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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SUBJECTS  
MILITARY HISTORY SECTION  
FORT BENNING, GA.

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ADVANCED OFFICERS' COURSE  
1922 - 1923.

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 28th U.S. INFANTRY, FIRST  
DIVISION, FROM NOV. 5th TO NOV. 11th, 1918.

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8. Statement of Personal Experience by Captain C. R. Huebner, Infantry, then Lieutenant Colonel, Second-in-command, 28th Infantry.
9. Statement of Personal Experience by Captain W. F. Lee, Infantry, then Major, Commanding 3rd Battalion, 28th Infantry.
10. Statement of Personal Experience by Captain Wm. G. Livesay, Infantry, then Adjutant and Operations Officer, 28th Infantry.
11. Statement of Personal Experience by Captain Russel Baker, Infantry, then Company Commander in the 166th Infantry, 42nd Division.
12. Statement of Personal Experience by 1st Lieutenant Paul D. Carter, Infantry, then Company Commander, Company K, 28th Infantry.
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The Operations of the 28th U.S. Infantry, 1st Division,  
from November 5th to November 11th, 1918.

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I. NARRATIVE OF THE OPERATION.

1. Introduction.- On the 26th of September, 1918, the First American Army began its attack on the Meuse-Argonne front. The object of the operation was to break the main line of the Sedan - Mezieres railroad. This was a four track line and served as the main artery of supply for the German forces on the major part of the western front; it was also very important to the Germans for rapid strategical movements of troops (1).

(1) Final  
Report of  
General  
Pershing  
p. 44.

The First Division which had been engaged in the line during the first part of October was again called into service as Corps Reserve of the Fifth Corps on November 1st. (2). During the period that the Division was in reserve the advance of the assaulting troops was so rapid that the Division experienced great difficulty in keeping within supporting distance. The congested condition of the roads made it necessary

(2) History  
First Div.  
pp. 222-223.

(3) History  
of the A.E.F.  
Thomas, p. 342.

that many of the marches be made across fields (3). The troops were therefore worn and tired when on November the 5th, the Division received orders from the Fifth Corps to relieve the 80th Division of the First



Corps along the Stonne - Beaumont road and to attack  
(4) History, in the direction of Mouzon at 5:30 A.M. November 6th.  
First Div.,  
p. 227. (4).

(5) History, The 28th Infantry formed one of the regiments of  
First Div., the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division; the 26th Infantry form-  
p. 1. ed the other regiment. (5). During actual operations  
companies C and D, of the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion,  
(6) History, were attached to the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, respec-  
3rd M.G.Bn. tively, of the 28th Infantry, (6) and the Regimental  
pp. 9 and 30. Machine Gun Company was attached to the 1st Battalion,  
thereby giving one machine gun company to each battal-  
ion. (7).

## 2. Location of the Regiment on November 5th, 1918.-

On November 5th, the 28th Infantry, less Company E,  
was bivouacked in the southeastern edge of the Bois de  
la Folie, about three miles east of Buzancy. For pro-  
tection from enemy air observation all units were under  
cover in the woods. Company E, detached from the regi-  
ment on November 4th for duty at Brigade Headquarters,  
was bivouacked at Fosse. (8).

## 3. Orders received to enter the line.- About 2:30

P.M. November 5th the regiment received a warning no-  
tice stating that the Division would relieve the 80th  
Division in line that night, and that orders for the  
movement would be issued later. (9). Accordingly, ar-  
rangements were made for the movement: troops were giv-

(8) Official  
Report of  
Regimental  
Commander.  
(9) Warning  
Notice for  
F.O. No. 61,  
1st Div.

and ammunition trains. It lead through thick woods and over low marshy ground. The shelling in this area had been particularly violent and the roadbed was filled with shell holes and fallen trees; in some places it hardly resembled a road. The soil was a clay formation and it had been churned to a mire; in many places the mud reached half way to the knees. The fields and ditches bordering the road were filled with water. The night was unusually dark, and when the woods were entered it was impossible to see more than a few feet. When the regiment entered the woods north of Neuart it was marching in the area of hostile shelling, but owing to the darkness of the night and the difficulty in keeping contact, the column of squads was maintained with practically no distance between units. Contact between units was maintained by connecting files marching so close together that in reality they formed a column marching in single file. An effort was made to maintain the column of squads, but owing to the condition of the road the column automatically formed a column of twos in many places. It can easily be seen that the road space occupied by the regiment varied constantly, and at times stretched out almost indefinitely. Many halts were necessary on account of the congested traffic and for the column to close up. Therefore, the rest periods were few and a comparatively steady rate of march was maintained.

en a hot meal, packs were made up, and a tentative march order issued designating the order of march of the regiment. The Field and Combat Trains were ordered to remain in the Bois de la Folie during the night and move forward the next day. By 4:30 P.M. all arrangements were complete; the regiment was in readiness and awaiting receipt of the order giving the route of march. (10).

(10)Observa-  
tion of  
writer.

At 5:00 P.M. the order, in the form of a written message, was received. The command was to march at once to the vicinity of Beaumont via Nouart - La Forge Farm - Beaumont. The Regimental Commander was directed to report to the Brigade Commander at La Forge Farm, as the regiment

passed that place, for orders as to the exact destination and mission of the regiment. (11). On receipt of the order the regiment was put in motion in a very few moments.

(11)Official  
Report of  
Regimental  
Commander.

No reconnaissance of routes was made. (12).

(12)Observa-  
tion of

writer. Ver-  
ified by Major  
Hammond and  
Capt. Lee

4. The march to the front.- The march proved to be exceedingly difficult. It had been raining for several days and the roads were very muddy and slippery. Difficulty was encountered in Nouart and some time was lost, owing to the narrow streets and the congestion of traffic, which was caused by units of the 2nd Division and the 80th Division also passing through the town. After Nouart was cleared the roads for some distance were fairly good and the traffic was not heavy. As the regiment neared La Forge Farm, however, the road again became congested with artillery

(12a)Observa-  
tion of  
writer, veri-  
fied by Maj.  
Hammond and  
Capt. Lee.

The average rate of march was about one and one-third miles per hour. (12a).

When the regiment reached La Forge Farm orders were received to the effect that the 1st Division would attack in the direction of Mouzon on the morning of the 6th of November, the 2nd Brigade on the right, with the 26th Infantry in the assault echelon and the 28th Infantry in brigade reserve. The 28th Infantry was to occupy a position in the woods two miles west of Beaumont and south of

(13)Field  
Order No.61,  
1st Division

the Beaumont-Stonne road. (13). (See general map, Plate 1.)

As the head of the column neared Beaumont it was found ~~that a bridge in Beaumont over which the column would have to pass~~ had been destroyed and that the exits of the vil-

(14)Official  
Report of  
the Regimen-  
tal Command-  
er.

lage were being shelled by guns in position on the heights across the Meuse. (14). It was evident that it would be difficult to get across the stream, and impossible to pass

through the town without casualties. The column was halted with its head near Muasote Farm, about one mile south of Beaumont. Enemy observation from the line of hills across the river prohibited an exposed light to study the map. However, by sitting down and placing the map and a candle between the knees and then wrapping a blanket closely around (forming a tent of the blanket), it was possible to study the map at length without exposing a light and inviting enemy shell fire. (15).

