

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF SMALL WARS

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THE subject of this conference is the strategy and tactics of small wars. United States Marines have engaged in numerous small wars as of late in Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti and Santo Domingo. It is not improbable that Marines will continue to perform duty of this nature so that the subject is peculiarly fitting for study. Whereas the small wars in which Marines have taken part have had their difficulties, the dangers encountered and the losses sustained have not been so great as in certain other small wars, and the tactical lessons obtainable from experiences of Marines are not sufficiently varied to depend entirely upon them for illustration. In so far as practicable, however, illustrations will be taken from experiences already more or less familiar.

2. *The strategy of a small war* is governed by three factors, namely: (1) The purpose of the war; (2) the natural and commercial geography of the contested territory; (3) the probable opposition.

The purpose of a small war will probably be one of three, namely: (1) For conquest; (2) for the suppression of a revolution; (3) to avenge a national insult.

Many of the American Indian wars belong to the first class. The operations of Marines in Nicaragua, Haiti and Santo Domingo in 1912, 1915 and 1916, respectively, come under the second class. The landing at Vera Cruz in 1914 comes under the third class.

The natural geography of the contested territory will govern to the extent that it will determine the districts wherein the greatest wealth and population are likely to be found and the consequent points of control therein. Man seeks those districts where the greatest reward for his labors are to be had. These districts will probably be agricultural first of all. They may be cattle lands or mining districts. Lacking these, fishing and hunting, manufacturing and commerce remain as a means of livelihood. Where the rich districts lie, cities will rise. Man congregates in and gathers his wealth into cities. Cities are the stations in organized commerce. Internal commercial relations extend to intercourse

with other countries and border towns or ports as the natural gateways grow.

The probable opposition to be met will depend largely on the purpose of the war. If the war is for conquest a united opposition may be expected. If the war is for the suppression of revolution, or in support of the constituted government, the opposition will probably be limited, provided the rights and privileges of the neutral inhabitants are not wantonly violated by the invading forces. If the war is to avenge a national insult, the resistance will probably not be great. Strong nations like strong individuals are not wantonly insulting purely for the sake of insult.

In any event the probable opposition will be (1) organized, (2) unorganized, or (3) both of these. By organized opposition we mean that the opposing forces will be formed into armies operating under regular leaders with definite plans of action and sufficient discipline to carry out such plans along some sort of tactical line. When such organized forces are defeated and scattered, its members may still be unconquered and may continue opposition through petty depredations degenerating in unorganized guerilla or bandit warfare. Such unorganized forces have as a last retreat inaccessible strongholds in the mountains and sparsely inhabited districts.

3. Let us see now how these three governing factors, (1) the purpose of the war, (2) the natural and commercial geography of the contested territory, and (3) the probable opposition, will affect the strategy of a small war.

"Strategy is the art of manoeuvring an army in the theatre of operations with a view to placing it in such a position relative to the enemy as to increase the probability of victory, increase the consequences of victory and lessen the consequences of defeat."

If the purpose of the small war is conquest, the strategy will be so inclusive as to seek complete control of all the contested and related territory.

If the purpose of the small war is the suppression of revolutionary operations, the strategy will be limited in extent to the infected districts unless the constituted government is so weak as to necessitate the taking over of government entirely to prevent a recurrence of revolution. This happened in Haiti and Santo Domingo in 1915 and 1916. Recurrence of revolution in Nicaragua since 1912 has been prevented by the presence in the capital of Nicaragua of a small American legion guard.

If the purpose of the small war is the avenging of a national insult the strategy will probably be limited to a suitable reprisal. The seizure of Vera Cruz in 1914 illustrates.

If the strategy is to include complete occupation of the contested territory then seizure first of the principle parts of border cities in accordance with the commercial geography of the contested territory will be contemplated, followed by a seizure of the cities in the naturally wealthy districts as determined by their natural geography. To effect this the extent of territory or its natural features, as mountain ranges difficult to pass, may make it desirable to divide the contested territory into military districts of occupation, each military district possessing its military head and occupying forces, each military head responsible for his military district to a supreme military head.

The probable opposition will have a distinct influence upon the contemplated strategy. So long as the opposition is organized and menacing the first principle of war will govern. The objective will be the hostile forces. This will still remain true when the hostile forces become unorganized. But the *weapons of reaching this objective* will differ from those used in regular warfare. In small wars, owing to the weakness or ignorance of our enemy, an announced objective such as the seizure of a principle city will act as a magnet to draw the enemy to its defense and to oppose our advance in the direct line of our advance. From this probability there has arisen a statement that the objective of a plan of campaign in a small war will be the seizure of a city or a number of principal cities. Should the enemy acting on sound tactical principles refuse battle in the direct line of advance and withdraw to one flank of our line of march so as seriously to threaten our line of communication, we shall have to make his forces rather than his cities our first object. It is a further general fact in small wars that a seizure of enemy cities has a great moral effect and tends to disintegrate his forces and discourage opposition. The seizure of Peking by the allied forces in 1900 effectively ended an opposition secretly supported by the Empress Dowager of China who thereafter submitted, though possessed of a divine right over four hundred million subjects.

When the opposition is unorganized, the strategy develops into a division of forces into small units pursuing an enemy active in movement and petty reprisal. The tactics of such an enemy are characterized by great mobility and ability of escape. The small

bands will not give battle and must be trapped into destruction. These bands must be suppressed because they prey on friend and foe alike. If successful their strength will grow by the addition to their forces of those otherwise not wholly determined in their attitude. In order to make effective expeditions against these bands by the more slowly moving regular troops bases of supply must be established in interior cities or fortified strongholds.

When practicable and as a further means of suppressing guerilla bands, the seizure of their livestock and supplies will make more difficult the operation of the enemy.

As a suppression of potential opposition and as a measure tending to lasting control, the requisition or seizure of all arms in the hands of all inhabitants in the occupied territory will become part of the strategy of a small war.

We have then six steps in the strategy of a small war:

- (1) Seizure of ports or border towns commanding routes of trade and entrance.
- (2) Seizure of interior cities commanding the resources of the territory and the establishment therein (or at other suitable points) of bases of supply.
- (3) Division of the theatre of operations into military districts.
- (4) Operations based on a captured city or fortified base of supplies against the remaining opposition.
- (5) Seizure of livestock and supplies.
- (6) Seizure of all arms.

4. *Example of Strategy of a Small War.*—Examine attached map of Santo Domingo. From Haiti to Cabo Engano is about 225 miles. From East to West a mountain range (Cordillera Central) divides the country into a northern and a southern district. Agriculture is the only developed resource of the country. The fertile sections are:

- (1) The valley of the Yuna from Santiago to Sanchez, called the Cibao.
- (2) The small valley north of San Pedro de Macoris.
- (3) The small valley north of La Romana.

The two last are sites of sugar plantations owned by foreigners and are of much less general importance than the valley of the Yuna.

The capital and principal city is Santo Domingo City.

Santiago is the metropolis of the naturally wealthy section of the country. Its ports are Sanchez, Puerto Plata and Monte Cristi. Its

neighboring towns in the rich valley are Moca, La Vega and San Francisco de Marcoris.

The only railroads of consequence give outlet to the products of the Cibao.

(1) From La Vega and San Francisco de Marcoris to Sanchez.

(2) From Moca and Santiago to Puerto Plata.

Fifteen miles of the length of the former runs on a causeway eighteen inches high over an otherwise impassable swamp. The latter cuts through a secondary mountain range, running east and west, the Cordillera Setentrional or Monte Cristi range.

San Pedro de Marcoris is the second town of importance on the South Coast.

The Republic of Santo Domingo was occupied by United States forces in 1916. The reasons for this occupation are unimportant for this discussion.

