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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SUBJECTS,  
MILITARY HISTORY SECTION,  
FORT BENNING, GA.

ADVANCED OFFICERS' CLASS.  
1922-1923.

The First Division in the Meuse Argonne.  
September 26 - October 12, 1918.

Barnwell R. Legge,  
Captain, Infantry.

1

The Infantry School,  
Fort Benning, Ga.,  
March 19, 1923.

MEMORANDUM TO: The Director, Department of Research,  
The Infantry School.

II. It is believed that it will be of interest from the viewpoint of historical research to furnish this additional information in connection with the references in the Monograph.

II. The official history of the 1st Division, which is referred to a number of times, was compiled in the following manner: Shortly after the 1st Division reached Germany the Commanding General appointed a history committee consisting of one officer from each regiment and separate organizations, whose duty it was to collaborate in writing up the operations. A number of months was spent in verifying every detail of each operation by conference with officers and enlisted men of the Division, and the history committee was given a free rein.

III. When the data was collected, the Commanding General sent five officers over the 1st Division battle fields to endeavor to check up on the ground. The writer of this Monograph was a member of both committees. The party which made the study of the terrain was headed by Brigadier General Frank Parker, a former Division Commander.

IV. When the party returned the history was completed. The Division Commander then had a large number of copies mimeographed and scattered broadcast among the combat officers of the Division for verification and correction. This process continued until the year 1922, when General Summerell was finally satisfied that the history was as complete and accurate as was humanly possible to make it.

V. It is believed that as an historical document the First Division History is entirely correct and authentic.

*B.R. Legge*  
B.R. Legge,  
Captain, Infantry,  
A.C.No. 61.

List of References.

1. Thomas, Shipley, "History of A.E.F."
2. History First Division. (Official)
3. History 26th Infantry. (Official)
4. War Diary First Division.
5. War Diary First Engineers.
6. Field Orders, First Army, 1918.
7. Field Orders, First Division, 1918.
8. Official Report of Commander in Chief to Secretary of War, 1919.
9. Casualty Records, First Division.
10. Personnel Records First Division.
11. G-2 Reports First Division.
12. History 18th Infantry (Official)
13. History Second Machine Gun Battalion. (Official)
14. Operations Report, 32nd Division.
15. War Diary, 1st Engineers.
16. War Diary, 1st Machine Gun Battalion.
17. History 16th Infantry. (Official)
18. Statement Captain C.R.Huebner, Infantry, then Major commanding 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry. (Eye witness)
19. Statement Captain W.G.Livesay, Infantry, then Adjutant 28th Infantry. (Eye witness)
20. Statement Major Oliver Allen, Infantry, then commanding 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry. (Eye witness)

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30. Statement Captain L.S.Frasier, Infantry, then Major commanding 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry.

All statements of eye witnesses were made in the year 1923 from memory and personal memoranda or data after consulting battle maps of the operation and making a study of that part touching upon their testimony. All have been written by the eye witnesses or taken down in writing by the writer of this paper.

The First Division in the Meuse Argonne

September 26 - October 12, 1918.

This monograph covers the operations of the 1st Division from September 26th to October 12th 1918.

Events leading up to the operation.

In order to furnish a background for a connected narrative, it will be necessary for me to pick up the thread where we find the Division resting in the Bois de Belle Oziere, in the former St.Mihiel Salient, on September 19th, six days after its successful advance as left division of the right wing of the American Army in the St.Mihiel

(1) First  
Div. History

p.173  
(2) Field  
Order 39,  
1st Div.  
Sept.19,'18.

(3) First  
Div. History  
p.173.

(3½)  
War Diary  
First Div.

Attack. (1)  
On September 19th orders were received transferring the 1st Division to the 3rd corps and placing it in army reserve. (2)

The movement was made in French Camions by the infantry, the motorized elements following. The horse drawn elements marched westward to join the infantry over improvised bridges constructed over the streams of the Woevre by the Division Engineers. (3)

On September 26th when the great offensive started, we find the 1st Division in the vicinity of Benoit-Vaux, in the area of the 3rd Corps. (3½)

It was tentatively planned, that should the attack progress favorably, the First Division would cross the Meuse in the vicinity of Verdun and prolong the attack of the Corps to the eastward.

Reconnaissances were made and conferences held between the Division Commander and the French Corps and Division Commanders hold-

(4) First ing this part of the front. (4)  
Div.History,  
p.174.

On September 28th we find the Division in the vicinity of Nixeville after a twelve hour march in a down pour of rain, the troops in woods rendered filthy and boggy by old bivouacs and

(5) War horse lines and cluttered up by a mass of wire entanglements of  
Diary, First rear area defenses. (5) Plans were changing.  
Div.Sept.  
28, 1918.

On September 29th the Division was suddenly transferred to

(6) P.O.30 the First Corps and ordered to Newvilly. (6) The Division Engineers  
1st Army- remained with the 3rd Corps, assigned to reconstructing the roads over  
Sept.29,  
1918.

(7) First what was formerly no-man's-land. (7)  
Div.History-  
p.174.

The uninterrupted movement of the infantry by truck, and the horse drawn elements by marching, across the congested lines of communication of the First and Fifth Corps was an achievement in which the staff and line share equally.

Let us leave the 1st Division for a few moments and turn to the situation on the front of the 1st Army.

The evening of September 29th finds the situation on the attacking front greatly altered. The impetus of the swift advance of the first two days had been lost. All attempts to advance the right of the line had met with failure; on the extreme left in the Forest of Argonne, only a slight gain had been made, while the enemy had reacted violently against the 35th, 37th and 79th Divisions.

(8) Shipley  
Thomas-His-  
tory of AEF  
p.258.

Orders were issued for the 1st, (Regular), 3rd, (Regular),  
and 32nd (National Guard), Divisions to move up immediately and  
replace these divisions in line. (8)

September 30th marks no change in the position of the  
American lines between the Meuse and the Argonne. The 77th Division  
had been able to advance its lines slightly in the Argonne. The  
French 4th Army on the left was pushing ahead.

(9) Shipley  
Thomas-His-  
tory of AEF  
p.258.

In the meantime the 1st, 3rd and 32nd Divisions were hurrying  
at top speed to the front. (9)

Operating under the 1st Corps the 1st Division was ordered  
to relieve the 38th Division, now somewhat disorganized, along the

(10) F.O.44  
1st Div. Sept.  
30, 1918.

line from Baulny extending generally eastward to Eclisfontaine, on  
the night of September 30th - October 1st. (10)

(11) War  
Diary, 1st  
Div. Sept.  
30, 1918.

The Division command post was established at Cheppy early  
on the morning of September 30th and the different sections began to  
function. (11) The troops were ordered to reach the vicinity of

(12) F.O.44  
1st Div. Sept.  
30, 1918.

Cheppy at dusk. (12)

Regimental Commanders and Staffs went forward to reconnoiter.

