

which is the motive power of the fighting man. The omission of some small apparently unimportant detail in a report may mean 20 or 30 rifles less in the firing line, as these omissions multiply the reduction in fighting men increases and becomes a most important factor. I should like to impress on you the absolute reality of Intelligence work and the necessity for the personal checking of every piece of information. Another very important point to remember is that information is of no use unless it is properly distributed.

The following instance shows what I mean. Some 5 or 6 years ago in England, the General who was going to command one side on the manoeuvres determined to have a reconnaissance made of the probable theatre of operations. Three officers were sent down to do this, myself among the number. The country consisted of long lines of high parallel ridges with narrow valleys in between. So long as operations were conducted down the valleys the question of transport was easy. As events turned out, the advance of the two armies was across those lines of ridges, and the problem of how to get the transport in and out of the valleys along the rather indifferent roads, became an important one. There was one particular village called Broadehalk, the streets of which were narrow and twisted, which was unfortunate as the village constituted an important road junction. There was a fairly good road into it from the high ridge to the South, but the exit by another steep ridge to the North was impassable by transport and was reported to be so in the preliminary reconnaissance. This fact was not communicated to the transport officer concerned, and the consequence was that the transport came down the road from the South and vainly endeavoured to get out to the North. To add to the confusion a Howitzer Brigade came along the valley road from the West and butted into the line of transport. The streets were too narrow for the wagons to be turned round conveniently, and the net result was the complete blocking of vehicles in this village for the whole night. The men got no food and operations the next day were seriously interfered with. This incident was quite avoidable, as full information as to the road conditions in this village had actually been reported to the Headquarters Staff in detail. This sounds incredible, but as a matter of fact, in the stress and rush of manoeuvre operations, such incidents are very liable to occur.