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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
FOURTH SECTION
COMMITTEE "H"
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA.

COMPANY OFFICERS' COURSE

OPERATIONS OF THE 1ST BATTALION 325TH
INFANTRY, 82ND DIVISION, IN THE SECOND
PHASE OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE,
OCTOBER 10-31, 1918.

CAPTAIN ROBERT OAKLEY, INFANTRY.

1

The operations of the 1st Battalion
325th Infantry, 82nd Division in the
Second Phase of the Meuse-Argonne
Offensive, October 10-21, 1918.

Introduction

In searching for written information concerning the operations of this battalion I found that little has been written about organizations smaller than a division. However, I did find that the History of the 82nd Division had considerable to say about the operations of its battalions. References referred to in writing this monograph are: History 82nd Division; Story of the 325th Infantry, and the authors personal file.

My mind goes back to September 5, 1917 and to Camp Gordon, Georgia, where the Battalion with the other components of the Division was organized. It was on this date the first selectman arrived at Gordon. He was from Cobb County, Georgia, was received by the author and assigned to the 325th Infantry. The organization was soon completed, but our men from Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee were, within a short time, transferred to the National Guard of their respective states. We again organized upon receipt of replacements from northern camps. From a real Southern Organization we became the "All American". (1)

Whitman (1)
Col. W. M.
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 4

We trained hard and faithfully, believing that the best trained and disciplined National Army divisions would go to France first. Orders came and we left

--one--

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la Victoire, Bordeaux, France, 1919.

in line and ready to assist. The mission as stated in Field Orders of the 1st Corps was:

(a) To reduce the Forêt d' Argonne by flanking it from the east. (b) To assist in cutting off hostile fire and observation from the eastern edge of the Forêt d' Argonne. (c) Upon arrival at the Corps Objective, the 1st Corps was to advance to the American Army objective in conjunction with the 5th Corps. (d)

The 82nd Division was honored with a heavy share of the 1st Corps' mission in making this thrust. The Division entered the fight on the 7th and fought faithfully for days and nights. The 164th Brigade made the initial attack for the Division, but was now so depleted that the 325th had to be put in to finish the task. The Regiment was fresh and strong, also anxious to get at the enemy.

The following order, being the first concerning the operations of this Battalion, is quoted here.

Headquarters 164th Infantry
Brigade, American E.F. France.

9 Oct., 1918

Field Order

No. 6

Map: Forêt d' Argonne

1. A hostile counter attack succeeded in driving our troops off the Corps Objective from Fleville to the railroad west of Carnay. The enemy occupies Fleville, Carnay and the ridge to the southwest.

0. On our right is the 1st Division and on our left is the 325th Infantry now on the Corps Objective.

--four--

by the Divisional Artillery and Machine Guns, had been fighting in a sector about three kilometers in width west of the Aire River from Chatal-Chesery to the town of Marq. (3)

Burton (3)
Col. E. Jr.,
82nd Div.
His. P. 44-49

The town of Carnay had been taken and lost with heavy casualties on both sides.

The terrain in this locality is extremely rough and uneven. Hills 180, 167, 223, 224, and the Carnay-Pylone Ridge furnished the enemy a natural means of defense that was difficult to overcome. (Arch Plate)

Disposition,

At 7:00 A.M., October 10th, troops were disposed as follows: 1st Battalion 325th Infantry on jumpoff line (97.0-80.5 to 96.5-80.5) with Companies "B" and "C" in the assault, Company "B" on the right. Companies "A" and "D" were in support, with instructions to follow the assaulting companies at five hundred meters. Right boundary: 97.0-80.5-Carnay (exclusive) to objective (97.7-82.4). Left boundary: 96.5-80.6-junction of railroad and improved road-thence along railroad to objective (96.4-82.6). The 2nd Battalion 325th Infantry was on the right and the 325th Infantry on the left. (2) The 1st Division (U.S.) was next on our right and the 77th Division (U.S.) next on our left. The enemy was composed of troops of the 37th Bavarian Division.

Whitman (3)
Col. W. M.
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 24

Plans and Orders:

The plans were to clear the Forêt d' Argonne of the enemy. With this object in view the 1st Battalion was

--three--

Farm will remain as now organized until further orders.
The 328th Infantry on the Hill to the north and west of Hill 223 will likewise remain as now organized until further orders.

All elements of the Cote 180 or of the Hill to the north and west of Hill 223 will be withdrawn by "H" hour.

"D" day will be October 10th, "H" hour will be five o'clock.

All element must be in place to jump off at "H" hour minus 1.

Post of command 82nd Division: La Forge

154th Infantry Brigade: Chatel Chahery

325th Infantry: Chatel Chahery

By Command of Brigadier General Lindsey.

Trammel Scott

Major of Infantry

Adjutant. (4)

Whitman, Col. (4)
W.M. Story of
The 325th Inf.
P.24.

