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A DESCRIPTION OF THE RECONNAISSANCE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE HOME DISTRICT TACTICAL AND WAR-GAME SOCIETY IN THE SUMMER OF 1891.

By Major E. SATTERTHWAITE, 2nd Volunteer Battalion the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

1. THE object of the work was twofold—

1st, to prepare a new set of maps to be used for the minor war-game in the winter season.

2nd, to give elementary instruction in reconnaissance work to members of the Society.

2. With regard to the first object, the minor war-game, as practised by the Society, was instituted in the winter season of 1890-91, at the suggestion of one of the most experienced Adjutants of metropolitan Volunteers.

It was felt that there was room in the operations of the Society for offering some further opportunities to company Officers for the study of tactical problems.

The senior Officers of the metropolitan Volunteers have for some years, under the auspices of the Society, practised *kriegs-spiel*, the Umpires being Officers of standing in the Regular Forces.

Junior Officers have been employed as subordinate Commanders, and it has been no uncommon occurrence for these company Officers to have command of brigades of infantry and regiments of cavalry, a state of affairs which has been felt to constitute an unreality by many, but by none more than the Officers concerned.

The gulf between the instruction derivable from these theoretical commands of large bodies and the ordinary work of their battalions seemed large, and the establishment of the minor war-game was an effort to bridge over this gulf, and to lead up from the lessons of the Drill Book to the study of higher branches of tactics—to form a link between the barrack square and the *manœuvre* field.

In this minor war-game the commands seldom exceed one battalion, and it is therefore essential to use a large-scale map, on which the smallest movements of the smallest bodies can be shown in detail.

The post of Umpire-in-Chief has been undertaken by different Adjutants of metropolitan Volunteers, and the map used last season was an enlargement (1" to 17·6 mile) of the map issued with Lieutenant-Colonel Wilkinson Shaw's "Elements of Modern Tactics." This enlargement had been made by the Officers and members of the Inns of Court Rifle Volunteers, who very kindly lent the Society its maps and apparatus. This map consisted of an imaginary country, which, however well designed, almost always fails to rivet the interest of combatants in a war-game on account of its unreality.

3. With regard to the second point mentioned in Section 1, it must be remembered that military topography is not a compulsory subject for Volunteer Officers.

Until 1889, Volunteer Officers were allowed to attend the examination for promotion in tactics only, and, if they passed, their corps received a special money grant.

The other three subjects were only thrown open to them in 1889, but as yet no grant has been assigned to proficiency in them; the consequence is that the number of Officers who present themselves for examination has been, and is, small.

4. The Executive of the Society therefore felt that an effort might be made to attain the twofold object, firstly, of obtaining a good large-scale map of typical English country for its minor war-game, and, secondly, of encouraging its members to take an interest in the study of military topography, sketching, and reconnaissance.

5. In May, 1891, the circular marked A was issued to the members of the Society, with the approval of Major-General Philip Smith, C.B., Commanding the Home District, the President of the Society.

In response to this, some forty names were received, and the work of the survey was commenced.

6. The ground chosen was an area of 9 square miles, 3 miles by 3, south-east of Caterham, being the nine square miles in the south-east corner of sheet No. 27, 6" Ordnance Survey.

This ground was chosen on general grounds, because it was a typical piece of English country, such as Volunteer troops would have to operate over in time of war; and on special grounds, because Caterham is known to be the concentration point of a large number of metropolitan Volunteers in case of invasion.

7. The maps to be used for war-game purposes were the 25·33" ($\frac{1}{25000}$) Ordnance Survey, which, it will be remembered, are neither contoured nor shaded.

8. The first task was to divide the area into convenient sections for reconnaissance; and this was done on the principle of making roads and paths, as far as possible, the boundaries of sections, and of giving each Officer about half a mile square to survey. The first proviso ensured a definite boundary to each Officer's work, and also furnished a duplicate report on each road or path.

In all, the 9 square miles produced twenty-five sections.

9. To each group of three or four sections an Instructor was appointed, whose duties were to arrange with his Officers to meet on the ground, to explain technical terms and conventional signs, and to give instruction in contouring and in rendering an efficient reconnaissance report as to the details required.

These Instructors were all Volunteer Officers who had "passed" in military topography, and who gave their services gratuitously (although two of the number were professionally engaged in the work of coaching young Militia Officers for the competitive examination).

