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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SUBJECTS
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ADVANCED OFFICER'S COURSE
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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 28th INFANTRY
IN THE AISNE-MARNE OFFENSIVE,
JULY 17-23, 1918.

CLARENCE R. HUEBNER, CAPTAIN, INFANTRY.

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 28TH INFANTRY
IN THE AISNE-MARNE OFFENSIVE,
JULY 17-23, 1918.

INTRODUCTION.

This monograph covers the operations of the 28th Infantry, 1st U.S. Division, in the Aisne Marne Offensive, from the march forward from the Compiègne Forest July 16/17 to the assembling of the regiment at Survillers on July 23rd, 1918.

In order to properly orient the reader, it will be necessary to go back to the latter part of the year of 1917 and give a short resumé of the events that lead up to this great battle, which according to most historians, marked the turning point of the war.

During the latter part of the year of 1917, the Germans were making large gains against the Russians in the east, which finally resulted in the collapse of the Russian Government. (1)

The Austrians, with the aid of several German Divisions, surprised the Italians in October 1917, and administered a serious defeat to them. The Italian Armies were driven back to the Piave River with terrible losses and were in such a state of disorganization, that it was necessary to send 10 French and British divisions from France to prevent the further advance of the Austrians. (2)

Final (1)
Report of
General
Pershing.
Page 17.

Final
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 17 (2)

The collapse of Russia and the serious defeat administered to Italy, released large numbers of German and Austrian divisions, which could be employed on the western front. Germany began moving some of these divisions from the Russian Front to France in November 1917. (3)

Final (3)
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 17.

During the early part of 1918, it became apparant, to the Allies, that the Germans intended to initiate a great offensive on the western front.(4)

Final (4)
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 18.

The first blow fell on the British Armies and the junction of the French and British Armies in the vicinity of St.Quàntin, on March 21, 1918. The Allied defenses were destroyed and their armies driven back with the loss of thousands of men and much material. It was only by the arrival of many French re-enforcements that the Germans were finally stopped on a general line Noyon-Montdidier-Amiens.(5)

Final (5)
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 31.

General Pershing states "When, on March 21, 1918, the German Army on the western front began its series of offensives, it was by far the most formidable force the world had ever seen. In fighting men and guns it had a great superiority, but this was of less importance than the advantages in morale, in experience, in training

Final (6)
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 30.

for mobile warfare and unity of command." (6)

General Foch was made Commander in Chief of the
British, French, Italian and American Armies on
April 3, 1918.(7)

Final (7)
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 31.

The Germans delivered an attack against the French
on May 27th, 1918, in the sector between Soissons and
Rhiems. The French defenses were broken, Soissons
captured, and the German lines were driven forward to
the Marne River, forming a salient of which Chateau
Thierry was the apex.(8).

Frothingham
Page 256- (8)
257.

The Germans attempted to widen the Chateau Thierry
Salient on June 9th, 1918, by an attack between Noyon
and Montdidier. The French held on stubbornly and were
able to stop this offensive with very little loss of
ground.(9)

Final (9)
Report of
General
Pershing
Page 34.

Early in June it became apparant to the Allies that
the Germans were planning a great offensive between
Chateau Thierry and the Argonne Forest. In fact,
Marshal Foch was so sure of the location of the attack,
that he began making counter preparations during the
later part of June and the early part of July. He
reenforced the French Armies that were holding the front
between Chateau Thierry and the Argonne Forest and
began assembling reserves in the Villers-Cotterets

Monograph(10)
Soissons
Capt.Viner
Book 1 Page 1.

Forest to execute a counter offensive.(10)

The 1st Division, American, which had assembled in the Beauvais Area, after its relief from the Cantigny Sector, received orders on July 11th, placing it at the disposal of the 10th French Army and ordering it to move to the Dammartin-en-Goele Area, northeast of Paris. On the night of July 12th, the entire division cleared the Beau^avis Area and was on its way to the new assembly point. The dismounted troops moved in trucks and the mounted elements proceeded overland by marching. The men of the 1st Division thought they were going to a rest area for a long deserved rest. This thought was confirmed by the fact that each regiment of infantry formed a composite company, which was sent to Paris on July 12th, to participate in the Bastille Day Parade on July 14th. (11)

1st Div.(11)
History
Page 100.

The last of the Germans Offensives took place on July 15th, 1918. The Germans attempted to break thru the Allied Lines between Chateau Thierry and the Argonne Forest. The French, with the aid of several American, Italian and British divisions, succeeded in stopping this advance without the loss of very much ground and caused the Germans to suffer great casualties. (12)

Marshal Foch began shifting his reserves towards Soissons on July 15th, when it became obvious that the line from Chateau Thierry to the Argonne Forest would hold. (13)

Final (12)
Report of
General
Pershing.
Page 34.
Monographs(13)
Soissons
Capt. Viner
Book 2, Page 1.

The 2nd Division, American, which was in a reserve position near Chateau Thierry, received orders on July 16th placing it at the disposal of the 10th French Army. (14)

Field Orders
No. 14 (14)
2nd Division.

The 10th French Army consisting of the 11th, 30th, 20th, 1st and 18th Army Corps, under General Mangin, held the front from the Ourcq River north beyond Soissons, in the order named. General Mangin received orders directing him to make a sudden attack on July 18th along the line between the Ourcq and the Aisne Rivers in the direction of Fere-en-Tardenois. (15)

Monograph (15)
Soissons
Capt. Viner.
Book 2, Page 3.

The 20th Corps, consisting of the 1st and 2nd Divisions, American, 1st Division, Moroccan, and the 69th and 38th Divisions, French, was to be the spear head of the attack.

Its mission was to encircle the Foret de Retz from the north and south, sieze Chaudin and Vierzy, and endeavor to reach the plateau northeast of Hartennes, from which position it was to hold the southern outlet of the Ravine de la Crise.

The attack orders of the 20th Corps were issued on July 16th and assigned the 2nd Division on the right, the Moroccan Division in the center, and the 1st Division on the left, with the 69th and the 38th Divisions in Corps Reserve.

The axis of attack was thru Dommiers-Chaudin-Villemontoire.

The mission of the 1st Division was to execute a frontal attack in its zone of action and to capture and hold the

ridge about one half way between Missy aux Bois and

Operations(16) Floisy on the left and Chaudon on the right,(16)
Orders
No. 227
20th Corps.

The infantry regiments, the machine gun battalions and the engineer regiment of the 1st Division were conveyed in trucks from the Dammartin-en-Goele Area to the eastern edge of the Compiègne Forest in the vicinity of Pierrefonds, on the night of July 15/16, 1918.

1st Division Headquarters opened in Mortfontaine on

1st Div. (17) July 16th. (17)
History
Page 102.

The attack orders of the 1st Division were issued on July 16th immediately after the receipt of the attack orders of the 20th Corps, (18)

1st Div.
History
Page 104.

The 1st Division was to attack on J day and at H hour with the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades abreast; The 1st Brigade on the right.

Each brigade was to have its two regiments abreast and each regiment to be echeloned in depth, with a 1st, 2nd and 3rd line battalion; The interior 3rd line battalion to be in brigade reserve, and the exterior 3rd line battalion to be in division reserve.

The 1st and 2nd line battalions were to be emplaced on the east side of the Ravine ^{ravine} du Retz in their respective regimental zones of action. The 3rd line battalions to be on the west side of the ravine east of Riverseau Farm and the Ravine du Retz. Both of the above ravines

just mentioned were being shelled constantly.

The 1st line battalions were to be so placed that the first wave would cross the front line at H hour.

That portion of the Moroccan Division, which was holding the front line in the division zone of action, was to be relieved in time to take part in the attack.

The line of departure of the division was along the Tranchee de Plateau from Tranchee de Glauz to Tranchee l'Arnee.

Surprise was to be an essential factor in this operation; therefore, there was to be no preliminary movements from the new positions, nor ^{were} ~~was~~ there to be any indiscreet telephone conversations or exposure of personnel.

The attack was to be covered by a rolling barrage and a dense artillery covering fire. There was to be no preliminary artillery preparation.

The divisional artillery, reenforced by the 253rd Field Artillery Regiment (75's) French, and one subgroupment of 105's or 155's, furnished by the 20th Corps, was to fire this covering fire and barrage.

Forty-eight tanks were ~~to be~~ attached to the division to support the attack.

