

The Argonne-Meuse Offensive.

SEPTEMBER 6 we returned to LaMotte, arriving at one o'clock p. m., where we remained until Sept. 8, when at 7.30 a. m. we marched back to the woods near the City of Orrouy, a town of about 1500 population.

On this march we passed Headquarters Co., 120th Field Artillery. We halted and had the pleasure of meeting the Sheboygan boys of former Troop M. I enjoyed a splendid visit with Capt. Herbert Kohler. This unexpected meeting with home boys did much to resuscitate the spirits of all the troops.

Sept. 9 at 9.30 a. m. we were given instructions to prepare for another move by rail; destination unknown. I was ordered to take charge of the 1st Battalion and Major Stevens was ordered to remain at the rail-head on special duty. Trains were provided and the men ordered to board. The Field and Combat Train, entrained at 2 p. m. and the troops at 5.30 p. m.

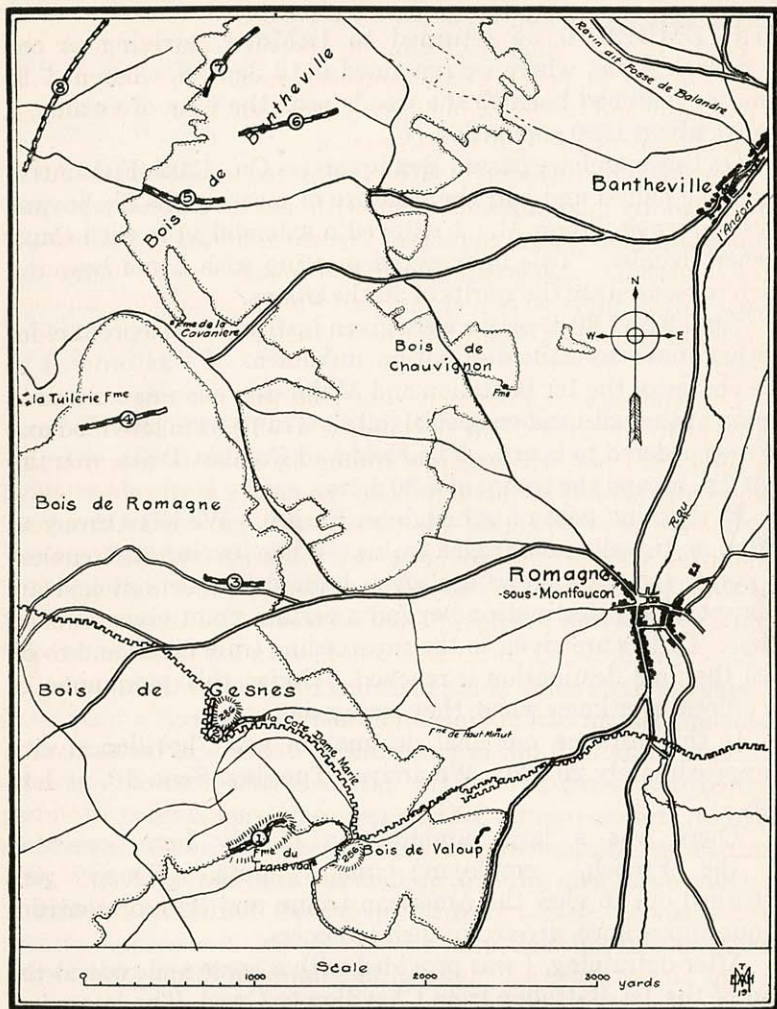
Everything goes on schedule in France. We left Orrouy at 6.30 p. m. traveling on French trains. When leaving any particular point, the train crews are given limited instructions and are ignorant of any destination beyond a certain point given in their orders. Orders are given to the superceding train crews and so on until the final destination is reached. Under this plan none of the officers ever knew where they were going.

In this instance, our final destination was Chevillon, a city of approximately 20,000. We arrived Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 1.45 p. m.

There was a large ammunition factory here, operated by the French, employing many girls. These girls all turned out to view the American troops and they presented a unique appearance, dressed in their bloomers.

After detraining, I was provided with a horse and rode at the head of the 1st Battalion from Chevillon to Cural. The latter is a small city of 2000 inhabitants, located five kilometers from Chevillon.

We were the first American troops to arrive in this section and our entrance into the town was greeted by a large crowd of women and children, who gathered around, showing their curio-



A map showing the ground covered by Co. C in the capture of the main objective, in the Argonne-Meuse offensive.

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sity and interest in the boys in Khaki. They had been apprised of our coming and the entire populace dressed in all their finery, turned out en masse.

We were billeted in this area for twelve days.

Sept. 12, we started drilling on the high plateau near the town. On the 14, seventy-two southern men were assigned to our company and the following day, thirty-eight more were added. This replacement gave Co. C. 245 men.

Cural is a picturesque little city, situated in a scenic country, surrounded by high hills covered with massive trees. It was autumn and the variegated hues of the leaves added to the beauty of the landscape. No greater beauty of foliage can be found any where. Grape vines were plentiful and wine manufacture was one of the main industries occupying the attention of the people before the war.

The women were extremely courteous and extended gracious treatment to our troops. At the home where I was billeted, boarded a school teacher, who was performing heroic work teaching the children and helping to instill hope in the hearts of the older folks. The woman of the house, kindly disposed and of mature age, brought me a French newspaper every morning. While I cannot read French, I was able to secure considerable information relating to war activities in the different sectors. The troops enjoyed the respite afforded them in this quiet, secluded location, where the song of birds made music in strong contrast to the thunder of cannon and the rat-a-tat of machine gun and rifle fire.

Sept. 22 at 3 p. m., orders came to move. Reluctantly we marched to the outskirts of this peaceful valley, where we were loaded on trucks, twenty-four men to each truck, and started for the far-famed Argonne forest.

Our route led through St. Dizier and Barleduc, two picturesque towns. We arrived at the Bois de Leroy, near Verdun, Sept. 23, at three o'clock, a. m.

The largest American ammunition dump in France was located in the Bois de Leroy, where we bivouacked. Ammunition was piled mountain high for a distance of three blocks.

We remained here until Sept. 25, when at 7 p. m., we marched to a point near Jubicourt, taking a position in an apple orchard at one o'clock in the morning. This did not furnish much protec-

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tion and several shells from German guns fell in our lines, wounding several men of the 127th Inf. Our position was doubtless signalled to the German batteries by the aeroplanes that had been hovering over our lines.

We vacated this hazardous position early in the afternoon, Sept. 26. On account of the heavy shelling to which we were being subjected, the entire regiment marched in approach formation from the apple orchard to a place called Abiancourt, continuing our march until we reached the Bois de Hesse.

The Bois de Hesse is the beginning of a series of woods, which is known as the Argonne forest. We concealed ourselves in the dense under-growth until Sept. 29, when at 9 p. m., we advanced to the Bois de Very, arriving Sept. 30 at 7 a. m.

The night this march was made was so dark that it was impossible for the men to see anything. The roads were muddy, making walking extremely arduous. The troops were almost overcome by fatigue, but they marched on in single file formation. Notwithstanding this precaution, the column broke and the men became separated, three companies being lost in the darkness. We continued to march until nearly daylight when the three companies halted and waited for day-break, and the scattered troops were reorganized.

It was a weird scene that daylight presented. Large trees were broken off by the heavy shell fire, scarcely a single tree standing erect and whole. Deep craters, formed by high explosive shells, gave mute testimony of the fearful destruction wrought by the German drive in 1914, when the French were driven back almost to the limits of the City of Paris.

Evidence of recent German occupation was on every hand, the machine-gun emplacements, electrical apparatus and wire entanglements proved how carefully the enemy had prepared for a powerful resistance. There was a narrow-gauge railroad constructed by the Germans, now torn up and many of the remaining rails twisted, while the deep trenches which the Germans had occupied for three successive years, showed the pains taken by the enemy to give their troops every protection and comfort possible to engineering skill. Some of the dug-outs, twenty-five to thirty feet deep and lined with strong timbers to protect the men from possible cave-in, were furnished with every home comfort, in-

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cluding furniture and even stoves to keep the places warm during the cold weather.

Leading from this labyrinth of trenches were several dug-outs, containing flour, hard tack and other army provisions.

These dug-outs were excavations extending inward from the lateral lines of the main line of trenches and showed great skill on the part of the engineers.

Signs fastened to the tree-stumps, indicated certain positions and were proof of the perfect system in operation before the evacuation by the enemy.

Before the arrival of the American troops and before the Germans had been forced to retreat from this strongly fortified position, it was used as a concentration camp; but at the time of our arrival the woods presented a scene of awful desolation. The large elm and hickory trees, twisted and gnarled, or broken off at the top, furnished ample proof of the destructiveness of the enemy guns.

Soon after our arrival, rumors were rife regarding the conditions along other fronts. Runners brought in reports of the demoralization of the German Army. Every day brought such reports as these: "Rumors of armistice;" "Bulgaria lays down," "Austria ready to quit;" Germany on the eve of surrender" and many others of a like nature until we began to hope that our fighting days were over and this was a cause for general rejoicing among our troops.

Rumors of an armistice and the probable cessation of hostilities was the principal topic among the troops; but Oct. 3, orders were received by the 127th Inf. to be in readiness at 5.30 p. m. to relieve the 37th Division, Ohio troops. Special orders and maps showing direction of the proposed drive, were supplied by Regimental Headquarters.

