

CHAPTER 7

HALTS AND SECURITY DURING HALTS

HALTS

■ 289. A halt after the completion of a march should be considered as much in the nature of preparation for the following operation as an opportunity for rest after marching. The bivouac area should be selected and the troops should be distributed in it to facilitate the succeeding operation. Security and comfort of troops influence the selection of the location for a halt.

■ 290. Considerations governing halts during a march are set forth in chapter 8.

SHELTER

■ 291. In the theater of operation, troops are sheltered in billets, bivouac, camp, or cantonment. (See FM 100-10.)

■ 292. The requirements of the situation and probable future action dictate the *distribution of troops in shelter areas*. Protection against air observation and air attack is sought by the selection of wooded areas and by the irregular distribution of units within the area.

■ 293. When contact with the enemy is remote, march considerations and comfort of the men govern dispositions for the halt. In large units, troops are sheltered as close to the route of march as practicable and are distributed in depth and in the order of march. Distribution in depth facilitates shelter and supply.

■ 294. When contact with the enemy is probable, tactical considerations govern the distribution of troops. Frontages are increased and units are echeloned in depth. Units incapable of self-defense against surprise attacks by hostile ground troops are quartered in protected areas or with troops equipped for defense. Trains are concealed in protected localities. Headquarters of regiments and higher units are concealed close to principal routes.

■ 295. When in close proximity to the enemy, combat requirements govern bivouacking.

During pauses in combat, troops rest in position on the ground held and secure their front and exposed flanks.

■ 296. The commander announces the shelter areas as soon as practicable. Quarters parties then proceed to their assigned areas. Countermarching by any unit to reach its shelter area must be avoided. Where practicable, unit commanders reconnoiter the area prior to the arrival of the unit.

OUTPOSTS

■ 297. An *outpost* is a security detachment to protect a resting command or a defensive position against annoyance, surprise, and observation by ground forces.

■ 298. The enemy capabilities and the decision of the commander relative to the location of the main body determine the location and nature of the outpost.

■ 299. A resting command provides outpost protection in all directions from which hostile forces may have access to the main body. The control of roads, of terrain features affording facilities for extended observation, and of observation points which would permit the enemy to direct the fire of long-range artillery on the main body is important. Measures for antimechanized and antiaircraft security and defense are stressed.

■ 300. Flank and rear security is provided by refusing the exposed flanks of the outpost position and by establishing detached posts on roads or at important observation points outside the sector covered by the outpost.

■ 301. The *strength and composition* of an outpost vary with the distance, mobility, armament, and attitude of the enemy; the terrain; the time of day; the size of the command to be secured; the degree of resistance the outpost is expected to offer; and the special duties assigned it. An outpost may comprise varying proportions of the combatant arms. It should be no stronger than is consistent with reasonable security. Economical protection is furnished by the use of patrols to keep close contact with the enemy, together with resisting detachments on the avenues of approach.

■ 302. In close terrain and during periods of darkness or low visibility, security forces are usually stronger and operate in closer proximity to the main body or defensive position.

■ 303. *Infantry* ordinarily constitutes the principal element of an outpost for a force of all arms. Its organic antitank weapons may be reinforced by the attachment of antitank units at the disposal of the higher commander.

Support of the outpost infantry is provided by the *artillery* with the main body or that assigned to the defense of the main position. If such support is impractical, artillery is attached to the outpost.

For the construction of obstacles, mine fields, and other barriers, *engineers* are attached to the outpost.

Cavalry, attached to the outpost, operates under orders of the outpost commander on reconnaissance missions, to maintain contact between adjacent units, and to establish detached posts at more distant points. Its use extends the zone of reconnaissance of an outpost. When not engaged actively, cavalry is withdrawn to a rear echelon of the outpost.

■ 304. The outpost of a large command is divided from rear to front into a *reserve*, *supports*, *outguards* and, when cavalry is attached, *outpost cavalry*. When important points to be secured lie outside the sectors of the supports, detached posts are established.

The general mission of the elements of an outpost is to gain time for the forces behind them. This mission governs their disposition.

Prominent points in rear of the outguards affording an extensive view over the foreground are used as observation posts.

■ 305. The missions of the *reserve* are to reinforce the troops in front, to counterattack, or, if the outpost has been given a delaying mission, to hold a rallying position. It is so located that it readily can reinforce the line of resistance, or, in delaying action, take up a position covering the retirement of the supports.

■ 306. The reserve sends out needed detachments. It maintains connection with supports and nearby detached posts. The reserve is instructed regarding its action in case of hostile attack.

