

**OPERATION
ORDERS. A
TECHNICAL STUDY**

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Operation orders. A technical study by Hans von Kiesling

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HANS VON KIESLING

**OPERATION
ORDERS. A
TECHNICAL STUDY**

OPERATION ORDERS.

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A TECHNICAL STUDY.

BY

HANS VON KIESLING,
Hauptmann im Generalstabe.

TRANSLATED BY THE GENERAL STAFF, WAR OFFICE.

WITH TWO MAPS.

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General Sketch Map $\frac{1}{500,000}$ } at end.
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PART I.

THE ATTACK.

PREFACE.

It has been my experience that battle orders are less practised at all our exercises in applied tactics than are orders for the march, for deployment, for bivouac, etc. Among those of our young officers who study tactics seriously there are few who cannot write satisfactory orders for the march or bivouac of a division; but when it is a question of issuing orders either for or during a battle, and of issuing them under the practical conditions of the battle-field, the number of experts will be found to be considerably reduced, especially if orders for detachments smaller than a division have to be issued rapidly, perhaps from the saddle. The war-game is almost the only means of training in applied tactics at the disposal of the regimental officer; but war-games are often too much concerned with the preliminaries of the battle, and there is no time for the discussion of the most important part, viz., the actual conduct of the fight. Besides, the direction of war-games which deal with the battle itself, requires a more complete system and greater skill than the direction of games which do not go beyond reconnaissance, deployment, and the advance to the battle-field.

I therefore acceded with pleasure to the suggestion of some young comrades of mine to prepare a series of exercises which should illustrate phases of a modern battle, with the special object of emphasizing training in the preparation of orders. After the publication of the new "Regulations for Medical Services in the Field," it appeared desirable to complete these exercises by working out the battle orders of the medical officers, and also to prepare routine orders, to which so little attention is paid. The examples of orders which I here present are the result of these exercises. They are the consequence of a series of informal discussions, and have no pretensions to be models. In fact it is not possible to give models of orders, for this would lead to a formal system, and every formal system in which form is emphasized at the expense of matter, is an evil. In the composition of orders the individuality of the composer must find expression. But some training, some method of emphasizing essential points and of expressing the meaning clearly, is indispensable. Guidance in this is often welcome, for it saves the beginner much time. Such guidance shows him how to work and gives him the means of beginning his work in the right way. I maintain that constant, regular practice is essential if orders are to be clear, brief, and at the same time complete. The object of this book is to lay the foundation for such practice.

VON KIRSING.

München,
January, 1907.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN I published these pages three years ago, I did so with some anxiety, for I was aware of the difficulty of the task which I had set myself. To-day I am conscious that my work has been on the right lines. The hearty commendation with which my German comrades have received my work, and the great good will with which it has been met everywhere, and with which its many defects have been overlooked, justify me in concluding that it has supplied a widely felt want.

I have therefore agreed to the request of my publisher, and now present my little book to military readers in a new edition, which has been considerably altered and brought up to date.

The appearance of a new edition of the "Field Service Regulations," and of a number of new manuals, has made it necessary to introduce new terms and to change a number of expressions; the great importance which machine guns, telephones, etc., have acquired in the modern battle has made it desirable to consider them also in the text. The feeding of the troops has been placed on a new basis by the introduction of field kitchens, and it has become necessary to discuss their employment and the duties of the supply officers.

The introduction of the various means which the progress of science makes available to an increasing extent causes the organization of our army to become continually more complicated. Improvements in armament, and in the communication and supply services, have been introduced and require consideration. It is a difficult task to give the necessary orders for the employment of these various organizations correctly and at the right time; instruction is necessary if nothing important is to be forgotten and orders are still to be clear, simple, and to the point. In using the expression the "technique" of orders in this connection, I mean thereby the confidence in issuing orders which is acquired by deep thought and constant practice. This confidence depends upon personal experience, practice in the use of terms, and upon clearness of intention, acquired by a logical system of mental training and by development of character.

"The Field Service Regulations" direct that there is to be no fixed form for battle orders. Orders may therefore be given either verbally or in writing, but always in such a way that there is no doubt as to the responsibility of the issuer for them, that his intention and will are clearly expressed, and that none of the units under his command are forgotten in the order. If all this is achieved, the order is a good order, more especially if it is expressed briefly and emphatically in clear, military language.

The germs of success or failure appear in the orders. The best intention and the most correct solution of a difficult problem are of little use if the commander in question cannot, either personally or by means of his staff, give them expression in correct order. Not only is the end to be attained of importance, but also the method of attaining it, though the latter may vary greatly in various circumstances.

I hope this new edition will find its place, and gain as many friends as the first.

HANS VON KIESLING,

*Neuburg on the Danube,
March, 1910.*

GENERAL IDEA.

A Red army coming from the north is advancing on München,* on the front Aichach—Schrobenhausen; a Blue army is advancing through München against it. The Danube forms the frontier between Red and Blue. Ingolstadt is a Red frontier fortress.

SPECIAL IDEA.

The 11th Infantry Brigade (10th and 13th Inf. Regts.), which had originally been kept back at Ingolstadt as a reinforcement to the general reserve, was ordered on 21. XI., to advance by Pfaffenhofen to the Ilm, in order to join the left wing of the Red army, which was intended to reach the Glonn on the line Unter-Weikertshofen—Weichs on 23. XI. with the object of seeking and attacking the enemy's army. The most northerly column (1st Army Corps) of the Red army was marching on the Aresing—Hilgertshausen—Ainhofen—Weichs road.

On the night of 22-23. XI., the following telegram reached the bivouac of the brigade at Reichertshausen by way of Ingolstadt:—

“Altomünster,

22. XI., 4 p.m.

“The enemy's army is advancing on the Glonn through München. The army will attack the enemy and will cross the Glonn on 23. XI., on the line—Unter-Weikertshofen—Weichs. Your brigade to advance to-morrow, 23rd, as early as possible by Petershausen.

“Army Headquarters.”

* In order to facilitate reference to the maps, the German names of places have been retained in place of the English equivalents, e.g., München, not Munich. For the same reason distances are given in metres and kilometres instead of in yards and miles.

The infantry regiments referred to in this book all consist of 3 battalions. Each battalion has 4 companies. The companies in a German regiment are numbered from 1 to 12. Thus, No. 9 Company is the first company of the third battalion. In the following pages companies are usually described by their number and regiment, without reference to the battalion to which they belong.

The German field artillery is organized in brigades, which are subdivided into regiments. Each regiment has two *Abteilungen* of three batteries. It is important to remember in reading this book, that the corresponding unit to our field artillery brigade is the *Abteilung*, not the brigade.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.