

3-42

THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
FOURTH SECTION
COMMITTEE "H"
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

ADVANCED COURSE
1931-1932

OPERATIONS
OF
THE 37-mm GUN PLATOON,
26th INFANTRY (1ST DIVISION),
OCTOBER 1-12, 1918.

(Personal Experience of a Platoon Leader)

Captain George J. Forster, Infantry

1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Title page.	(Unpaged)
Table of contents	i
Bibliography.	ii
Marginal abbreviations used	ii
Introduction.	1
The battle.	3
Comment on First day's battle	8
The second day, October 5	9
Comment on second day's battle.	15
The remainder of the battle	16
General comment	20

MAPS

Map is a tracing of the 1:2000 map used in the operation with overlay showing gun positions of 37-mm and enemy targets.	24
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Society of the
First Division, AEF

World War Records of the 1st
Division, A.E.F. 24 volumes,
2 sets of maps.

A most complete and invaluable record.

John C. Winston

History of the First Division,
A.E.F.

Contains a running story of the division
from its organization. Touches on all
phases of every battle.

Personal Papers

MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

F.M.
26th Inf.

Field Messages of the 26th Infantry
contained in Volume XV World War Records
of the First Division A.E.F.

Op Rp
26th Inf.

Operations Report, 26th Inf., contained
in Volume XV, World War Records of the
First Division A.E.F.

INTRODUCTION

This narrative pertains to the happenings during combat of a small unit attached to a battalion.

There are no broad interpretations of Principles of War involved. Rather in the preparation of this paper the author endeavored to point out situations and conditions of battle experienced personally and which may invite consideration from the standpoint of basic principles of field service and combat principles of small units in open warfare.

The 37-mm platoon which the author commanded belonged to the 26th Infantry. The regiment fought as the right flank regiment of the 1st Division attack during the period October 1-12, 1918, in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

The regiment was habitually deployed in a column of battalions through the 12-day period of battle except in special situations. The battalions leapfrogged one another in gaining ground and taking objectives.

By way of orientation then the reader should consider himself on a battlefield occupied by a battalion with the action taking place on a front of from 300 meters to 1100 meters during the entire period of the operation, with the right flank exposed and with stubborn resistance by the enemy.

The terrain of the battlefield was heavily wooded, had deep ravines, high points for observation by the enemy and many strong points defended by machine guns, direct fire by 77-mm guns and weapons of high

angle fire. Presence of enemy 77's were numerous ^{Syn}
/ for barrage fire. Large caliber enemy guns were not
experienced.

During the period of four days just preceding the jump-off the battalion which was the assault battalion in the attack had occupied a position which included the jump-off line. During this time the troops were constantly being subjected to enemy artillery and machine gun fire. The position consisted of small groups in shell holes and fox holes. During the four days the battalion sent frequent patrols into the enemy lines and was charged with maintaining contact with the troops of our neighboring division on the right. The battalion suffered many casualties during those four days just preceding the attack.

The morale, however, it may be said was high. The comparatively easy fighting in the St. Mihiel drive in September had proven a conditioning show for the troops as well as blending them into team work in every echelon from the squad up. This association built up those essential requirements that make high morale and fighting determination and efficiency. ^d

Each battalion was commanded ^{Syn} by a captain of a little more than one year's service but all of whom had gone through the previous operations of the regiment. About 25 per cent of the enlisted men had also gone through the experience of battle. The remaining were replacements whose experience was limited to their association with these regular experienced troops and were in the St. Mihiel drive only.

The officer who relates his experience had gone through all of the operations of the 1st Division with the 26th Infantry.

THE BATTLE

We jumped off at 5:30 AM, October 4. The practice of attaching one 37-mm gun to each battalion was followed and I found myself with one gun and crew following the commander of the assault battalion (Captain B. R. Legge). We followed immediately in rear of battalion runners and telephone men. Our gun was pulled by hand ropes and we carried all the ammunition we could manage.

It was dark. It had been raining. The air was filled with fog and smoke from the enemy barrage being laid down on us. The first obstacle in our front was the ^{AU} ~~Rue~~ de Mayache, a deep and narrow winding ravine with underbrush and steep slopes.

