AUSBILDUNGHEFT #2

Der Soldat in den Bergen
Specially trained mountain troops may influence decisively the outcome of a larger campaign, even though the decision is almost always sought and achieved on the flat by the main forces.
Offensive Purpose

1. Specialized troops secure the advance of main force through the mountain passes.

2. Main force reaches terrain of its own choice in the highest state of combat readiness.
Defensive Purpose

1. Wear down enemy power:
   Prevent, impede, harass or channel main enemy force through the valleys

2. When enemy main force is engaged by friendly main force he is exhausted and forced to fight decisively on unfavorable terms.
Focal Point of Mountain Combat: The Heights

- Mountain troops must gain and maintain control of the mountains
  - Observation posts
  - Gun emplacements
- Can only be seized by surprise
Implications For Re-enactor Training

Objectives:

1. Physical fitness adequate to lower Appalachians
2. Movement in steeper, densely covered terrain
3. Executing surprise
4. Securing the heights
5. Observation & FO for Artillery
6. Junior NCO decision-making
Minimum Proficiency

- Make any *STEIGEN* (ascent) on road or path free of snow.
- Walk on easy wooded grass and scree slopes until master fairly difficult terrain on moderately difficult climbs
- Walk with snowshoes on roads, easy and difficult terrain
- Cover icy stretches on moderately hard climbs
- GOAL: Move quietly, orderly and confidently under normal conditions of marching and without wasting time or taking unnecessary risks.
Technique – Mountain Marching

- Slow and rhythmic pace
- Consistent stride not too long
- Erect stance, not leaning into slope
- Breathe deeply
- Avoid talking
- “Switch back” vs. straight ascent
- Avoid haste
- Maintain prescribed distance between climbers
- Arrive at destination in condition to fight
Technique - Climbing

- Start with easy rocks to get a feel for the work
- Use legs slowly and rhythmically; they do most of the work.
- Use arms only for stability and balance; only pull climber when necessary

Handholds and footholds
- Not too far apart
- Grasp slowly and test them
- Always keep weight on 3 points going up
- Breathe quietly and slowly
- Achieve perfect balance
Technique - Descending

- Avoid sitting which gives way to sliding too fast for control
- Descend back to rock if not too steep and footholds good.
- Use extra caution on steep grass slopes
  - Grass tufts are good footholds but not handholds
  - Kick toe into grass if descending facing slope
  - Keep inner edge of foot close to slope
Technique – Steep Snow and Ice

- Use crampons or kick/cut steps for yourself
- Short steps and zigzag/switchback to save strength.
- **GLISSADING (Sliding down)**
  - Only when the bottom of a snow slope can be seen from the top
  - Never with crampons
  - Never on solid frozen ice
  - Ice axe used to turn, slow down or stop
Technique – Special Equipment

■ Basic principle: all equipment weight kept to a minimum

■ The surface determines the equipment:
  – Rock: Pitons, Snaplinks (carabiners), Rope, KLETTERSCHUE (felt-soled rock climbing shoes), Ice Axe
  – Grass: Mountain boots or Crampons, Ice Axe
  – Snow: Snowshoes (on flats), Crampons, Snaplinks and Ice Pitons
Technique – Special Equipment / Rope

- Most Important piece of equipment
- 100 feet of twisted hemp, highest quality, 7/16 inch diameter
- Dries in open air, hung from a peg in loose loops, repaired promptly
- First thing he learns are three basic knots
  - Overhand noose – secures men to rope
  - Square knot – secures two ropes together
  - Sling – secures rope to a projection in order to belay
- Climb three men to a rope with a mountain guide for a rope leader
- Men secured to rope around belly with an overhand noose knot
- Used for all difficult climbing as determined by the men
Technique – Special Equipment / Rope Belaying

- Prevents a climber who slips from falling far
- Climber can belay up or down
- Pay out rope if the next climber is moving away; take up slack if moving toward; keep taut but never pull climber off his holds
- If no suitable rock projection, use axe/piton/snaplink or your body
- Technique for Roping Down:
  - Pass rope between legs, up across chest and over shoulder
  - Hold dangling end with one hand and suspending part of rope with other hand
  - Slide by raising the dangling part over his shoulder
  - Stop by pulling down over shoulder
Technique – Special Equipment / Crampons

■ Whenever possible used rather than the axe on icy slopes
■ Steel frames with twelve 2 inch iron spikes attached.
■ Fit the bottom of the ski-mountain boot and strap over the top
■ Save labor and avoid noise involved with cutting steps
■ Can also be used on difficult grass slopes
Technique – Special Equipment / Ice Axe

- Used for extra support for ease and firmness in walking
- Handled with care to avoid injuring self and companions
- On rock with no other holds, used as a hand hold or foothold
- Can be used as a belay on grass slopes if thrust in deep
- Used to control glissading
- Tests strengths of snow crossings with it
- Cutting steps with pick end and clearing the step with adze end.
Technique—Special Equipment / Pitons, Snap Links

- When no natural belaying point available or body belay unsafe
- Rock pitons up to 6” long; Ice pitons up to 10” long
- Snaplink inserted through piton eyelet
- Piton is belaying point hammered into rock and left behind
- Snaplinks are collected and used again as men pass down
Bivouacs

- Must get all rest possible under difficult conditions
- Adequate rest is necessary for operating in mountains and means difference between life and death
- Types
  - Lean-to using rock ledge for roof and one wall
  - Snow holes
  - Snow huts
Self-Preservation and Orientation

Natural perils cause more casualties than combat

- Rockfalls
- Landslides
- Cornice fractures
- Snowdrifts
- Avalanches
- Glacial crevasses
- Icefalls
- Ice-slides
Self-Preservation and Orientation: Weather

- Lightning
- Snow blindness, glacial sunburn, exhaustion, exposure
- Rain, Snowstorms and Coldsnaps occur suddenly

Learn to Forecast:

- Bad weather incoming: ring around the moon, unusual twinkling of morning stars, rising clouds, bright red sunrise, early morning warmth, sun shine through mist.
- Fair dry weather: red sunset, evening clouds in valleys, lack of wind in clearing weather, heavy morning dew, cold nights. Up valley wind during day and down valley wind at night.
Self-Preservation and Orientation: Protection

- Goggles for snow blindness
- Lanolin for glacial sunburn
- Clothing must be warm but shouldn’t make you sweat—moisture is disastrous
  - Light clothing while moving
  - Heavy clothing during rest and bivouacs
  - Newspaper for body insulation
  - Keep feet and hands dry
- Must stay awake when there is danger of freezing to death
- Must be able to describe orally and in writing the terrain and paths they have traversed.
  - Memory retention is essential
Roping Illustrations

Figure 19.—Roping down a rock face.

Figure 21.—Rock climbing.
Knot Illustrations

Figure 17.—Basic knots used by German mountain troops.
(1) Overhand noose, for securing a man to the rope; (2) square knot, for joining ropes together; (3) sling, for securing the rope to a projection for the purpose of belaying.

Figure 18.—Double overhand noose. (This is the preferred knot for roping up. The end of the simple overhand noose (1) is inserted in the loop (2), and pulled through. The result is the noose (3).)