The wording of this order reveals the fact that Fleville and Cornay were in possession of the enemy and that the 325th Infantry must counter attack to regain Cornay which had been lost. The fighting had been heavy during the preceding three days as was evidenced by many dead American and German soldiers. The jumpoff line and the forward slope of the hill were strewn with these dead men. The ridge Cornay-Pylone, where the enemy had made his hardest fight, was covered with dead men, both German and American. On this ridge a dead German was found

--Six--

The 325th Infantry with artillery support will counter attack on "D" day and "H" hour and regain the corps objective, which runs generally along the 82nd Meridian from Fleville on the east (exclusive) to north and south railroad west of Cornay.

One Battalion of the 325th Infantry will attack from Hill 180 the line Fleville (exclusive), Cornay (inclusive).

One Battalion will attack from the Ridge extending from the point (87.0-80.5) to (95.5-80.5) that part of the objective between the line Cornay (exclusive) to the north and south railroad west of Cornay.

These battalions will pass the lines of those of the 328th Infantry located in that vicinity.

One battalion of the 325th Infantry, as reserve, will be posted under cover south and west of Hill 223.

Stokes Mortars and one pounders will be placed as directed by the regimental commander.

A Machine Gun Company will be attached to each attacking battalion. The commanding officer of the 321st Machine Gun Battalion has designated companies "B" and "D" to be reported to Commanding Officer 325th Infantry.

For artillery plans see annex "A".

Immediately on reaching the Corps Objective the position will be organized in depth as the position of resistance, and exploitation patrols will be sent to the woods and west as far as the Aire River, which will be the limit of the outpost position.

The 327th Infantry on Cote 180 and in Fleinchamp

--five--

drawing. Fighting and running, so to speak. The Boeko could be seen leaving Cornay when we reached the hill overlooking the town.

A few of the messages sent during this short advance, after gaining the objective are recorded here.
8:25 A.M. to C.O. 326th Infantry.

Everything progressing nicely. No machine gun fire and very little artillery. Have received no messages from leading companies yet, but scouts sent forward to ascertain progress report as above. Will report immediately upon hearing from companies. Two casualties reported so far; one from sniper, one accidental. Major Lott has gone forward to point 96.9-81.5 to establish new P.C. Where it will be moved from here immediately and directs me to make above reports.

Aldridge

Bn. Adjutant.

8:30 to C.O. 326th Infantry.

Eight prisoners being sent to your headquarters. No examination made here as to units etc., Major Lott gone ahead to establish new P.C. Prisoners just came.

Aldridge

Bn. Adjutant.

To C.O. 326th Infantry

Eleven more prisoners captured all to date by Company "B". Cornay reported taken. No reports as to reaching objective yet received. I am waiting in this P.C. until I receive reports from companies.

Aldridge

Bn. Adjutant.

--eight--

in a shell hole with bushels of empty shells. On one arm and around his head were bandages stained with dry blood. A bullet hole in his head with fresh blood oozing therefrom showed ~~showed~~ that he had been killed a few minutes before. This evidenced that the enemy had real men in its lines; men that would fight to the last. "Jerry fought us cleanly and we learned to respect the business end of his machine gun.

Operations.

We jumped off at 7:A.M., October 10th. The hour had been changed from 5:00 A.M. Dire things were expected to happen, but the objective was taken without much trouble. Stiff resistance was met, but the Battalion was fresh and eager to meet the enemy wherever found. The formation within the companies was two platoons abreast in the assault with the other two platoons in support. When the Cornay-Fylene Road was reached Company "B" was halted, and an effort to establish connection with its flanks was successful on the right, while on the left Company "C" had gotten out of the Battalion zone of action, and was later located in the 326th Infantry territory (the 326th Infantry was already on the Corps' objective) The Commanding Officer Company "B" extended his left by putting one of his support platoons in to fill the gap and followed the barrage and took the Battalion objective at 8:40 A.M. Nineteen prisoners were captured, and on the forward slope of the Cornay-Fylene Road several wounded soldiers belonging to the 327th Infantry were rescued and returned to our own lines. Major Warren Lott commanded the 1st Battalion. The enemy was now fighting and with-

--NINE--

also lost one man killed and several wounded before we could get friendly artillery stopped. The enemy soon raised his fire to Cormay. Enemy planes came over parallel with our lines and so low that the observer could be seen, and met no resistance from our air force, except once during the day when one of our planes paid us a visit and was attacked by two enemy planes and brought both of them down; or at least both enemy planes crashed to the ground and their pilots were killed. The planes were first seen tumbling and over and. It is believed that they collided with each other which resulted in their destruction.

The assault companies dug in on the objective and provided local security while the support companies patrolled as far north as the town of Mareq-Martin Court Farm.