The Division Command Post was to remain at Mortfontaine with a advanced representative at Couerves. (19)

Field (19)
Orders
No. 27
1st Division.

Two battalions 28th Infantry, two battalions 26th Infantry, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion and certain elements of the 1st

Brigade marched to the vicinity of Mortfontaine on the night of July 16/17, 1918. The remainder of the dismounted elements of the division remained in the vicinity of Pierre-

Operation(20)fonds. (20)

Section

Order No.

170 2nd.

Brigade.

1st Div. (21)

History

Page 104.

The Infantry Brigade and Regimental Commanders with two Staff Officers each, made as thorough a personal reconnaissance of their respective positions as was possible during the morning of July 17th. (21)

The Division Commander and his Staff attended a conference at the 20th Corps Headquarters, General Mangin presiding, at 1:00 P.M. July 17th.

The Brigade and Regimental Commanders with certain Staff Officers, were assembled at Division Headquarters at 3:00 P.M. July 17th, where the plans for the operation were thoroughly discussed in order that each commander would understand the exact part his unit was to play in the

1st Div. (22)attack. (22)

History

Page 105.

The attack orders of the 2nd Brigade were issued on July 17th, and maps of the area over which the division was to advance, 1/80,000 scale, were issued to Regimental and Battalion Commanders and to Regimental Staff Officers. Maps, scale 1/20,000, to be furnished by division, were to be issued later.

The brigade orders prescribed that the 2nd Brigade, as a part of the division, would attack at 4:35 A.M. July 18th, with the 1st Brigade on its right and the 153rd

Division, French, on its left. The 26th and 28th Infantry were to be abreast; the 26th Infantry to be on the right.

The zone of action of the brigade was as follows:

Northern limit: Fe de Pouy, incl,- along trench to Laversine, incl,- woods at head of ravine 1200 meters northeast of Cutry, incl,- Raperie, incl,-Montplaisir Fe, incl.-Parris-Soissons Road 2000 meters northeast of Cravancon Farm.

Southern limit: North edge of Vauberun Fe.- north edge of Le Murger Fe.- north edge of Saulin Mill/-south edge of Cutry/- Tilleau de la Glaux.-north edge of Missy aux Bois.- head of ravine Southwest of Floisy.

Interior limits between regiments: 100 meters north of Riverseau Fe.- 200 meters north of Cutry.-Center of Floisy.

The objectives of the brigade were as follows:

1st Objective: Road running east of north thru La Blaue Fe.- Tilleul de la Glaux.

2nd Objective: Eastern side of ravine east of Montplaisir Fe.-eastern edge of Missy aux Bois.

3rd Objective: Paris-Soissons Road at north sector limit, thence on a line in the direction of Chaudon.

A rolling barrage was to fall on the enemy's front line at 4:35 A.M. and was to progress to the 1st Objective at the rate of 100 meters every 3 minutes. The barrage was to stand 15 minutes in front of the 1st Objective and then to move forward at the same cadence to the 2nd Objective. It was then to stand 45 minutes in front of the 2nd Objective

and then to move forward at the same cadence to the 3rd Objective and cease.

After the 1st Objective had been reached, one battalion of Divisional Artillery (75's) were to move forward in each regimental zone of action to support the advance.

The 38th Group of tanks, 8 tanks, was attached to the 28th Infantry to support its attack.

Each infantry battalion was to have one machine gun company attached to it.

Each battalion was to take a normal formation with two companies in the 1st line and two in the 2nd. The machine gun companies were to follow the 1st line companies. [each company was to be formed with two platoons in the 1st line and two in the 2nd. Platoons of the 1st line companies of the assault battalion were to be formed in two waves, 7 to 8 meters between men. All other platoons were to be formed and move forward in small columns.

The 3rd line battalion of the 28th Infantry was to be in division reserve, and the 3rd line battalion of the 26th Infantry was to be in brigade reserve.

A distance of two to five hundred meters was to be maintained between battalions as dictated by the terrain.

The disposition of troops in their assembly positions was to be as per instructions of the Brigade Commander, which were given during the reconnaissance on the morning of

July 17th. This will be covered in detail later.

Troops forming up east of the Ru^{mine} du Retz were to be in position before 1:30 A.M. July 18th, as the enemy usually placed counter preparation in the ravine at that time.

Shell holes west of the line of departure were to be avoided on account of being satur^{ated}~~ed~~ with Yperite Gas.

Good spring water was available south of the church in Cutry. Only spring water was to be used, as all the wells and streams in the vicinity were full of Yperite

Field (23)
Orders
No. 34
2nd. Brigade.

Gas. (23)

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES.

The terrain over which the 28th Infantry was to pass was peculiarly well adapted to defense and presented almost insurmountable difficulties in some places.

The high plateau which lies south of the Aisne River is cut by many deep and wooded ravines, three of which lay in the sector of the 28th Infantry. These three ravines lay within supporting distance of each other, and afforded the enemy three natural barriers upon which to build his defenses. For the purpose of convenience I shall name these ravines as follows: First; The Missy aux Bois Ravine, named after the village of Missy aux Bois. Second; The Floisy Ravine, named after the village of Floisy. Third; The valley of the River de la Crise, named after the small stream which runs thru it.

This sector was traversed with many roads which lead to the small villages in or near the sector. The names of these villages are, Cutry, Laversine, Erioul, Sacinonet-Brioul, Missy aux Bois, Floisy and Berzy le Sec.

These villages were huddled in the ravines and all contained solid lime stone buildings, which had been converted, with the accustomed skill of the Germans, into strong forts.

The flat country which lay between the ravines in the sector was covered with high standing wheat at this time of the year.

The position of Berzy le Sec was well adapted to defense, as it stood like a powerful bastion along the eastern edge of the plateau and offered positions of great natural strength to the enemy. Berzy le Sec also guarded the entrance to the valley of the River de la

Personal (24) Crise. (24)
reconnaissance
July 1918
July 1919.

THE 28TH INFANTRY AT MORTFONTAINE July 17, 1918.

The action of the different units of the regiment, throughout this operation, will be covered from front to rear.

In compliance with orders from the 2nd Brigade, the 28th Infantry, less the 1st Battalion and Supply Company, marched to Mortfontaine, from the vicinity of Pierrefonds, during the night of July 16/17, 1918. It arrived in Mortfontaine at 3:00 A.M. July 17th. Regimental Headquarters was located near the western exit of the village, about 100 yards west of the church. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions bivouaced in the western edge of the village. The rolling kitchens were brought up in trucks during the day of July 17th. The 1st Battalion remained with the remainder of the division in the vicinity of Pierrefonds. The Supply Company, less detachment with 1st Battalion,

Field Orders(25) arrived during the morning of July 17th. (25)

No. 170

2nd Brigade.

Message

Capt.Livesay

to 2nd Brig.

July 17,1918.

The Regimental Commander, the Adjutant and two runners, made a reconnaissance, during the morning of July 17th, of the positions the regiment was to occupy during the night of July 17/18. The Brigade Commander accompanied the

Statement(26)

Capt.Livesay

Adjutant.

July 1918.

Feb. 1923.

Colonel on this reconnaissance. (26)

During the reconnaissance it was decided to place the 1st line battalion in the vicinity of the ravine running northeast of Cutry. The two assault companies to be in the area just east of the ravine and the two support companies just to the west; ~~The~~ machine gun company to be placed in rear of the assault companies.

The 2nd line battalion, ~~battalion~~ was to be placed in the open field about 500 meters west of the ravine running northeast from Cutry.

The 3rd line battalion, division reserve, was to

Eyewitness(27) be placed in the woods near La Fosse a Trure. (27)
Self.

Capt.Livesay
Adjutant

July 17,1918.

Each man was issued two large French canteens during the morning of July 17th. These canteens were issued because nearly all of the water in the area had been contaminated with Yperite gas, ~~therefore~~ making it almost impossible for the men to get water after they

Personal(28) left Mortfontaine. (28)
knowledge
self.

Capt.Curtis

Supply Officer
2nd Bn.
statement
Feb.1923.

Riflemen, selected from the newest replacements, were attached to Companies C and D, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, during the day of July 17th. Both of these companies were habitually attached to the 28th Infantry for all operations, and they were very short of their required personnel. The men attached to them were to be used as

Personal (29) ammunition carriers, in the machine gun squads.(29)
knowledge
Self.