At this point my gun got into trouble. A sheet of machine gun fire made us all hit the ground ^{Shelling down with that} and when we assembled it was found that the battalion commander had gone down into the ravine and was following the direction of the attack. A runner came back to get us but we could not get down into the ravine at the point with the 37 and did not catch up or find the battalion commander until an hour and a half later. He was on the regimental objective a distance of about 1100 ^{where on map was it} meters from the jump-off line. ✓ There were only remnants of two companies on the objective. The right flank assault company ran into enemy resistance from its exposed flank and was badly shot up. One support

company was completely made ineffective by getting caught in the ravine when enemy artillery fire dropped there. The section of our 75's artillery which was attached got caught too and they were out almost immediately. Things looked bad and as I see it now it required patience, energy, calm leadership and sound judgment to get things in shape.

Our battalion commander (Captain Legge) reported the position of his battalion to regiment but apparently the message did not get there as indicated by the exchange of the following telegrams:

"FROM REGIMENTAL COMMANDER TO C. O. 2d BN. (SUPPORT BN). 8:40 AM -- IF BN. COMDR 1st BN IS DISORGANIZED AND CANNOT ADVANCE, ASSIST HIM TO FIRST OBJECTIVE AND LEAPFROG. BE SURE TO PROTECT YOUR FLANK. (SIGNED) ERICKSON"(1)

(1) F.M. ✓
26th Inf.

In response of the foregoing message the commanding officer of the 2d Battalion went forward to see the 1st Battalion commander.

The following message was the result:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 1st Bn 26th Inf.

P.C.

Oct. 4, 18 10 AM.

C.O. 26th Inf.

Sent you sketch showing our position according to coordinates. We are on ridge across ravine where original first objective was and are delayed by machine gun nest in woods at bottom of square coordinates 31-21.

Should have been noted
on map

Request that artillery immediately place heavy fire on these woods.

(2) F.M. ↙
26th Inf.

Legge - Major." (2)

The regimental commander replied: (note hour)

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 26th Inf.

50-93

4 Oct. 18 11 AM 14 Runner

C.O. 1st

Your message requesting artillery **fire** has been telephoned to the artillery. It was received here so late that it is possible that you may have reduced the M. G. nests you refer to. I am with the 3d Bn in your rear, coordinate 5093. If you still need help call me on telephone and send runner. Make your message clearer.

(3) F.M. ↙
26th Inf

ERICKSON." (3)

Meanwhile the 2d Battalion (Support Bn) was having some difficulty, probably some flank fire. The message sent to the reserve battalion follows:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

Adj. 2d Bn 26th Inf.

Bn P.C.

Oct. 4 1918 10 10

C.O. 3d Bn. 26th

The 2d Bn has been held up. The first battalion has suffered heavy casualties, also held up. Send up some help.

A Van Lopik

2d Lt. 26th Infantry

(4) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

Adj." (4)

The regimental commander began to get anxious about his flank knowing the condition of his initial assault battalion. He sent the following message:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 26th Inf.

5093

4 Oct 18 11:35 AM 15 Messenger

C.G. 64th Brigade.

Request information as to whereabouts of Regiment on my right, supposed to be 127th Inf.

ERICKSON

(5) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

COLONEL 26th Inf." (5)

At about noon telephone communication was established between regimental P.C. and battalions. It was decided that the 2d Battalion (support) would leapfrog the 1st Battalion and continue the attack.

Captain Raymond Wortly, commanding the 2d Battalion, was wounded in the strafing received by his battalion and died later, as result of the wound. Captain R. M. Youell assumed command and came over to reconnoiter. He decided to advance by filtration and made good progress until finally delayed by machine gun fire. The artillery asked for earlier was cancelled. Patrols failed to take the strong positions held by the machine gunners and it was decided to withdraw our leading elements and have the artillery help in cleaning them out.

The commander of the 2d Battalion (Captain Youell) called for the 37 which had been with the 1st Battalion and indicated a definite machine gun post.

The gun and crew which had originally been assigned to the 2d Battalion was knocked out during the enemy firing which wounded Captain Wortly. We had joined the 2d Battalion as it came up to pass through the 1st Battalion.

