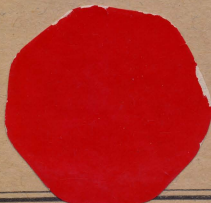


Lieut. W. Hudson

**MACHINE GUN
COMPANY & PLATOON COMMANDER'S
VERBAL ORDERS**

comprising
**Orders for Attack,
Defence & Withdrawal**

Printed and Published by
GALE & POLDEN LTD.
ALDERSHOT
and at
London and Portsmouth



COMPANY COMMANDER'S VERBAL ORDERS

ATTACK

INFORMATION (given in present tense).

1. **Enemy.**

All that is known of him, particularly any definite locations.

2. **Own Troops.**

A brief summary of the Commander's plan as it affects all arms other than machine guns. Given by phases if applicable. Use the following headings:—

(i) *Movement*.—Details of infantry and/or tank attack, start lines, objectives, rate of advance if decided, and subsequent action if known.

(ii) *Fire*.—Fire plan of the artillery and other machine guns and that of any other units which has an immediate effect on the operation.

3. **Ground.**

Anything to do with the ground which, in the opinion of the officer giving the orders, should be especially noted by the recipients of those orders.

INTENTION (given in future tense).

4.Company will support the attack;

or

.....Company will consolidate the objective;

or

.....Company will protect the flanks;

or

More usual—a combination of any of the above.

METHOD (given in the future imperative tense, though, for machine guns, this is seldom necessary since headings only will usually suffice).

Give it by phases if applicable, in which case complete the tasks, etc., of all Platoons in Phase I before starting on Phase II. Any orders applicable to all Platoons for all phases should come at the end. Avoid map co-ordinates and show each Platoon its job by pointing it out on the ground. Before going on to the second Platoon, make sure that your orders to the first Platoon have been understood, e.g., "Now, No. 5 Platoon, is that quite clear?" In other words, there should be an "Any questions?" period at the end of each Platoon's

task, in addition to the "Any questions?" at the end of the whole order.

5. No.....Platoon (or Platoons)..... Task in general, *e.g.*, covering fire, consolidation, flank protection or reserve guns.

Forward R.V..... (if not already given).

Area..... (Platoon area including any information about covered approach.)

Task..... May be:—

- (a) Definite task only for covering-fire shoot, *e.g.*, neutralization of known or suspected enemy position. This may be a timed shoot throughout or a shoot with a prearranged start time, ending when it is no longer safe to fire.
- (b) Definite task and arc, *e.g.*, as for (a) with an arc to watch on completion of the task. This arc may be given as "Right.....," "Left.....," or "Arc to include....."
- (c) Arc only for flank protection task. This arc may be given as "Right.....," "Left.....," or "Arc to include....."
- (d) Covered rendezvous behind the infantry start line from which they will advance on to the objective when that objective has been captured. Task on arrival to repel counter-attack and possibly give covering fire on to next objective.

Timings, rates of fire and amount of ammunition, *e.g.*,
z — z + 10, 6 belts, open, one belt rapid.

Action on completion of task, *e.g.*:—

Rendezvous.....

Stay in action for depth consolidation.

6. Repeat for other Platoons.

7. Zero hour..... (This may be given at the end of the order when synchronizing watches.)

ADMINISTRATION.

8. Ammunition.

Location of ammunition point. Location of ammunition reserve at opening stage, and subsequent route. Orders regarding dumping or replenishment of Platoons with definite tasks entailing a known amount of ammunition.

9. Vehicles.

Any special orders regarding Platoon trucks. (They normally are left with Platoons.)

Traffic control orders within the area.
Petrol points.

10. **Medical.**

Nearest aid post..... (Not necessarily that of the M.G. Battalion.) Evacuation of casualties.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

11. M.G. Company H.Q.....and subsequent route.

M.G. Battalion H.Q.....and subsequent route. Formation or Unit H.Q. with which M.G. Company is workingand subsequent route. Any special allotment of D.R., signal terminals, etc. Any special signals, e.g., infantry success signal.

12. **Synchronize Watches.**

13. **Any Questions?**

DEFENCE

NOTES.

1. When time is the ruling factor the Company Commander will give only the immediate essentials for getting his Platoons into action and he will give the less urgent detail at the first available opportunity.

2. Given plenty of time, Company Commander's orders will be detailed and full, possibly going down to Section areas and tasks.

INFORMATION (given in present tense.)

1. **Enemy.**

All that is known of him which affects the sector.

2. **Own Troops.**

(a) *Troops.*

- (i) Disposition of the infantry as far as is known, including the line of F.D.L.
- (ii) Disposition of outposts.
- (iii) Withdrawal route of covering troops.

