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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

ADVANCED COURSE  
1932-1933

MILITARY HISTORY

Operations of the Supply Company, 9th U. S. Infantry  
(2d Division) during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive  
November 1--November 11, 1918. Personal Experience  
of a Supply Officer.

CAPTAIN EUGENE V. BEHAN, INFANTRY

#1 [REDACTED]

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Corey, M. C.  
052M508

"Night march of the 2d Division through German lines south of Beaumont in the first week of November."

This course of information contains only a brief account of the Meuse-Argonne operation. It is accurate in its statements but does not include any discussion.

052-K-15

"Meuse Argonne"

"History of Ninth Infantry"

MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

F.O.

Field Order

Hdq

Headquarters

Brig

Brigade

## INTRODUCTION

On 22d October 1918 the 9th Infantry as part of the 2d Division was relieved from its tour of duty with the Fourth French Army in the Champagne Sector with orders to join by marching the First American Army. (1)

- (1) Hq 1st Army,  
A.E.F., Special  
Orders No 469

It left its billets at Courtisols and marched to Valmy, proceeding next day to Camp Cabaud near Islettes. (2)

- history maps*  
(2) Hq 3d Brig.  
F.O 38

On 25th October the regiment (3) marched via Chemin Romain Tranchee through the Argonne Forest to the woods just south of Exermont where the four Infantry Regiments of the Division were assembled.

- (3) Hq 3d Brig.  
F.C. 39

*not on map*  
See position  
plotted on map

Regimental Headquarters was at Chaudron-Ferme. From this position the regiment left for the operations of the Meuse Argonne Battle. The 2d Division has been used as shock troops along the different battle sectors, so we left with the understanding that we had another very hard nut to crack, as General Summerall expressed it during his conference with the officers of the 2d Division. The march conditions were very favorable to us as the sky was heavy with drizzling rain, which kept the Boche planes from spying on us.

After dark the night of 30th October found us in our new position five hundred yards in rear of the jump off place near Sommerance (1) behind the Fifth and Sixth Marines.

Map Buzancy  
Special (1)

*not clear LD not at Sommerance*

We had no difficulty in reaching our new place as the weather was dark and drizzling rain still continued. The travel of the trains was very slow due to road congestion. On this particular move, knowing what we had ahead of us, I preceded the regiment with the mission of locating our exact place in the woods, suitable place for the trains, etc. During this move we received very little shelling from the enemy. I found the roads in many places badly shot up by enemy artillery fire, which necessitated leaving the road and crossing fields. In the woods the roads being only one way had to be closely guarded by M.P.'s and road engineers. The regiment finally late at night moved into its assembly position in the woods (2) and settled down after three days march. Some went to sleep while others waited for the trains to arrive with the possibility of the cooks making coffee. The trains had to be piloted into the woods and placed so that should the enemy planes show up the trains would not give our position away. In fact the enemy knew that there were troops in the woods but did not know just how many. Here is where the duties of a guide came in, to wait and wait for the trains to arrive. The trains if possible were in the column according to the position of its regiment in column, but sometimes, unless the

See location  
on Special  
Map (2)

officer at the head of his train was on the alert, some other outfit, Artillery or French, would take advantage of any gap and move in, which would cut the train in two. Then again, on several occasions when the train would be halted for some unknown reason ahead, the drivers would fall asleep and part of the train would move out leaving the sleeping driver behind and the rest waiting for the vehicle in front of them to move out. I had my section chiefs ride up and down the train and by calling whom they thought would fall asleep kept them awake. The drivers as well as the troops did not get much sleep, as during the day when the troops might get in a few winks, the drivers had to take care of their animals and transportation whether they were up all night or not. I remember on one occasion when we were going day and night, during one of our long halts at night I sat down alongside of the field train and before I knew anything I dozed off still holding onto my mount. Just how long I slept I do not know, but my horse trying and eager to go along with the rest of the train woke me up.

