

Staff Department
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

STUDENT MONOGRAPH
Advanced Infantry Officers Course
Class Nr. 1
1955-56

TITLE
Reverse Slope Defense

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Roster Nr. 154

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PREFACE

25 January 1956

The point of view expressed in this paper is that of the author - not necessarily that of The Infantry School or the Department of the Army.


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INTRODUCTION

"Somehow, long established tactical methods - even methods that have been in our own manuals for years - come as a surprise (and are reported as 'new'). Some of the earliest combat reports from Tunisia said that the Germans were using 'unorthodox' defensive positions. These positions were on the reverse slopes and were murderous when they came as a surprise to our Infantry." (18:10) This quotation by Colonel A. G. Fox appeared in the November 1944, Infantry Journal. Now, more than eleven years later, we might ask ourselves; how much do we, individually, know about reverse slope defense?

It has been said on many occasions that infantry units in the combat zone spend approximately eighty percent of their time on defense; therefore, all our personnel should be completely familiar with the tactics and techniques of defensive combat. In order to accomplish our mission in defense of denying vital areas, containing, or inflicting the maximum casualties and disorganization on the enemy, we must properly utilize the terrain that we have available. (17:113) There are two principal types of defense, the position defense and the mobile defense. (17:113) A reverse slope defense, which is a defense organized on the slope that descends away from the enemy, is a method of employing the position type defense. (16:546)

During the research on this subject, it was found that there are few detailed examples of reverse slope defense; however, there are many general comments. It was also found that our doctrine of reverse slope defense is sound and generally the same as that taught by all nations; therefore, present doctrine and techniques will be used only

to amplify or explain the subject under discussion.

In discussing the reverse slope defense, we shall consider its advantages and disadvantages, times when it may be and times when it should be used, variations and other uses of the reverse slope, and training. The purpose of this monograph is to point out that we should not neglect the reverse slope of the hill when planning our defense; and to prevent this neglect, we should place more emphasis on reverse slope defense in the training of our units and our unit commanders.

All infantry personnel have been trained in defense from the forward slope of a hill; therefore, let's turn our attention to an almost equally important part of the hill, the REVERSE SLOPE.

DISCUSSION

Section I

When we are given a defensive mission, one of the first things we do after noting the friendly and the enemy situation is to make a terrain analysis. Depending upon the level of command this analysis may be made from a map; however, it must be made by someone on the ground prior to a unit occupying the position. In our terrain analysis we consider the military aspects of the terrain: critical terrain features, obstacles, cover and concealment, observation and fields of fire, and avenues of approach. (9:9) For our purpose we shall assume that we are going to occupy the critical terrain, which are any features of terrain, the seizure or retention of which would afford a marked advantage to either combatant, and confine our discussion to the remaining factors. (9:11)

From the definition of a reverse slope defense, we can readily see that it would have many advantages; however, we must realize that the key to the reverse slope defense is the control of the topographical crest of the hill by physical occupation or by denying it to the enemy with a heavy volume of fire. (16:546) In order to control the crest we should plan to occupy it; and when driven off, place all available fires on the crest and counterattack to regain possession. (16:551)

Section II

Let's consider the advantages of the reverse slope defense. We are protected from enemy observation by the crest; therefore, his indirect fire weapons must fire unobserved fires, thereby reducing their effect. (14:393) The enemy cannot make as detailed plan of attack

because his observation is limited to air reconnaissance. (20:34) The value of his air reconnaissance will be limited unless he is able to observe from above or behind our position. To do this he will have to fly over our lines which is very dangerous to the observation type aircraft.