(13) State-  
ment Capt.  
W.G. Livesay,  
Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

The movement forward was made by battalion. (13) Roads were  
denied to the infantry because of the congestion of in and out  
traffic on the single axial road of the corps.

Artillery, trains, ambulances and every conceivable form  
of military transportation blocked and jammed the roads, and, to  
add to the confusion an immense mine crater south of Varennes as



wide as the road and 30 or 40 feet deep, had to be passed on a one way plank bridge, over which the military police regulated traffic with the greatest difficulty. The entire transportation, of three combat divisions, was passing day and night in a steady stream over this obstacle. (14)

(14) State-  
ments Major  
Oliver Allen,  
Capt. C.R. Hueb-  
ner, Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

The infantry too was having its difficulties, marching over a sea of barbed wire, and trench after trench widened and revetted in four years of stabilized warfare. Wire cutting details pre-  
deded each battalion; animals had to be abandoned; machine guns

(15) State-  
ments Major  
Oliver Allen,  
Capt. C.R. Hueb-  
ner, Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

were carried by hand. Men tugged and pulled each other over the  
obstacles. (15) One battalion passed through a mined area and  
suffered casualties. (16)

(16) State-  
ment Capt. C.R.  
Huebner.

Dusk found the infantry regiments in a position in readiness in the ravine running east from Cheppy. No further advance could be made until nightfall. Kitchens and combat trains were blocked

(17) State-  
ments Capt.  
W.G. Livesay,  
Major Oliver  
Allen, Capt.  
B.R. Legge.

✓ somewhere on the road south of Varennes and the troops could not be fed. (17)

(18) F.O. 43  
1st Div. Sept.  
30, 1918. F.O.  
44, 1st Div.  
Sept. 30, 1918.

Field Order 43 was issued for the Division to attack on October 1st. This was almost immediately superseded by Field Order 44, which ordered a relief, upon change of intention of the high command. (18)

#### The March to Battle.

The somewhat disorganized condition of the 35th Division made formal relief impracticable.

Leading battalions of the 1st Division in order from right to left, 26th Infantry, 28th Infantry, 18th Infantry, 16th Infantry, were ordered to form up with their leading elements on the Charpentry-Eclisfontaine road at midnight and advance to the line Boleau Bois-

(19) F.O.44 Sèrieux Farm - Chaudrun Farm - L'Esperance, arriving not later than 1st Div.  
Sept.30,1918. 3:00 A.M. (19)

(20) F.O.44 Upon arrival of the leading elements of the 1st Division on 1st Div.  
Sept.30,1918. this line, the infantry of the 35th Division was to stand relieved informally. (20)

(21) State- Moving up under cover of darkness from very toward Epinon-  
ments Capt. ville, leading battalions faced left and marched on the escarpment. (21)  
C.R.Huebner,  
Capt.B.R.  
Legge. The blackness of night and the anxiety of battalion commander

(22) State- ders to reach the line on time caused them to greatly diminish inter-  
ments Capt. vals and distances. Battalions marched in on narrow fronts, com-  
P.W.Carter, ✓  
Capt.B.R. panies in columns of twos without distance between platoons, battalion  
Legge, Major Oliver Allen. commanders leading. (22)

(23) State- Running into sharp machine gun fire from the ridges north of  
ments Capt. Baulny, leading battalions halted and dug on along the line as  
P.D.Carter, ✓  
Capt.B.R. indicated. (23)  
Legge.

During the night elements of the 35th Division were relieved. Daybreak found the infantry as follows: 1st line battalion on the line indicated, 2nd line battalion in the Charpentry-Eclisfontaine ravine holding the Charpentry-Eclisfontaine road, 3rd line battalions in the ravine running east from Very. Each battalion had its

(24) 1st  
Div. History,  
p. 180.

usual machine gun company attached. (24)

The artillery brigade forcing its way over roadless bogs had gone into position as follows: the 6th Field Artillery (75's) was skillfully emplaced east of Charpentry, screened from view from Argonne Forest; the 7th Field Artillery (75's) in the ravine southeast of Eclisfontaine; the 5th Field Artillery (155's), one battalion near Charpentry, two battalions near Very. (25)

(25) 1st  
Div. History,  
p. 181.

The 1st Machine Gun Battalion (motorized) was in division reserve near Cheppy. Field hospitals and ambulance companies were at Very. The Division Command Post and Artillery Brigade Command

(26) First  
Div. History,  
p. 181.

Post were at Cheppy. The 2nd Brigade Command Post was at Very; the 1st Brigade at Charpentry. The 1st Division was now in its normal order of battle. (26)

#### The Terrain.

When the mist cleared on the morning of October 1st, from their fox holes along Baulny ridge and thence eastward to Les Boileaux Bois; leading battalions could get some idea of the task before them when the order to attack finally came. It was not difficult to see the problems which had confronted the 35th.

West of the sector of the Division lay the forest of Argonne, a densely wooded plateau, rising abruptly to the height of 500 feet above the valley of the Aisne. Close beside the eastern edge of the forest the Aisne river flows south, skirting the heights of Cornay-Chatel-Chéhéry and Apremont. East of the Aisne and squarely

in the line of advance of the 1st Division lay row and row of buttress like hills with wooded crests and glacis like slopes with small fringes of brush and woods. These were cut at frequent intervals by transverse ravines drained by small streams into the Aise. The most imposing of these were the Montrefange (Hill 240), the barriers of Hill 263 and 269 and a great forbidding ridge Hill 272 which seemed to defy all progress. (27)

(27) State-  
ments Capt.  
C.R.Huebner,  
Capt.W.G.Live-  
say,Capt.B.R.  
Legge.

The terrain lends itself admirably to a strong rearguard action.

~~Contemporary writers have called this barrier, three miles~~

in depth and three miles in width, the key position on the front of the American Army. With this position dominating the Valley of the Aise and the terrain to the west, the enemy could successfully hold the 77th Division in the Forest and prevent the outflanking maneuver of the 28th Division and seriously impede the progress of the divisions on the right of the First. (28)

(28) Shipley  
Thomas,History  
of A.E.F.  
p.291.

General Pershing says in his report: "Positions embraced in this area were of vital importance to the continuation of the general advances." (29)

(29)Report  
of C.in C.  
p.19.

It was apparent to the high command that before the junction with the 4th French Army at Grand Pré could be effected, this position must be carried.