Occupation was affected as follows:

Santo Domingo City (capital and largest city) occupied May, 1916.

Objective as Santiago and the Cibao was announced.

Puerto Plata occupied June 1, 1916.

Monte Cristi occupied June 1, 1916.

Advance on Santiago made via Monte Cristi-Santiago road and Puerto Plata-Santiago railroad in conjunction commencing June 26, 1916.

Santiago occupied July 6, 1916.

Moca, La Vega, Sanchez and San Francisco de Marcoris occupied during July, 1916.

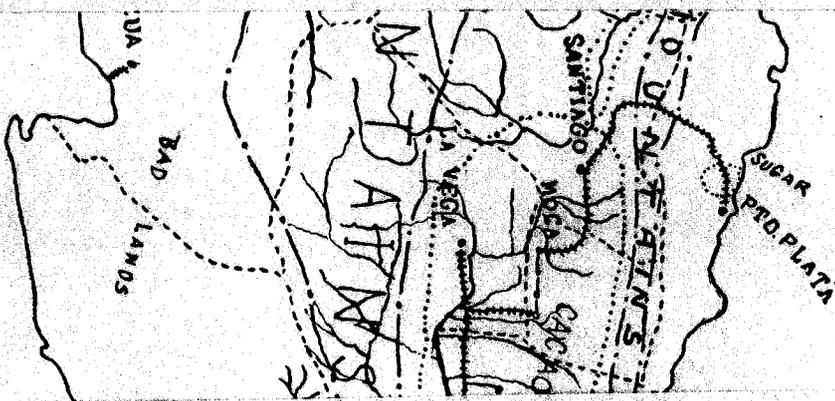
Samana, San Pedro de Marcoris, Romana, Seibo, Azua, Barahona were occupied or visited at later dates, as conditions made this necessary.

The Monte Cristi-Santiago route to the Cibao was preferred to the Sanchez-La Vega route because the former afforded a good road always within reaching distance of the Yaque river for water, whereas the latter route was impassable in the event of the cutting of railroad communications.

With the seizure of Santiago organized resistance ceased. Unorganized opposition from bands of outlaws has continued to date.

Cities occupied have been garrisoned and used as bases from which expeditions against bandits have continuously gone forth into the mountains.

Original organized opposition was from a revolutionary party.



The mass of the population was not hostile to intervention. Great care has been taken not to offend peaceful inhabitants or to commit injustices.

The conduct required of occupying forces cannot better be illustrated than by the following instructions issued by the commanding officer of the Fourth Regiment of Marines and associated organizations occupying the Dominican Republic in 1916.

U.S. FORCES OPERATING ASHORE IN SANTO DOMINGO, MONTE CRISTI D. R.

June 24, 1916.

From: Commanding Officer.

To: All officers of the forces.

Subject: Instructions.

1. The members of this force, officers and enlisted men, will at all times bear carefully in mind that our work in this country is not one of invasion; our mission is a peaceful one. We are here for the following purposes:

(a) To restore and preserve peace and order, and to protect life and property.

(b) To support the Constituted Government.

2. Members of this command will therefore realize that we are not in an enemy's country, though many of the inhabitants may be inimical to us, and they will be careful so to conduct themselves as to inspire confidence among the people in the honesty of our intentions and the sincerity of our purpose. Officers will act toward the people with courtesy, dignity and firmness, and will see that their men do nothing to arouse or foster the antagonism towards us that can be naturally expected towards an armed force that many interested malcontents will endeavor to persuade the citizens to look upon as invaders.

3. All commanding officers, of posts, companies and detachments, will carefully instruct their men in these matters, and will be diligent to enforce the principles herein laid down. While at all times being vigilant to guard against surprise and treachery they will be careful to avoid the appearance of constant suspicion, which attitude of mind, however, in private, it is wise to maintain while any particle of the present trouble and unrest remains in the country.

4. Orders will be carried out with as little use of force as may be needed to attain the desired end, but armed opposition or attack will be sharply and firmly met and suppressed with force of arms; this use of force to cease the moment the opposition has been overcome, the end attained and the safety of the troops assured. The same care and attention will be given to the wounded as would be given to our own and prisoners, while carefully guarded, will be treated kindly, and as liberally as the ensuring of their safeguarding will permit.

5. Under no circumstances will any subordinate commander carry out any punitive measure, or act of reprisal, without direct orders from the Commander of Forces.

6. The rights of property will be carefully observed, men will be instructed, and officers will be watchful to enforce the instructions that nothing, however apparently valueless, will be taken from any inhabitant of the country, or in any way appropriated, without remuneration, and the free consent of the owner. No force, threat or intimidation, will, in any way, be allowed.

7. No shot will be fired by any enlisted member of these Forces, unless by command of an officer, or in pursuance of orders given by an officer, except that, at any time, it is proper to fire in case of actual defense of one's life or the life of another.

J. H. Pendleton

The forces of occupation were in 1916 divided into a northern and southern military district, roughly north and south of the Cordilleras Central.

Because opposition has since the repression of organized resistance been only desultory, no resort to seizure of supplies has ever been made.

In 1916, the possession of arms by practically all citizens was forbidden. Thousands of revolvers and hundreds of carbines were surrendered. This was effected through the local chiefs who were not deprived of their authority and who were encouraged and enjoined to carry out the law.

The British in the Boer War resorted in 1901 to a systematic clearing of the enemy country of livestock and supplies.

General Hoche, during the French Revolutionary days, pacified the disturbed district of La Vendee in France by occupying every hamlet and village. All cattle and stores of corn were seized. Part of this was used for the Army of Occupation. Important inhabitants were also seized. These were released, and cattle and corn restored when the peasants voluntarily surrendered their arms.

5. *The tactics of a small war* frequently differ from the tactics of regular warfare. This is because the circumstances under which a small war is waged differ from those of regular warfare. This will be clear from the following brief consideration of tactics and its application to the circumstances of irregular warfare.

"Tactics is the art of disposing and manoeuvring troops on the field of battle."

The principle factors that govern tactics are: (1) Arms: Our own; the enemy's. (2) Terrain. (3) Morale: Our own; the enemy's.

Let us illustrate. If my army is equipped with high-powered rifles and your army having no rifles comes suddenly within 500 yards of my army on an open plain, your army will be destroyed.

If your army is equipped with long, sharp knives and knowing well how to use them, lies in wait in thick jungle alongside the path on which my army is filing, and my army all tired and sweaty thinks that the jungle is so thick that no man could possibly move in it and so keeps everyone on the path, *then* if your army jumps out suddenly into the path and knives my army, man for man, before we can pull a trigger, my army will be destroyed. Lastly, if your army has no courage and though having the ability to knife my army is afraid to try, then sooner or later your army will be hunted down and destroyed.

Knowing our enemy's means of fighting (his arms), the ground on which he is likely to be met, and his courage or methods of utilizing his arms and his ground, we can estimate the methods we shall adopt to defeat him with the least risk to our own forces. In other words, knowing the enemy's probable tactics, we determine the tactics we shall use against him.

Now *the tactics of the enemy and his morale are affected by his psychology* which varies with different peoples. In general, among semi-civilized and savage peoples, this is a matter of emotion. Intellect and reason abstracted from emotion are characteristic of civilized peoples. Reason is a development. Emotion is fundamental; peoples who are not developed intellectually are by comparison wholly emotional. Similarly children are impulsive and emotional, exposition of the fundamental psychological factor of man.

