

THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
FOURTH SECTION  
COMMITTEE "H"  
FORT BELLEVILLE, GEORGIA

ADVANCED COURSE  
1929-1930

COMPANY "D" - 188TH INFANTRY  
42D DIVISION IN THE 2D AND 3D PHASES OF  
THE MEUSE - ARGONNE  
OCTOBER 12TH - NOVEMBER 10TH, 1918

(PERSONAL EXPERIENCE)

CAPTAIN RUSSELL BAKER, INFANTRY

1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Cover sheet .....	(Unpaged)
Title page .....	(Unpaged)
Table of contents .....	i
Bibliography .....	iii
Marginal abbreviations used .....	vi
Introduction .....	1
<u>SECOND PHASE</u>	
Preliminary movements .....	2
General situation .....	3
Relief of the First Division .....	5
Terrain .....	5
Occupation of position .....	6
Operations, October 13-19 .....	6
First Battalion goes in .....	14
Relief of the First Battalion .....	15
Plans for the attack .....	16
Relief of the 83d Brigade .....	16
Artillery support on November 1st .....	17
<u>THIRD PHASE</u>	
42d Division transferred to I Corps .....	17
Operations of November 5th .....	18
Operations of November 6th .....	20
Operations of November 7th .....	21
Arrival of 1st Division .....	22
Company "D" starts for Sedan .....	23
Patrols attempt to enter Sedan .....	26
Company "D" returns .....	27
Lessons .....	29
Questions .....	30

MAPS

Special Map No 1--General Map of First Phase .....	32
Special Map No 2--General Map of Second Phase .....	33

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- \*Cheseldine, R. M. "Ohio in the Rainbow", The F. J. Heer Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1924.  
Accurate as to general facts; plays up the operations of the 166th Infantry; contains many personal experiences.
- \*Society of the First Division "History of the First Division during the World War, 1917-1918", Winston and Company, Philadelphia, 1922.  
An authentic reference book.
- \*American Battle Monuments Commission "Summary of Operations, 42d Division in the Meuse-Argonne, October 12-31, 1918", File 714.2 - M/MA, February 5, 1926.  
A reliable source for operations down to and including battalions.
- American Battle Monuments Commission "Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe", Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1927.
- Chambrun, J. A. "American Armies in European Conflict", The McMillan Co., New York, 1918.
- Dickman, J. T. "The Great Crusade", D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1920.
- Fiebeger, G. J. "Campaigns of the World War", United States Military Academy Printing Office, West Point, N. Y., 1921.
- Harper "Harper's Pictorial Library of the World War", Harper & Brothers, New York, 1920.
- Horne, C. F. "The Great Events of the Great War", National Alumni, 1923.
- Howland, C. R. "Military History of the World War", General Service Schools Press, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1923.
- Johnson, T. M. "Without Censor", Bobbs-Merrill Publisher, Indianapolis, 1928.
- King, W. C. "King's Complete History of the World War", C. A. Nichols Publishing Co., Springfield, Mass., 1922.
- Larned, J. N. "New Larned History", C. A. Nichols Publishing Co., Springfield, Mass., 1924.
- Liggett, Hunter "Commanding an American Army", Houghton Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1926.

McMaster, J. E.

Moss, J. A.

Page, A. W.

Palmer, Frederick

Pershing, J. J.

Pershing, J. J.

Reynolds, F. J.

Reynolds, F. J.

Simonds, F. H.

Sargent, H. H.

Stewart, L. O.

The New York Times

The Stars and Stripes

The Times History of the War

Thomas, Shipley

Tompkins, R. S.

U.S. War Department

Van Every, Dale

Viereck, G. S.

"United States in the World War",  
D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1920.

"America in Battle, with Guide to  
the American Battlefields in France  
and Belgium", George Santa Publish-  
ing Co., Menasha, Wis., 1920.

"Our 110 Days Fighting", Doubleday,  
Page and Co., New York, 1920.

"Our Greatest Battle, the Meuse-  
Argonne", Dodd, Meade & Co., New  
York, 1919.

"Report of the 1st Army, American  
Expeditionary Forces, Organizations  
and Operations", General Service  
Schools Press, Fort Leavenworth,  
Kansas, 1923.

"Final Report", Government Printing  
Office, Washington, D.C., 1920.

"The Story of the Great War",  
Collier and Sons, New York, 1920.

"World's War Events", Collier and  
Sons, New York, 1921.

"Story of the Great War", Doubleday,  
Page and Company, New York, 1920.

"The Strategy of the Western Front",  
McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1920.

"Rainbow Bright", Dorrance & Co.,  
Philadelphia, 1923.

"Current History, The European War",  
The Times Company, New York, 1919.

April 11, 1919.

The Times, London, 1914-1921.

"History of the A.E.F.", Doran &  
Co., New York, 1920.

"Story of the Rainbow Division",  
Beni and Liveright Co., New York,  
1919.

"Battle participations of the organ-  
izations of the American Expedition-  
ary Forces in France, Belgium and  
Italy, 1917-1919", Government Print-  
ing Office, Washington, D. C., 1920.

"A.E.F. in Battle", D. Appleton &  
Co., New York, 1928.

"As They Saw Us", Doubleday, Page  
& Co., New York, 1929.

Wolf, T. E.

"Brief History of the Rainbow  
Division", Rand, McNally & Co.,  
New York, 1918.

NOTE: Only those books marked with an asterisk (\*) were found  
to be of value in preparing this personal experience monograph.

MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

Ohio	"Ohio in the Rainbow"
1st Div.	"History of the First Division during the "World War, 1917-1918"
Summary	"Summary of Operations, 42d Division in the Meuse-Argonne, October 12-31, 1918"

## INTRODUCTION

The Forty Second Division was made up of National Guard units drawn from twenty-six states and the District of Columbia, the four infantry regiments coming from New York, Ohio, Alabama and Iowa, and being designated as the 165th, 166th, 167th, and the 168th, respectively. The first commander of this division was Major General William A. Mann, who, at the outbreak of the war, was the Chief of the Militia Bureau of the War Department; he chose for his Chief-of-Staff Major General (at that time Major) Douglas MacArthur, who later commanded the 84th Brigade of the division.

The decision of the War Department to make use of the National Guard in the first line of the army, brought to the Ohio troops the order to assemble at their home stations on Sunday, July 15, 1917; from this time until August 5th, the 4th Ohio Infantry was recruited to approximately 150 men per company and on the latter date was drafted into federal service and designated the 166th Infantry. A subsequent change in tables of organization required that rifle companies be expanded to a strength of 250 men each; to accomplish this expansion, each of the other seven regiments in Ohio transferred sixteen men per company to the corresponding companies in the 166th Infantry.

During the period August 12--September 7, the regiment trained at Camp Perry, Ohio. On September 8th, it moved to Camp Mills, New York, there to form a part of the Forty Second Division which was being assembled at that place. By October 13th, the regiment was embarking for France and by November 17th, all units were in the first training area, about eighteen kilometers



southwest of Toul. Rumors of a German drive near Toul resulted in the division being moved by marching to a new training area in the vicinity of Rolampont in order to make room for French reserves in the threatened area. The move was made between the dates of December 12--31.

Starting on February 16, 1918, the regiment moved by rail to the vicinity of Luneville, in Lorraine, preparatory to taking over a trench sector, being attached to the 60th French Infantry. (1) The first experience of the regiment in the trenches began on the night of February 22-23d, when the 1st Battalion took over a portion of that sector. (2) The month spent in this sector, with each battalion serving ten days in the front line, was the beginning of our contact with the enemy, which continued with but very few brief rest periods until November 10, 1918. During this period the regiment saw service in:

Baccarat Sector, Lorraine, March 31--June 21  
Esperance--Soulain Sector, Champagne, July 4--14  
Champagne--Marne Defensive, July 15--17  
Aisne--Marne Offensive, July 25--August 3  
Saint Mihiel Offensive, September 12--16  
Essey--Pannes Sector, Woevre, September 17--30  
Meuse--Argonne Offensive, November 5--10. (3)

#### SECOND PHASE

##### PRELIMINARY MOVEMENTS

Upon being relieved from the Essey--Pannes Sector, the division was moved by truck and marching to the area around Montfaucon, where it took up a reserve position on October 6th. Our regiment bivouacked in the Bois de Montfaucon during the next four days. See Special Map No. 1.

(1) Ohio  
pp.105-107

(2) Ohio  
p. 112

(3) Ohio  
p. 343

## GENERAL SITUATION

The great Argonne offensive had gotten under way on the night of September 26th. In order to understand the part played by the 136th Infantry in this, the last great battle of the World War, it is necessary to understand the strategy of the movement. The official army bulletin is quoted here for that purpose.

"It is necessary, first of all, to call attention to the vital relationship of this operation to the general German retirement. The withdrawal of the German forces was a vast pivoting movement based on Metz, having as its object a very considerable shortening of the front. It depended above all else for its success upon the holding of the pivot, and of the line in the vicinity of the pivot. Further, the railroad line skirting the Argonne to the north through Montmedy and Sedan, represented nearly one half of the supply and troop moving power of the German system of communications. Never during the war had an essential German line been so seriously threatened; and its eventual severance was one of the outstanding features of the operations on the Western Front.

"The front between the Meuse and the Aisne lies in very difficult country, heavily wooded, far from level, and with few and bad roads and narrow valleys along which the progress of any considerable body of troops is extremely difficult. Especially is all this true of the more westerly district in and on the border of the Argonne. This region is one of the wildest in France, its dense forests cut up by ravines and almost devoid of means of communication. Indeed, the whole front was peculiarly favorable to defense and correspondingly ill suited to the Allied offensive tactics in which

the combination of tanks and infantry has played so conspicuous a role. Furthermore, the natural difficulties in the way of the American advance were intensified by the thoroughness with which the enemy had prepared his defensive system in this area. The Hindenburg Line stood virtually intact at the beginning of the American operations, and offered a truly formidable obstacle to an advance. Despite these difficulties, however, the American attack launched over a front of eighteen miles, after very heavy artillery preparation, on the morning of the 28th of September with nine divisions in line, made a very considerable breach in the enemy's positions. On the right, the Bois de Forges, a strong position on the flank was taken in the initial rush and the Americans pushed their way through a relatively thinly wooded country to an irregular line running through Dannevoux-Gercourt, Septsarges-Nantillois-Montgaucon, while in the west, advancing up the valley of the Aire, they took Varennes and Montblainville--in each a penetration of some seven kilometers. The natural result of this success was the retreat on the German center and by the night of the 27th the line ran fairly straight from Dannevoux to Montblainville. Thus the initial attack carried our forces something like half way to the famous Kriemhilde line (second withdrawal line).