While the First American Army was hastily repairing its roads and rushing ammunition and supplies forward for the beginning of the second phase of the battle, the 1st Division lay in its

(30) State-  
ments Capt. P.L.Ransom, ✓  
Capt. C.R.Hueb-  
ner, Capt. B.R.Legge.  
fox holes, while enemy artillery pounded the area with high explosive and drenched the ravines and woods with gas, and machine guns and snipers harassed constantly wherever movement was observed. (30)

The ravine northeast of Charpentry was constantly drenched with mustard gas. The ground became so impregnated with it that when the Sun came out after the habitual morning fog, severe burns developed on many men and the casualty list increased hourly. (31)

(31) First Div. History, p.186.  
On the morning of October 2nd, before daybreak, front line battalion commanders were astonished ~~at the receipt~~ of verbal orders

originating at Corps Headquarters, to penetrate the enemy screen in their front with strong combat patrols and locate his defensive position. This order was based upon a report from the French on the left of the Forest that the enemy had withdrawn. (32)

(32) First Div. History, p.185.  
At daybreak strong patrols started out in a heavy fog. Passing through the enemy outguards in the mist and fog they penetrated to the vicinity of the Exermont ravine where most of them gave their lives. Some of the few survivors were not picked up until the advance of the 1st Division on October 4th. (33)

The similarity of the experiences of these patrols makes it unnecessary to go into the details of the operations of each. Because of the great difficulties facing the junior officer under these circumstances, I shall deal with one.

The battalion commander of the right flank battalion, com-

plying with the regimental order, sent a patrol of two officers and 70 men. Anxiety for the safety of the patrol caused him to send with it a signal detachment corporal and private with a reel of breast wire and a telephone. (34)

(34)History  
26th Inf.p.64  
Statement Bn.  
Commander, ✓  
Captain B.R.  
Legge.

In the confusion of events which followed, no report except a verbal one was made. In this detachment one officer and twelve men survived. The following comes from the officer's personal diary: "The patrol left battalion headquarters about one hour before sunrise, two officers and 75 men; it advanced in double file to the line of outguards. At the line of outguards it deployed in two waves, the first wave deployed, the second in squad column about 50 feet in rear - the fog was thick. The two officers were between the skirmish line and line of squad columns. When the patrol had advanced about a half kilometer, it was fired on by several machine guns from Montrebeau wood. Lieutenant X ordered the patrol to double time to the draw which was just ahead of us. We advanced at a run <sup>to the</sup> R<sup>of</sup> de Mayache and up the crest of the hill on the other side. Several men fell; we could see nothing to fire at. At this point the patrol was stopped by machine gun fire from the left rear, the left and from across the Exermont ravine. Suddenly a nest of two guns about 40 yards in front of us opened up. Lieutenant X, the patrol leader, was killed, as were a number of the men, while trying to rush the nest. It was finally put out and two Boche killed.

Fire was so heavy that we had to dig in where we were. Men were falling on all sides. At this time Corporal X cut the phone in. I got the battalion commander and told him what a mess we were in. He said to hold where we were. The fire from the woods to our left rear became so heavy that I sent Corporal X. and six men to work their way against it. They succeeded in putting out one light machine gun and reported the woods heavily held. About one hour later some 30 Boche were discovered, immediately in rear of the remnants of our patrol, in skirmish line. Part of the patrol was faced to the rear. Just then Captain X was seen coming forward

Personal  
Diary of  
D. E. Meeker,  
formerly 1st  
Lt. 26th Inf.  
Statement  
Captain B. R.  
Legge, Inf.

with a part of his outfit and the Boche withdrew. About 1:00 P.M. orders were received to withdraw to the line of outguards. We had about 20 men left deployed on a front of 200 yards. I managed to get 14 survivors back to the line of outguards and reported my arrival to the battalion commander." (35)

As great as was the cost, the patrols had accomplished their mission. Information was now available to lay the barrage for the initial attack.

On the night of October 2nd, after a long and exhausting  
(36) 1st  
Div. History, p. 182. march the First Engineers rejoined the Division and went into  
Division reserve, one kilometer southeast of Very. (36)

(37) State-  
ments Capt.  
W. G. Livesay,  
Capt. C. R.  
Huebner.

Throughout the 3rd of October enemy artillery from the heights west of the Aire and north of Baulny, and machine gun fire from apparently everywhere kept up the toll of casualties. (37)

*end*

(38) 1st  
Div. History  
p.183.

The losses had averaged 500 a day since the 1st of October.

(39) State-  
ments Capt. ✓  
W.G. Livesay,  
Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

On the night of October 3rd about 11:00 P.M., battalion commanders were assembled at their regimental C.P.'s. for verbal orders. (39)

To understand the mission of the Division, a brief recapitulation of the situation on the front of the Army is necessary.

After the impetus of the assault of September 26th which swept everything before it, the First American Army had advanced with steadily diminishing gains until the lengthening of the lines of communication, the increasing resistance of the enemy, who was rallying after the first shock, and a steadily increasing casualty list, caused a virtual stabilization of the front on September 29th. This marked the end of the first thrust, and had there not been fresh divisions to renew the assault, it might well have terminated the offensive.

(40) Map-  
Pershing's  
Report.

The line ran from Brioules on the Meuse to Apremonts on the Aire and sharply southwestward to Binardville in the Forest of Argonne. Before the Army lay the Kriemhilde Stellung, the last prepared defenses on the allied side of the Meuse. (40)

If a deep wedge could be driven in the German lines east of the Aire valley the enemy would be forced to loosen his hold on

(41) Shipley  
Thomas, History  
of A.E.F.  
p.291.

Argonne Forest and the whole line could be carried forward. This was the mission of the 1st Division. (41)



Leaving battalion commanders studying their orders, let us consider for a moment the state of training, morale and battle efficiency of the division entrusted with this mission. If I retrace ground covered in previous monographs I crave pardon on grounds of a desire to bring home a point.

### Resume of First Division's Experiences.

The 1st Division landed in France in June, 1917. G.H.Q.

had ordered a very careful schedule. It had trained under both British and French methods. On October 4th it had been in four

(42) Casualty  
Records, 1st  
Division.

sectors, one minor operation, Cantigny, two major offensives and one major defensive. Its total casualties to date were 582 officers and 14,800 men. (42)

War Diary,  
1st Div.

There are two determining factors which peculiarly influenced the morale of the 1st Division in this operation: First, immediately after its staggering casualties in the Aisne-Marne counter offensive, it was withdrawn, placed in a quiet sector and absorbed 7000 replacements, most of them drafted men untried and untrained. Shortly after this, with a brief few days training in a billeting area, it was thrown in the St. Mihiel offensive. (43)

The psychological effect of a rapid and successful advance of 13 kilometers in less than 48 hours, with practically no losses, had an astounding effect upon these men. They had proven their worth on the field of battle and the Germans were not so good after all.

(44)  
Personal  
Records, 1st  
Division.

The second factor influencing morale was the policy of the Division Commander with reference to promotion within his Division. The Division Commander had commanded the 1st Field Artillery Brigade; each brigade commander had commanded a regiment and of the Infantry battalion commanders and machine gun battalion commanders, practically all had landed in France with the Division as First and Second Lieutenants. In addition many wounded officers and men had recently rejoined. (44)

In training, discipline and spirit it was essentially regular despite the large number of drafted replacements. It had a strong backbone of old non-commissioned officers. Nobody was melting any church bells to make bronze medals in honor of their return, and they purchased their cigarettes at standard prices from the Y.M.C.A.