This order denoted that the direction was north-west; that the 79th Division would be on our right and the 91st Division on our left; but following the receipt of a subsequent order, the plan was changed and the 32nd Division relieved two divisions; the 63rd Brigade relieved the 37th, and the 64th Brigade relieved the 91st Division.

The 1st Battalion of the 127th Inf., under command of Major Stevens, took a position in the front line, the 2nd Battalion, under

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command of Major Dusenberry in support and the 3rd Battalion, in charge of Capt. Edward Schmidt of Manitowoc, in reserve.

At 5.30 p. m. we began our advance in approach formation, marching toward the sector where we were ordered to relieve the 91st Division. We marched over hills and through ravines, using the stars and compass as guides, stumbling over obstructions in the woods, often meeting wire entanglements which had to be cut and removed before we could continue our advance, until at 3 o'clock on the morning of Oct. 4, we met the guides of the 91st Division.

Co. C was the first to arrive and following the guides, marched in single file, for the Germans were shelling this position with extreme violence, until we reached the position held by Co. G, 364th Inf. These troops had been under constant fire for a long time and were glad to be relieved. The company had been decimated until the only officer left was a lieutenant, who said that his captain and all the other officers had been either killed or wounded, and that there were only 65 men in the company left standing.

I endeavored to secure some information that would guide us, but the lieutenant was ignorant of the enemy's strength or position. All he knew was that the Germans had a strong defense with machine-guns at the front and that they had been firing incessantly ever since their arrival in that sector, inflicting terrible losses in the ranks of the American troops. He cautioned us about exposing ourselves or making any noise which might attract the enemy's attention, adding that their company had been subjected to artillery fire all the preceding day.

The relief was quickly made, four platoons of Co. C. being placed in the most advantageous positions protected by shell-holes formerly occupied by other troops.

During the fall season, the nights are always damp in this section of the country and this, augmented by the recent rains, caused considerable mud that stuck fast to our shoes making it difficult for the men to walk, and also made the shelter holes a very uncomfortable habitation for the troops.

No orders had been received from Regimental Headquarters for some time and we were at a loss to know whether we were to hold our position or to attack in the morning. The men were exhausted after the long, tiresome march over heavy roads and through wet woods and they were indifferent about their location;

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all they wanted was to lie down and rest. Accordingly, packs were removed and every man crawled into a shelter-hole and remained there until morning.

When daylight came, we discovered that we were in an undulating country, dotted with patches of trees. We decided that the Germans were concealed in a heavy wooded tract about one kilometer north of our position. At a loss to know what to do, we made a careful survey of the country and awaited the arrival of definite orders.

At 6 a. m. a runner brought in a field message, the date showing that the message was belated, having been written at 2.30 that morning. The order read:

From Hqrs. 1st Bn., at P. C., Oct. 4, 1918, 2.30 a. m.

To C. O. Co. C.

“The first objective of today’s attack will be the Bois de Morine Bois de Chene, Sec. and the heights to the west of Romagne. The attack will be made by the 127th Inf. with three Bns. in the front line. The 1st and 2nd Bns will attack from the S. E. with a view to encircling the woods.

“The 63rd Brig. attacks on our right and the 26th Inf on our left. The 128th Inf. will support us. The attack will be made in successive waves of thin lines.

“At six o’clock a. m. a barrage commencing at the southern edge of Bois de Morine, stationary for a time, sufficient for the Infantry to arrive thereafter, rolling at a rate of 100 meters in four minutes, the right flank somewhat in advance of the left flank in order to allow the right encircling movement of the 1st and 3rd Bns. 127th Inf. to develop. Keep in close liaison with units on your right and left. Gas and flame platoons will co-operate. Tanks will attack from the eastern edge of Bois de Morine. Every effort will be made not to leave the tanks unsupported. The Inf. must follow and hold the ground gained by the tanks. Notify these Hqrs. in brief written message when objectives have been reached, giving location of front lines.

“The Regimental Comdr. hopes that every effort will be

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made to make this attack a complete success. Report by message when moving forward."

Signed Stevens, Comdg.

This was a signal for general activity and afforded genuine relief to both officers and men, for nothing pallis more than uncertainty and the feeling of absolute isolation was beginning to cause a feeling of unrest among the troops. Orders were immediately given to adjust packs and get into assault formation. Runners were sent to each platoon of the company and without delay the Battalion lined up in the following order: Co. C on the left front with Co. A left rear; Co. B on the right front with Co. D in rear. We were ready to advance when a large shell from an enemy gun landed close to our front line and exploded, throwing a shower of steel in every direction, making a most unusual noise and causing great consternation among the troops. I turned to see what the commotion was about, when at that instant a long "sliver" of the shell struck Pvt. Sorenson, of Illinois, directly in the chest. He threw up both arms and fell, apparently dead. An examination, however, showed that he had received no body wounds, but was merely stunned from the shock. He was carried off the field on an improvised litter made from an old door. He rejoined the company two days later, none the worse for his narrow escape.

Prior to our arrival in this sector, several memorandums coming from Division Headquarters regarding the assistance the Infantry would give tanks in battle, led to the belief that tanks would be employed in this drive. This belief was verified when on the morning of Oct. 4, as we were lined up in assault formation ready to start, two French soldiers were observed coming toward our line. One was a non-commissioned officer and the other wore overalls, but had a helmet on his head. Neither could speak English; but by using what little "High School" French we had in the company, we managed to understand that they had charge of tanks. Looking down the valley at our left, several small tanks were seen along the road. The two Frenchmen said they would assist us with these tanks but when they were informed that we would attack at once, one of the men began to tremble and his knees shook and the other turned pale.

Noticing their hesitation, orders were given for the first line

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companies to advance. This was the last we saw of the tanks during this drive.

We started at six o'clock, following directions given a few days prior and which I thought were correct; but after advancing for quite a distance we suddenly got under a German machine-gun fire that was so severe that we were compelled to seek shelter. We were in a ravine and about one half kilometer to our left was the City of Gesnes. American troops were along the road to our right. Halting the battalion, I took a runner and walked over to ascertain who they were and if possible to secure some information for our own guidance. We found that these troops were part of the 126th Inf., that they had become separated from their regiment, were lost and did not know where they were. The captain of the company had been killed and the Co. was under command of a lieutenant, who stated that realizing the predicament into which they had fallen, he decided to line the troops along the road and hold the position until something turned up.

Some miscalculation had been made in this movement, for all the troops we met were in the same position of doubt which we were and no one seemed to know where he was or what he had to do.

From a reliable source, I was later informed that when our Major realized the critical situation he personally made a visit to Regimental Headquarters for the purpose of getting information; but his mission was fruitless and he left the P. C. in despair over his failure to secure needed information for the protection of the troops.

Being unable to secure any valuable information from this source, I returned to the company and ordered the men to change position and get into safer quarters, where I might study the map again and work out the orders received in an effort to have them conform with the map in my possession. After a long and careful scrutiny of the map, it was proven conclusively that the orders did not correspond with the positions on the map and we were left as helpless as a ship without a compass, for there was not a star visible which we might use as a guide. It was afterwards found that the Colonel's map was drawn on a different scale than the one we carried and that there were several hills and other important locations not marked on my map, which was drawn on too small a scale.

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In the interim, the machine-gun fire grew more violent and the enemy began pounding our lines with artillery placing us in a very precarious position. It is useless to try to describe a fire such as this, for words are inadequate to give the reader even a faint impression of the intensity of the bombardment under which we were laboring. Some conception of the violence with which we were attacked may be gained when it is stated that after one hour of this shelling, I was the only company commander left standing in the 1st Battalion. Capt. Spencer, Co. B was shot through the abdomen, but recovered later; Lt. Nelson, Co. A was killed by a shell and Lt. Draheim, Co. D was seriously wounded.

Realizing the gravity of our situation and the absolute necessity of getting the men out of this hazardous position, I ordered a flank movement towards the city of Gesnes. We marched past the lost company of the 126th Inf. and took another position on a ridge east of the town.

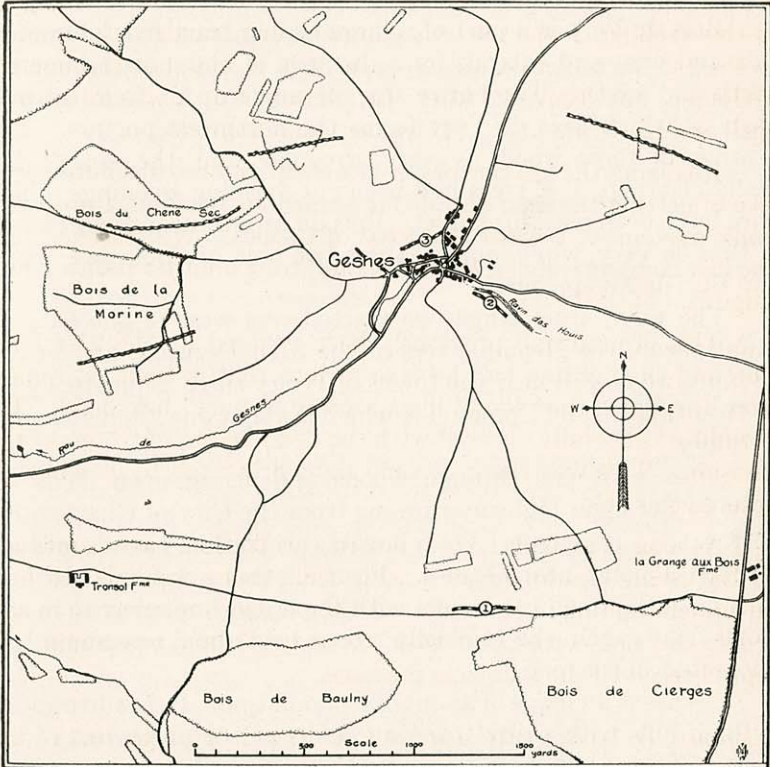
This ground had previously been covered by the 91st Division and the fighting had been so furious that in their retirement from the front, they found it impossible to bury their dead. The ground was literally covered with the dead bodies of troops of this division. This was the gruesome sight presented to us when we entered this field.