About 3:00 A.M. the following morning orders were received to assemble the Battalion on the reverse slope of the Hill running southwest from Cormay at the Battalion P.C. The orders for attack on this day (Oct. 11th) placed the 1st Battalion in Brigade Reserve with the 3rd Battalion in the assault, and the 2nd Battalion in support. This was a red letter day for the 325th Infantry, it lost four captains and one lieutenant killed; one major, one captain, and four 1st lieutenants and four 2nd lieutenants wounded. (S)

The number of enlisted men killed and wounded that day cannot be ascertained, except that Company "B" lost forty-one men and one lieutenant. Division and Brigade

--ten--

8:40 A.M. Oct. 10/18, to C.O. 1st Battalion.
Objective gained at 8:40. Could not keep liaison with left flank during the advance. Am making effort to get in touch with it now. Made nineteen prisoners on forward slope of first hill. Two men wounded.

Castle

To C.O. 325th Infantry.

Our artillery firing short on Cormay-Pylone Road. Objective taken. Liaison established with 325th on our left. No machine gun opposition. Very little artillery. Two casualties. Eighteen prisoners sent in. Three machine guns captured. Patrols going out.

Lott (5)

Whitman (5)
Col. W.M.,
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 30.

Note that a message from Major Lott states that friendly artillery is firing short on the Cormay-Pylone Road. This is the position occupied by the Battalion P.C. while the objective already taken runs along the ridge line about six hundred yards northwest of Cormay. Shortly after the objective was taken one airplane came over and asked for our position. Panels made of handkerchiefs and towels were spread and the plane answered "Understood". Thereafter everything went well until the Boche artillery opened up from the north and our own artillery from another direction, both on our position. A glance at the map will show that we were on a ridge line, and being shelled from the north and the south. There was no place to go for cover except a few fox holes that had been dug by "Fritz". Company "B" lost six men wounded by our artillery, among them Sergeant Glik and Corporal Woolis, both excellent non-commissioned officers. Company "G"

--nine--

Whitman (7)
Col. W.M.
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 35

orders stated that the enemy had been driven north of the Sommerance-St. Juvin Road. (7) As a matter of fact he fired on the 3rd Battalion from a position south of that Road; this in spite of the fact that this road was named as the jumpoff line.

Upon receipt of the orders for this attack a request for time to reconnoiter territory on the north side of the river was made, this request was denied. From where such information came, that is the source of the information that reached Division Headquarters to the effect that the enemy had been driven north of the Sommerance-St. Juvin Road, is not known. In so far as the author knows the blame for this costly blunder was never definitely fixed. To say the least it was the result of poor staff work.

In spite of this had start the leading battalion took and passed its jumpoff line by 7:00 o'clock (two hours late), but was so out of position that it could not hold the hill north of this road which it took shortly after passing its jumpoff line. It was driven from its position by counter attack. The 327th Infantry, on our right, about this time picked up and withdrew about one kilometer. This resulted in our support Battalion being put in on the right to fill the gap caused by the withdrawal of the 327th, and a call for the reserve Battalion. Two companies "B" and "C" arrived and reported to the

Whitman (8)
Col. W.M.
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 40

Regimental Commander at 11:30. (8) and were placed in skirmish line on the Sommerance-St. Juvin Road with their left near the junction of the Sommerance-Flevyille-St. Juvin Roads, where they were taken by machine gun fire from positions near St. Juvin.

Just as we back to Cornay thru which the 1st Battalion came to its position in Brigade Reserve. The streets of Cornay and the hills in the road above the town were

also lost one man killed and several wounded before we could get friendly artillery stopped. The enemy soon raised his fire to Cornay. Enemy planes came over parallel with our lines and so low that the observer could be seen, and met no resistance from our air force, except once during the day when one of our planes paid us a visit and was attacked by two enemy planes and brought both of them down; or at least both enemy planes crashed to the ground and their pilots were killed. The planes were first seen tumbling and over and. It is believed that they collided with each other which resulted in their destruction.

The assault companies dug in on the objective and provided local security while the support companies patrolled as far north as the town of Harcq-Martin Court Farm.

About 3:00 A.M. the following morning orders were received to assemble the Battalion on the reverse slope of the Hill running southwest from Cornay at the Battalion P.C. The orders for attack on this day (Oct. 11th) placed the 1st Battalion in Brigade Reserve with the 3rd Battalion in the assault, and the 2nd Battalion in support. This was a red letter day for the 325th Infantry, it lost four captains and one lieutenant killed; one major, one captain, and four 1st lieutenants and four

Whitman (5)
Col. W.M.
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 41

2nd lieutenants wounded. (5) The number of enlisted men killed and wounded that day cannot be ascertained, except that Company "B" lost forty-one men and one lieutenant. Division and Brigade

--ten--

Fleville-St. Javin Roads--now known as "Bloody Angle".

Perhaps it will be well to record a few messages sent and received as the days fight progressed.

11:45 to C.O. 3rd Battalion.

Barrage because of counter attack has been called for on ridge 85.5. Do not withdraw from ridge except to prevent barrage from falling on you. The enemy must not be allowed to hold the ridge.

Whitman

"2:00 P.M. to C.O. 3rd Battalion.