10. These preliminaries being settled, a further circular, marked B, was issued to the Officers who desired to take part in the survey. This circular was accompanied by a cutting from the 6" map, repre-

sending the section to be surveyed; this cutting was mounted on Whatman's thick paper and provided with a scale and north point as well as a general idea of the surrounding country, the existing 100' contours being marked in in red.

A group map was also furnished to the Officer who acted as Instructor to each group.

The 6" map was adopted for the field work as being less bulky and less expensive than the 25·33" map, and also as affording practice in contouring at the normal scale of horizontal equivalents.

11. The schedule of information required (marked C) was drawn up with the assistance of Lieutenant-Colonel W. W. M. Smith, R.A., D.A.A.G. for Instruction, Home District.

The authorized War Office Form for Road Reports (A.F. K 1305) was also issued where required.

12. The work was ordered to be rendered by August 31st, and the results were then transferred to the 25·33" maps.

These had been prepared by Mr. E. Stanford, of Cockspur Street, Charing Cross, at a cost of 3*l.* 12*s.* per set of twelve sheets, mounted on extra strong millboard and sized, each sheet representing an area of 1 mile by $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and measuring 25" by 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

The contours were then pencilled in by means of proportional compasses, and subsequently coloured with Faber's indelible liquid carmine ink. The contours were numbered according to their height at junctions of sheets and along roads and salient features, arrow-heads pointing downwards being also used to show at a glance the direction of the slopes. Watercourses were also marked in in blue.

The whole were then sized again and varnished.

Faber's inks were found admirable for the purpose, as they showed no sign of "running" when the size and varnish were applied; the "Camel" fountain pen was also found useful for this work.

13. The maps themselves thus showed the contour of the terrain, but for the purposes of the Society something more was required, and the numerous details collected in paragraphs 2 to 9 of the schedule (C) were too valuable to be wasted.

Umpires at kriegs-spiel are constantly asked, "Can I move my troops through this wood?" "Does that hedge afford cover from view or from fire?" "Can I utilize this farmstead for defence?" Or rather, the combatant usually claims that the wood, hedge, or farmstead is an ideal one for his purpose. These questions usually can only be answered by one intimately conversant with the country.

14. The 25·33" maps readily lend themselves to the tabulation of such details. Each enclosure (wood, field, or road) is provided with an index number, and the plan adopted has been to cut the edges of a foolscap book as a "Where is it?" book is cut, letting each division of the book contain the information relating to one sheet of the war-game map.

Within, against the number of each enclosure, a note is made of its characteristics, as rendered by the Officer who surveyed it. Thus—
Sheet 1. Enclosure 120.

"Arable field; high hedges; no ditches; gate to road east."

Sheet 3. Enclosure 413.

"Stonepit Wood; trees, 30—40' high; thick undergrowth; no paths; boundary hedges thick, with no ditches; good field of fire to the south."

Naturally the information rendered by some of the Officers is much fuller than that of others, especially as many Volunteer Officers have little daylight time at their disposal; but on the whole the information has been intelligently and correctly given, and the contours have "joined" on the edges of sections in a manner that is surprising, considering the inexperience of many of the surveyors.

15. As a recognition of the work done by the Officers engaged in the survey, the Society has had the various reports examined, and a certificate will be issued to each Officer, signed by the President, who throughout has taken the greatest interest in the work.

16. The maps will now be used for the minor war-game, at the Westminster Town Hall, and may be borrowed by subscribing battalions for kriegs-spiel at their own headquarters, on application to the Honorary Secretary.

A.

HOME DISTRICT TACTICAL AND WAR-GAME SOCIETY.

Before the commencement of the next Kriegs-Spiel Season, it is proposed to prepare a new set of Maps for the minor War-Game, in place of those hitherto used, which were kindly lent by Col. Russell, of the Inns of Court R.V.C.

The Maps to be prepared are the 25·33 inch Ordnance Maps of the Country round Godstone and Oxted, which is close to the line to be occupied by the majority of the London Volunteers on mobilization.

The assistance of Members of the Society and Officers of Subscribing Corps is requested in the preparation of these Maps.

A combined Survey will be made, and instruction given on the ground, in Military Sketching, Reconnaissance, and Contouring.

A small section of country will be assigned to each Officer, or if desired, a number of adjoining sections will be assigned to a Battalion.

A definite Schedule of the information required will be furnished to each Officer, which must be returned to Col. Haddan, 66, Sumner Street, Southwark, S.E., by August the 31st, to whom also the addresses of Officers proposing to participate in the work should be sent immediately.

Each Section will be calculated to contain about 2 days' work.