"In the days immediately succeeding, however, the gains were small. The impetuosity of the American advance had left much to be done in the way of mopping up and consolidating the ground won. But still more important, the Germans, thoroughly alarmed, and alive to the importance of this part of the line, soon took

(4) Ohio  
pp. 245, 247,  
248

the strongest countermeasures." (4)

#### RELIEF OF THE FIRST DIVISION

During the night of October 10th the regiment moved to the southern edge of the Bois de Montrebeau north of Chaudron Farm, near Exermont, preparatory to taking part in the relief of the 1st Division. This march, while not long, was one of the most difficult we made. It was very dark, the roads were poor and the rain fell almost constantly as it had for the past several days. The congestion of traffic rendered progress extremely slow and difficult.

Reconnaissance by battalion and company commanders was made on October 11th and the relief completed that night, the 2d Battalion taking over the forward position just south of Sommerance, the 3d Battalion in support near Hill 240 and the 1st Battalion in reserve in the Bois de Montrebeau. (5)

(5) Ohio  
pp. 248, 249

#### TERRAIN

Major Wolfe describes the area in which we found ourselves in the following words: "The terrain in which the Rainbow found itself was singularly rugged, exceptionally arduous, and during this particular season, peculiarly water logged. For nearly two weeks it had been almost constantly rained upon. Excepting on the extreme left of the division's sector, the roads were rudimentary, or, worse than that, trails a foot deep in mud, along which the water cupped itself as though they were canals. On most of these paths it was impossible for animal transport--even machine-gun carts--to pass. Rarely, and then only through Herculean effort could an ambulance be brought to the midway dressing station. The ground was of that remarkably oily nature, which, impervious to water, seems to be

dissolved by it. Over these steep hills and in the defile that ran east and west past Exerment there was an abundance of middle sized trees and tangled scrub. The entire position lent itself to the enemy's artillery plan in execution of which he had frequently each hour sent violent squalls of gas and shell into the wet draws through which alone ingress and egress were possible. Upon this terrain the Rainbow, which for over forty-five days had been either fighting or bivouacked in wet woods, or marching, made its entrance.

(6) Chio,  
p. 249

(6)

#### OCCUPATION OF POSITION

Each regiment of the division in the order from right to left, 168th, 167th, 165th and 163th, had one battalion in the line. The 32d Division was on our right and the 82d Division on our left. The 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry (32d Div.) occupied Sommerance during the night of the 11th and 12th and maintained liaison by patrols with the left of our 2d Battalion on Cote de Maldah. Before midnight of October 12th a platoon from our 2d Battalion relieved the troops of the 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry in the north of Sommerance and gained contact with that division at a point practically on the division boundary northwest of the town. Contact between this platoon in Sommerance and the rest of our 2d Battalion on Cote de Maldah was maintained by patrols. (7)

(7) Summary,  
p. 1

#### OPERATIONS OCTOBER 13--19

October 13th was devoted to readjustment of lines and preparations for an attack. A weak counterattack against our regiment was repulsed at about 3:45 PM. Just before midnight orders were received for an attack the following morning. The 84th Brigade, which

was to the right rear of the 83d Brigade, was directed to attack at 5:30 AM and reach the line of the latter by 8:30 AM, at which time both brigades would attack.

(3) Chin,  
p. 250

(3)

The operations of the 166th Infantry on October 14th, 15th, and 16th are set forth in its diary as follows: "14th October 1918. Regimental Hqs. at Bois Montrebeau. The 166th Infantry in conjunction with remaining elements of 42d Division attacked on the morning of 14 October 1918. Pursuant to F.O. 36, Hq. 42d Div., Oct. 15 and F.O. 16 Hq. 83d Inf. Brig., Oct. 13, the division formed a part of the 5th Army Corps and the 1st American Army. The 84th Inf. Brig. attacked at 5:30 AM, purpose being to advance the line to position on line with 83d Brig. attack at 8:30 AM. Our artillery fire was very heavy and the barrage was well laid down. At the beginning of the operation the enemy artillery fire was comparatively light. All units in position and ready on line of departure for attack. There was little counterbattery work from the enemy and rather light shelling on our lines. There was considerable fire, however, upon SOMMERANCE. 8:25 AM, Caterpillar rocket seen to come up just on right of our Brig., which indicated that the 84th Brig. had attained its first objective. 8:30 AM, regiment advanced to attack. 9:25 AM, enemy machine-gun fire increased. Enemy artillery fire combing our back areas. 9:37 AM, Hill 230 (southern hill) taken. 9:50 AM, gas shelling in and around SOMMERANCE. 9:55 AM, report from Division that 84th Brig. is keeping along side our Brig. in advance. The 32d Div. on our right is in the rear to a considerable extent. 10:00 AM, O.P. reports that resistance has been met on Hill

130 (on left). 10:15 AM. Elements of 32d Div. our left in liaison with us and bract call on our line. 10:30 AM. Report that 135th Inf. is making good progress and is just south of Landres St. Georges. 10:40 AM. Aeroplane firing on our front line and dropping signals. None of our planes seen. 10:50 AM. Indications are that our leading battalion has reached woods at west corner of 163th Inf., second objective, 3d Bn. (support) has reached SOMMERANCE. 10:55 AM. Heavy fire on our lines from Hill 263. 11:00 AM. Brigade Commander directs that we keep on proceeding after reaching 4th objective. 11:15 AM. Prisoners reported to have been taken (later found that 80 prisoners were taken by Co. H and sent to rear by leading waves with thought that guards would be sent by support platoons. In some way they became mixed with prisoners taken by 32d Division and were taken to the rear by 32d Division). 11:30 AM. Enemy artillery fire on practically our second objective. 135th Inf. slightly in our rear. 12:00 AM. P.C. of assault battalion in SOMMERANCE. C.O. 2d Bn. reports that our lines forward from second objective and moving carefully. Elements on right and left up with our lines. 12:55 PM. Meeting with stubborn resistance. Considerable number of casualties in assault platoons. 1:10 PM. O.P. reports that roads north of Landres-et-St. Georges crowded with traffic. Some enemy troops also leaving town. 1:35 PM. Machine-gun fire from nine enemy avions near SOMMERANCE. 1:45 PM. Advance elements nearing St. Georges meeting with very stubborn resistance from enemy M.G. fire. 1:40 PM. Reports from 135 Inf. that they have passed left of Landres-et-St. Georges and reached third objective at