It was difficult to find suitable cover but we finally crawled out into a shell hole dragging the trails and gun by the pulling ropes and took with us some brush for cover. The approximate location of our position and the enemy machine guns are indicated on the map.

Our target was in the edge of a woods about 800 yards to our right front. Three men and myself lay at the gun. I fired the first three rounds and was induced to give way to the pleading of the gunner who got on the target in about six rounds and then pumped two boxes at them. About this time a German 77 firing direct started to search the high ground from where we were firing and got in some terrible harassing fire on the riflemen of the battalion who were in most cases lying flat on the ground with no cover. A good number of them exposed themselves watching the effect of our fire. One platoon commander lying close to our position kept complaining while we were firing that in a little while we would bring down a barrage and get them all killed and it looked like he was about to be right. Shortly after we got on our target we saw Germans leave the edge of the woods and beat it to their rear. Meanwhile our own artillery had gotten on the woods and combed it very thoroughly. *Syr*

The experience in the face of that German 77 firing direct was no laughing matter. Actually the shell would burst before we would hear the report of the gun.

When our artillery stopped firing the battalion commander, Captain Youell, sent patrols and scouts forward and it was not long until the battalion had advanced north of the Exermont Ravine on line with and east of La ^{EU} Noeuville Le Comte Farm. (6) My gun crew and myself went forward with battalion headquarters but did not get another target that afternoon. The German 77 which had been firing during the advance of the 2d Battalion stopped firing as soon as the battalion found suitable cover to advance over but continued to fire intermittently for several hours, even after dark, with no apparent purpose except to harass us.

(6) Op. Rp.
26th Inf

Three abandoned enemy machine guns and four dead Germans were found lying at their guns when we passed the position. Artillery fire seemed to have done its work. Their bodies were badly torn. I made no minute inspection to judge the effect of the 37 firing but am satisfied that we did assist in overcoming their stubborn stand.

COMMENT ON FIRST DAY'S BATTLE

Outstanding in the writer's estimation the lessons to be learned from what took place are:

1. The amount of ground that was gained under the existing conditions by the use of two battalions.
2. Flank protection was of primary concern to the regimental commander.

3. Such protection increased the allotted front of the assault battalion. That responsibility placed a task on the battalion which no doubt contributed to the apparent disorganization.

4. The assault battalion was not fresh. It had been on the jump-off line for four days under the most trying conditions. Was it wise to use it as the leading battalion?

5. Field messages by runner were used until almost six hours after the battle started. The messages were clear. No uniform method of the use of coordinates but understandable.

USE OF THE 37-mm GUN

Only one gun of the 37-mm platoon was engaged on the first day and it is felt that the task performed was well done and effective against the enemy. One gun was destroyed and some of the crew killed. When the 2d Battalion passed through the 1st Battalion four members of the 2d Battalion gun crew which had been shot up brought forward their ammunition in accordance with a plan previously agreed upon should the gun be put out or should they be sent for.

The maneuver of the gun crew which fired was in accordance with the principles under which the crew was trained.

THE SECOND DAY - OCTOBER 5

The troops had a good night's rest. Not much enemy artillery fire. Regimental commander came up to front line battalion about 10:00 PM and the next

day's attack was gone over with three battalion commanders and most of the company officers of the two forward battalions.

Patrols were pushed forward and the location of the enemy was determined. It was decided that the 1st Battalion (Captain Legge) would again be the assault battalion passing through the 2d Battalion. A wire cutting detail was sent forward about midnight to cut passages through the wire in front of Hill 212.

At about 6:00 AM (October 5) the 1st Battalion pushed forward without any artillery preparation and advanced rapidly to Hill 212 about one kilometer in advance of the position of the night before. The battalion sent small groups forward and then advanced through the four paths cut in the wire.

The following message best describes the situation at 8:25 AM:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 1st Bn.

P.C. Cor. Woods Square 22-21-31-32

5 Oct 18 8.25 1 Runner

C.O. 26th Inf.

I am on my objective and organizing. We have killed a number of Germans and captured some materiel. Losses slight. The 3d Bn. should push forward as soon as possible. There is some sniping in the woods in right rear of us. We are cleaning it up.