(b) *Fire.*

- (i) Fire plan of artillery (including A/Tank)
- (ii) Fire plan of neighbouring M.G.
- (iii) Mortar fire plan.

3. Ground.

Attention should be drawn to those parts of the sector which are favourable or otherwise to M.G. fire.

INTENTION (given in future tense).

4. Examples:—

(a) A Company will defend.....reserve locality;

or

(b) A Company will thicken up the fire in front of the F.D.L.;

or

(c) Defend the.....(rear) locality;

or

(d) Company will be in mobile reserve at.....;

or

(e) A combination of the above.

METHOD.

5. Given to each Platoon in turn:

No.....Platoon.

Area..... (Section areas).

Task (may be dual).

(a) Defensive fire in front of.....

(b) Defensive fire in front of F.D.L.

(c) Combination of (a) and (b), in which case state which is primary and which is secondary.

(d) Defence of.....locality.

(e) Mobile reserve at.....

6. Arc.....Right and Left.

7. Fixed Line..... Area in which fire is to fall and purpose of the fire.

Rate of fire on fixed lines (usually given in belts, e.g., two belts rapid—two minutes' pause—repeat).

8. Repeat for other Platoons.

9. Extent of digging (usually extensive).

10. In action by..... (May be given at end with synchronization of watches.)

11. Any orders as to reservation of ammunition, e.g., keepbelts for primary tasks.

ADMINISTRATION.

12. Ammunition.

Company reserve.....

Battalion reserve.....

Ammunition point.....

13. Vehicles.

Orders for collection, *e.g.*, R.V.....at.....
(normally right back behind Divisional Reserve).

14. Medical.

Nearest aid post and stretcher-bearers.

15. Other administrative matters, *e.g.*, rations, replacements, etc.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

16. Company H.Q.....

Battalion H.Q.....

Infantry H.Q. in association.....

17. System of communication, *e.g.*, infantry or M.G. telephone or runner.

18. S.D.F.—description and place from which it will go up.

19. Any questions?

WITHDRAWALS

NOTE.

1. The degree of control which an M.G. Company Commander can exercise over his Platoon during a withdrawal must depend on the nature of the fight, and it will frequently be a case of issuing orders to individual Platoons according to the progress of that fight.

2. Alternatively, M.G. Platoons will sometimes be placed under the orders of an Infantry Commander for a phase of the battle, and in such cases the M.G. Company Commander can only give those Platoons a forecast of their subsequent rôles and a rendezvous at which to revert to Company control.

3. According to the situation, withdrawal orders may be issued in either of the following ways:—

(a) Complete for occupation and withdrawal.

(b) For occupation with as much detail of withdrawal as known.

(c) For occupation only—withdrawal later.

INFORMATION (given in present tense).

1. **Enemy.**

2. **Own Troops.**

To include covering troops.

3. **Ground.**

INTENTION (given in future tense).

4. Example: " ' B ' Company will stop the enemy on the east side of the River....."

METHOD (given to each platoon in turn).

5. Area..... (may be approximate).

Task..... (usually fire within an arc).

Arc..... (wide and usually frontal, give a near limit).

In action by.....

Under command of.....for occupation and/or withdrawal.

Next position or rôle or Company rendezvous.

Withdrawal timing if known.

ADMINISTRATION.

6. **Ammunition.**

Position and route of ammunition reserve. Arrangements for replenishment (these need careful thought).

7. **Medical.**

Nearest aid post (probably not M.G. Battalion aid post). Sub-allotment of stretcher-bearers, if any.

8. **Vehicles.**

Normally kept by Platoons.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

9. M.G. Company H.Q.....and subsequent route
Any extra allotment of D.R. or signal terminals.

10. **Synchronize Watches.**

11. **Any Questions?**

PLATOON COMMANDER'S VERBAL ORDERS

ATTACK.

ORDERS TO SECTION COMMANDERS.

INFORMATION.

1. Enemy.

All that is known of him.

2. Own Troops.

(a) *Troops*.—Present dispositions and any future moves.

(b) *Fire Plan*.—Details of other supporting weapons, *i.e.*, other M.G. Platoons, mortars, artillery. Their positions and where their fire will come down.

INTENTION (given in future tense).

3. Examples :—

“ No.....Platoon will support the attack ”;

or

“ No.....Platoon will protect the right flank.”

METHOD.

4. When using *Direct Fire*.

No. 1 Section :

(a) Area.

(b) Position in readiness.

(c) Where trucks should go back to for cover.

(d) Task—*i.e.*, neutralize that area from z to $z + 12$, six belts per gun;

or

Right of arc.

Left of arc.

Fire by observation—use up to six belts.