(15)Obser-  
vation of  
writer.



The map revealed that by marching across country in a northwesterly direction for two miles the regiment would reach the position prescribed. The Regimental Commander thus had two lines of action open to him. He could continue following the prescribed road and reach his position with practically no difficulty other than that to be encountered in passing through the village. Or, he could march across country and avoid the shell fire in the town. The main disadvantage of the second plan was that the movement of the column would be slower and marching much more difficult. However, as there was sufficient time, the second plan was adopted. Accordingly, a compass bearing was taken, and as a check on the distance, the map showed three unimproved roads running directly across the line of march. After the third road was crossed the regiment would be near its destination. The darkness of the night made it impossible to point out land marks to march on, so the compass bearing was given to each battalion commander in case the column became bro-

(16)Observa-  
tion of writ-  
er,verified  
by Maj.Hammond  
& Capt.Lee

ken. (16). The regiment left the road and started the march, following the compass bearing. The fields over which the column passed were wet and soggy; they had not been cultivated for some time and were filled with a small growth of weeds and brush; in addition to this, there were numerous ditches and shell holes to stumble into. Two or three wire fences had to be cut before the column could

the Germans in taking supplies to the front. The regiment was <sup>marching</sup> in the right direction and had only a short distance further to go before reaching the designated position. By the time the officer rejoined the column with the information gained it was daylight. (20).

(20) Observation of writer.

Directly in the line of march was a large open hill under observation from the heights across the Meuse. It was possible to avoid this hill only by going some distance out of the way. However, as the hill was not being

~~shelled at this time~~, and as it was nearing the hour for the regiment to be in position, it was decided to cross directly over the hill. In order to save time, it was

decided to maintain the same formation with increased distances between platoons until compelled to extend. (21).

(21) Observation of writer, verified by Maj. Hammond.

The hill was crossed in column of squads with about 50 paces between platoons and 100 paces between companies. Strange to say, not a shell was fired at the column, and so far as it was possible to tell, the movement was not observed. (22).

(22) Observation of writer, verified by Capt. Lee.

The march was continued and the approximate position of the regiment was reached at 7:00 A.M. (23). The battalions took cover in the woods and a staff officer was dispatched to locate the command post of the 26th Infantry.

(23) History 38th Inf. p.34.

Following a trail running due north through the woods for about 600 yards, he ran directly into the command post of that regiment. He reported to the Brigade Commander by

progress. After the regiment had marched about one mile dawn began to approach and visibility became better. The bodies of many dead Germans were found in the fields, mute evidence of the fierce struggle the day before. The enemy was shelling the area through which the column was passing at this time, and the distances between units were extended. However, only two men and one machine gun mule were killed while passing through the field. (17) (18).

(17) Official  
Report of  
Regimental  
Commander.

(18) Obser-  
vation of  
writer ver-  
ified by

At last the third road was reached and the Regimental Commander thought he should be very near the designated po-

sition. Dawn was breaking and ground forms were visible for some distance. The column was halted for a rest and a study of the map and terrain was made. They did not check, and it was impossible to determine the exact location of the column. As is always the case when you are in doubt as to your exact location, things become all the more indistinct and doubtful. A possibility presented itself of the wrong azimuth having been taken, resulting in the column marching in the wrong direction. The Colonel decided that the best thing to do was to halt in the present location until oriented. Accordingly, one of the officers of the regimental staff was sent to follow the road in the direction of Beaumont. He was unable to orient himself until he had almost reached the edge of the town. (19). It was discovered that instead of the three roads shown on the map, there were four, a new one having been made by

(19) Personal  
experience  
of writer.

(23a) Personal  
experience  
of writer.

the telephone at the 26th Infantry command post, that the regiment was in position. (23a).

The regiment had marched a total of 19 miles, 17 miles of which was over a very muddy and congested road through the pitch dark night, and the other 2 miles across country by compass bearing, and had arrived in position at the hour designated. (24).

(24) Official  
Report of the  
Regimental  
Commander.

5. The Day of November 6th.- The 26th Infantry advanced from a line of departure along the Beaumont - Storme road with two battalions in the assault and one in regimental reserve. It advanced to its objective, meeting very little resistance. By noon the two battalions were established on a defensive position in the woods west and south of Villemonttry, with patrols exploiting the front. These patrols entered Mouzon and Villemonttry on the banks of the Meuse. The 28th Infantry was not called on for any special mission, and remained in the woods west of Beaumont throughout the day as Brigade reserve. (25). Brigade Headquarters was established at La Thibaudme farm during the morning. (26). Company E, 28th Infantry, which had been detached from the regiment at Bois de la Folie, left Fosse at 3:00 A.M., 6th November, and arrived in the woods west of Beaumont and joined its battalion about 3:00 P.M.

(25) Official  
Report of  
Comdg. Gen.,  
2nd Inf. Brig.

(26) Observa-  
tion of writ-  
er.

(27) Official  
Report of the  
Regimental  
Commander.

that day. (27).

Wire communication was established with the 26th



Infantry soon after arrival in position, and arrangements were made to connect with the brigade through the 26th Infantry switchboard. When the command post of the 26th Infantry moved forward the 28th Infantry communications platoon took over the switchboard already estab-

(28) Observation of writer, transferring equipment to save trouble. (28).  
er.

It rained at frequent intervals throughout the day, and by 3:00 P.M. it had developed into a slow, steady

(29) Personal experience of drizzle. (29). Orders were sent to the field train to  
Capt. Lee.

move forward to the woods south of Beaumont and send food on carts to the location of the regiment. On account of the condition of the roads it was thought that it would not be possible to get the ration carts forward very early that night. However, as a further advance was not expected, the 37mm and machine gun carts were sent to meet the ration carts to expedite the delivery of food forward to the troops. (30). The men and officers arranged their bivouacs for the night, obtaining such shelter as was possible from the rain. A bed of leaves, even though wet, when heated by the warmth of the body makes a very comfortable place to rest and sleep, in time of war. Fires, of course, were prohibited throughout the advanced area, as at night any light would draw shell fire. The regimental command post was established at the base of a large tree, and after considerable trouble a place was arranged

(31) Observation of writer.

for the commander, and one or two of his staff officers, to have a light after nightfall to study any orders that might be received. (31).

6. Orders for a Night March.- The regiment did not get to stay in its bivouac that night, for about 4:00 P.M., when they had just settled down for the night, a telephonic order came from the Brigade Commander. It was, in effect, as follows: "The Brigade is going on a long night march. March at once on the Beaumont - Stenne road towards Stenne. Report in person to me at the cross-roads

at La Bagnell for orders. The 26th Infantry will be withdrawn and will follow you in column." The Brigade Commander was informed that the food for the regiment was within a very short distance at that time, and it was suggested that the men be fed before marching. The reply was, "March at once; disregard the food". So, when the ration carts arrived they found only a man waiting to tell them that

(32) Official Report Comdg. Gen. 2nd Inf. Brigade. the regiment had moved on and it would be impossible to reach them with food that night. (32) (33).

