

*Patrick M. Saw*

Staff Department  
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE  
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• THE OPERATIONS OF THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE  
HURTGEN FOREST, 13 SEPTEMBER - 27 OCTOBER 1944  
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY ATTACK  
ON A FORTIFIED LINE

Captain Vernon W. Underwood, Infantry  
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO I

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE  
HURTGEN FOREST, 13 SEPTEMBER - 27 OCTOBER 1944  
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 9th U. S. Infantry Division as a part of the VII Corps, First U. S. Army. (See Map A) The period of action covered 13 September - 27 October, deals primarily with that action which occurred in the HURTGEN FOREST.

It is felt that the reader should be familiar with the major tactical actions which took place prior to the period mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

The veteran 9th Division participated with distinction in the campaigns for NORTH AFRICA, TUNISIA and SICILY. (1) Following these victories the Division was shipped to ENGLAND for additional training and the channel invasion which was to follow. (2) On 10 June 1944 -- D plus four, elements of the 9th Division as a part of VII Corps, First United States Army landed at UTAH BEACH, on the coast of FRANCE.

This action was in turn followed by the cutting of the COTENTIN PENINSULA, 16-19 June and the capture of CHERBOURG 20-25 June 1944. July 1st marked the end of the COTENTIN PENINSULA action.

However the end of one action seemed to be merely the signal for another phase of combat to begin and during the month of July, the 9th Division experienced it's first large scale attack by the enemy, since landing on the continent of

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(1) A-1, p. 51, 79, 125  
(2) A-1, p. 147

EUROPE. Following this action, the 9th Division broke out of NORMANDY, moved across FRANCE and into BELGIUM on 2 September 1944. (3)

The crossing of the MEUSE RIVER proved to be an extremely costly operation in terms of men and material. The Germans well realized that the MEUSE RIVER was their last natural defense barrier in front of the SIEGFRIED LINE. The crossing of the MEUSE RIVER was completed 5 September and the 9th moved on in pursuit of the enemy, who was rapidly withdrawing into the SIEGFRIED LINE. (4)

After participating in three major campaigns within a period of three months and advancing against enemy opposition for a distance of approximately six hundred miles, the 9th Division was in a position to breach the SIEGFRIED LINE and in turn meet the enemy on his own ground.

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION

September 13, 1944, marked the beginning of the Battle for Germany. On this date the VII Corps as part of the First United States Army was generally disposed with divisions abreast, along the German border. (See Map B)

The 1st Division was protecting the VII Corp's left flank in the vicinity of AACHEN. (5)

The 3d Armored Division on the right of the 1st Division, drove through WALHEIM and was slightly northeast of this city. (6)

The 9th Division, on the right of the 3d Armored Division, had been moving in the direction of DUREN, and on 13

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(3) A-1, p. 222

(4) A-1, p. 227

(5) A-2, p. 50

(6) A-2, p. 48

September the Division moved up to the general line ROTGEN-REINARTZHOF-CAMP ELSENBORN. The 9th Division was facing MONSCHAV from a distance of approximately three miles. (7)

The 4th Cavalry Group, located on the right of the 9th Division, protected the right flank of the VII Corps.

The initial plan of maneuver (13 September) for the VII Corps was to force a gap in the German lines south of AACHEN. AACHEN would then be bypassed, and in turn cut off from the rear by means of a thrust northeast, the final goal of the VII Corps would then be the ROER DAMS. (8)

To accomplish this plan the 1st Division was given the mission of cutting the roads and railroads which were a means of supplying AACHEN from the east and northeast. (9)

The 3d Armored Division was to attack with it's objective being STOLBERG. (10)

The 9th Division was given the mission of launching it's attack in the direction of DUREN. In order to do this the extensive positions of the SIEGFRIED LINE within the HURTGEN FOREST would have to be overcome. This unknown element was to develop into a problem of immeasurable proportions. (11)

The 4th Cavalry Group was to protect the right flank of the VII Corps, maintain contact with the 9th Division on the left and the V Corps on the right. The Group was also assigned the task of maintaining contact with the enemy to the immediate front through the use of extensive patrol action. (12)

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- (7) A-2, p. 49  
(8) A-2, p. 48  
(9) A-2, p. 48  
(10) A-2, p. 49  
(11) A-2, p. 50  
(12) A-2, p. 50

