

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

2-40

COMPANY OFFICERS COURSE  
1925-1926

OPERATIONS OF THE 364th INFANTRY, 91st DIVISION,  
IN FIRST PHASE OF THE MEUSE ARGONNE.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR R. WHITNER, INFANTRY.

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MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED.

- A. With the 364th Infantry in America, France and Belgium.
- B. The Story of the 91st Division.
- C. Fifth Corps Orders.
- D. 600 Days' Service.
- E. Report of the 1st Army A.E.F.
- F. History of the A.E.F.
- G. Battle of the Meuse-Argonne.
- I. Information obtained from personal experience and conversation with others who participated in the operation.
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## INTRODUCTION.

When the allied forces on the western front definitely assumed the offensive in July 1918, the desperate need of the English and French armies for the assistance of the American combat units in stopping the German drives of spring and early summer had passed.

For about a month practically all American troops withdrew from active participation in the conflict, reappearing, not as scattered regiments and divisions, but as the First American Army, which, on Sept. 12th flattened out the long existing St. Mihiel salient at one blow.

Two weeks later the men in brown hurled themselves against that part of the hostile line which had long been regarded as the strongest. From the Meuse to the western fringe of the Argonne, where for four long years the field gray and the horizon blue had faced each other across the desolate waste of No Mans' Land and had fought to exhaustion, until finally each was content to merely watch and observe the other, a new uniform appeared.

Dominating this region was the hill of Montfaucon, from whose crest in 1916 the German Crown Prince had seen his assaults crumple and fail, leaving the slopes of Morte Homme and hill 304 covered with their dead.

To this front there came the Army of America, not thoroughly trained; to a large extent untested, but with youthful assurance confident in itself because of recent victory, of high courage, eager to join battle with the veteran troops of the enemy.

## ORIGIN.

The 364th Infantry, 91st Division National Army, came into existence at Camp Lewis, Washington, in September, 1917. The officer personnel was composed almost entirely of graduates of the First Presidio Training Camp, at San Francisco,



California, and the ranks were originally filled with selective service men from the southern part of California.

On July 12, 1918, the regiment sailed from New York on board the liner Olympic, for overseas service. Arriving in France July 21st, it proceeded to the Department of Haute Marne, and was assigned an area about twenty kilometers east of Chaumont. Headquarters was located at Bourdons, and the remainder of the organization was billeted in five small towns in the vicinity. (1)

(1) I.

#### FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Completing "Area Training" about September 1st, the first move was by railway train to vicinity of Gondrecourt, bivouacking in woods a few miles from the town. For the next three weeks the command moved only at night, remaining under cover of the forests in the daytime.

The night of the 10-11, September, brought a long hard march to vicinity of Pagny-sur-Meuse, the 91st Division being in Army Reserve for the St. Mihiel drive, but the fact was not known to Company Officers until about noon on the 1st, at which time the officers of the regiment were assembled and the Division Commander explained the situation, and also stated that though the division had not been needed in this operation, General Pershing had assured him that "the 91st would not have a back seat at the next show".

The night of the 13-14 brought a move by French motor trucks to an area just north of Bar-le-Duc, the regiment remaining there until nightfall of the 16th, when packs and rifles were shouldered and the march taken up again, this time straight toward the north.

Davlight of the 18th found the troops partially sheltered in a scraggly orchard on a hillside just above the ruined village of Courcelles, about four miles south of the Foret de Hesse. Mid afternoon of the 19th, battalion and company

commanders and one sergeant from each platoon moved forward to these woods. Battalion and company areas were assigned and strips of white cloth were fastened to bushes, to show platoon lines of bivouac, so that upon arrival of troops later in the night there would be a minimum of confusion and noise. From the 20th to 25th the regiment rested and some shortage of equipment was made up, additional draft animals and machine gun carts, also a number of company officers who had been at the Gondrecourt school, rejoined. (2)

(2) I.

WAITING FOR "D" DAY.