As soon as we had the best possible protection, I sent a message to Battalion Headquarters stating that there appeared to be a misunderstanding in the orders as the positions referred to in said orders did not correspond with the maps in my possession. In reply I received the following message:

*From C. O. 1st Bn. 127th Inf., at P. C., Oct. 4, '18, hour 10.45 a. m.
To C. O. Co. C., By runner.*

"You should move your company to the left. You are out of your sector. Our right should be at O6-82. Move to front so you will get back into sector. Our objective is the plateau west of Romagne. Continue the advance without waiting for 2nd Bn. When you reach objective attack Bois de la Morine just west of Gesnes. Use tanks when possible."

Signed Stevens



A sectional map of the Argonne showing where Co. C took an important part.

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However, we held the same position for the balance of the day and all that night, but the resistance was too strong and we were blocked for the time at least.

That the reader may form an idea of the topography of the country in this sector, it may be well to begin with a description from our starting point in the woods north of Bois de Hesse, known as Bois de Very.

Bois de Very is a part of a large timber tract five kilometers east and west and extends for a distance of about six kilometers north and south. The entire tract is made up of four integral parts of which Bois de Very forms the northwest portion. The contour of these woods is very irregular and the spaces are really clearings, i. e. trees had been cut forming openings which may have been used for travel. Bois de Montfaucon is northwest of Bois de Very, while south of these two bois' are Bois de Cheppy and Bois de Malancourt.

The point from which we started was west of the City of Montfaucon, the Headquarters of the 37th Division, and in our advance we passed near the towns of Ivoiray three kilometers west of Montfaucon, and Epinonville which is about one kilometer west of Ivoiray.

After marching through woods and across open fields we came to the main highway running from the City of Charpentry, northeast to Romagne. We followed this corduroy road until we reached a point near Gesnes. From Gesnes a lateral highway runs from the town to connect with the trunk line referred to and along this branch, the Michigan troops held about one and a half kilometers of the road.

Gesnes is a village of about 500 population. It is surrounded by high hills with many towering peaks at the northwest of the town and these hills were alive with German machine-gun nests.

We marched until we reached a pocket south of Gesnes before we had any knowledge of the emplacement of machine guns and the elevation of the enemy's position gave them an excellent opportunity to storm our lines which they did with deadly effect. When we discovered our dangerous position we hurriedly dug shelter holes on the ridge and crawled in for the night as before stated. But before we gained shelter many of our troops were killed or wounded.

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Our machine guns were ordered to engage the enemy, but this brought on a retaliation of a hotter and more destructive fire than before, and the faster our guns fired, the more furious was the answer to our challenge.

Realizing that we were overwhelmingly out-numbered, I called for artillery fire; but the enemy guns were so infiladed and placed in such advantageous positions that it was impossible for us to advance without being cut to pieces.

We finally located one of the machine gun nests and our riflemen were ordered to fire into it; but no sooner was this done than the German gunner sent a fusillade into our lines and within a few seconds five of our men were laid low. Sgt. George Gessert, Plymouth, and Corp. Sternhagen, Chilton, being among the number. While Corp. Sternhagen was being carried to the First Aid, he was again hit by a piece of shell, which penetrated his lung. He recovered from these wounds.

I then sent Lt. Cimiotte to Battalion Headquarters with instructions to secure another map, if possible, and any additional information which might help us in our dilemma. Lt. Cimiotte described our situation at Battalion Headquarters, and the officers in charge decided that the only way to obtain accurate knowledge was to send the Scout Platoon to the front to make observations and have them report the positions of the different lines. Accordingly Lt. Cimiotte escorted the Scout Platoon to the desired locations; but on his way back to our company he lost his bearings and unknowingly walked directly into a German machine-gun nest. He had reached a point not more than fifty yards from the gunner, who doubtless was as much surprised as he, when they opened fire, but by one of those strange and mysterious happenings, every shot went wild. The German gunner, in his surprise, probably fired high for there is no possibility of escaping a machine gun bullet at such close range under ordinary conditions.

Lt. Cimiotte was unable to describe just what happened, except that he fell into a shell hole where he remained for a long time before attempting to change his position. On his way back to our lines, he encountered a German non-commissioned officer whom he held up at the point of a revolver and brought him back into our lines a prisoner. This was two hours of the most thrilling experience Lt. Cimiotte went through during the war.

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Darkness came and we devoted our attention to making our position as comfortable and safe as possible under the circumstances. We dug in deeper and were cautious in exposing ourselves to possible enemy fire. Cossack posts were established to prevent surprise attack during the night and an additional guard was placed in the company lines to guard against gas attack.

The losses in our Battalion during this day's fighting were heavy and the men almost exhausted, wearily fell asleep.

Our position was such that we could communicate by runners.

My orderly had dug a hole for me; but when I lay down that night to sleep, a dead soldier, lying close beside me, was my bed-fellow. This is only an incident in the life of a soldier and does not materially effect the regular routine of the grim business of making war.

This was our first day in the Argonne drive and it furnished thrills enough to satisfy the most adventurous spirit. "No Mans Land" is a good name for this terrain. Dante never pictured hell with greater horror than the circumstances under which we lived on this day and night. Mind cannot conceive and words cannot describe the terror of the time.

At daybreak, the men were stirring about on one of those dreary, foggy mornings typical of fall in this part of the country. Everything was quiet and the enemy seemed to welcome a rest equally as much as we. A cold breakfast of reserve rations, did not help much to overcome the chill of the morning air.

At eight o'clock, I sent a runner to Battalion Headquarters with the following message:

From C. O. Co. C, at 5.9-81.4 1-50 Montfaucon, map 5, Oct. 18, 8 a. m.

To C. O. 1st Bn. 127th Inf.

"The front line of Co. C. is from 05.9-5 left flank to 06-81.9 right. Map 1-50,000 Montfaucon. Have Co. B. on right. The 126th Inf. is still on our right and holding. Must have more artillery fire on the outskirts of Gesnes. Many M.G. there. We can't see them from our location this morning, its too foggy. Have just received your message written at 2.30 a. m."

Signed, Schmidt, Capt.

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Everything considered, I determined that it was safer for us to hold our present position than to make any attempt to move. The 126th Inf. was holding a position along the highway, 300 yards on our right.

As before stated, I did not have a proper map of this sector and every effort to secure another and more accurate map proved futile. Thus far we had followed orders regardless of positions marked on the map. The chaotic condition was doubtless responsible for the confusion, for one must bear in mind that we were in a strange and extremely hostile sector and coupled with the sudden and awful carnage inflicted upon our troops, it is not to be wondered at that some mistakes did occur. The fact that the maps used by the officers at Regimental Headquarters did not correspond in the same scale with the ones we carried, and which was responsible for the failure of the general movement to be as effective as originally planned, was naturally a costly circumstance; but this should not in any manner be misconstrued as reflecting upon the officers at Headquarters. These are conditions which are liable to arise under like or similar circumstances.

We laid low, but spiritedly engaged the enemy machine-gun nests with hot rifle fire, which was met with a counter fire of greater violence; but our troops never faltered and courageously kept up the duel until their guns became almost too hot to hold.

Early in the afternoon, a runner came in with a Field Message that read:

C. O. 1st Bn., P. C., Oct. 5, 1918, 1.45 p. m.

To C. O. Co. C.

"An artillery preparation on V-shaped woods N. W. of Gesnes and also on woods N. W. of them. The Bn. will attack at once. "C" Co. will move through the town of Gesnes and clean it up also help, if necessary to mop up woods afore mentioned. The barrage will be a two hour barrage, commencing at 1.45, so when advancing keep up right behind it.

When an aeroplane appears over your lines, showing a flare of three or more stars, you will immediately mark out your front."

Stevens, Comdg.

Our objective has been changed to woods on hill 255.

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The barrage started on schedule time, but proved to be a weak fire. Not more than ten shells came over in the succeeding one and one half hours, all striking on a hill n. w. of Gesnes. We could see the shells as they exploded but apparently they did no material damage.

Immediately upon receipt of the foregoing order, our troops were lined up in a ravine near Gesnes. My object was to make a dash through the city and secure an advanced position northwest of the town.

The 1st Battalion attacked at about 3 o'clock p. m. in assault formation. The enemy machine guns on our west were in sight but we were hidden from the view of those stationed on the north and were exposed to the machine gunners n. w. of the town. When we advanced toward Gesnes, we were attacked by a criss-cross fire from all the machine guns located on the north, northwest and west while the German artillery pounded the town with hammering blows that shook the ground while the thunder of cannon reverberated among the hills that surrounded the town.

However, in the face of this fusillade, we reached the town, where we halted in a position which was so low that the enemy fire went over our heads. The high embankments at the north end of the town furnished admirable protection for our troops and our position gave us a good perspective of the entire town.

The enemy had been driven out of the town and could be seen on the hills north of Gesnes. We opened up with Chauchat rifles, directing the fire with telling effect.