The Regimental Commander attended a conference at Division Headquarters on the afternoon of July 17th,

where the plans for the operation were thoroughly discussed. (30)

1st Div. (30)
History,
Page 104.
Statement
Capt. Livesay
Adjutant
Feb. 1923.

Colonel Babcock, who had recently been assigned ~~the~~^{to} command of the 28th Infantry, arrived at Division Headquarters just before the above mentioned conference, and received all the orders for the operation. Colonel Gilbreth, whom Colonel Babcock succeeded in command of the regiment, was to remain until the operations had terminated. (31)

Statement (31)
Col. Babcock
Capt. Livesay
Adjutant.
July 17, 1918.

Colonel Babcock, accompanied by Colonel Gilbreth, returned to the regiment after the conference was concluded and Colonel Babcock assumed command of the regiment about 4:30 P.M. July 17th. (32).

Statement (32)
Capt. Livesay
Adjutant.

The Commander of the 1st Battalion, 2nd's in Command, of the 2nd and 3rd Battalion, all the Battalion Staff Officers, and all the Company Commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions and of Companies C and D, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, were assembled at Regimental Headquarters at 5:00 P.M., where the Regimental Commander (Colonel Babcock) issued verbal attack orders. The plans for the operation were ~~th~~ thoroughly discussed in order that each commander would understand the exact part his unit was to play in the attack. (33)

Statement (33)
Capt. Livesay
Adjutant.
Capt. Lewis
2nd in Command
2nd Battalion
July 17, 1918.

The attack orders assigned the 2nd Battalion, with Company C, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion attached, as the 1st line battalion; the 3rd Battalion, with Company D, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion attached, as 2nd line battalion; the 1st Battalion, with the Machine Gun Company 28th Infantry attached, as 3rd line battalion.

Strict march discipline was to be maintained during the march forward to the line of departure. No smoking, lighting of matches or the use of electric torches were to be permitted. Intervals of 50 meters were to be maintained between platoons. Maps were to be issued to Battalion Staff Officers and Company Officers from the Battle Command Post of the Regiment.

All units of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were to be in position before 1:30 A.M. July 18th and report made to the Regimental Commander at that hour.

The Regimental Battle Command Post was to be located in a large dugout 300 meters east of Le Chaffeur, shortly

Statements(34) after dark. (34)

Capt.Livesay

Adjutant

July 17,1918

Feb.1923.

Statement

Capt.Lewis

2nd in Command

2nd Battalion

July 17,1918.

The Commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions reported for duty just as the Regimental Commander finished issuing his orders. They had been in Paris with the Composite Company of the Regiment and had just returned. They were not aware of the impending attack until they reported for duty, so it was necessary for the Colonel

Eyewitness(35) to reissue his orders. (35)

Self

The Commander of the 2nd Battalion, after receiving his instructions for the operation, was directed to proceed to the Battle Command Post of the Regiment in a Ford truck as soon as it was dark and make such reconnaissance as would enable him to become more familiar with the avenues of approach to the line of departure and to join his battalion as it marched by the Command Post of the Regiment. The battalion was to march

Eyewitness(36) forward to the Command Post under the 2nd in Command.(36)
Self.

When the conference at Regimental Headquarters was completed, all unit commanders proceeded directly to their respective organizations and issued such orders as were necessary and ~~to make~~^{made} the necessary preparations for the march forward that night and the attack the next day.

The orders of the Commander of the 2nd Battalion prescribed that Companies H and G, right to left, would be the assault companies. Companies E and F, right to left, would be in support. Company C, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, was to support the attack by attaching one platoon to Company G and one platoon to Company H; Company Headquarters and the other platoon to be in reserve and to follow near

Eyewitness(37) Battalion Headquarters. (37)
Self.

THE MARCH FORWARD TO THE LINE OF DEPARTURE.

Regimental Headquarters moved forward to the Battle Command Post as soon as it was dusk and the Commander of the 2nd Battalion, with one runner from each company, followed shortly afterwards. (38)

Eyewitness(38)
Self.

The 2nd Battalion assembled in column of platoons, 50 yards interval between platoons, in the following order of march: Battalion Headquarters, Companies G, H, E, F, and Company C, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion. Each rifleman had 220 rounds of ammunition and two defensive hand grenades. The men carried these grenades in the breast pockets of their blouses. Gas masks were carried in the alert position. (39).

Statement(39)
Capt. Lewis
2nd in Command
Eyewitness
Self.
July 17, 1918.

The Battalion marched at 9:30 P.M. via the trail 600 meters north of Mortfontaine-Raperie Road, thence along ^{the} same trail to the 1st Aid Station ^{at} Les Longues Rayes, thence along unimproved road to Le Chaffeur, thence along trail past the Regimental Command Post. The road running south from Fe de Pouy was cleared at 10:15 P.M. Guides having a slip of paper showing to which company they belonged were picked up on this road.

Just after crossing the road where the guides were picked up a violent rainstorm started. The darkness became so intense that it was impossible for the men

in ranks to see the men in front of them. The trail, which was bad at best from recent shelling, now became a quagmire of mud and it was necessary to close the units without distance and have the men hang unto the equipment of the men ahead. Great difficulty was experienced in keeping the column from being broken, as the men were constantly slipping and falling in shell holes. As the column approached the front, the roads and trails were filled with hundreds of horses, cannon, motor trucks, tanks and artillery on the way to their positions. This added to the difficulty of the battalion and it was only by almost superhuman efforts on the part of the officers and the men, that the battalion ever reached its destination. (40)

Statements(40)
of officers
and men to
self.
July 17,1918
August 1918.

The Battalion Commander joined the column as it passed the Regimental Command Post. The column was deployed at this point and the several companies proceeded to their respective positions guided by the French guides, who were with them for that purpose. Maps were to have been issued to the Staff and Company Officers at this point but they had not arrived from Division Headquarters, and the only map in the battalion was the one the Battalion Commander had. All of the units of the battalion, except Company H, arrived at their respective positions about 2:00 A.M. and the Morrocan Company which was holding the front line withdrew to the right. (41)

Eyewitness(41)
Self

Company H was not as fortunate as the remainder of the battalion. When the company started to descend into the ravine northeast of Cutry, the enemy commenced to harass that part of the area with artillery fire. The French guide became excited and seemed to lose his sense of direction. The Company Commander, not having a map or a compass, did not realize he was going in the wrong direction until he arrived in Cutry. He was in a terrible dilemma. He learned from some French soldiers that he was in Cutry and that some Americans were east of there. Later he found the Adjutant of the 26th Infantry, who gave him the general direction of his position.

After receiving these directions he proceeded north east and at 4:15 A.M. he lead his company by the Command Post of the 2nd Battalion 26th Infantry, where ~~its~~ ^{whose} Commander told him where his position was. It was beginning to get light enough to see at this time and it would not do for him to climb out of the ravine and go to his position, as the enemy would see him and thereby we would lose the effect of surprise. He continued his march up the ravine until he reached the Command Post of the 2nd Battalion 28th Infantry, where he reported to the Major, what had happened to him. He was then directed to form his company under cover of the steep slopes of the ravine in attack formation and then to mass his men near the top. The company was to emerge at a run at zero hour and take

Statement(42) their position in the assault and close on the barrage(42)
Lt.Martin

C.O.Co.H.
July 18, 1918.
Message Maj.
McCloud to
Hq. 26th Inf.
July 18, 1918.
Statement
Capt. Legge
Feb. 1923

The 3rd Battalion formed for the march forward just in rear of the 2nd Battalion, in column of companies, the companies being in column of platoon, 50 yards between columns. It followed the 2nd Battalion to the Regimental Command Post. The road running south from the Fe de Pouy was cleared at 10:30 P.M. and guides joined at this point. The battalion experienced about the same difficulties as the 2nd Battalion experienced in its march forward. After passing the 1st Aid Station at Les Longues Rayes, the column was broken and three rifle companies were lost. The Regimental Commander sent out runners to find and direct them to their respective positions, which the runners succeeded in doing. The entire battalion was in position

Statement (43) shortly before 4:35 A.M. (43)

Maj. Tack
C.O. 3rd Bn.
July 18, 1918
Message
Col. Babcock
to Brigade
Commander
July 18, 1918.

The 1st Battalion had a much more difficult task to perform on the night of July 17/18 than either of the other battalions of the regiment. It was in the woods near Pierrefonds, about 10 kilometers west of Mortfontaine, and was forced to make its long march forward over roads that were congested with almost every kind of military transportation and equipment. There being only one map in the battalion and no guides, it was necessary to keep the column connected in order to reach the destination.