Nothing definite was known as to just when the attack would begin, but as each night passed, and the concentration of guns and troops became greater and greater, all knew that the great adventure was close at hand. Final letters home were written, and each man placed his house in order.

The night of the 24-25, C and L companies rejoined the regiment, having been on duty at the railhead for two days unloading ammunition. Early morning of the 25th a raid was made on the area of the 35th Division adjoining on the left, but as the French still held the front line positions, the enemy learned nothing definite. (3) The regiment was alerted and was under arms until all firing ceased, as it was thought possible the shelling might become general, and be followed by an attack in force.

(3) A.48.

During this period of waiting, every precaution possible was taken to prevent the enemy from discovering the presence of the troops in this area. Men were held close in hand, not allowed to leave cover of woods during the day, military police being posted to prevent fires, lights, etc. at night. Only dry, seasoned wood was used in rolling kitchens. (4)

4) I.

### GERMAN DEFENCES.

The enemy defences within the zone of action of the 364th Infantry consisted of a continuous, double line of trenches and wire, located in the southern edge of the Bois de Cheppy. (5)

(5) J. 3.

A similar line crossed the sector just north of Neuve Grange Ferme, being located partly in small clumps of woods. This line was called "the intermediate position". (6)

(6) J. <sup>2</sup>/<sub>B</sub>.

Between these was the dense Bois de Cheppy, a natural obstacle of tangled undergrowth, broken trees, water filled shell holes which made its passage very difficult. (7)

(7) I.

The second position extended in a general east and west line in front of Eclisfontaine. This line occupied a strong position, and was sited to command the southern slopes of ridges. It was very heavily wired, but trenches were only partially constructed. (8) North of the second position and just in rear are a number of small woods, affording good cover for artillery, machine guns or troops forming for counter attacks. Located in between the main positions were many machine gun nests and emplacements, some of concrete, skillfully placed, to take full advantage of the terrain.

(8) J. 4.

### ENEMY TROOPS.

It so happened, as was later discovered, that the 91st Divisions' sector was on the dividing line between the Army Groups of the German Crown Prince to the west, and General Von Gallwitz to the east. On the west was the 1st Guards Division and on the east the 117th Reserve Division. The 1st Guards had come from Russia late in 1917, had spent the winter in open warfare training, and had been used a number of times, with notable success, in the big drives in the spring. It was rated as one of the best of the first class <sup>shock</sup> divisions.



The 117th was rated as one of the best of the second class divisions, had incurred heavy losses in August, <sup>was</sup> withdrawn

- (9) B. 17. to Sedan, rested and received replacements. (9) Prisoners from both of these units were taken by the regiment during the advance of the 26th and 27th, also on the 27th, prisoners from the 5th Guards Division. (10) Major Von Giehl, Chief of Staff, 16th Corps (German), says: "On the 27th the entire 5th Division was pushed in between the ranks of the 1st Guards." (11) G. 134. (11)

It is hard to place the strength of these enemy divisions, but due to the heavy drain on his manpower caused by the drives of spring and early summer, it is very probable that they were nowhere near full strength.

#### INTENTIONS OF THE ENEMY.

The enemy did not expect an attack on this front, but did expect a continuation of the St. Mihiel operation. The German forces were disposed in depth, the first line being held lightly, the intermediate line to be the main line of resistance. (12) The rapidity of the American advance, also the severity of the artillery preparation, denied the intermediate position, and the second line was occupied as an alternative position. That the enemy intended to hold in this locality is plain to be seen from the wording of the statements contained in a captured German document pertaining to the 1st Guards. "It is only in case of a deliberate offensive against the whole front that there should be any retirement to the main line of resistance. The main line of resistance must be held in any event." (13)