1:15 PM. (found out at 2:00 PM to be incorrect.)  
2:00 PM. Enemy planes very active. 2:20 PM.  
Division Commander very anxious to get brigade  
across ravine between Landres-et-St. Georges and  
gain heights beyond, thence to exploit to fourth  
objective with patrols. 2:40 PM. Barrage to be put  
down on trenches between St. Georges and Landres-et-  
St. Georges commencing at 3:30 PM and lasting one  
hour, maximum rate of fire. It will then lift to  
stream north of St. Georges and continue with maximum  
fire of 100 rounds per piece per hour. Forward  
patrols to be withdrawn to zone of safety and neces-  
sary precautions to be taken. Assault battalions be  
ready to move forward at 4:30 PM. 5 battalions light  
artillery (4 on trench systems and one each on troops)  
on 33d Brig. front. 3:45 PM. Two enemy detachments  
seen coming into Landres-et-St. Georges from north.  
4:08 PM. Barrage will be continued until 5:00 PM.  
4:20 PM. En. commander reports companies will be  
set. 6:00 PM. Patrols were seen to make successful  
progress. Nearest elements of 165th Infantry scattered  
and officers trying to round them up. 6:35 PM. 165th  
Inf. did not advance but attempt is being made to do  
so by infiltration. 6:50 PM. Lt. Grose, Brigade Aide,  
reports that 165th Inf. was sending forward patrols and  
suggested that we do likewise. This has already been  
done. 6:55 PM. Reports received to effect that 34th  
Brigade was going to try to break through, using "cold  
steel". 7:21 PM. Mixed liaison position right con-  
sisting of elements from Co. "L" 165th Inf. and Co.  
"G", 166th Inf. 7:30 PM. Our patrols again sent out  
with instructions to go as far as possible until  
resistance is met. 8:30 PM. Barrage line arranged



for 400 meters in front of our lines along brigade front. 10:50 PM. F.O. 17 Hq. 33d Inf. Brig. 14 Oct. 18 received from C.O. 23d Brig. to relieve 2d Bn. by 3d Bn. during night. C.O. Co. to be relieved also presumably by Co. "D", 16th U.S. Bn. 2d Bn. will then form part of brigade reserve. 1st Bn. moved up to support positions. Four casualties were reported in Machine-Gun Company, all slight.

18 October 1918. 1:00 AM. Field Order 17, Hq. 33d Inf. Brig. 15 Oct. 18 received ordering continuation of attack, commencing at 7:30 AM. Barrage to start at 7:15 AM on enemy wire and continue for 15 minutes. At 7:30 AM it will lift 300 meters for passage of enemy wire and at 7:40 AM move forward at the rate of 100 meters every six minutes. Sixteen tanks will be used during the attack for the brigade. 3d Bn. to attack with Cos. L. and M. as assault companies, (2 platoons each forming assault waves and 2 each in support) and I. and K. Cos. in support. Orders were immediately sent out to Bn. Comdrs., but were slow in getting to them. 5:40 AM. Relief as ordered in F.O. 17, Hq. 33d Inf. Brig. (received at 10:50 PM same night) had not been completed. P.C.s 1st, 2d, and 3d Bns. in SOMMERANCE. No tanks had been seen at this hour. 6:20 AM. Enemy H.E. and gas shell fire active. Enemy is attacking our lines, barrage piercing. 7:50 AM. Tanks reported to be on way to front. 7:55 AM. Our attack went ahead according to schedule without regard to counterattack. Tanks on way up. 8:40 AM. Lt. Monnett, commanding Co. M reports that he sent patrols into woods which had been entered to clean it out. 8:45 AM. Captain Grave reports that he can see enemy dragging a field piece over the ridge toward our lines. 8:55 AM. All tanks were pulled back on account of mechanical

trouble and casualties among personnel. Tank Comdr. stated that he saw Germans at point 31.2-35.5 who seem to be getting the better of the Americans. Tank Comdr. stated that he had standing orders to withdraw and reorganize if at any time he was reduced to less than five tanks. 9:03 AM. Report from brigade to effect that 135th Inf. was advancing slowly through enemy wire and into shallow trenches. 9:22 AM. L Co. held up by machine-gun fire, and line about 150 yards south of trench system. 9:25 AM. Message from M Co. states that they are having hard fighting in woods, having lost 20 men and enemy still in woods. Also reports that 82d Div. on left is held up. 9:35 AM. 135th Inf. requests zone fire on their front on line 233.9 and 166th Inf. requests that fire be extended over whole brigade front. Colonel Reilly orders fire for one half hour, zone fire sweeping, commencing at 10:15 AM in order to allow Bn. Comdrs. to adjust their lines accordingly. Following approximate casualties in 2d Bn. on Oct. 14th., 1919:

	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>WOUNDED</u>	<u>MISSING</u>
E - - - - -	0	10	1
F - - - - -	2	20	0
G - - - - -	5	33	11
H - - - - -	11	38	15
L.O.Co. - - - - -	0	5	1