The battalion arrived in the woods at La Fosse a Trure about 5:30 A.M. or one hour after the attack started. The men were exhausted from the fatigue of the long march forward and were badly in need of rest. No orders had been received from the Division upon arrival at this point. The Brigade Adjutant found the battalion and ordered its Commander to move his command forward in the regimental zone of action and reported his action to Division Headquarters. (44)

Statement(44)
Maj. Rozelle
C.O. 1st En.
Aug. 1918.
Message Maj
Wills to Div.
Hq. July 18, 1918

The Field and Combat Trains of the regiment remained at Mortfontaine during the night of July 17/18th. (45)

Statement(45)
Capt. Curtis
Supply Officer
Feb. 1923.

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE.

A battalion of the 153rd Division, on our immediate left, began moving forward to the line of departure about 4:25 A.M. and the enemy outguards saw them. Numerous flares were lighted by the enemy all along the line and the German protective barrage fell on our lines at 4:30 A.M. This barrage was very severe, but our men were so thoroughly instructed that not a man showed himself and the enemy was unaware of a general attack until our own rolling barrage fell at 4:35 A.M. Our barrage fell on the enemy's line of surveillance and seemed to cause great consternation among his outguards. These outguards sent numerous flares up, which were repeated back as far as the eye could see.

Eyewitness(47)
Self.

The assault companies moved forward to the attack at 4:35 A.M. and soon closed on the barrage. Numerous German outguards were encountered in the enemy's line of surveillance, but they quickly surrendered or were killed in their shallow shelters.

Battalion Headquarters followed closely behind Company H. It suffered many casualties before it reached the enemy lines. The Artillery Liason Officer, three or four of the 1st Aid men and most of the communication personnel were killed or wounded. This was a serious blow because it left

Eyewitness(48)
Self

THE ENEMY AND HIS DEFENSIVE POSITION ON July 18, 1918.

The enemy defensive positions in front of the 28th Infantry were as follows: The front line, consisting of a series of shallow trenches, and occupied by his outguards, extended in a general north and south line 300 meters east of the Tranchee de la Plateau.

His line of resistance extended thru the Raperie in a north and south direction, being about one kilometer east of his line of surveillance, and consisted of organized shell holes and shallow trenches. The Raperie was organized as a strong point in the line of resistance and was occupied by approximately one rifle company and five large machine guns. Other machine guns, both heavy and light, were scattered broadcast throughout the line of resistance.

The reserve position was located in the Missy aux Bois Ravine. This ravine was highly organized with machine gun nests disposed according to the latest German method, which is the method we now use, and enabled the enemy to cover every approach with dense bands of enfilade machine gun fire.

The 6th German Division held the front of the 2nd Brigade, with its reserves located in the Missy aux Bois Ravine. All

Eyewitness (46) of the divisional artillery was located in or near this Self. Summary of Information July 20, 1918. ravine. The 11th Bavarian Division held that part of the line in front of the 153rd Division with its reserve near Saconin-et-Brieul. (46)

The support companies moved forward at 4:35 A.M. and passed thru the German barrage, which was falling on our old front line and the ravine running northeast of Cutry. Both companies suffered heavy casualties from this barrage. The Company Commander and one Lieutenant of Company F were killed and the company was so badly disorganized that a halt and reorganization of it became necessary as soon as it passed our old front line. This halt and reorganization delayed the company considerably and it did not rejoin the assaulting companies until the 1st Objective had been

Statements(49) reached. (49)
and reports
of N.C.O.'s
to self on
July 18,1918.

The assault companies continued their advance, following the barrage closely, until they reached a position about 200 meters west of the Raperie and the enemy's line of resistance. At this point, they met with heavy rifle and machine gun fire, most of it coming from the Raperie, which pinned them to the ground. On account of the level ground, the support platoons of both companies were forced to take cover from the enemy fire being directed at the assault lines. Something had to be done quickly to relieve this situation, as the barrage only rested 15 minutes in front of the 1st Objective. The support companies were not within supporting distance at this time and the only troops which were available for maneuver was the Scout Platoon of the Battalion. This Platoon was composed of one Lieutenant and 35 enlisted men. The men were all expert shots and

had been selected on account of their good shooting ability and former bravery in action. The Scout Lieutenant was ordered to attack the Raperie with his platoon. Two squads of the platoon opened fire on it from the front and the other two squads were maneuvered to a position on the flank from which enfilade fire could be delivered on it. As soon as fire was opened by the squads on the left flank, the two in front, lead by the Lieutenant, charged the enemy. One platoon of Company H, lead by its Lieutenant, joined this charge. Both Lieutenants were severely wounded as they were about to close with the enemy; but the men, inspired by their leaders, continued the charge and succeeded in capturing the position. Five heavy machine guns and about 100 prisoners were captured in and around this strong point. The enemy's casualties had been very

Eyewitness (50) heavy on account of the accurate shooting of our men. (50)
Self.

Distinguished Service Cross Citation of Lieut. Jin Quinn and Lieut. Hugh M. Flannigan: The capture of the Raperie lessened the fire on our assault companies and the advance was continued; the men firing from the shoulder as they moved forward in the high wheat.

On account of the rapidity of the advance forward from the Raperie, many Germans, who had hidden themselves in beet piles and small underground shelters, were not located by our men. As soon as our lines passed, the Germans would come out of their shelters and open fire from the rear. The judicious use of the hand grenades carried by the men

soon put a stop to this sort of practice.

The assaulting lines moved forward to the 1st Objective without encountering much resistance with the exception of the St Amand Farm, which lay in the sector of the 153rd Division on our left. One platoon of Company G assisted

Eyewitness(51) the French in the capture of this farm. (51)
Self.

The 3rd Battalion moved forward at 4:35 A.M. and encountered the full force of the enemy's protective barrage. Great difficulty was experienced in crossing the ravine northeast of Cutry. The battalion suffered about 25 percent casualties and was badly disorganized. It reorganized, after it had passed thru the enemy barrage, in the open field near the enemy's old front lines. After reorganization the battalion moved forward and followed about one kilometer in rear of the assault

Statement(52) battalion. (52)
Maj. Tack
C.O. 3rd Bn.
to self
July 18, 1918.

THE CAPTURE OF THE MISSY AUX BOIS RAVINE.

The assault lines moved forward from the 1st Objective closely following the barrage, which at this time was rather thin as only the heavier calibers were firing.

The tanks came up about this time and took their place in front of the assault lines.

With the aid of the tanks, the high ground about 300 meters west of the western edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine was reached with little difficulty.

Upon reaching this high ground, the men of the assault companies were greeted with a wonderful view. The Missy aux Bois Ravine lay before them in full sight. The enemy was attempting to save some of his artillery and many horses and artillery men were shot at a range of less than 300 meters. Three German batteries of 77's located on the eastern edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine opened direct fire on our advancing lines and tanks. Five of the tanks were destroyed by direct hits. The other three did not come forward to this high ground but moved off to the right under cover of the high ground to their front. (53)

Eyewitness
Self (53)

The assault companies moved forward, notwithstanding the enemy's effort to stop them with artillery fire, and descended into the Missy aux Bois Ravine. Here they were met with terrific rifle and machine gun fire from positions in the ravine and on the eastern slope. They had not

progressed more than 100 meters when they were stopped by enfilade machine gun and direct artillery fire coming from machine gun nests and a battery of 77's located in or near Brioul, which was in the French sector.

The 26th Infantry, which had been abreast of us on our right flank up to this time, was stopped by enfilade fire coming from our front.

The 153rd Division on our left was having very severe fighting and as yet was unable to enter the Missy aux Bois Ravine. The village of Saconin-et-Brioul had been very strongly organized by the enemy and its garrison was resisting stubbornly.

When it was determined that the assault companies were ST definitely stopped, the two support companies of the battalion were ordered to extend the line to the left and attack and capture Brioul and the defenses in front of it. This attack had not progressed more than 300 meters when it was stopped by terrific machine gun and artillery fire from the vicinity of Le Mont d'Arty, Saconin-et-Brioul, and the ravine running east and west just north of Brioul. The casualties were steadily increasing and it looked bad for the battalion. The machine guns of the battalion were not to be found any place. It was afterwards discovered that the riflemen who had been detailed to carry ammunition for the guns had thrown away their boxes of ammunition and had picked up rifles and rejoined their own companies.

