

A Hurry Job and Its Handling

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *In the July-August number, Captain C. E. Hooper, Q. M. R. C., had a most informative article on how a war strength division might be moved by train and ferry on hurry-up orders. It brings as a sequel another article which has to do with that same historic unit, the First Division; how it was equipped and made ready for its splendid parades in New York and Washington in record-breaking time.*

YOU ARE one of the Quartermasters on duty at a camp. You receive a brief telegram that a division is to descend upon you equipped with—nothing. But directions explicitly state that it is immediately to be fitted out with—everything.

What to do? How to do it? Let me set down here what was done, and how, for the benefit of those Quartermasters who may have a similar job sometime in the future.

In the latter part of August, 1919, advices were received at Camp Mills that the First Division, scheduled to arrive in the United States in the near future, would parade New York City as soon as practicable after its arrival home. The exact date had not yet been fixed.

What to Do?

Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Smith, Q. M. C., Camp Supply Officer, called me into his office and handed me a letter of instructions just received from Port Headquarters. These instructions were very meager and brief, with nothing definite; further instructions were to issue.

"What are we going to do?" I asked the Colonel, not knowing just what equipment the Division would have on arrival at Camp Mills.

"Everything necessary to be ready to equip fully an Infantry Division at war-strength," was his answer, plain enough.

That evening I studied over the tables of organization very carefully, making notes of the principal items of equipment, number of animals, vehicles of various kinds, guns, and such, required to equip a war-strength division, and the next day, after a conference with Colonel Smith, I spent several hours preparing requisitions for such articles as I believed the First Division would require.

Of course, it must be understood that we were not in a position to equip such a large unit with anything but clothing, blankets and a few small articles of individual equipment; this had not been our function during the war. Furthermore, our supply of clothing was greatly depleted.

But we got busy at once. As a starter, several trips of a convoy of fifteen trucks were made to Governor's Island in order to be ready to supply the Division with clothing. We knew that the Commanding General had ordered that every man have a new uniform for the parade, and most of them would be needing underclothes, socks and shoes, besides, after passing through the delousing process.

Horses and Mules Next

Next, horses and mules. We got the wires busy. Some 7,000 animals were shipped from various Remount Depots on our requisitions, but not one of them was shod and we had very little time, and no personnel or materials, for such a great undertaking. Major C. A. Coe, Q. M. C., Camp Property Officer, and myself, scoured the country in search of blacksmiths and horseshoers, but were only able to muster eleven. Then we appealed to the Horse Shoers' Union in New York City. This organization agreed to furnish fifty shoers and blacksmiths at \$1 an hour, the Government to furnish them quarters in camp and to mess them at a cost not exceeding \$1 a day. However, as they were willing to work fifteen to eighteen hours daily, the agreement was made, and we considered ourselves fortunate to obtain them at any cost.

All unoccupied company kitchens were immediately converted into blacksmith shops. But these were not enough and other work places were improvised by stretching paulins in convenient spots near the picket lines. There were no forges, anvils, shoes, nails or blacksmith tools in camp, so I prepared a special requisition and went with it to Supply Headquarters,

461 Eighth Avenue, New York City. There I learned that part of the supplies called for were stored at Governor's Island and the remainder at Army Base, Brooklyn.

Next day I sent out two large motor truck convoys; one to Governor's Island, the other to the Army Base, Brooklyn, to get the necessary supplies for shoeing the animals. In a few days the camp looked like a great blacksmith shop speeded up to its maximum capacity. And all the while time was galloping along; the days were getting fewer.

About this time Colonel Moses and Major Daggett arrived as advance representatives of the First Division. They announced that the animals must be clipped before they would be presentable for parade. So I took a couple of trucks and a requisition over to Colonel Carson, in New York City, and got two loads of clippers—hand, motor and foot-driven. There were only about fifteen, all told, in stock at the Depot, so we spent the greater part of the day visiting the large hardware stores, buying out their entire supply. Later, our blacksmith shops were turned into horse and mule barber shops. Many of the animals were green, untrained and had never been shod, making it necessary to improvise hasty stocks. In many cases the horses had to be thrown and tied, taking the time of several men to handle each one during the shoeing and clipping process.

Rolling Kitchens, Wagons and Harness

A whole train of rolling kitchens were shipped from Jeffersonville, Ind., by fast freight, and three train loads of escort wagons, sanitary carts, water carts, and other vehicles, rolled in from other points. From the New Cumberland Army Reserve Depot a large convoy of motor trucks loaded with harness was sent and many large guns, drawn by tractors, came to Camp Mills from various military posts.