The crest of the hill acts as a shield and protects our defensive position from the effect of the enemy direct fire weapons. (20:34) The Army Ground Forces Board published this comment concerning reverse slope defense on 20 May 1944. "The whole purpose of reverse slope defense is to shield oneself from the direct fire of assault guns and tanks and against observed artillery fires. In fact, it seems the only satisfactory defense against this type of attack." (28:4) This cover and concealment provided by the crest gives us more freedom of movement on the reverse slope. This makes the work of improving our positions, evacuation, resupply, and command supervision less dangerous. (14:393)

Another outstanding advantage of reverse slope defense is the defenders ability to achieve surprise and stop the enemy's attack with a heavy volume of accurate fire as he crosses the crest. (18:11) An aid in achieving surprise is that the location of our positions will not be disclosed by premature firing because the troops will not be able to see the enemy until he crosses the crest. (21:131) In order to achieve the most effective fire on the crest and on the approaches around the crest, we would like the forward platoons located between 200 and 500 yards from the crest; and the reserve platoon located on the military crest of the next high ground in rear of our position, if it is within supporting range. (14:394)

Analyzing the advantages, we see that they are all provided by the cover and concealment obtained from the crest of the hill;

therefore this factor in our terrain analysis points to the use of the reverse slope defense.

Section III

As we continue our terrain analysis it becomes apparent that unless we can do something about it, our advantage of cover and concealment from enemy direct fire and observation may become a major disadvantage. From our positions on the reverse slope we cannot maintain observation of the enemy until he crosses the crest of the hill. Without this observation the effect of our own indirect fires is limited. (14:393) In addition, we are unable to take full advantage of the long range of our larger caliber direct fire weapons from positions on the reverse slope. (14:393) These two disadvantages would appear to cancel the corresponding advantages of the reverse slope defense. Lieutenant Colonel Tompkins had this to say about the limited fields of fire in the July 1949, Marine Corps Gazette. "Long fields of fire are of less concern to the defense than the ability to bring devastating fire from all weapons onto the crest itself." (30:32) This devastating fire on the crest is a must in reverse slope defense; however, we would still like to take advantage of the long fields of fire from the crest. To accomplish this we place observation and security groups on the crest of the hill. The mission of these groups is to maintain observation over the units front, provide security, and to delay and disorganize the enemy with long range fires. (14:396) These groups will vary in size, composition, and number depending upon the situation. A normal group consists of a half squad to a squad in size, possibly reinforced with machine guns, rocket launchers, recoilless rifles, or tanks. (14:394) Observers for mortars and artillery are included in the observation and security groups. (20:137) As the enemy approaches, the personnel of the observation and security groups warn the battle

position and place direct and indirect fire on him. The observation and security groups withdraw into the battle position prior to the enemy assault. (14:396)

We would like to place minefields and obstacles on the forward slope of the hill, but from positions on the reverse slope we are unable to cover them with direct fire. (14:393) In order to overcome this disadvantage we use the weapons of the observation and security groups on the crest to cover these minefields and obstacles. (20:37) These obstacles may also be partially covered by weapons of adjacent units.

There are two disadvantages of the reverse slope defense which we cannot counteract: (1) If the enemy seizes the crest of the hill, he will be attacking our position downhill, (2) If the enemy succeeds in penetrating our position, our counterattacking force will be attacking uphill in order to eject him from our position. (14:393) We employ mines and obstacles to the maximum in the area between the crest and the battle position to slow the enemy should he succeed in crossing the crest. (20:37) This slower movement will provide easier targets; however, it by no means removes the disadvantage of the enemy attacking down on us. About the only time when our counterattack would not be attacking uphill would be when we are occupying the reverse slope of a ridge and the adjacent or another unit would counterattack down the ridge into the flank of the penetration.

In addition to the other disadvantages, the reverse slope defense may be more vulnerable to a night attack than the forward slope defense because we are unable to take advantage of every man being a potential long-range observer. (20:34) In order to counteract this disadvantage the observation and security groups are strengthened at night and during periods of poor visibility and more use is made of battlefield

illumination and antipersonnel mines. (14:548)

Analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the reverse slope defense we continually emphasize the importance of the crest. The advantages will be nullified if the enemy controls the crest, and the disadvantages will be partially nullified if we control the crest. We will have good cover and concealment from enemy direct fire and observation, good long range observation and fields of fire from the crest, and good fields of fire between the crest and the battle position by placing our unit in the best position on the reverse slope. Two of the factors in our terrain analysis may then be considered as favorable to a reverse slope defense. We will not discuss the remaining two factors.

