

3-3

THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
FOURTH SECTION
COMMITTEE H
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA.

ADVANCED COURSE.

THE 362 INFANTRY
IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE
SEPTEMBER 26-29 (INCL).

MAJOR LEE SUMNER, INFANTRY.

1

I N D E X.

	Page
Bibliography	11
Introduction	1
General Situation	4
The Terrain	5
Disposition (Operation Map)	5
Plans and Orders	6
Operations	6 -14
Gains and Losses	15
Analysis and Criticism	15 -19
Lessons	19 -22

-----o-----

I L L U S T R A T I O N S.

Operations Map, Plate 1

23

B I B L I O G R A P H Y.

Story of the 91st Division.

Pershing's Final Report - Introduction.

600 Days' Service, 361st Infantry

Napoleon's Maxims .

Personal Diary.

INTRODUCTION.

In preparing this monograph, the writer has deemed it necessary to take into consideration the organization of the 91st Division, 181st Brigade, and of course the 362d Infantry.

As this is a monograph written of a personal experience with this organization on the dates specified above, it does not seem appropriate to dwell in lengthy discussion on terrain features, disposition of Army and Corps, therefore, will limit those parts to the bare essentials necessary to properly orient the reader, carry ^{him} with the regiment from birth and finally bring him back with the remnant of the regiment that marched back from the army objective; the regiment that gallantly carried and planted a firm foot-hold on said army objective, the only regiment that gained the line that date or for several days thereafter. (1)

(1) Story
of the 91st
Division. P-1

In eight great western states, the young men of military age chosen to represent their respective communities in the first five percent of the selective draft, constituted the nucleus of the 91st Division of the National Army.

The 181st Infantry Brigade (361st and 362d Infantry) was made up in part from the men mentioned above and from later drafts from the same states. The principal part of the enlisted men of the 362d Infantry coming from Montana.

The Division was mobilized in Camp Lewis, Washington, trained in that extensive training that other divisions endured during those hectic days, when it behooved each and every division commander, and commanders down to the lesser units, to whip a team into shape to combat the Hun.

The majority of the officers of the 362d Infantry were the outcrop of the first training camp at Presidio of San Francisco, California.

Here should be placed and credit given to those officers that were in a great degree responsible for the training of this wonderful unit, as space will not permit to list and specify down to the companies, will only describe the regimental commanders.

At the organization of the regiment Colonel Pegram Whitworth, was designated to command and to this officer should be given a majority of the credit, as it was to his untiring energy and everlasting spirit of the Objective, Offensive and Morale, that finally when it came time to throw all at the Hun, although the command had passed to another, the unit responded and made a hole in the German line on September 29, 1918, that caused a major general to remark, "Give me fresh troops and I will carry the ball to Sedan without halting".

On September 10, 1918, Colonel Whitworth, having been promoted, Colonel John Henry Parker, (Gatlin Gun Parker) assumed command. Assumed does hardly seem the proper term, as Colonel Parker does not assume in any sense of the word, he commands; by this I mean, he leads. He led that gallant regiment personally across the field of Hell where human vocabulary fails in expression, carried along the drive until he fell with three wounds, refused to be evacuated, caused the post of command to be brought forward to his side and personally directed the fight from that position.

The command was at this time (9:30 P.M., September 29, 1918) taken over by Colonel J.B. Woolnough, also an officer of exceptional ability and leadership. In the drive just mentioned he went over the top with the First Battalion of the regiment and during the advance when the Battalion Commander and Adjutant both fell wounded, Woolnough personally led the battalion, for which he was awarded the rank of Colonel.

Late in June, 1918, the Division entrained for an unknown port on the eastern coast and arrived in Camp Merritt and sailed July 6, 1918, arrived in England and received their introduction to Rest Camp No. 1 and English Marmalade.

The trip across the channel and to the training area consumed the usual time and the only incident worthy of relating is a train wreck in which the Machine Gun Company of the regiment lost some seventy (70) men and the Medical Detachment was completely lost. It also can be mentioned that an unknown providence that handles such affairs apparently caused the train crew to switch the officers' car from the rear to the front of the train just before a through freight plowed its way through the last seven or eight cars, leaving death and destruction in its wake.