(33) Observation of writer, verified by Maj. Hammond. The regiment was marching in a very few moments, marching without the expected cooked food, marching they knew not where. (34). The 37mm and machine gun carts sent for food had not yet returned, so these weapons had to be carried by hand. The carts did not rejoin the regiment that

(35)Official night. (35). The Colonel, accompanied by the Lieutenant Report of the Regimental Colonel of the regiment and two mounted orderlies, rode Commander.

(36)Personal forward at once and reported to the Brigade Commander as experience of directed. (36). Maj. Hammond.

La Bagnell was an old tavern situated at the cross-roads about four and one-half miles west of Beaumont. In the center of the crossroads, in front of the building, a huge mine had been exploded, making a hole about thirty or forty feet across and half as many feet deep. The building was an old stone structure and was partially destroyed

by the explosion of the mine. It made a suitable place for the Brigade Commander to issue his orders, as it was possible to have a light in the building. (37).

(37)Observation of writer.

The situation as explained by the Brigade Commander was, in effect, as follows: The Corps Commander had directed the Division to march on Sedan to assist in capturing that city the following morning. The plan of the Division Commander was to march on a wide front, arrive on the hills southwest of the city, and attack at daylight.

(38). The Division order directed the march to be made in five columns as follows, from east to west:

(38)History, First Div., p.231.

"Column 1: 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, by the road Autrecourt - Remilly - Wadelincourt.

Column 2: 16th Infantry (less one battalion) and Company A, 1st Engineers, by the road Pourron -

Autrecourt - Raucourt - Haracourt - Thelonne -  
Noyers.

Column 3: 18th Infantry (less one battalion) by  
the road Pourron - Autrecourt - Raucourt - Mai-  
soncelle - Bulson - Chaumont , thence north.

Column 4: 28th Infantry and Company D, 1st Engi-  
neers, by the road Stonne - Chemery - Chehery -  
Frenois.

Column 5: 26th Infantry, by the road Stonne -  
Chemery - Omicourt - Harnagne - St. Martin.

The 6th Field Artillery was ordered to follow the 18th  
Infantry; the 7th Field Artillery to follow the 28th infan-  
try; a battalion of the 5th Field Artillery to follow

(39) Field  
Order No. 63,  
First Div.

each of the columns 2, 3, and 4." (39). No provision  
was made for contact between columns; they were to meet  
on the position southwest of Sedan.

Neither the exact location of the enemy, nor that of  
our own troops in the line of march was definitely known,  
but our own front line was believed to be generally about  
three miles north of the Beaumont - Stonne road. The plan  
of the Brigade Commander was to pass through the enemy  
line, marching in column of route with an advance guard,  
pushing through resistance with as little extension as  
possible, with the object of deploying on the heights  
about one mile southwest of Sedan and attacking that city



(44) Personal  
experience  
of writer,  
verified by  
Capt. Carter.

detail than is usual with the ordinary advance guard order. He prescribed that the point should consist of one squad with two automatic riflemen attached. This gave the point three automatic rifles; the regiment was equipped with the French Chauchat rifle, and the regular organization gave one to each squad. (44). The advance party (one platoon, less one squad) was to follow the point at about 100 yards. The support (one company, less one platoon) was to follow at about 200 yards; the reserve to follow at about 300 yards. Double connecting files were

~~provided between units, to permit of a steady communication~~

vals. The main body was directed to follow the advance guard at about 300 yards. The advance guard formation was to be taken up at Stonne. It took about thirty minutes for the battalion commander to issue his orders and

(45) Personal  
experience of  
writer, verified by  
Capt. Lee.

get the command in readiness to march. (45).

The regimental commander, realizing the almost superhuman effort it would require to get the regiment into position, gave orders to the battalion commanders to inform, not only all officers but, as far as possible, all the enlisted men of the nature and object of the operation, and the effect it would have on the German Army if successful. The regimental commander rode along the column and told many of the men the object of the operation. It is

(45a) Personal  
experience of  
Maj. Hammond.

believed that this materially helped the morale of the men.

(45a).

(40) Personal at daybreak. (40)  
experience  
of writer.

After the regimental commander received his orders he dispatched a messenger to the regimental operations officer with directions to report to him at the farm. When this officer arrived, the Colonel explained the situation and mission of the regiment and gave him instructions as follows: "The 3rd Battalion will form the advance guard for the regiment; the 1st and 2nd Battalions will form the main body. You will accompany the point of the advance guard, and see that the column follows the roads indicated. While the column is marching to this point make a very careful study of the map and fix it thoroughly in your mind, as all maps, orders, messages, etc. must be destroyed at this point. The regiment has 14 miles to march before dawn, and you will be responsible for the right roads being followed." (41)

(41) War Diary of writer dated Nov. 10, 1918.

When the regiment arrived at the crossroad at about 8:00 P.M., the battalion commanders were assembled in the building, and orders based upon the above plan were issued. Immediately after the Colonel had issued his order, the battalion commander, 3rd Battalion, assembled his officers at the head of the column and issued his advance guard order. It was a very complete order, following the form of the five paragraph order prescribed in Field Service Regulations, and provided for a support and reserve. (42).

(42) Personal experience of writer.

(43) Personal Company K formed the support. (43). Owing to unusual situation, the battalion commander issued the order in more

7. The March on Sedan.- The road to Stonne was a hard surface road, and was in good condition except for occasional shell and mine craters. The traffic was light. After leaving the main road, however, difficulties were encountered. The roads were made of dirt, and were muddy and filled with water. The men were already worn physically and mentally; they were hungry; their rain-soaked packs began to feel unberable on their backs, many of which were discarded by the roadside. (46). The Headquarters Company threw away all their equipment except one 37mm gun. The entire company carried this gun; it ~~was carried by two men at the head of the company until~~ they became exhausted; it was then passed on to the next two men in rear and so on through the company until it reached the end, when it was again started at the head of the company. The machine gun companies carried their equipment in a similar manner. (47). The men marched as in a dream and the instant the column halted they sank down in the mud and were instantly asleep.

Two bridges had been destroyed by mines, and this materially delayed the progress of march. At one of these bridges the entire regiment crossed the stream in single file over a narrow foot log. At the other it was possible to march in column of twos. A short distance north of Artaise the regiment halted for almost an hour waiting

(46) History,  
First Div.,  
p.232.

(47) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Huebner

(48) Official for the 26th Infantry to join the column. (48).

Report of the  
Regimental  
Commander.

