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ADVANCED OFFICERS' COURSE,
1898-1914.

THE CROSSING OF THE MEUSE.
BY
THE ELEVENTH INFANTRY.

BY JOHN WEST,
MAJOR, 13 INFANTRY.

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The Crossing of the Meuse.

Bibliography.

History of the Eleventh Infantry.
History of the 5th Division.
Operation Report 3rd Corps.
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Copies of personal Correspondence to my wife.
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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

OF

THE CROSSING OF THE MEUSE BY THE 11th INFANTRY.

Introduction.

The preceding Monographs have so ably covered the general situation on the Western Front and have dealt in detail with the First American Army in the Argonne and its objectives, that it will be unnecessary for this paper to repeat them. As outlined in the 3d phase of the Meuse-Argonne, the 3d Corps wheeled to the right using the 5th Division at Brioules, as the pivot for the final drive to the northeast and the crossing of the Meuse. (1) As Major Gill covers the operations of the 5th Division, I shall, therefore, give but a brief summary of the movement of the Division, in order to properly orient the actions of the 11th Infantry, in this operation.

(1)
Opp. Rept.
5th Div.
par. 38.

The 11th Infantry, previous to this time, Commanded by Colonel John B. Bennett, belonged to the 10th Brigade, under the command of Brigadier General Paul B. Malone, who, with the new Division Commander, Major General H. E. Ely, had already demonstrated their ability as go-getters, in the 2d Division at Soissons and Chateau

(2)
Hist. 5 Div.
p. 21

Thierry. (2) I take the liberty of mentioning the names of the two latter, because of the direct influence of their personalities on the operations of the 11th Infantry, in what General Pershing has termed, "One of the most spectacular drives in the history of

the War." Colonel Bennett was promoted to the grade of Brigadier General, the Lieutenant Colonel and one Major, evacuated, and another Major, sent to the States, leaving but one officer of the Regular Army on duty with it Major Richard C. Birmingham when the author joined at Malancourt. All other officers were in for the War. Under the new regimental commander, the Regiment was reorganized, strengthened by the addition of seven hundred and eighty-four replacements, recently from the States, reclothed and re-equipped for its next part in what became the last phase of the

(3) World War. (3) Having just been relieved from front line duty, the next twelve days were anything but pleasant, as the entire personnel was in very bad physical condition, due to diarrhea, colds, and the terrible mental and physical strain it had just passed thru. Both officers and men broke ice in nearby shell holes and bathed as best they could. At night, they slept in dugouts and fox-holes, and during the day, trained under constant shell fire from east of the Meuse. Two new battalion commanders were assigned, Capt. John F. Harris and Walter G. Cowart, and recent officer casualties replaced in companies. (4)

(4) Hist. 5 Div.
p. 390-1.

GENERAL SITUATION:

Terrain;

For the benefit of those who have not visited the terrain in this vicinity, a brief description will explain the difficulties

encountered by our troops in the operation to be presented.

The Meuse River flows northward thru this sector, between steep bluffs, from one to two hundred feet above the river bed. The valley between these bluffs, is a flat marsh from three to seven hundred yards wide. Along the west bank is a mecadam road and a standard guage railway, while on the east bank, is a concrete canal, twenty feet wide and nine feet deep, and the Route Nationale, from Verdun to Sedan. The river itself, winding back and forth across this valley, varies from six to ten feet in depth, and at this time of the year, was from sixty to one hundred feet in width, flowing at the rate of about four miles an hour. East of the river bank is a succession of wooded hills, ravines, and ridges, which rise gradually to the edge of the plains of the Wovre. This formation offers many excellent successive positions for defense, with but one good road east and west thru the sector and no cross roads west of the Loison. All main roads were in a poor state of repair, and the few trails thru the woods, were muddy, in fact, almost impassable for heavy transport with loads. The valley of the Wovre is swampy and covered with dense woods, broken by an occasional clearing. Opposite Brioules, the Bois de Chatillon extends close down to the river, offering perfect cover from observation from the other bank. This part of the Meuse was crossed by two bridges, one at Dun-sur-Meuse and the other at Liny-devant-Dun, both of which had recently been destroyed by the retreating enemy. The bridges across the Loison, except at Louppy, were intact.

The Weather;

The weather, at this time of year, was cold and rainy, which produced frequent fogs.

Our own Troops;

At 7:00 p.m. October 22d, the 11th Infantry was relieved from front line duty in the Bois de Rappes by the 90th Division, and moved back that same night, to reserve positions near Malancourt for a much needed rest and reorganization. Since October 12th, it had spent both day and night in what Sherman rightly calls war. The ground over which it had advanced in this time, and christened with its blood, is now the largest American Cemetery in France---
ROMAGNE. (5)

(5)
OPP.Rpt.
5th Div.
par. 30.

November 1st.

In accordance with F.O. #39, 3d Corps, and F.O. #63, 5th Div., the Division was returned to the front line again and directed to stand fast on November 1st, as a pivot on the west bank of the Meuse, for the swing of the 3d and 5th Corps toward the north east. (6)

(6)
Opp.Rpt.
5th Div.,
par. 38.

November 2d.

November 2d, F.O. #44, 3d Corps, directed the 5th Division to cross the Meuse and gain a foot hold on the east bank, establish a bridge head and advance to the northeast. (7)

(7)
F.O. #65
5 Div. p.304
Hist. 5 Div.

November 3d.

Preparations were immediately begun to effect this crossing and on the night of 3/4 November, both the 9th and 10th Brigades attempted a crossing on their respective fronts, but on account of

the heavy artillery and machine gun fire, did not succeed. Small detachments of the 10th Brigade, however, succeeded in crossing the river at Brioules, but were stopped at the canal, where they were forced to dig in. (8)

(8)
Opp. Rpt.
5th Div.
par. 41-44.

November 4th.

All units at the river bank, withdrew to their former positions.

November 5th.

At day-break, November 5th, the 10th Brigade, succeeded in breaking the enemy resistance at Brioules, which had been held since 1914, established a bridge-head, and aided the 9th Brigade in gaining a foot hold on the east bank at Dun. The rest of the day was spent in mopping up and driving the enemy away from the river. (9)

(9)
Opp. Rpt.
5th Div.
par. 46-54.

November 6th.

The next day, both Brigades pushed to the northeast, keeping close on the heels of the retreating Boche, who fought a stubborn rear guard action. (10)

(10)
Opp. Rpt.
5th Div.
par. 55-59.

November 7th to 11th.

This drive was kept up until the Division reached the Loison on November 9th, in which, it penetrated the enemy's lines eighteen kilometers east of the Meuse, where it was stopped by the Armistice. (11)(12)

(11)
Opp. Rpt.
5th Div.
par. 60-75

SPECIAL SITUATION, 11TH INFANTRY.

(12)
Hist. 5 Div.
p. 150

November 2d.

On the morning of November 2d, officers patrols were sent to the west bank of the Meuse, north and south of Brioules, to make a

(13)
Hist. 5thDiv.
p. 199

reconnaissance of possible river crossings and attempt to locate the enemy machine guns and lines of defense on the opposite side. (13)

The results of these reconnaissances were not as successful as expected as the enemy snipers would not let the patrols get into the river and his positions were so well camouflaged, that very few were located. About two p.m., the Lieutenant Colonel made a personal reconnaissance of Brioules and vicinity, visited the 6th Infantry Bn CP, and located a suitable CP for the 11th. By crawling along the ditches and low ground, he entered what was left of the R. R. Station, from which he obtained an excellent view of the river bottom and the opposite shore line. Looking out on the Meuse and the valley in front, he was very strongly impressed with the width of the river and the great distance to the enemy's position on the east side. About six weeks later, he returned to this same place and was astounded at the difference in the appearance of the scene, as it seemed so much smaller. Returning directly to Brigade CP, he reported what he had seen to the Brigade Commander, strongly recommending heavy artillery preparation and the assistance of trench mortars and machine guns, to cover our crossing. The Air Service furnished us excellent photos of the Meuse in this vicinity, which aided us materially.