Though not expecting an attack in force, nevertheless the enemy was beginning to get a little uneasy, as shown by the summary of information of the 1st Guards for September 23rd, which stated that brown uniforms had been seen opposite their front and presence of Americans was suspected, nothing

unusual during the daytime but at night much noise, railways, motor trucks, sounds of unloading heavy material, sirens and claxons. Consequently the resting battalions, 3rd Guard (14) B. 16. Regiment, were brought up south of the Very-Montfaucon road. (14) Early on the morning of the 25th the enemy must have gotten some idea as to the severity of the blow coming, for they turned loose a perfect flood of orders and messages, the gist of them being to abandon the 1st line and make the intermediate position the 1st line of resistance, and for the artillery to be disposed in greater depth. The American attack seemed to catch them on the move. They also did not expect the attack to pass through the dense Bois de Cheppy, but by way of the Aire Valley and Ruisseau de Chambronne, and had concentrated their defense on the open country to west and north of these woods.

#### RECONNAISSANCE.

Not until the 25th were any members of the regiment, except the Colonel and his immediate staff, permitted to go up to the front line. About 10 A.M. on that day a reconnaissance was made of the terrain from the bivouac area up to the line of resistance, by all officers down to include seconds in command of companies. French coats and helmets were furnished so that the presence of Americans would not become known to the enemy. Moving through the woods, trails and approach trenches, the officers arrived at Mont des Allieux, and a few hundred yards to the west, Cigalerie Butte, the latter of which the French had tunneled through and established an observation post within, equipped with a high power telescope, with which No Mans' Land to the front and flanks, the hostile front trenches and portions of the enemys' back areas could be closely examined. The French front line trenches were about 500 yards down the forward slope of the hill, nearly at its foot.

No Mans' Land was about 500 yards wide, containing many lanes of French and German wire and grown up with grass and weeds about knee high. The enemy trenches were on high ground, just within the woods, and in front of them ran a small stream, the Buanthe. To the northeast Montfaucon could be seen and to the west, Vauquois. The American officers were not permitted to go farther forward, as it was feared any unusual activity about the area would be noted by the enemy, and cause shelling. (15)

(15) I.

#### TERRAIN.

The zone of action of the 364th Infantry was practically that of the 182nd Brigade. Being in support all of the first morning of battle on the 28th, it covered the entire brigade sector.

Right boundary of the brigade, "Points 8201--8205--8240 (all exclusive)-Cote 242 (inclusive)-Eclisfontaine-(inclusive)-Landres et St. Georges,(exclusive)" (16)

(16) D. 46.

Left boundary - "Vauquois (exclusive)--Very (exclusive)--Eclisfontaine (inclusive)--Sommerance (exclusive)", (17).

(17) C. FO 2.

The left boundary was also left boundary of the 5th Corps.

Passing through the Bois de Cheppy, the terrain becomes more open with a few small woods adjacent to the Cheppy--Montfaucon road, then rough and broken crossed by two small streams. North of Very the slopes are gentle, leading gradually up to the little town of Eclisfontaine, north of which are some more small woods, Bois de Baulny, being the largest; the terrain is rolling, crossed by ravines, generally running east and west.

The Ravin de Gesnes is the deepest and widest of these natural obstacles, north of it are more woods with cote 269 affording observation as far south as Very. All wheeled transport until late afternoon of 26th was obliged to use the Avocourt-Very road, the part passing through Avocourt being used by



the entire 5th Corps, and required a great deal of work the morning of the 26th before it was passable over No Mans' Land. (18)

PLAN OF ACTION.

The mission of the First American Army in the Meuse-Argonne offensive was to force the enemy from the line of the Aisne. (19) The mission of the 5th Corps was "With corps and divisional artillery to assist in neutralizing hostile observation from Montfaucon. Reduce the Bois de Montfaucon and Bois de Cheppy by outflanking them from east and west thereby cutting of hostile fire and observation from these woods against the III and I Corps. Upon arrival of the III and I Corps at the corps objective to continue to the American Army objective and penetrate the hostile third position without waiting for the advance of the III and I Corps. " (20) The mission of the 91st Division was to outflank the central group of woods from the west and in conjunction with the 37th Division, mop up these woods, pushing on to Corps and Army objectives. The mission of the 364th Infantry was to support the assault regiment of the brigade, and mop up in their rear.