The state of Supply at this date <sup>17th</sup> ~~is~~ the Combat Trains, consisting of one ration cart, one rolling kitchen and one water cart, filled to capacity with rations and forage. The cooks working at the kitchens are now busy trying to cook a hot meal for the troops with as little fire as possible before the jump off, which will

Diary of  
Author

*Not clear  
presumably  
per Co*

be in a few hours on the morning of November 1st.

ENEMY LOCATION

On this new front the enemy was holding strong positions with his line running east and west (4) about four hundred yards south of Landres-St. George. Previous attempts to take this position had been unsuccessful.

- (4) Map  
F.O. 49, Hq  
2d Div.  
Vol I

Own Supporting Troops (Div)

See attached overlay. (5)

- (5) Hq 2d Div.  
F.O. 49  
Vol I

*no overlay*

Trains

The regimental combat and field trains are both in the woods in bivouac one thousand yards south of Sommerance, placed with wagons and kitchens under the trees. The animals are tied up with short picket lines here and there in small groups, keeping the teams together for purpose of control and near <sup>their</sup> ~~its~~ battalion's.

- (6) Equipment  
Jan. 14,  
1918

Organization of the Supply Company (6)

The organization of the Supply Company in an Infantry Regiment was as follows:

- 4 Officers (commissioned)
- 156 Enlisted men
- 9 Horses, Riding
- 275 Mules, Draft
- 7 Mules, Riding
- 2 Cart (Ration) (2 mule) with Co Hq
- 2 Carts (Ration) (2 mule) with Hq Co
- 1 Cart (Ration) (2 mule) with each  
Machine Gun Company
- 4 Carts (Ration) (2 mule) with each  
Battalion
- 16 Total

- 1 Cart (water) with Co Hq
- 2 Carts (water) with Hq Co
- 1 Cart (water) with each Machine Gun Co
- 4 Carts (water) with each battalion
- 16 Total

1 Rolling Kitchen with Co Hq  
 2 Rolling Kitchens with Hq Co  
 1 Rolling Kitchen with each Machine  
     Gun Company  
 4 Rolling Kitchens with each battalion  
16 Total

3 wagons Combat Limbered Caisson, ammunition  
     type, Hq Co (4 mule)  
 2 Wagons, Combat Limbered Caisson, each  
     Machine Gun Company  
 4 Wagons, Combat Limbered Caisson, each  
     battalion  
17 Total

6 Wagons, R & B QMC (4 mule) Co Hq, 5  
     Forage Wagons  
 1 Wagon, R & B, Reg. Hq  
 2 Wagons, R & B, Hq Co  
 1 Wagon, R & B, each Machine Gun Company  
 4 Wagons, R & B, each battalion  
22 Total

A total of 86 vehicles.

#### MY JOB - MISSION

My job was to keep in touch with all the  
 movements of the regiment, get in touch with  
 Regimental Headquarters each day, locate each  
 battalion kitchen section and see that each  
 battalion received its rations and forage daily.

#### System of Class I Supplies

The system of Class I supplies was handled  
 by each company submitting its daily strength  
 report through its battalion to Regimental Head-  
 quarters, where it was collected and sent to the  
 Personnel Adjutant in the rear echelon, who made  
 up a consolidated regimental strength report and  
 sent it to the division adjutant, furnishing the  
 Regimental Supply Officer with a copy. The regi-  
 mental strength formed the basis upon which the  
 commander of the field trains made his daily  
 drawing. Very seldom did we have to draw direct  
 from the division railhead.

As the Division Trains always had a section of trucks go direct to the regimental field train bivouac, where they were unloaded, apportioned to the separate units by the distribution group and there reloaded on ration and baggage wagons for transportation forward to the battalion and separate unit kitchens. When the troops were in the rest area and the battalions were close to the regimental field trains, the battalion supply officers would accompany their own battalion trains and draw their battalion's rations and forage.

#### Zone of Supply Responsibility

The zone of the Supply Company responsibility began at the time when the regiment received its supplies from the Division, and ended when it placed the supplies in proper quarters at the control of the battalion service. In every case I always found each battalion supply officer trying to furnish his battalion with hot food. This hot meal was most generally sent up to the troops either on the kitchen itself or sent in Marmite cans. In most cases, especially on this front, the kitchens would be brought up very close in the woods and the men fed from the kitchens. In the Champagne Sector, when the regiment was in the vicinity of Medeah Farm, the troops were fed from Marmite cans.