As an illustration of emotion and reason, two civilians *A* and *B* fell to fighting with their fists on a city street. A third man *C* happened along and stood watching *A* and *B*. A fourth man *D* looked out of the window of his home and saw *A* and *B* fighting in front of his house. His ideas of order were shocked. He was incensed. He rushed out of his house without his hat and promptly stepped in between *A* and *B* and stopped the fight. He reprimanded *A* and *B* to their great surprise and sent them on about their business. *C*, who had observed the whole affair, marveled that *D*, who was a little man, should have interfered between two large men, either one of whom might have turned upon *D* for interfering in an affair that was none of his business. It never occurred to *C* to interfere. He had a sporting interest to see what was going to happen, but his common sense told him not to interfere. He might have to fight both *A* and *B* himself. *A*, *B* and *D* were governed by emotions; *C* by reason.

It may happen of course that an intellectually highly developed

individual shows great emotion. This is a matter of circumstances, or if frequently repeated a lack of control. Probably any people, however civilized, possess as great emotional powers as any other. But reason and control temper this emotion.

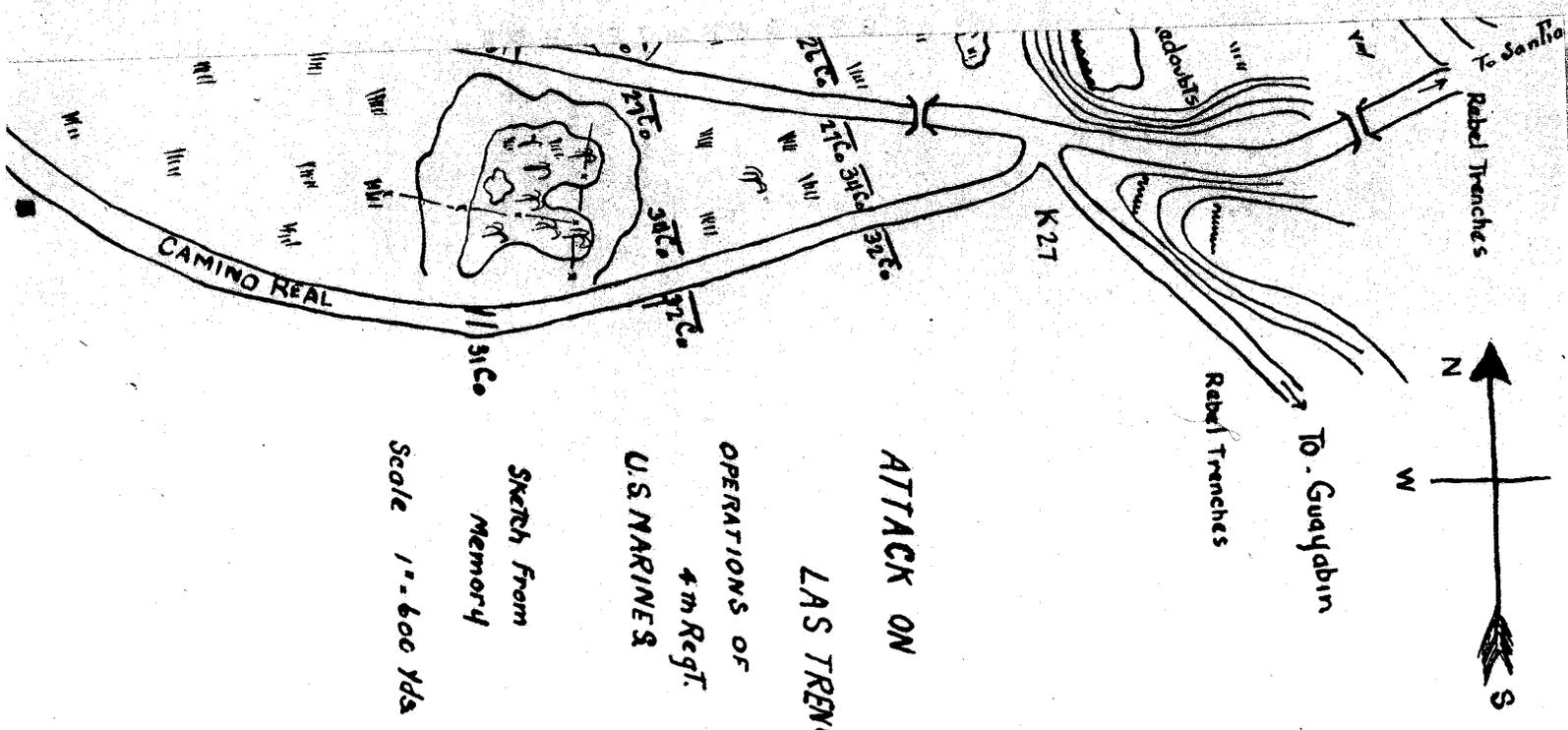
As between two peoples at war, the one big, powerful and waging war as a part of some preconceived State policy and the other comparatively weak and fighting the powerful invader, the smaller will be acting under a greater emotion.

This emotional factor will account for many otherwise inexplicable acts of the enemy in small wars. Whenever one single strong emotion governs, the consequent actions are likely to be violent and impetuous. Here are a few instances in support of this contention.

One of the greatest of emotions is religion. Religion is a matter of faith and not of reason. The Mohammedan believes that heaven will be opened to him if he kills his Christian. He fights for Allah. If he himself is killed his reward is assured. Hence occur his fanatical attacks in the face of almost certain destruction.

"Of all the emotions, fear was the first, the strongest and the most unreasoning. It still remains the strongest influence that governs man's actions" (Ethinge). With many primitive peoples fear is exemplified in their customs, superstitions and even in their religions. Fear affects their tactics. Seldom will such an enemy await the white man's steady approach and bayonet charge. This characteristic is not wholly lacking with regular troops. With an undisciplined, poorly controlled, poorly armed and ignorant enemy, flight before a bayonet charge is almost certain. This same enemy may at another time take the offensive with great courage. But once controlled by the emotion of fear his flight is precipitous. This accounts for a principle of small wars that we must take the offensive, that if compelled to take the defensive we must conduct an active defense, that as a last resort a counter-attack must be made. This accounts for the line of retreat that the enemy always provides for in his defensive positions.

Example: On June 27, 1916 a force of 850 United States Marines under command of Brigadier General (then Colonel) Joseph H. Pendleton, U.S.M.C., attacked Dominican intrenchments at Las Trencheras, 27 kilometres from Monte Cristi, D. R. enroute to Santiago. Attached is a small sketch from memory of this engagement. The firing line included four companies of about 80 men each or roughly 325 men.



Machine guns were attached to the companies. The trenches rose about seventy-five feet above the roads leading thereto over which the attack was made and were dominated by a second hill which in turn was intrenched with a good line of retreat to the rear. The attack was begun with the fire of two 3" naval landing guns with shrapnel and of a platoon of machine guns. This fire had apparently little effect on the Dominicans who opened fire on the approaching lines of marines at about 1000 yards distance. The fire of the Dominicans however mingled with great yelling and cheering was as usual high, only one marine being killed and four wounded. The advance of the marines was regular with short halts for fire and ended in a charge and capture of the trenches. The enemy however had not awaited a final assault as a completion of the steady advance but sounded his retreat on his bugles and fled from his first and second line trenches. Apparently it was originally intended to envelop the enemy's left flank but this was not done. The Dominicans escaped apparently with small loss. No killed or wounded Dominicans were found after the fight.

The emotion of courage, on the other hand, may be quite as strong as that of fear and hence the ability of lesser peoples to suffer extraordinary losses when they themselves are taking the offensive.

Most emotions are short-lived. One emotion may quickly supersede another. A child turns from joy to grief and back again with great rapidity. In the British Indian hill wars the tribesmen treated regularly before the advancing British columns, attacking spasmodically perhaps but making few great stands. The British expeditions, however, were punitive in nature. They did not march to occupy the land and so had to return to their bases in one, two or more days. When the retirement commenced, the attitude of the tribesmen habitually changed. Then they attacked, gathering in great numbers at the sight of the "retreating" British. Original fear seems to have been superseded by courage at the first opportunity.