As the Brigade Field order for this crossing, is a classic of its kind, it is deemed best to copy it here in full. (See Appendix 1) The message which changed the order of regiments is also copied.

(14)
Monograph
5th Div.
p. 191.

(Appendix 2) (14)

November 3d.

On receipt of the Brigade order, and after a short discussion of the problem with the Regimental Commander, Battalion Commanders and their staffs were assembled for a conference.

PLAN.

The 3d Bn, "A", under Major Birmingham, was directed to cross on foot bridges that were to be constructed by the Engineers at Briouilles, attack north east and establish a bridge-head.

The 2d Bn, "B", under Captain Cowart, was ordered to follow the 3d Bn at 500 meters and, after crossing, take position in support.

The 1st Bn, "C", under Captain Harris, was assigned to Brigade Reserve.

All preliminary movements were to start after dark and move independently to positions as follows:

1st Bn to dugouts in the Bois de Fays (12.45-84.05).

2d Bn to the ravine at Bonne Fontaines west of Briouilles, (13.45-83.45).

3d Bn to the west entrance of Briouilles along the Nantillois Road.

Hq. Co. with its Signal Dept., pioneers, howitzers and trench mortars, were to follow the 3d Bn to Briouilles, in the order named without distance. No written field order for the regiment was issued.

~~All packs were stripped and each man given two days emergency~~

ration. The pioneers were sent to prepare the regimental CP at Briouilles and the Signal Det. connected this up with Brigade, and 6th Infantry CP.

At 8:00 p.m. that night, the advanced CP moved to Briouilles and arrived there just as the enemy staged a barrage of artillery and minenwerfers. The CP being in a cave, deep into the bluff along the Nantillois Road, which the boche had prepared many months before, we lost no time in seeking its deepest part, and remained there for some time, with a prayer of thankfulness on our lips, that we had had foresight enough to previously establish this place, instead of depending on darkness for protection. At 11:00 p.m., the 3d Bn was moved thru Briouilles and placed in position north of the town, along the west side of the R.R. track, which rose about two feet and a half above the level of the ground and afforded excellent shelter for direct fire from the front. This cover was not found sufficient against other fire, so they rapidly dug in and were ordered to push patrols along the west bank in search of crossings.

The night was cold, cloudy, and as black as ink, affording us excellent cover from observation, but making movement and control of troops difficult in a strange place. An occasional shower, with a sharp north-east wind, made waiting on the wet ground very unpleasant, and, if it had not been for the excitement produced by bursting enemy shells at most unexpected places, and the thrill of a river crossing in prospect, in our front, at any moment, the morale of our men would have been considerably lowered.

November 4th.

Just why the A Bn of the 11th Infantry did not lead off, was not understood, but by midnight of the 3/4 of November, Co. F, 7th Engrs., had a foot bridge in place in front of the 6th Infantry, and at 2:00 a.m., Cos. E, and G, 6th Infantry, jumped off, making a rush for this bridge. This movement on the part of the 6th Infantry, was soon detected by the enemy, and brought down, immediately, a heavy barrage of machine gun and artillery fire, which not only swept the bridge away and destroyed it, but covered the entire river front at Briouilles, and the roads approaching it. Our losses in this were very slight, but the 6th Infantry was severely punished. This barrage was so dense and the fire so direct that noise of the bullets and shells sounded like a Kansas cyclone and the use of flares made the place look ghastly. Why the enemy did not use gas, is hard to understand.

Notwithstanding the severity of this fire, detachments of Cos. E and G, 6th Infantry, and some Engineers, succeeded in getting across the river before the bridges went out, made a rush for the canal bank and dug in. These detachments remained in this position all day of the 4th, completely cut off from the rear, and unable to go forward on account of the canal and the enemy in their immediate front.

Patrols in our own front having failed to locate crossings or fords, in the meantime, and daylight approaching, permission was secured from Brigade to move the 11th Infantry back to its former

afterwards, that the first two companies deployed in succession, after they crossed the river, rushed to the canal, and under the protection of the A Bn of the 6th in their front, crossed on a canvas pontoon bridge and again deployed in positions east of the canal.

The 2d Bn of the 11th Infantry followed closely in rear of the 3d, and upon crossing the canal, deployed in ^Nsmall columns and groups of skirmishers at short intervals, and moved north, clearing the east bank of machine gun nests which had been delivering a destructive fire on the troops at the crossing. This movement also permitted the elements of the 9th Brigade on our left, to cross to the east bank.

(Note:- In order that my own actions and the reasons therefore, may be better understood by the reader, I wish to state at this point, that pursuant to an order from G.H.Q., Colonel R. H. Peck, from the 4th Division was assigned to the 11th Infantry and assumed command on October 30th. The Brigade Commander informed me that he had no previous knowledge of this assignment, that it was not made at his request, and in no way reflected on my own work. A very close friend of mine, told me a few months later that he had made this assignment and did not know at that time that I was commanding the regiment. His chart showed the regiment was commanded by a major, and he felt that the regiment should be commanded by a colonel in the coming attack. The new Colonel, however had not had a fair chance to become acquainted with his officers and men. In order

positions east of Nantillois (3 1/2 kilometers), where hot food was served and the men allowed to sleep.

From information received the next day, it was learned that, in addition to many pieces of both light and heavy artillery, using direct and indirect fire, minenwerfers and trench mortars, our passage was opposed by the 7th Infantry of Bavarian Reserves, 11th Grenadiers, and detachments of the 56th and 59th Machine Gun Marksmen Detachments.

By 8:00 p.m., the 11th Infantry advanced CP had returned to the river and the other elements of the regiment, to their former positions in readiness, as on the preceeding night.

At 11:00 p.m., the 3d Bn moved into its former position along the R.R. north of Brioules and assisted the Engineers in constructing a foot bridge made of telephone poles, duck boards, and pontoons. Further patrolling failed to locate a ford or other crossing place in our sector.

November 5th.

At day-break on the morning of the 5th, the A Bn of the 6th, on the south having crossed, the A Bn on the north, rushed the newly constructed bridge as shown on attached sketch (Appendix 3), and effected a very difficult and spectacular crossing of the Meuse River, under terrible machine gun and shell fire. About three hundred yards to the northeast, the A Bn of the 11th crossed the canal, deployed and formed for attack due eastward.

Altho I did not see all of this movement, I was told immediately

In order that the reader may obtain a better picture of the operation and hence draw more useful lessons, I have confined the initial preparation of this monograph to facts within my personal knowledge. After the basic preparation had been completed the references noted were consulted and several changes made in the monograph where such references were in accord with facts as I knew them. No attempt has been made to establish an alibi for myself, or anyone else, altho I realize that many mistakes were made by myself and others. I feel quite confident that if I should have a task of this nature to perform in the future, I would approach it along entirely different lines.

Whether or not other methods would succeed as well as those used in this instance, will have to remain a matter of opinion.

In accordance with the Regimental Commander's order and against the protest of the 2d in Command, the advance Regimental CP at Brioules, was without warning, abruptly discontinued at day-break, on the morning of the 5th, without even notifying the Brigade CP. The entire advance personnel, following the 2d Bn across the river

and canal with no future CP announced. Upon arrival on the east bank, the Regimental Commander verbally directed the Lieutenant Colonel to assume charge of the attack of the 3d Bn in our front, and indicated that it was not progressing fast enough to suit him. The Bn Commander was shortly located and the Colonel's order communicated to him, with the result that two companies were pushed eastward deployed in two lines, abreast. Extending the other two companies to the northeast, in like manner, with no support. The attack succeeded, driving the enemy toward Fontaines and clearing Hill 228. (Some reports show Hill 228 taken by the 6th Infantry, which is evidently an error, unless the enemy reoccupied the hill prior to our attack. He was reluctant to leave, even when strongly urged by the two right companies of the 3d Bn. After mopping up and leaving a thin line to hold this front, attention was turned to the high hill across the valley to our left, (Hill 260), from which we were receiving a destructive machine gun fire. With the two left flank companies, an attack was started on Liny, and following this, the Bn Commander started a drive on Hill 260. Liny was promptly taken and in a half an hour, the mopping up netted us our first prisoners. As the Adjutant appeared at this time with the Headquarters personnel, saying that he could not find the Regimental Commander we selected the nearest stone building on the west edge of Liny, established a Regimental CP and connected up with Brigade.