Section IV

In considering times when we may use the reverse slope defense, it might be well to consider some instances when this method of defense was effectively used against our forces. In a report dated 10 November 1944, containing extracts of a memorandum from the 83d Infantry Division, this description was given of the German defenses. "One method used by the Germans for obtaining close contact has been the use of reverse slope tactics in defense. Only a few of the defending force are placed on the forward slope near the crest. The bulk of the force with supporting weapons is well dug in on the reverse slope. Any force attacking such a position finds little trouble reaching the crest of the hill, but once it starts across the crest it comes under heavy fire at short ranges from a mass of automatic weapons, including machine guns." (7:2) Another comment appearing in the July 1949, Marine Corps Gazette stated: "Germans showed in both North Africa and Italy that they were exceedingly cunning in utilizing reverse slope defense", (30:31) Both these comments point to the conclusion that the

Germans were taking maximum advantage of the terrain when establishing their defenses.

A specific example of where the Germans used a reverse slope defense very effectively was in North Africa on 22 and 23 December 1942. The objective, "Longstop Hill", had to be seized in the Allied drive to Tunis. (Annex A) The hill appeared about 2 miles long and about 800 feet high. Not known at that time and not shown on the maps was that the hill was a double feature. On the northeast end of the hill was a feature called "El Rhar" which was distinct and separate.

The plan was that a battalion of the Coldstream Guards would seize "Longstop Hill" during the night of 22-23 December 1942. They would be relieved before dawn by a battalion of an American Combat Team and move back to prepare for another mission after the hill was secured. The night was dark with a cloudy moon; and it started raining before dawn.

After a 20 minute artillery preparation the attack started and all companies took their objectives without much trouble. The British had seized the high ground and the American Battalion relieved the British in position. Before dawn the Germans began to counterattack and by the 24th the British were going back up the hill to help hold the position.

When the position was regained, it was discovered that this was not the commanding ground. There were four ridgelines and they were all occupied. Each ridge had automatic weapons on the forward slope and positions organized on the reverse slope. As a result of this organization of the ground the automatic weapons of the German observation and security groups made our troops fight up the hill; as they reached the crest, they were subjected to heavy fire from the reverse slope and the observation and security groups on the second

ridge. The troops would then have to fight their way down the reverse slope through the fire and enemy positions to reach the forward slope of the second ridge. This process was repeated on each ridge. By the evening of the 24th the first assault gained the crest of the third ridge and discovered that the "El Rhar" feature was across a deep gully. The bulk of the enemy forces were on the reverse slope of this feature. Until this time, no one had realized its presence. Heavy fire and counterattacks by the Germans repulsed our attacks. The casualties by this time were 200 British and 300 Americans killed or wounded.

Eventually, a fresh infantry brigade was brought in and finally secured the hill, but by that time our attack toward Tunis had passed the position. (30:31)

Analyzing this example we may tend to place the blame on faulty intelligence, no prior reconnaissance, and inaccurate maps. These things may be true, but the fact remains that the Germans did make the maximum use of the terrain. They followed the techniques of reverse slope defense, and by doing so gained the advantages discussed in Section II. They controlled the crests of the ridges thereby reducing the disadvantages discussed in Section III, and were defeated only after much time, men, and material had been sacrificed. It's interesting to consider whether we would have used a reverse slope defense in the same situation, and if not, what would have been the result.

One of the times when we will be forced to use the reverse slope defense is when the forward slope has been lost or not yet gained. (16:546) This situation may confront us at any time whether we are on the attack or the defense.

An example of when a reverse slope defense was established under the above conditions was in the operations of the 2d Platoon, Company "A", 100th Battalion, 442d Regimental Combat Team in the attack on hill

"Georgia", north of Serravesza, Italy on 5-6 April 1945. The mission of the 100th Battalion was to assault frontally from the south up the ridge consisting of hills "Georgia", "Ohios 1, 2, and 3", and Mount Ceretta. (Annex B) The ridge was too narrow for more than one company and it contained successively higher masses that furnish observation and fires in depth. Concealment was negligible and there were mines covering all approaches. About 500 yards to the left there was a parallel ridge, and to the right the ridge dropped off sharply.

