

CHARACTERISTICS OF MACHINE GUNS

The Tactical Application of this Piece of Ordnance

OF INTEREST TO "M. G." UNITS

Captain John J. Dooley of the Marine Corps Reserve, formerly a Colonel in the Maine National Guard needs no introduction to any of the older rifle shots of the N. Y. N. G. as he has always been a familiar figure on the big rifle ranges and has helped for years in making shooting history in this country. He has recently been connected with the manufacture of machine guns, specializing on the Lewis, and is one of the experts on this piece of Ordnance. In an article recently published in "The Marine Corps Gazette" on the "Characteristics of Machine Guns" he has given much interesting data some of which we republish, knowing it will be of interest to the many machine gun units newly organized in the New York Division.

"In the use of machine guns two features stand out: (1) the task to allot them; (2) the assistance to expect from them."

"When we speak of the characteristics of any weapon we mean the peculiarities it possesses, and, no matter how well trained a machine gun section may be in its mechanical working, we will fail in action unless we handle it correctly in a tactical sense. To do this it is vital to understand clearly the tactical application of a machine gun's characteristics."

"Some of the characteristics of the machine gun are shared to a certain extent by both the rifle and the field-piece of the artillery. Like a rifle it may have the same range, same caliber and use the same ammunition. Like artillery it has its rest or carriage. Some of its peculiar characteristics might be considered as handicaps, but the others are of a value that far outweigh the defects."

"Let us take up first the characteristic of the rest of the machine gun. A field mount or tripod, not fixed, vibrates while fire is going on. Here we have a distinct advantage over the rifleman, for the gun does not have to be held by hand and when a rifleman is fatigued his aim is poor."

"With a mount one man can do the actual firing while every rifle in the firing line multiplies that factor. With a mount of any sort the grouping of shots is far superior to the fire of infantry. If the first shot can be spotted, then every succeeding shot counts heavily. The personal factor is thus largely wiped out. It is one man, one gun, one hold as against many barrels and many holds, all of which vary and a large proportion of which are bringing no results and a scattered group. With this close grouping comes the power to concentrate fire which is invaluable in a crisis of the fight when surprise fire is the game. The fortunes that ebb and flow in the fight, and the nervous tension that grows as the crisis develops, communicate themselves to the rifleman, but the tripod or other rest is a nerveless thing."

"It is easy to realize that observation of fire is easier and more reliable, while the watching of rifle shots that show when they strike may lead to errors in estimating ranges."

"When the crisis of the fight does come the post of the machine gun must be close up, ready to deliver a surprise fire or a heavy fire at any point on the front. When a machine gun hits it hits hard and its moral effect is greater than any rifle fire of the same volume could be."

"Its volume of fire and the ease with which this volume can be started and maintained at full speed is another characteristic. The squeeze of the trigger is all that is necessary, and then the insertion of clip or belt as the gun empties takes but a second.

It has been estimated that one machine gun is equal to the fire of fifty rifles when these riflemen carry on rapid firing for a minute and the machine gun is delivering its 400 to 600 rounds in that minute, relaying the piece after each burst of fire that is carried in the clips or in the belts."

"In another detail we also have the advantage that the captain of the gun can lay the piece for the first shot himself if there is any doubt as to the objective of fire. With infantry it is often difficult not only to change from one target to another, but to fire first at the desired target. It simplifies fire control. Besides this an outpost with a machine gun, or a stretch of trench manned with one, or in pairs, allows more men to relax and there is always the value of surprise fire, which has become such a factor at the front."

"Another characteristic is the narrow front and the shallow depth from which a large volume of fire can be delivered. Where but two riflemen can find room to handle their pieces a machine gun and its crew can handle its larger volume of fire. Take your machine gun from such a site firing its 500 rounds per minute and it is safe to say that in that time the two riflemen will do well to get off twenty rounds between them. Five shots in twenty seconds with magazine fire is all that an expert can deliver, and with reloading it would be impossible for him to keep up that rate and get off his fifteen shots. So here is a good illustration of the superiority of the machine gun on a crowded front and in close country."