(Note:- After satisfying myself that the 3d Bn was properly organized for the attack on Hill 260, and reverting the two companies

in Liny to his control, I returned to the new Regimental CP, picked out a nice room for an office and sent a message to the Brigade Commander, telling him what had already been done and of our new location, and despatched a runner to locate the 2d Bn. As the runners had been up all night, with no chance to sleep, those not needed for other work, crawled into some hay on the floor to rest. Unfortunately for us, the enemy was still on the job, for just as we settled down to do business in our new home, he put down a barrage on the town, base of Hill 260, and the ridge to the south. I was fully convinced that this was a preparation for a counter attack and made up my mind to check the attack on Hill 260 and send word for the 1st Bn, when a shell came thru the center of our building, bursting in side and blowing us thru windows and doors into the open again. Two of the sleeping runners never wakened up again and the rest of us found shelter in nearby shell holes, trenches and dugouts. Judging from our actions, as soon as we found ourselves outside again, the telephone orderly and I, thought of the same hole at the same time, for I have a distinct recollection of running him a close second for the entrance to a dugout about fifty yards up the side of the adjoining slope to the south. After removing two dead Germans, who had evidently crawled in side to die, we waited for the barrage to lift. During this time, it occurred to me that in the future, it would be well to select a CP with due regard for the effect of the enemy's shells, and let comfort be a secondary consideration.)

Had the enemy launched a counter attack at this time, immediate-

ly after the shelling, I hesitate to say what might have been our plight. However, he spared us this unpleasantness and as word had arrived that the 2d Bn was a half a mile north of Liny, orders were sent for it to attack due east in conjunction with the 3d Bn, which was still held up on Hill 260. By this time, some of the personnel of the Regimental CP had collected in our dugout and we again connected up with Brigade.

Joining the C.O. 3d Bn in a shell hole at the foot of Hill 260, where he had placed a sheet of corrugated iron over himself for a roof, it was learned that he was up against trenches manned by riflemen and a well organized machine gun position. Under the protection afforded by the ground, his men were moving gradually up the slope, in an irregular line of skirmishers, supported by groups in shell holes, which kept up a hot fire. (Note: Finding the progress of the 3d Bn satisfactory, I started out to find the 2d Bn or secure information as to what they were doing and had gone about two hundred yards, when my attention was attracted to one of the 3d Bn platoons moving into line from its position in the ravine. As the platoon reached the ravine crossing, south of Hill 260, I saw the Regimental Commander stop the platoon leader and talk to him while the platoon was exposed and under fire. Realizing that the Regimental Commander was not in possession of information as to our progress and knowing that the 3d Bn Commander, was depending on this reinforcement to push his attack, I ran down to where they were and asked him not to

interfere with the movements of that platoon as it was part of the attack on that Hill (pointing at 260). After a few words with the Regimental Commander, he turned north and I did not see him again until after dark that night. Later, I learned that after leaving me, he had joined the 1st Bn which had been sent to assist the 61st Infantry in the attack on Dun, after which, he gathered up a patrol of five or six men and went straight out into the enemy position. After passing the enemy front line, he discovered a battery of light artillery on the trail from Fontaines to Murvaux just as it was approaching La Maissonnette Ferme. On this, he promptly opened fire with his detachment, disabled some of the horses and sent the crew flying into the woods beyond. This firing in the rear of the enemy's lines and the confusion caused by the appearance of the Americans in their rear, caused them to break in front of the 3d Bn and beat a hasty retreat. The 3d Bn immediately moved up and occupied all of Hill 260 and the adjacent ridge, where it dug in and remained for the night. Upon learning of this incident from one of the men who was with the Colonel, I reported it to the Brigade Commander. Shortly after the armistice, the Regimental/Commander was awarded the D.S.C. for this brave act and other and similiar daring deeds performed in the next few days.)

Moving on to the north, the 2d Bn was located on Hill 292 and finding an old German CP in the ravine between Hills 292 and 260, we moved the Regimental CP to this point.

After Dun was taken, the 1st Bn returned to the edge of the Bois

de Chenois, where it dug in for the night. The 2d Bn having secured Hill 292, and remained there for the night.

About 8:00 p.m., a message was received from Brigade, directing the Regimental Commander to report at Brigade CP for a conference, and as the Regimental Commander entered the Regimental CP at this moment, the message was turned over to him. We ate some lunch that had been sent up from Brioules, the first we had had since mid-night of the 4/5 and it was not long until I was sound asleep. The Colonel returned about mid-night and informed us that we would attack at 7:00 a.m., giving no details of his plan or orders for preparation.

November 6th.

At 7:00 a.m., without a conference with Bn Commanders or any orders of any description, so far as Regimental Headquarters knew, the Regimental CP was again abandoned and none announced for the future. The entire Regimental Headquarters personnel, including the Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, and Adjutant, started northeast thru a mist, without an advance guard or even a patrol, followed by the 2d Bn in column. We had gone but a short distance, when machine guns in our front caused us to hurriedly seek cover. The Regimental Commander turned to me and said he would take the 1st Bn and directed me to move forward with the rest. As one of the runners standing beside me grabbed both his ankles and howled that he was hit, it did not take me long to decide that I should get in touch with the C.O. 2d Bn who was following us. Upon finding Captain Cowart, he was directed to clear out the machine gun nests in our front and move

forward, and a runner was sent in haste to direct the 3d Bn to move from Hill 260 towards Fontaines. The Adjutant and Sergeant-major, having joined me with a few runners, we moved forward following the 2d Bn which we found deployed along the crest of our front. Not being able to discover what was holding up the advance, the Adjutant, Sergeant-major, and myself, moved forward to the crest of the ridge where we soon found out all we wanted to know. Machine gun and rifle fire was coming from our front and machine gun fire from our left and rear. Just as a runner was despatched to find the Bn commander, the Regimental Machine Gun Co. Commander, reported to me with his company not far to the rear. As this was the first time I had had any intimation as to his whereabouts, since leaving Brioules, he was directed to get into action at once against the enemy trenches on that ridge (pointing to les Greves). After waiting under the shelter of a rock for a few minutes, in the hope that the Bn Commander would appear, we noticed the volume of our own fire increasing, so moved further up to see what was causing it. As we came out of the brush on the crest of the ridge at (17.20-88.75) we found that our men had picked up the target in the trenches across the ravine at less than five hundred yards. On the right, left, and rear, machine guns of friend and foe, as well as our own rifles, were shooting in all directions. In this bedlam, I yelled to the Commanding Officer Co. H, on my left, to move out (pointing toward the Bois de Fayel), and clean out the machine guns, and tried to give orders to the rest of the line to advance on the trenches. There was so much noise and confusion that

no one would pay any attention to me, so my first inclination was to crawl back into the woods and find the Bn Commander. There was no doubt in my mind that there was some kind of immediate action necessary at once, and as it was evident that we could not stay where we were very long under present conditions, I had just started back, when a burst of machine ^{gun} bullets, with whickers on, whistled in both ears and splashed mud and gravel in my face, causing me to fall to the ground in a hurry. The serious look on the Adjutant's face, near by, convinced me that this was no time to hunt for anyone and that it was just as healthy down the slope to our front, as it was back in that brush to the rear. We therefore took advantage of the first lull in the firing and, with the Adjutant and Sergeant-major, shouted and signaled cease firing, jumped up, yelling, "Let's Go", and ran down the hill as fast as we could go. The men on our right and left seeing this, followed suit and soon the whole line, was running as hard as we were, for the ravine in front. The boche took this for a bold attack, jumped out of his trenches and retreated toward Fontaines.