Example: In the Tirah campaign in 1897 a reconnaissance was being made by the Kurrun movable column up the long Karmana defile into the Chamkani country. No opposition was encountered in advance; but when the retirement commenced, the tribesmen collected in some force and adopted their usual harassing tactics; they were however kept in check without great difficulty. A picquet of the Kapurthala infantry which had been detached to hold a flanking spur, however met with disaster. It was ordered to withdraw at the proper time and it received the message but instead of descending obliquely rearward into the valley and joining the rear guard the commander and most of the men made an attempt to strike the valley higher up with the idea of participating in the skirmish which was going on. The

party got into difficult ground and came in contact with the enemy higher up than where the rear guard was—they in fact missed connection with it and thus became isolated. They found themselves, moreover in an awkward side ravine and the tribesman quickly closed the ends of this. The upshot was that they were eventually shot down to a man.—Callwell.

Example: "In the British operations of 1881 in Waziristan, the first Sikhs advanced up a spur covered with oak jungle, so thick that it was difficult to see more than ten yards off. About half way up they halted and the two half companies were ordered to lie down, fix bayonets and load. Suddenly a charge was made on them, the enemy appearing about ten yards off. The fire they received sent them back, but the officer instead of allowing his men to get out of hand, pursued them steadily up hill, halting to reform every now and then. This was a wise precaution as if the men had got out of hand and rushed up the hill, a rush of Waziris might have swept through them. As it was, at each hill the Waziris tried to rush the companies, but did not succeed After the charge we heard the general's bugle sounding our regimental call and the retire.

Colonel Price, who was a very able officer and quite understood the situation, refused to obey the order, as he was aware that if we retired through the thick scrub before the Waziris were beaten, the result would have been a heavy loss in men, so, instead, he drove them over the range and we halted for some time, and then retired without a shot being fired at us."—Callwell.

Similarly fear demonstrated in precipitous flight burns itself out with escape. The relief from attack and pursuit is so great as to become to the enemy a victory. It may well happen that he cares not at all for the loss of the position which he defended. He has escaped unhurt. The last game that he played with us after the battle was to see if he could get away from us before we caught him. And he got away. With very good reasoning you failed. He won and will fight again just as soon as he gets ready and opportunity offers.

Illustrations of this, perhaps most familiar to us, are to be found in both Haitian and Dominican campaigns of 1915 and 1916. The campaign against the Haitian Cacos in Northern Haiti, included numerous small engagements culminating in a concerted attack on Fort Capois. For reasons which will be explained later the capture of this fort was only a minor victory. Eight Haitians were killed. Some 150 others escaped. A few weeks later a similar mountain fastness—Fort Riviere—was taken with the practical destruction of its garrison of some seventy-five Cacos. This action ended the

campaign. In the Dominican Republic the action at Las Trencheras occurred with no apparent losses to the Dominicans. They attacked the advancing American column on numerous occasions until their signal defeat with considerable losses eight days later at Guayacanes which ended organized opposition.

Small wars are characterized by the usual failure of an enemy to continue a pursuit for any length of time. The white man's persistency is inexplicable to him. The enemy's mental calibre is demonstrated by inability to persist in his efforts to a certain end. Consequently he is the victim of his own emotions.

The keynote of the enemy's morale in small wars is the fact, generally speaking, that he is governed by his emotions.

6. We have considered the factors that govern tactics. Let us now consider *three principles of tactics* that appear essential to success. These are the Offensive, Surprise, and Security.

(1) In order to gain decisive results it is necessary to take the offensive. Both sides are therefore likely to attempt it.

(2) Surprise is an essential element of a successful attack. To be surprised is never justifiable.

(3) By proper security, surprise can always be prevented.

The offensive and its essential element, surprise, are assumed by us at will. The same prerogative belongs to the enemy. Since we do not know when the enemy will attempt a surprise, we must take the proper means of security all the time. In order to know what are the proper means of security we must know the tactics of the enemy; that is, how will he attack. If we knew when our enemy would attack, with what arms he would attack and where he would attack, we should be prepared to meet him. Since we do not know when he will attack, we take measures to meet him at any time. These measures are such that the arms he uses will not be effective against us until we are ready to meet him. We effect this ordinarily by meeting him with advance or delaying detachments so that he will be unable to strike our main body before it is prepared to meet him. The size of these advance or delaying detachments depend upon many things, as our own strength, the strength of the enemy, our weapons, his weapons, etc. The distance from the main body of these advance or delaying detachments will depend on the terrain and the range of the enemy's weapons. All this is nothing but ordinary tactics. But it is an essential to proper action that we should understand the reasons for any particular action. We shall then under-

stand that we are only using common sense in what we do. Let us take one or two examples from regular warfare. We shall then see how to apply our security in varying conditions against irregular enemies.

Example: A purpose of an advance guard, of a rear guard, of a flank guard, of an outpost in regular warfare is to hold the enemy beyond effective rifle fire or in large bodies, *beyond effective artillery* fire until it can form for action.

Example: The one pounder is really not an offensive weapon but a defensive weapon; its primary purpose is to destroy the enemy's machine guns; it cannot act until an enemy machine gun discloses its position by opening fire. Held in readiness it is a means of security against a special form of attack by the enemy.

7. These three principles, the Offensive, Surprise, and Security, are of particular importance in small wars, the Offensive because the burden of proof necessarily rests with the invader; Surprise because in small wars it will often be the only means of attack where the enemy has greater mobility than the regular troops and refuses battle; Security because the enemies' methods of attack will be surprise, flank and rear movements rather than frontal.

Our strategy of small wars included the seizure of ports, border towns and interior cities, and engagements in the field. Tactically these resolve into:

1. Landing Operations.
2. Seizure of a city.
3. Operations in the field.

We shall consider our tactics of small wars under these three divisions and whenever applicable in each such division under the heads of the Offensive, Surprise, and Security.

8. *Landing Operations.*—"Landing and mopping up a seaport is not a difficult matter provided the job is treated as a military operation, but the landing of a force at a customs wharf, or similar front door entrance, may be very difficult for the reason that the disposition of troops is such as to encourage an enemy to strike, and if he strikes the troops are poorly disposed to return the compliment. There is no known reason why this condition should ever obtain. When a Marine force lands in whatever fashion, the enemy knows that it will not fight unless attacked and also knows that if the landing force is attacked it will fight back and complete the job. Some may object to this on the grounds that the orders are to seize a limited objective—the customs house, or some other particular facility in

the city and that a "peaceful landing" is to be made. While that may be the fact, there is no known reason why the landing force should not be disposed to control the city pending the successful accomplishment of the particular mission. Experience demonstrates that there is a good chance that the particular mission will not be accomplished peacefully.

"A proper procedure would be to land suddenly at one or more points in the vicinity of the port, encircle the city (seizing any commanding ground), form the mopping-up force and jump off. The encircling (or control) of the city is very important for several reasons; port facilities are secured, the hostiles that are caught in the city will not have to be chased in the bush afterwards, the mopping-up force will have choice of jumping-off positions and directions of advance. The ideal conditions would be those permitting the mopping-up force to jump off from an elevated position and advance in the direction of the sea. Such conditions would ensure the widest use of the land and sea forces available, lessen the danger of inter-firing among one's own troops and bring the most complete results. Moreover if the occupation of a city is carried out as a real military operation the danger of bloodshed will be lessened for the reason that the rapid unfolding of the various stages of action will tend to render resistance manifestly hopeless.

"The efficient and economical success of the mopping-up force, properly landed, will depend, like any other operation, on the completeness of the staff work, battle formation used, weapons available and coordination. Sectors and street objectives should be assigned, directions of advance prescribed for each sector and plans made for coordinating progress.