The machine gunners, who had suffered heavy losses from the enemy fire directed at the assault companies, were struggling forward, very much overloaded, and arrived too late to be of any value in this attack. (54)

Eyewitness(54)
Self.

Report of
Operations
28th Inf.
Statement
Capt. Walsh
July 18, 1918.

The Commander of the 3rd Battalion heard the heavy firing to his front, and came forward ahead of his battalion and met the Commander of the 2nd Battalion on the western edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine. After consultation it was decided to use the 3rd Battalion in an attempt to push on. Three companies were used in assault and the fourth was held in reserve on the western edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine. One company attacked and captured Le Mont d'Arty and then swung to the right and attacked the heights south of Saconin-et-Brieul. The other two companies attacked the enemy located in the ravine just north of Brieul. Their right flank guided on the left of Brieul. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, the 153rd Divisions on the left and the 26th Infantry on the right, attacked at the same time. The great pressure brought to bear on the enemy's flank enabled the entire line to move forward. The fighting was very severe and the enemy defended his positions to the last. In fact, very few, if any, prisoners were taken by the troops of the 28th Infantry in this advance. Our men waded the mud and water, in many places to their hips, and continued to advance in spite of heavy casualties. Many glorious feats of valor

were performed during this attack and the entire success of this advance was due to the efforts of the individual soldiers who continued to advance regardless of the casualties. One of the outstanding cases, was where a young soldier of Company G, in some way worked his way forward to the eastern edge of the ravine and reached a point about 150 meters east of the battery of 77's that were located just east of Brioul. He immediately opened fire on the gunners and by his efforts alone the enemy were unable to serve the guns. He killed the gunners as fast as they were sent forward and finally the enemy withdrew and left the battery in his possession.

The eastern slope of the Missy aux Bois Ravine was captured about 10:30 A.M. and the units were hastily reorganized and the attack resumed. The assault progressed about 300 meters east of Brioul where it was stopped by heavy fire from the front. There being no reserves left to renew the attack, a front line was established by the men digging in where they found themselves. The left of the line resting ^{ed} about where the unimproved road running from ~~Brioul~~ Saconin-et-Brioul enters the improved road running from Brioul to the Paris-Soissons Road. The right of the line resting ^{ed} on the right of the regimental zone of action.

The casualties of both battalions had been so great and the line head ^{had} was so wide, that one thin front line was

Eyewitness(55) established. (55)
Self.

Distinguished
Service Cross
Citation of
Corpl. Wilson.
Statement
Maj. Tack.
C.O. 3rd Bn.
July 1918.

The 153rd Division on the left, having captured the eastern edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine, ordered one battalion of their troops to relieve the 28th Infantry in that part of the line north of the unimproved road running from Brioul to the Paris-Soissons Road.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were reorganized after this relief was completed, which was about 4:00 P.M.

The 3rd Battalion then took over the front line of the regiment. The 2nd Battalion went into a support position on the eastern edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine, just east of Brioul. (56)

Eyewitness(56)
Self.
Operations
Report
28th Inf.

While the fighting was going on in the Missy aux Bois Ravine, it was discovered that great numbers of the enemy were emerging from a large cave in the vicinity of Le Mont d'Arty and that they were firing on our troops from the rear. This cave had not been captured by the troops that had previously attacked and captured Le Mont d'Arty. The reserve company, which had been left on the western edge of the Missy aux Bois Ravine, attacked the enemy at once and took them on the flank. The Germans were driven back in the cave ^{but} ~~and~~ they refused to surrender. It was impossible to bomb them out as the entrance was covered with machine guns from within. This made it necessary to lay seige to the entrance. The commander of the enemy

garrison held out until about 4:00 P.M. when he came out under cover of a white flag and surrendered his entire force, consisting of twenty officers, including a Commandant, and between three and four hundred men. Several horses, officers mounts fully equipped, a great number of machine guns and trench mortars were also captured in this cave. (57)

Messages(57)
Col.Babcock
to 2nd Brig.
July 18,1918.
Statement
Capt.Manning.
C.O.Co.M.
July 18,1918.

An attack was ordered to take place at 5:30 P.M. but was recalled before it was started. Both battalions distributed their units in depth and organized the ground held for defense. The regiment made no further advance until the morning of July 19th. (58)

Eyewitness(58)
Self

The Regimental Command Post was moved forward about 5:00 P.M. to the large cave at Le Mont d'Arty.

The Regimental Aid Station was also located there about

Statement (59) the same time. (59).

Capt.Marshall
Operations
Officer
July 18,1918.

During the early part of the evening, about 70 Germans, mostly Red Cross men, suddenly appeared before the Colonel and asked to be taken prisoners. These men had hidden in a tunnel and did not surrender with the remainder of their comrades who had been taken a few hours before. All of the German Surgeons and 1st Aid men were retained to help dress the wounded. About 40 other prisoners were retained as ~~little~~^{litter} bearers. All of the wounded were gathered during the night and were brought to this cave for 1st Aid. The place was overflowing with wounded men

Messages(60)
Col.Babcock
to 2nd Brig.
July 18,1918
Eyewitness
Self
July 19,1918.

who were evacuated as fast as possible. (60) .

The 1st Battalion, division reserve, was moved to the 1st Objective, during the afternoon of July 18th and this position was organized for defense. (61)

Message (61)
1st Div.
to 1st Bn.
July 18,1918.

The Field Trains and Combat Trains of the Regiment moved forward from Mortfontaine to the vicinity of Couerves during the afternoon of July 18th, An attempt was made to get food and water forward to the front lines but this was not successful. (62)

Statement(62)
Capt.Curtis
Supply Officer
Feb. 1923.
Eyewitness
Self.

The regiment had not reached its 3rd Objective but it had gone beyond the 2nd against terrible resistance. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions had gone into the attack that morning nearly full strength. Now their companies looked like platoons. The 2nd Battalion was reorganized into five small rifle platoons and one machine gun platoon, all commanded by sergeants. All the officers, excepting the Battalion Commander, had been either wounded or killed.

The 3rd Battalion was in a little better shape, as Company M had been retained in reserve, and therefore suffered but few casualties. The other three rifle companies and the machine gun company had lost about 50 per cent of their men.

The night of July 18/19 was fairly quiet and most all of the men, excepting the outguards, secured a much needed

Eyewitness(63) rest. (63).
Self.

THE ADVANCE TO THE PARIS-SOISSONS ROAD July 19, 1918.

The enemy, becoming alarmed at the advance of the 1st Division during the day of July 18th, brought forward the 34th German Division and placed it in position east of Floissy. Numerous snipers and machine gunners were hurried forward, the snipers being placed along the Paris-Soissons Road and the machine guns were scattered broadcast, covering the flat open ground with dense bands of machine gun fire. A strong point, which was located astride the Paris-Soissons Road about 600 meters to the left of our zone of action, was occupied by what seemed to be a battalion of riflemen, well supported by machine guns. This strong point had been constructed by the French, prior to May 28th, 1918. It was well organized and was completely surrounded by two bands of wire entanglements. This position commanded the ground for a distance of 1200 meters in every direction. The enemy's line of resistance was on the high ground about one half way between Floisy and Missy aux Bois. (64)

1st Div. (64)
History.
Page 121.
Summary of
Information
July 19, 1918.
Eyewitness
Self.

Orders were received during the night of July 18/19 to continue the attack at 4:00 A.M. July 19th, the objective being a line thru Berzy le Sec and Buzancy. The Artillery barrage was to come down on the 3rd Objective of yesterday at 4:00 A.M. and was to stand for 45 minutes.

It was then to advance at the rate of 100 meter every three minutes. (65)

Field Orders
No. 28 (65)
1st Division.

The battalions of the regiment were disposed as follows:

Eyewitness(66) 3rd Battalion, assault; 2nd Battalion, support.(66)
Self.

The 1st Battalion was released from Division Reserve

Message (67) and placed at the disposal of the 2nd Brigade. (67)
G-3 1st Div
to 2nd Brig
July 19, 1918.

The 3rd Battalion moved forward a few minutes after 4:00 A.M. and was met with heavy rifle and machine gun fire from the front and left flank. The battalion continued to move forward slowly in spite of losses.

The Battalion Commander was very severely wounded at the very beginning of this attack. (68)

Eyewitness(68)
Self.