Hill "Georgia" was fairly flat, bald, and wide enough for an attack with two platoons abreast. The plan was that Company "A" would assault "Georgia" frontally with two platoons abreast, then Company "C" would leapfrog up the slope to "Ohio 1"; H- hour 0500 hours. Company "A" planned to clear the forward slope, then form platoons on line and assault across the crest. The 2d Platoon would be on the left.

The enemy had the left slope protected by two machine gun positions, with other automatic weapons and mines emplaced lower on the slope. These positions and those on the reverse slope were well dug in to permit artillery fire to be called on their own position. The artillery was adjusted from the next higher terrain feature to their rear.

The attack started, went according to plan, and by 0532 hours the platoons were deployed on the crest. As the two assault squads of the 2d Platoon crossed the crest they were subjected to intense fire from the unit on the reverse slope and fire from weapons located on the next terrain feature up the ridge. The two squads immediately suffered 8 casualties and withdrew to the forward slope. Enemy indirect fires were now placed on the crest and the forward slope. These fires caught the platoon in the open and after 15 minutes the two squads had sustained a total of 14 casualties. The support squad was committed around the left flank and was stopped by enemy fire. At this time the

Germans repeated the indirect fires on the crest and forward slope, but the platoon suffered no serious casualties. Company "C" was committed wide around the left flank of the hill, but its attack was stopped; therefore, the Battalion now had two of its companies pinned down. At nightfall, all units were told to dig in and hold their positions. The platoon leader realizing that the Germans would probably counterattack moved his platoon down the slope and established a reverse slope defense. At 2345 hours the Germans attacked over the crest and were driven back by our reverse slope defense.

At 0530 hours 6 April, Companies "B" and "C" in conjunction with an air strike by-passed the position and seized the next objective. (12)

In this example we see two successful reverse slope defenses. The German defense succeeded in stopping our attack with heavy losses. In this situation we knew that he was using a reverse slope defense, and were unable to defeat it initially. On the other hand the Platoon Leader of the 2d Platoon, unable to seize the forward slope, realizing the value of the reverse slope defense, and expecting a counterattack, established his defense and stopped the German attack.

Another time when we may be forced to use a reverse slope defense is when the forward slope is untenable due to intense enemy fire or the lack of cover and concealment. (16:546)

A battle experience extract from the Twelfth Army Group, dated 15 November 1944, gives this recommendation. "A rear slope defense seems to be the most practical as accurate artillery fire makes forward slopes untenable." (8:1)

Another recommendation appeared in the July, 1949, Marine Corps Gazette. "Under certain conditions, the location of the MLR on the forward slope is more costly to the defender than to the attacker. This is particularly true if the attacker has a preponderance of artillery

or direct fire support weapons, such as tanks and assault guns. (30:31)
Both of these quotations point to the fact that it is unnecessary for us to overly expose our units to intense enemy fire, when a good defensive position may exist on the reverse slope of the hill.

The 1st Platoon, Company "K", 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, was forced to use a reverse slope defense in North Africa on 22-23 March 1943. The action took place during the latter stages of the Battle of Gafsa and El Guettar which had begun on 15 March 1943. The next objective of the 18th Infantry was Gabes, some 75 kilometers to the east. The Italians were fighting a delaying action. An attack by the German 10th Panzers was expected on 22 March 1943, and the 1st Platoon, Company "K" had to immediately organize a defensive position.

The terrain contained no vegetation and was primarily rugged valleys and ridges. The hill assigned to the platoon was about 200 yards wide, a continuation of a ridge leading into a valley. The forward slope was gradual and the reverse slope was at an angle of about 30 degrees. The only feature on the hill was a small wadi running parallel and about 15 yards from the crest on the reverse slope.