#### OPERATIONS, NOVEMBER 1-11th

It is now the night of 30th October - 1st November, and everybody is anxiously

waiting for word from our Artillery, which had to stay back in the Champagne Sector to support the Thirty-Sixth Division. Soon we received the good news that the Fifteenth Artillery was moving into ~~its~~<sup>their</sup> position, so we all felt better as the Ninth Infantry was always supported by the Fifteenth Artillery. Soon the artillery barrage will start and then the jump off.

(7) Hq 2d Div,  
F.O. 50;  
Hq 3d Brig.  
F.O. 42

Operations, November 1st (7)

The Ninth Infantry in column of battalions from positions already described jumped off in support of the Marine Brigade at eight hours, 1st November 1918, with one thousand yards distance. I usually knew what the regimental objectives were. Sometimes they would have two or three and it was the duty of the Supply Officer to get out and find the regiment and locate each battalion kitchen section. It was from now on that I had my troubles. Unknown to the Supply Officer, this is what happened. The regiment following in support of the Sixth Marines on the left of the Division Sector dug in for the night in the same relative position. When the attacking line reached the day's objective considerable artillery fire was received during the advance and some casualties were sustained due to direct observation and systematic shelling of the anticipated route. Supplies for the night had been delivered to the ration carts with the battalions previously.

Operations, November 2d

On November 2d, orders (8) were received

(8) Hq 2d Div,  
F.O. 51

Map Buzancy  
Special  
304.3-96.8

to relieve the Fifth Marines on the right of the Division Sector, but after the battalions were marching to their new position, orders were changed. These new orders were to jump off at 5:30 AM from the Division Exploitation line. It was found that this line was two or three kilometers in front of the outpost line then held by the Marines.

(9) Hq 2d Div,  
F.O. 52;  
Hq 2d Brig,  
F.O.

It was impossible to jump off in line of battle from the Marine position and advance that distance over rough and wooded ground and arrive at the position ordered (9) at the proper time. An advance of the right in column of squads on the main road and with advance guard was then ordered by the Regimental Commander. In conformity with these orders the regiment was formed. First, Second, Third Battalions on the Bayonville-Nonart Road, the advance guard clearing the foremost elements of the Marines' front line (third objective line) at 18:30 hours under cover of darkness. Opposition from enemy troops was met along road. Artillery fire registered upon the column, but losses were slight, and after some delay, while flank patrols cleaned out the surprised enemy positions, the battalions arrived into position, along the exploitation line, about daybreak, and under cover of a heavy fog.

Due to this change of orders and not promptly getting word back to the field trains, I found myself reconnoitering routes ahead in the town of Fosse then occupied by the Marines, well to the left of the regimental sector. If

Map: Remmeville  
304.5-96.8 on  
Buzancy-Nonart  
Road

(2)

*mount*

I remember correctly, this day I moved out soon after the jump off and traveling mounted I was soon farther to the front than I was supposed to be. After I saw that the regiment did not occupy the sector I was in, I inquired from some Marines if they knew just where the Ninth Infantry was. I was told the Ninth Infantry was some where on the right. I immediately started out to find the regiment and found it in the vicinity of Nonart on the right of the sector. Having found with much difficulty each battalion kitchen section, I returned to field train bivouac to bring up the field trains with the rations and forage.

3

This one incident did not deprive the troops of any rations, as the battalion ration carts were loaded to full capacity of rations, but there was just enough forage for that night. The weather at this time was foggy with drizzling rain all the time; had the troops been waiting for the field trains to bring up food they would still not have gone hungry. Up to this time we had no difficulty in supplying the regiment. In fact, the type of ration carts (2 wheel) would not hold the daily supply (automatic as it was), no allowance being made for loss of strength, more Class I supplies were received than were needed. There were times when the daily strength reports would not reach the Division Headquarters before the ~~division train left for each regiment with what~~ they (the railhead personnel) thought we needed, based upon the previous day's report. Then again,