FINAL PREPARATIONS.

About 2 P.M. the 25th, battalion commanders assembled their officers and gave them the information that "D" day was the 26th, and "H" hour 5:30 A.M. Orders were verbal from the regimental commander to battalion commanders, and on to company officers. Maps were studied and sectors outlined, known and suspected enemy machine gun positions were noted on maps with aid of aerial photographs which were supplied at this time. Orders were issued to leave rolls and packs in battalion areas, and for troops to be ready to march by 8:00 P.M. The movement forward began at 8: 20 and by midnight all elements were in position, 1st and 2nd Battalions on reverse slope of Mont des Allieux, and the 3rd battalions on reverse slope



(21) I. of Cigalerie Butte. (21)

FORMATIONS.

Brigade orders at first directed attack formation to be regiments abreast, the 364th on the right, but before leaving the bivouac area it was changed so that the 353rd was to make the assault, with one battalion on the line and one in support, one battalion of that regiment being in Division Reserve. The 2nd and 1st Battalions, 364th to follow in support, in order named, echeloned to left at 500 meters with 500 meters distance between echelons. This formation gave great driving force to the brigade.

The regimental machine gun company was assigned to the 1st Battalion, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were each assigned a machine gun company from the 348th Machine Gun Battalion. The 3rd Battalion, less Co. "L" was detailed as brigade reserve, and was to await orders on Cigalerie Butte. Company "L", with the battalion machine gun company drew detail as combat liaison between the 91st and 35th Divisions. Each rifle company furnished the machine gun company assigned the battalion 10 riflemen, to assist in carrying.

The band section of Headquarters Company was detailed as additional litter bearers. The regimental chaplain, one lieutenant and one man from each company were to follow the

(22) I. last element of the regiment as a burial party. (22)

The regiment was supported by one battalion from the 58th

(23) B. 20. Field Artillery Brigade. (23)

Compass bearing for the attack- North, 9 degrees east magnetic to the Cheppy-Montfaucon road; then North 17

(24) D. 47. degrees west magnetic, to the American Army objective. (24)

Line of departure, the French front line trenches crossing the sector.

### ARTILLERY PREPARATION.

The Divisional artillery was not present, it still being in training area. The following constituted the artillery support of the Division. 18 batteries of 75s, 7 batteries of 155s and 2 batteries of 9.2. Also about 40 heavy trench mortars (French). In addition there were corps and Army

(25) D. 51. long range heavies. (25)

The artillery preparation began at 11:30 P.M. the 25th. One-fourth of the Army long range guns opening at that hour, the number gradually increasing until at 2:30 A.M., 26th, all guns had taken up the fire. At 5:30 A.M. the fire was concentrated on enemy front line for 25 minutes, then the bombardment became a rolling barrage, advancing at the rate of 100 meters in four minutes (in woods 100 meters in 5 minutes), resting on the hostile intermediate position ten minutes, and on second position twenty minutes, ending one kilometer beyond line connecting center of Montfaucon-center

(26) E.FO.30. of Very. (26)

The bombardment was terrific, the earth literally shook under its intensity. It was hard to believe that it was war; it seemed more like a gigantic pyrotechnic display, a mammoth Fourth of July celebration. The night wore on, five-thirty finally came and the curtain went up on the show, whose first scene was laid near invincible Verdun, the last at Sedan, and which lasted a month and a half.

### NARRATIVE OF ACTION.

#### September 26th.

Air bursts of white phosphorus above No Mans' Land was the signal for zero hour. The barrage lifted and moved forward through the Bois de Cheppy, the 363rd passed through the lanes cut in the French wire, deployed and moved forward without

(27) B. 24. meeting resistance. (27)

The 2nd Battalion 364th passed around the west side of Mont des Allieux and moved forward, but in the dense smoke and fog which prevailed, got on the wrong trail, went too far to the left, and was unable to locate the gaps in the wire promptly.