The platoon leader was planning to establish his defense on the forward slope; however, as he approached the crest he received intense fire, and soon realized that it would be impossible to occupy the forward slope during daylight. He also realized that he had to establish his defense immediately because the German attack was expected at anytime. It was at this time that he remembered a defense of the reverse slope the Germans had been using. He decided that this method of defense was his only solution.

He placed his platoon in the wadi and had them dig their positions in the forward bank. The 1st Squad was on the left, the 2d Squad in the

center, and the 3d Squad on the right. The rifle grenadiers of the 1st and 3d Squads were placed on the flanks. The Light Machine Gun Section was split, placing one gun to protect each flank. The 60mm Mortar Squad was placed in rear of the wadi behind the center squad. The BARs were placed in the wadi to cover the entire crest. For observation, he established two observation posts on the crest. This was his reverse slope defense.

By dark on the 22d the attack had not materialized so the platoon leader moved everyone straight forward from their positions to the forward slope. The LMGs shifted their position to cover the flanks and front of the platoon. For security, he placed a 2 man listening post approximately 500 yards to the front of the position.

At 0400 hours on 23 March the attack by the 10th Panzers began. The tank force by-passed the platoon's position and went up the valley. As the infantry attacked he moved the platoon back to the wadi on the reverse slope where they held their fire. As the attack crossed the crest the platoon opened fire and no Germans reached the reverse slope. A total of four attacks across the crest were repulsed in this manner. The Germans attacked again at 1440 hours trying to flank the position; the LMG and BARs repulsed a infantry attack on one flank, and the LMG and rifle grenadiers repulsed a infantry and half-track attack on the other flank. After this attack failed, the Germans tried to dislodge the platoon by throwing grenades over the crest. This last attempt failed and the Germans were repulsed by 1700 hours. The Germans suffered 5 half-tracks destroyed and 500 men killed and wounded. The platoon suffered 1 man killed by a grenade and 7 men wounded. (29)

In this example we saw where a platoon was forced to occupy a reverse slope. The techniques used by the platoon leader were basically the same as those taught today and the defense was very successful.

The disappointing fact was that the platoon leader did not know what to do, and probably would have waited until dark to place his platoon into position had not an attack been expected. Realizing the situation, why didn't the platoon leader immediately recognize the value of a reverse slope defense? Evidently, he had not been trained in reverse slope defense or the subject had not been emphasized. When forced to use the reverse slope, he had to rely on knowledge gained from experience fighting the Germans.

Other times when we may desire to utilize the reverse slope defense are when there are better fields of fire on the reverse slope, or when we need not occupy the forward slope to gain observation. (16:546) We may have better fields of fire on the reverse slope in mountainous terrain where the slopes are rugged. Observation may be provided by adjacent units, high ground behind our position, or the crest of the hill we occupy.

We may want to employ the reverse slope to avoid a dangerous salient or re-entrant in our lines. (16:546) This would normally be in conjunction with other units; for example, the units on either flank occupying the forward slope positions and the center unit occupying the reverse slope to prevent a salient in our lines.

An example of the feeling toward reverse slopes during World War II was illustrated in the June 1952, Military Review. "In the last war, in Europe, reverse slopes were not treated as a novelty, but as a lifesaving necessity. In Italy, in 12 months of heavy fighting, one Canadian unit occupied nothing but reverse slopes." (1:84) We do not wish to say that reverse slopes are the answer to our troubles in defense, but merely to point out the feeling toward them during wartime.

An article in the July 1949, Marine Corps Gazette summarizes the

question of when to occupy the reverse slope in the following quotation. "The points to bear in mind are that (1) in the organization of positions for defense or against counterattacks, the habitual occupation of forward slopes can frequently be costly and ineffective; (2) good value may be obtained by organizing a reverse slope position, accepting shorter fields of fire, and placing all possible artillery and mortar concentrations on the crest in front (3) provided observation from other ground is assured, the reverse slope position is often superior." (30:33)

Section V

Thus far we have discussed the advantages, disadvantages, and when to occupy a reverse slope. In considering these points, we may discover that there may be times when we would like to utilize this defense, but cannot make the techniques fit the terrain available. We should, therefore, consider some variations in the use of the reverse slope which will still give us the advantages discussed in Section II.