When the point of the advance guard started down the long slope leading to the valley in which Chemery is located, a light was observed in the town and noise of considerable movement was heard. The point became tense, expecting to be challenged at any moment. The men looked over their rifles and adjusted their equipment for instant action; word was passed back that they were nearing what was thought to be the enemy position. The men had been fighting the mud in the road, their packs on their backs, and many intangible things that it would do no good to

curse, but out there a short way was something upon which they could wreak their vengeance - something that would afford them the satisfaction of striking back. Unconsciously the pace was quickened; they were eager to close with the enemy. It is difficult to say whether it occasioned a sense of relief or disappointment when it was discovered that the lights and noises were made by units

(49) Personal experience of the 42d Division. (49). The 28th Infantry column was writer.

marching west through Chemery and a column of artillery and ammunition trains of the 42d Division was marching north through the town. Considerable difficulty was encountered in passing the columns through one another. An officer was stationed at the street intersection to supervise the crossing, but no systematic arrangement was worked out, the foot troops of the 28th Infantry filtering



through as they could. At the northwestern exit of the village the road led up a very steep hill, at the foot of which a mine had been exploded, completely destroying the road. This necessitated leaving the road and finding a path around through the buildings. The advance guard passed about two miles beyond the town and halted for almost an hour to allow the rear elements of the column to close up. By the time the column cleared the town and was again on the march it was early in the morning of the 7th. The advance guard formation was maintained. Occasional bursts of rifle and machine gun fire could be heard in the front and directly on both flanks. From this it was known that at last the enemy positions were not far away. (50).

(50) Personal  
experience  
of writer,  
verified by  
Capt. Lee.

8. The End of The Night March.- At 7:00 A.M. the advance party emerged from the woods south of Chehery. Before it lay a long, comparatively narrow valley resembling a huge arena. The ground descended gradually from the edge of the woods to Chehery at the floor of the valley; the level ground was about 1500 yards wide and extended north from Chehery about two miles to the village of Chevenges. North of Chevenges the ground ascended gradually to the heights overlooking Sedan, the city made famous in 1870. Except for the narrow passes at the entrance and exit of the stream which flowed north generally along the western edge, the valley was completely surrounded by wooded hills

rising about 100 feet over the level of the stream. The Bois de la Marfee covered the hill at the northeastern end and furnished an excellent position for machine guns. The road ran generally along the center and was bordered on each side by rows of ~~small~~ trees. The valley was fertile and intensely cultivated. A number of the inhabitants were still in the villages and had placed white flags on the housetops as a request that the troops not fire into the

towns. These flags were respected by the Americans, but

(51) Personal  
experience of  
writer, veri-  
fied by Capt.  
Lee & Capt. Car-  
ter.

When the advance party emerged from the woods it was fired upon by long range machine gun fire from the high ground east of Chehery and from a position near Chevenges. The advance halted just within the edge of the wood and the regimental commander, who was with the advance guard commander at this time, issued his order for the attack. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to attack with two companies in the assault echelon and two companies in support; the 2nd Battalion was to remain in reserve in the woods south of Chehery until ordered forward. The formation of the Battalion was: companies I and K, from right to left, in the assault; L and M, from right to left, in support. (52). The artillery was far in the rear and did not reach the area until about noon, and no artillery support was ob-

(52) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Carter &  
Capt. Henry.

tained. The rifle and the machine gun were the only infantry weapons employed in the attack. No tanks or chemical warfare

(53) Official troops supported the regiment. (53).

Report, Comdg.  
General, 2nd  
Inf. Brigade.

9. The Advance to the Attack.- The approach march was

(54) History,  
First Div.  
P. 233.

taken up and the advance elements of the battalion reached Chehery at 7:40 A.M. (54). Company I advanced through the open fields on the right of the road in two lines, two platoons in the first line and two platoons in the second

(55) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Henry.

line, both lines in squad column. (55). Company K advanced in column of platoons near the stream west of the

road to within a very short distance of Chevenges before extending. The company commander preceded the company by from 50 to 100 yards, locating defilade areas through

which the company could advance without being fired on.

(56) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Henry.

He thus facilitated control and the rapid advance of his company. (56). The support companies followed at about 400 yards. Company L sent out one section as a combat patrol to advance along the eastern edge of the valley, to cover the right flank of the battalion. This patrol was not aggressive and did not advance promptly enough to be

(57) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Henry.

of much value. (57).

10. The Attack.- The battalion deployed about 400 yards south of Chevenges. The companies deployed with two platoons in the assault echelon and two in the support echelon, both echelons in two waves with about 50 yards be-

(58) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Carter  
and Henry.

tween waves. (58). For some reason which has not been determined, the advance halted soon after the deployment was

(59) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Huebner

made. (59). Company I on the right apparently halted be-

cause Company K had halted. The company commander of Company K stated that he halted on orders from the battalion commander sent through the battalion adjutant, but this is believed to be erroneous. The halt, even though for a short space of time, gave the Germans an opportunity to send forward additional machine guns to strengthen

(59a) Personal experience of writer, verified by Capt. Carter & Capt. Henry.

their lines, which they promptly did. (59). The action of the battalion was observed by the regimental commander and the Second-in-command was sent forward to start the

(60) Personal experience of Capt. Puchner

battalion moving. (60). The advance was resumed by the

arm signal "forward" given by the battalion commander. No scouts were sent out in front by the companies as the location of the enemy was known; they could be clearly seen

(61) Personal experience of Capt. Carter.

moving about their position. (61).

Units of the 166th Infantry, 42d Division, were found in Chevenges and dug in along the road running southeast.

(62) History, First Div. p. 233.

They were not advancing, and the 3rd battalion passed

(63) Personal experience of Capt. Baker, 166th Inf.

through them. (62) (63). Company I encountered resist-

ance from Hill 307 and Bois de la Marfee from the moment

the advance was resumed. Company K on the left advanced

under cover of Chevenges and did not encounter resistance

until they emerged from the village. As the company en-

tered the open field north of the town the company command-

er, who was in advance of his company about 50 yards lead-

ing it forward, observed five Germans running forward with

a machine gun to a position about 150 yards to his front.



It was evidently a detachment consisting of two machine gunners with three ordinary riflemen to protect the machine gun while going into position. The company commander had a corporal and two runners with him at the time. He had to decide upon a plan of action immediately, as it was imperative that the machine gun be destroyed before it opened fire on the company; its fire at that range would be annihilating. The officer, acting on the spur of the moment, directed the men with him to follow, and they started forward to capture the machine gun crew. A

rifle duel ensued in which the company commander was se-

verely wounded in the arm, one runner wounded and one runner killed. The machine gun did not go into action,

(64) Personal  
experience  
of Capt. Car-  
ter.

but the command of the company had to be changed. (64). When the line advanced about 500 yards north of Chevenges it was halted by rifle and machine gun fire from hill 307 and the western edge of the Bois de la Marfee. Some fire was received from the left front. Most of the casualties were caused by machine gun fire; some few casualties resulted from artillery fire, although the shelling was not severe. The machine gun emplacements were hidden and very difficult to locate; they were so placed as to enable them to obtain cross fire in their front. The number of casualties was greatly reduced owing to the fact that the height of the enemy position necessitated his using plung-

(65) Personal  
experience  
of Capt. Henry

ing fire. (65).

Company M took cover along the wall of the cemetery east of Chevenges. This wall was enfiladed by machine gun fire. It also furnished an excellent target for artillery, and as a result, Company M suffered many casualties in that position. Company L, on the right, was deployed in an open field and suffered practically no casualties. (66)

(66) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Huebner

The right flank of the battalion was exposed to fire from the edge of the Bois de la Marfee, and the battalion commander ordered one platoon from company L to attack in that direction to cover the flank of the battalion. The

platoon advanced only a short distance before it was pinned to the ground by machine gun fire. (67).