Legge,

Major." (7)

(7) F.M.
26th Inf

At 9:00 AM the regimental intelligence officer who was with the support battalion sent the following message:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

Capt. THOMAS

2d Bn. P.C.

5 Oct 18 9 AM 21 Runner

C.O. 26th Inf.

Major Legge is on his objective and digging in. He captured several prisoners of the 52d Division. These state that the 5th GUARD Division was expected last night to relieve the 52d, and will surely come tonight.

1st Bn had light casualties this morning and are organizing their position. My O. P. is moving forward.

Thomas, Capt." (8)

(8) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

Enemy machine guns were located in the woods north of Hill 212 but there was no suitable target for the 37's. The guns were flanked out by our patrols. *where on map?*

At this point (about 10:00 AM) it was decided to pass the 3d Battalion (Captain Frasier) through the 1st Battalion. The 3d had been in Division Reserve and had not yet been engaged. When the leading elements of the 3d Battalion attempted to advance from the north edge of the woods north of Hill 212 they were checked by heavy enemy machine gun fire from the right flank. The situation was telephoned to regimental commander who gave the following instructions:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 20th Inf

P.C. 3209

5 Oct 18 10:40 AM 22 Runner

C.O. 3d Bn.

Do not Advance Until You get orders from ME.

ERICKSON

If You Have Advanced Dig in.

(9) F.M.
26th Inf

Do not Advance Until Your protective Barrage Begins. (9)

The 37-mm platoon commander made a reconnaissance along the northern edge of the woods in front of Hill 212. Machine gun fire was coming from the high ground across the ravine but on account of fog the machine gun position could not be located. ^{AN}Effort was made to take a 37 through the woods but it was impossible, on account of thick underbrush and a mass of wild vines. Visibility was poor but the machine gun fire continued to sweep the edge of the woods intermittently.

We finally set up a gun at the edge of the woods as indicated in the map and waited for the fog to lift to find our target. The platoon commander of the 37^{-mm} sent Sgt. Rimstead to the northeastern edge of the woods and in about a half hour he came back very much excited and stated that he located the machine gun. The target is shown on the map. Finally the sun broke through the mist and we laid on the point of the high ground and fired about fifty rounds at that point. It was impossible to actually see the machine gun crew from any position and Sgt. Rimstead went over to his former observation post and reported

back that they evidently hauled out. Effort was made to definitely locate other guns that were firing at us but we could not do so. We did fire at possible locations along the edge of the Bois De Moncy. One of the 37-mm gun crew, Private Boyce, was killed by a machine gun bullet while serving the gun. There was no shelter excepting the iron shield of the gun. The crew were constantly in the path of the machine gun fire and it is remarkable that more men were not killed. Most of the crew were nearby lying on the ground and in the fox holes which they dug.

The enemy's resistance became stronger as the mist lifted and at noon no advance had been made. It was simply impossible to go forward with the heavy fire from the flank. The support battalion sent patrols over there to clean them out but failed. / *Hyun*

At this point the following messages were exchanged between the regimental commander (Colonel Erickson) and C. O. 3d Battalion (Captain Frasier):
"C.O. 26th Infantry

3209

5 Oct 18 12 noon 24 Runner

I am now calling for the rolling barrage to start as soon as possible. Follow this **Barrage**, when it starts, without further orders, and notify me when you reach 2d Objective.

(10) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

ERICKSON." (10)

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 3d Bn 26th Inf

North edge of woods in front of hill 212.

Nov. * 3/18 12/20 runner

C.O. 26th Inf.

1. Understood.

2. We will go thru if such a thing is possible.

Casualties have been fairly heavy. Lost several men getting into position. Guns had remained in concealment in woods north of hill 212.

3. If 32d were fully up on our right, it would go much better.

* Should read "Oct." -

L.S. Frasier

S.G.W.

Maj. 26th Inf." (11)

(11) F.M.
26th Inf

The 3d Battalion finally advanced about 4:00 PM after the 127th Infantry of the 32d Division came up along side and cleaned out the flank fire and at dusk we were stopped by strong resistance from enemy machine guns and artillery fire from Hill 272.

The battalion did not reach its objective for the day and it was decided to have the first battalion (support Major Legge) make a flanking movement which is described in the following message:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 1st Bn.