On September 6, 1918, the movement to the front began. Marches, trucks, more marches by night and the usual sleeping and existing in likely woods in the day time. After being held in reserve in the St. Mihiel Offensive, another tour by night and the 91st Division, less its artillery, that was still held in training, arrived opposite its sector as part of Fifth Corps, First Army. (2)

(2)
Story of
91st Division,
P-14

The sector assigned the 91st Division ran almost exactly up to the dividing line between the army group of the German Crown Prince to the west and the army group of General Von Gallwitz, to the east. On either side of the boundary lay a German divisional sector; the eastern one extending from about the south tip of Cheppy Wood, east to Malancourt, and the western taking in the west half of Cheppy Wood, the Valley of the Aire and the eastern border of the Forest of the Argonne. These two sectors, which lay opposite the 91st Division front were held by the 117 Division and the 1st Prussian Guard Division.

The 117th was rated as one of the best second-class

divisions in the German Army. It had been raised in the second year of the war, had fought with credit in successful Carpathian Campaign on the eastern front and had particularly distinguished itself in Italy. During the offensive in 1918, the 117th was repeatedly used as a shock unit and each time acquitted itself well.

The First Prussian Guard Division as its name implies, belonged to the elite of the German Army and nothing more need be said except that it had been well trained in open warfare.

(3)
Pershing's
Final Report
Par.9, Intro-
duction

(3)

GENERAL SITUATION.

On September 16th, the concentration of the large force for the Meuse-Argonne was well underway, including the movement from the St.Mihiel front. The St.Mihiel salient had been reduced and the staff at Chaumont was taking up the task of launching the second attack by the First Army, which had apparently been planned by General Pershing as the proper strategic move to terminate the war, realizing that never during the war had an essential German line been seriously threatened and as the railroad skirting the Argonne on the north, through Montmedy and Sedan, represented nearly one-half of supply and troop moving power of the German line of communication. (4)

(4)
Story of the
91st Div.
P-11

Since the very beginning of the war this stretch of country had been the scene of hard fighting. During the original German drive in August 1914, the French were forced to fall back down the Meuse and the Aire, Montfaucon was bombarded and taken, the enemy passed by Verdun and struck sand.

After their defeat on the Marne the Germans succeeded in checking their pursuers on a line as designated in another paragraph of this article. From 1916 to the Meuse-Argonne Offensive numerous hand to hand fights, but the net results

(5)Story of in ground gained or lost was small. (5)
the 91st Div.
P-12

THE TERRAIN.

The Foret de Hesse, in which the 91st Division took up its position for the attack, and the Bois de Cheppy, through which it passed on the first day, are easterly extensions of the Foret d' Argonne and, like it, are thick, heavily underbrushed and cut by numerous ravines. The district is sparsely populated and poorly provided with roads.

The French and German lines were separated by the narrow valley of the Brantche, south of the Brantche the French held the heights of Mont des Allienx and Cigalerie Butte, which gave excellent observation across No Man's Land, but the heavy woods in which the front line was located handicapped the observation into the enemy's trenches. The German held the north half of Vanqusis Hill and also could see across No Man's Land, also were retarded from observation of the trenches held by the French, by the woods.

DISPOSITION (OPERATION MAP)

The battle line held on September 25, 1918, was divided into brigade sectors, the 181st on the right and the 182d on the left. ^{For} As the four days covered by this article, the two regiments of 181st Brigade were two days of ^{the} time abreast, and the other two days in column of regiments, it will be ^{not} necessary to cover the brigade sector.

Attached to the Division were the following units:

58th Field Artillery Brigade; one regiment of the 158th Field Artillery; one battalion of the 65th Regiment Coast Artillery; one battery of French Artillery; Company "B", 1st Gas Regiment, less one platoon; 104th Squadron, Air Service, less one flight. (6)

The Machine Gun Company of the regiment was attached to and fought with the First Battalion of the regiment and one company of Machine Guns was attached to each of the other two battalions and therefore became an integral part of the battalion attached.

The Commanding General of the 58th Field Artillery Brigade was ordered to designate two regiments, one battalion to each regiment as supporting guns, and to furnish accompanying batteries, but it was not until the fourth day that batteries were pushed to the front as accompanying guns for front line battalions. During the first day, no artillery was able to reach the positions north of Bois de Cheppy in time to assist the infantry advance.

At the jump off, the command posts were as follows:

Division P.C.	-	Bertrame
Brigade P.C.	-	Lutzen
Regimental P.C.	-	Along the line of Liaison.

PLANS AND ORDERS.

The general plan of the attack will be fully discussed in subsequent monographs of the Army and Fifth Corps, therefore will suffice to say that the 91st was to attack in its zone of action. The 361st Infantry was to assist our regiment in the taking of Epinonville. The 362d Infantry with administrative orders attached made a very bulky document.