(67) Personal  
experience of  
Capt. Henry

About 11:30 A.M. the regimental commander received orders from the Brigade to halt the advance and organize the ground gained for defense. Division Headquarters had learned that the enemy positions south of the Meuse were strongly fortified with artillery and machine guns, and it was decided not to pass the crests of the hills until night. (68). The orders reached the battalion commander within a very few moments after they were received at the regimental headquarters. Accordingly, the advance was halted and the men began to dig in.

(68) History,  
First Div.,  
P. 233.

The position in which the battalion halted was exposed and the men suffered severely from machine gun and trench

mortar fire coming from the western edge of the Bois de la Marfee and the crest of hill 307. The platoon which had been sent to clear this area had not succeeded. To send a company from the battalion reserve to clear the woods would necessitate withdrawing it some distance to the rear under fire, and then to attack along the edge of the valley. The 1st battalion had been halted in Chery and upon the recommendation of the Second-in-command, who had been forward with the battalion commander, the Colonel sent Company A around the right to clear the west-  
~~ern edge of the woods and cover the right flank of the~~  
battalion. The company advanced through the woods, overcoming stubborn resistance, reached its objective and connected with the right of the 3rd battalion. The enemy on hill 307 was then compelled to withdraw, and the line advanced to a position about 800 yards north of Chevenges and organized the position for defense. (See Plate 11).

(69) Personal  
experience of (69).  
writer and  
Capt. Huebner

The battalion commander had with him only his adjutant and runners from each company and regimental headquarters. During the approach march he advanced along the road abreast of the support platoon of the assault companies; during the attack his position was just in advance of the reserve companies. No difficulty was experienced in communicating with the companies and the regimental commander. Runners and arm signals were the only

means of communication used. No elaborate message center was established, nor was one needed. The battalion aid station was established in Chevenges. (70).

(70) Personal experience of writer, verified by Capt. Lee.

The regimental command post was established at the northwest corner of the cemetery at Chehery at about 7:30 A.M. From this point the entire area was in plain view. The actions of the assault battalion could be observed without difficulty. No wire communication was established, runners being the only means of communication. The Bri-

gade Headquarters was in the southern edge of Chehery, and was also the Division Headquarters. The regimental commander was in personal contact with both headquarters.

About noon the regimental command post moved back to a building near the center of Chehery. The 1st battalion, with the exception of Company A, did not advance beyond Chehery; the 2nd battalion remained in its initial position. (71). In connection with this battalion it is interesting to note that Company E during the time from 3:00 A.M. November 6th until 9:00 A.M. November 7th, a total of 30 hours, was 28 of these hours actually in march, and during the other two hours was digging in. (72).

(71) Personal experience of writer.

(72) Official Report of Regimental Commander.

(73) History 28th Inf., p.34.

The enemy shelled the area constantly during the day; stokes mortar, machine gun and rifle fire was incessant until late in the afternoon. (73). Very effective use of an accompanying gun was made by the enemy. A field piece drawn by six horses at a gallop came down the main road



to within a few hundred yards of the front line where it went into action and fired about thirty rounds with direct laying on the main street in Chehery. The horses were then hitched and the gun moved away over the hill unharmed. Only one American plane appeared during the day. It flew over the front at a very low altitude and was shot down, falling in the field north of Chehery (74).

(74) Personal  
experience  
of writer,  
verified by  
Capt. Lee.

11. The Withdrawal.- In marching on Sedan the First

Division had marched directly across the line of communication of the 77th and 42d Divisions. This made the supply of all three divisions difficult.

About 3:00 P.M. the Corps Commander, Fifth Corps, who was then at the headquarters of the First Division at Chehery, received a wireless from the Headquarters of the First American Army directing that the First Division be withdrawn south of the line La Besace - Autrecourt. The honor of entering the historic city of Sedan was thus denied the Division (75). The orders were received by the regiment about 4:00 P.M. It was to assemble and march to the vicinity of La Besace, the movement to be made in two marches, the first march to end at Artaise. It was decided that the battalions would march independently to that place, and accordingly the 2nd and 1st Battalions, less Company

(75) History  
of the 1st  
Div. p. 235.

A, began the march immediately. The 3rd Battalion and Company A remained in position until dark, at which time units of the 40th French Division marched through our line in column of squads and took up a position on top of the hill, proving that the 28th Infantry had driven the enemy from that position. As soon as the French had passed, the movement of the battalion began. It was assembled south of Chehery and marched from there as a unit. The Regimental Headquarters marched with the 3rd Battalion. Up to this time only one ambulance had been able to make its way forward as far as Chehery and it was therefore impossible to evacuate the wounded before the regiment left the area. The wounded were assembled at a collecting point in the village of Chehery before the regiment left the area and Medical Corps men were left with them to render such aid as was possible until they could be evacuated by the

(76) Official French or the 42nd Division (76).

Report of the  
Regimental

Commander and

Personal ex-  
perience of

writer.

The last units of the regiment arrived in the vicinity of Artaise about 11:00 P.M. and bivouacked in an open field north of the town. The rain had continued at intervals throughout the day and at nightfall developed into a steady downpour. The field in which the troops bivouacked was covered with about an inch of water. From the evening of

November 5th no food had been available except the supply of reserve rations the men carried; these had been eaten long before this time. Some of the men had eaten raw turnips found in a barn in Chehery in an effort to appease the gnawing hunger; this caused many cases of cramps and the men who had eaten them were in a worse condition than before. Even though the field was covered with water it is needless to say that the men were glad to sink down in the mud and

water and snatch a few hours of the much needed rest

#### (77) Official and sleep (77).

Report of the  
Regimental  
Commander and

Orders had been sent about 3:00 P.M. Nov. 7th to the Field Trains and Combat Trains, which had been of the 28th Infantry, p. 34. left in the woods south of Beaumont, to move in the

#### (78) Personal direction of Artaise (78)

Experience  
of writer.

At 6:00 A.M. Nov. 8th, the regiment was again put in motion, marching on La Besace with orders to go into bivouac in the woods just south of that

(79) History  
of the 1st  
Div. p. 235.

village. (79). The knowledge that they would meet the kitchens sometime that morning increased the morale of the troops and made them more willing to march. The Regimental Supply Officer rode forward during the night of the 7th and found the regiment at Artaise. He returned to the trains, moved them to a position about one mile north of Sfonne, established the kitchens in an open field and prepared all the

(80) Personal food they could hold at one time (80).  
experience of  
writer.

The regiment arrived at the kitchens about 10:00 A.M. Nov. 8th, and the men were fed a hot meal - the first one since leaving the Bois de la Folie on the evening of Nov. 5th, a total of 66 hours. It is needless to say with what joy the hot and steaming kitchens were greeted. The regiment had marched 33 miles since their last cooked meal, had advanced about two miles in the face of the enemy, and had been

(81) Official under shell fire all the while (81).