Upon reaching the lower ground in the valley, we could see our whole line charging down the slope, so we halted to let it pass, and directed it on to the ridge on the opposite side of the valley. After directing the Bn Commander to organize his firing line along this ridge and sending a company to the left to take care of the machine guns on that side, we stepped into a shed on the north side of Doua Rau, and established a temporary CP. Just at this time, what we thought was an American plane, flew close to the ground, directly

over us, and the aviator yelled something in English which we could not understand. We believed this to be one of our planes looking for the front lines, and waived our pieces of pannel at him, which he answered with a signal pistol. Since that time, we became fully convinced that this was an enemy plane because of what happened immediately afterwards.

Looking to the west, at this time, the 3d Bn could be seen approaching along the Liny-Fontaines trail in column of squads, and a runner was directed to tell the Bn Commander to follow the 2d Bn and support his attack on Fontaines. Before the runner reached the door of our shed, however, the enemy artillery dropped a terrific barrage on us which drove everyone to any cover he could find for the next four minutes. (Note: To me that four minutes seemed like a half an hour, and finding myself in a wooden manger which afforded absolutely no protection, I got up to look out on the valley. If it had not been so serious, this sight could have been called wonderful. Shells were striking in checker board formation thru the whole valley, and the splash made in the black wet loam, showed not only where the shells struck, but left great black holes in the ground. Men were hugging the ground on the ridge and the 3d Bn had dispersed and taken cover along the trail. Even the enemy machine guns had stopped barking. A burst of shrapnel nearby and the resulting splinters, again reminded me that the ground, was the safest place to be, and the closer the better. I had no more than assumed my plastered position, when, a shock near the door indicated the arrival of a large steel

shell, which left a hole, but did not explode. Had this not been a dud, I feel quite sure that the 11th Infantry would have been short some of its Headquarters personnel. As a matter of fact, there were a number of duds in this barrage, as we could hear the dull thud of their strike quite often.)

As the barrage lightened and gradually tapered off into irregular shelling, both battalions moved on over the ridge and up the ravine, taking Fontaines, where we secured a few prisoners and two batteries of light artillery, a large dump of ammunition and a number of machine guns. Our troops reorganized, with the 2d Bn on the right, the 3d on the left, and pushed on up the slope into the woods.

A new Regimental CP was established in Fontaines, in the cellar of a stone house on the west side, recently used by the ~~Boche~~ Boche commander.

By noon, les Fonzy Bois, and Bois Chassogne, were securely in our hands, and before dark, our lines had passed thru Bois des Tailles Forgettes, le Hartois des Murvaux Bois, and the Croix Morand. Each battalion dug in for the night, where darkness found them, and were not disturbed by the enemy that night. It was very fortunate that the enemy was not reinforced on the 6th, as our troops were tired, hungry, and in need of ammunition. Hot food reached Fontaines that night, in marmite cans, but details sent forward with it, did not locate Bn CPs. A message by runner, informed us that Murvaux had been taken by the 1st Bn, and that it was then located in the valley west of the Bois de Carrol.

The Regimental CP was established on the east side of the village, next morning.

Orders were dispatched to the 2d and 3d Bns to resume the attack at day light and to send guides to Murvaux for ration and ammunition details.

November 7th.

The advance on the 7th was not so rapid on account of the forest thru which the battalions were moving and the utter impossibility of Battalion and Company Commanders to maintain close contact in their units. Small patrols sent out to the front and flanks, often failed to return. (Note: After the Armistice, members of these patrols returned from the German lines, stating that they had been captured on the 7th and that other members of the patrols had been killed in the woods.)

All trails thru the forests were deep in mud and well defended by machine guns placed in trees and in concealed pits along the open stretches. Snipers in trees also caused severe losses, until our leading elements discovered what the enemy was doing. Evidence left in the trees, as we passed thru this area the following day, convinced us that the enemy had adopted the wrong method to stop our advance. From the two battalions on the right, we learned that the most successful method of advancing in this woods, was by dividing the assault line into groups of from five to twelve men and paralleling each side of the trails. This, of course, was very slow work, but it allowed the largest part of the command to advance along the trails in a compact formation. Whether or not, this was the proper formation, under the circumstances, it succeeded, and, altho the enemy was rein-

forced this date by the 6th Grenadiers, the right battalions had advanced to the western slope of the Bois de Brandeville, while on the left, the 1st Bn, under the direct supervision of the Regimental Commander, pushed thru the Bois de Carrol and entered the trenches at the foot of La Sentinelle, east of Murvaux. Captain Harris, Commanding the 1st Bn, was wounded during the afternoon in the Bois de Carrol, and evacuated with many others of his command.

The Supply Company established a much needed supply dump, accompanied by rolling kitchens, in the Fond de Renol and the ammunition train arrived at Murvaux.

Very little has been said of the machine gun company, since the morning of the 5th, and very little use was actually made of it. As a matter of fact, it had used up its entire supply of ammunition on the morning of the 5th, and on account of the abundance of enemy machine guns and loaded belts, in our possession, the company was kept as a reserve, equipped with the enemy's guns.

The night of the 7th, the Regimental Commander arrived at the CP at Fontaines and gave us information of the action on the left of our sector for the last two days. The operations officer, had plotted the positions and operations of the 2d and 3d Bns on a map, and had on file carbon copies of all messages and orders issued in his absence.

(Note: One little incident that occurred this date, illustrates the necessity for centralized control in a unit as large as a regiment, as effecting troops on the line and replenishment of supplies

from the rear. In sending the Supply Officer forward to establish a ration dump, it was ordered placed at a point from which it could be reached by all parts of the assault line and at the same time, protected from artillery fire.

All Bn Commanders were notified of this location and details sent from each to secure their food. Upon the arrival of some of the details at the designated place, the dump had been moved and no word left as to its whereabouts. Without notifying the Regimental CP and only one of the Battalions, the supply dump was moved from the position assigned to it, forward into the ravine to the east. Altho this position was more convenient for the 1st Bn, it worked a hardship on the others, and subjected the kitchens to constant shell fire from the heights to our left. This incident is mentioned as it caused the unit commanders to loose confidence in our regimental supply system.

November 8th.

During the night of 7/8, a message was sent to each Bn Commander, directing him to push the advance to the heights of Brandeville. By 8:00 a.m., the entire regiment had occupied the heights from Brandeville to le Haut Gron, encountering only slight resistance, the main body of the enemy, having retired during the night, toward the Bois de Remoiville. Patrols were sent to both flanks to get in touch with friendly troops and to the front, to locate the retreating enemy, while the Regiment dug in on the Heights overlooking the valley of the Wovre. Food, ammunition and medical supplies were sent up and the troops rested the greater part of the day, altho harrassed by a con-

tinual shell fire from the left and front. All wounded were evacuated and the dead collected and buried.

During the morning, I went forward with the Regimental Commander to Brandeville, where we found signal property, rolling stock, and a large dump of ammunition, as well as many machine guns, both light and heavy.

An inspection of the positions of the entire regiment was then made, Bn Commanders interviewed, and upon the return to Fontaines, report of the situation made to the Brigade Commander.

(Note: While roaming around this morning, I ran into a row of dead on Hill 370, which marked the unfortunate experience of a company of the 128th Infantry, in approaching an open space, in close formation, without proper protection. The men lay in a row just as they had fallen and I later learned from a soldier of the 128th that had attached himself to our troops, that this was the work of enemy machine gunners, who had waited until the company exposed itself, when they opened on it a murderous fire. This was the first information that I had had of the 128th or any other troops on our right. We later received word that the 128th had sent a detachment into Brandeville.)

Since the 6th of November, the 11th Infantry, had failed to gain contact with friendly troops on the right flank, existing reports to the contrary, notwithstanding. We afterwards learned that neither the 128th which was supposed to be on our right nor the 9th Brigade on our left, had been able to keep up with us.

On this date, the accompanying gun reported at Fontaines, but on account of the difficult trails and rapid sequence of events for the next two days, was not used. The artillery liaison officer, however, moved forward with the Regimental CP to Remoiville and was ready to co-operate with us on the morning of the 10th.

November 9th.

