

is more disastrous to a military commander than indecision. He should learn at the outset what he is expected to do, and then decide what he *will* do under every and all circumstances. To this end he will determine as far as practicable what contingencies may arise. He should endeavor never to be taken at a disadvantage, and never in any emergency show the least hesitation or surprise. Thus he will impress his command with the idea that he is equal to the undertaking, and remove from their minds that most serious and unfortunate sentiment, want of confidence. If a command has confidence in its leader, the limit of achievement is vastly increased.

His first duty is to learn what to do, and to what limit he may go to accomplish it. This opens up a subject that all officers ought to be familiar with before attempting any operations—what officers may do with their commands under the law. I will not attempt to elucidate it at this time for two reasons; first, it is too extensive for the scope of this essay; second, I hope to be able to induce Captain Allen of my regiment to read to you his essay on law given this year before the Officers' Lyceum at Fort Douglas—a most complete and comprehensive treatise, leaving you in no doubt as to your prerogatives, your duties to your country, your command, and to yourself.

The commander's next duty is to consider what force he is given to accomplish his task with—and the length of time he may be engaged in its execution. Thus he will give directions as to the necessary supplies, subsistence, arms, ammunition, clothing, equipage, medical stores, transportation. Each of these headings may require special attention. His mode of transportation may determine the kind of subsistence; the possibilities of action, the amount of ammunition; the locality of his operations, the kind and quality of clothing and equipage, climatic conditions and changes, his medical supplies. His transportation is overland by wagon, the fertility of the country he passes through is an important consideration in determining the amount and nature of forage he will take. All these things the commanding officer must attend to, for he alone will be held responsible for the wants of his command. It will not do to say, "I have an adjutant, quartermaster or medical officer who should have attended to all these wants." The commanding officer *must know* before he starts on an expedition that they have been attended to, and should have all the chiefs of departments and subordinate commanders report to him what they have in the way of supplies, that he may have personal knowledge that nothing is wanting in the incipency of his undertaking.

He can then dismiss these important elements from his mind, and be untrammelled in the serious work before him. He can leave the care and distribution of his supplies more generally to the chiefs of the departments to which they belong.

The commander knowing that he is thoroughly equipped, what is his next care?

At the very outset he should make all his dispositions for self-defense, and use every means to obtain information. I do not mean by this, that he should start out on the defensive, but that

he should so dispose his command that there will be the minimum chance of surprise or taking at a disadvantage. When he reaches his objective he should assume the offensive at once. It is a military axiom, "in the offensive is strength." He will lose no opportunity to gain information of his objective, for by it he must be at all times guided.

There are two kinds of operations that will probably demand our attention. One when the objective is on the great lines of travel, railroads, steamboats, etc. The second where it is inland from these and must be reached by marches. The first is the most likely to engage us. Let us consider the methods of getting on the field of operations, and those to be adopted when we get there.

In operations against mobs it is not well to determine beforehand that violence must be resorted to on meeting it, but it is absolutely essential that timely preparation be made to meet violence with violence. In civil disturbances, unlike actual warfare, it is best that violence should be initiated in some form by the mob, but a quick and not uncertain response should be made. After the first blow is struck, there should be no parley, no compromise in military operations, until you have asserted yourself to such an extent that you can treat as the conqueror who has something to give—nothing to ask.

The self-defense I referred to is attained by several methods known to the military art, each a subject, as I have said, more than sufficient for one lecture. Advance guards, outposts, pickets, patrols, reconnaissance, screens, rearguards, flankers, spies, orientation, scouting, all these enter into security and information. The proper use of these would take months to demonstrate, yet a knowledge of each is essential.

For our purpose tonight I will only allude to the best and most necessary methods for the small operations we are liable to encounter.

In all operations the careful commander will make his dispositions for offense at a sufficient distance from his opponent to allow him to form for attack without molestation, develop without confusion, assault without uncertainty.

On railroad or steamboat, order and promptness are most essential. Compartments should be assigned to each organization or unit, and they should proceed to occupy them independently of each other. Regular details by roster should then be quickly made to load and unload baggage. All should be done with system and celerity, but without confusion—preferably under the supervision of an officer but always under either an officer or non-commissioned officer. A guard should invariably be on duty with a command. Its size and composition will depend on the existing conditions, and be regulated by the commanding officer. If the travel is by rail and danger is imminent, pilot engines well guarded should go in advance. The guard for the main body should be quartered near the rear of the troops, and should not be allowed to take off accoutrements, so that in case of attack it will be ready at once, and can get out of the train as far away from the attacking force as possible and thus go into action without confusion. So too if an accident happens to the train by derailment or otherwise, it will be less liable to be involved in

the disaster, and will be in condition to prepare the way for the main body, which should always be disembarked in the rear of the guard, the train, or boat either backing down for this purpose or the guard advancing so as to clear them. The main body having formed, flankers will be thrown out on each flank for observation and protection, and a small rear guard will be thrown back of the column for the same purpose. All these movements will be made as near as possible with the precision used in drill, without noise. The commander's voice alone is heard, i. e., the commanders of the different movements.

These dispositions made, an advance will be next in order. This also should be made as if in drill. The systematic and precise advance will give morale to your men, and demoralization to the enemy, causing them, if they are determined to go to the last extreme, to expose their methods and locality of resistance—and will draw their fire at a time and distance when there will be least exposure.

It will be remembered that in operations of this kind our opponents are wanting in what we should be proficient, viz, drill, order, rules of attack and defense; that when once drawn into action, the tendency of a mob is to huddle together because disorganized, and offer the better target the deeper they become involved. By a well delivered fire this force may be dispersed. Volleys are always preferable to desultory or other kind of fire, and here is when troops other than regulars usually make a mistake—they are liable to fire over the heads of a mob for the purpose of intimidation. As a rule it does not have that effect. When the smoke clears away and it seems that no damage is done, the mob becomes encouraged and is easily excited to more vigorous action. It is well known that the time in a fight when fear has the greatest effect on troops is just before firing commences. After one gets accustomed ever so little to it, excitement takes the place of fear, bravado of imidity. Straggling, that bane of successful action, is greatest when going on to the field. Once under fire it diminishes. Then too it is more merciful to fire right into a mob, because a little of it will ordinarily be sufficient to accomplish your ends and the loss of life will be less. Besides, high fire is apt to inflict injury on innocent people, women and children. The effect of this, independent of its misfortune, will be to enrage your opponents and take from them reason as well as fear. Thus I say, when you have to fire, let it be a fire of no uncertain nature. Aim to hit, but be sure it is to hit those who are armed against you.

Having delivered your volley you may expect consternation and a dispersion of the mob. Now the commander must use great judgment. If the disintegration is not general and decided, pour in another volley, and continue them so long as organized opposition is able to stand before you.

Having dislodged your enemy, move forward at once, the troops well in hand, and occupy the place it held. If that is not a good position for defense, secure one beyond it if possible. Make no movement that looks like retreat. Never if you can avoid it, make a retrograde movement during an action. If you