Report of the  
Regimental  
Commander.

12. The Armistice.- By a series of marches, through mud of varying depth and stickiness, soaked to the skin by steady rain, and utterly worn out, the men of the 28th Infantry moved back from the front. At 11:00 A.M. Nov. 11th, the hour the Armistice went into effect, the regiment was on the march with the head of the column at the road fork about one mile east of Fosse. An officer stood at the roadfork and announced the fact to the companies as they marched by. The announcement caused no demonstration in the ranks, only here and there weak cries of hurrah. That night in Bois de la Folie, the men came to the full realization of the fact that there would be no more fighting; camp

(82) Official  
Report of the  
Regimental  
Commander &  
History of  
28th Inf. p. 34

Fires could be seen everywhere, the first exposed light at night of any kind the men had seen since landing in France (82).



## II. ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS.

1. Summary.- Between 5:00 P.M. Nov.5th and 11:00 P.M. Nov.7th, the regiment had marched or fought without food or sleep, during which time it had covered 33 miles; the operations consisted in a night march to the battle position, a march in pursuit with an advance guard, development, attack, transition from the offensive to the defensive, and a withdrawel.

The operations were made possible by the physical ~~efficiency~~, the high state of morale, and the fighting spirit of the officers and men of the command. The regiment at last realized the necessity for the long-sustained marches and maneuvers in which it had been trained.

2. The Operations during the night,5-6,Nov.- The Operations of the regiment the night of the 5 - 6,Nov. consisted of a night march . The fact that the regiment successfully carried out its mission precludes criticisms of any magnitude. The trains of the regiment might have followed the column on the march and thus been nearer the regiment on the afternoon of the 6th. The disadvantage of this plan was the difficulty in moving the vehicles at night over the congested roads. It is believed that it would have been impossible to

get them forward during the night; furthermore, had they been nearer the troops, it would have been of little advantage, as food could not be sent forward before nightfall. By waiting until the 6th the trains were able to move with greater ease and were still in a position to accomplish their mission had the regiment not made the unexpected move. It is believed that this is the reason the Colonel's decision was to ~~move them forward during the day of the 6th.~~

### 3. Sending the 37mm and Machine Gun Carts to the rear.-

Sending the 37mm and machine gun carts to the rear for food on the afternoon of the 6th resulted in the men having to carry the guns by hand during the entire night. From this we may draw the conclusion that machine gun carts should not be sent to the rear for food. They may be used to good advantage to carry food forward from their positions but they should not be sent to the rear. If they are sent forward they will still be in the area and possibly nearer their guns than before, and will thus be available to carry their equipment in case of an unexpected move.

4. Orders Received by the Regiment.- It is hardly within the scope of this monograph to criticise the orders issued by the Higher Command. However, the operation of the 7th illustrates the necessity for a very careful

utmost value in a stabilized or semi-stabilized warfare, becomes of less value when the Army leaves the trenches and moves forward on a war of maneuver. The present tendency is to increase the equipment of the individual as well as that of the various headquarters. I believe the present equipment prescribed for number three of the rear rank is about one hundred and thirty pounds. How far can a man, who has not eaten for two days, be expected to carry a load of this kind through mud and rain? This leads to the discussion: Is it better for the men to arrive at the jump off line fresh and ready to meet with the enemy, without certain equipment, or is it better for him to reach his position with all the accessories of modern warfare, but in such an exhausted condition that his aggressive spirit is gone? The actions of this company should be an object lesson and make us endeavor to lessen, rather than increase, the load carried by the men until the time arrives when the Infantry is equipped with something similar to a caterpillar tractor to carry equipment.

**6. The Attack.**—The mission of the regiment was to march through the enemy lines and deploy on the heights southwest of Sedan in preparation for an attack at daylight. The

study and calculation being made before orders are issued. The Higher Headquarters should not order units to move from one place to another, unless it is fully realized what the effect of the orders will be to the man who has to carry his equipment and do the actual marching. The First Division was ordered to march directly across the line of advance of two Divisions by roads which their combat trains could not follow. The men had to undergo the hardships of a long night march carrying their equipment through rain and mud. This is the part the Infantryman plays in war, and he does it uncomplainingly; however, he should not be called upon to make unnecessary exertions. To my mind the lack of necessity of the operation on November 7th was proven by the Division being ordered to withdraw before an appreciable advance against the enemy had been made.

5. ~~The~~ **Actions of the Headquarters Company.** - I do not believe that any one who has undergone the rigors of a long night march under conditions similar to those encountered in this operation can justly criticise the actions of the Headquarters Company in throwing away their equipment. Men cannot be expected to carry bulky equipment in a war of maneuver where long night marches are made. Such equipment as Stokes Mortars and bulky communications material, while of the



difficulties encountered during the night prevented the regiment reaching the position before daylight, The enemy lines were further north than had been expected and were not passed through during the night. The regiment had arrived in front of the heights on which it was to deploy and found the position occupied by the enemy. The question arose, what was to be done? Had the situation changed so as to change the mission?

The mission called for the regiment to deploy on the ridge to the front; the fact that the enemy occupied the position did not change the mission. The Regimental Commander decided, therefore, that he would attack and drive the enemy from the hill and deploy as directed. The next question was, how should he attack? The location of the enemy was definitely known and it was reasonable to assume that his line was more or less continuous along the front. Previous actions of the enemy indicated that the line would be lightly held by machine guns and a few rifles. The orders of the Brigade Commander were to reach the position with as little extension as possible. The Regimental Commander did not know what would be required of the regiment after it reached the position. Any unit employed in the attack would be more or less disorganized and would require some time for reorganization.

before it could continue in pursuit of the enemy. If only one battalion was employed in the attack there would be two battalions remaining to continue the advance while the assault battalion reorganized. Hill 307 north of Chevengees was expected to cause the most difficulty. Bois de la Marfee was a heavy wood and did not offer suitable enemy positions except along the edge. Therefore it was thought unnecessary to attack through these woods. If resistance developed from the positions northwest of the village another battalion could be sent in on that flank later. It is believed that these conditions influenced the commander in attacking with one battalion in the assault echelon.

The next question was, in what formation should the battalion attack? By placing three companies in the assault echelon a wide front could be covered and there would still be one company left for maneuvering. In this method of attack control of the line would be difficult. Hill 307 was the objective of the battalion. With two companies in the assault echelon, after capture of hill 307, the reserve companies could exploit to the right and left and clear the ridge for the deployment of the regiment. These, I believe, were the determining factors in the decision to attack with two companies in the assault and two companies in reserve. No doubt

the decision was influenced to a certain extent by the fact that this formation had been generally used in the regiment during previous attacks.

The formation of the companies with two platoons in the assault and two in reserve is primarily designed for attacks of penetration; with three platoons in the assault echelon the company commander would have had too wide a front to control, with any degree of success. The platoons were not at full strength; by placing the three platoons with the greatest strength in the assault, there would not have been a sufficient maneuvering force in support. For this reason and from the experiences of the past as discussed under the battalion, the companies attacked with two platoons in the assault and two in support.