The 1st Battalion advancing in column of files on each side of the road, was obliged to halt upon reaching the wire, as a machine gun organization was passing through the gaps. The fog having cleared a little by this time, the column was observed by the enemy on Vauguois hill, and subjected to both machine gun and shell fire, with many casualties resulting. There was some delay at this point owing to the wait and the confusion following the shelling, but finally getting through, the 1st Battalion was ordered in the lead in place of the 2nd. The leading battalion of the regiment was now about 1000 meters in rear of the 363rd instead of 500. The 2nd Battalion passed through the wire at about 7 A.M. and

(28) A. 58. followed as regimental support. (28)

The machine gun companies carried forward by hand, the transport going around by Avocourt.

Moving through Bois de Cheppy as rapidly as possible, mopping up as they went, the 3<sup>rd</sup> was overtaken at the northern edge of the woods, and the line was reorganized in the ravine north of Neuve Grange Ferme, the 1st Battalion being placed in the assault line on left of the 363rd, each assault battalion being supported by the other battalion of its own regiment. Moving forward, encountering resistance from machine gun nests, snipers, and occasional shelling from artillery, the line reached the high ground north of Very by 5:30 in the afternoon, having advanced about four and one half miles during the day. Endeavoring to maintain connection with the 35th Division on the left, the regiment was occupying

(29) A. 63. 700 yards of frontage in the sector of that division. (29)



After nightfall, the line was reorganized, the 364th moving out of the 35th sector over to the right of the brigade sector, with the 2nd Battalion in assault line, the 1st in support. The troops rested on the northern slope of Ravin de Baronvaux, with outguards forward on the high ground. Orders were received to continue the attack at midnight, but were soon revoked. (30)

(30) I.

The 3rd Battalion remained the entire day on Cigalerie Butte, watching the advance as it moved forward over the rough ground north of Bois de Cheppy. At times the line could be barely distinguished, then when the skirmishers would appear, climbing the slopes a cheer would go up. Possibly owing to the relief of the brigade commander about 9 A.M., or the rapidity of the advance, no orders came to move forward, and it was due principally to the initiative of the Battalion Commander in sending forward and asking for orders, that the command was able to move forward about 5 P.M., going into bivouac in northern edge of Bois de Cheppy, near Very-Avocourt road. There was a German Engineer dump in the vicinity, containing sand bags and large entrenching tools. Before moving forward on the 27th each man was issued two of these bags and ordered to place them in his pack. They proved to be a great help on the 29th and the days following. A number of large shovels and picks were also carried forward.

Company "L", combat liaison on the left had a day of hard fighting. Moving abreast of the tanks, it advanced through the eastern edge of Cheppy, clearing out snipers and machine guns, and taking about 200 prisoners. The company was relieved of this duty about 1 A.M. the 27th, and joined the 3rd Battalion, which released as Brigade Reserve, moved up to position of regiment, early morning of the 27th. (31)

(31) A 65



September 27th.

Somewhat refreshed by food, consisting of their haversack rations, and a little sleep, the troops were ready to take up the advance again. Orders from 5th Corps were that

"Divisions will advance independently of each other, within

(32) C.FO.44. previously described zones of action". (32) The 2nd Battalion and Co. "C" formed the assault line, 3rd Battalion in support at about 500 yards, and 1st Battalion (less Co. "C") regimental reserve.

The advance commenced at 9:30 A.M. Assault waves in skirmish formation at 5 pace intervals. Heavy machine gun fire was encountered at once upon leaving the shelter of the ravine, the fire coming from the battered little town of Eclisfontaine, and les Bouleaux Bois, just west of it. The double line of trenches in front of the town did not seem to be held by much of a force and were found to be in very poor repair, but the heavy wire proved a formidable obstacle. The line was held up for two hours; troops on both flanks were meeting with the same kind of opposition. Finally artillery fire was brought on the enemy positions, and by 5 o'clock the first line had passed the wire and was advancing through the town and the woods. The 37 mm guns of Headquarters Co. were of great assistance during this advance, following up the assault line and firing through gaps. They became so hot that they had to be placed in battery by hand. The advance had penetrated several hundred yards past Eclisfontaine by nightfall, and orders were received to dig in and hold on, but about midnight withdrawal was ordered south of the Varennes-Dun-sur-Meuse highway, as possibly that road would be barrage line for corps artillery during the night. Outguards were placed along southern edge of road, and lines occupied German