Realizing the shattered condition of our units, the Brigade Commander, sent me forward on the morning of the 9th, with instructions to organize our position on the heights for defense. In consolidating this position, it was divided into three parts with one Bn assigned to each sector, in order of 2d, 3d, and 1st Bns, from right to left. Each Bn was escheloned in three lines to the rear on account of the heavy shelling we were getting from the left. The Machine Gun Co and Howitzers were assigned to the right sector, overlooking Brandeville and commanding the approach on the one road to the front. Detachments of the 7th Engineers prepared barbed wire entanglements on our left, which was refused on account of the failure of the 9th Brigade to connect up with us.

Our patrols having brought in word that the enemy was retreating, as evidenced by large columns of smoke rising in the vicinity of Louppy, the Brigade Commander, telephoned me that the Regimental Commander had pushed forward toward the Bois de Remoiville, with two companies of the 2d Bn, and directed regiment to assemble and follow.

This message reached me in the left sector at 2:15 p.m., and orders were immediately issued to concentrate the Bns on the road

north of le Haut Gron and follow the Remoiville Road, keeping the troops on each side of the road in column. The enemy artillery observed our movement after we started and made the advance a strenuous one as far as the Bois de Remoiville, which we reached at dusk.

(Note: One man of the 1st Bn who was standing near the telephone, when I received the message to move forward, evidently felt that he had had enough of the wild life we had been living during the past few days, as he deliberately shot himself in the foot with his rifle. This is mentioned as an indication of the effects on morale, of the rapid advance, thru a wet wooded country, behind a retreating enemy, whose artillery and machine guns were exacting their toll. There were other cases of this, but as this one happened right under my nose, it made me realize that our troops were not the same as they were the night we crossed the Meuse.)

(Note: 2: My horse and orderly, having arrived on the 8th, I was enjoying the use of my mount as a means of rapid transportation from one point to another, and, being reluctant to surrender this advantage, followed the Regiment on the road to Remoiville. As I approached the road junction north east of Brandeville, a 77 picked me up, and followed me closely at a wild gallop to the Bois de Remoiville, where I gladly turned the horse over to the orderly and told him to get back to Brandeville the best way he could after dark. During the ride, I am sure the horse was not any more frightened than his rider, for I distinctly remember that when I dismounted, the

horse was trembling like a leaf.)

Upon my arrival at R.J. 25.60-94.08, I reported to the Regimental Commander in a dugout near the road, where it was found that the two leading companies of the 2d Bn had taken over the German position along the southern branch of this R.J. and Lieutenant Ross had been sent with a patrol toward Louppy. Fortunately an enormous fire in the Bois de Moncel, lighted up the surrounding country and enabled us to distinguish land marks very plainly.

With no information as to the location of the enemy or his strength, the Regimental Commander directed me to attack at once. As heavy shelling on our exposed troops forbade any further delay, with an officer and one squad a short distance in front of us, we moved out in column of squads along the road to Remoiville, until a point was reached on the south edge of the Bois de Moncel, where Bn commanders were called together and instructed as follows:

C. O. 3d Bn, "Form your line for attack and push thru that woods, (pointing to the Bois de Moncel) and take Louppy."

C. O. 1st Bn, "Move out at once and take that village over there, (pointing toward Jametz)."

C. O. 2d Bn, "Attach at once along both sides of this road and take Remoiville, (Pointing to the road we were on)."

The Regimental CP was announced as the Dugout at the R.J. in Bois de Remoiville, altho it was shortly discovered that all except a telephone orderly of the advanced CP, personnel, had followed the Regiment toward Remoiville. After seeing that each Bn was on its

way, word was sent back to the Regimental Commander to that effect, and I then joined the 2d Bn. It soon became evident that the 1st Bn on the right was not advancing according to schedule, and upon investigation, it was found that they had been stopped at the Rau de ~~Remo~~^{Brande}ville, by machine guns on the ridge in their front. After locating the Bn Commander, he was directed to push on across that creek to the Loison, and, if he could not wade, to swim the Loison and take Jametz. Later that night, word was received by us that the Bn did, after wading the Rau de ~~Remo~~^{Brande}ville, wade and swim the Loison, which at that time of year, was four or five feet deep. The Bn Commander reported that he captured the village of Jametz at 9:00 p.m., dug in for the night and enjoyed a dinner that had been prepared in the German CP by a French woman, for the Colonel of the 251 Infantry and his staff.

Returning to the 2d Bn, the C.O. was found in a trench near the Remoiville road at 27.95-96.10, with his front line in the draw directly north. Machine guns on the north bank of the Loison, on both sides of the bridge, held up the Bn for about a half an hour. The line crawled forward and with rifle fire, drove the enemy into the village, crossed the bridge, and passed on to the north side of Remoiville.

At 7:25 p.m., the advanced CP was established in a cellar on the south side of the village near the bridge, and a runner sent to the Regimental Commander, notifying him of our success. Patrols were sent to both flanks to connect up with the other battalions. A

few cans of corned Beef and some hard tack, made the world seem brighter and it was not long until the Signal Det. connected us up with the Regimental Commander.

The 3d Bn was more successful than the others, as it moved promptly thru the Bois de Moncel, crossed the Loison, and captured the ancient chateau at Louppy, which in fact was a fortress, behind whose stone walls, they remained for the night.

In the advance, the night of the 9th, the 11th Infantry was supported by the 6th Infantry, which arrived in the Bois de Remoiville from Brandeville, about 9:00 p.m., one Bn taking up position, in Bois de Moncel, and another in the northern part of the Bois de Jametz.

November 10th.

On the morning of the 10th, the 3d Bn consolidated its position along the road north of Louppy, and at Remoiville, the 2d Bn dug in on the north edge of the village, using some of the buildings nearby. The Machine Gun Company, which had arrived during the night, occupied a position in the center of this line, using the church tower as an observation post. In the mopping up of Remoiville, shortly after day-break, many hand to hand conflicts occurred, causing great confusion among our troops. About noon, a Bn of the 6th Infantry, relieved the 1st Bn 11th, at Jametz, and as soon as relieved, was moved to the south end of Remoiville, extending the line of the 2d Bn.

Rations and ammunition were brought up for all units during the night and preparations made for an attack on the morning of the 11th.

Patrols had located the enemy line in the deep ravine north of Remoiville, on which the Chemical Warfare Service, assured us they could put some thermite bombs, before our jump off. Arrangements had also been completed with the Artillery to assist us.

The morning of the 10th, the Regimental Commander arrived at Remoiville and visited the troops at Jametz and Louppy. During these inspections, he was subjected to machine gun and sniper fire, but did not seem to mind either.

At Remoiville, on the morning of the 10th, the Regimental Machine Gun Company Commander, Captain George H. Dashiell, was killed by a shell, just outside the Regimental CP, en route to make a report of a reconnaissance he had just made. The burst of this same shell caught the writer, just leaving the CP to meet the Machine Gun Officer, blew him back into the cellar and left him unconscious for several minutes.

In checking up the active personnel on the 10th, it was found that we had just six hundred officers and men ready for active service, out of a total of twenty-two hundred in the Regiment when we left our CP west of Brioules on November 3d.

November 11th.

Early on the morning of the 11th, a message was received from the Brigade notifying us of the Armistice which was to become effective at 11:00 a.m., and directing that we should hold our present line, returning shot for shot, until 11:00 o'clock, when all firing would cease. Instructions were later received which directed that the

Germans be kept out of our lines. Accordingly, our attack was called off, and at 11:00, after chasing the Germans back to their own lines, our guards were posted and the men allowed to bathe and sleep the rest of the day. Details were sent out to pick up our dead, whom we buried on the north bank of the Loison at Remoiville.

By referring to the general map of France, it will be seen that the 11th Infantry, at 11:00 a.m., on the 11th of November, 1918, of all the units on the Western Front, occupied a point, nearest the enemy's country. There was not much pep left in us, altho, we were ready to "go over", on the morning of the 11th, every mother's son of us felt that time for our relief from the front line had come. I firmly believe that the units of the Regiment, would have given a good account of themselves in that attack, but doubt if they would have been able to follow it up, as they had done in the preceding days.