## DISPOSITION AND PLANS OF THE 9TH DIVISION

The situation confronting the 9th Division on 13 September could hardly be considered as favorable. The division was disposed along a front of approximately eight miles, this portion of the front being nearly half of the VII Corps assigned sector. (13)

The 39th Infantry was located in the vicinity of EUPEN, prepared to drive up the EUPEN-MONSCHAU ROAD. (14) (See Map C)

To the east of EUPEN and the 39th Infantry, the 47th Infantry was poised for an attempted maneuver, the objective being the German city of DUREN. (See Map C)

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion of the 60th Infantry had been attached to Task Force Buchanan, composed of the 1st Battalion, the 9th Reconnaissance Troop, Company B of the 746th Tank Battalion, one platoon of tank destroyers and the 60th Field Artillery. The mission of this task force was to advance on CAMP ELSENBORN, a former BELGIAN Army post. The initial location of this task force, following its organization, was southwest of EUPEN. (15) (See Map C)

To the northeast of Task Force Buchanan the 60th Infantry, less the 1st Battalion, was waiting for the order to proceed towards MONSCHAU and HOEFEN. (See Map C)

## THE DIVISION SITUATION

Once again the 9th Division was in a position to attack the German forces. There were a number of factors present at this time, however, which would greatly influence the action

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- (13) A-2, p. 48  
(14) A-1, p. 239  
(15) A-3; A-1, p. 239

to follow. The most important factor was the terrain which faced the 9th Division. This alone was enough to discourage even the most seasoned members of the Division.

The SIEGFRIED LINE consisted for the most part, of a zone of small concrete forts sited to support each other. This zone reached it's maximum depth in parts of the SAAR AREA. Here the distance from the anti-tank obstacles on the forward edge, to the rather scattered defensive works at the rear edge, extended in depth up to a distance of three miles. (16)

This defensive line, overgrown by four to six years of natural growth, was in itself an individual problem, even without considering the heavily forested areas which surrounded it. (17)

Bolstered behind the SIEGFRIED LINE, elements of the German LXXIV Corps faced the 9th Division. A shortage of enemy reserves was shown by the fact that Panzer Troops had been placed in the SIEGFRIED LINE as Infantry. In addition rear area service troops were being given a short period of training and then were being put in the pillboxes of the LINE. (18)

By way of comparison the 9th Division was also having it's personnel problems. The crossing of the MEUSE RIVER, 5 September, had all but wiped out the 2d Battalion of the 60th Infantry. In addition the 1st and 3d Battalions were down to about 40 percent of full strength. The two remaining regiments, the 39th and 47th were also well below their normal compliments. This general condition of units being understrength, existed even though replacements had been re-

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(16) A-3  
(17) A-3  
(18) A-3; A-2, p. 51



ceived in a fairly even flow since crossing the MEUSE RIVER.

(19)

A third factor which was to influence the morale of the 9th Division, as well as it's ability to overcome the enemy, was the weather conditions. Intermittent rain on 13 September developed into a drenching downpour during the following day. As could be expected, unfavorable ground conditions were the result of this inclement weather. (20)

A fourth factor to be considered, as second only to the terrain, was supply. As the Corps of the First United States Army drove through BELGIUM, the supply lines were extended almost to the breaking point. (21) This overextension in turn led to shortages in all classes of supply. The VII Corps and in turn the 9th Division were to feel this shortage, with special emphasis on Classes I, III and V. In one instance just prior to 13 September, the 60th Infantry was forced to attack without armor support, due to a lack of gasoline. (22) Sufficient ammunition for a major battle was not available and the troops were supplementing their concentrated rations with captured German Army rations. (23)

To summarize briefly; the 9th Division as of 13 September 1944 could hardly be compared to the 9th Division that had landed on the coast of FRANCE some three months earlier. Shortages were prevalent in practically every category, to include personnel, gasoline, ammunition and food. The immediate terrain was unfavorable for the attack, as the wooded areas placed definite limitations on the use of armor. September

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- (19) A-1, p. 230  
(20) A-1, p. 240  
(21) A-4, p. 10  
(22) A-4, p. 10  
(23) A-6, p. 193

13th brought rain and the inevitable mud which makes the foot soldier's life even more miserable.

On 13 September 1944, the 9th Division jumped off against a well fortified, determined enemy. October 27, 1944, was to find the Division leaving the same area of the HURTGEN FOREST, greatly reduced in strength and it's mission unaccomplished.