10:50 AM. Casualties light in other battalions on that day. C.O. Co. M reports that he cleaned out woods killing a considerable number of the enemy and the balance running to the rear. 10:55 AM. Artillery fire will be continued until noon and then leading battalion will attempt to push ahead. 1:25 PM. Report from Co. L, that 135th Inf. line is a considerable distance in his rear, and with exposed flank, they cannot advance until the 135th Inf. moves forward. 1:25 PM. C.O. Co.

reports that he has made four attempts to advance, but cannot do so due to M.2 fire coming mainly from the right. Estimates that he has lost 30 men since noon. Co. L reports that they are held up also by machine-gun fire. 1:30 PM. Our attempts to advance unsuccessful. 4:30 PM. Considerable shelling on our front line. 5:15 PM. 32d Div. going to lay a barrage 500 meters north on account of heavy fire on their front lines. 6:00 PM. Order from Brigade Adjutant that a detail of 50 men under command of commissioned officer will report to Lieut. Winslow of 117th Engrs. at the main road junction in SOMERANCA at 8:00 PM as carrying parties for Bangalore torpedoes. They will be carried forward to leading companies who will furnish covering parties to the wire where the torpedoes will be exploded by the Engrs. 6:10 PM. Pioneers designated as carrying detail, and Major Haubrich (condg. 3d Bn.) instructed to provide covering patrols. SUMMARY: Enemy attack during morning failed. In hand to hand encounter in woods enemy was worsted and forced to retreat. All of our own attempts to advance during the day were also unsuccessful. 15 Oct. 13. The relative positions of units of the regiment at the beginning of the day were the same as upon the preceding day. We made no attack during the day but sent out strong patrols for the purpose of attempting to enter St. Georges from the flank. 4:50 AM. Nothing of importance happened during the night. The attack which had been scheduled for early in the morning this date was changed in order to allow units on our right and left to attempt an advance and bring their lines on a line with our lines. The weather conditions were very bad, it being exceedingly dark

was raining during the night. 2:00 AM. Information received from the C.G. to the effect that corps on our left would attack during the day. We also stated that the enemy was holding less strongly and that we should hold ourselves in readiness to attack if so ordered. 9:05 AM. There was fairly heavy shelling during the early part of the evening upon our front lines which gradually slackened during the night and at this hour had practically ceased. 9:00 AM. Unconfirmed report received to the effect that organization on our left had made material advance. C.C. Co. M instructed to send out liaison patrol immediately to ascertain the facts in the case. 9:45 AM. Enemy planes again flew over our lines firing on the infantry and directing their artillery fire. 10:20 AM. Instructions given that in case division on the left has made advance, our patrols will be sent forward and attempt to get through enemy lines. 10:26 AM. Report received that regiment on our left has advanced. C.O. 3d Bn. instructed to send patrols forward at once. 12:00 M. Weather has been very unfavorable all morning, it being rainy and cloudy. Capt. Hutchcraft, comdg. Co. K, is attempting to gain entrance to St. Georges from the western edge. In case he is successful with his patrol, town will be entered by the remainder of his company and Co. M will attempt to take line of trenches from the flank. 12:15 PM. Capt. Peck ordered to take command of Co I at once. 1:00 PM. Report received from brigade that 82d Division is not making the main attack, but is instructed to keep up with the division on its left. 1:05 PM. Heavy shells in addition to 75's will be used on Hill along St. Georges in case town

is taken.

4:15 PM. Captain Hatcher returned making the following report: Moved over to left to effect junction with 83d Division elements and found that latter were a considerable distance from St. Georges on road running from same. He accordingly came back the same direction and attempted to push on. An aeroplane overhead located him and directed machine-gun fire in his direction. He had two men killed and four wounded and realizing that he could not gain entrance to town withdrew his patrol. 6:00 PM. Several changes in commissioned personnel of 83d Brig. General Lenihan relieved from command of 83d Inf. Brigade, Colonel Reilly succeeding him. Colonel Mitchell commanding 165th Inf. was relieved by Lt. Col. Dravo. 8:30 PM. Town of St. Georges will be gassed from 4:00 AM to 8:30 AM, 17 October 1918. (9)

(9) Ohio  
pp.250-255

There was very little activity during the next few days other than patrolling to maintain contact with the enemy who were still in Sommerance.

#### FIRST BATTALION GOES IN

On October 20th, the 1st Battalion relieved the 3d Battalion with Companies A and B in the line and C and D in battalion reserve just south of Sommerance. The following day our battalion extended its line to the right, taking over part of the line held by the 165th Infantry in order that the latter could take over the line held by the 84th Brigade which went into division reserve. The division on our right extended its line to the left about 300 meters leaving our brigade to hold about 4,000 meters. See Special Map No 1. (10)

(10) Summary  
p. 7

During the afternoon of October 22d, while on a reconnaissance of the front line with some of the

other officers of my company, the enemy subjected our reserve position to a brief but violent bombardment, inflicting several casualties in spite of the fact that the troops were well dug in. We were unable to account for this sudden activity on the part of the enemy as there was no indication of a counter-attack nor of his withdrawal; however, upon our return, I learned that an enemy observation plane had been flying very low over our position for some time; the pilot became so bold and flew so low that a few of the men, being unable to resist the temptation any longer, left their holes and fired at him with their rifles; this noise brought the rest of the company out of their holes, giving the enemy observer just the information that he was seeking; the plane left immediately and in a short time the enemy artillery opened on us; judging from the casualties inflicted, the firing data given the enemy artillery were very accurate.