"The opposition to be met with will vary greatly. While the usual city will be capable of a very strong resistance on account of the prevalent type of architecture and street plan, yet it is not likely that the hostile element will be so organized or the spirit of resistance will be so widespread as to cause universal resistance throughout. The resistance will most likely be centred on those sections inhabited or frequented by the younger and more lawless elements and native troops, such as the Red Light district and the plaza district, with the so-called palace, police and troop barracks and club buildings. On the other hand, peoples of all nations are rapidly progressing in the military art and wholesale resistance, with organized city

outskirts and block by block fighting may be met with and should be prepared for." (Ellis in MARINE CORPS GAZETTE.)

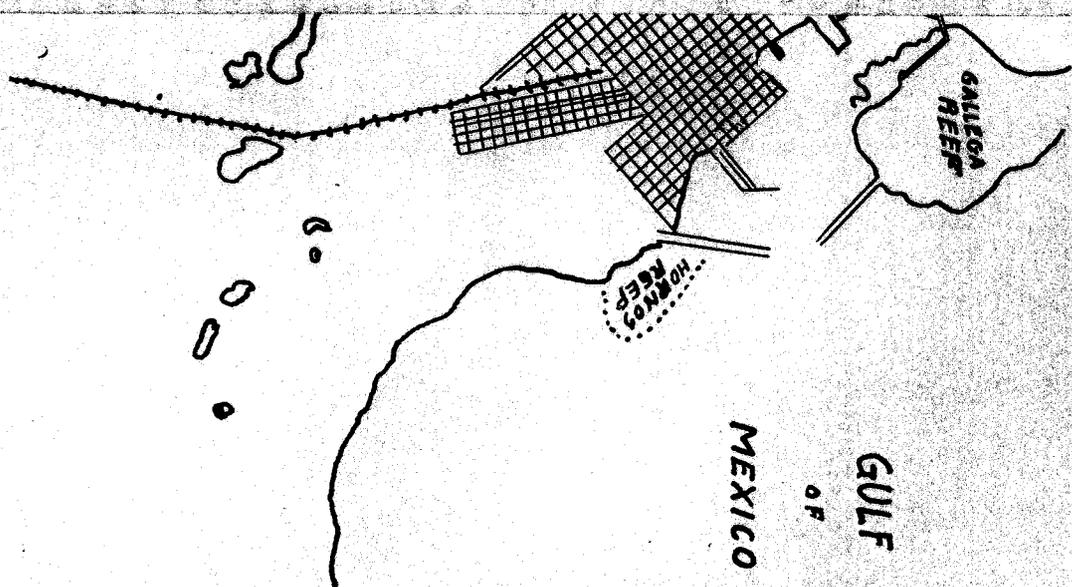
Examples of Landing Operations:

Account of the landings at Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1847 and 1914: Vera Cruz is located on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico at the apex of a flat triangular sandy plain, one to two miles from apex to base. At the base extending from Vegara Bay on the northwest to the Gulf of Mexico on the southeast is a line of hills 60 to 160 feet high.

The city is therefore surrounded on the apex and sides by water and on the base by hills. (See map.)

In 1847, General Scott, believing that there were some 5000 Mexican troops in and around Vera Cruz, disembarked on March 9, 1847, at the beach *south* of Vera Cruz and due west of Sacrificos Island. No opposition was met from the Mexicans. There were no American casualties. Landing in 65 open boats (cutter type) was begun in the late afternoon. Thirteen thousand troops were ashore by 10 p.m. Weather was excellent. The hills to the southwest of the city (base of triangular plain) were occupied, artillery brought ashore, and from the 2nd to the 27th the city and fortifications thereof were bombarded with 6700 projectiles. The Mexican commander then requested cessation of hostilities which resulted in parleys and surrender of the city. City was taken without assault, infantry used only to hold investing lines. Mexican casualties about 600; American, 67. Five thousand Mexicans with 400 guns surrendered.

In 1914 (April), American war vessels were ordered to various Mexican ports to protect and receive Americans leaving Mexico if the strained relations then existing became worse. The First Division, Atlantic Fleet, lay at Vera Cruz, where on April 21, 1914, a cablegram was received from Washington directing the seizure of the Custom House to prevent the landing of a large assignment of rifles and machine guns for the Mexican Government due on the German steamer, *Ypiranga*. The mission of this landing was therefore limited to the taking of the Custom House. Officials ashore were notified that the Custom House would be seized, opportunity was given to foreigners to clear the city, and a force of 787 (including 502 Marines) landed at the custom house pier and took the custom house and cable station without firing until after landing. Firing commenced on approach to cable station, a few blocks up city



from wharves. It then became necessary to advance to a certain extent to cover the objective taken. Resistance was local and uncontrolled. Efforts to communicate with responsible Mexican authorities to stop local firing having been fruitless, the American forces ashore were ordered on the 22nd to suppress firing, take possession of city and restore order. American forces moved forward by sections through the city, clearing houses, etc., equal advance being maintained by signal on cross-streets. Sand hills southwest of city from Vegara beach to beach just west of Saerificos Island were seized by 11 a.m. Additional forces were landed, bringing forces ashore on the 22nd up to 1950. On that evening and on the 23rd forces were increased to 5400. American losses were slightly greater than in General Scott's capture of Vera Cruz. Fire from ships' guns was used against military positions in the city to aid the advance of the landing force.

Landing of small detachments of United States Naval Forces were made at *Santo Domingo City, D. R.*, on May 5, 1916, and at *Puerto Plata, D. R.*, on June 1, 1916.

At *Santo Domingo City*, landing of 300 Marines and Bluejackets was effected at the "beach" near San Geronimo Fort, two miles west of the city, at 1:00 p.m. At that time Santo Domingo city was held by a rebel force of about 250 regular troops and some seven or eight hundred volunteers, all plentifully supplied with ammunition. The city was being attacked by some 800 government troops from the west and north. No opposition to the landing of American forces was made. Landing was effected as follows: A motor-sailer was anchored with a heavy anchor near the outer edge of the breakers; a three and one-half-inch line was run ashore through several lines of breakers to a palm tree ashore; a large lifeboat with a lizard at each end was run along this line by a picked crew. On May 5th and following days a total of 600 men, two 3-inch field pieces with caissons, several machine guns and large quantities of stores and ammunition were landed in this manner. There is no actual beach suitable for landing within many miles of Santo Domingo City.

At *Puerto Plata*, a force of 130 Marines and 63 Bluejackets, with two machine guns, was landed June 1, 1916, in small boats from the U. S. S. *Sacramento* at a small cove on the western side of East Point (see sketch). Puerto Plata was at that time held by a revolutionary force of some 500 men armed with Winchester rifles with the announced intention of preventing a landing. Civilian and