Commanding Officers are requested to give publicity to this Scheme in their Orders, so that all Officers may have due notice.

By order of the Committee,

E. SATTERTHWAITE, Major,

Assistant Secretary.

30, Throgmorton Street, E.C.

7th May, 1891.

B.

HOME DISTRICT TACTICAL SOCIETY SURVEY, 1891.

1. The Survey is to be made with a view to working up the 25·33" Ordnance Maps for the purpose of the Minor War-Game.

The information required will be suitable to this end, and will not comprise all that is required for a regular Military Survey.

The Maps to be used will be the 6" Ordnance, and the results will be transferred to the 25·33" by the Staff of the Society. Contours to be at 20' Vertical Interval.

2. The Country chosen is that bounded on the North by the Chalk Hills South-East of Caterham.

If the present Survey is successful, an extension of the Map can easily be made next summer.

3. Each Officer will receive a Section of Country to survey; there will be no objection to his obtaining the assistance of other Officers or N. C. Officers of his Battalion.

Each 3 or 4 Sections will be grouped under one Instructor, who will arrange with the Officers under him to meet on the ground.

4. The Instructor's duty will be to explain technical terms and conventional signs, and generally to put the Officers into the way of rendering the information required.

The operation of Contouring, either with the Clinometer or Aneroid, will form a principal part of the work required.

5. Great care must be taken that no damage is done to crops.

6. Each Report will be signed by the Officer making it, and forwarded with the Map to his Instructor, who will see that all the Reports of the Officers of his group are collected and forwarded to Col. Hadden, 66, Sumner Street, Southwark, by August 30th.

7. Railway Station for Group A (Sections 1, 6, 10, 11) Caterham.

"	"	"	B {	"	2, 3, 7, 12), Caterham.
"	"	"	C {	"	4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14), Godstone.
"	"	"	D {	"	15, 16, 17), Oxted.
"	"	"	E {	"	18, 19, 20, 21), Oxted.
"	"	"	F {	"	22), Oxted.

N.B.—Section 22 was divided into 4 Subsections.

C.

DETAIL OF INFORMATION REQUIRED.

1. Contours.

These will be marked on the map (enclosed) in red ink at 20 feet vertical intervals.

The 100 feet contours will be found marked already (4 contours must therefore be marked between each) certain Benchmarks along roads and at certain other points will also be found marked 241, 322, and 417. These heights have been underlined and marked as above.

2. Roads.

Information as to each road in a section (including the Boundary Road) should be given as under:—

A. The road leads from	—Miles to	—Miles.
B. Metalled or not; materials for repairs.		
C. Average and minimum width.		
D. Details of any defile, hollow road, or embankment.		
E. Fences (see 5).		
F. Details of bridges and culverts over or under which the road passes.		
G. Anything that may tend to retard the usual rate of marching, such as steep grades, bad state of repair, &c.		

3. Paths.

A. From	—Miles to	—Miles.
B. Nature of soil.		
C. Nature of gates, stiles, &c.		

4. *Villages.*

- A. Name,
- B. Material of houses.
- C. If suitable for defence.
- D. If commanded from neighbouring positions; if screened from distant Artillery fire.
- E. Materials for strengthening defences.
- F. Buildings suitable for keep.
- G. Water supply.
- H. Surrounding fences and walls.
- J. Approximate population; useful Stores; farms or trades.

5. *Fences and Walls.*

- A. Height.
- B. Ditches, average depth; which side of hedge.
- C. Suitability for defence.
- D. Gates to be marked on map thus —|—|—.
- E. Average character of hedgerow trees.

6. *Woods.*

- A. Average height, frequency, and nature of trees.
- B. Density or otherwise of undergrowth as affecting the passage of all arms.
- C. Paths or streams traversing.
- D. Defensibility of edges and Boundary fences.
- E. Field of fire from edges.

7. *Railways.*

- A. Single or double.
- B. Cutting or embankment.
- C. Stores of fuel or plant.

8. *Streams.*

- A. Width and depth.
- B. Nature of adjoining country, if marshy, &c.
- C. Liability to floods.
- D. Watering places.

9. *The Country.*

- A. Marshy, dry, wooded, or open.
- B. Arable or grass to be written across each field on the map.
- C. Any details as to the view to be obtained from any commanding points, especially as to the possibility of seeing troops marching along the roads, whether within or without the section.

Further information can be obtained from—

Col. Haddan, 66, Sumner Street, Southwark, S.E.,
or Major Satterthwaite, 30, Throgmorton Street, E.C.