No change in the location of our lines occurred during the period October 22d-30th, although we continued to keep contact with the enemy who showed no signs of withdrawing. The officers and noncommissioned officers of Company "D" made frequent and thorough reconnaissances of the forward position with the view to leading an attack which it was believed would be ordered within the next day or so.

#### RELIEF OF THE FIRST BATTALION

During the night of October 24-25 our battalion was relieved by the 2d Battalion in order that we might have an opportunity to reorganize and rest a day or so before the next attack.

## PLANS FOR THE ATTACK

On October 25th, the Regimental Commander announced to the officers of our battalion his plans for this attack; in this plan Company "D" was to attack St. Georges from the west, going into the zone of the 82d Division for this purpose, while the remainder of the battalion was to attack from the front. Following this conference I went to the command post of the right brigade of the 82d Division to arrange for the passage of my company through their zone; we completed our plans, familiarized ourselves with the terrain over which we were to advance, and awaited the announcement of D Day.

## RELIEF OF THE 83d BRIGADE

Division Field Orders No 43, received October 26th, announced plans for the relief of the 83d Brigade by the 2d Brigade (2d Division); this was immediately followed by Field Orders No 44, revoking the former. On October 27th, 28th and 29th orders were received from the Division announcing plans being made for an attack to be launched on a date to be announced later; however, on October 30th, other orders were received directing the relief of our brigade as announced in Field Orders No 43; command of the sector was to pass to the 2d Division at noon the next day, October 31st. Our front line elements were to remain in position until passed through by the Marines. (11)

(11) Ohio  
op. 260-261

The relief was carried out as ordered and by evening of October 31st, the 166th Infantry, less the 2d Battalion still in the line, found itself bivouacked in the vicinity of Charpentry, about three kilometers southeast of Exermont, where it remained for three days before again taking an active part in forcing the

enemy back to the Meuse River.

It was with mixed feelings of relief and keen disappointment that we listened to the terrific bombardment that preceded the successful attack of the 2d Division on the morning of November 1st; relief at being out of range of enemy machine-gun and artillery fire for the first time in nearly a month; disappointment at not being permitted to participate in smashing the line in front of which we had been held for over two weeks. Our best wishes went with the Marines that morning.

#### ARTILLERY SUPPORT ON NOVEMBER 1ST

In this attack the 2d Division had the direct support of 334 pieces of artillery, plus the general support of seventy-two 155-mm guns from the corps reserve and the machine guns of three divisions. (12) Compare this with the two brigades (1st and 67th) which supported the numerous attacks of our division.

(12) 1st Div.  
p. 232

#### THIRD PHASE (Special Map No. 2)

#### 42D DIVISION TRANSFERRED TO I CORPS

At this time (Nov. 1st) the 42d Division was relieved from further duty with the V Corps and assigned to the I Corps which was on the left of the First American Army. Our regiment, as part of the division in corps reserve, remained in the vicinity of Charpentry until November 3d on which date we again got under way, marching north to Verpel where we spent the night. The following day the march was resumed with Briouilles-sur-Bar as the objective; however, owing to heavy shelling of that place, the regiment spent the night in the vicinity of Authé; Company "D" bivouacked in a railroad cut southwest of Briouilles.



OPERATIONS OF NOVEMBER 5TH

Pursuant to orders received late the night before, our division resumed the march on the morning of November 5th with the mission of relieving the 78th Division and continuing the pursuit of the enemy. Our regiment was to relieve the 311th Infantry. The division advanced with regiments abreast in the order from right to left: 163th, 167th, 165th and 168th. (13) Our regiment advanced in column of battalions with the 1st Battalion leading, followed by the 2d and 3d Battalions in the order named. The 1st Battalion had companies "C" and "D" in the lead with companies "A" and "B" in reserve.

(13) Ohio  
pp. 235, 236

The body of the report of the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, covering this relief is quoted below:

"1. Pursuant to verbal orders, Commanding Officer 168th Infantry, this battalion moved from its position south of Brioules-sur-Bar at 5:30 AM, November 5, 1918, with orders to relieve the 311th Regiment of the 78th Division at 12:00 noon, November 5, 1918, on the line of departure: Les-Petites-Armoises-Verrieres.

2. This battalion halted on the Les-Petites-Brioules-sur-Bar road, its officers going forward to reconnoiter the line of departure with guides from each company of the 311th Infantry who had met the battalion at the halting point.

3. The Battalion Adjutant located Lt. Col. Budd of the 311th Infantry at Tannay but was unable to secure any information from him concerning dispositions, relief, etc. He (the Adjutant) did state, however, that he believed a relief that afternoon impossible, also that if the Battalion Commander desired any information, he, personally, could secure it from Lt.

Col. Budd at Tannay.

4. Instructions were received at 12:00 M to proceed with the relief and pass the lines of the 311th Infantry. The advance lines of our elements passed through the 311th regiment from 2:30 PM to 3:00 PM, in the vicinity of Tannay and south of the Bois de Mont Dieu.

5. The relief was made approximately three hours after the stipulated time owing to the fact that the elements of the regiment to be relieved had moved forward from the line of departure.

6. This battalion was in regimental reserve during the day of November 7, 1918, coming in contact with the halted Infantry of the First Division, on the Sedan road only." (14)

(14) Ohio  
D.