### NARRATION

#### THE PENETRATION (13-16 SEPTEMBER)

As the German 12th and 353d Divisions withdrew to the German border, their tactics changed from delaying actions to a definite attempt to halt the advance of the onrushing 9th U. S. Division. This stiffening resistance was evidenced by the enemy's use of mines, demolitions, infantry-tank teams and increased artillery fire. September 13th found the regiments of the Division moving against this stiffened resistance. At 0830 hours the 39th Combat Team advanced with two battalions abreast, to clear the EUPEN-MONSCHAU ROAD. The advance during the day was slow and costly as each road block was well defended with boobytraps, mines and small arms fire. As a result the road was not cleared until after 1800 hours. Clearance of the EUPEN-MONSCHAU ROAD, allowed the 39th to move across the German border into the city of ROTGEN, where the unit in turn took up a defensive position. (24)

During this same period the 47th and 60th Combat Teams moved towards the German border without making contact with the enemy, and by 1630 hours were closed into their respective areas.

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(24) A-3

During the day Task Force Buchanan was assembled at HOCKAI, and after organization was affected, the force reconnoitered to the south, capturing SOURBRODT and advancing to CAMP ELSENBORN. (25) (See Map C)

The unfavorable weather of the previous day was to develop into a downpour on 14 September, as the regiments of the Division prepared to continue their action against the enemy.

The 47th and 39th Combat Teams were coordinated for a two pronged attack, the final objective of this attack being DUREN. By overcoming light enemy resistance, the 47th Combat Team was able to pass through ZWELFALL and move on to VICHT. Here enemy resistance was encountered in the form of occupied pillboxes. These positions proved to be enough to hold up the 47th until darkness made maneuver practically impossible. (26)

Meanwhile the 39th Combat Team had moved northeast, meeting little resistance during the morning. However during the afternoon contact with the Germans was made and after a minor action the unit moved to the area of LAMMERSDORF.

The 60th Combat Team and Task Force Buchanan were not to be idle during the day. As the 60th pressed forward towards MONSCHAU, Task Force Buchanan closed into CAMP ELSENBORN. (27) (See Map C)

As the dispositions and intentions of the German forces became clear, the mission of the 9th Division was modified accordingly. Although DUREN was only a distance of approximately ten miles from the most advanced elements of the 9th

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(25) A-1, p. 242

(26) A-3

(27) A-1, p. 242

Division, it became apparent that the immediate and most difficult task would be the breaching of the SIEGFRIED LINE. Consequently, this mission of breaching the SIEGFRIED LINE was assigned to the Division 15 September.

It should be noted that during the period 13-15 September, and the period to follow, intelligence information played a vital part in the plans and actions of the Division. Effective utilization was made of every possible source of information concerning the enemy. Sources of information were practically unlimited and from all indications the Division G-2 was well qualified to take advantage of this favorable situation. As a result, the G-2 was able to make accurate estimates of the enemy's capabilities, which in turn provided the Division commander with a sound basis for the majority of his tactical decisions. (28)

September 15th was to show little indication of progress.

The 39th Combat Team continued it's attack in the vicinity of LAMMERSDORF with slight success. An envelopment was attempted by the 2d Battalion of the 39th in order to relieve the situation, however the battalion was engaged by heavy small arms and artillery fire and was forced to withdraw. (29)

Plans for 15 September for the 47th Combat Team were thrown off balance prior to the time of attack, which was 0830 hours. At 0630 hours an enemy force of approximately 350 Germans, wandered into the positions of the 3d Battalion. Three hours later this enemy force withdrew, probably unaware

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(28) A-1, p. 242; A-3

(29) A-3

that this unintentional battle had completely disrupted the 9th Division's coordinated plan of attack. (30) During this period the 2d Battalion was defending it's area from a determined German force of undetermined size. Following these two engagements the 47th prepared to outflank the German village of VICHT and by nightfall of 15 September the unit had advanced five kilometers, penetrated a portion of the SIEGFRIED LINE and had captured four hundred prisoners.

During the day, good progress was made by the 60th Combat Team until strong resistance was met at MUTZENICH. At 2100 hours a portion of the Combat Team was disposed over the ROER at MONSCHAU.