4

5

the tactical situation following the enemy in pursuit did not allow the troops to have three meals each day. Consequently the rations on the ration carts would accumulate and were hard to transport. On many occasions the battalion supply officers would ask me not to bring any more supplies until they asked for them. I had this in mind at all times with the hope of the regiment staying in one place long enough for the troops to enjoy three meals each day. On each ration cart you would find sacks of flour which could not be used under those conditions. This one article was mentioned to the authorities at the railhead, but it seemed they had more of it than they could use and were very anxious to pass it along, sooner than move it from one railhead to another. If we could have had more forage in lieu of flour, the animals would have been better off. I personally gave the Salvation Army sacks of flour, rather than have it spoiled by the rain and dampness. I also found that the daily issue of bread would soon pile up causing much waste.

The supply of rations forward came directly under me. As soon as I had located on received word just where each battalion kitchen section was located, and having received the supplies from the division train and distributed accordingly, I would start out. The roads at this time were in a very bad condition caused by the rain, and in some places trucks and artillery would be stuck hub deep. On one

8  
occasion I was on the road all night, as once you got in column you could not pull out to go ahead or turn back due to the number of vehicles on the road. Trains were not allowed to go forward until properly released by the Provost Marshal or G-4.

Operations, November 3d

(10) Hq 2d Div,  
F.O. 53

The objective for the attack (10) November 3d, the heights south of Bois de Belval, was reached at 9 hours, 3d November, without any stiff resistance.

The day's attack had been a complete success, but the enemy resistance demonstrated that he intended to hold the Bois de Belval, a naturally strong defensive position with heavy woods, which it would have taken days to fight through if any resistance were offered.

Regimental distributions for rations and forage are at Bayonville.

It was at this point that the regiment formed again in column of twos, at dusk abandoning its line moved out through Belval to carry out a surprise move of eight kilometers in enemy territory, with its combat trains, kitchen trains trailing behind. ~~Several machine-gun~~ posts were taken unawares and either dispersed or captured. German details passing up and down the road, seeing that they were in rear of their enemy line, began to give themselves up to the men marching alongside of the combat trains. This was quite a topic for some time among the

drivers and cooks, as for a minute they thought they were captured themselves. This move was through the enemy line with an objective in rear of the front held by an unknown regiment.

The next A.M. the Supply Company heard the news and receiving messages to send the rations forward I started out in broad daylight with the field train loaded with the daily supply for the regiment. There was considerable shelling along the road as the night move of the Ninth Infantry stirred up Fritz so he was sending over all he had. I did not have a map, <sup>or</sup> did I know where La Tuillerie Farm was, but I kept on asking now and then my direction. About noon I reached La Tuillerie Farm and found the regiment scattered to the right of the road, very much used up from their night's march. It seemed whether they needed rations or not, they were anxious to see a new supply of jam and such articles that only came in small quantities. While the wagons were being unloaded I went to the farm house where the Germans were making merry the night before and found Colonel Van Horn with his staff lying and sitting on the floor. They looked tired and worn out from plodding through the mud all night. (I congratulated Colonel Van Horn on his wonderful achievement.) He was glad to see the rations come up, but told me that I would draw artillery fire on the farm by bringing four-line mule teams in the open, as it were. I bid them all Good Luck, and moved out down the road at a trot.

first  
mentioned  
spelled  
differently  
on  
map  
Tuillerie

who is  
he

(9)

(10)

(11)

Some shells to the right and left of the road but none came near enough to cause any casualties. This road through Belval, being the only road north, was very much torn up by the artillery rushing forward to their new positions.

State of Supply Combat Trains filled to capacity with troops, rations and forage.

Regimental Field Trains at Bayonville.

The regiment now holds a line of defense 200 meters north of the Ferme, extending eastward for five hundred meters from the Belval-Beaumont Road. Outposts established to the front and flanks.