At 2:30 our artillery will stop, after that the ridge must be occupied. The troops will advance no further than that. They must dig in for the night. These orders are preemptory.

Whitman. (9)

At 2:30 Companies "B" and "C" were ordered to re-take the hill. These Companies went into the assault abreast with Company "C" on the right. During the advance up the hill men of the 3rd Battalion were found; but none on top of it. The hill was retaken and held until 5:00 P.M. The following day (Oct. 12) 150 prisoners and 5 machine guns were captured by both battalions. (10)

During all of this time enemy machine gun fire and artillery were continuous. Enemy planes came over and bombed our lines, but none of our planes were seen, except during the afternoon of the 12th, when the sun came out and with him our planes came over in beautiful formation as if for a pleasure jaunt.

No attack was ordered for the 12th. We held on until 5:00 P.M. when the 5th Battalion, having been re-

--Whitman--

thickly strewn with dead soldiers--German and American. The author particularly noticed more than one dead German with a musette bag filled with pyrotechnics and armed with a Wever pistol and a Luga. This accounted for the enemy's excellent co-ordination with his planes and artillery, which the Americans certainly did not have. The enemy had now been driven from the Argonne. He surely must have been thinking things about this time. If he could be driven from positions that afforded such excellent natural means of defense, it must have been obvious to him that he was bound to loose, and that soon.

At Fleville the bridge across the Aire River had been blown up, and was being repaired by American Engineers. The Battalion crossed on the debris in single file with high explosive shells of big calibre falling all around. However it succeeded in getting across without much damage, and marched and took up position west of the Fleville-St. Javin Road in column of companies in the vicinity of 98.5-98.0. The ground was level and, of course afforded no shelter. The position was in plain view of St. Javin and the high ground north thereof. A heavy fog obstructed the enemy's view. He pounded the de Noelle, Rance, and the Colches Ravines to our right where it was believed supporting troops would be. Fritz's estimate of the situation was right in this respect, for there we should have been. It would have been obvious to a novice that we should not have been where we were. However luck and the fog were with us. Well "All is well that ends well." We were glad the fog didn't raise. The Regimental P.O. was at the junction of the Somme--

--twelve--

Whitman (9)
Col. W.M.,
Story of
the 325th
Inf., P. 40

Whitman (10)
Col. W.M.,
Story of
the 325th
Inf., P. 42

Due to the illness of Major Lott and the hard fighting the Battalion had gotten into bad condition; many of its number, including one captain and one lieutenant had been killed, and a great many wounded. Battalion headquarters was located in a dugout facing the enemy, who having been driven therefrom was well aware of its exact location. He was making good use of his knowledge as was evidenced by constant artillery directed at that spot. We took over the front line and by 3:30 P.M. our supporting artillery had registered on the ravine a few hundred yards north of and parallel with our lines with request for heavy concentration for a period of thirty minutes, as soon as it could be put down, and thereafter during the remainder of the night, a harassing fire within the Battalion zone as far north as the Ravin-Aux-Ferras.

Enemy Counter Attack.

At 4:00 P.M. the enemy counter attacked with everything he had, but was soon driven back in disorder. The men by now were getting accustomed to counter attacks.

Messages.

Telephone message from Division O.P.

At 16 hours the Germans started a barrage on the north bank of the river. They are now advancing in a local counter attack. I can see several hundred men in open formation advancing over ridge 287.4-286.4 and 288.0-285.5. They seem to be on the ridge advancing south in open formation. It looks as if they were coming over the ridge down to the river valley.

--Fifteen--

organized, took over the position and Companies "B" and "C" joined the other companies of the Battalion on the south slope of the hill, and just south of the Somme-ance-St. Juvin Road. We dug fox holes and thought to get some rest, but such was not to be our lot. Fritz fired high explosive and gas throughout the night in an effort to put out a battery of French 75mm guns that were firing from a position further south. He had the wrong data to the 1st Battalion's detriment. One shell covered the Commanding Officer Company "B" with dirt mixed with gas and burning powder; another buried Lieutenants McDaniel and Bolster to such an extent that they had to have help to get out. In spite of all this I heard one soldier say "Encore Fritzie", and another "Oui, Oui" when a shell barely missed his fox hole; while others were cursing the whole Kaiser family. Luckily the night passed without much damage. A slow cold rain was falling, every one was wet, tired and sleepy, and hungry too. The question of food was now a serious matter, and should have been given more and better attention.

There was no attack planned for the 13th. At daylight the shelling stopped, we dug in to better advantage, and were supplied with rations and ammunition. At 11:30 A.M. this date the Battalion Command passed to Captain Honier Castle. Major Warren Lott was evacuated sick. Immediately following this change the 1st Battalion was ordered to again take over the front line position and prepare for the attack to take place the following

Whitman ((11)) morning, ((11)).
Col. W. M.
Story of
the 885th
Inf., P. 45

--Fourteen--

From Lieutenant Jones, 164th Infantry Brigade
Headquarters 16:30 hours.