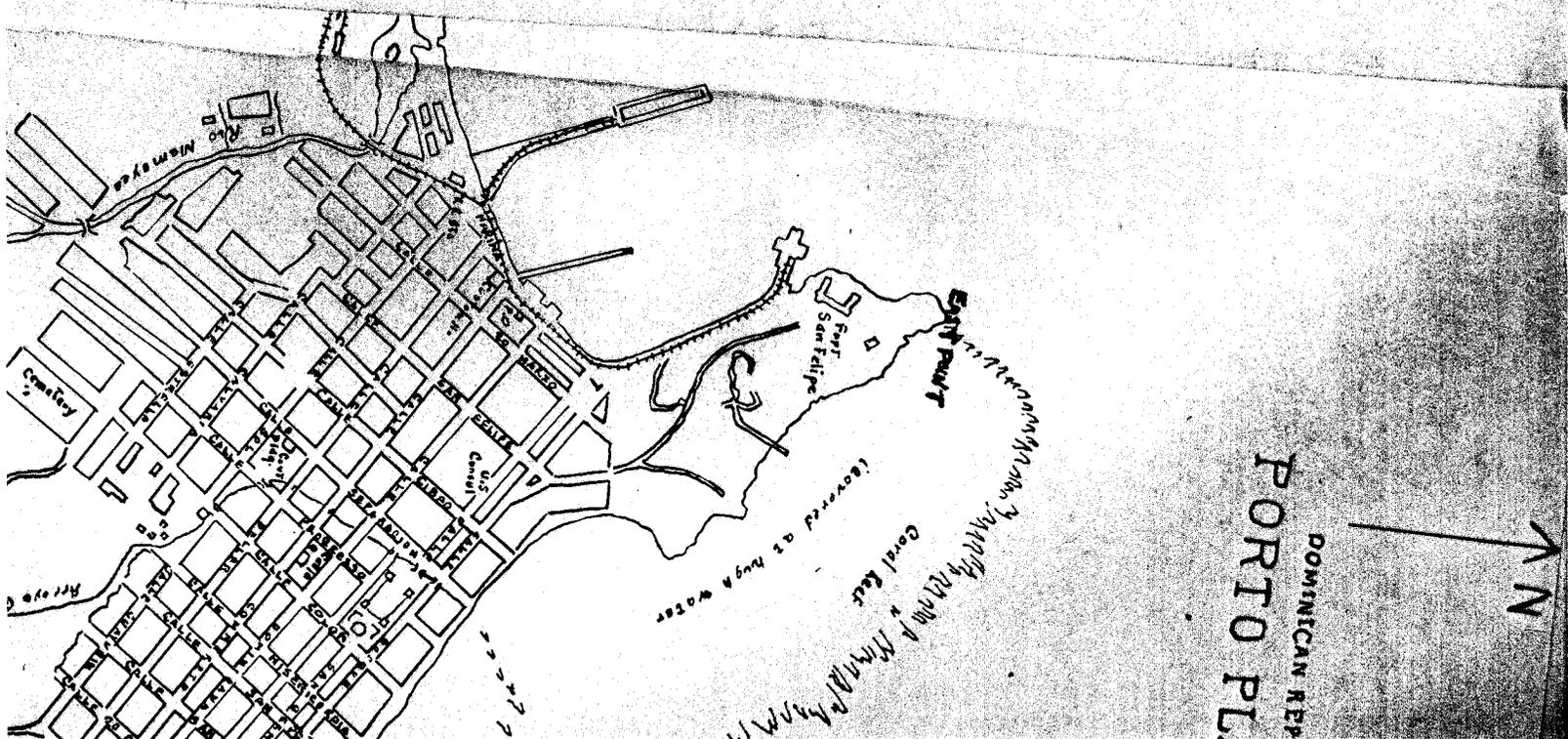
foreign non-combatants in Puerto Plata made it inadvisable to return any fire from these revolutionists. At 6:15 a.m. several three-pounder shots followed by four-inch shells were fired over the fort at the entrance to the harbor from the *Sacramento*. These were intended to frighten the revolutionists, but did not prevent a storm of rifle bullets directed at the ship and the landing-boats throughout the passage from ship to shore (the boats left at 6:30 a.m.), bullets falling all around the boats and many hitting the sides of boats. This fire was not returned, "for to have done so lives of non-combatants would have been in danger." One officer was shot in the head and killed, several men were slightly wounded, and a small boat grounding, two men were nearly drowned but later resuscitated. The fort and town were promptly seized, the revolutionists retreating upon the advance on shore of the Americans.

None of these landings were effected in the face of serious opposition and none of them are sufficiently detailed to illustrate the tactics of a landing operation. The following covers the subject briefly: As in all attacks, surprise if accomplished is of immense advantage. To effect surprise various favorable landing places may be examined with small war vessels and sea planes, favorable landing places given a preliminary bombardment from the sea to develop the enemy's defensive dispositions and finally at the time of actual landing demonstrations made at auxiliary landing places to deceive the enemy as regards the point of landing in force. It might be profitable to effect actual land reconnaissance by scouts landed at night.

The operations upon landing are immediate and are in the nature of an execution of the principles of security. This will be effected by the seizure of all terrain affording positions to the enemy to command with fire the chosen landing places. The selection of the place of landing will among other considerations (as the physical nature of shore line or beach as offering approach to final objective, etc.) be governed by the local objectives to be seized immediately upon landing in order to afford security to the landing beach.

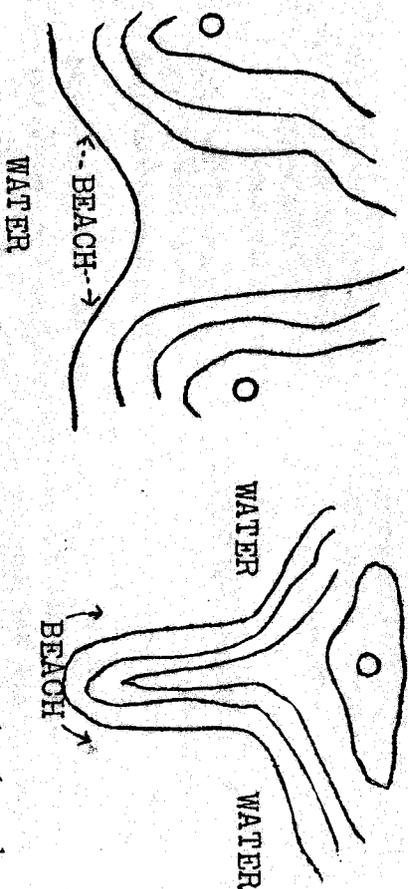
In illustration of a landing operation, reference is made to the two following diagrams:

In each diagram the position O (objectives) will be seen to be high ground commanding the landing beach. The fire of ships' guns being of flat trajectory will not be effective against masked positions except perhaps at long range. The landing forces will therefore in



approach be able to bring but small fire on O from machine guns, Stokes mortars and one-pounders carried in the bows of small boats. On landing it will be imperative that each O be attacked immediately and taken. Troops on the open beach will be exposed to annihilating fire. They will seek cover immediately and will attack all objectives to *secure* the beach against fire.

In order that this may be accomplished without delay and unnecessary loss, troops should be fore-leaving the ships be assigned to objectives, and sub-sectors of attack must be assigned to each unit and sub-unit so that each sub-unit will seek cover at its assigned sub-sector and commence the attack immediately. This may be done in



the usual manner, though perhaps less accurately by landmarks and from the map in degrees of azimuth. Supports and reserves will similarly be assigned to sectors to advance the attack.

Our three main tactical principles operate in landing operations as follows:

We take the offensive, land, and seize; otherwise, even though we are able to bombard the land from the sea, we accomplish little.

We exercise surprise by our feints at landing and by actual landing at daybreak.

Our means of security will be our airplane reconnaissance, our fire from ships, our fire from landing boats and our immediate seizure of all points commanding the landing beach. Our operations from then on pertain to the tactics of small wars on land which we shall consider later.

(To Be Continued.)

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF SMALL WARS

By MAJOR SAMUEL M. HARRINGTON, U.S.M.C.

(Continued from the last number)

9. *Seizure of a city:* Our present sources of information on this phase of small warfare are two. The first refers to the seizure of Latin-American cities which are perhaps the most simple and regular in construction. The second refers to the seizure of modern cities of the temperate zones of greater irregularity of structure. We shall consider both methods.

Latin-American towns are usually laid out regularly in parallel streets with cross streets at right angles. The blocks therefore are rectangular. The buildings as a rule are closely adjacent, are one story high, and have flat roofs.

Such a city is seized systematically with proper tactical formation as in any other offensive. The inhabitants and the garrison may be surprised by a seizure at daybreak and opposition thus avoided. The more thoroughly planned, the more systematic, the more energetic the seizure, the less opposition is there likely to be.