**7. Actions of the Battalion.-** Had the battalion not halted immediately after deployment the capture of hill 307 could have been accomplished with comparative ease. This illustrates that during an engagement there is always more or less confusion, and orders for a halt frequently originate from sources other than the commander. It is believed that the reserve companies followed the assault at too short a distance; had they not been so close, the platoon sent to the right flank could have been maneuvered to better advantage. In this

connection, it is believed that a company should have been sent for this work rather than a platoon.

The section sent to the right flank as a combat patrol in the initial stage of the attack was not large enough. Had a platoon or even a company from the reserve battalion been sent, as was done later, it is believed that the advance would have been facilitated.

The actions of the company commander of the left assault company illustrates two points. First, the company commander should not engage in a fire fight so long as he has maneuvering strength left in his company.

The machine gun going into place offered an excellent problem for a squad or section leader and it should have been given to one of these units to perform. The main point this incident brings out, however, is, that it clearly illustrates what can be expected from a corps of insufficiently trained officers. The actions of the company commander are to be commended, as it was a very courageous thing to do, and I believe it is exactly what the average American will do on the spur of the moment. The American Officers in the World War certainly cannot be accused of lack of heroism and courage, but the most courageous thing is not always the best thing to further the scheme of the whole operation. And here is the value of the R.C.T.C., The Infantry School, and the correspondence courses sent out from



the Infantry School. I venture to say that had this company commander solved several map problems here at the School, or in a correspondence course, which required him to maneuver a portion of his company in order to dislodge a machine gun, the first thought to enter his mind would have been to maneuver his company rather than go himself.

Company M took cover from the enemy fire behind a cemetery wall which was enfiladed by machine gun fire and situated in an area on which the enemy was placing concentrations of artillery fire. This illustrates the fact that men seek cover even though insufficient, in preference to staying out in the open, whereas the latter in many instances is safer.

No mechanical means of communication were employed. The commanders of all echelons were well forward where they could observe and control their units. I believe, in open warfare situations where there is not a preponderance of artillery fire, the commanders should not be tied down to a command post but should be well forward where they can have direct personal control over their units.

### III LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.

1. Troops marching on the road in campaign occupy more road space than that prescribed for units under normal conditions.

2. Warning orders are of great value in that they permit troops to be prepared to move on short notice.

3. With the proper use of the compass, no difficulty will be encountered in the maintenance of proper lines of advance.

4. Maps of an area made before the occupation by the enemy cannot be depended upon explicitly.

5. During night marches distances between units of a column must be very short and enough connecting files provided to prevent the column becoming separated.

~~6. Suits provided for the transportation of certain~~  
~~specified equipment and munitions should not be sent~~  
to the rear for food.

7. A responsible officer with a good sense of direction should accompany the advanced element of a column on a night march in order to assure the correct route being taken.

8. Troops cannot be expected to carry bulky or heavy equipment on long marches.

9. Troops deployed and under fire suffer greatly when enfiladed.

10. An assaulting echelon can take care of its front, but its flanks are especially vulnerable to modern firearms. The morale effect of flanking fire is as great as the physical effect. Hence, combat patrols to give warning, or covering detachments to give

security, are indispensable on exposed flanks.

11. During the approach march all covered lines of advance are so utilized that only indistinct and fleeting targets are presented to the enemy. The captain precedes his company, moving to points from which he can obtain the best available views and thus anticipate the course of action, without, however, losing control over his company.

12. Reserves are primarily maneuvering bodies whose role is that of outflanking points of resistance developed by the assaulting echelon.

13. The company commander should not engage in the fire fight, so long as he has a maneuvering unit left in his company.

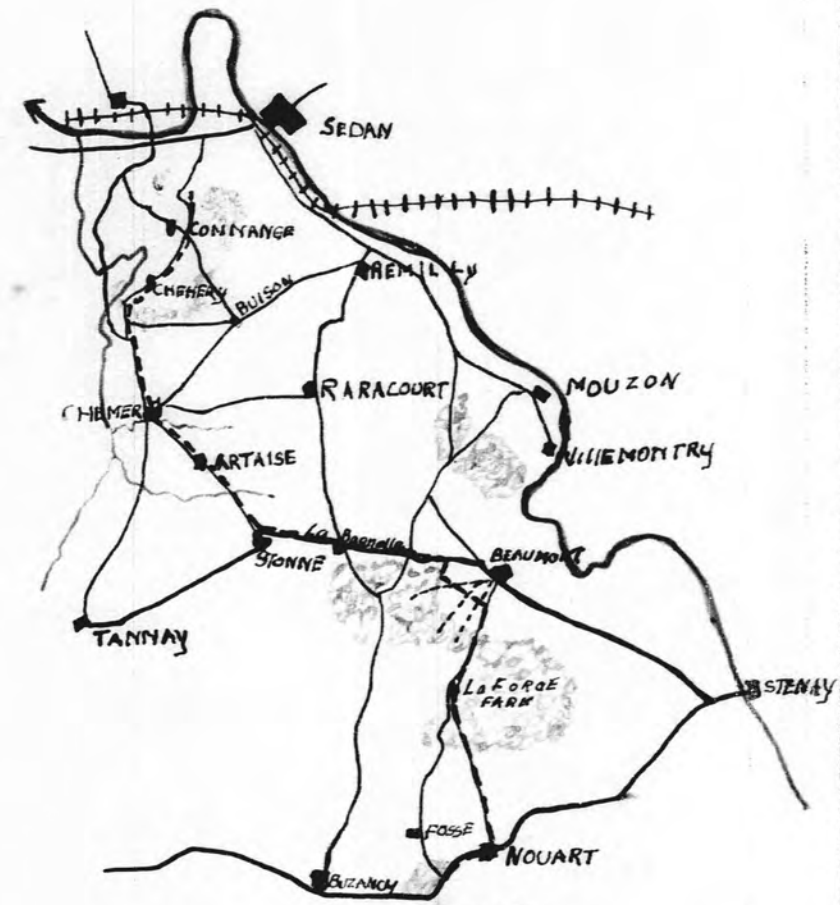
14. Every means must be employed to develop a high standard of physical efficiency, and this standard must be maintained after it has been secured.