"Boche barrage has cut off our front line and
Boche coming over, request planes at once.

164th Infantry Brigade, 16:40 hours.

"Colonel Whitman reports that German planes are
flying low over his lines and firing machine guns into
his men. He requests airplanes from Corps to drive them
off.

When asked about the progress of the Germans in
the counter attack, Lieutenant Jones stated that Col-
onel ^{Whitman} said the Boche barrage had cut off his front line,
the barrage falling between the first and second lines.
He did not know what was happening farther than that.
Jones said it took our artillery about two minutes to
get over.

164th Infantry Brigade, 17:20 hours.

"Boche barrage stopped and Boche have been driven
back in front of our positions and everything is as it
was. Our artillery barrage most effective. (4)

This counter attack was stopped by prearranged
artillery fire which caused it to be so effective
and prompt.

October 14th.

The Battalion did not loose or gain any ground
during 12th and 13th, but was in the line with Com-
panies "A" and "D" abreast in the assault, supported
by Companies "B" and "C", the 3rd Battalion 325th In-
fantry, one company from the 321st Machine Gun Battal-
ion and 2nd Battalion 320th Field Artillery. (5)

--sixteen--

Due to the illness of Major Lott and the hard fight-
ing the Battalion had gotten into bad condition; many
of its number, including one captain and one lieutenant
had been killed, and a great many wounded. Battalion
headquarters was located in a dugout facing the enemy,
who having been driven therefrom was well aware of its
exact location. He was making good use of his knowledge
as was evidenced by constant artillery directed at that
spot. We took over the front line and by 3:30 P.M. our
supporting artillery had registered on the ravine a few
hundred yards north of and parallel with our lines with
request for heavy concentration for a period of thirty
minutes, as soon as it could be put down, and thereafter
during the remainder of the night, a harrasing fire
within the Battalion zone as far north as the Ravin-
Aux-Perres.

Enemy Counter Attack.

At 4:00 P.M. the enemy counter attacked with every-
thing he had, but was soon driven back in disorder. The
men by now were getting accustomed to counter attacks.

Messages.

Telephone message from Division O.P.

At 16 hours the Germans started a barrage on the
north bank of the river. They are now advancing in a
local counter attack. I can see several hundred men in
open formation advancing over ridge 297.4-285.4 and
298.0-285.5. They seem to be on the ridge advancing
south in open formation. It looks as if they were com-
ing over the ridge down to the river valley.

--fifteen--

We reached top of hill north of St. Javin-St. Georges Road without much further trouble, but here we got it from the right flank. The 326th Infantry was behind, due, they said, to failure of the 42nd Division to advance. (12)

We are taught, and rightfully too, not to go ahead of our flanks, but I feel certain that those who have been in action will agree that the American Doughboy is rather difficult to stop at any time, especially is this so when meeting with success.

Messages.

10:30. 1st Battalion started over the top as per schedule; no information from front lines at this time. About forty prisoners have passed through our hands.

Castle.

10:50 Reports show line advancing as per schedule. Prisoners are coming over in large groups. Support Battalion has reached my P.C. I will move forward at once with my personnel, except adjutant, and establish new P.C. Everything looks roseate.

Castle.

12:45. To C.O. 3rd Battalion. Report positions of your companies. Castle is meeting stiff resistance from ridge north of St. Javin-St. Georges Road. Send forward to see if he needs help and put one company in if necessary. (13)

Whitman.

The Division History shows many more messages that were sent during this days fighting, all of which are

--eighteen--

Airplanes were also listed as our support, but by this time at least one of our number was losing confidence in the air personnel on the Argonne Front. The 328th Infantry was on our right and the 325th Infantry on our left. The advance was to be 100 meters in six minutes. Troops on our right and left jumped off at 7:00 A.M., but the 1st Battalion did not move forward until 10:00 A.M. This was due to being in a salient and the only unit of the Division on the objective specified for the 11th. The Battalion Zone of advance was bounded on the right by a line running from 99.3-85.0 to 99.2-85.7 to 99.1-87.0 to 98.9-88.0, and on the left by a line running from 98.4-84.3 to 98.3-86.3 to 97.8-87.4. The Battalion soon found itself, again in a salient due to failure of the troops on both flanks to keep up. Soon after the fight started a 2nd Lieutenant and 40 men were captured. The lieutenant stated he had come into the lines the night before from Metz. He was very polite, and the fear of death was plainly written on his face. These men belonged to the 30th Infantry, Bavarian Division. When orders were given to take the prisoners to the rear the lieutenant asked if they were to be killed.