(33) I. trenches north of wire. (33)

were captured about 1: 30 P.M. A few prisoners were taken in this position, and about thirty Germans killed. Beyond Exmorieux Ferme was a long shallow ravine running generally east and west, a number of enemy machine guns were firing down this ravine, but luckily the range was long and there were only a few casualties in crossing it. North of the ravine was Bois de Baulny, consisting chiefly of thick underbrush, it was impossible to locate the German machine guns hidden in it until they opened fire, so the ravine was crossed with a rush and the woods taken with the bayonet. Losses were small, some guns being put out before they could open fire. The woods were evidently just being organized, the enemy seemingly having counted on the fire coming down the ravine holding up the attack long enough for them to get their guns emplaced. Clearing the woods the advance continued until nightfall, Tronsol Ferme and the strip of woods north of it being occupied, Company "K" advancing as far as Ravin de Gesnes, but having to drop back to connect up. (37)

(37) I.

That was the most advanced point reached by the regiment in the operation. The line dug in for the night along the ridge east of Tronsol Ferme and north of Bois de Baulny, outguards being in long strip of woods north of the Ferme, and connecting with 181st Brigade on the right. The 364th was in contact with the 363rd at Tronsol Ferme, that regiment

(38) B. 30. from a supporting position, was now facing almost due west. (38)

The 28th was the regiment's hardest day of fighting; advance was about two miles.

The enemy sent up many flares and rockets that night, they were very nervous and jumpy, there was a good deal of night firing.

In the advance during the day contact was maintained with the 361st on the right, but the 363rd in the effort to maintain contact with the 35th Division, pulled more and more into section of that division. As a result the frontage of brigade was about doubled. During the days advance, much artillery fire came from the left flank, some being almost an actual enfilade. The enemys' resistance was beginning to stiffen somewhat. Advance for the day was about one and  
(34) B. 29. one-half miles. (34)

September 28th.

Although the advance was ordered by Corps to start at 7 A.M., it was delayed by artillery not supporting until 8:45 A.M. The enemy having reoccupied Eclisfontaine and Bouleaux woods after the American withdrawal, it became necessary to again shell those points.

The regiment took over the entire brigade sector, 3rd Battalion on right, 1st on left, 2nd Battalion in support. The 363rd to follow in support in column of battalions echeloned to the left. Just before the advance got under way a German plane flew low over the lines, firing with its machine gun, then it spiralled overhead. For a few minutes the area was heavily shelled but fortunately no shrapnel was used, only high explosive, and as intervals and distances were  
(35) I. great, the damage was not very heavy. (35)

Major von Giehl, Chief of Staff, 16 Army Corps (German) says "The American infantry was heavily shelled by 13 German  
(36) G.135. batteries located in eastern edge of Argonne Forest." (36)

The advance was slow but steady, overcoming machine guns and snipers with intermittent heavy bursts of shell fire, until opposite Exmorieux Ferme which had been converted into a strong point, with a number of machine guns, also some riflemen. Getting the 37 mm guns and a captured trench mortar in position, the machine guns were put out of action and they  
---fourteen---



September 29th.