Quartermaster personnel worked day and night preparing for the big show. All of the vehicles were set up (they arrived knocked down). It was the consensus of opinion of those in charge that the wagons, guns and tractors should parade in camouflaged colors, but when the Division Commander arrived he decided against us and ordered everything on wheels and all steel helmets painted olive drab.

Prisoners on the Job

More woe! There was not enough O. D. paint in camp to cover a dozen helmets, so I had to hustle over to New York City with another special requisition. Owing to delay in getting the requisition approved and ferry trouble, I did not reach Governor's Island until after 9 o'clock at night. Of course by that time the Depot was closed and everyone connected there-

with had gone home, so I called on the Commanding Officer.

With his permission prisoners were turned out from Fort Jay and we broke the lock on the warehouse in which paints were stored. I guess it was the first time that prisoners ever broke locks by permission! Some 1,500 gallons were required; it was put up in barrels of about fifty-gallons capacity, so we rolled out thirty barrels, together with enough turpentine and dryers to thin it down to proper consistency for immediate use and quick drying.

No one present knew where paint brushes were stored. Trouble again! So, after getting the convoy started back to Camp I went to a hotel for the night, or I should say, for the morning, because we did not finish loading until after midnight. A hasty breakfast and I returned to Governor's Island for the brushes. About 500 were necessary. I got them at last and I hurried out to camp. By noon hundreds of amateur painters, mostly enlisted men, were at work. It was a joyful sight.

And Now, 200 Bicycles

Before I arrived in Camp with the paint brushes, Major Coe had opened one barrel of paint and started a number of men to work painting helmets, utilizing grease brushes taken from the Camp Bakery. When the escort wagons were all set up and painted they were inspected by the Division Staff, and during the inspection it developed that there were not enough spare poles to put one on each wagon. Once more I had to take a couple of trucks and make a special trip to the Army Base for wagon poles.

This Division had to be complete in every detail, so it must include a bicycle contingent. Of course, there were no bicycles in Camp. Arming myself with a requisition, duly approved, I took a convoy of six trucks over to New York City and before night was on my way back to camp with 200 bicycles.

On September 6, we were informed that the parade would take place on the 10th. Only three days were left to complete the work of getting ready. I never knew the clock to chase its hands around so fast.

Only Saddle Cloths Missing

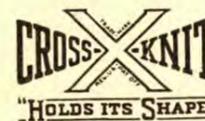
About the 8th it was discovered that the Division did not have a complete set of flags, standards and colors, and that the officers were without sabers. A hurried requisition was prepared for these necessary articles and I started again for New York, this time in a half-ton truck. Sabers were procured from the Ordnance Depot, Governor's Island, but I could not locate all of the necessary flags. I communicated by telephone with the Quartermaster General's Office and arrangements were made to get from Washington such flags as could not be obtained in New York, and an officer was sent from there to New York on the

night of the 9th, delivering the flags to the Division as it marched over the Queensborough Bridge next morning, September 10.

Let me observe right here that it was with considerable satisfaction that I watched the parade pass up Fifth Avenue. With the exception of saddle cloths for the officers, I verily believe the whole outfit was fully equipped.

And it could never have been accomplished without the loyal, workmanlike cooperation of several officers who would not take "No!" for an answer—all of

them of the Q. M. R. C., except Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Smith, and he was from the New York National Guard. Major C. A. Coe helped us meet and solve every problem as it arose, and Major George F. R. Taylor and Lieutenant Harvey Fritz, in charge of the Rail Transport Division at Camp Mills, made all arrangements for railway equipment and quick dispatch of the trains loaded with troops en route to New York City, for participation in the big parade in which General Pershing rode at the head of his gallant veterans of the A. E. F.



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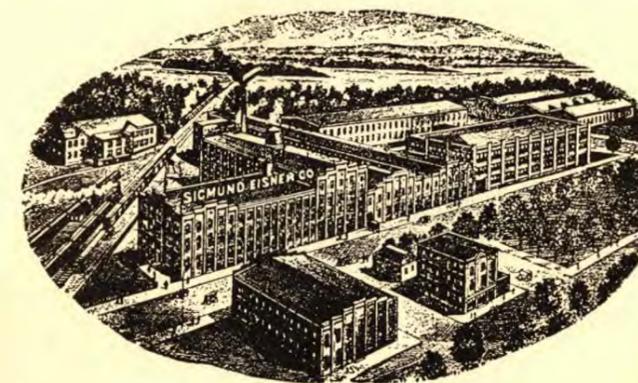
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