"It is, of course, advisable to mount a gun with the view of concealment whenever possible. Whatever the type of gun the minimum amount of cover necessary for gun and men should be studied, and the lowest position will, of course, simplify that matter. As few men with the gun as possible is another rule that can be well followed when concealment is desired. Men needed to replace casualties are held in reserve sections by our infantry where the work of machine guns has been developed. Some regiments have as high as three reserve sections."

"The machine gun section or crew should be well trained in moving across country with its gun to make the best use of cover, and this can be carried out on almost any terrain, varying the character of the terrain whenever possible. Simulating the movements of infantry may be of advantage, for the enemy will be on the alert all the more if you betray by your movements or formation that you are with the machine guns."

TO RETAIN STATE NAMES

It is understood that President Wilson has set at rest one mooted point by his order taking the state troops into the Federal service. Drafted regiments will retain the name and number borne when in the state service, and to that extent at least will retain their identity. This act is both gracious and wise on part of the President. Some talk had been heard of dropping any form of designation that would tend to perpetuate the state name, regiments to be numbered serially and to have no other distinctive title. This, of course, would completely nationalize the army, but it would also discourage something that must yet be reckoned with—the distinct support of the stay-at-homes by reason of their interest in the boys from home. State pride is not a negligible quantity and is easily fostered by permitting the regiments to carry their state names. The National Guard is not entirely extinguished, as the order discharging its members from state service on being taken into the Federal operates only to evade the technical objection to foreign service. With 200 new regiments to be immediately formed, the Federal army will lose nothing by having a few state names mingled with its high numbers, and public interest will not be lessened, because the home folks can talk of the "Fighting Fourth," the "Furious Fifth" or the "Dandy Sixth."

THE TRAINS AND MILITARY POLICE

(Col. Charles Hine, Commanding.)

This organization was recently completed as a Regimental Unit of the New York Division, being created by the United States Army Tables of Organization, May 3, 1917. The organization is commanded by Colonel Charles Hine, and is temporarily occupying the old 8th Regiment, at 94th Street and Park Avenue, New York City. It consists of the Military Police, The Ammunition Train, The Supply Train, and The Engineer Train.

The Military Police consists of two companies of Mounted Infantry under command of Major T. Harry Shanton, formerly of The Supply Train.

The Ammunition Train is under the command of Lieut. Col. Cleveland C. Lansing, and is divided into two sections, namely The Artillery Ammunition Train of six motor truck companies, commanded by Major Lansford F. Sherry and The Small Arms Ammunition Train, also composed of six motor truck companies, commanded by Major Walter L. Bell.

The Supply Train of six motor truck companies is commanded by Major George E. Roosevelt, formerly of the 12th Infantry.

The Engineer Train, which was organized at Albany, is commanded by Captain David D. Mohler, formerly of the 3rd Infantry.

The Trains and Military Police finished mustering into the Federal Service June 25th, 1917, and are practically at full strength with forty officers and about fourteen hundred men, exclusive of The Sanitary Train, which when assembled as such by the bringing together of the four Field Hospitals and four Ambulance Companies, will add forty-nine Medical Officers and about one thousand sanitary men to the trains.

The idea of the new organization of the trains is to group under one responsible head, who ranks as Colonel of Infantry, the administrative work of the trains and the old time Provost Guard. It is a step in the right direction as it avoids the necessity of stripping other units of officers and men for these necessary duties.

Colonel Hine is very well known in New York City where he has resided for many years. He is a member of the Army and Navy Club in New York and Washington and of the Railroad Club in New York City. He is a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy and has seen service in both the regulars and volunteers. He served during the Spanish War in the Infantry army and was major in the Siege of Santiago. In private life he is a railway and transportation expert and has filled all the positions in the railroad service from freight brakeman to Vice-President.