Gesnes had been abandoned by the populace during the German's first drive in 1914, leaving behind them several large and substantial buildings, but these were being rapidly demolished by the German's heavy artillery which relentlessly bombarded the town, and within a few minutes after we left the place, it was a crumbled mass of ruins. The buildings were principally of stone and mortar and all that was left was a heap of broken stone.

From subsequent observations, it was evident that the Germans had made an officers' rendezvous of Gesnes. We found several officers' black helmets among the ruins, denoting the haste with which the enemy evacuated the town. The bodies of about fifty dead American soldiers furnished mute and tragic testimony

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of the advance and retreat of American troops who had been here before us. These corpses were men of the 91st Division, and from appearances had been laying on the field for at least, a week.

After reaching the position north of the town, I sent back a runner with the following message:

*At 05.7-82 1-50,000 Montfaucon, Map, Oct. 5, '18, 5.00 p. m.
C. O. 1st Bn., 127th Inf.*

"Co's C and B are now on outer edge of Gesnes and holding, engaging M. G. nests. We could not advance any further. M. G. nests all along the hills, N. W. of Gesnes. We have too much of a fire against us, enemy is also using gas shells.

"We are now engaging them with rifle and Chauchat rifle fire. We have not seen any tanks or gas and flame platoons. We could not locate 3rd Bn. Enemy is shelling at present. We have no map here showing Bois de Morine, only the 1/50,000 Montfaucon map.

Signed Schmidt, Capt.

It was still light enough for us to see the emplacements of German guns, not more than 100 yards apart, camouflaged on the hillsides to the north of Gesnes. The German gunners could be seen running in and out of their shelter holes and other places of concealment, denoting that there was considerable activity in the enemy's lines.

We were not kept long in suspense, for at six o'clock, they began a violent shelling of our lines and also the positions in our rear and in the town. This proved to be a terrific bombardment of both high explosive and gas shells. The first fire went over our heads and looked like "duds;" (Duds are shells that do not explode) but when we discovered a peculiar tinted vapor rising from the holes where the shells dropped, we realized that these were gas shells. The wind was favorable to the enemy, but before the gas had reached our lines, we had adjusted gas masks and no injury resulted. Gesnes received many direct hits and the red dust from the crumbling walls and the red terra cotta roofs rose in clouds above the doomed city. Four shells struck in rapid succession, in our lines, wounding several men of Co. C. Among the number

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were: Sgt. Edgar Kallenberg, Corp. Elmer Daniels, Corp. David Krause. Pvt. Rudolph Van Handel performed heroic work here, rendering first aid, bandaging wounds and administering whatever care was necessary to the wounded. I admired his coolness under heavy fire and his courage in exposing himself to danger to help his comrades. No sooner would he finish dressing the wounds of one man before he would say, "Is there anyone else?" Pvt. John Manthey was shell shocked. All wounded were sent back to the hospital.

When it became dark, firing ceased and quiet reigned along the sector. This gave us an opportunity to remove the wounded men back to Epinonville, five kilometers south, where a temporary hospital had been established in a farm house.

Expecting to hold this position for the night, the men were ordered to remove their packs and prepare shelter for the remainder of the night. Outposts were stationed and guards placed around our lines to avoid a sudden gas attack. But about nine o'clock came a runner who informed us that the 128th Inf. would relieve the 127th Inf. and that we could prepare to retire.

I accompanied the guides back to the southern edge of Gesnes and what an awful sight was presented. The streets choked with debris, formed beds for a number of dead American and German soldiers and horses. It was truly a gruesome sight, but it was no time to dwell upon horrors. Leaving the men at the outskirts of the town, I advanced to Battalion Headquarters, which had been removed to another position, near the western part of the ruined town. By this time, the Germans held positions on the hills to the north, northwest and west of Gesnes. Our troops shot phosphorus with Stokes Mortars, to deceive the enemy into the belief that we were launching a gas attack.

Leaving the Battalion Headquarters, I walked to a position at the extreme southern end of the town where Co. A, 128th Inf. had arrived, and escorted them back to the position held by our company, first taking the captain forward and showing him the lines and acquainting him with whatever was necessary.

After this had been done, our battalion retired about one kilometer, arriving about 3.00 o'clock a. m. at the position formerly occupied by the 128th Inf. where we were held in Reserve.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalion of the 127th were on our left dur-

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ing the attack the previous day; but the 127th Inf. was fighting over a long front and I do not know what position they held during the following two days that we were in Reserve.

The position which we held was located in a ravine covered by dense underbrush, and there were several large dug-outs which were used by Battalion Headquarters as a relay or telephone station.

This position was formerly occupied by the Germans. Above ground and directly over one of the dug-outs was a combination frame and cement cottage. Adjoining this, was another similar building which had been used as a German officer's Headquarters and later by them as an Aid Station. Two Lieuts. myself and orderly made this our quarters during the nights of Oct. 6th and 7th. Our one regret was that there was not sufficient protection for the men as our position was being shelled by long range guns, and several of our men were killed or wounded.

The Divisional Platoon of machine guns on the hill near our position, which opened fire on the Germans, was responsible for drawing the enemy artillery fire on our lines. This attack became so fierce Oct. 7, that it was suicidal to even attempt to walk outside of the dug-outs, and the cottage we occupied became a dangerous place to stay. I had just walked outside when a large shell struck the building, leaving a hole, at least six feet in diameter, and exploded on the inside and demolished the cottage. Pvt. Frank Zorman was in the room where the shell entered and it was a miracle that he was not blown to pieces. Several machine gunners who were in an adjoining room were all either killed or wounded.

1st Sgt. Leo Marks was wounded during this engagement, Sgt. Christ Reinhart taking his position as acting 1st Sgt.

Major Stevens decided that it would be advisable to vacate this position and take up another line about one kilometer west near Regimental Headquarters which had been occupied by Co. D during the nights of Oct. 5 and 6.

In the afternoon the following message was received:

Bn. Hqrs. at P. C., Oct. 7, '18, 2 p. m., by runner.

To C. O. Co. C.

"You will move your company to the east outskirts of

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woods Bois Communal De Baulny at once. Movement must be completed before daylight. Runner will guide you to your position in woods. You will put on a guard and keep all your men well under cover and concealed in woods. Have sufficient interval and "Dig in".

Signed Stevens.

We immediately moved into this position, which proved to be a quiet zone and we obtained a much needed rest, remaining concealed in the dense underbrush and in dug-outs until the morning of Oct. 9, when our Battalion launched another attack against the enemy.

A general attack was perfected between the 91st Division, the 42nd or Rainbow Division and the 32nd Division. The 42nd held the extreme left of the line, the 91st was on their right at a position about one kilometer west of Gesnes, the 125th Inf. was east of the 91st, their line beginning in the town of Gesnes and extending east until it formed liaison with the 126th Inf. which was holding the extreme right end of the front wave line. The 127th Inf., in reserve, were directly south of Gesnes.

At 9 a. m. our battalion moved forward within 1000 yards of the front line battalion of the 125th Inf. Our battalion had a Platoon of machine guns and a Section with 37mm. or one pound field pieces. These guns are provided with telescopic sights and are the most accurate firing gun known. They are used especially for destroying machine-gun nests.

A dense fog hung over the land as we started and we were compelled to follow the compass until nearly noon when the fog lifted and it became clear enough to see for quite a distance. Reaching a point about one kilometer south of Gesnes, we saw the first section of the front line Battalion holding a position in an open field. In crossing this field, which was strewn with dead from a previous attack, the German artillery observers, or their observation balloons, discovered the position of the 37mm guns, whereupon they attacked our lines with an vicious storm of high explosive shells.

This bombardment, which continued for over one hour and a half, became so intense that we were compelled to hurriedly dig

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shelter holes and hug close to the ground. About one o'clock p. m. about twenty-five shells fell in my immediate vicinity and the boys jocularly called my attention to the fact that this being my birthday, the Germans were celebrating the occasion and these shells were directed at me personally as a birthday gift. The ground was literally torn up and deep craters, not more than ten feet apart, covered the fields. My Orderly tried to induce me to seek a safer shelter, but I told him that we occupied a place as secure as any other adjacent therefore, we remained in our position until the shelling subsided.

While changing positions, Pvt. Joseph Fitzpatrick, who was near me, was struck by a piece of shell from the effects of which he expired the following day, at the First Aid Station. Sgt. Walter Matzdorf, Corp. Albert Reightley and Corporal Jacob Kopf were wounded. In checking up the list of Co. C that evening, there were only thirty-seven men who were present.

Lt. Joseph H. Maybie, of Albany, N. Y., who was commissioned Oct. 1, was assigned to Co. C, coming direct to our company from the Army Candidate School. Lt. Maybie arrived at our position while the heavy shelling was in progress and proved to be an excellent officer. He remained with us until Oct. 25 when he received an assignment to command the Scout Platoon.

While the bombardment was at its height, a runner brought in the following Field Message:

C. O. 1st Bn., at P. C. 05 point 8-83, point 8, Oct. 10, 12.45 p. m. via runner.

To C. O. Co. C.

"1st Aid Station changed to 06 point 8-80 point 7, La Grange and Bois Farm Square 60 Map Verdun A. Take all wounded men there."

Signed Stevens.

Shelling ceased about 3 p. m. and quiet reigned until the following morning, Oct. 10. In the meantime, the 91st Division and the 125th and 126th Inf. of the 32nd Division, kept up a constant fire at the enemy. Co's. A, B and D had taken a position directly behind and near the 125th Inf. south-east of Gesnes.