P.C. Same indicated in sketch

5 Oct. 18

C.O. 26th Inf

The 3d Bn. was unable to reach its objective because of strong machine gun and infantry resistance on commanding ground.

I am supporting 3d Bn. as indicated on sketch.

I have sent Capt. Manning in command of 2 companies to accomplish the flanking movement. No report from him as yet. The men need food and water. Request 10,000 rounds M.G. ammunition,

Legge

Major Comdg." (12)

(12) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

COMMENT ON SECOND DAY'S BATTLE

This day's fighting was vicious in the extreme, the enemy resisting by strong points held with machine guns. Attention is invited to the following:

1. Effect of machine gun fire to defend by selecting strong points and field of fire.
2. Slowness of the battle.
3. Difficult to coordinate attack with neighboring troops belonging to another division.
4. Ability of troops to attack on successive days in the assault.
5. The deployment of the two front line battalions should be noted on the map.

USE OF THE 37-mm GUN

Like on the first day one gun got into the fight. When the third battalion advanced the battalion commander directed that the 37-mm go to the flank and the high ground occupied by the machine gun which was fired on was chosen. It controlled the edge of the BOIS DE MONCY and covered the front taken up by the two companies of the first battalion. One disbanded enemy machine gun was found and it may be that the fire of the 37-mm that morning drove them out. There were no dead Germans.

THE REMAINDER OF THE BATTLE

The 1st and 3d Battalions to which the remaining two 37-mm guns were attached remained in the positions occupied on the night of October 5. No attack was ordered but each battalion sent out frequent patrols and advanced the front lines wherever an advantage might be gained.

On the morning of the 7th, the 37-mm with the 3d Battalion responded to frequent calls of the battalion commander to fire on points supposed to be occupied by enemy machine guns. No positive targets were found.

Whenever the 37-mm fired it was not long before the Germans would reply in the direction of our position with their high angle firing weapon from hill 272 and hill 263. As a result our riflemen received this fire and we suffered some casualties. The men felt harassed and it was decided to suspend firing the 37-mm until a definite target could be picked up.

The other 37-mm gun covering the two companies of the 1st Battalion in the Bois de Mondy spotted a German machine gun crew, the gun drawn by a horse and fire was opened up on them. They passed into the woods before suitable adjustment could be made on them. This single instance of firing also brought fire from the German high angle guns, killing several of our riflemen and three of the 37-mm crew.

On the night of the 7th neither of the two 37-mm guns had more than five men to man them.

On the 8th of October orders came from division to attack at 8:30 AM on the 9th. Our mission was to take HILL 263, and assist the 32d Division in cleaning up Le PETIT BOIS and BOIS de la ROMAGNE, north of HILL 263. (13)

(13) F.O. 49,
1st Div

It is interesting to note the strength of the three battalions on the night of October 8 as reported to the 2d Brigade by the 26th Regimental Commander:

1st Bn. incl. all units:	8 officers	200 men
2d Bn. " " "	10 "	419 "
3d Bn. " " "	7 "	260 "

ERICKSON

H. J. Erickson

Col. 26 Inf. (14)

(14) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

It was decided to attack with the 2d Battalion as the assault followed by the remnants of the 3d Battalion. The 1st Battalion had been engaged continuously since October 4 and it became the Division Reserve. (15)

(15) F.M. ✓
26th Inf.

On the 8th while preparation was being made for the attack our regimental commander sent a field message from the front line recommending the promotion of a battalion commander. The message follows:

"U.S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

C.O. 26 Inf

P.C.

Oct 8-18 11:00 AM 39 Mtd Orderly

C.G. 1st Division A.E.F.

Strongly recommend that Capt. R.M. Youell, 26th Inf who has commanded his battalion in an exceptionally able manner during the present battle be promoted

without delay to Major. He has been previously recommended three (3) times. Would like to have his promotion reach him on the field. There is a vacancy in the regiment in the grade of Major.

Erickson." (16)

(16) F.M. ✓
26th Inf

✓ The regimental commander directed that one 37-mm gun accompany the 2d Battalion in the attack and that the other be forwarded with the 3d Battalion. These dispositions were made with difficulty because both battalion Posts of Command moved out before gun crews could fall in with them.