General Buchanan's Task Force, meanwhile remained at CAMP ELSENBORN, maintaining contact with the 4th Cavalry which was protecting the right flank of the VII Corps. (See Map C)

During the fourth day of action, 16 September, the 47th Combat Team accomplished the immediate mission of the 9th Division, by penetrating the secondary positions of the SIEGFRIED LINE in the vicinity of SCHEVENHUETTE. (31)

Little change took place during this day, in the positions of the 47th and 60th Combat Teams. Task-Force Buchanan was dissolved at the close of the day's actions and elements of the force returned to their parent units. (32) (See Map C)

#### THE ENEMY BUILD UP

Resistance all along the 9th Division front was stiffening to a degree where little if any progress was being

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(30) A-5, p. 6  
(31) A-3  
(32) A-3

made by the units of the 9th Division. The Germans, well dug in, and supported by effective high angle fire, were able to resist even the most determined attack. The enemy's previous patrol action had ceased. This was interpreted by division intelligence officers as an indication that the German forces were reinforcing their positions for an all out defense or perhaps even an attempt to restore their original line. This latter course of action was indicated during the remaining days of September. The German forces employed every means available to annihilate the elements of the 9th Division. The battle developed into a death struggle, as the Germans launched one attack after another. Reinforcements were brought up by the enemy from every available source, and although these soldiers were poorly trained, they did serve the purpose of relieving the seasoned troops for more aggressive action. (33)

Enemy pillboxes continued to be tenaciously defended, not only from within but also from field fortifications thrown up in their immediate vicinity.

Of particular interest was a method adopted by the 15th Engineer Battalion for the assaulting of pillboxes and concrete bunkers. The "assault teams" used for the attack of fortified positions was found to be impractical, as far as the engineers were concerned. The normal ten pound pole charges were found to be too light, when used against pillboxes and bunkers of the SIEGFRIED LINE. In addition, flamethrowers were found to be ineffective against these fortifications. (34) After a number of experiments had been made

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(33) A-3

(34) A-3

on captured pillboxes and bunkers, it was found that the only effective means of attack was downward through the top. For this purpose enemy "beehive" charges were used to clean the five foot layer of soil covering the top of the pillbox or bunker. Then five or six consecutive charges, each consisting of four "beehives" tied together were used to penetrate the reinforced concrete roof for a depth of approximately two and one half feet. Following this a two hundred pound charge of TNT was put in the hole made by the "beehives" and exploded. The concussion caused by this two hundred pound charge was great enough to cause the enemy to surrender. However, even with the fortification free of the enemy, there was always the possibility of reoccupation at a later date. The solution to this problem was found in immediately welding the steel doors shut or bulldozing dirt over the entrances. Following this tentative action the Engineers would blow up the pillbox as soon as the tactical and supply situation would allow. (35)

During the period 17-30 September, only one coordinated action of importance took place. On 29 September the Division plan called for a highly coordinated attack southeast towards BICKERATH. The 47th Combat Team was the main element of this attack. The attack was to have prepared supporting and diversionary fires in coordination with the bombing of carefully selected targets by the IX Tactical Air Force. Plans were formulated well in advance and were primarily based on air support. Time over targets for the air element was to be 0830 hours, however at 0738 hours the Division was notified that the TOT had been changed to 0805 hours. This

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(35) A-3

change in time schedule did not allow an adequate interval for proper firing of the artillery deception plan or the carrying out of the other phases of the attack as scheduled. As a result the deception plan was inadequate. This attack met with minor success, even though good results were reported as a result of the air mission. (36)

#### ENTERING THE HURTGEN FOREST

October 1st was to find the Division holding a line from SCHEVENHUTTE in the north, through MAUSBACH to MONSCHAU in the south, a distance of approximately twelve miles. (37)  
(See Map C)

The 39th Infantry was engaged in the LAMMERSDORF sector. The action during the day consisted primarily of maintaining contact with the enemy through patrol action and of reducing three pillboxes during the day.