A report dated 20 May 1944 from the Army Ground Forces Board suggested the use of the reverse slope as a shelter. They wanted to take maximum advantage of the fields of fire on the forward slope and yet reduce exposure to enemy fire. To do this, they recommended firing positions just forward or on the crest be prepared for automatic weapons and rifleman. The personnel to man these positions, except a few for security, are kept on the reverse slope. The security would slow the enemy attack while the remainder of the position is manned. The whole position would be manned at night. (28:2)

Battle Experiences of the Twelfth Army Group suggests the use of the reverse slope in repelling counterattacks. After seizing an objective; to avoid heavy losses from enemy fire, either move forward quickly or

leave a small holding or observing force, and move the bulk of the force to the reverse slope. (7:2)

A successful system used by the Germans in Tunisia was to occupy the forward slope at night and the reverse slope during the day. This was done to escape the fires from our tanks and observed artillery. (28:3)

Another system might be to place the MLR on the forward slope; and if no good positions exist for the reserves, place it in position on the reverse slope. (28:2)

We have seen some of the variations that may be utilized and still gain the advantages of the reverse slope. These are only a few; there are as many different variations as there are different situations and different terrain.

Section VI

Before we discuss the training presently prescribed in reverse slope defense, we should consider the reasons for alarm. The July 1949, Marine Corps Gazette presents this thought: "In the past we have become accustomed to having an almost overwhelming superiority in supporting weapons together with a lavish scale of ammunition expenditure for those weapons. This happy condition may not always be true and the next time out the shoe might conceivably be on the other foot. Even so, the alert battalion or company commander can often successfully defend his hill if he adopts a reverse slope type of defense!" (30:32)

Lieutenant Colonel Guy Emery gives us generally the same idea in the January 1945, Infantry Journal. "The tactic of massing of artillery fires, begun in World War I, has been developed in this war to the point where objectives limited in width can be pulverized and annihilated. It may very well be that, in some not too distant future, it will no longer be possible for defenders to survive on a forward slope, under observed fire. It is something to consider". (11:31)

To emphasize the previous statements we might give some facts about a potential aggressor. "The Soviet Army is artillery minded. In no other army has artillery achieved the status it attained in the Red Army during World War II." (10:76) Approximately 25 to 30 percent of the present Soviet Army strength is artillery. (10:76) They have artillery divisions of 20 to 24 battalions, and artillery groups of 72 to 96 battalions. (10:76) "The employment of tremendous numbers of artillery pieces would be the rule in major Soviet military operations against strong hostile forces in the near future." (10:76) This means that there may be as many as 7 or 8 artillery battalions in addition to the weapons of the division and regiment in support of a regimental size attack. (10:76) This gives us something to think about when deciding where to place our defense.

How are we training our personnel in reverse slope defense? A soldier during his training cycle of 29 weeks, from the Basic Combat Phase of training through the Regimental Phase of the Advanced Unit Training, receives 8 hours instruction in reverse slope defense. (6)(2)(5)(3)(4) This training is received during the Rifle Company Tactical Exercise Phase of his Basic Unit Training. (2:13) The principles to be taught are: "Employment of a rifle company operating with tank units, as part of a larger force, in a reverse slope defense. Tanks will be present or simulated". (2:49) The actual training received and under what conditions will naturally depend upon the unit involved. It is possible that the soldier may be sent overseas after his Advanced Unit Training; and unless his unit used a reverse slope defense in the field problems included in his training cycle, this is all the training that he would have received in this subject.

Let's now consider the reverse slope defense training that this soldier's leaders receive. If these leaders have been through the

training cycle described, they have received the same 8 hours instruction that the soldier received; but let's look at the instruction the leaders received while attending The Infantry School.

