

1834

2875A
7-13-33

Senior and Junior Classes 1934

EXERCISE IN ORDER WRITING NO.2

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Issued Wednesday, 1200 ----- 2 August
Solution to be submitted by
1200 Friday ----- 4 August

DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS
Naval War College
Newport, R.I.
July, 1933.

Senior and Junior Classes - 1934

ORDER WRITING EXERCISE No. 2

Transpose the appended order of Admiral Farragut into the form for orders given in the pamphlet "The Estimate of the Situation, Plans and Orders". Examples of such transposition will be found in the Appendix to the pamphlet "A Study and Discussion of the Estimate of the Situation".

In making this transposition assume three task groups; the Ships, under the direct command of Admiral Farragut, the Gunboats, commanded by Commander James S. Palmer, and the Mortar Flotilla, commanded by Commander D.D. Porter. Use Admiral Farragut's phraselogy as far as consistent with clarity. Where, for completeness, it is necessary to add a sentence or phrase not mentioned by Admiral Farragut enclose this sentence or phrase in brackets.

It will be noted that Admiral Farragut, in what will become paragraph 2 of the rearranged order, omits mention of 'what' the force will do, and 'why', and confines his general plan to 'how'. Students may assume the 'what' to be "to destroy the Vicksburg forts", and the 'why' to be "in order to open up the MISSISSIPPI to the Western Flotilla". This part of the order is of interest and will be further discussed after the Staff Solution is distributed.

Required:

Pencil draft of transposed order to be turned in following the assembly on Friday, 4 August, at 1100.

GENERAL ORDER

UNITED STATES Flagship, HARTFORD,

Below VICKSBURG, June 25, 1862.

The mortar boats and gun-boats of the mortar flotilla having been placed by Commander D.D. Porter, according to his judgment, to the best advantage to act upon the batteries on the heights and the fort below the hospital: at 4 A.M., tomorrow they will open fire upon the same and on the city of VICKSBURG.

At the display of the signal for the ships and gun-boats to weigh, they will form in a double line of sailing, the RICHMOND, Commander James Alden commanding, leading; the ships HARTFORD, Commander R. Wainwright commanding, next; BROOKLYN, Captain T.T. Craven, third. The gun-boats will form another line, so as to fire between the ships, in the following order: IROQUOIS, Commander James S. Palmer, and ONEIDA, Commander S. Phillips Lee commanding, ahead, but on the port bow of the RICHMOND, so as to fire into the forts at the upper end of the town, without interfering with the fire of the RICHMOND; next in order, the WISSAHICKON, Commander Jno. DeCamp, and the SCIOTA, Lieutenant-Commanding Ed. Donaldson, in the line with the IROQUOIS and ONEIDA, but on the port bow of the flag-ship, so as to fire between the RICHMOND and flag-ship; next the WINONA, Lieutenant-Commanding Ed. T. Nichols, and PINOLA, Lieutenant-Commanding Pierce Crosby, on the port bow of the BROOKLYN.

The HARTFORD will, as often as occasion offers, fire her bow guns on the forts at the upper end of the town; but the broadside batteries of all the ships will be particularly directed to the guns in the forts below and on the heights. The free use of the shrapnel is considered the best projectile, but care must be taken in cutting the fuzes, so as always to be sure that they burst short of their destination. When close enough give them grape. The enclosed diagram will show the position of the respective vessels in the order of attack. -

When the vessels reach the bend in the river, the WISSAHICKON, SCIOTA, WINONA, and PINOLA, will continue on; but, should the enemy continue the action, the ships and IROQUOIS and ONEIDA will stop their engines and drop down the river again, keeping up their fire until directed otherwise.

D. G. FARRAGUT,

Flag-officer Commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron

2875 B
7/13/33

Senior and Junior Classes 1934

EXERCISE IN ORDER WRITING No.2

SOLUTION BY A MEMBER OF THE STAFF

(Issued 1030 - 4 August)

DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS
Naval War College
Newport, R.I.
July, 1933.

Operation Order
No. 24

Below VICKSBURG,
June 25, 1862.

TASK ORGANIZATION

(a) Ships

RICHMOND, HARTFORD, BROOKLYN.