The line of the Loison was the last of the enemy's defensive line in our sector and from what we learned from the enemy prisoners, that morning, it was the last of his army. German soldiers who tried to surrender to us, stated that officers had fled, fearing violence from their own men, organizations were broken up, and everyone was rushing in disorder toward Germany.

Our advance from the Meuse netted us 350 prisoners, 6 pieces of Field Artillery, 150 machine guns, light and heavy, vast quantities of ammunition, and supplies of every kind. An engineer dump at Louppy was valued at over a million dollars.

(15)
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p. 351.

Our losses killed in action, were, 1 officer and 139 enlisted men, wounded and ^{1 officer +} Gassed, 504 enlisted men. A total casualty list of 2 officer and 643 enlisted men. (15) In addition to this, there were many men missing who were later accounted for among the list of lost, dead and captured.

Since November 5th, the 11th Infantry had written new pages in its glorious history by many acts of personal heroism, performed by its officers and men. Red blooded Americanism, as fostered and developed in the mountains and on the plains of this Continent, were in evidence from start to finish. At the jump off, at the Meuse, a few men of foreign parentage, were cowed by the terrific shell fire and whistle and whine of machine gun bullets, causing them to cling to the trenches for shelter, while their comrades went forward. These exceptions, however, were few. Reports were made by eye witnesses of many acts of individuals, after the Division joined the Army of Occupation in Luxemburg, and records of these were forwarded to G.H.Q., but I feel sure that many other deeds, more brilliant and daring, were not reported, because the principle actors or witnesses, and in some cases, both, were left behind and their secrets, later carried with them, to the beautiful National Cemetery at Romagne.

To indicate the nature of the fighting and assist in the description of their difficulties, I take the liberty of copying extracts from a few of the citations, in the Regiment and earnestly hope that we will never again be called upon to perform such deeds:-

SERGEANT GEORGE L. ELLIS, COMPANY M, at BRIEULLES, November 4th:

"While the Regiment was trying to force a crossing over the Meuse, he swam and saved the lives of two of his comrades who had become exhausted by the cold water."

SERGEANT OLEX PHILLIS, COMPANY L, near BRANDEVILLE, Nov. 5th to 10th:

"Displayed extraordinary bravery and devotion to duty on patrols and volunteered his services to the Commanding Officer for an expedition into the German lines, for which he was publicly commended. He personally captured several machine guns and materially helped the wounded by first aid in the absence of the Medical Detachment."

SERGEANT ANTHONY J. CHIRAFISI, COMPANY H, near BRANDEVILLE, Nov. 8th:

"Volunteered to establish liaison between the 2d and 3d Battalions, of the 11th Infantry, Sergeant Chirafisi crossed an open valley in the face of heavy artillery firing by guns of large calibre and climbed for an hour on a hill exposed to steady machine gun fire. Finding the 3d Battalion, he returned by the same route, and under cover of darkness, led the Battalion to its position."

SERGEANT NEWMAN DAVIS, COMPANY D, near BRANDEVILLE, Nov. 7th and 8th:

"Then a corporal, personally took charge of and gallantly led into action, his company, after all the officers had been killed or wounded."

SERGEANT JACK BENNETT, COMPANY K, near LOUPPY, on November 10th:

"Led a patrol to out flank a machine gun nest, which was holding

up our advance. Having four of his eight men killed or wounded, he continued on his mission and silenced the machine gun; but he was out flanked by another nest on his right, which made it impossible for him to return to our lines until after dark, when he returned, bringing with him, the wounded men."

Corporal TOM SILVER, COMPANY H, near FONTAINES, on Nov. 6th:

"During the attack of the 11th Infantry on Fontaines, captured and destroyed single-handed, a machine gun. The gun was being operated on the right flank of Company H, 11th Infantry, and in such a position, that progress was impossible, without great loss of life. Upon being ordered to locate this gun, Corporal Silver, without regard for personal danger, rose and advanced thru heavy and continuous fire upon the gun, capturing and destroying it, thereby making it possible for his company to advance."

PRIVATE DANIEL ERB, COMPANY D, near Dun, on November 5th:

"Having become lost and endeavoring to rejoin his company, discovered an enemy machine gunner waiting to hold up our advance. Realizing the necessity of capturing the gun before our troops appeared, he rushed the gun and captured it and the crew single-handed. Placing his prisoners in a nearby dugout, he discovered it was already occupied by forty-eight more Germans. Private Erb caused these also to be disarmed and held them prisoners until the arrival of his company."

CORPORAL NORVAL, EDWIN C., Company B, near Jametz, on Nov. 9th:

"Was sent out on patrol to reconnoiter roads into Jametz. Being exposed to the fire of several machine guns which surrounded him, he

laid in the water on the banks of the river for more than an hour, locating the positions of the machine guns and returning to his Battalion Commander with the desired information, thus displaying great bravery and devotion to duty. (Citation in G.O. 81, Hq. 5th Div. 1918.)

2d LIEUTENANT LEO G. CLARKE, near Remoiville, Nov. 10th:

"Lieutenant Clarke's company was scattered thru the village, detailed as moppers-up. This officer visited all parts of the village under a very heavy bombardment and assembled the various elements of his company, (Company H), and led them to a place of safty. In pursuit of this duty, he discovered a wounded man lying in a place exposed to steady machine gun fire. Without regard for personal danger, Lieutenant Clarke, advanced thru this fire and succeeded in reaching the man, carrying him to the first aid station. He then continued assembling his company, leading them out of the shell-ed areas, until all were in places of safty, before considering himself."

COLONEL R. H. PECK, 11th Infantry.

"Colonel Peck exhibited most extraordinary heroism in his successive attacks on Liny-devant-Dun, Cote 292, Bois de Chenois, Fontaines, Murvaux, Bois de Carrol and Bois de Brandeville, on November 6, 7, 8, 1918, placing himself in front of the leading waves and personally leading them to the assault, then in company with nine men, attacking a battery of enemy artillery near la Maisonnette Ferme and forcing the abandonment and subsequent capture of the battery; leading and directing his regiment with most conspicuous

gallantry, capturing 350 prisoners, 6 pieces of artillery, three anti-tank guns, 150 machine guns, vast quantities of ammunition and supplies and stimulating his command to a high state of enthusiasm and creating a superb morale."

Criticisms.

1. The plan outlined in F.O. #49, 10th Brigade, is an excellent one, and had it been carried out as ordered, would probably have resulted in the capture of many more prisoners and lessened the loss of life. The assignment of a regiment of Field Artillery or even a battalion to each regiment of Infantry, and placing the Artillery temporarily under the Infantry Brigade Commander, is, I believe the best solution of a problem of this kind. Artillery liaison officers were invaluable.

2. From the stand point of the second in command and in view of the time available, I severely criticize absence of written orders, prescribing the definite mission for each unit of the regiment as out-lined in the Brigade order. This, with a sketch of the regimental sector, would have permitted the battalion commanders to act on their own initiative and would have obviated a great deal of confusion that followed.

3. Instead of operating the organization as a regiment, after the crossing, the Regimental Commander, apparently took command of individual battalions, companies and patrols. Except in rare instances the influence of a Regimental Commander can best be exerted

from a controlling position in rear rather than in front of the assault lines.

4. Instead of maneuvering battalions in the sector, they were separated and dispersed across the whole sector of two to three and one half kilometers using the frontal attack at all times, without any attempt at maneuver. A severe reverse for either wing would have been disastrous for the other.

5. Unwarranted interference with the plans of battalion commanders without full knowledge of the situation, during an action, causes a mutual loss of confidence and should not be permitted.

6. In order to successfully command a unit the size of a regiment, its commander should know the character and limitations of his battalion commanders, or rely upon his staff to furnish them to him.

7. Either the Regimental Commander or his second in command should have been with the advanced CP, and its location should have been known at all times, to battalion commanders and staff, as well as to Brigade.

8. Company and platoon commanders displayed untiring enthusiasm and dogged determination. Their courage was of an exceedingly high order. It was particularly noticeable that those who had served for some time with their units, had the confidence and hearty support of their subordinates. In other words it was easier for them to lead.