A few minutes later one sergeant, one private, Company 3, 32nd Regiment, 15th Bavarian Division; also 2 privates, 1st Machine Gun Company, same Regiment and Division were captured. The sergeant could speak English, and was in an entirely different frame of mind from the lieutenant, or at least seemed so; said he had been in America before the war and left America to fight because he loved Germany and hated

Whitman (13) American (16)

101. W. M.

History of

the 328th

Inf. P. 45

328th

Whitman(14)
Col. W. W.
Story of
the 328th
Inf. P. 49

The melees lasted only about fifteen minutes. The enemy was driven back before our preparation barrage started. Companies "B" and "D" were in the line supported by Companies "A" and "C". (14) The fighting was short, sharp and decisive, leaving the ground on top of the Hill strewn with dead and wounded American and German soldiers. 1st Lieutenants Thomas L. Bolster, William B. Spratt and Norman A. Garrett were killed. 1st Lieutenant Homer Thompson and 2nd Lieutenant Everett Shepherd were wounded, and 2nd Lieutenant Thomas W. Walker was captured. Our left flank followed the enemy well into the Ravin-Aux-Pierres, but our right was pinned to the ground by flanking fire from the northeast and east. Our left was, as a result of this, forced to withdraw, and nightfall found us in the position from which we had attacked that morning. The 328th Infantry was still hanging behind, and strange as it may seem, Sergeant Alvin C. York belonged to one of the companies of that Regiment. One might think that, after all the heroism alleged to have been displayed by that soldier, he would have connected up the line himself. ✓

There was a different story to tell of the enemy in this section of the line. There were no German soldiers waiting to surrender to the first American that would furnish them protection. Message after message was sent asking the 328th to come forward. Strength of the Battalion at dark of this date was 5 officers and 186 enlisted men.

--twenty--

essentially the same as those quoted above. At nightfall the 1st Battalion had gained and was holding a line extending from 98.2-86.5 to 99.2-86.9 with its flanks exposed in the air. The 328th Infantry on the right was hanging behind and blaming it on the 42nd Division. The men were pinned to the ground by machine gun and rifle fire from the high ground to the northeast and east. At dark the men began to dig in; but there was not much digging in to do. The enemy's and our own artillery had done that and "Jerry" was still at it. The men lived in shell holes half filled with water. The Battalion Commander received a message from the Regimental Commander to the effect that "The 328th Infantry claims to be as far as advanced as you". A glance at the attached map will settle that contention. Unsuccessful efforts were made to get food. The only water to be had for drinking purposes came from a small stream running through the sector between parallels 85 and 86.

October 16th

We were now on the Kriemhilde-Stellung Line. The Battalion was ordered to jump off at 7:30 A.M. preceded by a barrage that was to start at 7:25 hours and 300 meters in front of our position. After five minutes concentration it was to move forward 1000 meters and stop. The Hoche beat us to it by fifteen minutes by making a vicious counter attack with infantry, artillery and airplanes. He was repulsed but not until many men had been killed, wounded and captured. We got nine prisoners and seven machine guns. (7)

Buxton, (7)
Col. F. J.
His 328th
Div. 3.168

--nineteen--

taken by our troops and Captain Varnado was found unconscious but still faintly breathing. There were no wounds upon his body. After a long period in the hospital he recovered full possession of his strength and senses and returned to the United States with his Regiment after the war was over." (8) The above report is correct except that Captain Varnado was not unconscious when found. He was able to rinse his mouth ^{with} water and to take one swallow. He was not allowed any more at that time. A message speaking of Captain Varnado's death is quoted here.

"16th Oct. To Austin 1 (163rd Inf. Brigade).

Came out through vicious barrage. All over now. M.G. fire coming over, not bad. Captain Varnado killed. Estimate less than 250 men in both battalions remaining fit for duty. Counter attack by enemy would be bad. Lines as stated by phone. Am not a calamity howler, but the officers and men are all in. Jones in good position as reserve but, of course, no shelter from the elements. Will get Castle and Melton together and organize. Will move Jones back slightly and put Melton in support with his Battalion. Less than 100 men. Castle with his Battalion and Company "H" attached to hold line of road and have advanced parties in shell holes 200 yards in front. Am starting this now, execution of same at dark.

Campbell.

Whitman (15)
Col. W.M.
Story of
the 325th
Inf. P. 53

Campbell was Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment. (15)
RAVIN-AUX-PIERRES TAKEN FOR THE LAST TIME.
32nd Division Field Order No. 30 issued at 21 hours,

--twenty-two--

From the 16th to the 20th inclusive we did not advance, but continued to hammer the enemy front line troops, ever ready to take the Ravin-Aux-Pierres but unable to do so.

Just why the high command wanted this Ravine which would place them further into what was now a very dangerous salient, is not known. Troops were pushed into this Ravine each day and then withdrawn at night because only one flank could get in at a time. On one of these foolish attempts Captain Varnado, Commanding Officer of Company "E" was left in the Ravine for dead. The Division History has this to say concerning the reported death of this officer:

"The report concerning the death of Captain Varnado proved later to be incorrect but forms the back ground for one of the most amazing incidents in the history of the Division.