(b) Gunboats, Commander James S. Palmer, U.S.N.

IROQUOIS, ONEIDA, WISSAHICKON, SCIOTA, PINOLA.

(c) Mortar Flotilla, Commander D.D. Porter, U.S.N.

Mortar boats and gunboats.

1. - - - - -

2. (This force will destroy the VICKSBURG forts in order to open up the MISSISSIPPI to the Western Flotilla). When the vessels reach the bend in the river, the WISSAHICKON, SCIOTA, WINONA, and PINOLA will continue on; but, should the enemy continue the action, the ships and IROQUOIS and ONEIDA will stop their engines and drop down the river again, keeping up their fire until directed otherwise.

3. (a) Ships direct all broadside batteries to the guns in the forts below and on the heights; HARTFORD will, as often as occasion offers, fire her bow guns on the forts at the upper end of the town. At the display of the signal to weigh, form line of sailing, the RICHMOND leading; the ships HARTFORD, next; BROOKLYN, third.

(b) Gunboats fire between the ships, in the following order: IROQUOIS and ONEIDA ahead, but on the port bow of the RICHMOND, so as to fire into the forts at the upper end of the town, without interfering with the fire of the RICHMOND; next in order the WISSAHICKON and SCIOTA, in the line with the IROQUOIS and the ONEIDA, but on the port bow of the flagship, so as to fire between the RICHMOND and the flagship; next the WINONA and PINOLA, on the port bow of the RICHMOND. At the display of the signal to weigh, form line (to port of the line of ships).

(c) Mortar Flotilla at zero four hundred tomorrow open fire upon the batteries on the heights and the fort below the hospital and on the city of VICKSBURG. Commander D.D. Porter place the mortar boats and the gunboats of the mortar flotilla, according to his judgment, to the best advantage.

(x) The free use of shrapnel is considered the best projectile, but care must be taken in cutting the fuses so as always to be sure that they burst short of their destination.

When close enough give them grape.

The enclosed diagram will show the position of the respective vessels in the order of attack.

4. - - - - -

5. (O.T.C. in HARTFORD with Ships).

D. G. Farragut,
Flag Officer Commanding Western
Blockading Squadron.

ANNEX

A. Diagram showing order of attack.

Distribution:

All Task Commanders and
Commanding Officers.

X

Commander, U.S.N.
Flag Secretary.

Senior and Junior Classes 1934

EXERCISE IN ORDER WRITING NO. 2

Admiral Farragut's Orders
at New Orleans and at Vicksburg

by

Commander R.M. Griffin, U.S.N.

4 August, 1933.

Department of Operations
Naval War College
Newport, R.I.
July, 1933.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
RESTRICTED

Not to pass out of the custody of officers of the U.S. Naval
or Military Service.

To be returned to Publication Section, Room N-11, after it has
served its purpose.

(Remarks on Admiral Farragut's Order by Comdr. R.M. Griffin)

4 August, 1933

Gentlemen:

Before proceeding with a detailed discussion of Admiral Farragut's Order I propose to review briefly the historical background of this order, and compare it with the order Admiral Farragut issued for the passing of the forts below New Orleans.

When the attack on New Orleans was planned there was a considerable difference of opinion as to how it should be executed. The original conception appears to have originated with Mr. Fox, a former naval officer who was then Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The plan provided that the ships run by the forts without reducing them in order to take New Orleans, and thus cut the forts off from their supplies. Commander Porter, later Admiral D.D. Porter, who collaborated in making the plans, urged that mortar flotillas be employed to reduce the forts before the ships attempted to pass them. He was supported in this recommendation by General McClellan, and by Major Bernard, the officer General McClellan designated to represent him in the planning for this operation.

Major Bernard summed up the case for first reducing the forts as follows:

"To pass the forts (merely) with a fleet and appear before New Orleans is merely a raid -- no capture. New Orleans and the river can not be held until communications are perfectly established."