The 26th Infantry on our right was able to reach the Paris-Soissons Road where it was stopped by enemy fire from the strong point on the left. It attempted to cross the road but was repulsed with heavy losses. (69)

Message (69)
Maj. McCloud
to C.O. 26th
Inf. July 19,
1918.

Company M, which was the left support company of the 3rd Battalion, seemed to lose its direction and veered off to the left. The enemy evidently had prepared for such a movement as not a shot was fired at the company until the Paris-Soissons Road was reached. As the leading units of the company reached this road, a withering enfilade fire from the enemy strong point on the left was opened on it. This fire was so intense that the entire company, with the exception of four or five men, was

Statements(70) annihilated. (70)
of men who

were not killed
Eyewitness, self

A few men who had been stragglers or had been slightly wounded were gathered up and organized into a small platoon. All the German machine guns that were in the area were turned about and manned by these men.

About this time the enemy could be seen forming for a counter attack in the vicinity of the strong point on the left. The artillery was notified thru the 26th Infantry and artillery fire was requested. One battalion of the 7th Field Artillery was given the message by the Adjutant of the 26th Infantry as it was moving forward near Missy aux Bois. It galloped forward to the Paris-Soissons Road under cover of a small ridge and wheeled its guns into line, guns were hub to hub, and opened on the enemy with direct laying. This fire soon disorganized the enemy formation and the counter attack was not attempted.

One company of the brigade reserve was placed at the disposal of the Regimental Commander and it was moved to a position about 300 yards west of the Paris-Soissons

Eyewitness (73) Road. (73)
Self.

Message Gen. The three remaining tanks of the regiment had gone
Buck to Col. around Missy aux Bois and then advanced to the attack.
Babcock

July 19, 1918. One was destroyed east of the Paris-Soissons Road in the
Statement zone of the 26th Infantry, the other two succeeded in
Capt. Legge reaching Floisy where they were either destroyed or
August 1918.

Report (74) captured. (74)
Div. Comdr.
July 1918.

Eyewitness Self.

The remainder of the 3rd Battali6n began veering off to the right, but finally reached the Paris Soissons Road, ~~but~~ ^{however, they} were unable to cross same on account of fire from the left. The men took cover along the western side of the banks of the road and in the drainage ditch. (71)

Eyewitness(71)
Self.

The 2nd Battalion ~~mov~~ing forward in support was met with heavy rifle and machine gun fire from the front. The 3rd Battalion being ^{SP}seperated, left a large gap in the line. At least two machine guns and several snipers were in this gap and they turned their attention to the 2nd Battalion when it attempted to come forward. The battalion attacked at once straight to the front and after heavy fighting succeeded in killing the enemy machine gunners. As the battalion neared the Paris-Soissons Road it was subjected to a heavy fire from the left, but succeeded in reaching the road with 35 or 40 men who took cover along the western side of the banks of the ~~road~~, Some few of the men and one machine gunner succeeded in crossing the road and took up a position in the drainage ditch.

The casualties in the two battalions had cut the fighting strength down to about 120 riflemen, 4 machine guns and two officers. In this weakened condition it was impossible for them to continue the attack and the men were told to dig in where they were. Two machine guns were placed in the front line and two a little to the rear.

The 1st Battalion, brigade reserve, was placed at the disposal of the Regimental Commander, owing to the weakened condition of his other two battalions. It arrived east of Brioul about 1:00 PM and took up a defensive position. (75)

G-3 (75)
Message to
General Buck
and Col.
Babcock
July 19, 1918.

The Field and Combat Trains moved to Cutry on the morning of July 19th so as to be able to move forward in case the lines advanced. Long range artillery fire was directed at them, with an enemy aeroplane adjusting the fire. The Supply Officer was severely wounded and heavy casualties occurred among the men and animals. The trains sought cover in the woods and ravines nearby and remained there the rest of the day (76)

Eyewitness (76)
statements
Capt. Livesay
Capt. Curtis.

THE CAPTURE OF FLOISY JULY 19th, 1918.

During the afternoon of July 19th the entire division was ordered to attack at 5:30 P.M. The 28th Infantry in close liason with the 153rd Division on the left, was to make the main effort; the other regiments of the division conforming to the movement. The line was to be advanced to the western edge of the Floisy Ravine and defensive positions were to be organized there (77)

1st Div. (77)
G-3
Memo 718
July 19, 1918.

The 1st Battalion, which had suffered but few casualties, was ordered to execute a passage of lines thru the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, and carry out the mission assigned the regiment. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were to be reorganized into one group and follow as support. (78)

Eyewitness (78)
Self.

The 1st Battalion formed for attack, normal formations, just east of Brioul, and moved forward in time to cross the Paris-Soissons Road at 5:30 P.M. It was met with a terrific rifle and machine gun fire, coming from the enemy strong point on the left, just after it crossed this road. The casualties were heavy but the battalion continued to advance. (79)

Eyewitness (79)
Self.

The 153rd Division also attacked at 5:30 P.M. and the enemy strong point that had caused the 28th Infantry so much concern was captured about 5:45 P.M. after very heavy fighting. When this strong point on the left fell, the entire line was carried forward to the Floisy Ravine.

Severe hand-to-hand fighting continued throughout the entire night for possession of the village of Floisy and the Fe du Mt de Courmelles. Fe du Mt de Courmelles had been organized as a strong point by the enemy and was strongly garrisoned. It also commanded our entire line to the south. One officer and about one platoon of Company B attacked and captured this farm, only in turn to be counter attacked by the enemy. The enemy counter attack was so powerful that the few men of Company B that had just captured the farm were overwhelmed and all died fighting gallantly. Other men of Company B made a second attack on the farm and succeeded in recapturing it. The left of our front line rested at this point during the remainder of the night of July 19/20th. The fighting in the village of Floisy was desperate and it was well towards the morning of July 20th that the village was finally in our possession. While the losses of the 1st Battalion had been very heavy, the losses of the enemy were appalling. At least one battery of 77's had been captured and many

Statements(79) of Officers and men in the investigation of Capt. Oliver's being carried as missing. (79) prisoners were taken. The enemy dead were piled everywhere. In the meantime, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were reorganized into one rifle company and one machine gun platoon. This organization will hereafter be referred to as the 2nd Battalion. The Commander of the 2nd Battalion and a 2nd Lieutenant of the 3rd Battalion were the only remaining officers. The rifle company was spread in one

thin line across the zone of action and the machine gun platoon followed in rear of the center of this line. The battalion moved forward to the high ground which lies about one half way between Floisy and Missy aux Bois and organized a position in defense. The enemy shelling was very heavy during this advance and the Commander of the 2nd Battalion was wounded just before

Eyewitness(80) the new position was reached (80)
Self.

Statements of [] The remainder of this monograph will not be written from wounded to self [] personal experiences of the writer but will be taken from July 19, 1918. [] sources other than his own.

The men of the regiment had not had any food or water, expecting that carried on their persons, since leaving Mortfontaine, and were suffering terribly for want of same. Hot food and water was brought forward to the battalions of the regiment during the night of July 19/20 in a train composed of most of the kitchens and water carts of the regiment. Six of these vehicles were destroyed by shell fire during this move and many casualties were inflicted among the men and animals of the train. It was only with great difficulty that the food was brought forward but

Eyewitness(81) it was a case of where the (sacrifice) was worth the (gain).(81)
Capt. Curtis
Supply Officer

THE FIRST ATTACK ON BERZY LE SEC July 20, 1918.

The enemy again tried to stop the advance of the 1st Division, and the 42nd German Division was put in the line near Floisy during the night of July 19th. (82)

Summary (82)
of
Information
July 20, 1918.

Orders were received from the 20th Corps on July 20th stating that on account of the difficulties the 153rd Division had encountered, the 1st Division was charged with the mission of capturing Berzy le Sec, which was formerly included in the zone of action of the 153rd Division. The zone of action of the 1st Division was extended to the northern edge of the village. (83)

1st Div. (83)
G-3 Memo
No. 721.

The orders of the 1st Division were received during the morning of July 20th. The 28th Infantry assisted by the 26th Infantry was given the mission of capturing Berzy le Sec.

The artillery, which had moved forward, delivered a powerful preparation on the enemy's front line and Berzy le Sec from 1:15 to 2:00 P.M. and then put down a rolling barrage which advanced at the rate of 100 meters every four minutes.