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During a lull in the firing, another runner brought in an order which read:

From C. O. 1st Bn. 127th Inf., at P. C., Date Oct. 10, 2.15 p. m., by runner.

To Capt. Schmidt.

“Send ‘A’ Co. to occupy slope 5.8-2.6 extend as far to west as possible up that draw. B Co. move forward between H and 125th. Find Co. O. leading battalion and get together with him. Take these positions and dig in before morning and A and B. Co’s. Send me word when this is done.”

Signed Stevens.

Immediately after seven o’clock p. m. our Battalion moved due north, going through Gesnes, until we reached a highway leading northwest. We followed this road for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a kilometer and took a position. The Germans were holding a position in the Bois de Gesnes, which was protected by strong machine-gun emplacements.

Securing all the shelter possible by lying in shell holes, we lay in this position until the next morning.

The 91st Division and the 125th and 126th Inf., in a defensive position, held a line with a front of about four kilometers, a short distance from our front. In this line-up, we held on until the night of Oct. 11.

Soon after we had taken our position along the road, a runner brought me the following message:

C. O. 1st Bn. 127th Inf., At P. C., Date 10, Oct. '18, 7 p. m. Runner.

To C. O. Co. C., 127th Inf.

“The 125th and the 126th Inf. will readjust their lines north of Trenches de Dantrise between 7 and 14 o’clock today. The 64th Brigade has ordered this Battalion to take over the Trench de Dantrise from 6.6-3.8 in the n. e. corner square 63 to the Farm de Transvaal, middle square 53 with all four Companies on line A. B. C. D.

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from right to left this morning. Must be completed by 14 o'clock and must be started immediately.

A Patrol from Scouts will conduct you to your place on the line.

At 14 o'clock when the 63rd Brigade moves forward the 1st Bn. will remain where they are and let the rest of the regiment pass."

Signed Stevens.

At 7 o'clock, verbal orders were given for us to change our position and relieve a battalion of the 91st Division that was holding a line west of Gesnes. We marched all night going through the village of Gesnes until we reached a point about two kilometers southwest of the town where we were met by guides from the 361st Inf. of the 91st Division, who accompanied our battalion through a swamp north of a heavily wooded tract.

It was a dark night and a heavy mist was falling sending a chill to the marrow; even the guides, who had previously traversed this route, had great difficulty in finding the way. Occasional illuminating flares, sent up by the Germans, helped a little, but these were intermittent and between flares we often lost our way. We marched in single file to hold the lines intact. During the night, several shells fired by the Germans, fell in our line, killing two and wounding two men of Co. D.

After a long, toilsome march, until 5 a. m. next morning, Oct. 12, we arrived at the position held by one of the battalions of the 361st Inf. I called for the Battalion Commander, but the Major who responded could not furnish me with any information beyond the fact that his battalion had held that position for seventeen successive days and that out of 950 men there were only 174 left. He expressed his joy and that of the troops that his battalion would be relieved.

When daylight came we found ourselves in a rugged, wooded country. The enemy were concealed in the Bois de Valoup, on the wooded hills close to our front.

Co. C immediately established liaison between the 32nd Division and the 42nd Division, by means of Combat Patrols. The 42nd Division was on the extreme left of the line, the 168th

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Inf. which was part of that division, was on our left and our 127th Inf. was the left unit of the 32nd Division.

Lt. Joseph Maybie led most of the Combat Patrols, giving efficient service. Each patrol had twelve men and covered the front every two hours.

We were being harassed by German snipers concealed in the woods on the hill, bullets coming from every angle on our front. The enemy's position was protected with barbed-wire entanglements and the number of concrete machine-gun emplacements, which were visible, showed us that they were well provided with these auxiliary arms.

We held this position until 7 p. m. when we were notified that we would be relieved as liaison company by Co. D, and orders were given for the three remaining companies of our battalion to report at Regimental P. C. at Gesnes.

We advanced to Hill 255, a distance of two kilometers north when our 3rd Battalion, in charge of Lt. Newton, moved to the right. Machine Gun Co., in charge of Lt. Torrison and Co. C. under my personal command, remained in the shelter of the trees on Hill 255. Lt. "Billy" Jensen took Co's. A and B to Hill 286, near Farm du Transvaal, 300 yards southeast of Hill 255, where he held an isolated position opposite the Cote Dame Marie.

This was the Hindenberg line of the Argonne generally referred to as the Kremhilde Stellung.

Late in the afternoon, I received orders to move Co. C to the Hill occupied by Co's. A and B. To have attempted this move in daylight would have been suicidal because we would have been exposed to the merciless fire of the enemy who were in a position to rake the entire field with machine gun fire. We therefore, waited for darkness, when in single file, we cautiously moved to that position.

Having reached about half way, we halted and scouts were sent ahead to ascertain whether there were any Germans located along the line, the main body of troops remaining in a defile in the road while the reconnaissance was being made.

The Scout advance not drawing any fire, we proceeded on our way to the Hill, when following orders, my Adjt., three company commanders and myself reported at Regimental P. C.

A few days before this was written several members of Co. C

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were present at a gathering and recalled various incidents connected with our participation in the war. Sgt. Christ Reinhardt and Pvt. Frank Zorman, who were both captured by the Germans the day following the march described above, were present and stated that the Germans told them that their patrols had observed our movement from one hill to the other and that the patrols had hurried back for reinforcements; but that when they returned to the road, we had already passed and reached our destination. The Germans said that had we been only a few minutes later, no doubt every man in our company would have been either killed or taken prisoner as they had enough troops to surround and overwhelm us. This shows one of the many narrow and providential escapes of Co. C.

A conference of officers, held at Regimental P. C., started at 9 p. m. and it was decided that we would launch an attack from the isolated hill the following morning. Eight o'clock was to be the zero hour.

The 1st Battalion was to lead in the attack, the 3rd Battalion, in charge of Lt. Newton, to act in support and the 2nd Battalion under command of Capt. Mitchell to be in reserve. The assault was to be directed against a ridge known as Cote Dame Marie, a position held by the Germans which was well fortified and protected by extra heavy barbed wire entanglements. Their position was sheltered in deep trenches which were protected by a dense growth of large trees. The land between the hill occupied by our troops and the ridge held by the enemy was low and swampy, being a difficult country to line up the troops in attack formation.

The plan of attack as outlined at Brigade P. C., called for a barrage which was scheduled to start ten minutes before the zero hour and play until five minutes after, when it was to lift and travel forward at the rate of 100 yards every four minutes. We were ordered to keep close behind the barrage. After gaining the first objective, we were to halt and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were to execute a passage of lines and continue in pursuit of the enemy.

We were furnished with extra large wire cutters and bolos, to enable us to cut our way through the wire entanglements.

Just before the close of the conference, our Lt. Col. gave us the orders and read the Brigade attack order and the ORDER OF

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THE DAY which is considered the most interesting order issued on the field and which was given the name "Electric Order."

An Order of the Day

The following is the "Order of the Day," issued Oct. 13, by Brig. Gen. Winans, commanding the 64th brigade, of which Co. C was a unit.

SOLDIERS OF THE FRONT LINE, 32nd DIVISION.

A few hundred yards to the north of you the remnants of the decimated crack divisions of the German army are clinging desperately to the pivotal point of their bruised and broken line, on which hangs the fate of their Emperor and the Empire.

The 32nd Division was sent to this sector to shatter that line. You are shock troops, "Les Terribles," the French call you. "Fighting sons o'guns," the Americans call you. You are the very flower of our army. You that remain up there on the front have been tried by fire. The skulkers have skulked—the quitters have quit. Only the man with guts remains.

Machine guns? You have captured thousands of them. And you took them standing up. The only way to take machine guns is to take them. No use lying down on the ground. They have plenty of ammunition and they aim low.

Shells? Shell casualties are only three per cent of the total.

Tired? You have been in the line two weeks. Your enemies have been in five weeks, prisoners say they have gone thru hell.

The 32nd Division is going ahead when the 1st American Army attacks. We're three regiments abreast, with one in support. Each is echeloned in depth. One battalion behind the other, except the one on the extreme right, that one mops up Romagne, the other go forward. This formation will give you driving power.

The Americans must succeed. It is not enough to say "I'll Try."

Your resolve must be "I Will!"

WINANS, Brigadier General.

While the battalion officers were at Gesnes discussing the attack order and comparing maps, a Staff Officer came over and

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informed us that the zero hour had been changed from 8 to 5:30 a.m.

We started back for Hill 286, walking along muddy roads, caused by several days' rain, when suddenly we were attracted by the cries of a man who was lying in the grass beside the roadway. We approached the man and he informed us that he was a member of the 125th Inf.; that he had been wounded three days prior to our arrival and had been compelled to lay in that position ever since. Members of the Scout Platoon carried the poor fellow back to the First Aid Station at Gesnes.

Promptly on schedule, the barrage started at day-break, Oct. 14. Co's. A, B and C were lined up in assault formation; but an inspection of the rear showed that neither the 2nd nor 3rd Battalions were in sight. Obeying orders, we went "over the top."

Everything appeared quiet and serene until we reached a point mid-way between our former position on the hill and the ridge occupied by the Germans, when some officer carelessly blew a whistle which apprised the enemy of our presence. Immediately, a storm of machine-gun bullets from the crest of the ridge swept our lines with terrible effect. Men fell like pins struck by a ball on a bowling alley; but notwithstanding this furious fire, the troops courageously advanced toward the enemy's line. Climbing through the wire entanglements, the troops swept on with such desperate energy that the Germans were forced out of their trenches and over the ridge, but our battalion was broken and the men scattered; some advancing too far, were captured by the Germans. Sgt. Christ Reinhardt and Pvt. Frank Zorman of Co. C, were among the number. Part of our wounded were taken to the First Aid Station by members of the 168th Inf., who were on our left and the balance were carried back to Gesnes.