■ 307. *Supports* constitute the principal echelon of resistance of the outpost. They provide their own security and the observation service of the outpost by establishing outguards and sending out patrols. They are placed at the more important points on or near the outpost line of resistance. A support is generally placed near a road. Each support is assigned a sector which is clearly defined by recognizable boundaries. Supports vary in strength from a platoon to a company. Machine guns and other supporting weapons are attached to supports as required. Supports are numbered consecutively from right to left.

■ 308. When supports are furnished from more than one battalion, a sector of the outpost position is assigned to each battalion furnishing the supports. Battalions assigned to sectors of the outpost position hold out their own reserves.

■ 309. An *outguard* varies in strength from four men to a platoon, depending on its location and the number of sentinels it is to furnish. Posts at a short distance from the support may be held by weak outguards while important posts at a considerable distance must be strongly held. Outguards are numbered consecutively from right to left in each support. (See FM 7-5 and FM 2-15.)

Outguards must be ready for action at all times. When in close contact with the hostile outpost, the establishment of listening posts at night in front of the general line of observation is advisable.

■ 310. *Sentinels* are charged with the observation of a portion of the foreground of the outpost position, with the discovery of hostile activity, and with giving alarm in case of attack. Sentinels at the post of the support and outguards repeat the signals given by advanced sentinels.

The duties of sentinels are prescribed definitely in special orders.

■ 311. Outposts conduct reconnaissance only so far as required by their security mission. The execution of more distant reconnaissance is regulated by the higher commander.

■ 312. The field of view held under observation by sentinels is extended by *patrols*. Patrols execute reconnaissances in advance of the line of sentinels and reconnoiter positions of the foreground which are masked from view of sentinels and

observation points and are too distant to be included in the outpost lines. (See FM 21-45 or FM 7-5.)

■ 313. Patrolling in front of the line of observation is increased during periods of low visibility and during the hour preceding dawn.

When outposts of opposing forces are in close contact, reconnaissance is largely restricted to night patrolling. Night patrolling requires systematic organization, careful preparation, and the coordination of advanced outpost elements with the activity of the patrols.

■ 314. Within the outpost position patrols maintain contact with advanced elements and with adjacent supports and outguards and reconnoiter between sentinel posts. Patrols may be used to maintain contact with detached posts.

■ 315. During an advance, the outpost established at halts usually is furnished by the advance guard. A new advance guard usually is designated when the movement is resumed. The outpost ordinarily stands relieved when the support of the advance guard passes the outpost line of resistance.

■ 316. During a retreat, the outpost usually furnishes the rear guard, a new outpost being posted from the main body when the command completes the day's march.

When the command remains stationary for a prolonged period, the outpost ordinarily is relieved at intervals of several days.

■ 317. The *halt order* of the commander of the troops assigns locations to the elements of the command, designates the position to be held in case of attack, and contains instructions relative to security. This order either provides for an outpost under centralized control by naming the outpost commander and detailing the outpost troops or it requires column commanders to organize outposts for their commands. In either situation, the commander of troops designates an outpost line of resistance, important areas to be held, and the limits of the front to be covered by the outpost system. He indicates what action the outpost is to take if it is attacked in force, outlines special reconnaissance to be executed, indicates the approaches which are to be especially guarded, and regulates the signal communication to be established between adjacent

outposts. He may direct the establishment of detached posts by the main body or by the outpost commander.

■ 318. Upon receipt of orders to establish the outpost, the outpost commander promptly makes his dispositions under the protection of march outposts established by the advance, flank, or rear guards. In proximity to the enemy, his initial orders insure the prompt execution of the most urgent measures to meet a hostile attack. These measures include the occupation of commanding terrain, reconnaissance, construction of obstacles, and preparation for the defense of the outpost position. Details and rectification of preliminary dispositions are regulated by subsequent instructions.

When battalions (squadrons) are assigned to sectors of the outpost position, the outpost commander issues his orders for the occupation of the outpost line to the sector commanders. The sector commander fixes the distribution of troops within his sector; assigns to each support its location and the area it is to cover; prescribes the location and disposition of the reserve and its conduct in case of attack; provides for the necessary detached posts and connection with adjacent troops; issues instructions for organization of the ground, signal communication, antiaircraft, antimechanized, and gas defense. He prescribes the disposition of trains and gives the location of his command post.

■ 319. After issuing the initial orders, the outpost commander inspects and coordinates the dispositions of the supports, completes his arrangements, and reports his dispositions to his superior. He prescribes the degree of readiness for action of the elements of the outpost.