The tactical requirements are however special and very detailed, owing to the nature of the work to be done. It is necessary to take the whole city from the same direction and moving forward regularly in a wave which on both flanks overflows the city. Otherwise flanks would be exposed to enemy detachments passed by, and our own detachments would be exposed here and there to the fire of others of our own detachments less advanced or advancing on irregular streets at an angle to the main direction of approach. Similarly each house in every street is in itself a fort which may harbor one or more individuals armed and determined to do mischief. Thoroughly to seize a city, every bit of territory including cellars, roofs and yards must be seized.

The operations on one street are all that can be viewed thoroughly from any given position. If we understand what is going on in one street, we shall understand what is going on in each street and so be able to link up the whole operation within the city and to link this with the tactical requirements outside of the city.

A street is seized as follows:

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The organization assigned to a street is divided into

1. A street detachment.
2. A roof detachment.
3. A searching detachment.
4. A main body.

A squad may be sufficient to form a street detachment.

1. Half the squad moves on one side of the street, taking advantage of cover from doorways, stone steps, etc., and covering with its rifles the enemy fire from windows and roofs on the opposite side of the street. The leading man of course covers straight to the front. Those behind him by reason of their formation cannot well fire to the front without coming up on the line.

2. The other half of the squad performs similar duties on the other side of the street.

3. To silence enemy machine gun fire a one-pounder may well follow the street detachment.

4. A street detachment advances one block to the rear side of the cross street and halts, taking a temporary barricaded or defensive position.

A roof detachment will consist of at least one squad for each side of the street.

1. Each squad enters the first house on its side of the street and gains the roof. The first man enters the house alone, his entrance being covered by one or more rifles outside.

2. On the roof, each squad is divided into a first and second line.

3. The first line carries and utilizes planks, scaling hooks, rope ladders as may be necessary.

4. The second line covers the advance of the first line, protects its flanks and acts as a support.

5. Roof detachments fire only to their front if flank fire will endanger friendly troops.

6. The rifle, the automatic rifle, hand and rifle grenades, and machine rifles are suitable weapons.

7. When the roof detachment gains the most advanced roofs in the block it halts and engages the enemy on the cross street and beyond.

8. As soon as the enemy fire has been controlled, the second line or support with roof equipment (planks, scaling ladders, etc.), descends to the street to form the advance line for the new roof detachment for the next block.

9. The first line remains in position until the new first line has

gained the roof on the far side of the cross street, when it descends, crosses the street and becomes the support.

10. If desirable an entirely new roof detachment may be furnished by the main body at each cross street.

The size of the searching detachment will depend upon the size and number of buildings in each block to be searched. A squad may be necessary for each building. If there are twelve houses on each side of the street in any block and it is desirable to search all houses simultaneously, twenty-four searching squads would be required. If each searching squad might search two houses during the block advance, twelve squads, and, if four men were sufficient to search a house, six squads would be sufficient for this duty. A less number of squads would scarcely be sufficient for rapid advance.

1. A searching squad makes a thorough search of every room and courtyard.

2. And places in the street in one pile for each block all arms and ammunition found.

3. And guards this pile until relieved from the main body.

A main body is used to reinforce the three preceding detachments.

1. It is held under cover of a cross street until the next cross street is cleared by the street detachment when by a rapid advance it gains the cover of that street.

2. It leaves a guard on each pile of arms and ammunition until relieved by a guard from the battalion support.

From the foregoing a summary of a minimum number of squads for a thorough advance on a street is as follows:

Street detachment	1 squad
Roof detachment	2 squads
Searching detachment	6 squads
Main body	3 squads (or more if available)

12 squads

Behind this organization follows the Battalion Support.

1. It furnishes reinforcements for the preceding main body.

2. It collects the arms and ammunition piled in each block.

3. It leaves patrols pending relief by the regular provost patrols. (These patrols should reexamine the houses in the assigned district to

cover any omissions made by the searching parties. In cases where the inhabitants are very hostile some or all in a district may have to be evicted therefrom.)

From experience in Vera Cruz in 1914, it was estimated (U. S. Army) that if the depth of a town in the direction of the advance averaged two miles, a battalion would not ordinarily be assigned a width of more than two streets; that is, one block and one-half of each of the adjacent blocks.

In any event it will be clear that a certain number of streets will be assigned to a battalion as its sector. A sector will include a whole street and will extend half-way into the flank block. Authority then on any street will not be divided. The advance is coordinated as follows:

1. The officer in charge of each roof detachment reports or signals to the officer in charge of the street detachment that his work for that block has been completed.

2. The officer in charge of the searching detachment after check of all groups reports to the officer in charge of the street detachment that his work for the block has been completed.

3. The officer in charge of the street detachment assures himself that all opposition on the cross street has been suppressed and then puts out in the cross street a flag or by other means signals that he is ready to advance.

4. The officer commanding the advance of the base battalion verifies the "ready" signals of streets on the flanks of his battalion and then orders the advance of his own battalion.

5. Other street detachments observing the advance of the base battalion then advance.

6. It may happen that all cross streets are not straight. In this case certain straight cross streets are designated in orders as coordinating streets where all units come abreast before again advancing. In-between coordinating streets, units check up with units on their immediate flanks as each cross street is reached.

We may now consider our line as advancing as a wave or series of waves, one behind the other, across the city in one direction and from one direction. There are three points that we have not yet considered, our flanks, our rear, and our exit on the far side of the town. In our tactical dispositions within the city we have considered carefully all details for the security of each detachment, the front,

the flanks, the rear. Behind our battalion supports, of course, we provide provost guards to take over and patrol occupied districts.

Now, behind our provost guards, we need a mobile reserve for rear and flank protection, and on our flanks and in our rear we need constant reconnoitering patrols to guard against a surprise. This is important and its omission entirely is not justifiable. Now as to our exit on the far side of the town: if, as in the case of an approach from the southwest into Vera Cruz, the water cuts off escape from the town and the taking up of position beyond by the enemy, our task is completed with the taking of the city. But if the city be inland or it be necessary to approach it so that the exit will be inland we shall have to provide for that exit in two ways—first, to prevent the escape or withdrawal of the enemy; second, to prevent his surprising us from positions beyond the town when our troops flushed with victory may seek to pursue him hotly. We can prevent the enemy's escape by an enveloping or turning force passing around the city and taking position in flank of the final exit. This may be sufficient to cover our own debouching troops but does not relieve the commanders thereof from the use of measures of security as the advance of scouts and patrols in the open to develop the enemy's fire before numbers of troops are exposed to view emerging from the town. We seek of course to keep the enemy so far from us that we shall not be exposed in large numbers to danger from his weapons at their effective range.

The value of tanks, trench mortars and field pieces against enemy barricades is obvious. These weapons will be most advantageously placed with the main body where they can rapidly be brought into action when needed. In small wars, air service will do much to relieve the infantry of its labors. But no matter what means of warfare, modern science may invent, the man on foot must in the last analysis drive out the man on foot, and seize and hold the land because mankind lives on the earth. Infantry tactics will therefore always be of importance.

In a small war the seizure of a city may be a minor operation. The principles, however, will be the same and the thoroughness with which these principles are carried out will depend upon necessity. We have seen in general how the city of Vera Cruz was taken in 1914. From the experiences of that operation there were for the most part drawn the detailed instructions outlined in the paragraphs

immediately foregoing. A single further example of the seizing of a small city will be illuminating.

Example: Santo Domingo City was seized by American forces in May, 1916, in the early days of the occupation of the Dominican Republic. Original plan called for an entrance from the West in conjunction with the forces of President Jimenez moving on all parallel streets eastward (see map), a detachment of Jimenez forces to pass around the city the previous night to cover escape of the rebels *via* the Camino de Galindo. This plan of entrance allowed of fire from ships' guns in the harbor northward along cross streets so as to take in the flank opposing forces operating therein.