Realizing that we were without support from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, and having only 150 men left in our battalion, I sent Lt. Jensen to Regimental Headquarters with the information that we had no support. In the meanwhile, being aware that it would be impossible to hold the Cote Dame Marie, we drew back to our former position on Hill 286.

In this engagement, Lt. Cimiotte was wounded in the leg and was carried to the 42nd Division First Aid Station. An artery was severed and he almost bled to death before reaching the Station.

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Lt. Cimiotte had a premonition the preceding day, that he was going to be hit.

Our Scout Platoon also suffered heavy casualties. Lt. Colvin, of Jackson, Michigan, who was in command, was standing beside me when he was shot through the head and instantly killed.

We had just reached our former position on the Hill when the Germans again became active and began shelling our position.

In the meanwhile, Lt. Jensen, who had been to Regimental Headquarters returned with the following order:

*P. C. 127th Inf., At Gesnes, Date 14, Oct. 18, Hour 10.50 a. m.
By Lt. Jensen.*

To C. O. 1st Bn., 127th Inf.

“Upon Major Dusenberry joining you he will take the two battalions (1st and 2nd) around the Hill 286 to the west of the hill and to the north.

I have ordered Capt. Mitchell to take the 3rd Bn. to the east of the trench on Cote Dame Marie to outflank that trench from the east. If you want artillery to help, let me know where you want it and at what hour you want it stopped. Give location by co-ordinates of exactly what ground you want us to pound with artillery.

The Corps Commander directs that we take the position at all cost. Use phone of 2nd Bn. when it reaches. I have been trying all morning to get a phone to your line. I expect it to reach you soon.”

Langdon.

Soon after the receipt of this order, Col. Langdon, who was sent out with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, came in our rear, following an unbroken road through the woods at the foot of the hill we occupied. Col. Langdon gave me verbal orders to remain with the 1st Battalion on the hill and hold, while the other two Battalions would make a detour of Bois de Gesnes and execute a movement to outflank the enemy from the west, and attack the right flank of the enemy, which were then on the hills east of the woods.

Soon after I received this message.

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From Lt. Col. Meyer, At P. C., Date 14, Oct. '18, Hour 6 p. m. by runner.

To C. O. 1st Bn.

"Send me a message by this runner as to conditions. Try and reconnoiter Trench in your front and determine if still occupied by the enemy. If you have a runner in your Bn. who knows the location of D Co. send him in to report to me. If you have no one who knows location of D Co. try get word to Lieut. Worth to send me in 2 men as runners and guides.

Hope for good news tonight. This is not certain.

If you can get in touch with Col. Langdon or 2nd or 3rd Bn. do so and get guides in from those Bns. Tell Col. L. that I wish he would come in and let me relieve him."

Meyer, Lt. Col.

We held the position on the ridge until 2.30 p. m. at which time a runner delivered a message to me with orders to place troops in the trenches in the Cote Dame Marie and to report back when it had been accomplished. I first sent out patrols to see whether these trenches were still occupied by the enemy. Sgt. Brown and Sgt. Schmidt of the Scout Platoon were selected for this hazardous work. They returned with a report that there were no signs of German occupation. I, therefore, decided that a small force would be sufficient for this mission. Accordingly, a lieutenant of Co. A, Scout officer, Lt. Barclay and ten men were selected to carry out the order. Lt. Barclay was instructed to report back to me immediately after the trenches were occupied so that same could be reported to Lt. Col. Meyer.

In the meantime, Col. Langdon, in command of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, had made the flank movement, encircled the north-west corner of the woods and held an important position on the west of the enemy's right.

During the night, the Germans shelled our position with their artillery making a few direct hits, wounding six men of our battalion among whom was our Artillery Agent. Artillery agents are employed to observe all barrages and artillery activities; to report whether shells are dropping short or going over and to carry messages whenever artillery fire is needed. They are required to

be in the front line at all times so as to keep in touch with commanding officers and for efficient artillery service.

Seven o'clock the following morning, our battalion started in a northerly direction for the position held by Col. Langdon with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. This position was at the fork of a road where the Germans had constructed a strong line of defense. A labyrinth of trenches with dug-outs, protected by reinforced concrete, covered a wide area both sides of the highway. The walls of these dug-outs were more than two feet in thickness and of almost bomb-proof construction. Several cottages, which apparently were formerly used by the officers, stood among the trees. An extensive water system had been installed furnishing running water to the cottages and also to the dug-outs, showing that the Germans had occupied this position for a long time. Being on the main highway to Romagne, this was a very advantageous position.

After the report of the occupation of the trenches had been delivered to Col. Langdon, he ordered an immediate conference of all officers of the three battalions at which time the orders from Brigade Headquarters, sent out by Lt. Col. Meyer, out-lining a concerted attack against the enemy holding lines north of the 127th Inf., were generally discussed, and the probable action which our regiment would take in the attack.

Col. Langdon ordered the 2nd Battalion to advance in a northerly direction and the 3rd Battalion to follow close behind them, both to advance in a direction 13 degrees west of the Magnetic North, a point near the border of the Bois de Romagne. The 1st Battalion was ordered to keep in close contact with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, following in line of combat groups. In this formation the regiment began the advance, our battalion being about 300 yards in the rear.

After marching about one and a half kilometers, we discovered several machine guns which the Germans had abandoned in their hasty retreat. The officers of our regiment dismantled these guns by breaking the locks, making them unfit for immediate service.

This had been a vicious machine-gun nest and the surroundings indicated how carefully the enemy had prepared this position for defense. Several large dug-outs were near the gun em-

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placements, evidence that Germans in large numbers had occupied this position.

While the work of dismantling the guns was in progress, several Germans voluntarily entered our line and surrendered. I interrogated one man about forty years of age, asking him questions relative to the strength of their troops and the nature of their position. He answered by saying that there was a very large number of German troops equipped with many machine guns, a short distance north of our line and that he considered it to be physically impossible for us to inaugurate a successful attack against such a strong force. He added that he was tired of the war and rather than continue fighting, he preferred to take his chances as a prisoner in our hands than to be killed fighting against us. He inquired whether we held any other of his countrymen as prisoners and was surprised when I told him that we had several, because he was led to believe that no prisoners had been taken, and he was joyful over the fact that he would find many of his own countrymen with us. This was true of most of the prisoners which we took in the Argonne sector. They had grown weary of the long struggle and the prospect of another campaign through the long, cold winter were not alluring. Four years of incessant warfare, under terrifying conditions, had deprived them of all zeal and almost any change was preferable to the life they had been compelled to endure in the trenches.

Proceeding on our march, we had just emerged from the woods at a place called LaTuilerie Farm, when the enemy, which was seemingly awaiting our appearance, assaulted our lines with an almost unbelievable storm of shot and shell. Machine guns, trench mortars, anti-tank, artillery and gas shells met us as we reached the clearing. Our lines staggered from the blow, wavered for an instant and then retreated into the woods leaving behind several killed and wounded.

The heavy rain and fog shut off the view of the territory in our front, making the conditions somewhat disheartening. An immediate conference of Battalion Commanders was called, whereupon, it was decided to establish a defensive position rather than to take another chance of combating such a formidable force as the enemy proved themselves to be. Out-posts were placed at the front and a sketch made, showing our location and formation. This was sent

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back to Regimental P. C., which was then established at the fork of the road, where our advance had started in the morning.

Before we left that morning, Col. Langdon ordered hourly messages sent to him and complying with his order, we immediately dispatched the first message.

The plan adopted by the American Army officers to get information from the front to General Headquarters was to have commanders of battalions send messages to Regimental P. C. where they were scrutinized, then forwarded to Brigade P. C.; then to Division Headquarters; then to Corps; then to Headquarters of the Army before they were finally dispatched to G. H. Q. In this way every Commander and Field Staff of each unit were kept in constant touch with every movement at the front. This plan conspired to help the American fighting units to operate on a general well formulated basis; thus producing the greatest possible efficiency.

That his orders would not be forgotten, Col. Langdon sent a runner to our position soon after the noon hour with the following message.

*From C. O. 127th Inf. At 05.7-84.0, Date 15, Oct. '18, Hour 12. M.
To C. O. 1st Bn.*

*"Send in sketch of your position at 12.45 for Brigade.
It must be in here by 1.15 p. m. Give me your front
now."*

Langdon.

We remained in the woods all the rest of the day, expecting every hour to be relieved, for it had been rumored that the 127th Inf. was to be retired and the troops were becoming restless over the uncertainty and delay. The Germans kept up a desultory fire all afternoon, putting over many gas shells. Several men were killed by direct hits of gas shells, but the adjusting of gas masks before the gas had time to concentrate, saved us from having casualties by gas.

The rain continued to come down in torrents and the shelter holes occupied by the men filled up with water, leaving us with only one alternative, viz: getting out of the water and exposing ourselves to the enemy shell fire and possible death, or to remain in

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the holes with our bodies submerged in the cold water. Between the two, we decided to remain in the shelter holes. It was a discouraging situation. Dysentery aggravated the already bad condition and the men began to speculate on what would happen to them were they compelled to remain in this position all night. To add to the horror of the situation, our own artillery shot several shells into our lines about three o'clock in the afternoon, and while the shells fell short, they helped to make our condition still worse. We sent a runner back to Regimental P. C. giving a statement of facts, and when an investigation was made it was found that a Battery of the 42nd Division was responsible for this unwarrantable fire. Fortunately no one was hit.