Admiral Farragut, who was given command of the expedition, considered that it was unnecessary to first reduce the forts, but agreed to try the mortar flotilla and see what it could do. After the flotilla had bombarded the forts for a week without silencing the guns and had expended most of its ammunition, he became convinced that his first estimate was correct and called his commanding officers aboard his flagship to make his decision

known to them, and to hear their comments and suggestions for improvement. At this conference Commander Porter read a lengthy paper setting forth his objections to passing the forts without reducing them, but to no avail.

Soon after the conference Admiral Farragut issued the following order. As the problem at New Orleans resembles that at Vicksburg, it is interesting to contrast this order with the one you have been studying, and to note the essential difference, both in the phrasing of the order and in its execution by Farragut's subordinates. Here is the New Orleans Order.

U.S. Flagship HARTFORD,
Mississippi River, April 20, 1862.

The flag officer having heard the opinions expressed by the different commanders, is of the opinion that whatever is to be done must be done quickly, or we shall be again reduced to a blockading squadron, without the means of carrying on the bombardment, as we have nearly expended all the shells and fuses and material for making cartridges. He has always entertained the same opinions which were expressed by Commander Porter - that is, there are three modes of attack, and the question is, which is the one to be adopted?

His own opinion is that a combination of two should be made, viz., the forts should be run, and when a force is once above the forts to protect the troops they should be landed at Quarantine from the Gulf side by bringing them through the bayou, and then our forces should move up the river, mutually aiding the other as can be done to advantage.

When in the opinion of the flag-officer the propitious time has arrived, the signal will be made to weigh and advance to the conflict. If, in his opinion, at the time of arriving at the respective positions of the different divisions of the fleet we have the advantage, he will make the signal for close action, No. 8, and abide the result - conquer or be conquered - drop anchor or keep underway, as in his opinion is best.

Unless the above signal is made, it will be understood that the first order of sailing will be formed after leaving Fort St. Philip, and we will proceed up the river in accordance with the original opinion expressed.

The programme of the order of sailing accompanies this general order, and the commanders will hold themselves in readiness for the service as indicated.

D.G. Farragut,
Flag-Officer Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

(Note: The order, as quoted by Mahan in 'Admiral Farragut' has phrases in italics as underlined above. Boynton's 'History of the Navy during the Rebellion', and Porter's 'Naval History of the Civil War' do not indicate that Admiral Farragut underlined any phrases).

It will be noted that in the above order Admiral Farragut makes known to his subordinates what he proposes to do, and his reasons for the proposed action. He starts his order with an appreciation of how unsatisfactory the existing situation is, with ammunition running low and the forts still resisting the bombardment. He tells his force "whatever is to be done must be done quickly".

He realizes the situation he wishes to bring about, - the establishment of his force above the forts. He tells his subordinates what the new situation must be and explains why. He includes the how, - "the forts should be run". His decision as it would be expressed in paragraph 2 of our present order form is:-

'This force will establish itself above the forts, by running past them, in order to protect the troops landed at Quarantine from the Gulf side and brought through the bayou, and then to permit our forces to move up the river, mutually aiding the other as can be done to advantage'.

Had you been asked to put Farragut's New Orleans Order into the present form for orders there would have been no necessity of assuming a 'what' and a 'why' for paragraph two of the order, you would have found them both in Admiral Farragut's order. He knew at New Orleans just what he wanted to accomplish and why, and told his subordinates in unmistakable terms. There is little else in the order. His entire 'how' is to advance to the conflict when the signal to weigh is made, to form the first order of sailing after leaving Fort St. Philip, and to run the forts. The rest of the order is information and reasons supporting his decision. He provides an alternative plan to take advantage of any unexpected success, but provides very carefully that this alternative plan shall only be put into effect if, in his opinion, he has the advantage, and then only upon signal from him.

His forces operated under this order without confusion, even after he orally changed the instructions he had given as to 'how' the operation was to be carried out. For at the last minute he changed the order of sailing from double to single column. But no confusion resulted, his subordinates knew what he wanted them to accomplish and they proceeded to do it without confusion.