■ 320. The sector or support commander seeks to protect his sector so that the enemy, in dangerous numbers, cannot reach his section of the outpost line of resistance unobserved. Elements within supports are deployed in frontage and depth as for the defensive except that intervals are considerably greater.

Each defensive area on the line of resistance is organized to command an adequate field of fire to the front and to sweep with fire the intervals between it and adjacent areas. Road blocks and obstacles are prepared for defense against mechanized attack.

■ 321. When the support is posted, the support commander inspects, rectifies defects, and reports his dispositions, preferably accompanied by a sketch, to his immediate superior. He indicates the areas not effectively covered by the fire of weapons at his disposal and where the fire of artillery supporting the outpost is desired. He renders subsequent reports covering additional developments, embodying information collected by his patrols. He maintains connection with adjacent supports and keeps them informed.

The support commander prescribes the degree of readiness for action of the support. Greater vigilance is required during fog and toward dawn. Under these conditions it may be necessary to cause the entire support to stand to arms and to draw in the outguards closer to the support. At night, it will sometimes be advisable to move the outguards from day positions. Where an outpost occupies a position for a considerable length of time in close proximity to the enemy, provision must be made for frequent change in the position of outguards to avoid capture by hostile raiding parties.

■ 322. In occupying their positions and during relief, the various subdivisions of the outpost conceal their movements against both ground and air observation. They prepare their positions for defense unless the situation renders such action unnecessary.

CAVALRY AND MECHANIZED OUTPOSTS

■ 323. *Cavalry and motorized or armored* units secure themselves by far-reaching reconnaissance and by depth of their dispositions in the bivouac area. When at a distance from the enemy and not protected by other troops, they send out security detachments (companies or troops, platoons) to hold critical points on the routes of approach from the front, flanks, and rear. These detachments preferably are posted along some protective terrain line that the enemy will be forced to pass in his advance (defiles, streams, crossings) and provide for their own security by posting outguards and sending out patrols. Additional outguards are posted near the main body.

■ 324. In close proximity to the enemy, security measures approach a more continuous outpost organization. When the security troops occupy an extensive front, outpost sectors are assigned to the various security detachments. When neces-

sary, portions of the main body are held in readiness for immediate action. The mobility of a motorized or mechanized unit permits its outpost to bivouac at some distance from the main body. The number of vehicles with the outpost is the minimum necessary for patrolling and signal communication. Vehicles of the resting units are serviced and made ready for operation. Motor parks are established in protected, concealed areas located to avoid congestion and to expedite departure.

■ 325. In immediate proximity to the enemy, the outpost organization conforms to the general procedure for an outpost of all arms. Horses or personnel carriers are sent to the rearward echelons of the outpost. When there is danger of attack, increased readiness for action is obtained for outguards and supports by holding animals saddled and ready for movement.

SECURITY MEASURES WITHIN SHELTER AREAS

■ 326. To provide local security in any shelter area, the commander establishes an *interior guard*. This guard is charged with giving warning in case of gas attack or approach of hostile aircraft or ground troops, and with the enforcement of regulations governing such matters as traffic control, police, use of lights, and circulation of civilians.

■ 327. Concealment in shelter areas is of primary importance. Effective camouflage is stressed. Traffic is strictly controlled. Vehicles are concealed or are camouflaged and parked irregularly. Only those lights are allowed that cannot be seen by hostile observers on the ground or in the air.

■ 328. Antitank detachments are posted to cover routes of approach by mechanized vehicles. Antiaircraft weapons are sited to provide defense against air attack.

■ 329. In hostile territory, interior guards are made stronger. Guards for bridges and railway stations, searching parties for enemy wire and radio installations, holding of hostages, closing roads to civilian traffic, and other special security measures often are necessary.

■ 330. At each headquarters and in each company or similar unit, one officer, and in each platoon, one noncommissioned

officer are constantly on duty to alert the command in case of attack.

■ 331. The area commander designates a rallying position and the route thereto for each subordinate unit. Intermingling or crossing of units is avoided.

■ 332. To alert all the troops, the alarm is sounded. If the area commander decides to alert only certain troops, he notifies them by telephone or messengers.

When alerted, each unit forms on its assembly place, reports its readiness to the commander, and awaits orders. In an alert, quiet and order are maintained. Each man must know where to go and what to do.

■ 333. On the approach of hostile aviation, the interior guard sounds the alarm if danger is imminent. All troops take the prescribed antiaircraft measures.