Class	Duration	Total Instruction	Tactics (excluding individual training)		Reverse Slope Defense
			Offense	Defense	
(1) ADV NCO	16 weeks	717 hours	69 hours	35 hours	0
(2) OC	22 weeks	968 hours	127 hours	76 hours	2 hours Conference and Map Exercise
(3) BASIC OFF	17½ weeks	770 hours	73 hours	60 hours	0
(4) ASSOC CO	15 weeks	660 hours	77 hours	61 hours	4 hours Conference and Terrain Exercise
(5) ASSOC ADV	18 weeks	792 hours	102 hours	97 hours	0
(6) ADV	35 weeks	1540 hours	171 hours	136 hours	2 hours Conference and Map Exercise

(1) Infantry Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course. (25)

"Purpose: To train noncommissioned officers qualified to serve as NCOs in an Infantry platoon in training and in combat." (19:15)

(2) Infantry Officer Candidate Course. (27)

"Purpose: To develop selected personnel to be second lieutenants of the Army of the United States who will be capable of performing duties appropriate to their grade in the Infantry." (19:15)

(3) Basic Infantry Officer Course. (24)

"Purpose: To provide training for newly commissioned officers, other than Infantry OCS graduates, so that they have a working knowledge of the duties and responsibilities appropriate to platoon leaders of Infantry." (19:13)

(4) Associate Infantry Company Officer Course. (22)

"Purpose: To produce company grade officers who have a working knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of company

commanders and battalion staff officers." (19:13)

(5) Associate Infantry Officer Advanced Course. (23)

"Purpose: To provide advanced branch training to officers so that they have a working knowledge of the duties and responsibilities appropriate to field grade Infantry officers." (19:13)

(6) Infantry Officer Advanced Course. (26)

"Purpose: To provide advanced branch training to officers so that they are thoroughly grounded in the duties and responsibilities appropriate to field grade Infantry officers." (19:13)

We can readily see from the information given that in the instruction to these classes very little, if any, time is devoted to the subject of reverse slope defense. On the other hand, the purpose of the courses is to produce leaders and staff officers of Infantry units. Are we fully accomplishing the purpose of the courses?

A comment on the subject of training in reverse slope defense appeared in the July 1949, Marine Corps Gazette. "The subject remains virtually neglected in our service schools and almost completely neglected in our tactical exercises." (30:31)

Another teaching vehicle that we use are our field manuals. The two manuals that we are primarily concerned at the Battalion and lower level are FM 7-10, Rifle Company Infantry Regiment, and FM 7-20, Infantry Battalion. The October 1949 edition of FM 7-10 gives sufficient information to employ a reverse slope defense. (13) The Draft FM 7-10, submitted in July 1954, contains generally the same information as the previous edition. (14) The March 1950 edition of FM 7-20 contains only one short subparagraph on reverse slope defense. This subparagraph is under the major heading of Selection of the Main Line of Resistance. (15) The Draft FM 7-20, submitted in February 1954, contains generally the

same amount of information on reverse slope defense as FM 7-10. The difference in the two manuals is that FM 7-20 describes a battalion in a reverse slope defense. (16) We can see from this that more detailed information is being placed in our more recent manuals.

As to how much use is made of reverse slope training in field exercises and maneuvers, we cannot say; however, we probably would be close with a statement such as: It all depends upon the terrain, the situation, and how much the commander concerned knows about the subject.