#### Operations November 4th

At 9:30 hours, 4th November, the second and third battalions attacked, advancing to position on ridge (11) south and east of Beaumont against stiff resistance from machine guns thickly planted along this ridge. The enemy gunners were either driven off, killed or captured. Enemy artillery from three sides shelled the advancing troops heavily, assisted by numbers of enemy planes, which directed the fire of their artillery accurately. Throughout the day these enemy planes, unmolested by our planes, swept the troops with machine gun fire and dropped bombs on all three battalions with some effect. The casualties during the advance were heavy, including animals. On one occasion the mules on one of the company ration carts and the driver were killed by shell fire.

(11) Hq 2d Div,  
F.C. 56,  
Vol I

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Another driver, having his mules killed, went crazy and had to be evacuated to the hospital. The road south from Beaumont to Belval was shelled heavily throughout the day. Many casualties resulted and passage on the road was most precarious on account of the accuracy of the German Artillery. A German observation balloon which we could all see very plainly commanded a view of the entire length. Regimental Headquarters still remained at La Tuilerie Ferme.

State of Supply Combat Trains filled to capacity with rations and forage.

Regimental Field Train at La Forge Ferme loaded with regimental and company property, including two days reserve rations.

Operations November 4th-5th

During the night 4th-5th November the Twenty-Third Infantry passed through our lines and took up a position some fifteen hundred meters to our front relieving the fire from our lines.

MT  
Clear

State of Supply Combat Trains filled to capacity with rations and forage.

Operations November 5th-6th

The night of 5th-6th November, the Ninth Infantry again started out on one of its night marches, and with advanced guard marched through the Twenty-Third Infantry lines and continued its forward movement on main highway northward through Beaumont and reached a position, without loss, on

the west bank of the Meuse shortly after midnight, which was consolidated.

Map: Buzancy  
Special at  
306.6-310.5  
La Sartelle  
Ferme

This movement preceded a daylight attack of the Twenty-Sixth Infantry (1st Division) and protected their right flank from any attack which they might expect to encounter from the enemy who had withdrawn across the Meuse river. The enemy at this point, although holding the heights across the river, was very nervous and kept up **constant** artillery and machine gun fire. The second battalion in the front line held about three thousand meters of the west bank of the Meuse. It was at this time that the Supply company did not carry out its mission due to the following reasons.

(13) The field train operating forward from La Forge Ferme was held up by heavy artillery fire on the road some little distance south of Beaumont. The officer in charge decided that to go farther would possibly kill most of his animals and men so he dumped the rations alongside of the road, leaving one man to guard the rations. Also sent word to the kitchens in and near Beaumont just where the rations were. Well, the troops did not come after the rations and they stayed there all night. The next morning, we received the following message at the field train bivouac:

AM November 7, 1918.

U. S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

From: Adjutant, 9th Infantry  
At: Beaumont  
Date: Nov 7/18, 10:00 AM No -  
To: Supply Officer, 9th Infantry

Enclosing copy of Ad. Memo. No. F 2,  
No. 6/18.

Dear Mac: We are completely out of rations. Haven't a damn thing. Send up the field rations from the train if you have any left. Do all you can to get something up here. Men are all out of reserve rations and we have eaten everything we ever did have. Get as much coffee, bread, jam and other food that you can get up here as soon as you possibly can. The regiment holds the west bank of the Meuse from Beaumont to Mouzon. Send Sergeant Major Ausborne and regimental clerk with records of Regimental Headquarters to Beaumont at the earliest practicable moment. Get our rations, etc., up as soon as you can as we expect to move farther north any minute and want to give the men something to eat. I believe we will make Sedan shortly.

Signed:

O. P. Meyer,  
Captain, 9th Infantry.

Having gone to sleep the night before with the understanding that the troops received their rations, and then to receive this message

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led me to ask Captain A just what happened to the rations. I was informed that he could not get to Beaumont on account of the shelling and thought that the troops could come that short distance and carry the rations. This blunder caused me to hook up the necessary transportation and proceed to point where the rations were left. I found the rations nicely covered up with a wagon sheet with the guard still on post. At this time and all during the night, the enemy was registering heavy artillery on the roads and western bank, causing casualties. My mission was to pick up these rations and deliver them to the kitchens. Knowing and feeling that the Supply branch had fallen down on this particular occasion I was determined to move in to Beaumont at all costs. I started out leaving plenty of distance between the wagons. Although the enemy artillery registered in front and in the rear, we got through with no losses but, including myself, some rather scared drivers and mules.