The 47th Infantry continued to hold its positions along the line, DREWINKEL-SCHEVENHUETTE. Little or no action was experienced during the day. However, enemy artillery fire continued to harass movement of vehicles and troops. It was found at this time and was confirmed later as the units of the Division moved deeper into the heavily forested areas, that artillery "tree bursts" took a heavy toll of life. In moving situations it was discovered that it was not wise to lie prone on the ground when caught under shell fire, where a large percentage of the detonations were "tree bursts". In most cases it was found that the maximum cover was afforded by crouching against the base of a tree, with the tree

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(36) A-3

(37) A-3



between the individual and the direction of bursts. (38)

Action within the 60th Infantry sector was slight and consisted mainly of patrol action to determine the enemy's positions. Patrol action by any of the units during the period in the HURTGEN FOREST proved to be extremely costly. This loss of lives was primarily due to lack of specialized training which would qualify the individual soldier to carry on effective patrol and combat action in heavily forested areas. (39)

The activities of the three Infantry Regiments was to show little if any change on 2 October. This seeming inability to destroy the pillboxes of the SIEGFRIED LINE, obviously had to be overcome. To this end the 60th Infantry conducted tests to determine a standard means of reducing pillboxes and bunkers. After numerous methods were tried the following method was adopted as the most efficient. The first step in the procedure was for a rifle platoon to approach as near as possible to the pillbox without drawing substantial small arms fire. Next a tank destroyer was placed in position to fire on the pillbox. However, in many cases, a tank or tank destroyer could not be employed and in such cases, either an anti-tank gun or bazookas were used. The third step was to smother the area around the pillbox with artillery and mortar fire, in order to neutralize enemy infantry which in most cases were found defending the pillboxes from the outside, within a radius of one hundred yards. As the artillery and mortar fire was lifted, the tanks, tank destroyers or anti-tank guns and bazookas fired on the apertures and entrances of the pillbox. Meanwhile the infantry

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(38) A-3  
(39) A-3

closed in, delivering assault fire, supported by BAR's and machine guns. This coordinated method of attack, proved much more effective than attempts to flank this type of position. (40)

On the following day, 3 October, the relief of elements of the 60th and 39th Infantry took place. These units were relieved by elements of the 4th Cavalry Group. The objective of this relief was to regroup the division in preparation for an attack on the SCHMIDT-STECKENBORN AREA. However, following the relocation of the units, the attack was postponed by order of the Corp's Commander. This postponement was found necessary due to unfavorable weather conditions which prohibited fighter-bomber support. (41)

As a result of the postponement, the combat elements of the Division remained in place 4-5 October, awaiting favorable weather and the air support which was becoming a necessary part of any major attack.

Word was received on 6 October that prevailing weather conditions would allow an air strike. The plan of attack was for the 47th Infantry to remain in its present sector, protecting the 9th Division's left flank. The remaining two regiments jumped off in the attack at 1130 hours, following a successful air strike and artillery preparation. Progress was extremely slow and difficult in the initial stages of the attack, for the 39th and 60th Infantry Regiment's were now entering the HURTGEN FOREST. (42) The HURTGEN FOREST covers an area of about fifty square miles and extends from the vicinity of AACHEN in the north to MONSCHAU in the south

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(40) A-3  
(41) A-3  
(42) A-3

and to DUREN in the east. The HURTTGEN is not a virgin forest, for as certain areas were cut down replanting was done. As a result the trees varied from ten to one hundred feet in height. Visibility within the forest was not good, even at 1200 hours when the sun would be directly overhead. At night visibility was practically nonexistent. The distance between trees varied from area to area, however within these areas, tanks could not operate due to the lack of trails and breaks within the growth. There were some fire breaks which would allow tanks to move forward but these breaks would not allow lateral movement. As a result, once a tank started moving forward, it would be canalized and in turn would be an easy target for enemy anti-tank weapons. (43)

The foot soldier also found the going tough, for in many instances opposing forces would come within fifty yards of each other before either could discern a target at which to shoot. The ever present pillbox once again proved to be the prime factor in delaying the advance. During this attack 155 mm self-propelled guns were employed against the pillboxes and bunkers. This means of attack proved to be successful in locations that allowed adequate maneuver space and a quick means of withdrawal. In many instances however, the direct fire of the 155 mm self-propelled guns did not seriously affect the fortifications, due to their excellent construction. Some pillboxes were circular in nature, constructed of steel and concrete. The steel would vary in thickness from eight to ten inches and in addition be covered with a layer of concrete up to a foot thick. Other pillboxes were found to be constructed of concrete ranging from eight to

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(43) A-3

ten feet in thickness. Direct fire on the apertures in pillboxes was limited, due to mounds of dirt placed so as to mask the openings. In most instances these mounds caused the 155 mm rounds to ricochet. (44)

Very little ground was gained by the forward units of the Division on 6 October. The enemy seemed to have the unbeatable combination of a well prepared defense, coupled with anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines, wire entanglements and effective artillery fire.