The platoon commander went forward with the 2d Battalion gun. We followed the battalion telephone wire. The going was slow, with three men pulling the gun and two carrying ammunition.

There was a path overgrown with brush and the telephone line followed a winding route often 50 yards off the path and then back on it. The leading elements of the [?]2d Battalion coming up as the support were close at our heels. The German artillery fire was extremely heavy and we lost one ammunition carrier going up the side of Hill 263 which had been cleaned out by riflemen. We remained there for the entire day because it was the only ground from which we could fire. We had a commanding position but could find no mission to perform. ✕

From this stage of the battle the platoon commander found himself acting as scout officer for the 2d Battalion.

9
On the 10th the front line battalions exploited the successes of the attack of October by pushing forward behind combat patrols.

On the morning of the 11th the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion sent the 37-mm platoon commander forward to report conditions on the front line.

The following message was the result:

"Major Legge:-

11:02 AM.

I am at Pt. 85.3- in square 25 at edge of woods H Company of the 28th is here waiting for Major Frazier to relieve them. Our H and I Companies (26th) are forming in the woods. Frazier's adjutant is here waiting for the Major to bring up the other two companies. Men are walking in front of woods and are not drawing machine gun fire. I saw Major Uhls* at 10:30 and he was being relieved by a battalion of the 362d Inf. He was about ready to come over and cover Frazier. Uhls* says that the Germans are still in the trenches at his right rear. Machine gun fire is coming from that direction. Apparently there is no resistance in front of where I am. Captain Ware of 2d Bat. 28th went forward with patrols about 800 meters and met machine gun fire from roads running diagonally through square 15. I will remain here in observation. Send me two or three runners and I will keep you informed what is going on but I must have runners.

Forster.

Capt. Ware of 28th sent a report to his Reg. Commander. Grosland, Frazier's adjutant says he has no telephone at all. (17)

(17) F.M.
26th Inf

*Major R.M. Youell, Comdg. 2d
Bn. 26th Inf. - B.R.L.

7

The 37-mm guns did no firing after October 9. When orders reached the front line at about noon on the 11th, the 37-mm platoon got permission from the battalion commanders to get an early start for the rear and with the help of two attached men from the rifle companies the crews of both guns pulled their guns about three kilometers before we reached the wagon train where we found our mules.

GENERAL COMMENT

A summary of the lessons gained for the first two days has already been given.

For the period October 7 to the hour of the relief of the regiment there was unlimited opportunity to visualize innumerable events and conditions that come under the head of Field Service and tactical principles of the Infantry Battalion and Regiment.

Depleted units were called upon to perform tactical missions and were recognized as such in the field orders, even though single battalions had no more officers and men than the strength of a company.

There was constant opportunity for exploitation.

The withdrawal of two battalions from the line on the night of the 8th and moving them 1500 yards to the flank for another attack at 8:30 AM, showed the value of training in night marches.

10 16 There was a similar movement on the morning of the 19th when two battalions of the 26th made a side-stepping movement into the zone of a neighboring regiment. It is true that the battalions were small but that did not minimize the responsibility for the front assigned.

Every possible discomfort and hardship of battle confronted the troops. Including the four days before the jump the troops lived in the open for 20 days with no cover except their shelter halves which were never pitched.

sign
The troops ate but two meals a day. A hot meal would come up at dusk and details were sent several hundred yards behind the front lines to get it. The same for water. Two men with as many as twenty canteens strung on a pole would go for water. Another meal would come up between two and three o'clock in the morning. There were no meals between 3:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Water details frequently drew water from streams which were contaminated. Fifty per cent of our troops were complaining of disentary for a period of five days after we left the lines. The practical use of lister bags was out of the question. ✓

not shown
The battle afforded the use of Engineer troops as riflemen and they did a good job. One whole battalion held Hill 269 for a period of three days until relieved by other troops. *Sign*

It should be noted that exterior rear battalions were used as division reserve for protection of the division flanks. Interior rear battalions were brigade reserve.

The enemy in our front was never large in numbers. Well selected machine gun positions and observation posts put up the strong defense.