The troops shivered as they laid in the water, but were buoyed with the prospects of relief; but when it grew dark and the following message arrived at seven o'clock, it proved to be almost the last straw and the men were about as disheartened as mortal could be.

From C. O. 127th Inf., At Reg. P. C., Date 15, Oct. 18, Hour 6.25, p. m.

To C. O. 1st Bn.

"Send out Ration Detail to this P. C. to report to Lt. Cohen. No relief tonight. Guides will be returned to you."

Langdon.

"B. Co. has their rations."

At nine o'clock, another order came for us to change positions and take another line along a narrow-gauge railroad about 500 yards east of our present position. Arriving at this position, we found evidence of previous heavy shelling, many carcasses of horses being strewn on the field, and while the ground was lower than at our former position, it was more tenable. Out-posts were established and we passed a fairly comfortable night.

Oct. 16, at 9 a. m., we received orders to move into the Bois de Bantheville. We had gone about one half kilometer when we came upon another abandoned German camp. Carcasses of several horses were scattered about, portions of the meat had been cut away, showing that the Germans had probably used this

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meat for food. We stood viewing this scene, when we were attacked by the Austrian "Whizz-bang," the shells coming from the north, but we continued to advance until we reached the north border of the woods, when the 2nd Battalion took the front line position at the extreme right, the 3rd Battalion, in charge of Capt. Mitchell, holding a high elevation to the left and slightly in the rear, and the 1st Battalion under my command, took a position with our left flank extending to the western border of the woods. Outposts protected our flanks at the front. Co. C held the line from the outer edge into the woods, Co. B was in the center and Co. A held the extreme right of the line.

During the afternoon, Major Beveridge returned and relieved Major Dusenberry in command of the 2nd Battalion.

The 127th Inf. now had two fronts, north and west, the 1st Battalion protecting the west, the 2nd Battalion protecting the north with the 3rd Battalion in support. In this formation, we took possession of the Bois de Bantheville, which was our Fourth Objective, and the end of our drive.

Two messages were delivered during the night which are here inserted to complete the record of this drive.

From P. C., 127th Inf., Date 16, Oct. '18, Hour 11.00 a. m. by runner.

To C. O. 1st Bn. 127th Inf.

"Unless otherwise ordered this Division will not attack. The attack will be made by the 1st Corps (on left of the left of the 42nd Division.) Our duty is to hold the ground that we have and to prepare against counter attack. You will dig in where you are and cover your flanks by patrols. You will keep in liaison with Capt. Mitchell's Battalion in your front and with 168th Inf. on your left. Find out exactly where they are and report to me their location.

Our 2nd Battalion (Major Dusenberry) is too far to your right for you to keep in liaison with it. It is located in north-eastern part of square 56 in vicinity of point 05.6-85.8.

I have placed a machine gun company on right near my

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P. C. to cover the gap between the 2nd Bn. and the two other Battalions.

Make your position as secure as possible. Be careful to avoid aeroplane observation.

Reorganize your Battalion by putting men into their proper companies."

The other message from Lt. Col. Meyer follows:

From C. O. 127, date 16 Oct. '18, 11.30 p. m.

To C. O. 1st Bn. 127th.

Have your Co. grub details report at 5.30 a. m. tomorrow at this P. C. No good news about any relief."

Signed, Meyer.

During this entire drive, the 125th and 126th Inf. Michigan troops were on our right, and were under the same heavy shelling to which we were subjected. These two regiments made an enviable record and one of which the State of Michigan may well feel proud.

The 42nd or Rainbow Division was on our left, but did not reach their objective on this drive until Oct. 18. In the meanwhile we held our position awaiting their arrival.

The 89th Division was in our rear, and was to relieve the 32nd Division. For several days officers of this Division came up to the front inspecting the lines and getting familiar with locations.

Oct. 18, Col. Langdon sent the following Field Message:

Advanced P. C., 127th Inf., Date 18, Oct. '18, Hour 9.15 a. m., No. 1 by Lt. Rothman.

To Co. O. 1st Bn.

"Lieut. Rothman will show you how I want to have the edge of the woods held by small out-guards located where the men will be under cover of the trees but where the open ground can be observed in front. The Battalion will be located about two or three hundred yards from the edge of the woods and entrenched."

Signed Langdon.

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On this day, an interesting incident occurred. A Col. of the 89th Division came up with a reconnoitering party and advanced too far. The Col. was captured and his orderly wounded in his right side. This created considerable excitement and the following day, a Scouting Patrol, numbering twenty-five men from the 89th Division, came up to make a thorough search for their Col. After a day spent in fruitless search, they returned to their position.

Later in the afternoon of Oct. 18, another message arrived from Col. Langdon.

From P. C., 127th Inf., Date 18 Oct. 18., Hour 4.45 p. m., by runner.

To C. O. 1st Bn.

"Artillery gas attack will be fired on Bois de Bantheville Bois de Hagois and woods north of St. Georges and Caudre. St. Georges at 2 a. m., 19, Oct. 1918. Avoid locality until one hour after daylight. Have gas guards on alert and watch direction of wind."

Signed Langdon, Per G.

Nothing of consequence happened during the night, although a heavy shelling started in the middle of the night, which went over our heads and was too high to disturb us.

The next day, Oct. 19, Col. Langdon came up to the front and made an inspection of the position, expressing his satisfaction over the manner in which all orders had been carried out.

There was an intermittent shelling during the day, but most of the shells fell to our left, some went high over our heads, and while we could see them explode, there were no fatalities in our regiment.

That night, a message came stating that we were going to be relieved. A Lieut. and three non-commissioned officers from each company were detailed to go and meet the guides of the 89th Division and act as guides in bringing up that Division. In the meantime, our mess detail came up and we had one of the most sumptuous meals we ever had in France. "Everything from soup to nuts" as the saying goes.

This reminds me of the part played by this department of the

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Army, and it is only fitting that something should be said in favor of the brave chaps who risked their lives in providing food for the soldiers at the front. The kitchens were invariably far in the rear, oftentimes three kilometers back, and the detail had to carry heavy Marmite cans over rough roads, subjected to the same shell or artillery fire that the men at the front had to withstand. It was hazardous work, but these brave fellows never faltered. Sometimes one would be killed or wounded; but Sgt. Eitel Meyer, in charge of our Mess Detail and his willing workers, could always be depended upon to fulfill their duties in this dangerous work. Co. C was fortunate with their mess detail, having only two men wounded. These two men were southerners and were assigned to the company after we reached France.

Packs were adjusted and everything was in readiness for immediate departure. The troops were eager to leave and the minutes dragged along slowly until about 9 a. m. when we were suddenly surprised by a number of shells that fell near our lines. The troops were standing along the road expecting every minute to be relieved, and this shelling was not what we looked for.

Realizing that something serious might happen, I advised the men to rush for shelter holes. All but a few followed these instructions and they were no sooner ensconced in the holes before a large shell fell in the road about twenty-five feet from where I stood and exploded, killing Pvt. Rudolph VanHandel of Sheboygan, and Ira Smith of Santa Clara, Cal., who had been assigned to Co. C. Corp. Louis Schlegel, now promoted to Sgt., who was standing near was blown several feet, but was uninjured. The Marmite cans which were placed beside the road were completely destroyed. While the tragedy was serious, it might have been a horrible sacrifice of lives had the troops who sought shelter holes, remained at the road.

At 11 o'clock the welcomed relief arrived and we began to retire, marching all night, going through Gesnes and stopping two hours for rest, about two kilometers south of the town, where we had mess with our kitchens.

Nine o'clock the next morning we continued to march, reaching the Bois De Very about 1 p. m. Oct. 20th.

The casualties in Co. C during the sixteen days drive in the

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Argonne-Meuse offensive, beginning Oct. 3, were killed 20, wounded 94, missing 9.

The following is a complete list of all officers and enlisted men of Co. C who were killed or wounded in the Argonne-Meuse offensive.

KILLED OR DIED OF WOUNDS

Corp. Clemens Gerhards, Chilton, Wis.

PRIVATES

Loren G. Harrington,	R. 35, Bx. 98, Oregon City, Oregon.
Herman Mueller,	Box 302, Sheboygan Falls, Wis.
Rudolph VanHandel,	734 N. 3rd St. Sheboygan, Wis.
John Altman,	R. No. 1, White Lake, S. Dakota
Lafay Brower,	Ashton, Idaho.
Everett L. Crim,	R. R. No. 2, Weiser, Idaho.
William H. Farris,	1408 Schiller avenue, Little Rock, Arkansas
Joseph Fitzpatrick,	2432 S. 7th street, Sheboygan, Wis.
Dan Folker,	Forsyth, Montana
A. C. Gecowets,	1039 Harrison street, Defiance, Ohio
Eli Godwin,	Dequeen, Arkansas
Edward C. Johns,	Graytown, Ohio
Jack W. Lewis,	Franklin, Missouri.
Martin Manning,	Lyons, Iowa
Peter A. Polomis,	Wausaukee, Wis.
John Radojevich,	2015 Ventura avenue, Fresno, California.
Francis T. Rath,	R. R. No. 2, Defiance, Ohio.
Ira M. Smith,	1359 Lewis street, Santa Clara, California.
Grover C. Upton,	R. F. D. No. 1, Prairie Point, Mississippi

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WOUNDED

2nd Lt. Walter L. Cimiotte New York City, N. Y.