Actual seizure was effected from the north moving southward by six companies of sixty to eighty men each, operating roughly on an east and west line from Villa Francisco and Galindo between Calle Sanchez and the Rio del Ozama, with a flanking company at the Receptoría and a company moving eastward to occupy the triangle between La Primavera and Calle Pina. The Ozama was covered by ship's guns from the harbor and by machine guns from the company moving south along the river. The six companies reformed from time to time on Calle Mercedes, Calle Separacion, etc. The rebels had withdrawn to the northward before the occupation. Occupation was effected at 6 a.m. Sunday before the city was awake and no opposition was encountered.

So far we have considered cities of a regular construction. But all cities are not so constructed. Often the avenues run irregularly, the houses do not necessarily join and the roofs may not be flat. The same principles however apply. The advantage of moving into a city only in one direction lies, as we have noted, in the protection of our flanks from enemy fire and from fire of our own flank detachments. Proper coordination may prevent this even though we converge from two directions on the city as may be desirable should the main defense say be in one corner of the city or should it be desirable to force the enemy retreat in a particular direction. If the houses on a block are not adjoining or have not flat roofs, a regular advance by a roof detachment is of course impossible. The same effect however will be produced by seizing the first roof in the block and as the searching parties advance the next roof so high as to conceal the roofs beyond it. In this fashion we seize successively the high points. Depending on the construction it may be necessary to occupy all roofs.

Example: "Following the Armistice the German forces withdrew to their depots in Germany for demobilization, and rapidly melted away. Red riots began in Germany in December, 1918, and were numerous in January, 1919. Many of the large cities were controlled by the Reds. The old army regiments proved utterly unreliable in efforts to suppress the Reds and regain control of the cities. In many instances the returned soldiers joined the ranks of the Communists and supplied the Communists everywhere with quantities of rifles, hand grenades, a few machine guns, and ample ammunition. In order to reestablish order in Germany and to suppress the Communists, enterprising officers of the old German Army organized volunteer units. These officers were self-appointed and each followed his own ideas. The units were composed of cavalry, artillery, wireless, and aviation detachments and had from a hundred to a thousand men in each. Many of these volunteer units grew to large proportions, equalling the normal strength of a division. One of the large units was the Landesjaeger Corps, organized by General Maercker in December, 1918, at Senne-Lager, a great German training camp in Westphalia. In late December, 1918, the Landesjaeger Corps had a functioning staff and was having manoeuvres, at Paderborn, on the problem of capturing Paderborn from assumed Communist control.

"In January, 1919, the Landesjaeger Corps began to appear in the various columns directed by Minister Noske, against Communist groups in Central and Western Germany. Between January 1st and April 1st, General Maercker captured Halle, Magdaburg, Brunswick, Halberstadt, Leipzig, and numerous smaller communities, Leipzig, which was the last city to be taken, fell without a shot, as the Communists quit as soon as they saw the Landesjaegers, who had gained the reputation of being invincible. In all these actions the same tactics appeared, although there was a distinct evolution in the tactics, as experience dictated changes.

"The Communists being in complete control of a city, fully armed, and having fairly well organized units, volunteers, composed largely of demobilized soldiers and criminals, it was the practice for the government forces to take ten days to two weeks in preparing for the attack. Meanwhile, in order to gain time, insincere negotiations for a possible compromise would be initiated by the political representatives of the Government. This course was followed in

so many instances that it seems to have been a part of the military plan.

"The government troops were prepared in their garrisons and then quickly assembled about ten miles from the city to be captured. Usually two columns were assembled to attack the city from different angles. Munich was attacked by three such columns, but in some instances only one column was formed. Obviously the attempt was made to have this assemblage secret for a special censorship was imposed. In no instance, however, did the Government succeed in making a complete surprise attack and rarely did the Communists have less than twenty-four hours' notice.

"In the final phase of evolution shown by these tactics, the attacking columns formed in the following general manner:

"*Aviation:* Three to six aeroplanes, flying low, preceded the column. The aeroplanes were equipped with machine guns, but did little fighting. Their principal duty was to spot all groups of Communists, all rioters on roofs, and all barricades and signal back the facts to the attacking column. In some instances they were used to fire with machine guns on the rioters on the roofs.

"*Armored cars:* These cars preceded the main column and consisted usually of trucks hastily covered more or less with sheet iron and armed with machine guns. There is no satisfactory evidence as to the efficiency of these armored cars used in this way. However, for the mopping up and patrolling later, all these armored cars were necessary.

"*Infantry:* The infantry in the column had an excess ratio of machine guns and of hand grenades.

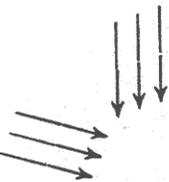
"*Artillery:* The artillery gradually became almost exclusively trench mortars, which in the German Army were an arm of the artillery in the large calibres and of the infantry in the small calibres.

"In entering a city, the immediate objective of the column was to obtain possession of as much of the city as possible. Thus, when rioters were found strongly occupying a quarter, that quarter was not immediately attacked but was segregated as effectively as possible. In due time this resolved the resistance down to certain isolated quarters. The capture of these quarters was then undertaken, the two distinctive features being the use of aeroplanes for reporting assembled groups and for attacking rioters on roofs, and the free use of trench mortars (minenwerfers), to toss bombs completely over a city block of buildings, and into a building on the next

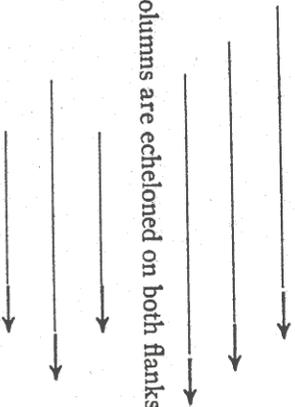
street, occupied by the rioters. No efforts seem to have been made to minimize the destruction of property, in the course of the operations."—*Eaton*.

It may happen that we are able to make an entrance into a city by railroad and so to detrain in the heart of the city. This would happen probably before the outbreak of any hostilities and in the hope that none would occur. Such an operation is similar to a landing operation. The first troops to detrain must cover the landing which is the railroad station. In all directions must this be secured and to the extent of the range at least of small arm fire. This again is nothing but simple security.

We have said that it may be desirable to make an entrance into the city in converging columns



so as to drive the enemy in a particular direction and to have the advantage of flanking fire. This will not be simple unless the streets are so constructed. The same result may be obtained by columns echeloned to the rear.



Lastly, if our columns are echeloned on both flanks,

Whatever the formation for seizure, forces moving into position outside of the city will afford this opportunity. In coordinating such movements the air service should be of great value.

To summarize the operations of seizing a city and referring again to our three main tactical principles:

Our very assumption of the offensive and seizure of the city is a taking over control and an establishing of moral supremacy.

Surprise in such action in small wars may best be effected by a seizure at daybreak. In certain instances opposition may thus entirely be avoided. Prompt, firm action is psychologically a surprise.

The tactics of Security consist chiefly in reconnaissance to the front, flanks and rear. Conditions will determine the size of the mobile reserve to be maintained. Within the city itself no more thorough means of security will obtain than by the search of all houses and the seizure of all arms.

(To be continued)

we tend to divide the enemy forces into two bodies. Whereas, all of these formations afford flanking fire against the enemy, they require more careful coordination to prevent fire into our own columns. Moreover the advantage to be gained will be questionable. The seizure of the city will be the first objective. If in addition we seek the destruction of the enemy forces we may effect this by fire from both flanks upon the enemy upon his exit from the town.