Just north of Briouilles-sur-Bar there was a causeway several hundred yards in length crossing a marshy creek drained into the Bar River. In places the fill on which the roadway was built was some fifteen feet high. The Germans had done a most thorough job of destroying this roadway as they retreated, rendering it impassable for transportation and delaying the progress of the foot troops for about two hours. Passage was eventually made over a plank road constructed by our Engineers. It was in this area that we saw a number of dead horses, whose appearance lead to the conclusion that someone had taken advantage of their presence to replenish their meat supply.

While passing over the high ground northeast of Tannay we were subjected to heavy artillery fire and suffered some casualties. We continued our advance, clearing the Bois de Mont Dieu of the enemy, and

halted for the night along the northern edge of the woods with our outpost about 300 yards to the north. About midnight we made contact with the 1st Infantry on our right. That night in Bois de Mont Dieu was one never to be forgotten by those who were there; in addition to the enemy artillery fire, we had to contend with the elements, cold, darkness, rain and severe electrical storms. Due to the bridges and roads being destroyed by the enemy it was well past midnight before carrying parties were able to get any food up to us. Division Field Orders No 53 were received during the night; extracts of this order are quoted below:

"1. The enemy is retreating rapidly across the Meuse. The 40th Div. (French) is in liaison on our left. The I Army Corps continues the pursuit with the object of defeating the enemy's rear guard and capturing or destroying his troops and transport before a crossing is effected.

2. The 42d Div. will continue the pursuit tomorrow at 5:30 hrs., will reach the Meuse and secure the bridgehead at Sedan.

3. (d) The pursuit will be pushed with the utmost vigor. THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED TO THE DIVISION IS ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT OF THE WAR. Brigade and regimental commanders will by personal example and leadership, insure the rapid progress of the front line battalions." (15)

(15) Ohio  
pp.268-269

#### OPERATIONS OF NOVEMBER 6TH

Our advance was resumed the next morning (Nov. 6th). That the enemy resistance was stiffening was evidenced by the number of his machine-gun crews, who remained with their guns until they were either

captured or killed. These guns were skillfully placed and rendered our progress slow and difficult, necessitating frequent use of our own machine guns and 37-mm gun; in many instances it was necessary to halt the advance and wait for our patrols to capture these positions. Due to the condition of the roads and shortage of ammunition, our artillery was unable to afford us the desired support. Between the hours of 10:00 and 11:00 AM our patrols entered the village of Chemery, reporting that the enemy had just evacuated that place and were withdrawing to the north. Our advance was halted temporarily just north of the town due to some misunderstanding as to our left boundary, which was also the left boundary of the American Army. However, this was soon adjusted and our advance was resumed, becoming more difficult as it proceeded until finally it was halted late in the afternoon along the road running east from Conage where we were ordered to dig in.

About midnight, November 6-7, Division Field Orders No 54, quoted below, was received at our regimental command post in Chemery:

"1. The enemy is still in retreat. The I American Army Corps continues the attack. 2. The 42d Division will continue the pursuit at once and will continue it day and night without halting. The reuse will be reached and Sedan will be taken to-night. (Nov. 7th)".

(16) Ohio  
p. 270

(16)

#### OPERATIONS OF NOVEMBER 7TH

Immediate steps were taken to resume the advance; the 3d Battalion, which had been in rear of the 1st Battalion, got under way by 2:30 AM. (17) and passed

(17) Ohio  
p. 270

through the lines of the latter. The 2d Battalion followed the 3d. The 1st Battalion was reorganized and followed the 3d, marching along the Chemery-Sedan road. Thus began the day of November 7th; the day when there were two armies (Fourth French and First American), three corps (IX French and I and V American) and three divisions (40th French, 42d and 1st American) represented on the hills southwest of Sedan, each one surprised at the presence of the other, and each one intent upon capturing the city.

The Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, states in his report, dated November 10th, that the advance elements of his battalion reached a line about one and one half kilometers north of the road running east from Chevenages, and about one kilometer north of the line held by the 28th Infantry. (1st Division.) (18)

(18) Ohio  
p. 288

The 1st Battalion remained along the road about 2 kilometers southwest of Chehery until about noon when orders were received for us to extend the right of the 3d Battalion; we also learned at the time that the 2d Battalion was to extend the left of the 3d Battalion. This maneuver was soon under way and we moved northeast as far as Rocan Chateau where we received orders to remain in that position. It was later learned that the extension of the flanks of the 3d Battalion had to be called off due to the 28th Infantry being in our zone, causing such congestion and confusion as to render maneuvering practically impossible.

#### ARRIVAL OF THE 1ST DIVISION

Before leaving our reserve position we witnessed a rather unusual scene; a division commander, staff, headquarters, personnel and transportation advancing

along the Sedan road in close formation in the area occupied by our assault battalion which was at that time having difficulty in advancing its lines; the command post of this division was established in Chemery. The natural result of this unusual activity on the road was a material increase in enemy artillery and machine-gun fire from which all units suffered. Although this division is to be commended for making a most difficult march under adverse conditions, it is my firm conviction that its presence there seriously impeded the advance of our own troops and resulted in excessive casualties in both divisions.

The withdrawal of this division late that afternoon was followed soon after by orders for the relief of our own brigade. The boundary of the Fourth French Army was moved to the right (east) in order to include Sedan in its zone of action. Thus ended the race to Sedan as far as the American troops were concerned.

Our battalion had orders to move back to a bivouac area about one and one half kilometers south of Chemery. When I arrived at Chemery at about midnight with my company, I was met by a regimental staff officer who said: "The rest of the battalion is going to bivouac south of town; your company is to remain here to-night as the Regimental Commander has a job for you to-morrow morning; I will guide you to your billets."