Lieutenant Colonel Cleveland C. Lansing is likewise an ex-regular and served many years as an officer of field artillery. He hails from Buffalo and was reared in Canandaigua. Lt. Col. Lansing saw active service with the regulars in the Philippines and was with General Funston at Vera Cruz. He resigned from the army about a year ago.

The other officers are as follows: Captains George H. Robinson, Thyson, Cornelius W. Wickersham, William T. Starr; Lieutenants John I. McWilliams, E. B. King, Percival E. Nagle, C. G. Dodd, W. F. Paris, Juan M. Caballas, W. P. Root, R. B. Field, G. H. Storm, H. J. Hartley, Robert Guggenheim, John Jahn, H. S. Lynch, Carl H. Danchez, Jacob E. Jetter, E. B. Libbey, F. H. Cruger, George A. Mullarky, R. A. Cheney, E. V. Moncrieff, A. W. Beale, W. W. H. Rerey, M. M. Munsill, R. W. Matson, D. J. Demarest, Rutherford Lawrence, L. P. Sanger, Henry Hallahan, Edward C. Mayers.

News from Our Division Units

22ND REGIMENT ENGINEERS (Col. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Com'g.)

The last bugle note of "Assembly" on Sunday, July 15, found an eager and alert body of men, facing their equally alert and proud Colonel, Cornelius Vanderbilt. The scene was not without a shading of tenseness and terseness, incidental to a war mobilization, but it showed no reflex in the brawn, brain and stature gathered on the armory floor. It was a goodly sight and fit material for the work of an engineer regiment.

All the companies with the exception of "A," now somewhere on Long Island, reported with full complement together with an attached list to replace such as should fail in the physical test.

Monday A. M. quietly and efficiently, like a night on the Rio Grande after taps, the preliminaries to mustering in were begun, under the direction of Major Wall, U. S. A., and none could deny that Rio Grande influence was a factor in this efficiency, for despite the complexities of engineer property, finger prints and their histories of the individual lives, the entire command was physically examined, and mustered in by Friday, July 20th. Some Engineering! The mustard seed of the Rio Grande was beginning to be a tree.

We are also happy to announce that we now have with us Capt. Stockwell and Palmer of "E" and "C," respectively, who added another bar. Lieutenants Davis, Lamb, and Whitelsey were admitted to one bar, and we have Lieutenants Richardson, Douley and Whippley as recent arrivals of the order of the gold and black. Lieut. Odell, an old 22nd man, a mighty builder of dams in the sage brush of Montana, said he would like to add a few dams for democracy, so he is with us. The crowd looks pretty good.

The camaraderie of the officers found a fit outlet in a beefsteak dinner tendered to their Colonel, Cornelius Vanderbilt, on Thursday evening. Capt. Charles Dieges, in behalf of the officers presented him with a beautiful swagger stick, suitably engraved and emblematic of his dignified and honored position. The mustering officers were invited guests. Altogether it was some party and despite certain restrictions, spirits rose high and the tufted battle-cock of wit and laughter ran a successful score. Some of the remarks were classics, and worthy of reproduction but space limitations forbids.

Friday, July 15, Mr. Knecht, of the French Government, delivered a lecture on our coming into the war and what our help meant. He saw action himself in those heroic battles around the Somme and could speak of realities. It certainly sent a fighting shiver up the spines of those present when the assembly rose, while the band played "La Marseillaise." Moving pictures of the various battle fronts were also shown.

Last, but not least, we have a motor cook wagon, and its savory odors from its position on 169th St. are the envy of all the housewives

in the vicinity. From their presence at windows during meal hours we suspect that like chefs, they are living on the smells. However, the wagon was presented to Col. Vanderbilt by Louis Sherry, the well-known restaurateur, and now the First Battalion is using it. Mr. Sherry, during a trip to Europe, studied the French and English motor kitchens, and he embodied the best of these in his. His chefs also acted as an advisory board, and it's a pippin. Mounted on

(Continued on page 4.)

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