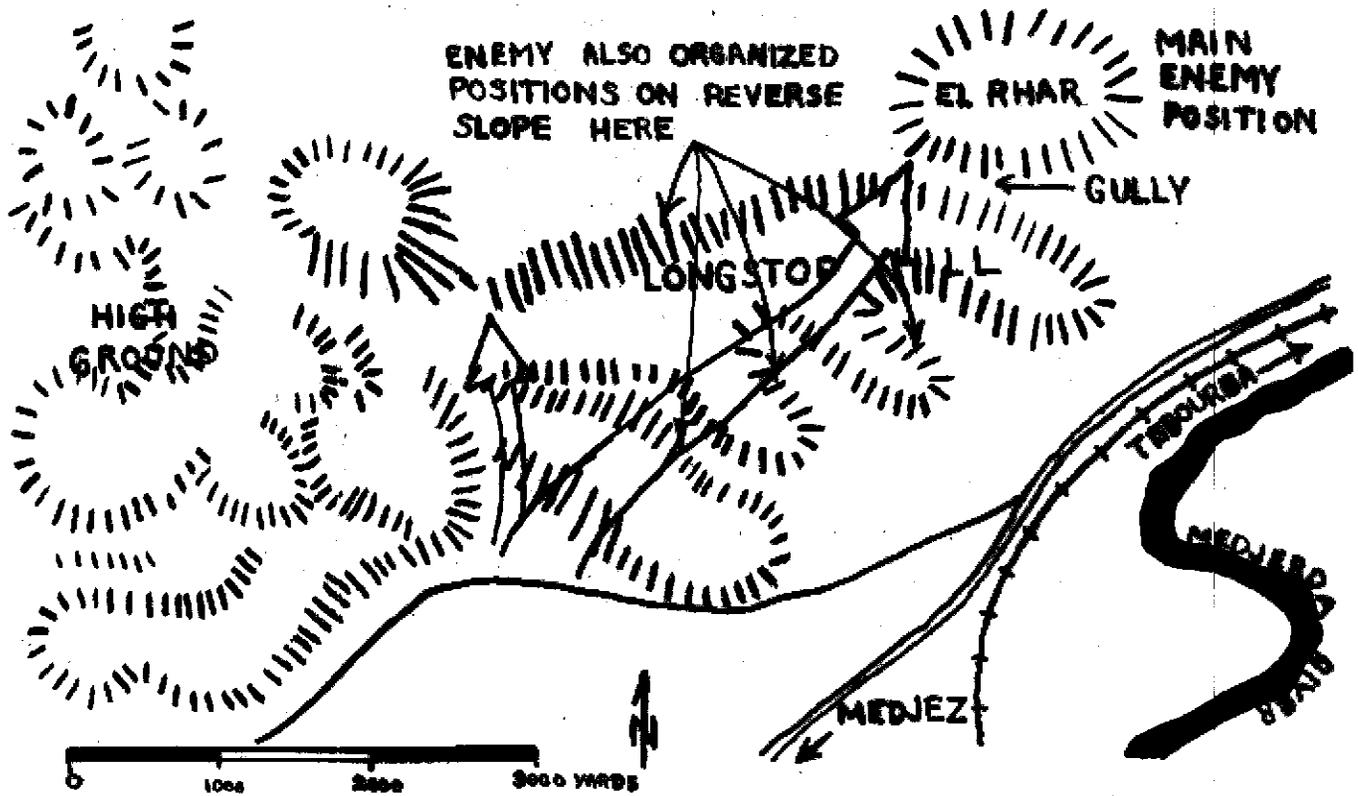
CONCLUSION

We have shown in Sections II and III the advantages and how to overcome the disadvantages of the reverse slope defense. We considered times when the defense itself may be used in Section IV, and some variations of the reverse slope defense to gain its advantages in Section V. Throughout, by examples and statements, we showed the importance of the reverse slope during the last war; and a look into the future at the beginning of Section VI showed that there is no reason to believe we will not have use for the reverse slope at that time. Therefore, if there is a chance that we may want to use the reverse slope, it's an important part of our military education.

On the other hand, we looked at the training our units and leaders are receiving in reverse slope defense. The training received by units during the training cycle will soon be forgotten unless it is practiced, and it will not be practiced unless our leaders are thoroughly trained in its use. By increased emphasis and increased training we will bring reverse slope defense up to an equal status with the other methods of defense. By doing this we will eliminate such remarks in military publications as: "There was a time during the last war when everybody looked for reverse slopes, but that was a time when reverse slopes were fashionable. Now like last year's styles, we discard them". (1:84)

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15. FM 7-20, Infantry Battalion (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Army, March 1950).
16. FM 7-20 (Draft), Infantry Battalion (Fort Benning, Ga.: The Infantry School, February 1954).
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18. Foxx, A. G., "Reverse Slopes", Infantry Journal, pp10-11, November 1944.
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ANNEX A (Longstop Hill) (30:31)



ANNEX B (Attack on Hill Georgia) (12)