#### The Attack of October 4th.

Keeping the mission in mind let us consider for a moment the order for the attack.

The 1st Division, as right division of the 1st Corps was to advance rapidly to the Corps objective as indicated, without reference to the units on its flanks, assisting the 91st Division on the right in reducing the Bois de Moncy and the Petit Bois.

Normal formations were to be used; brigades abreast, regiments abreast, battalions in column. Second line battalions were in regimental reserve; exterior third line battalions were in

Division reserve; interior third line battalions were in brigade reserve.

Machine gun companies of 1st and 2nd line battalions were to accompany their battalions by bounds keeping close liaison with battalion commanders.

Machine gun companies of 3rd line battalions were held out and placed under brigade commanders for emergency.

The 16th Infantry was ordered to detail one company from 1st and 2nd line battalions for combat patrol duty on the valley of the Aire, at the same time insuring liaison with the right regiment of the 26th Division.

The 26th Infantry was ordered to have strong patrols on its right flank to assist the 91st Division and maintain contact.

Two accompanying guns (75MM) were attached to each assault battalion.

The regimental 37MM platoons (3 guns) and the 3 inch stokes mortar platoons (6 guns) were in regimental reserve.

Two companies of light tanks (American Units) were to deploy across the front of the division as follows: One Platoon in front of each regiment of Infantry; the two supporting platoons at the right and left of their respective brigade axes. The mission of the tanks was defined: to attack strong points and machine gun nests and assist the advance of the Infantry, leading the assault waves.

Observation squadron No. 1 was attached for the operation. It was to have one Infantry command plane and two artillery planes in the air at all times during the advance.

Balloon Company No. 2, also attached, was to observe and adjust artillery fire.

Company "C" of the 1st Gas Regiment, also an attached unit, was ordered to place a smoke screen along the southern edge of Montrebeau woods from H-5 to H-plus 30.

A provisional squadron of cavalry consisting of three troops of the 2nd American Cavalry also attached was ordered alerted in

place and ready to move on thirty minutes notice.

The artillery, reinforced by the 219th French Field Artillery, which was Corps Artillery, was to put down a deep barrage 200 meters in front of the line of departure at H-5.

At H the barrage was to lift and advance at the rate of 100 meters in four minutes to the first objective, a line running from the northern edge of Hill 212, southwest through Montrebeau woods. Here the assault waves would reorganize while the barrage stood for thirty minutes. It would then move forward at the same rate to the 2nd objective a line passing from the northern edge of Hill 269 southwest to Ferme les Granges, where it would again stand for thirty minutes and then roll forward to the corps objective, as indicated on the map, where it would stand for twenty minutes and cease.

The line of departure now held by outguards, was slightly in advance of Baulny Ridge. Assault battalions were ordered to throw out screens to mark the line of departure, not later than midnight, to form up in rear of the line, so as to cross it at H-hour. (45)

(45) F.O.44  
1st Div.Oct.  
2, 1918.

The 5th Prussian Guards were facing the 1st Brigade, the 52nd Division faced the 2nd Brigade, both were firstclass Divisions. (46)

G-2 Report  
1st Division.

At 5:25 A.M., without a preliminary shot our barrage fell 200

meters in front of the line of departure, stood five minutes and rolled forward. (47)

(47) First  
Div.His.  
p.186.

Simultaneously with the first few shots rocket after rocket of

every color went sailing up along the line of outguards. The signal was repeated rearward for several moments, and a few moments later, the enemy S.O.S. Artillery and machine gun barrage came down. (48)

(48) State-  
ments Capt. ✓  
P.D.Carter,  
Capt.B.R.Legge,  
Major Oliver  
Allen.

The attack started in a dense fog, it was still dark. (49)

The objectives as set by the Division indicate that the 2nd Brigade by advancing vigorously on the right would relieve pressure on the front of the 1st Brigade, which, in addition to serious obstacles in its front was exposed to a demoralizing infilade fire

(49) State-  
ments Capt. ✓  
P.D.Carter,  
Capt.B.R.Legge.

from west of the Aire. Let us see how the plan of maneuver worked.

(50) F.O.44  
1st Div.Oct.  
2, 1918.

(50)

We find following the barrage closely, in the 2nd Brigade; the 1st Battalion 26th and 3rd Battalion 28th; in the 1st Brigade, the 3rd Battalion 18th and 3rd Battalion 16th. In the heavy fog and

(51) First darkness, the 2nd battalion 18th moving up into position in reserve, Division History, p.190. closed on the 3rd Battalion at Chaudron Farm and went over with it.

(51)

Side by side these three battalions forced their way

(52) State- through Montrebeau wood and open ravines to the west and reached ment, Major ✓ Oliver Allen. the first objective on time. There was practically no rifle fire delivered.

They hung close to the barrage and bored through. (52)

The assault battalions of the 26th and 28th were unable to follow this barrage across the Exermont Ravine and the R<sup>ap</sup> de Mayscha.

From the wooded crests to the north and northeast, bands of machine gun fire enfiladed the two deep ravines which lay on their zone of advance. The combat liaisons group which was to protect the ~~left~~ <sup>Right</sup> flank was annihilated by machine gun fire at the "jump off". A battery of 77's in the vicinity of La Neville, <sup>e</sup> Conte farm fired point blank at the advancing lines at less than 800 yards, until detachments

(53) State- from the 26th and 28th worked their way forward in the folds of the ments Capt. B.R.Legge, Ex. ground and killed the crews. (53) Lt. S.A.Baxter.

When the barrage moved forward to the second objective, the 16th and 18th, in the same formation moved forward. Crossing the Exermont ravine they were exposed to a raking enfilade artillery fire from the heights west of the fire and artillery and machine fire from Hill 240 and the ridges in rear. Fighting their way through Exermont, where enemy groups were resisting they continued to advance. The 16th pushed its line out west of Hill 240 and reached the second objective on schedule. The assault echelon of

(54) First  
Division His-  
tory, p. 191.

the 18th, now badly depleted, fought its way up the steep slopes of Hill 240, small groups reaching the crest. Here they met with such heavy fire that they were unable to dig in. They withdrew to the base of the hill and held. At nightfall reorganization was effected; the 3rd Battalion digging in in front of the 2nd, which was echeloned to the rear near the Exermont ravine. (54)

The assault battalions of the 28th and 26th were still held up by the ravines. Both were confronted with the problem of crossing a deep gully ~~enclosed at close range by machine gun and light~~ artillery fire, climbing steep and unprotected slopes and assaulting

(55) State-  
ment Capt-  
P.D. Carter, ✓  
Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

strongly held positions on the other side. The machine gun company of the 1st battalion 26th was placed in position in Montrebeau woods and delivering overhead fire. (55)

The 28th assisted by pressure of the 18th Infantry was able to work forward in the afternoon capturing La Neville le Comte Farm and Beuregard Farm.