Orders from 5th Corps were as follows: "The attack will commence not later than 7: 00 A.M. Divisions will advance independently of each other, pushing the attack with utmost (39) C.FO.46.vigor and regardless of cost." (39) Accordingly the 363rd, with two companies of the 1st Battalion 316th Engineers, which had joined the Brigade from Division Reserve about 4 A.M., passed through the 364th at 7:15, and attempted to cross the open ground north of Bois de Baulny. They were checked at the Tronsol Ferme-Grange aux Bois Germe road, by heavy machine gun fire from their front and both flanks, also artillery fire from guns in Bois de Morine, north of (40) B. 33. Ravin de Gesnes. (40)

Before artillery assistance could be definitely arranged for to support another attack, the orders for the Brigade to advance were revoked and no further attack made. The remainder of the day being utilized in reorganizing the front and improving positions by deepening and connecting up the fox holes and shell craters that the assault waves were occupying. The 364th was assigned about two-thirds of the Brigade sector on the right, the 363rd having the left third and the long exposed flank. Two companies of the 2nd Battalion were sent to support the 363rd about 4 P.M., that regiment having reported a counter attack imminent. The machine guns of the brigade broke up the attack before it really got under way and the rifle companies were not needed. Shelling was very severe all day. Apparently new guns had been brought up from the rear and placed in position on the high ground north of Gesnes and in the Bois de Morine. The range was very short and single men would draw fire from these sniping 77s. Fortunately there were a great many "duds" and this fact kept losses down.



September 30th.

Orders received late afternoon of the 29th directed that a defensive position be taken up by the Division, as it now occupied a salient, the organizations on each flank being some distance in rear. By morning of the 30th the line of resistance in the Brigade sector ran in a south-westerly direction from Exmorieux Ferme to Cote 231.

The line of outguards on ridge north of Bois de Baulny was held by the 2nd Battalion, the line of resistance by the 3rd and the 1st Battalion was regimental reserve located in woods just north of Eclisfontaine.

None of the hard won ground had to be actually given up as Tronsol Ferme was included in the outpost line. On the exposed flank of the 363rd all machine guns in the Brigade

(41) A. 79. were posted. (41)

On the 30th the Division Commander made the following report to the Corps Commander : "This division, if supported on right and left, will have less casualties in an advance than by remaining at a place so accurately observed by hostile planes, every spot in which is registered by enemy

(42) A. 77. artillery." (42)

October 1st.

Regiment in same position and formation, positions being improved by deepening and connecting up. Enemy artillery very active throughout the day, but cover was better and losses were comparatively light. The regiment was warned to be ready to advance on the 2nd, but was later advised

(43) A. 82. that the attack would not take place. (43)

The enemy aviators were very daring, flying over the American lines at will for observation, bombing or using machine guns on Infantry. Very few Allied planes were seen over this sector.

The rolling kitchens were brought up during the night as far as the reserve line, and as many men as possible were given hot food, the first since about 6 P.M., September 25th.

(44) B. 38. Patrols of the 363rd made contact with patrols from the 1st Division in vicinity of Serieux Ferme. (44)

October 2nd.

Same positions were being held, enemy artillery active, throwing many shells into the area. Woods and bottoms of ravines were getting bad as a good deal of gas was coming over.

(45) B. 38. The machine gun company of the regiment, in position near Tronsol Ferme, fired on enemy troops in front of the 1st Division as it was advancing. (45) The 3rd Battalion relieved the 2nd on line of outguard after dark.

(46) A. 34. A warning order was received at 8 P.M. to be ready to advance in the morning, but the order to advance did not come. (46)

(47) I. Snipers were giving a great deal of trouble, a number being killed who had clothed themselves in American uniforms, taken from dead or captured men. One German dressed as an American officer, even attempted to give orders to a patrol which was operating in Bois de Baulny; something in his manner made the men suspicious; upon attempting to arrest him he tried to draw his pistol and was shot and killed. (47)

October 3rd.

No change from the preceding day. Entire regimental area was subjected to heavy artillery fire from 11 A.M. until about 8 P.M., about the most intense shelling of the entire operation. The men were in rather bad shape by this time from the cold, dysentery and loss of sleep and rest, but there was practically no <sup>mal</sup> lingering or straggling.