SERGEANTS

Edgar Kallenberg, Plymouth, Wis.
George Gessert, 105 W. Mill street, Plymouth,
 Wis.
Leo Marks, 1114 Georgia avenue, Sheboygan,
 Wis.

CORPORALS

Wilber J. Bennett, Zion City, Illinois
Muriel C. Curtis R. F. D. No. 7, Jackson, Michigan
Elmer Daniels, 516 Washington Court, Sheboy-
 gan, Wis.
Michael G. Dee, 6130 Honore street, Chicago,
 Illinois.
William Diederich, R. F. D. No. 5, Hilbert, Wis.
Jacob Kopf, R. F. D. Box No. 2, Cleveland,
 Wis.
David Krause, 1317 N. 13th street, Sheboygan,
 Wis.
Archie O. Marley, Newcastle, California
Loren G. Moore, Donald, Washington
Albert Reightley, Plymouth, Wis.
George A. Reko, Oakes, N. Dakota.
Arno Speckman, 1120 Lincoln avenue, Sheboygan,
 Wis.
Harry A. Wilson, Cherokee, Iowa

1ST CLASS PRIVATES

Grover C. Ashlock, Carlton, Oregon
Floyd Flitsch, Potosi, Wis.
Arthur Stenger, R. R. No. 5, Sheboygan, Wis.
Earl M. Wood, 3522 52nd street, Portland, Ore-
 gon

THE ARGONNE-MEUSE OFFENSIVE

PRIVATES

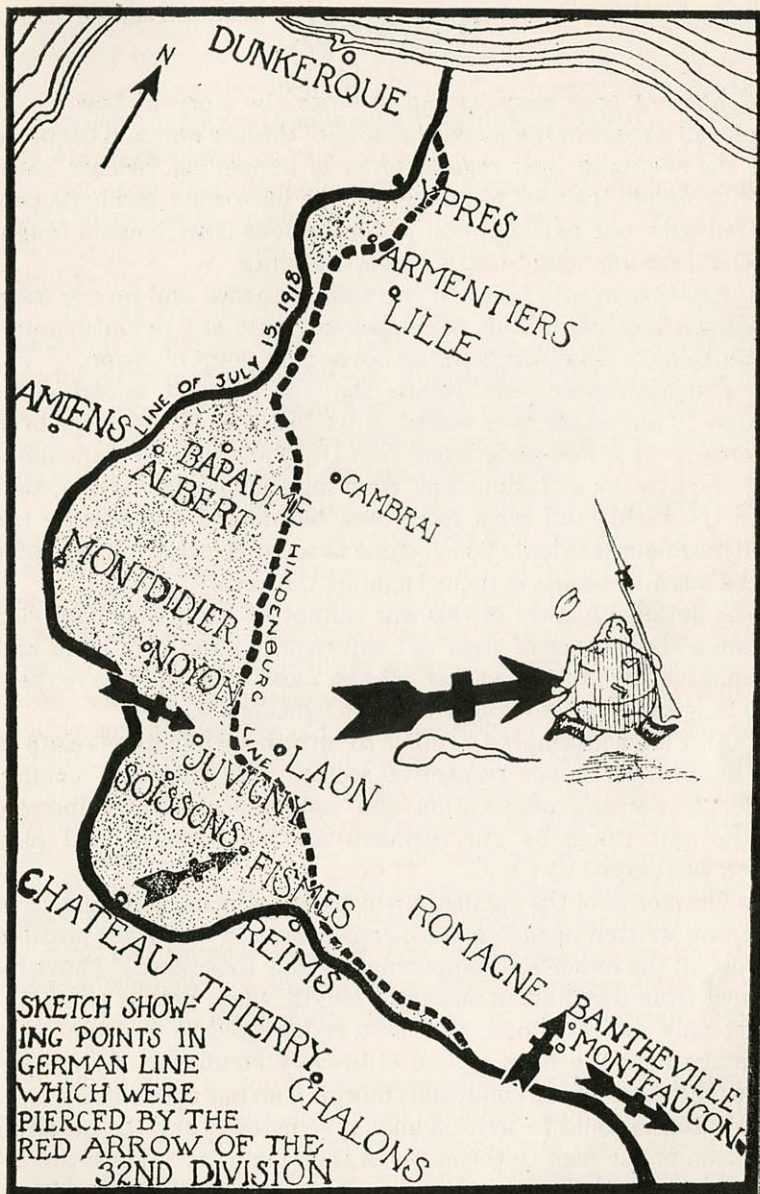
Joseph J. Bauer,	315 12th avenue, N., S. St. Paul, Minnesota.
Andrew A. Beanblossom,	Mockport, Indiana
Dennis E. Bell,	Columbia, Kentucky
Servier F. Bell,	Scottsville, Kentucky
William H. Berry,	R. F. D. No. 7, Nashville, Tenn.
Herman Bluemke,	R. R. No. 1, Box 180, Kawkawlin, Michigan
George Boka,	Teton, Fremont Co., Idaho
Edward Boly,	1219 Tower Grove avenue, St. Louis, Missouri
Peter W. Burk,	Anoka, Minnesota
James F. Burton,	1643 E. 3rd street, Chattanooga, Tennessee
Henry E. Butler,	Hollister, California
Mitchell Cloyd,	Jonesboro, Arkansas
Wade H. Crabb,	Muddy Point, Virginia
Chrisman Crabtree,	Hidalgo, Kentucky
Rocco DeVincentis,	221 8th street, Sharpsburg, Penn- sylvania
Gregorio R. Domingos,	780 Bay street, San Francisco, California
Constantinos Econome,	515 Beacon street, San Pedro, California
Simon A. Entmeier,	412 N. Galena avenue, Freeport, Illinois
Henry Feldman,	4152 Papin street, St. Louis, Missouri
Pietro Flongo,	176 Rockway avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.
William Freudenthaler,	1911 Fairmont avenue, Cincinna- ti, Ohio
Claude Frohn,	176 Rockway avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

THE ARGONNE-MEUSE OFFENSIVE

George W. Graham,	King, Arkansas
Denny Hammond,	Delta, Kentucky
Maurice Haug,	Dale, Indiana
Charles A. Hutchinson,	Libertyville, Illinois
Victor J. Jacobs,	Carver, Minnesota
Edward C. Johns,	Unknown
John T. Kostopoulos,	524 Beacon street, San Pedro, California
Victor Kutzbach,	Sheboygan Falls, Wis.
Clarence Laramey,	10th street, Hermosa, California
Frank E. Lester,	736 Parker avenue, Toledo, Ohio
Frank F. LoForti,	R. T. Jay, Box 165A, Fresno, California
Robert F. Luedtke,	Box 44, Young America, Minne- sota
John W. Lybrook,	Floyd & Jefferson streets, Jef- fersonville, Indiana
Leo D. Maier,	965 Dupuy street, Louisville, Kentucky
Charley Martain,	Whealon Springs, Arkansas
John A. Matysik,	2037 Thomas street, Chicago, Illinois
Orvis Miller,	Melrose, Wis.
Jerry C. Montgomery,	Evansville, Tennessee
Henry C. Mormann,	4242 S. Richmond street, Chica- go, Illinois
Carl Muchow,	Blue Hill, Nebraska
Franz P. Nordberg,	954 River street, Hyde Park, Boston, Mass.
Joseph L. Palmer,	R. R. No. 2, Larwill, Indiana
Charles Patterson,	Wilder, Idaho
Edward F. Peters,	862 Pinewood avenue, Toledo, Ohio
Loy J. Pickard,	Gates, Tennessee

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Mike F. Pietrassak,	1749 Hamilton street, Toledo, Ohio
George B. Plummer,	Rifle, Colorado
Timothy A. Powers,	Estacada, Oregon
Martin Quai,	San Martino, Canavese, Italy
William T. Quinn,	Brownsville, Mississippi
Ben Riley,	Paducah, Texas
Ole J. Rockland,	3117 Newton Ave., N. Minne- apolis, Minnesota.
Frank F. Rogers,	3654 Finney avenue, St. Louis, Missouri
Fred Rogers,	116 Forest Avenue, N. Chatta- nooga, Tennessee
Tony Rodinelli,	Box 23, Irven, Pennsylvania
Wilber M. Ruby,	Sellersburg, Indiana
Louis Sabella,	Pessolamazza, Italy
Klein R. Schoenberger,	R. R. No. 1, West Point, Arkansas
Charles W. Sickinger,	402 Mohawk street, Cincinnati, Ohio
Martin Sorenson,	3417 Kinzie avenue, Racine, Wis.
John L. Stanley,	R. R. No. 2, Box 39, McMinn- ville, Tennessee
Nathan W. Swift,	226 S. 4th street, Richmond, California (Gassed)
Eugene M. Tilton,	Dunlap, Iowa
Rufus Tramel,	R. F. D. No. 1, Liberty, Tennessee
Alvin Tyler,	Pocahontas, Arkansas
Jacob Verhelst,	R. R. No. 1, Sheboygan, Wis.
Gilbert A. Wee,	R. R. No. 3, Hanska, Minnesota
Francis J. Wenmoth,	Batavia, Illinois
Max A. Wilk,	Windsor, Colorado
Linn W. Williams,	420 W. Woodland avenue, Ot- tumwa, Iowa
Wilson G. Young,	Box 449, Billings, Montana



SKETCH SHOWING POINTS IN GERMAN LINE WHICH WERE PIERCED BY THE RED ARROW OF THE 32ND DIVISION