15. The rifleman is still capable of advancing under cover of his own firepower.

# OPERATIONS

NOV. 5th to 7, 1918

Plate No. 1



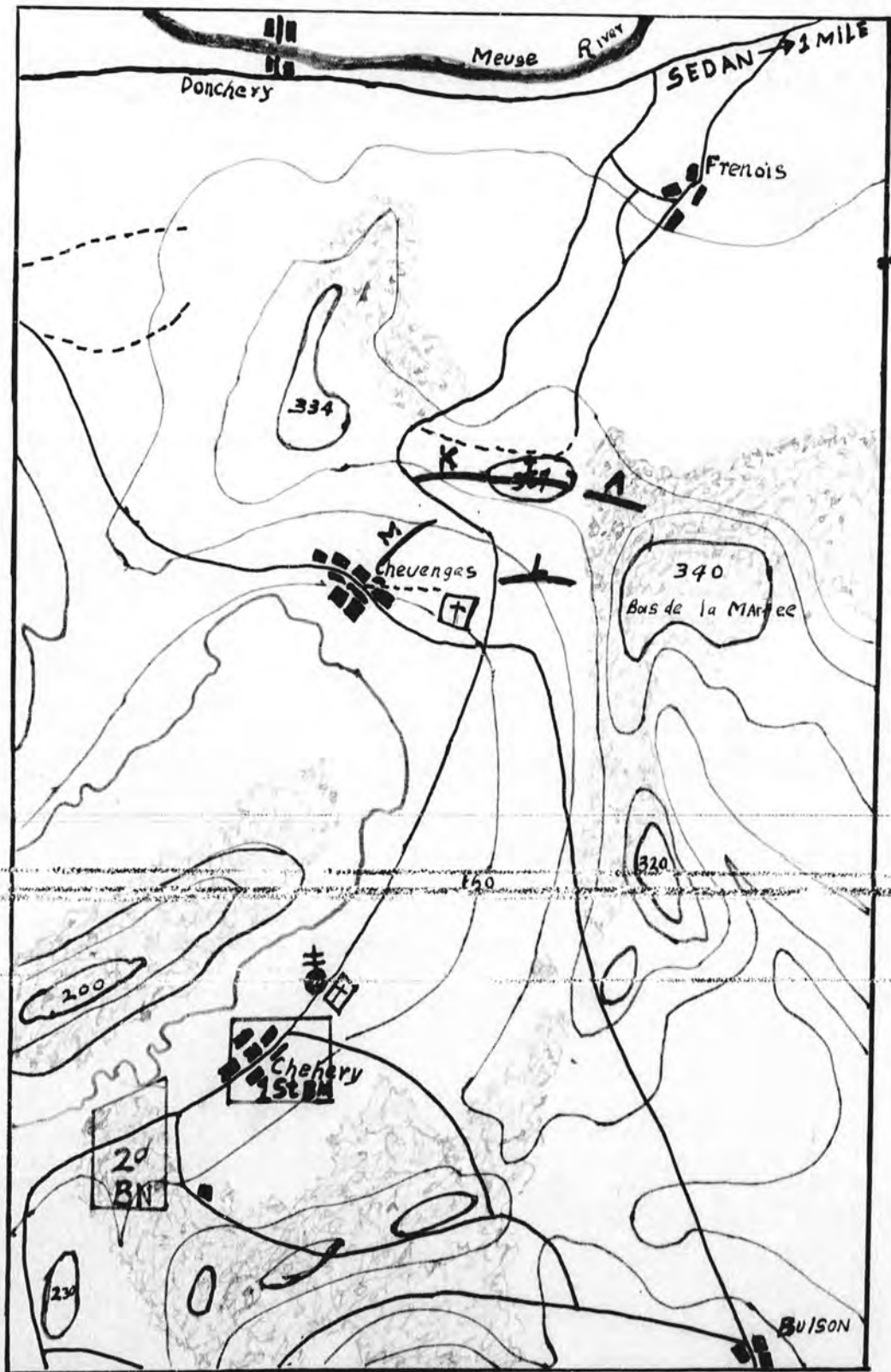
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LEGEND

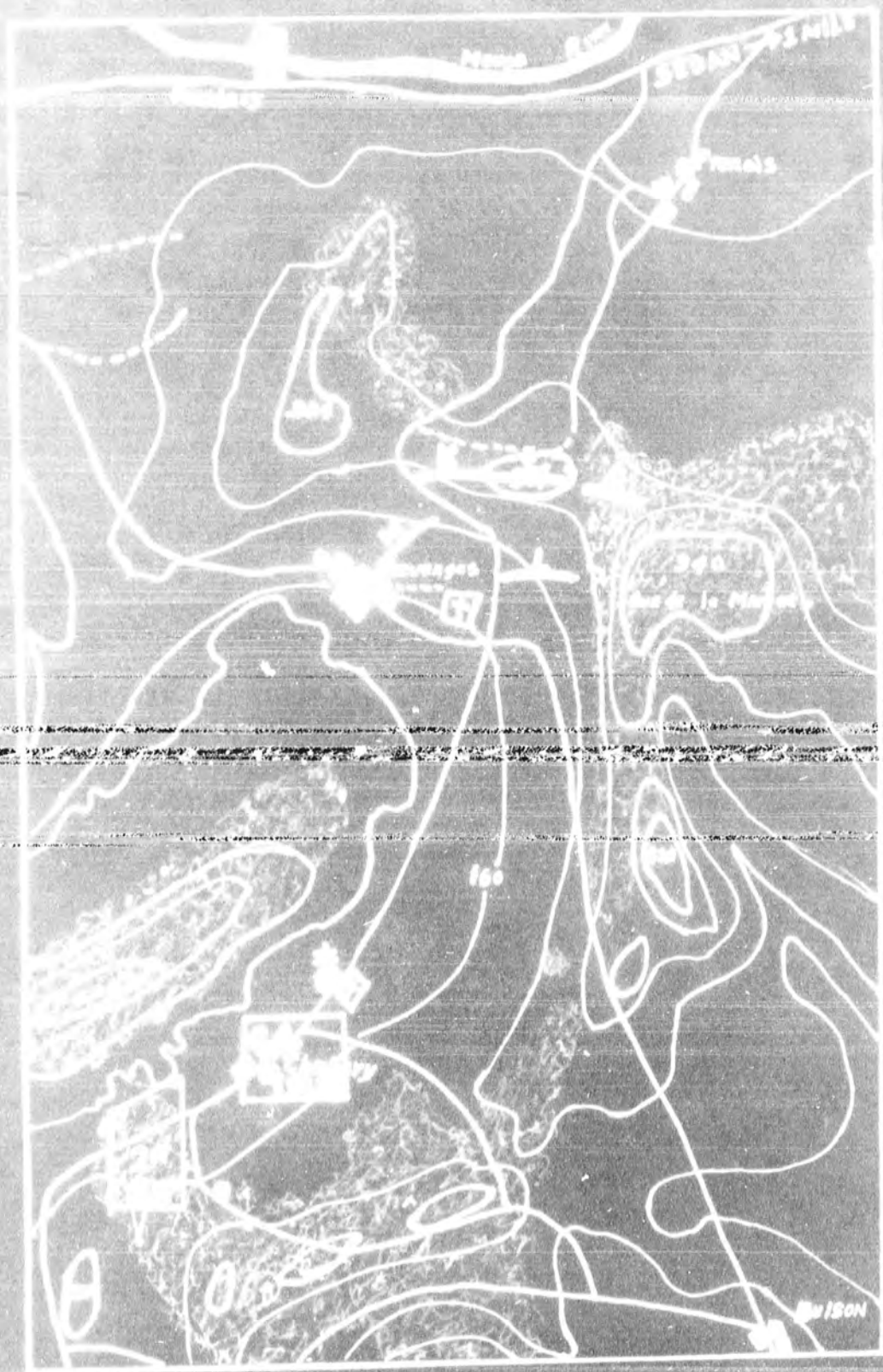
Route of march ----





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Photo 16, 2. -2-4- Lichman



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