It was different at Vicksburg. After the attack on the Vicksburg forts Farragut with the major part of his force passed above Vicksburg, while the Brooklyn and two of the gunboats dropped down below the town, creating an embarrassing division of the force. This was not what Farragut intended. After passing Vicksburg he reported to the Secretary of the Navy as follows: "The Brooklyn, Kennebec, and Kathadin did not get past the batteries. I do not know why". Later he reported:

"It gives me great pleasure also to report that the officers and men of the ships that accompanied me up the river behaved with the same ability and steadiness on this occasion as in passing Forts Jackson and Philip. ---- It pains me much to limit my praise, but I cannot speak of those who did not come up. It was their duty to have followed me, with or without signal, particularly as it was too early and too smoky to distinguish signals. I enclose their explanations herewith."

One ship explained that she did not have a copy of his order so her explanation has no bearing on this discussion. The other two did not pass the forts, as they explained, because Farragut's order did not indicate that it was his intention that they should do so. The commanding officer of the Kennebec stated:

"When the dense smoke which previously obscured the vessels had passed away, I found that you, with the rest of the fleet, with the exception of the Brooklyn and the Kathadin, and this vessel, had passed up, and that the mortar vessels had discontinued their fire. Placed in this position, I again referred to your orders, which were: 'But if the action should be continued, the ships and the Iroquois and the Oneida will stop their engines and drop down the river again, keeping up their fire until directed otherwise'. Retaining my position astern of the Brooklyn, I continued firing upon the batteries until my supply of ammunition was so reduced that I deemed it advisable to desist."

The explanation of Captain Craven, the commanding officer of the Brooklyn was similar. As the Brooklyn was one of the large ships, it is probable that his misunderstanding of the order contributed to the action of the two smaller vessels, who to some extent were keeping position on him. He said:

"My reason for not following the flagship up the river, that is, above and beyond the fire of the forts, is simply because, in your general order of the 25th instant, you say 'should the action be continued by the enemy, the ships and the Iroquois and the Oneida will stop their engines and drop down the river again.'; and, on the evening of the 27th, twice (when in your cabin and on the quarter deck of your flagship) I asked you if it were your wish or desire for me to leave any batteries behind me that had not been silenced, you answered 'No sir; not on any account'."

How did it happen that an officer as capable as Farragut, who had a few months previously given his subordinates the clearest kind of directions, could issue an order at Vicksburg which permitted such confusion? I believe that the explanation lies in the fact that at New Orleans Farragut was clear in his own mind as to what he expected to accomplish, while at Vicksburg he was not.

At New Orleans Farragut believed that the fall of the city would result in the fall of the forts. He made it clear to his subordinates that the task in hand was to get above the forts, in order to support the army in operations there. At Vicksburg nothing would be gained by passing the forts, since the line of supply of the forts was from the southward and would not be affected by federal control of the river above.

Farragut realized that nothing was to be gained from passing the forts without reducing them. He also realized that there was little possibility of reducing the types of forts existing at Vicksburg with the fire of his fleet. He therefore did not want to undertake any operations against them, and did so only because he was goaded into doing so by the Department.

The purpose of the Navy Department, as expressed in the original orders to Farragut, had been to send his squadron up the river immediately after the capture of New Orleans. The words were:

"If the Mississippi Expedition from Cairo shall not have descended the river, you will take advantage of the panic to push a strong force up the river to take their defenses in the rear."

When these orders were issued the Department believed that the Cairo expedition would have progressed down the river, or at least Farragut so interpreted them. When the Cairo expedition made little or no progress there was little point to operations by his forces on the river unsupported by the Army.

Farragut, while he obeyed his orders, showed in his despatches and in private letters of the same period, how much against his judgment were operations conceived on such erroneous military principles and undertaken with such inadequate force. But the Department pressed him on, and as early as the 17th of May sent a despatch intimating that he had forgotten his orders. He was urged and required to open up the Mississippi to Flag-officer Davis's command then still above Memphis. This and other letters of the same date must have been particularly exasperating; for they were received early in June, when Farragut had been up the river as far as Vicksburg and satisfied himself that without an adequate force of troops nothing could be accomplished.

Finally the Assistant-Secretary of the Navy wrote him as follows:

"The only anxiety we feel is to know if you have followed up your instructions and pushed a strong force up the river to meet the Western flotilla."