About 5 P.M. the regiment was notified that it would be relieved during the night by the extension of the 32nd Division to the left. Guides were ready when the relieving troops began to arrive about 11 P.M. The relief was quickly made and the men were started back in small groups across country to designated bivouac area in Bois de Cheppy, not far from the old jumping off place. The machine gun company was not relieved until the morning of the 4th, and had 23

(48) A. 85. casualties in getting out. (48)

From the 4th until the night of the 6th the regiment was in 5th Corps reserve, bivouacing in Bois de Cheppy and getting back in shape. The night of the 6th orders came relieving it from Corps Reserve and directing a march back to vicinity of Dombasle. Thus ended its participation in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

On September 25th the effective strength of the regiment was about 2700 men, companies averaged about 200, most rifle companies going into action with three full platoons instead of four partly filled ones. The troops were equipped with Model 1917 rifles, Chauchat automatic rifles, the latter also firing Cal. 30 ammunition, and Vickers Machine Guns. The Howitzer Platoon had 37 mm guns but no mortars, neither were there any rifle grenades for the rifle companies.

Total distance gained----	About 8 miles.		
Total Casualties---	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
Officers	6	29	
Men	<u>143</u>	<u>684</u>	<u>176</u>
	149	713	176 (49)
Total - 1038	- 37%		

(49) A. 87.

### SUMMARY.

The regiment accomplished all missions assigned to it, and it held all ground gained unless ordered by superior authority to retire.

### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.

The analysis and criticism is rather difficult, as the 364th was simply a very small part of a large force. Such principles as were illustrated by work of the command are herewith set forth.

The attack, being directed against the armed forces of the enemy, with their destruction in view, conforms to the principle of the Objective.

The momentum of the attack having slowed down and finally stopped, the worn out men of the regiment were still ready to attack, thus the principle of the Offensive was observed.

Rushing the German machine guns in Bois de Baulny before they were prepared illustrates three principles: Mass, Movement and Surprise.

In advance of the 27th, the troops were deployed in many thin lines, having increased intervals and distances, supports and reserves held back, out of fire. This was correct observance of Economy.

Reconnaissance of front line in French clothing, strict regulations during bivouac in Hesse woods, always having troops in reserve to use in case of counter attack by enemy, was Security.

The principle of Simplicity was observed in that orders were few, were understandable, there were no complicated maneuvers or movements. Higher than the Regiment, there were too many changes in orders.



The 364th Cooperative by using machine guns on enemy in front of 1st Division, sending troops to help 363rd repel counter attack on 29th.

A lack of aggressiveness on the part of the Brigade Commander soon after zero hour September 26th, on the occasion of the shelling of the 1st Battalion, caused his relief about 9 A.M. the same day. This incident did not effect the success of the brigade in any manner, but it might well have.

There was a lack of initiative on the part of the Battalion Commander 2nd Battalion, in not informing himself fully as to the exact location of the gaps in the French wire and the route of approach thereto.

#### LESSONS.

The following are some of the many important lessons that may be learned from this operation:

Good liaison is necessary for the successful conduct of battle, especially between the Infantry and supporting Artillery. All methods of communication should be developed, of course this predicates trained personnel. All methods but one may go out and dependence has to be placed on that one method.

Artillery support is necessary in attack on prepared positions; its lack will cause unnecessary sacrifice of the Infantry.

The importance of all leaders being able to correctly interpret maps, in order to orient themselves.

Familiarity in use of compass, especially is it necessary in operations involving movement through woods.

Cooperation is vital; team work should be perfected in training, so that it can be applied in battle.

Adequate roads for the supply of a large force are a necessity, also a well regulated and strict control of traffic. If roads are few or poor or both, the more need for regulation and control.

The high morale and fine physical condition of the American soldier carried him through to success, and overcame lack of training, poor technique and bad tactics, but at a cost that our country is blindly disregarding and seemingly trying to forget.



THE 364<sup>th</sup> INF  
 91<sup>st</sup> DIVISION  
 FIRST PHASE  
 MEUSE-ARGONNE  
 SEPT. 25-OCT. 3  
 1918