During the period 6-9 October the Division front was to be pushed forward for short gains and then in turn pushed back by the enemy. Pillboxes, when captured by units of the 9th Division, were now blown up without delay, for if they were left in place a counterattack would make them available for the enemy to use once again.

In the GERMETER AREA, the 39th Infantry received an attack during the early morning hours of 10 October. Casualties amounted to two platoons, and the delay of a scheduled attack for 0800 hours. However, the attack was underway by 0900 hours, and nightfall found elements of the 39th across the GERMETER-HURTGEN ROAD, engaged in house to house fighting. (45)

The 60th Infantry, preceded by a heavy moving artillery preparation, bypassed a pillbox which had been holding up their advance and moved forward to the area of RICHELKSKEUL.

During this same day, 10 October, the 47th Infantry, while holding it's defensive positions, delivered a diversionary attack with one company. The object of this attack

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(44) A-3  
(45) A-3

was to contain the enemy while the 60th and 39th Regiments made the main effort. (46) (See Map C)

The crossing of the GERMETER-HURTGEN ROAD had one distinct advantage, for the terrain allowed the use of tanks and self-propelled guns to some degree.

Previous to this time, the use of these weapons had been practically impossible due to inadequate space for movement and the canalized routes of approach.

The advantage of tanks and self-propelled guns was to be only momentary, for the 39th lost three tanks on 11 October. This loss was due once again to the factors mentioned previously, namely lack of space for fire and movement.

The 60th Infantry employed four tanks during the day's action, but fared little better than the 39th, as three of the four tanks became mired down early in the day. As a result the infantry was able to make but little progress against the enemy's overwhelming volume of fire. (47)

Enemy artillery and mortar fire effectively held up the advance of the 47th on 11 October. This high angle fire proved to be extremely effective due to the large percentage of tree bursts. The enemy was well dug in with overhead cover, while the attacker was forced to move out of his covered position in order to move forward. The net result was that the attacker suffered casualties not only from the enemy's high angle fire weapons, but from his own as well. (48) (See Map C)

The resumption of the attack by the 39th Infantry Regiment was suspended 12 October, because of a heavy attack by

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(46) A-3  
(47) A-3  
(48) A-3

the enemy in battalion strength. This attack penetrated the front line positions of the regiment and threatened to extend into it's rear area. Reinforcements arrived in the 39th Infantry's area in the late afternoon and with this additional strength the unit was able to partially restore it's positions.

A planned attack for the 60th was unable to proceed beyond the MLR during this day's action.

The 47th, meanwhile, was meeting with little success in it's own sector. (49) (See Map C)

On 13 October the 39th Infantry undertook to restore it's lines of the previous day. This move was met by determined enemy resistance, in the form of flanking counter-attacks, however, by 1715 hours the 39th's actions succeeded in closing the gaps in the line.

The 47th Infantry continued to hold it's defensive positions on the Division's left flank.

Meanwhile, the 60th Infantry attack towards the south, against the usual concentrated small arms and artillery fire, and once again only small gains were realized. (50)

It may be said that the only favorable result of operations during the period 1-14 October was the number of prisoners captured.

On 14 October the 60th Infantry captured 209 of the enemy, even though the ground gained could be measured in hundreds of yards. The main reason for this comparatively large number of prisoners was the fact that when a pillbox was captured the enemy were usually alive. In addition,

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(49) A-3  
(50) A-3

enemy commanders were determined to hold their troops in the SIEGFRIED LINE positions. This was evidenced by information from prisoners of war, to the effect that areas immediately in rear of the front line of fortifications were extensively mined. This precaution forced the enemy front line troops to stay in their positions. In addition, a series of outposts, manned by reliable non-commissioned officers, were set up, with orders to shoot any men who did not have proper authorization to be absent from their positions. (51)

Action within the 39th's sector, 14 October, consisted mainly of repulsing an attack in the morning and following up with a counterattack during the afternoon, to restore the unit's positions.

On 15 October the 39th and 47th Regiments consolidated their respective defensive positions and maintained contact with the enemy through light patrol action.