During the withdrawal of the 325th Infantry from the Ravine, a large calibre, high explosive shell burst within a short distance of this officer. The force of the explosion tossed him in the air and dropped him in a limp heap on the ground. One of his non-commissioned officers ran to his assistance and satisfied himself that his Company Commander was dead. For five days Captain Varnado lay unconscious in this Ravine. During this period a cold rain fell almost constantly and the Ravine was heavily shelled with gas and high explosives. At intervals a machine gun barrage was poured into this area. At the end of five days, on October 21, the Ravine was again

--twenty-one--

Pierres on the line 97.5-86.8 to 98.4-87.15. This line is held by both regiments; sixty men of the 326th Infantry on the left and the 1st Battalion 325th on the right (something less than 200 men); the whole under command of Captain Castle, 325th Infantry.

X X X X X X X X
The whole to-night constitutes the first line of the 325th Infantry. The line is in contact with the 164th Brigade on its right, who joined us this afternoon.
X X X X X X X X
The commanding officers of both regiments carried out very carefully my instructions given during the day. Progress was made by persistent infiltrations aided by machine guns and occasional artillery. While the line is well advanced and forms a salient, it has been carefully prepared against resistance during the night." (9)

The Brigade Commander got his flanks mixed. The sixty men borrowed from the 326th Infantry was used to close the gap on the right of the 1st Battalion of the 325th instead of the left. The 326th Infantry did not join us, as alleged. We used the sixty ^{men} referred to and extended back to them.

The following pictures the situation as seen by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell at 4:00 P.M., and reported to Regimental Commander:

"Oct. 21st. I gave back "D" Company to Castle at his request. Phones all out, please try to get them in. Everything lovely so far. Pretty heavy shelling, will stick around for an hour or so and mosey back. Castle is driving this thing in good style. Machine gun positions being reconquered and I think everything

O.K., if 326th will look out for our left." (10)

Campbell (10)

--twenty-four--

October 20, 1918, stated that the 1st Army Corps would continue to improve its position for a general advance by local operations on October 21. The order further provided:

"The 32nd Division will develop the enemy's main line of resistance by pushing out strong exploitation detachments on its front and will seize and hold any advantageous ground from which the enemy may be driven or may withdraw. Infantry Brigade Commanders are charged with carrying out local operations on their own fronts as prescribed but will not involve themselves in a serious operation or bring on a general attack."

As a result of this order the 1st Battalion, in compliance with orders, seized the slope north of the Ravin-Aux-Pierres. The attack was initiated at dawn and by 1:00 P.M. the Battalion was dug in and the front line consolidated. This was the farthest any unit of the Division advanced and held its gains (see map). Men had to be borrowed from the 326th Infantry with which to connect our flanks. The advance into this Ravine was plain "Tomfoolery"; there was nothing to be gained, the Battalion was already in a salient. Every effort to advance beyond the Ridge, with our flanks exposed as they were, was not in keeping with sound tactics. The enemy kept hammering at our right flank until relief came the night of the 31st. Extracts from the report of the Brigade Commander concerning this day's foolish exploits are of interest.

"The operations of this Brigade to-day resulted in establishing its front line north of the Ravine-Aux-

--twenty-three--

Buxton (9)
Col. E. Jr.,
Hq. 32nd D
Div. P. 200

Buxton (10)
Col. E. Jr.,
Hq. 32nd D
Div. P. 200

During the night of October 31st the Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Battalion of the 320th Infantry, 80th Division, and withdrew to a position about three kilometers southwest of Marq in Army Reserve, where it remained for three days and then, (the Division being assigned to the 2nd Army) left the Foret d'Argonne never to face the enemy again.

Gains and Losses.

The Battalion in this operation penetrated enemy territory to a distance of about eight kilometers on approximately a one kilometer front, and captured several hundred prisoners and many machine guns (exact number not known). Our losses in dead and wounded were 543.

Strength on entering the line: Off. 24, Men 894

Casualties	Off.	Men
Killed	6	102
Wounded	7	428
Captured	1	22
evacuated suffering from gas and sickness	7	226
Strength when relieved	5	116
Total	24	894

This concludes the operations of the 1st Battalion of the 325th Infantry in the Meuse Argonne Offensive from October 10th to 31st, 1918, and in the greatest war in the World's History. It was reduced in numbers but conscious that it had played no mean part in the struggle for human liberty, and in the suppression of the selfish schemes of the most powerful military na-

No effort was made to advance beyond the position reached on the 21st. The whole Division was so depleted that it would have been of little effect in an attack. The battalions took turn about in the first, second and third positions until relieved by the 320th Infantry, 80th Division, during the night of the 31st. The days that elapsed before relief came were very trying. The Boche kept at us with everything he had throughout the day and night. There was no rest. The rain was incessant. Efforts to get food to the front line failed many times because of shells and machine gun fire on the approaches. This usually resulted in destruction of the food carried. To make bad matters worse our airplanes not only failed to give us assistance but actually machine gunned our lines after we had been in the position for several days. Listen to this:

"To C.O. 163rd Brigade. The C.O. 1st Battalion 325th Infantry reported at 16:10 hours 2 planes firing with machine guns on his positions along the St. Juvin-St. Georges Road. These planes were clearly marked with U.S. insignia and were numbered 8 and 17. At 16:16 hours similar report was received from C.O. 3rd Battalion that same two planes fired on his front line position north of the Ravin Aux Pierres. From observation point near Regimental P.C. these planes were seen firing tracer bullets. The planes were later seen retreating in a southerly direction. Request prompt investigation and

Whitman (16) Prompt action. Whitman (16)
 Col. W.M.
 Story of
 the 325th
 Inf. P. 22

(b) The troops, the airplanes and the artillery were not properly co-ordinated, which resulted in loss of life and wounded soldiers, to say nothing of the depressing affect that the firing of friendly artillery had on troops.

(c) The placing of the Battalion as Brigade Reserve in the vicinity of 96.5-83.0 was a grave and unpardonable mistake. I say this because there was good shelter in close proximity to this position. If the fog had raised there isn't a doubt but that heavy casualties would have resulted. I hear some say we must expect casualties in battle; right, we do, but the officer who, through carelessness or ignorance, does not use every means at hand to preserve the lives of men placed in his hands should be deprived of his command.

(d) The attack on the 12th was made without reconnaissance. The 3rd Battalion led by Colonel Whitman-- he was at the head of the column--crossed the Aire River at Fleville with the understanding that the 1st Division (U.S.) had taken and were holding the Sommerance-St. Juvin Road. This was not the case. There were no friendly troops on that road or between Fleville and that road. The enemy occupied positions south of the road from where they fired on the assault Battalion of the 325th, inflicting many casualties. Some one is to blame for poor staff work and furnishing faulty information.

(e) The 327th Infantry is to be severely criticised for withdrawing in the heat of battle and leaving the

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tion that the world has ever known. Perhaps every one did his best, but if the same battles were to be fought again it is believed that certain things would be done differently. The, let us be happy in the knowledge that the reconquest of the Foret d' Argonne and the Valley of the Aire River stands out as one of the best achievements of the American Army. From beginning to end the weather was anything but propitious; a steady downpour of rain most of the time offered nothing but the most depressing conditions. Cheerfulness was and always will be characteristic of the American soldier; he fought from the beginning to the end with an ardent little in keeping with his surroundings.

The author, having written this narrative, in most part, from memory and personal knowledge of the deplorable conditions, is constrained to say that the Government of the United States cannot rightfully be proud of anything in connection with the victories won on this part of the front, except the courageous and unskilled efforts/displayed by her soldiers, and that her numerical strength was greater than the effective bullets of the enemy.

Analysis and Criticism.

There is much to criticize:

(a) The Commanding Officer of Company "C" did not, during the action on the 10th, keep within his zone of action. This was brought about by failure on his part to carefully consider his orders, and the information he received concerning the troops on his left being already on the Corps Objective.

--twenty-seven--

flank of a neighboring unit in the air. For this the regimental commander was relieved.

(f) The Battalion should not have, without specified orders, gone ahead of its flanks.

(g) The Ravin-Aux-Pierres should not have been taken thereby exposing its flanks to deadly enemy fire.

(h) The Battalion should not have been kept in action twenty-two days without relief.

Lessons Learned.

Lessons to be learned from this operation are:

(a) Officers should read their orders carefully, and should be extremely careful to learn of the location of troops on their flanks before advancing into action.

(b) Organizations should never go into action supported by artillery and airplanes without prearranged signals as a means of communication. The signal personnel-- a big percentage of the men--should be equipped with pyrotechnics and other means of signal communication, and taught how to use them; also when to use them.

(c) All personnel, the officers in particular, should be deeply impressed with the vital necessity of keeping in touch and on a general line with troops on their flanks when advancing in combat.

(b) The troops, the airplanes and the artillery were not properly co-ordinated, which resulted in loss of life and wounded soldiers, to say nothing of the depressing effect that the firing of friendly artillery has on troops.

(c) The placing of the Battalion as Brigade Reserve in the vicinity of 98.5-83.0 was a grave and unpardonable mistake. I say this because there was good shelter in close proximity to this position. If the fog had raised there isn't a doubt but that heavy casualties would have resulted. I hear some say we must expect casualties in battle; right, we do, but the officer who, through carelessness or ignorance, does not use every means at hand to preserve the lives of men placed in his hands should be deprived of his command.

(d) The attack on the 12th was made without reconnaissance. The 3rd Battalion led by Colonel Whitman-- he was at the head of the column--crossed the Aire River at Fleville, believing that the jumpoff line was in the hands of friendly troops, but such was not the case. There were no friendly troops on that road or between Fleville and that Road. The enemy occupied positions south of the Road from where they fired on the assault Battalion of the 88th, inflicting many casualties. Some one is to blame for poor staff work and furnishing faulty information.

(e) The 82nd Infantry is to be severely criticised for withdrawing in the heat of battle and leaving the