The 1st Battalion, in conjunction with the troops on its right and left, attacked at 2:00 P.M. following the barrage closely. The lines moved forward to a point about 500 meters west of Berzy le Sec, where they were stopped by heavy rifle and machine gun fire coming from the village.

The individuals in the front line units dug in where they were stopped and the lines remained in this position during the night of July 20/21. (84)

Report(84)
1st Div.
Commander.
July 1918.

The 2nd Battalion followed the assaulting battalion at 500 meters as support. When the 1st Battalion was stopped the support dug in on the eastern edge of the Floisy Ravine

The Regimental Command Post moved forward to Floisy

Statements(85) during the afternoon of July 20th. (85)
of Officers and
men made to
self in August
1918.

The Kitchen Section of the Combat Train moved forward to the Missy aux Bois Ravine during the day of July 20th.

Statement
Capt.Livesay
Adjutant
Feb. 1923.

The Field Trains and Combat Trains, less the Kitchen Section remained at Cutry. (86)

Statement (86)
Capt.Curtis
Supply Officer
Feb.1923.

The night of July 20/21 was spent in reorganizing the different units of the regiment, giving the men hot food and waters and preparing for an attack early the next

Statements(87) morning (87)
Capt.Livesay
Adjutant
Capt.Curtis
Supply Officer
Feb. 1923.

THE CAPTURE OF BERZY LE SEC JULY 21, 1918.

The enemy made a great effort to hold Berzy le Sec as it was the key point of the defenses of the Chateau Thierry-Soissons Railroad and as long as it was in German possession the Valley of the River de la Crise afforded good cover for the forming of reserves to make a counter offensive to relieve the pressure on the southern end of the Chateau Thierry Salient. Berzy le Sec was being garrisoned by remnants of the 6th, 34th, 42nd German and the 11th Bavarian Divisions. This garrison was reenforced during the night of July 20/21, 1918 by the 46th German Division which had just come up.

Berzy le Sec and the adjoining terrain, was organized into a powerful defensive position. The stone houses were converted into veritable forts and every avenue of approach was swept with dense bands of machine gun fire. In addition to the rifle and machine gun defense one battery of 77's were placed in the very front line

Summary (88) for anti-tank defense.(88)

of information

July 22, 1918.

Statements of

men to self

August 1918

Eyewitness

Self.

July 1918.

The attack orders of the 1st Division were received during the night of July 20/21 and prescribed that the 1st Brigade on the right and the 153rd Division, reenforced by one regiment of the 69th Division, French, on the left would attack following a rolling barrage at 4:45 A.M. to the 1st Objective, which was a line running northwest and southeast along the eastern edge of Berzy le Sec. The

barrage was to stand for one hour in front of the 1st Objective and cease. The 1st Brigade ^{was} then to conform to the movements of the troops on its right.

The 2nd Brigade, reenforced by the remnants of one company and the 3rd Battalion 18th Infantry, was not to be accompanied by a rolling barrage, but a powerful artillery fire for destruction was to be placed on Berzy le Sec and neighboring ravines. At 8:30 A.M. this fire was to lift and the 2nd Brigade was to advance and occupy the ground outflanked by the neighboring units. After the 153 Division and the 1st Brigade had completely disengaged their front, the 2nd Brigade was to pass into Division Reserve. (89)

1st Div. (89)
Field Orders
No. 29.
Statements
Capt. Gibson
18th Inf.
Feb. 1923
1st Div.
History
Page 134.

The 1st Brigade advanced at 4:45 A.M. following their barrage closely, but suffered heavy casualties from the left. It reached the 1st Objective on schedule time and held that line until the 2nd Brigade came up.

The 153rd Division did not attack at 4:45 A.M. as directed but moved forward at 8:00 A.M. and was met with heavy resistance from its front at the very start. It finally reached its 1st Objective but never attempted to go beyond that point. (90)

Report of (90)
1st Div.
Commander.
July 1918.

At 5:30 A.M. the artillery concentration dropped on Berzy le Sec and continued with crushing effect until 8:30 A.M. when the fire lifted in front of the 2nd Brigade. At 8:30 A.M. all of the 28th Infantry, the elements

of the 18th Infantry and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions 26th Infantry, all in one line, and lead by the Brigade Commander in person, moved forward to the attack. Our troops were subjected to heavy direct artillery, rifle and machine gun fire which caused heavy casualties in our ranks, but the line swept on. Berzy le Sec was captured and by 9:15 A.M. the last German had been driven out of the village or taken prisoner. The line was then pushed forward about 500 meters east of the village and consolidated for defense. One battery of 77's, that fired on our men until the gunners were shot down, was captured. In addition to the many prisoners and spoils of war that had fallen into our hands the Germans had lost their last covered position to form for an offensive.

On account of the 153rd Division failing to move forward from its 1st Objective the 2nd Brigade did not pass into the Division Reserve but held a very dangerous front line ~~and~~ the 1st Brigade had pushed ahead and were now holding the Chateau of Buzancy and the ridge east of the River de la Crise. The gap caused by this was almost one kilometer wide and caused grave concern to the Division Commander. No attempt was made to fill this gap during the day of July 21, but on the morning of July 22 the 26th Infantry pushed forward and occupied the Sucerie and connected up with the 1st Brigade on the right and the 28th Infantry on the left.

No attempt was made by the 28th Infantry to push its lines forward during the remainder of the day of July 21st and July 22nd. The front line was consolidated and the few remaining machine guns were placed in positions to command the approaches to Berzy le Sec. Many of the

Report of (91) enemy machine guns were also used for this purpose. (91)

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Adjutant.
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THE RELIEF July 22/23, 1918.

Orders were received during the night of July 21/22 stating that the Division would be relieved during the night of July 22/23 by the 15th Scottish Division.

The advanced parties of the Scottish Brigade that was to relieve the 2nd Brigade arrived in the sector on the morning of July 22nd and a reconnaissance of the positions were made.

One guide per company went to Missy aux Bois and met the incoming units, at 5:30 P.M. and guided them to their respective positions.

The relief of the division was made difficult by the numerous aeroplanes the enemy sent over our lines to bomb our support and reserve positions.

The relief was completed early in the night and the regiment was assembled on the Paris-Soissons Road just east of Missy aux Bois. The regiment then marched to a point several miles southeast of Missy aux Bois, via the Paris-Soissons Road, where hot food was served and the men enjoyed a long deserved rest.

About noon on July 23rd trucks arrived and the remnants of the regiments, less the Field and Combat Trains, ^{were} ~~was~~ conveyed to the Dammartin-en-Goele Area. Regimental Headquarters was located in the village of Survillers. The Battalions were located in the small villages in the

immediate vicinity of Survillers. The Field and Combat
Trains marched overland and joined the regiment on July
24th, 1918.

The casualties of the regiment in this operation ~~was~~^{were}
56 Officers and 1765 enlisted men killed or wounded.

These casualties do not include those of the attached

Report of (92) elements who suffered in like proportion.(92)

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ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.

In making a study of this operation it will be seen the 28th Infantry was assigned a most difficult mission. It was given a frontal mission and at the same time the mission of bringing up the left flank of the 2nd Brigade, of the 1st Division and of the 20th Corps. The troops on the left flank belonged to another Corps. This made it very difficult, as it was only thru the 10th Army that the movements of these two units could be coordinated. This in a large way was responsible for most of the difficulty the 28th Infantry encountered in this operation.

The preparation and orders for carrying out the mission assigned to the 28th Infantry were as full and complete as the circumstances would permit. Those points in reference thereto which admit of criticism are:

1st: The failure of Battalion and Subordinate Commanders to make any reconnaissance during the day of July 17th. There were very good reasons for not permitting this reconnaissance to be made. A French Division was holding the front over which the 1st Division expected to attack. The attack was to be a surprise and any unusual movement of Americans in this area would be sure to be noticed by the enemy and the element of surprise would be lost.

2nd: The failure of G-2 of the Division to provide

maps for subordinate commanders. This caused great difficulty throughout the entire operation as the officers most concerned were dependent entirely on their sense of direction and the French Guides who led them into position.

3rd: From the light of after events it will be seen that the Brigade and Regimental Commanders erred in directing that the support companies of the assault battalion be emplaced just west of the ravine running northeast of Cutry. This ravine was a difficult obstacle and with the enemy's barrage falling into it, was almost impassable. It would have been better to have emplaced the support companies on the eastern edge of this ravine.