The 1st Battalion 26th, after unsuccessful efforts to maneuver to the right and left in the R<sup>au</sup> de Mayache had lost practically all its officers and suffered about 50% casualties. The Commander of the second battalion 26th had been killed while coming forward to assist the 1st Battalion. The senior officer left, assumed command and came forward to consult with the commander of the 1st Battalion. They decided that a maneuver was impracticable on account of the exposed right flank. A passage of lines was decided upon

The tanks too had fared badly. Arriving on the jump off line after the assault had started they worked forward. Those supporting the 2nd Brigade met with disaster. Anti tank guns on Hill 240 prevented a single tank from reaching the assault waves. The tanks supporting the left brigade were more fortunate, although the commander of the tank brigade states that they encountered the stiffest resistance of the war. Five tanks succeeded in reaching the Exermont ravine and one got into Exermont. Of the tanks in

(58) State-  
ment Capt.  
S.E.Brett,  
1st Div.His.  
p.194

~~the fight, three were out at the end of the day. Casualties in~~  
personnel amounted to 84 per cent. (58)

(59) First  
Div.His.  
p.186.

The accompanying guns were all put out of action at the jump off and did little more than to add to the casualties of the day.

(59)

(60) State-  
ments Capt.  
C.R.Huebner,  
Capt.W.G. ✓  
Livesay.

When darkness fell dead and wounded were still scattered all over the ground over which the division had advanced. Litter bearers did their best but it was impracticable to care for all. Burial details were not attempted. (60)

(61) Shipley  
Thomas, History  
of A.E.F.  
p.297.

On the right of the 1st Division the 32nd Division line remained at Tronsol Farm. On the left the 28th Division had reached Gesnes Creek. (61)

(62) 1st  
Div.History  
p.185.

During the night the 1st Engineers sent detachments up to assist in "digging in" the 16th Infantry in order to relieve it in some measure in its exposed position in the Aire Valley. (62)



Telephone communication had been established with the Regimental Commander, who approved the plan. The 37 M.M. Platoon had worked forward far enough to furnish support. It was decided not to wait on the artillery.

The 2nd Battalion came forward in squad column widely deployed crossed the exposed ground by infiltration, reformed in the ravine and passed the remnants of the 1st Battalion on the ridge south of Exermont ravine by rushes of small groups, and fought their way

(56) State-

ments, Capt.  
B.R.Legge, Inf.  
Ex-Major R.M.  
Youell.

across of the 26th. The 1st Battalion rallied, reformed and followed closely. (56)

Darkness was falling when the two battalions badly depleted

and exhausted reached the line indicated and occupied the same ground, refusing the right flank sharply to prevent infiltration from the Bois de Morine on the right, which was still strongly held by the enemy. (57)

(57) First  
Div.History  
p.191.State-  
ments Ex.Major  
R.M.Youell,  
Capt.B.R.  
Legge.

In the meantime the 3rd Battalion, 16th infiltrated from the bluffs west of the Aire and raked from hill 240 and the high ground in its front, followed its barrage to the 3rd objective, mopped up the town of Fleville and withdrew according to plan to the ridge to the south.

Two officers and 240 men of practically a war strength battalion, the survivors of the day gained for their regiment: the signal distinction of being the only unit of the Army to reach its objective.

The Attack of October 5th.

Orders for the renewal of the attack reached battalion commanders about 3:50 A.M.

(63) State-  
ments Capt.  
C.R.Huebner,  
Capt.B.R.  
Legge.

Reserve battalions furnished carrying details, who succeeded in getting food forward under great difficulties. It reached some units just before dawn. Men were putting away their mess kits when they formed up to attack. (63)

The mission of the division remained unchanged. It was to continue its attack in its zone of action, as originally prescribed, to the corps objective. Pivoting on the 16th, the 18th, 28th and ~~both were to swing abreast of that regiment then the whole line~~ would advance.

The order for the attack divided this into two phases. The first phase; the 2nd Brigade and 18th Infantry would advance to the 1st objective, a line running from the northern edge of the woods on Hill 212 to the crest of Hill 240 where it would halt for two hours and reorganize; then to the second objective a line extending from the right of the 16th infantry to the crest of Hill 272, halt for two hours and reorganize. The second phase; the line would then advance to a line north of Hill 272, extending from the Cote de Mal-dah through a point one kilometer north of Fléville. (64)

(64) F.O.48  
1st Div.  
Oct.4,1918.

During the advance to the second objective, the right flank regiment was entrusted with the difficult operation of attacking with one battalion at a right angle to the general line of advance.

(65) F.O. 48  
1st Div.  
Oct. 4, 1918. Its mission was to capture organized positions on the west slopes of Hill 269, securing the right flank of the Division. (65)

At H-15 the divisional artillery was to put down heavy concentrations between the front line and the first objective. At H hour a rolling barrage was to fall 200 meters in front of the Infantry and advance at the rate of 100 meters in four minutes. During the two hour halt, heavy concentrations would be put down between the first objective and second objective and shrapnel on the Bois de Moncy. The advance to the second objective was to be pre-

~~(66) F.O. 48  
1st Div.  
Oct. 4, 1918.~~ and the procedure from the second objective to the third objective was the same as the previous ones. (66)

All available tanks were to go to the 2nd Brigade in front of which the terrain was most difficult. H Hour was 6:30 A.M.

The 1st Battalion 26th which had led its regiment on the day previous again led off. It fought its way through a wired position on Hill 212, mopped up the woods and killed a number of the enemy who held their ground, and capturing a number of light and heavy machine guns. (67)

(68) 1st  
Div. History,  
p. 199. State-  
ment Capt.  
C.R. Huebner. The 1st Battalion 28th passed through the 3rd Battalion and advanced to the crest of Hill 240 in liaison with the 18th Infantry. In hand to hand fighting they took the hill. (68)

The 3rd Battalion 18th which had assaulted on the 4th fought its way up the slopes of Hill 240 in close contact with the 28th suffering heavily from enfilade artillery fire from the western heights of the Aire. (69)

(69) History  
18th Inf. p. 94.