15

I found that the troops had eaten up everything they had or ever had and were then eating green cabbage and turnips that they found in the different cellars and houses in the town. The rations were received with great joy. I moved back to the field train bivouac as soon as I could because the town was being heavily shelled by the enemy.

Trains bivouac at this time La Forge Ferme.

State of Supply. Combat Trains empty, only daily supply on hand. Field trains, two days supply.

In fact, the rations were only two kilometers from Beaumont and the kitchens. The battalion supply officers, expecting the food to be delivered, did not know just where to find the dump and also on account of the heavy shelling on the road were satisfied to eat cabbage and turnips. Proper liaison would have avoided this incident.

#### Operations November 8th

At 16:30 hours, 8th November, 1918, K and M Companies occupied Villemontry and La Faubourg (Mouzon) respectively. The occupation was carried out with but slight losses. Regimental P.C. established in Beaumont, which was shelled more heavily than the lines, although the town was still occupied by civilians. At La Faubourg the 3d Battalion in anticipation of crossing the Meuse at this point reconnoitered the passage of the river. The enemy had taken a strong defensive position with machine guns crossfiring at short range upon the destroyed bridge. Investigation during daylight was impracticable, as the one street was under sharp fire from enemy snipers in dominating positions, and the western bank of the stream afforded no cover from the heavy machine gun fire which every movement brought forth. Fire augmented at night by oil and the whole vicinity made as bright as daylight. Despite these diffi-

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9th Inf,  
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culties, patrols reconnoitered the destroyed bridge, which had been reported passable only to find two impassable gaps, wire, and located in the stream with a steep twenty foot bank to scale on the Mouzon side. Patrols attempting to cross fell in the water and were subjected to heavy fire both from machine guns and a line of Infantry. The enemy was extremely nervous at this point, throwing up flares at every sound and firing machine guns at every shadow.

(17) State of Supply Combat Trains, only daily issue on hand.

Field Trains, two days supply on hand.

(18) Supply Officers have requisitioned for three days supply on reserve rations from the Division railhead, Field Trains at La Forge Ferme.

Operations, November 10th

At 7 hours, 10th November, Company G and H assisted the Second Engineers in placing two bridges across the Meuse near La Sartelle Ferme, while the other two companies of that battalion with B and C Companies in conjunction with attached machine gun companies assisted the crossing of two battalions of the Fifth Marines. By fire of position upon the east bank of the river at 4:15 hours, November 11th, the first battalion moved out crossing the Meuse River and took up position in support of the Fifth Marines on the eastern bank. The enemy is still pounding the roads with heavy artillery fire.

History of  
9th Inf

The Armistice took effect at 11 o'clock, 11th November. That night at dusk the regiment was relieved by the Twenty-Third Infantry and assembled in billets at Beaumont.

The Field Trains are now moving up to join the regiment in the vicinity of Beaumont.

Status of Supply Combat Trains, filled to capacity with troop rations and forage.

#### COMMENT

*not relevant*

This action of the Meuse Argonne was one of the most brilliant attacks of the war. It shows that the Allies were gaining in strength while the enemy holding out to the last stronghold on the Hindenberg line had to give up to the attackers overwhelming strength of artillery and machine gun fire.

*irrelevant + not well built up in narrative*

It is obvious why he started to fall back on his reserve positions, also his line of communications. Too much credit cannot be given the Ninth Infantry who succeeded in their mission of driving through the enemy's fortified lines to a depth of over nine kilometers, seized the heights of Bayonville, and destroyed the enemy forces on its front. Then again, with grim determination to push on, marched through the Forest of Belval under the cover of darkness by a single road and occupied the ridge near Beaumont. It impresses one with two important tactical thoughts. First, the tremendous value of initiative on the part of Colonel Van Horn, and second, how the regiment could have walked into a trap and cut off from its

line of communications. By this daring feat of the Ninth Infantry the flank troops were able to advance much faster. Rain, mud and cover of darkness afforded the American Troops during this move into the assembly position, also the night march through the woods.

