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I. Pending the publication of a manual the following general principles will govern in the employment of machine guns:

1. The Division Machine Gun Battalion—motorized (2 companies)—should be assigned to the "Division Reserve" at the beginning of an engagement, unless the machine gun requirements of the action can be most clearly foreseen or the nature of the ground is such as to preclude its profitable employment on the remainder of the division front. The battalion has been motorized in order that the division commander might have at his disposal a great fire power of extreme mobility. To prematurely relinquish control of this fire power will often result in an inability to influence the action at its most critical stage.

The battalion may be employed either under the direct control of the division commander or may be used to reinforce either one or both brigades.

The battalion commander is the machine gun officer of the division staff, and is the adviser of the Commanding General on all matters pertaining to machine guns. He will, through his agents of communication, keep constantly in touch with the tactical situation and will advise the division commander of any opportunity for the employment of his guns.

2. The brigade machine gun battalion (4 companies) is a tactical command and must be treated as such. A *general assignment for all tactical exercises* of the companies of this battalion to the infantry battalions of the brigade is a distinct violation of the spirit of G. O. No. 82, H. A. E. F., 1917. The battalion may be employed in any one of the following ways:

(a) As a unit.

(b) One or more companies may be assigned to infantry regiments and the remainder of the battalion act as a unit.

(c) All of the companies may be assigned to infantry regiments or battalions.

The second method will be the one most used.

Whether or not the machine gun companies of the brigade machine gun battalion should be attached to the infantry battalion in any special case depends entirely upon the task to be assigned to them, and must be determined for each tactical situation. As a general principle, the companies of the machine gun battalion should only be taken from the control of the commander of the machine gun battalion when they can more efficiently serve the infantry by acting directly under the command of infantry battalion or regimental commanders.

When the terrain is such that the machine guns will evidently have a series of missions which cannot be clearly foreseen at the beginning of the action, the machine gun companies should be attached to infantry battalions or regiments.

Barrage fire calls for a concentration of guns and centralization of command. When the terrain permits and the tactical situation calls for an overhead barrage, either direct or indirect, it will usually be best to keep the companies so employed under the control of the machine gun battalion commander.

The brigade commander should not relinquish command of the whole of the machine gun battalion at the beginning of the action except for a very special reason.

The commander of the machine gun battalion is the machine gun officer of the brigade staff, and his duties as such are analogous to those of the machine gun officer of the division staff.

3. Regimental machine gun companies or machine gun companies attached to a regiment may be used in any of the following ways:

(a) The company may be trained under the direct control of the regimental commander.

(b) One or more platoons may be attached to battalions, and the remainder retained under the direct control of the regimental commander.

(c) The whole company may be assigned to one battalion or the platoons assigned to different battalions, the regimental commander retaining control over no part of the company.

4. It is not sufficient to use machine guns to obtain isolated successes at decisive points in the infantry combat. They must be so used that they will exert a continuous influence during the whole of the fight. This can only be accomplished if all commanders understand the principles of machine gun employment, and plan carefully, not only the initial use to be made of the guns, but their employment during the latter stages of the fight. Whether employed by battalions, company or platoon, definite tasks must be assigned to the machine guns, but the machine gun commander must not be restricted too much in carrying out this task. The initiative of machine gun commanders must be developed.

The following are suitable tasks for machine guns:

In the Offensive:

(a) To support the assaulting troops with a powerful fire, thus reducing the losses of the infantry.
(b) To protect the flanks of the attack.
(c) To occupy an interval.
(d) To occupy the conquered ground.
(e) To assist in resuming the attack in open ground

5. The initial task of the machine guns in the attack is to cover the first objective of the infantry with a belt of fire. The object of this is to immobilize the enemy and keep him down in the trenches.

Whether the machine gun fire is directed against the enemy's front line or against the ground in rear depends upon the distance between the opposing lines and the terrain. As the infantry approaches the objective it will become necessary for the machine guns to fire upon reserves, the retreating enemy or other objectives farther to the rear. If the duration of the fire is not regulated by a time table, arrangements must be made for machine gun agents to accompany the assaulting waves so as to signal when the fire is becoming dangerous to our infantry.

6. Distribution in depth must be maintained in the offensive as well as on the defensive. This will provide security against counter-attacks and protection for the flanks. Machine guns should be put in the infantry lines only when an immediate increase of fire power is demanded and the machine guns cannot intervene by flanking fire or from the rear by use of overhead fire or firing between units. If the engagement develops into a steady advance a very high degree of initiative is required of the machine gun commanders. Sections, platoons or companies are advanced alternately. Their objectives are points from which they can obtain overhead or flanking fire on the enemy most dangerous to our infantry. Their principal task is to cover with a heavy fire the hostile infantry which is decisively engaging the infantry which the various machine gun units have been designated to support. The automatic rifles, trench mortars and 1-pounders can better engage the hostile machine guns.

7. In the war of movement, seek constantly for opportunities *for direct overhead* or *flanking fire*. Indirect fire is practicable only when time and a detailed knowledge of our own and the enemy's troops are available. Maps of not less than 1:20000 scale or accurate range finding and angle measuring instruments are also essential.

8. Machine guns must always be advanced as far as practicable by means of the the carts or pack mules.

9. An infantry escort must be provided for machine guns where surprise is at all probable.

10. *In the defensive* the following are suitable tasks for machine guns:

(a) When attack appears imminent, to enfilade trenches, trails, defiles and areas where enemy troops would probably form for the assault.

(b) During the assault to fire upon the enemy with maximum intensity.

(c) If the enemy gains a foothold in the position to hold him until the counter-attack can be prepared.

(d) To support counter-attacks by flanking or overhead fire.

11. *Direct fire* is the primary consideration. Indirect fire is secondary. Therefore, all guns must be sited for an extensive field of fire. However, machine guns which are placed to cover ground by direct fire must also be able to carry out their tasks by indirect fire at night, in case of smoke, fog, etc., and must be in constant state of readiness to execute such fire. Indirect fire may always be employed to harass the enemy, providing the supply of extra barrels and ammunition is sufficient and the damage inflicted is commensurate with the cost. The indirect S. O. S. barrage is justifiable only when the hostile infantry attack is really imminent.

12. Guns should usually be sited in pairs, with the four guns of a platoon close enough together to be controlled by the platoon commander.

13. Machine guns must be sited for all-round defense. Any dead ground in the vicinity must be covered by auto rifles, rifles or grenades.

14. If withdrawal becomes necessary there must be close cooperation between the infantry and machine guns. In the withdrawal machine guns cover the infantry, and, in turn, are covered by the automatic rifles of the infantry. As soon as the infantry has withdrawn and reorganized on its new position part of the machine guns should take up new positions in depth. An officer should be sent to the rear to make reconnaissance of these positions before the arrival of the guns, in order that there may be no delay in opening fire. These successive positions must be separated by a considerable distance to permit of an ordinary withdrawal.

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