As the barrage rolled forward to the second objective, the 3rd Battalion 26th leapfrogged the 1st Battalion and continued the assault. As the leading waves advanced from the slopes of Hill 212 they came under a strong enfilade fire from the Bois de Moncy, the woods to the north and field pieces on Hill 269. The leading waves were pinned to the ground a few yards in front of the woods on Hill 212, and practically annihilated. Seeing that they could

(70) State-  
ments Capt. B.R.  
Legge and Capt.  
P.N. Starlings.

not advance, the battalion commander ordered his battalion to dig in, called the regimental commander on the phone and requested artillery support. (70) The Regimental Commander stopped the barrage and

(71) State-  
ments Major  
Francis Rug-  
gles, 7th P.A.  
Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

ordered a concentration on the points holding up the advance. He then ordered the 3rd Battalion to commence its advance again in two hours, under a new rolling barrage. (71)

At about 2:00 P.M. the 3rd Battalion 26th advanced, captured Arietal Farm and reached a line running generally east and west through this position about 3:30 P.M. Here it was pinned to the ground by fire from Hill 272. Attempting a frontal attack on this

(72) State-  
ments Captain  
P.N. Starlings  
Capt. B.R.  
Legge.

formidable position under supporting fire of its machine gun company, it was repulsed with heavy losses and dug in on the line indicated. (72)

The 2nd Battalion 28th Infantry, which had been in brigade reserve, passed through the 1st Battalion and advanced to the northern

(73) 1st  
Division His-  
tory p. 291.

slopes of Hill 240. It attacked in the direction of Hill 272 and like the 3rd Battalion 26th was repulsed with heavy losses, suffering converging fire from Hill 176 and Hill 272. (73)

(74) History  
18th Inf.  
p.94.

The 3rd Battalion of the 18th, showing splendid driving power, advanced to the northern slopes of Hill 240, where it too was definitely stopped. (74)

(75) 1st  
Div. History  
p.202.

The 16th Infantry, with the 3rd Battalion still in its forward echelon, although it had not advanced, suffered heavily during the operation. The 2nd Battalion, entrenched in close support, on the open plain south of Fléville, like the 3rd Battalion, caught the full force of the enfilade fire from the west.

(75)

~~Nightfall found the lines as indicated.~~ Throughout a day of hard fighting, artillery and machine gun companies had given the closest support to assaulting battalions.

(76) His.  
2nd M.G. Bn.  
p.37.

The nature of the terrain made it necessary to push machine gun companies well forward to commanding ground. Companies attached to the 1st Brigade were in position on Hill 240 and echeloned rearward. (76)

(77) 1st  
Div. History  
p.198.

The right brigade had its machine gun companies with assault units well forward, while the companies of its third line battalions organized for barrage fire near the Exermont ravine. (77)

(78)  
1st Div. His-  
tory, p.202.

As soon as it was found that resistance was too stiff for troops to follow a barrage, the sixth and seventh field artillery passed to control of brigade and regimental commanders. Close liaison rendered its support practicable. Some single guns fired more than 1000 rounds in 24 hours. (74)

The howitzers of the 5th P.A. were being constantly called upon

for counter battery and destructive fire.

(79) State-  
ment Capt.  
S.E. Brett.

Tanks were not used after the first day. The Brigade Com-  
mander of the tanks states that the tanks were available. I am  
unable to state why they were not used. (79)

On October 6th no advance was ordered. Efforts were made  
to push patrols through the woods toward Hill 272. The 3rd Bat-  
talion 26th while attempting to infiltrate toward Hill 272 encountered  
an enemy force estimated to be a battalion, forming for counter  
attack in the ravine north of Hill 269. The battalion commander

led his battalion to meet the enemy and the battalion opened

(80) Div. History  
p. 202. His-  
tory 26th Inf.  
p. 64.

~~The Regimental O.P. on Hill 212 had also observed~~  
this movement and, on its call, artillery, previously registered on  
this approach, dispersed the formation. (80)

To go back a few hours, the patrol from the 1st Battalion 26th  
which had been pushed out to Hill 269 on October 5th reported that  
the enemy had evacuated the hill. A platoon was promptly sent to  
occupy the <sup>crest</sup> of the hill. The Platoon Leader unfortunately had no

(81) State-  
ment of Capt.  
B.R. Legge.

map and occupied the southern knoll thinking that he was on the  
crest. The occupation of Hill 269 was reported to the 5th Corps,  
but the 32nd Division was constantly reporting fire from Hill 269.

(81)

Although in the zone of action of the 32nd Division, the  
32nd could not advance directly against it because of fire in its

(82) Operations report  
32nd Div. Oct.  
5-6, 1918.

front. (82) The situation remain thus until October 8th.

On the night of October 6 - 7, the 82nd Division, which had taken over half of the sector of the 28th Division, entered the zone of action of the 1st Division. At daybreak it attacked due west against Chateau ~~du~~ <sup>Chéhéry</sup> ~~Nancy~~. The 6th Field Artillery, sup-

(83) First Division report, Nov. 24, 1918.

ported the attack. Its success relieved the exposed flank of the 16th Infantry from a galling fire which it had borne for six days and nights. (83)

(84) F.O. 58,  
1st Army, Oct.  
7, 1918.

181st Brigade (91st Division). Its zone of action was extended to the northeast. The right boundary was Hill 269 - Tuilliere Farm, the left boundary Fléville - Sommerance. (84)

(85) War Diary  
1st Engrs. Oct.  
8, 1918. War  
Diary 1st M.G.  
Bn. Oct. 8, 1918.

It now became necessary for the Division Commander to place the 1st Engineers in the line. During the night of October 7th-8th, the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers, with one company of the 1st Machine Gun Battalion attached relieved a detachment of the 32nd Division on Hill 269, which in turn had relieved, 24 hours before, the platoon of the 26th Infantry, which I referred to previously. (85) Heavy shelling during the relief prevented its accomplishment until 5:30 A.M. The enemy was found to be holding the crest of the hill and the eastern slopes..

It was apparent that the crest of the hill must be cleared before the line of departure could be established for the next advance.

The 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers and a detachment of the 1st Battalion 26th Infantry attacked at 4:00 P.M. The detachment of the 26th moved east up the slopes of 269. The Engineers attacked north. There was no supporting fire.

(86) History  
26th Inf. War  
Diary 1st  
Engineers.

The crest of the hill was cleared by dusk after close fighting in dense woods and brush and occupied for defense. (86)

The period of semi stabilization - October 6th, 7th and 8th, had been a trying one. Machine gun artillery and minnenwerfer fire was increasing the already heavy casualty list. The wounded were so numerous that they could not be evacuated daily. Burial parties as far back as Montrebeau wood had to be discontinued. (87)

(87) First  
Division His-  
tory p.206.

The lines had been straightened out by constant plugging away. The artillery was displaced and moved forward to resume its close support. Everything was in readiness to advance, although the question of the employment of the remaining troops presented a serious problem to the Division Commander in covering the broad front assigned.

(88) History  
1st Div.  
p.205.