For the proper serving of troops in the front line, the battalion and company kitchen section should be so located that the food can be carried to the men if the situation demands it. By proper and constant liaison with P.C. Regiment and Battalion, the Supply Company can furnish the requirements of all concerned. It is necessary that all routes to the front be reconnoitered by a mounted officer or noncommissioned officer. This was very valuable going through the different towns at night, and especially in getting the rations forward. At times we were issued too much food from the railhead, and having no place to carry or store it, we naturally passed it on to the companies who I knew never ate it all or could they carry it on the ration carts then, provided for its transportation.

Fresh beef was also issued when the troops were in the heat of battle. This meat was cooked up as soon as possible. Then again it had to be hauled along the road until a convenient place could be found to cook same. This sometimes was not satisfactory for front line troops. The Supply Company and rear elements had more fresh meat than the men in forward echelon.

The necessity of conserving reserve

on the soldier should be stressed.

23  
The regimental field train should carry or have some quick method of resupplying with reserve rations, as during this period the roads in the regimental and Division Sector were at first impassable and after November 3d were entirely impassable. Due to this fact there was some shortage of rations for two or three days. After the divisions on our left and right advanced, the roads through their areas were used for getting up rations and ammunitions and conditions improved. The troops went into battle with the full supply of ammunition which proved sufficient for all purposes, but there was a shortage of rations for two or three days and it was impossible to supply the same to the front lines. During this period the men subsisted on very scant rations and upon what was captured from the enemy and taken from the dead.

24  
The necessity of training men to handle animal or motor drawn transportation for the purpose of handling supplies for combat troops cannot be stressed too strongly.

25  
I know that if the Supply Company of the Ninth Infantry was not trained in every detail of supply and handling of animal drawn transportation, the Ninth Infantry would not have been so fortunate while maneuvering through the battle fields of France. It was a well organized and disciplined organization. The appearance of its train even during combat conditions was excellent.

## LESSONS

The lessons to be learned may be summarized as follows:

*irrelevant*

1. Contact with the enemy is most important.
2. The failure of the Germans to maintain contact with the Ninth Infantry in the Belval Forest simplified the march through the woods and their surprise at La Tuilerie Ferme.

Careful planning and preparation as to night marching when the enemy is retreating and each one being coached in the part he was to play were a big factor in this successful movement.

*not clear*

By believing that the troops had plenty of food and dumping the rations on the side of the road is a mission not fulfilled until the troops have food. On this particular rush of the Ninth Infantry through the Forest de Belval and on to Beaumont, the troops lost or cast away most of their reserve rations, which brings home the fact that they must be closely guarded by each individual. Then again, not to send more food to the troops than it can properly handle with its limited transportation on the march.

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Flour was found not suitable as a front line ration and should be held in the larger supply depots.

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Due to the rapid movement of the regiment during this phase of operations and the few roads leading north within our sector made the roads more congested with animal and motor drawn transportation. The rainy weather and the

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type of roads caused many vehicles to mire up and hold the long column for hours. The problem was to get the rations forward to the regiment, but no matter how fast or whatever happened the train could not leave the column to go ahead. On account of the slow moving field train it is necessary that the troops be abundantly supplied with reserve rations and the proper kind of vehicle to transport same. In this way the combat train which the ration cart is a part of is up with its company or battalion with enough food to forestall any delay on the part of the field train, which is usually far enough to the rear to be mixed up with the other elements on the road.

#### CONCLUSION

The Germans at the battle of the Meuse Argonne knew they were beaten when the cutting of the Sedan railroad had practically cut the German Army in two. The greater part of it was north of Sedan and if it had had any reserves they would have to come only by the round-about route through Belgium. On the other hand as our line and the British had approached nearer each other and the French line getting shorter in between, which would allow more troops for the Lorraine front, where joined with ours already there they could present an overwhelming force against the Germans on that front.

The Armistice went into effect just in time to save the Germans from this threatened

catastrophe. The high command of the German Army knew at this time that conditions back in Germany were getting worse all the time and should the war continue it would be fought on German soil.