There was marked evidence of leadership. The regimental commander himself kept pushing his command

post up onto the leading battalions and made his presence felt by frequent messages to the front lines.

During the time that the battalions were actually engaged in combat they were fortunate enough to have the same battalion commanders which was a great advantage for the [?]perse~~cution~~ and continuity of the battle.

See / In this attack and previous ones when men fell during the actual advance there was no pause by the nearest man to help him. Medical corps men while not numerous took care of them. It was the natural impulse of battle to push forward or follow.

Following the relief on the night of October 11-12, the troops marched a distance of fifty-five kilometers before trucks could be supplied to take them to a rest area. The marching was done over the roads in Argonne Forest, and we encountered steep grades. One truck followed the column to pick up sitting cases of the sick who were forced to fall out.

Behind the leadership in the regiment in all grades there was ever present a division spirit which had grown up since the arrival of the division in France in June, 1917. Replacements coming to the regiment to my own knowledge felt their important role. They heard of the division in the rear and were willing to accept the help of the seasoned veterans. Their word to the newcomer was law.

THE 37-mm GUN

The value of the 37-mm gun as an accompanying weapon was fully justified by its performance in the attack.

At no time during the attack was the gun used as a defensive weapon except that the guns were constantly in position for possible targets.

The advance of the gun by pulling with ropes *Sign* is entirely practicable. Husky men should be considered, however, in the make-up of the personnel for gun crews.

The **training of the crews to act** independently in battle without officer supervision for selection *Sign* of fire positions and fire direction should always be emphasized.

Every opportunity should be taken to make a gun section feel a part of a certain battalion. This *Sign* can be accomplished in the period of maneuver training period and field exercises.

COTE DE CHATIGNON

Lt. FORSTER
OP

LINE
← Oct. 11

Bois de Romagny

COTE 268

Petit Bois

JUMP OFF Oct. 9th

Bois de Moncy

272

274

275

276

HRIETHAL

FRONT LINE 7:30 A.M.
Oct. 5

FRONT LINE 5:30 P.M.
Oct. 4

1st BN. 7:30 AM

RAU

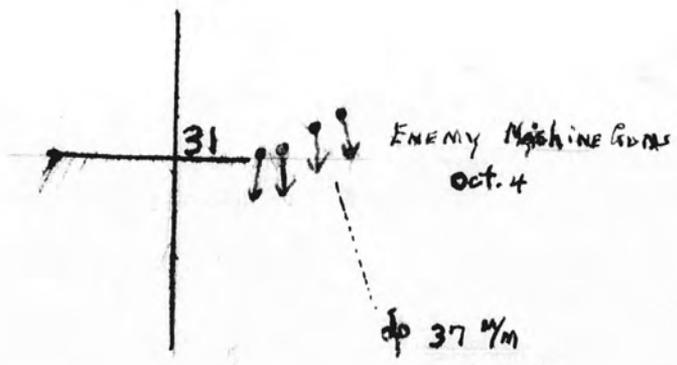
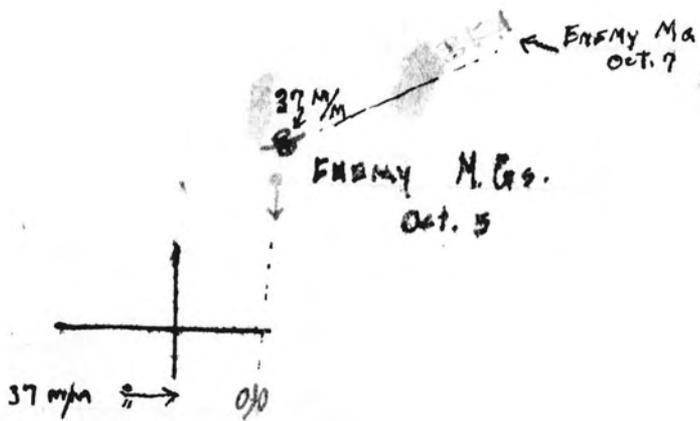
26th
INS

JUMP OFF LINE 6:30 AM Oct. 4

49

SCALE 1:20,000





37 M/M LAYOVER

49

Capt. Forster