5. No. 2 Section—ditto.

6. Factors affecting safety.

7. Position for A/Tank rifle.

8. Subsequent action, *i.e.*, remain in action until further orders; or

After completing task, cease firing and R.V. at.....

When using *Indirect Fire* :

(a) Method to be employed.

(b) Gun line—frontage and pivot gun.

(c) Position in readiness. Where trucks should go back to for cover.

(d) Position for A/Tank rifle.

ADMINISTRATION.

9. Company ammunition reserve. Details of any replenishment of ammunition taking place.

10. Nearest R.A.P.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

11. Platoon O.P. and H.Q.

Synchronize watches—zero hour is at.....hrs.

Any questions?

ORDERS TO PLATOON SERGEANT AND SECTION CORPORALS WHEN USING DIRECT FIRE

INFORMATION.

Very briefly. (Given in detail to Platoon Sergeant later, when he reports to you at your O.P.)

INTENTION.

As in Section Commander's orders.

METHOD.

No. 1 Section :—

(a) Position in readiness and route to it.

(b) Number of belts required off the truck.

(c) Indicate Section area.

(d) Position to which trucks will go to after unloading their stores.

No. 2 Section—ditto.

Any orders for local protection (*i.e.*, "Platoon Sergeant—you will put out the A./Tank rifle at that cross-roads").

ADMINISTRATION.

Anything applicable, but briefly.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

Platoon H.Q.

Synchronize watches—zero hour is at.....hrs.

Any questions?

DEFENCE

Note.—These orders include everything that the Platoon Commander should give to Section Commanders. Whether they can all be given out at the same time will depend on the situation.

INFORMATION.

1. Enemy.

All that is known of him, and when he is likely to be in observation of the position.

2. Own Troops.

(a) *Troops.*

- (i) Disposition of any covering troops or outposts and routes by which they will withdraw.
- (ii) Disposition of the infantry in your sector of the main position, and details of F.D.Ls.

(b) *Fire.*

- (i) Fire plan of artillery (including A./Tank guns) in your sector.
- (ii) Fire plan and dispositions of neighbouring M.G. Platoons.
- (iii) Mortar fire plan.

INTENTION (given in future tense).

3. Examples :—

No.....Platoon will put down defensive fire in front of
..... (reserve localities);
or

No.....Platoon will put down defensive fire in front of
.....F.D.L.;
or

A combination of the two;
or

Mobile reserve at.....

METHOD.

4. No. 1 Section :—

Section area (in detail—almost pin-pointing gun positions).

Position in readiness.

Task—fixed line (approximately to start with); arcs of fire.

5. No. 2 Section—ditto.

6. Rates of fire on fixed lines. Any orders as to reservation of ammunition for primary task. If putting down fire in front of reserve localities who will decide when to open fire—the Section Commander or will the Platoon Commander inform him?

7. Extent of digging (normally extensive). Any extra allotment of tools.

8. Local protection—A./Tank rifle.

ADMINISTRATION.

9. Ammunition :—

Company reserve.

Battalion reserve.

Ammunition point.

10. Nearest R.A.P.

11. Vehicles will be sent back to.....at.....hrs.

12. Any other administrative details, *i.e.*, rations, etc.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

13. Platoon O.P. and H.Q.

Company H.Q.

Battalion H.Q.

14. S.O.S.—description and place from which it will go up.

Synchronize watches—in action by.....hrs.

Any questions?

WITHDRAWAL.

Note.—These orders can be divided into two stages, *i.e.*, orders for :—

(a) The occupation of the position.

(b) The withdrawal from the position, including the sending back of a recce. party when necessary.

They will usually be given out separately, as it is unlikely that you will know details of the withdrawal at the time when you are occupying the position.

1. Orders for the Occupation of the Position.

The withdrawal action is only a form of defence, with the result that your orders are exactly the same as in defence, with the addition in the *Method Para.* of:—

(a) "Near Limits" to each Section.

(b) Platoon R.V.

(c) Company R.V.

2. Orders for the Withdrawal.

INFORMATION.

1. Enemy.

2. Own troops.

INTENTION.

3. No.....Platoon will prepare to withdraw.

METHOD.

4. Platoon Sergeant will take the following recce. party back to meet the 2nd-in-Command at..... (place) at

.....hrs., in order to recce. the next position.

Composition of the recce. party?

5. No. 1 Section will thin out at.....hrs.

Leave six belts per gun.

Vacate position on my command.

No. 2 Section—ditto.

Platoon H.Q. :—

You will withdraw.....

Platoon R.V.....

Company R.V.....

ADMINISTRATION.

6. Replenishment of ammunition will take place at.....

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

7. I will withdraw No.....Section as far as the Platoon R.V.

Synchronize watches—zero hour.....hrs.

Any questions?

NOTES