All day and all night of October 8th the 5th Field Artillery pounded Hill 272 with high explosive, shrapnel and non-persistent gas. (88)

Orders for the attack reached all echelons in ample time. The mission of the division, with the 181st Brigade attached, was to cover its front strongly north of Hill 240 and attack in the direction of the Petit Bois, assisting the 32nd Division by cleaning up



(89) F.O.49  
1st Div. Oct.  
8. 1918.

the Petit Bois and the Bois de Romagne north of Hill 263. It involved the shifting of the zone of advance in close contact with the enemy, a critical maneuver. (89)

Up to this time every infantry battalion except the 1st battalion 16th Infantry had been heavily engaged. The 1st Battalion 1st Engineers and all machine gun units had also been committed. The first Division was to make its final effort.

The plan of attack was carefully drawn in every detail. It involved the maximum use of artillery and auxiliary troops and showed the confidence of the Division Commander in the maneuvering ability of his regiments, which the results of the operation proved was not misplaced.

#### The Attack of October 9th.

The operation was divided into three phases in order to obtain a maximum density of artillery fire:

The 1st Battalion 16th Infantry from division reserve was to take place in the sector of the 28th Infantry before dawn. Operating under the commanding officer 18th Infantry, it was to attack and capture Hill 272, supported by a heavy artillery concentration and preceded by a rolling barrage. During its advance the 16th and 18th Infantry were to push their lines forward slightly and maintain liaison. For five minutes before the attack, Company "C" 1st Gas Regiment from Hill 240 was to smother Hill 176 with thermite.

At H plus 23 minutes, the 2nd Brigade using its least fatigued

battalions was to swing to the right and attack Hill 263, with the Divisional Artillery rolling its barrage 200 meters in front of the assault waves, and work its way abreast of the 1st Battalion 16th. It was to halt here and reorganize while the artillery pounded the hills to its front. At H plus three hours it was to advance behind a rolling barrage at the rate of 100 meters in six minutes to the second objective.

The 2nd Phase was to consist of the advance of the 1st Battalion 16th to the 2nd objective. For 30 minutes before its advance, the artillery was to fire concentrations in the zone of action in its front. At H plus four hours and 50 minutes a rolling barrage was to precede it at the rate of 100 meters in six minutes, and it was to advance to the second objective, maintaining liaison on its flanks.

The 3rd Phase was to consist of the advance of the 1st Brigade to the second objective at H plus six hours and 20 minutes, following a rolling barrage at the rate of 100 meters in six minutes. Upon reaching the second objective all units were to organize and prepare to exploit their successes. Thirty minutes after the 1st Brigade reached the second objective the artillery would cease.

The First Engineers on Hill 269 were to form the pivot of the attack, cleaning up the Bois de Moncy in their zone of action.

The 361st Infantry (181st Brigade) on the right was to hold its position near the southern slope of Hill 269 and cover the right flank.

(90) The 362nd Infantry, (191st Brigade), 2nd Battalion, 1st Engineers  
F.O.49 and 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry formed the Division reserve. (90)  
1st Div. Oct.8,  
1918. No tanks were assigned on account of the difficulty of the  
terrain.

The Cavalry was assigned to liaison duty, but, on account of  
heavy shelling and gas, could not function.

(91) During the advance to the second objective the zones indicated  
Original by cross hatches were to be avoided by troops in order that the  
Battle Map to Accompany F.O. artillery could interdict these areas which the enemy was known to use  
49, 1st Div. for forming his reserves. (91).  
1918.

~~The morning of October 8, 1918, the~~

1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, "jumped off" on time. H hour was  
8:30 A.M. It followed its barrage closely across the open ground  
to the base of Hill 272 and fought its way through a powerfully organ-  
ized position to the crest of the hill. This successful assault  
paved the way for the rest of the attack and stands out as one of the  
most brilliant operations in the history of the division. A great  
number of machine guns and minnenwerfer were captured, and a few  
prisoners. The denseness of the fog made team work impossible.  
Small groups fought their way forward and kept boring through. (92)

(92) History  
16th Inf. p.55.  
On its left the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, ran into heavy  
machine gun fire from Hill 176. One company worked its way around  
the western slope and outflanked the position, enabling the battalion  
to reach its objective. (93)

The 16th Infantry, on the left of the line, advanced its line  
to the 1st Objective, sustaining considerable losses.

On the right of the 1st Brigade, the 2nd Brigade, slipping over into its new zone of advance attacked northeast, the 1st Battalion, 26th on the right, the 3rd Battalion 26th on the left.

(94) State-  
ments Capt.  
C.R.Huebner,  
Capt.P.D.  
Carter.

Isolated machine guns and small enemy groups were overcome and the objective reached on time. (94)

While the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers was forming up on the pivot, it was viciously counter attacked from the northeast and east. Two machine guns of the 1st Battalion 26th, which had been placed there on October 8th by the battalion commander were captured and the crews killed or wounded. The engineers counter attacked

(95) War  
Diary, 1st  
Engineers.

promptly and recaptured the guns, and shortly after advanced to the 1st objective. (95)

The 1st Battalion 26th passed the 3rd Battalion on the first objective and in liaison with the 2nd Battalion 26th advanced to the second objective. (96) An enemy counter attack forming in the Bois de Romagne was caught by our artillery fire and dispersed. (97)

(97) 1st  
Division His-  
tory, p.210

The artillery now shifted to the front of the First Brigade which advanced successfully to the second objective and dug in.

(98) 1st  
Div.Report,  
Oct.17,1918,  
War Diary  
26th Inf.

During the afternoon of the 9th a battalion of the 361st Infantry cleared the eastern slopes of Hill 269, into which the enemy had again infiltrated. A battalion of the 362nd took position supporting it. (98)

(99) Statements  
Capt. C.R. Hueb-  
ner, Capt. J.V. ✓  
Ware.

During the night of the 9th, the disorganization of the enemy in front of the 1st Division was beginning to show. A rolling kitchen full of cooked food came down an unimproved road on the eastern slope of the Côte de Maldah, looking for its company, which no longer existed, and was gratefully received by the 28th.

(99)

(100) 1st  
Div. History,  
p. 210.

During the night, the 6th and 7th Field Artillery displaced forward along the line Fléville - Hill 272, where they could better support the attack. (100)

#### Exploitation.

(101) F.O. 50  
1st Div. Oct.  
9, 1918. F.O.  
57, 1st Army,  
1918.

On the night of October 9th, the First Division was ordered to exploit its successes to the line Sommerance - Tuilliere Farm. Each regiment was to push out patrols in its zone of action at 7:00 A.M. Infiltrating forward they were to seize and hold favorable ground. The assault battalions would maintain liaison, immediately advance and occupy the best defensive position. The 181st Brigade was relieved and attached to the 32nd Division. (101)

(102) State-  
ment Ex-Major  
R.M. Youell.  
Capt. L.S.  
Fraser.

The 2nd Battalion 26th infiltrated forward, fighting its way through woods so dense that contact was almost impossible. The 3rd Battalion 26th in close support, threw two companies on the right flank to protect a gap between the 1st Division and the unit on its right. Night fall found it on the northern edge of the Bois de Romagne. (102)

The 2nd Battalion 28th and remnants of the 1st Battalion 28th similarly filtered forward, using the same methods, to the line as indicated.