#### COMPANY "D" STARTS FOR SEDAN

About 3:15 that morning (Nov. 8th) I was directed to report to the Regimental Commander; upon reporting to him I was informed that the Brigade Commander wanted to see me; I stepped into an adjoining room and reported to Colonel Henry J. Reilly,

1st Lt. J.A., who was in command of our brigade at that time. He gave me the following information and instructions: That our Corps Commander had authorized him to send one company each from the 165th and 186th Regiments to report to the Commanding Officer, 251st French Infantry to represent the American Army in the capture of, and entry into, Sedan; that my Regimental Commander had designated my company to represent his regiment; that I would leave Chemery at 7:30 o'clock that morning (Nov. 8th); that if my kitchen, and ration and water carts were not ready to start when I did, they would overtake us sometime in the forenoon; that the regiment would get rations to me if necessary; that the 251st French Infantry was some place between Chemery and Sedan; that I would meet the company from the 165th Infantry some place, some time that day; that I would proceed at once to the command post of the 40th French Division in Connage for a conference with their staff--it will be noted that I was not to have the rest of my train which meant that we would have only the ammunition and equipment which we carried on our persons. After leaving the Brigade Commander, I went to Connage in search of the command post of the 40th French Division, which I located with considerable difficulty; it would have been better had I spent this time getting some much needed sleep as the information received was of little or no value to me. I got back to Chemery in time to make preparations for the day's march.

At 7:45 o'clock that morning we moved out of Chemery accompanied by the Regimental Operations Officer and Battalion Intelligence Officer. Although the men were in poor physical condition, badly in

need of rest and a change of clothing, their morale was high due to the prospect of a good time in Sedan. In fact, they were in such high spirits they did not worry much over the fact that they had not had breakfast, and did not know when they would, as our kitchen had failed to report. I had decided that if it did not overtake us by the time we arrived at Chemery, I would halt at that place and attempt to buy sufficient food of some kind for breakfast; however, inquiry there disclosed the fact that an American kitchen was halted just north of the town. We soon located it and found a hot breakfast awaiting us. There had been some miscalculation of time and space which resulted in the kitchen leaving Chemery ahead of the company.

While we were eating an automobile load of war correspondents drove up; they told me that they had been informed of our mission at Corps Headquarters and would like to get the story and some pictures. After convincing me of their identity and getting such information and pictures as they desired, they proceeded toward Sedan; they returned in a short time, however, with the information that the Germans were shelling the road north of Cheveneges, and that the 251st French Infantry was near Frenois.

Upon arriving at a point about one and one half kilometers north of Cheveneges, and noticing that there was occasional shelling along the road ahead, I halted the company and had the men take advantage of such cover as was available; taking two runners with me I proceeded across country to Frenois where I reported to Colonel Ludovic Abel de Ville, commanding the 251st French Infantry. After a most cordial greeting, he



called a staff officer and directed that arrangements be made at once to billet my company. At the conclusion of our conference, I asked if I might visit his forward position; he readily agreed to this and sent for a runner to guide me to the Commanding Officer of the leading battalion. I found him in his observation post which was upstairs in an old building located on commanding ground about 1000 meters northeast of Frenois; from this point we had an excellent view to the front and could plainly see the city of Sedan.

After a brief conference with the Battalion Commander, I returned to the regimental command post and sent a runner back to the company to guide it to Frenois. The company from the 165th Infantry which was supposed to be with me had not reported and no word as to its location had been received.

#### PATROLS ATTEMPT TO ENTER SEDAN

About 8:00 o'clock that evening Colonel de Ville informed me that he was sending out a strong patrol with the mission of entering Sedan, and asked if I would care to send some of my troops with it; I readily accepted the invitation and detailed the 3d Platoon, commanded by First Lieutenant Calvin H. Todd, to accompany the French patrol. The 1st Platoon, commanded by First Lieutenant George E. Cortinger, was detailed under similar circumstances to accompany a second patrol sent out with the same mission as the first. Judging by the written reports submitted by these two officers, as well as by their oral reports at the time, it appears that Lieutenant Todd's patrol entered the village of Forges and the one led by Lieutenant Cortinger entered the village of Pt. Torcey, both of which are suburbs of Sedan on the west side of

the Meuse River. Their written reports, headings omitted, are quoted below:

Lieutenant Todd's report: "The patrol was guided by a French Lieutenant who was familiar with the terrain. We proceeded at 5:30 PM, November 3, 1918, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometer northeast of Frenois; thence bearing slightly to the north for a considerable distance, probably  $1\frac{1}{2}$  kilometers until the outskirts of Forey (Forges) were reached. Several buildings were passed. The patrol encountered shell and heavy machine-gun fire, and the French officer, seeing that further progress was impossible, without serious losses, ordered the patrol to return at 2:30 AM. No prisoners were taken." (19)

(19) Ohio  
p. 288

Lieutenant Crotinger's report: "After leaving chateau we proceeded in the direction of Sedan, along Sedan-Frenois road for a distance of about three-quarters of a mile, and were there halted by the French officer. There was continuous shelling of the road and occasional bursts of machine-gun fire, but none of which appeared to be directed on us. We passed several houses along the road after being halted by the French officer. We laid along road till about 3:30 AM, when the French officer said that farther progress was impossible and ordered patrol to return by same route." (20)

(20) Ohio  
p. 289

#### COMPANY "D" RETURNS

The next morning (Nov. 9th) the Commanding General, 40th French Division, came to Frenois and informed us of the fact that armistice terms had been given to the Germans and that the date of acceptance had been set 11:00 AM, November 11th; also that in view of the expected acceptance of the terms of the armistice, his