LESSONS LEARNED.

1. Before a river crossing is attempted on a large scale, Battalion and Company guides should be sent to reconnoiter the ground by day if time permits.

2. Untrained recruits should not be assigned to an organization just before a battle or engagement.

3. Officer personnel should not be changed in companies and battalions just prior to an engagement unless absolutely necessary. Men do better in action under an officer who knows them.

4. An excessive dispersion of battalions, without reserves or supports, invites disaster and must not be countenanced, even in pursuit of a retreating foe. A substantial support should follow the firing line or contact troops, at such distance, as not to become involved in a counter attack, before it has had time to deploy to meet it.

5. Machine guns with animals on present model of carts cannot keep up with the assault line in rough wooded terrain, but can follow close enough to render valuable assistance when the line is held up by the enemy. The best method of defense in a retreat apparently is the occupation of strong points covering avenues of advance, with machine guns echeloned in depth, and protected by snipers or patrols.

6. Trench mortars are very valuable in the defense of a river crossing in breaking up the attacker's bridges both by day and night.

7. Indirect artillery fire is not as effective against deployed infantry as direct machine gun fire from guns echeloned in depth.

8. Unless artillery and machine gun fire superiority is secured and maintained before the jump off, river crossings should not be attempted in day light. Just before dawn seems to be the best time to start a crossing that is to be carried to a successful conclusion. A smoke screen laid down on the enemy position and in the river valley would have given the same protection that darkness gave the attacking troops in this case.

9. Rivers and canals covered by prepared positions are not impassable.

10. A regiment of Infantry cannot operate successfully for any considerable period, without an advanced command post which acts as a directing and co-ordinating force. This command post must be within reasonable distance of the battalions and at all times connected with Brigade.

11. Field telephone connections cannot be constantly maintained, necessitating the use of high grade runners. It was found more practicable for signal details to connect from the rear forward.

12. Reliable information of changes in front lines must be promptly communicated to battalion and regimental commanders.

13. Each battalion should have a second in command who should be easily available to the battalion at all times. I am rather inclined to the belief that the battalion second in command should accompany the advanced regimental CP., and be in close touch with the regimental executive, or operations officer.

14. Either the Regimental Commander or his second in command,

should at all times be with the regimental CP. When either is absent his location should be known.

15. Company commanders should be required to make an immediate report to battalion commanders of meritorious acts in their organization, either verbally or in pencil.

16. If time permits, battalion commanders and their staffs should meet the regimental commander in conference before any engagement or operation that may extend over several days, and become familiar enough with the critical points of the terrain, to clearly visualize their own parts in the coming action.

17. Intermediate and limited objectives following a retreat are not suited to our troops.

18. Small detachments or widely separated battalions are not as effective as a unified command well in hand.

Conclusion.

The daring exploits performed by the various units of the Regiment and the dash and initiative displayed in performing every task assigned them, under exceptionally difficult conditions, deserves unstinted praise and high commendation. The very fact that our Regiment was composed of officers and men, whose valor, integrity, and loyalty, were never questioned, when the supreme test was made, fills me with pride that I was permitted the honor of associating with them, in one of the most remarkable feats of the War.

Appendices

1. F. O. #49, 10th Brigade.
2. Field Message of Brigade Commander Nov. 4th.
3. Map of Brioules and vicinity.
4. Map of Division Sector showing.
Assignment of subsectors to Regiments.

Appendix: 1.

HEADQUARTERS TENTH INFANTRY BRIGADE,

American E.F., FRANCE, 1 Nov.18.

S E C R E T

Maps

FIELD ORDERS NO. 49.

1. See F.O. #65 Hq. 5th Division. The 9th Brigade will, in the event of the enemy's withdrawal, pursue within zone indicated on attached map.

2. (a) The 10th Brigade will, in the event of the enemy's withdrawal, pursue side by side with the 9th Brigade and in the right, within the zone indicated on said map.

(b) Objective of the Brigade: REMOIVILLE-LOUFFY.

3. (a) The brigade will advance with its Regts. side by side the 6th Inf. on the right, the 11th Inf. on the left, each Regt. in formation of column of Bns. designated "A", "B" and "C" from front to rear, dividing line between Regts. as indicated on map.

(b) The crossing of the EMUSE River will be made under cover of darkness at approximately point 14.5-85.8, where the engineers will construct one foot bridge. A similar bridge will be constructed by them across the canal at point 15.0-86.0. Two companies of "A" Bn., 11th Inf. will be made available to cover the engineers during the work.

(c) Objectives of Regiments.

The first objective of the 6th Inf. after crossing

the River and canal is Hill 228. Cote 252 and the Bois de CHATILLON.

The first objective of the 11th Inf. is Hill 260 and the eastern exit of LINY-dev't-DUN.

The attached sketch (1c) shows the approximate disposition to be taken by the "A" Bns. upon the first objective. From these objectives the advance toward the final objective will commence.

Final objective for 6th Inf.: REMOIVILLE.

Final objective for 11th Inf: LOUPPY.

No intermediate objectives are assigned; the advance will be made from point to point within each regimental sector, liaison between regiments and on the flanks being maintained. The map attached shows the points suggested.

(d) Execution of the pursuit:

(1) Approximate initial dispositions before crossing river:

See sketch attached(1a)

(2) Approximate dispositions for advance on first objective:

See sketch attached (1b)

(3) Approximate formation for the general advance:

See sketch No. 2 attached.

(4) Direction: From first objective to BRANDEVILLE-

58 degrees

From BRANDEVILLE to final objective-

33 degrees.

(c) Details of the operation.

The crossing of the river and canal by the "A" Bns. and their disposition for the attack on the first objective will be effected under cover of darkness. The time required for a Bn. with its attached troops to cross the river and canal over foot-bridges will be calculated by the Regt'l. commanders.

Two Co's 11th Inf. will cover the engineers while they throw bridges across, first, the river; second, the canal. While the footbridge is being thrown across the river, the artillery will lay a barrage all along the canal. See sketch #3 attached.

When the bridge is constructed, a green star rocket will be fired, the signal to the Artillery to change barrage to No. 2 as shown on sketch.

The engineers, covered by the two Co's of Inf. will then throw bridge across the canal. The artillery will maintain the box barrage (No.2) protecting this operation. (See sketch). Upon completion the signal, a green star rocket, will again be fired, and the Artillery fire will lift to zones No. 3 & 4-5-6-7 as shown on the attached sketch.

The two companies 11th Inf, will cross and take their positions in readiness for the attack on first objective, followed

by two companies of the "A" Bn. 6th Inf. The remaining Cos. of the "A" Bns. will then cross, the 11th Inf. first. When "A" Bn. 11th Inf. is in position to advance, a green star rocket will again be fired, whereupon the artillery will lift from zone No. 3 to zone 8 and from zone No. 4 to zone No. 9.

When the "A" Bn. 6th Inf. is in position and ready to advance upon its first objective, a green star rocket will be fired whereupon the fire upon zones 6 and 7 will commence to roll or creep through the Bois de CHATILLON at the rate of 100 meters in 10 minutes to zones 11 and 12, and at the same time fire will be placed at zone No. 10.

Zones numbered from left to right 9-8-5-10-11-12 indicate the location of the standing barrage in front of the first objectives.

The "B" Bns. will commence the crossing of the river and canal as soon as the "A" Bns. move forward against their first objectives. Order of crossing: B-11th- B-6th. "B" Bns. will follow "A" Bns. at 500 meters.

The "C" Bns. will follow the "B" Bns. at a distance of 1000 meters.

(f) Brigade Reserve: The "C" Bns. will be the reserve of the brigade at the disposal of brigade commander.

(g) Liaison:

Each Regiment will protect its outside flank by a flank guard of one Co. of each of the "A" "B" and "C" Bns. These

companies will throwout liaison detachments to maintain liaison with adjoining units as well as to protect the flanks.

The usual mixed combat liaison group (one Pln. of Inf. and one Section M.G. from each Regiment) will be provided to maintain liaison between the regiments.