The 1st Battalion, 16th moved forward down the Côte de Mal-dah, against slight resistance, to the line indicated. During its progress a German colonel was captured. He stated that he had been cut off by the barrage of October 9th and unable to move from his dug out.

(103) 1st  
Div. History  
Battle map  
of Argonne.

The 1st Battalion 16th pushed forward to the line indicated, patrolling into Sommerance. The 16th was ordered to (103)

This operation was a slow process and lasted throughout the day.

(104) F.O. 52  
1st Div. Oct.  
10, 1918.

On the night of October 10th the 1st Division was ordered to continue its attack in the same manner. (104)

At 7:00 A.M., patrols were pushed out. These immediately came under heavy fire from the wired positions of the Kriemhilde Stellung line. It became evident that a specially prepared assault was necessary to take the position. Front line troops were ordered to hold their lines. (105)

(105) First  
Div. His-  
tory p. 211.

During the day of the 11th advance parties of the 42nd Division entered the sector.

On the night of October 11th, 12th the First Division, less its artillery brigade, was relieved by the 42nd Division, marched out of the sector and reassembled in the Bois de Cheppy. No

(106) 1st  
Division  
His.p.213.

trucks were available to transport it to rest billets, so it started on a 75 kilometer march to the area of Vavincourt. (106)

Summary.

The 1st Division had written one of the brightest pages in its history. With its flanks exposed, it had advanced seven kilometers through the key points of the American front, flanking out the bluffs of the Aire and enabling the 77th to pursue the enemy now falling back rapidly in the Forest of Argonne. Elements of the

(107) 1st  
Division  
Reports,  
Nov. 3, 1918

following enemy divisions stubbornly resisted its advance. The 1st Prussian Guards, the 5th Prussian Guards, the 42nd, 45th, 28th and 115th Divisions. (107) The Division Commander's report of the operations starts off, "As per schedule". Colonel Frederick Palmer, famous war correspondent and an observer in the operation refers to this in his account of the action as the coldest prose he had ever read.

One thousand four hundred and seven prisoners were taken, 13 field pieces and numerous mimmewerfer machine guns and rifles. The enemy losses in killed and wounded are not known.

(108)  
Casualty  
Records, 1st  
Division.

The losses of the 1st Division testify to the stubbornness of the battle. Nine thousand officers and men in round numbers were the price of its victory. As we are all infantrymen it is scarcely necessary for me to say where the brunt of the battle was borne. (108)

(109) G.O.  
201, GHQ Nov.  
19, 1918.

On November 19th the Commander in Chief recognized this action by awarding the 1st Division in General Orders #201, the only single citation awarded an American Division. The closing paragraph of

this order is the heritage of every man who ever wore the Red One.

"The Commander in Chief has noted in this Division a special pride of service and a high state of morale never broken by hardship or battle."

(109)

Analysis and Criticism:

An analysis of a successful operation is simple. A criticism is difficult. This is considered to be the model operation of the First Division and for this reason it is much less difficult to analyze than criticize. The Infantry showed fine maneuvering power and stamina for which it had already been noted. Its high morale in the ~~front~~ ~~line~~ ~~was~~ ~~comparatively~~ ~~simple~~.  
comparatively simple.

The use of machine guns was intelligent. They were used for overhead fire and for covering gaps in the line. Some units were organized into groups for barrage fire.

Artillery support was always close and particularly successful. This may be attributed in large part to the fact that Infantry and artillery officers were known to each other personally and had mutual confidence in each others ability.

There is no opportunity to analyze the use of the accompanying gun. They were undoubtedly too far forward at the jump off, became excellent targets for the enemy artillery, and were promptly put out.

The 37 M.M. gun was effectively used and proved its practicality.

The three inch trench mortar could not be effectively supplied with ammunition.



Communication was excellent throughout the action, but resolved itself, as it always will when real resistance is encountered, to the telephone and the runner.

The tanks did excellent work while they lasted, but suffered from a well directed artillery fire.

The fighting was too close for the Cavalry to be of use.

The Air Service was hampered by the aggressiveness of the enemy's planes.

The First Division method of handling stragglers was entirely effective. A line of Infantry ~~posts~~ <sup>posts</sup> in the zone of advance of their units and promptly turned back any stragglers. Compared to straggler posts and military police this method has the overwhelming advantage of turning the straggler back immediately into the fight. The other method allows him to accomplish his purpose by avoiding the action of the day. If he can do this, tomorrow will find him straggling again.

Fog and conditions of low visibility were of invaluable assistance to the Infantry in closing with the enemy. Infantry will often be forced to advance without returning the enemy's fire because of the latter's excellent concealment and long range machine gun fire. In this action it was providential that each attack was launched in a dense fog.

The use of reserves was timely. When battalions became

exhausted, they were promptly passed and given an opportunity to reorganize. The last day of the fight finds every unit committed to action, every available rifle in the line and a reserve furnished by the corps.

No criticism can be offered of the Division Commander's plan or of its execution by the troops. The operation is a reflection of the former's military character and insight into the capabilities of his officers and men and the latter's aggressiveness and willingness to go forward.

The plan of maneuver was undoubtedly correctly drawn. When it failed to work the first day of the attack, the Division Commander realizing that it was still a correct plan, immediately pivoted on the left of the line and swinging the center and right forward worked it again and again until it succeeded.

The lessons which we may learn from this action are numerous. To mention them would be merely to reiterate the analysis in another form. Each point touched upon is in itself a lesson in success or failure under similar conditions.

However, there is one outstanding lesson which overshadows all others and concerns us vitally as Infantry officers of the staff or line, and it is this:

The progress of Infantry on the field of battle is a slow and painful process. In the map room we send our Infantry forward from the southern end of the map to the northern, following a series of road angles and coordinates. Artillery support is always perfect. If

it is not available we go ahead regardless, supported by a lone trench mortar and a one pounder. We leave the roads at night and march in darkness over hill and valley, woods and plain, our riflemen squeeze the trigger at 800 yards and hit everytime. The word objective may slow down the rapidity of our attack so we delete it in horror from our military vocabulary. The blue pin moves forward and the red pin moves back.

The acid test of any operation is its success. The action I have tried to describe shows us that in the face of determined resistance even veteran Infantry must be closely supported in every possible way. It must not be pushed indefinitely without giving it forward rallying lines or objectives on which to reorganize before advancing again, if not, disorganization and loss of control is inevitable.

- This subject brings out forcibly the lesson of*
- A - Reserves - always available & constantly used.*
  - B - Communications - use of telephone by front line battalions and even by patrol groups.*
  - C - Liaison - Both to flanks & rear & especially between infantry & artillery, this is the action.*
  - D - Machine Guns - their constant use by forward units.*