The 60th Infantry, with a company of medium tanks attached, moved into the attack at 0730 hours. This attack made good progress in advancing against strong points and enemy pillboxes. The tank's additional fire power and effective protection against small arms fire, proved enough to swing the engagement slightly in favor of the attacker. During the course of the day's action seventy-nine prisoners were taken. (52)

Once again on 16 October this same combination of the infantry and tanks proved to be effective for the 60th Infantry Regiment. The attack was delivered at 0930 hours

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(51) A-3  
(52) A-3

with the mission of reducing pillboxes and other enemy positions. This mission was well accomplished in the early stages of the attack, however, later in the day, the density of the forest limited maneuver space and as a result the infantry units were forced to halt.

The 47th and 39th Infantry Regiments remained in place during the day, improving their defensive positions and sending out patrols to the front and flanks. (53)

#### DEFENSE AND RELIEF

During the period 17-24 October the 9th Division was given a defensive mission, pending relief by the 28th Division. During this period there was little enemy action, what there was, consisted mainly of patrol actions and harassing artillery fire. The elements of the 9th Division improved their positions by increased use of wire entanglements, road blocks and mines. In addition patrol action probed at the enemy's lines to determine his main positions. (54)

On 25 October, units of the 28th Division began to arrive in the 9th Division's sector, to affect the relief. By nightfall of 27 October the majority of units of the 9th Division had closed in on CAMP ELSENBORN for a period of training and a well earned rest. (55)

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

##### 1. SUPPLY

Critical shortages in gasoline, ammunition and rations,

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definitely limited the ability of the 9th Division to continue it's pressure on the enemy after crossing the MEUSE RIVER. It is felt that if adequate supplies had been available following the crossing of the MEUSE RIVER, the 9th Division might have been able to maintain it's forward momentum. However, the temporary lull in the attack which did occur, allowed enough time for the retreating Germans to organize and effectively defend the SIEGFRIED LINE.

## 2. TACTICS

### a. INFANTRY

During the period that the 9th Division was engaged in the HURTCEN FOREST and adjoining area, it seems evident that too many piecemeal attacks were made. Time and again all three combat teams were committed at the same time on an extended front. This means of employment met with little success. It is felt that had a concentrated effort been made to break completely through the SIEGFRIED LINE in one location and in turn had this breakthrough been exploited with all possible speed, the enemy would have been forced to shift his limited forces. This shift in turn would have weakened a major portion of the defense system.

### b. ARTILLERY

When fighting in dense woods it is extremely difficult to adjust artillery fire, inasmuch as it is almost impossible to locate the strike of high explosive or smoke shells. Therefore forward observers should call for fire 300 to 400 yards beyond the target and then adjust by pulling in the

rounds by the creeping method.

c. ARMORED

The tank to be employed effectively must have adequate space to move in any direction. The use of tanks in heavily forested areas is extremely limited and if they are to be used, at least one rapid route of withdrawal must be planned for. During the 9th Division's period in the HURTGEN FOREST it was found that the infantry-tank team was able to make favorable gains in areas where the infantry alone could do little.

3. TRAINING

It is felt that the individual soldier and units destined to fight in woods be given previous training in this type of fighting. Woods fighting is radically different from ordinary operations and a knowledge of it's basic requirements will save lives and insure success.

4. AIR SUPPORT

Close coordination in the planning and execution phases of the air-ground operation is a prime requirement. Information concerning changes in plans by the supporting air units must be disseminated as rapidly as communications will permit.

LESSONS

1. Adequate supply is a prime requisite for any tactical operation.

2. a. When the defender has the advantage of a well built and planned defensive structure, the attacker must concentrate his efforts and not resort to ineffective piece meal attacks.

Captured enemy pillboxes should be destroyed as soon after capture as possible. This will deny their use to the enemy in case of recapture.

b. During operations in the HURTTGEN FOREST, it was found that the creeping method of adjusting artillery fire was the most accurate and effective.

Self-propelled 155 mm guns are not effective, as a rule, when fired on well constructed fortifications such as those found in the SIEGFRIED LINE.

c. The basic characteristics of tanks limit their effective use <sup>of tanks</sup> in heavily wooded areas. is limited

When the terrain allows the effective use of armor, the infantry-tank team is one of the best combinations to use in the assault of fortified positions.

Tanks when employed in conjunction with infantry tend to have a favorable effect on the morale of the individual foot soldier.

3. Specialized training should be given to individuals and units destined to fight in wooded areas.

When the combat efficiency of a unit is low, the correction is not replacements alone, but replacements and retraining.

4. Air-ground operations must be closely coordinated in all phases.