Farragut replied:

"I had no conception that the Department ever contemplated that the ships of this squadron were to attempt to go to Memphis, above which the Western flotilla then was; nor did I believe it was practicable for them to do so, unless under the most favorable circumstances, in time of peace, when supplies could be obtained along the river"

It was in this frame of mind, and after this estimate of the situation confronting him that Admiral Farragut drafted the order you have transposed. Is it any wonder that he omits saying 'what' he expects to accomplish, and more particularly 'why'. Or that his subordinates were unable to tell just what he wanted, either from his order or from their conversations with him.

In contrast with his Vicksburg order we have noted the New Orleans order as an example of the type of Order which Admiral Farragut issued when undertaking an operation in which he believed. Another example is the general order issued to his captains before Port Hudson. There he stated his objective clearly as follows:

"The captains will bear in mind that the object is to run the batteries at the least possible damage to our ships, and thereby secure an efficient force above, for the purpose of rendering such assistance as may be required of us to the army at Vicksburg, or, if not required there, to our army at Baton Rouge."

Mahan comments as follows:

"In 1862 (Vicksburg) Farragut was driven up the river against his own judgment, seeing no prospect of tangible or permanent results. In 1863 (Port Hudson) he went on his own responsibility, because he saw in the then condition of affairs, --- the movement he made would not only be successful in itself, but would materially conduce to the attainment of the common end."

Mahan might have added that Farragut's orders in the three instances reflected his attitude at the time, uncertainty and lack of purpose at Vicksburg; determination and clear purpose at New Orleans and at Port Hudson.

Had the Navy, in 1862, an order form which required the commander to state what he wanted his force to accomplish and why, it is probable that Farragut would have been forced to clarify his own mind as to his intentions before commencing the operation, and that his subordinates would have received better guidance. The advantages of this form are twofold. First, the subordinate is better able to do what the commander wants if he knows what his commander wishes to accomplish, and why. Second, the commander himself, in order to draft such an order must clarify his own

thoughts as to what he will do and why. It keeps him from getting lost in a lot of important and interesting details as to how he will do something unexpressed.

During the year you will draft various orders. Unless you have had considerable experience along this line, you will probably find that in your first drafts you have told forces how to do something, but that you have not told them what to do. If you appreciate this distinction, and set about to correct the order, you will be surprised to find how difficult it is to express exactly 'what' you want a force to do, when previously you had been well satisfied that your directions to the subordinate had been clear. If you, who draft the order, find this difficulty in stating the 'what', consider how necessary it is for the subordinate that you do state it. For until you are clear in your own mind as to 'what' you want him to accomplish, there is no possible way that he can tell.

Until one's own mind is clear it is hardly to be expected that he will frame a clear order. Orders to a force to cruise in a certain locality, to scout an area, to proceed to a certain position, are all directions as to how something or other is to be accomplished. They are written easily and naturally into an order without much effort. But they give the subordinate no clue as to what you expect him to accomplish while cruising, scouting, or by proceeding. It is the framing of this 'what' to do for each subordinate which is difficult, for each time you direct a force 'what to do' you must make a decision, always a difficult thing to do; but the duty of the commander nevertheless. The 'how' may be entirely omitted, as Farragut did to a great extent at New Orleans, and, if the 'why' is obvious and well known to all, it too can be omitted. But uncertainty and confusion is very likely to result unless the 'what' is stated.

These orders of Farragut's are examples of good orders and poor orders. As they were issued by the same man to approximately the same forces and provide for similar types of operations, I

trust that the analysis of the orders and the results obtained with them ^{is} ~~are~~ of value. If any wish to pursue the study further they will find more detailed accounts of the operations and orders in Mahan's "Admiral Farragut", and in Admiral D.D. Porter's "Naval History of the Civil War". Much of the material in this paper is taken from these sources.

In closing I invite your attention to the numerous illustrations of the results obtained with good orders and with bad orders which Colonel Cordonnier presents in his book "The Japanese in Manchuria". He expresses clearly the primary requirement of a good order as follows:

"Intention is the key to victory, and victory is the just reward of a definite purpose clearly expressed."

("Intention" and "purpose" as used above are terms synonymous with "the objective".)