The Plan of Liaison, Annex #2 to F.O. #63, Hq, 5th Division, will be in force for this operation unless otherwise notified.

The "C" Bns. brigade reserve will keep constantly in liaison with brigade P.C. by runners. After each change of position new runners will immediately be sent to Brigade P.C.

Every effort will be made to get back information, particularly as to location of front line, which information must get back. Telephone communication will be established and maintained with the advance.

Brigade axis of liaison: BRIEULLES - thence along limit between regiments to axial road of brigade (broken blue line on map) thence along said axial road.

(h) Artillery: One Regiment of 75's is attached to the Brigade, one Bn. supporting each Inf. Regt. One gun will accompany each of the "A" Bns. for direct fire under command of the Inf. Bn. Comdr. and will take position to cover the crossing of the river and canal by the Inf.

The Artillery will cross the river at Liny dev't

DUN and will advance in close support of the infantry.

For fire to be executed by the artillery during the crossing of the river and canal and the advance upon first objective, see Par. 3 (e).

Subsequent fire will be delivered upon targets as called for by the infantry, or as may appear to artillery observers.

(i) Machine Guns: The Brigade Machine Gun Officer will prepare a plan of M.G. fire which will support the infantry and cover its crossing of the river and the canal. The M.G.'s. of the "C" Bns. are made available for this purpose.

(j) Engineers: Co. "C", 7th Engineers is attached to the brigade and will be used to facilitate the advance of the infantry by opening roads and trails. One half of the company is assigned to the 11th Inf. and one half to the 6th Inf. These Engrs. will follow closely behind the "A" Bns.

Company "F", 7th Engrs. will construct the footbridge across the MEUSE at point 14.5-85.8, repair the existing footbridges at 14.6-85.4 so that same can be utilized, and construct the footbridge across the canal at point 15.0-86.0.

Two Cos. of Infantry from the "A" Bn. 11th Inf. will cover them during this work.

4. (a) Field and combat trains will accompany the troops, subject to the orders of regimental commanders. The accompanying artillery will have precedence or right of way.

Route: BRIEULLES - LINY dev't DUN - thence along

axial road of brigade as shown on map attached.

(b) Troops will carry the equipment prescribed in
Operation Memo. 121, Hq. 5th Division, 29 Oct.'18.

As to overcoats and packs later instructions will be
issued.

(c) Plan of communication, evacuation and supply will be
issued later.

5. (a) Advance P.C. of Brigade - reverse slope of Hill 263
(14.0-83.6).

Subsequent P.C's. to be determined later.

(b) Regimental commanders will march at the head of their
support Bns.

PAUL B. MALONE,

Brigadier General, U.S.A.

Commanding.

COPIES TO:

G-3, 5th Div.

C.O. 10th F.A.

C.O. 6th Inf.

C.O. 11th Inf.

C.G. 9th Brig.

C.O. 5th Colonials.

FILE.

Monograph
5th Div.
P.191-193.

Appendix: 2.

Field Message.

November 4th.

10 H 30

Message to Skip to effect that Slum ordered to lay bridge and put one company across Meuse and if possible across canal tonight and secure control of bridge-head. He is to be ready for exploitation as contemplated in order Brig. Comdr. Artillery not yet in position so that contemplated Artillery support will probably be impossible. Skip requested to be ready to move tomorrow morning to assigned area and there to carry out projected program at least insofar as your A Bn is concerned. Due to fact that other troops are not ready wide departure from the program will probably be necessary. Advise will be given by Seattle by Code word "SANTIAGO" if you are to move to Bois de FORET otherwise remain in present position. M.G. Co. of your C Bn. assisted by 30 men C Bn. will be moved by Orienz to position to assist crossing.

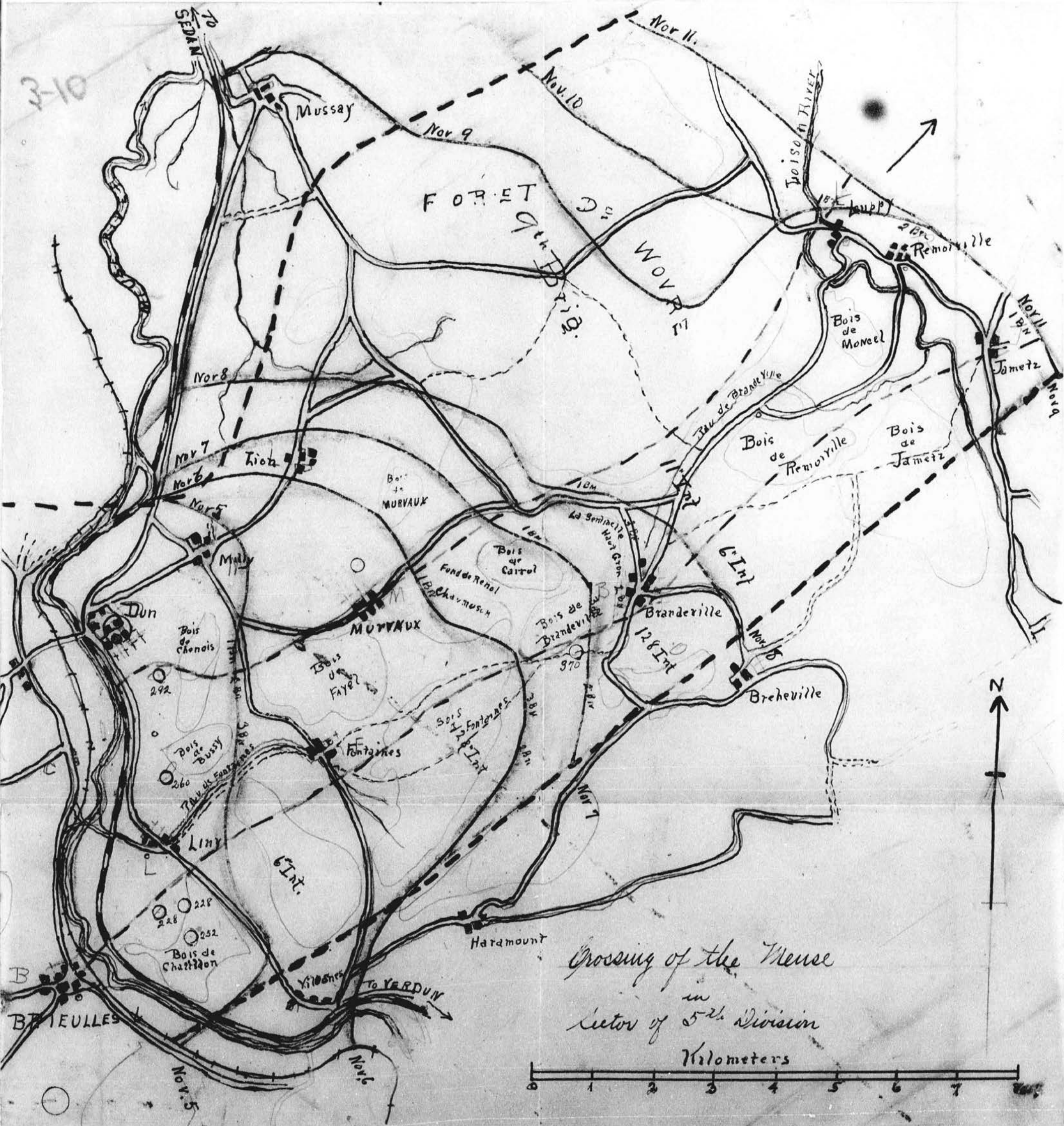
Monograph
5th Div.
P. 206.

Note:

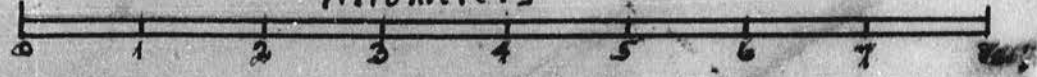
Skip--11 Inf.

Slum-- 6 Inf.

3-10



Crossing of the Meuse
in
Sector of 5th Division
Kilometers





Vicinity of Brieulles 16 - Appendix no 3 17