4th: Orders required the support battalion to follow so close^{ly} behind the assaulting battalion that it lost about one fourth of its strength in passing thru the enemy's barrage.

5th: The Brigade orders prescribed normal formations. Even the exact formation^s of the assault platoons were prescribed. Little or nothing was left to subordinate commanders. However, under the circumstances it may have been justified. This was the first major offensive in which the Brigade participated. Most of the subordinate commanders were all young men. Nothing had ever been written about the formations desired. The Brigade

Commander took no chances.

6th. To change Regimental Commanders on the eve of battle is to invite disaster. It is manifestly unfair to both the officer and the command under him. While it worked out ^{all right} ~~alright~~ in this case, it was most unusual and is not a good practice.

Before passing to the battle most favorable mention of the officers and men of the regiment in getting to their respective positions on the night of July 17/18th must be made. They went into positions they had never seen, without maps or compasses, on a night that was extremely dark and over almost impassable roads and trails. The success of this movement can be attributed only to the iron will and determination of the officers and men.

The movement of the French Battalion on the left which brought the protective barrage of the Germans on our lines, might have been disastrous; except for the fact that the morale and discipline of our regiment was very high. As it was our command did not seem to be affected by it in the least. The men held their positions to the exact second of zero hour and then rose out of the ground like one man and dashed to the attack.

It will easily be seen that the success of the battle during the first two days of the attack was in the hands

of the subordinate commanders. The advance was so fast and the fire so heavy that it was the individual on the spot who made the decisions and then carried them out.

The loss of so many officers during this battle speaks well for the German method of snipers placed well back of the front lines armed with rifles equipped with telescopic sights with the mission of picking out the leaders and firing on them.

To sum up the results of this battle: The 28th Infantry advanced over eleven kilometers against heavy resistance. It succeeded in bringing up the difficult flank of the division and captured nearly as much ground to the left of its sector as it did in its own. It fought and decisively defeated elements of six German Divisions. It continued to advance after losing fully 60 percent of its fighting strength. Its losses in this operation were 56 Officers and 1765 men killed and wounded.

next

LESSONS.

Some of the lessons to be learned from this operation are:

1. Surprise is an essential element of a successful attack.

2. In combat, three things are of vital importance. Reconnaissance - Communication - Liaison. The first must be made by each unit commander before an engagement to ensure for his unit its proper route to the line of departure, its correct deployment and its proper direction; and further, it must be continuous throughout the action. The second and third can only be maintained by constant effort on the part of every commander.

3. To regain fire superiority and restore mobility, reserves should always be so located that they can be quickly engaged.

4. A regimental commander must make his plans and preparations for an attack before it starts. Once the attack is launched, the conduct of the assaulting units are in the hands of the smaller unit commanders. The regimental commander can influence the action by the use of his reserves and supporting weapons.

5. Once an attack has been launched, personnel and material must be used to force a successful conclusion.

6. Command Posts of Battalions and larger units should be placed in position where they do not come under the direct fire of the enemy and should move forward from one covered position to another. The Commander, with a small detail, can conduct the troop leading from a more advanced position.

7. Reorganization should be carried on throughout the action when ever the time and necessity present ~~itself~~ *themselves*.

8. Any unit that has for its purpose the support of riflemen must be self contained and cannot depend on them for any assistance other than protection.

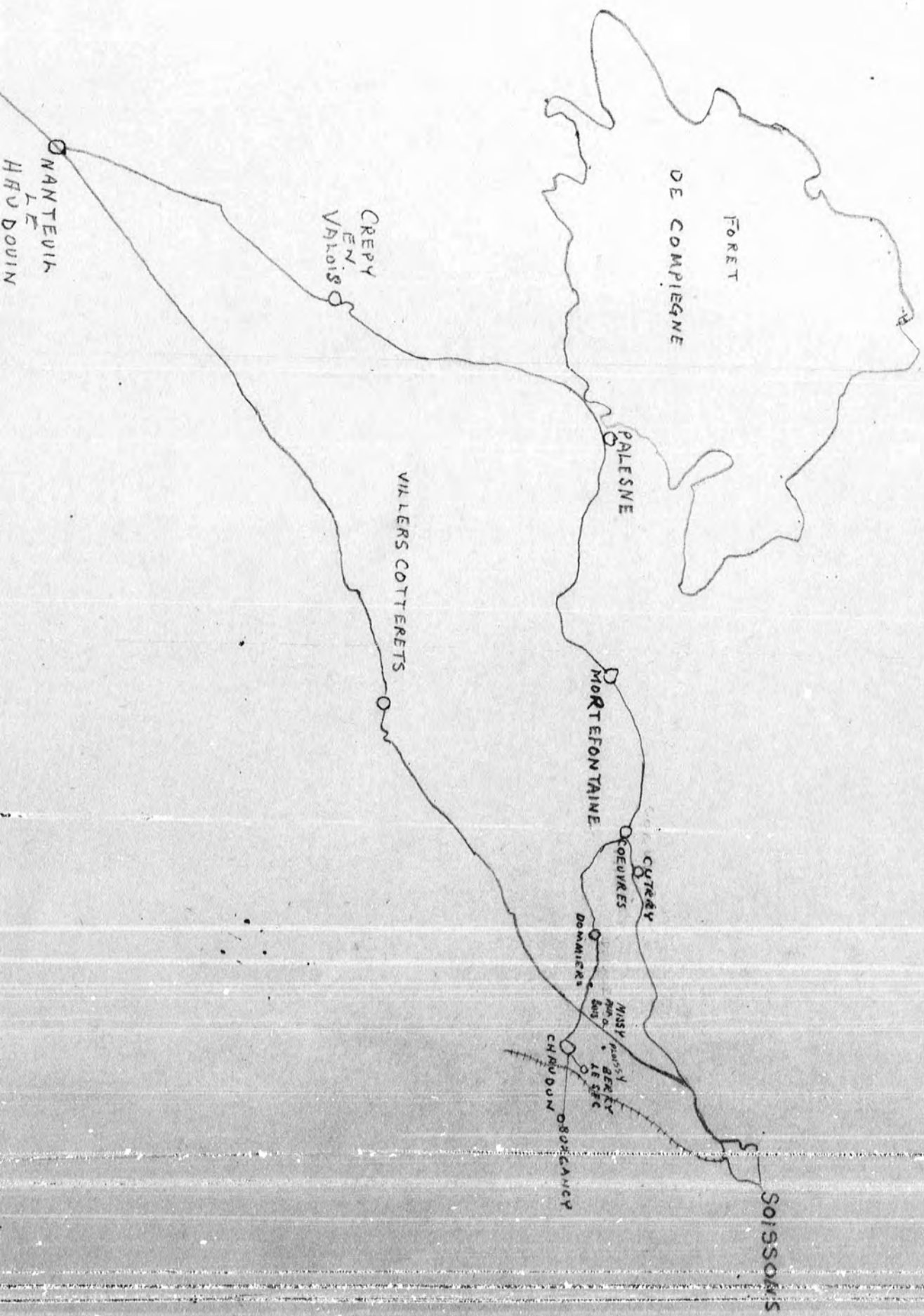
9. When rolling barrages are used to assist the advance of infantry, objectives must be prescribed and arrangements made for the barrage to rest in front of these objectives a sufficient ^{length of} time for the advancing riflemen to overcome resistance and then ^{to} follow the barrage when it moves forward.

10. A rolling barrage that advances without closely following infantry is not only a waste of ammunition, but leaves the infantry without proper protection.

11. Artillery is the long thrusting bayonet of the higher commanders. In bayonet fighting, the thrust is always directed at a vulnerable part of the body. The divisional artillery should be used in the same manner.

To bombard areas is only wasting ammunition which is difficult to secure. Artillery fire should be concentrated on critical points for maximum assistance.

12. The infantry attack has as its basis the fighting spirit and aggressiveness of the officers and noncommissioned officers with fearless, intelligent leading on their part, and the individual initiative on the part of the individual soldier. It is the duty of all leaders to stimulate and cultivate these qualities in time of peace and in the training areas after ^{WWI} ~~was~~ has been declared. The soldier in combat will only do those things which he has actually done in training. To tell him what to do in combat, without requiring him to practice it in training, is only wasting your breath.



REDUCTION OF NOYONS-RHEIMS
SALIENT
18 JULY - 5 AUGUST 1918