The Corps Order stated that each division would push ahead with all the force possible and under no circumstances would wait for troops on its right and left.

The regiment within its zone of action in column of battalions; 1st Battalion in the lead; 2d Battalion to mop up and the 3d Battalion to follow at 500 meters. On our right the 37th Division, on our left the 361st Infantry.

OPERATIONS.

Numerous writers have attempted to describe the artillery bombardment, but I believe it is useless to try, will therefore suffice by saying that those that lay under it during the hours before the jump-off will never forget it. It was so vast, so stunning, and the noise was so overwhelming that no one could grasp the whole.

The regiment was able to cross No Man's Land through the cloud of smoke and mist ~~without~~ suffering casualties. Some difficulties were encountered in the open ground north of Cheppy Wood, but the Powder River Regiment had the bit in their ^{its} teeth and pushed on to a position where the German position near Epinonville could be seen and here the opposition stiffened and on account of a mistake in orders to the 122d Field Artillery, which was to assign one battalion to our support, proceeded to the Very Crossroads and the artillery support never materialized; however, the brigade (361st and 362d Infantry) fought side by side across that open field and before nightfall had penetrated the city, but were ordered back to enable the artillery to bombard the town, also to straighten out the line for the night.

September 27th the kick-off came as the day before and in the night the Germans had strengthened their positions in the town and for the lack of artillery three attempts were made to take Epinonville and finally the regiment swung out of its zone of action long enough to capture the town of Ivoiry that was causing severe losses to us, this owing to the fact that the Division on our right was unable to keep up ~~and~~ ~~A~~ look at the map will show that the ridge extending west of Ivoiry was an excellent machine gun ridge and afforded flanking fire across our regiment.

September 28th the Brigade Order written on a message pad by pencil and leaving plenty space at the bottom, a great deviation from our first attack order, and as the writer thinks, the order, the usual order received under the situation, also attention is invited to the time issued, extracts are shown here exactly as written: (7)

(7)
600 Days'
Service 361
Inf.P-73

"181 Brig.
28 Spt.18-612 AM

F.O.S.

The Brigade will attack in column of Regts. at 7:00

o'clock in the following order:

361st Infantry.

362d Infantry.

The regiments will be formed with two battalions in line, the 3d Battalion in support.

x x x x x x x

The writer well remembers the time of receipt of our order from the Brigade Commander, and up to that time we were preparing and expecting to leap-frog one battalion over the other for the push that day. Here it does not seem amiss to say that no idea of criticism is offered to the Brigade Commander, and on the other hand ^{to} offer the highest praise for that officer that so capably commanded the brigade. His leadership was felt throughout, and it would be hard to find through the Army three officers that could equal or even approach the Brigade Commander, General J.B. McDonald, Colonel William D. Davis, 361st, and our noble leader Colonel John H. Parker, the fire eater.

Upon receiving the order to follow the 361st, our Colonel remarked that he did not know how to follow, he had always been in the lead up to this time and I will remark that no truer words were ever spoken than those.

The 361st lost heavily during the day, especially when the outfit reached Les Epinettes Bois and the Bois de Ceirges and the night apparently found them in a desperate position as at 1:00 A.M., September 29th General McDonald called our P.C., and ordered Colonel Parker to push one of our battalions forward to support the 361st Infantry. Colonel Parker, with certain members of his staff, went forward, verified the condition of 361st Infantry and at 3:00 A.M., our 2d Battalion moved up. The front line extended from la Grange Aux Bois about 1000 meters to the left, along the hither side of the geographical crest along the ridge. At this time the

Colonel requested that the Brigade Reserve (our 1st Battalion) be released and allowed to take over the right of the line, this was done and we now had the line by daylight that I mentioned above.

The position at daylight was a precarious one. While it has been my effort to keep from belittling anyone, it here becomes necessary to at least explain in part the reasons for our position. The 182d Brigade of our division had apparently fallen down on its leadership as the Brigade Commander and one of the regimental commanders were relieved after a few hours from the jump-off September 26. The 35th Division on their left had led off to the left leaving a wide gap for which the 182d Brigade found it necessary to fill. The 37th Division on our right see-sawed back and forth and there are numerous witnesses that will state that the Division; or that part within our sight, retreated in more or less disorder on several occasions and on the morning of the 29th the 91st Division had a salient into the German front, without very little support from the left and for three kilometers to the right, none at all. At 11:00 A.M. after a careful reconnaissance of our front lines, Colonel Parker reported the situation by runner and phone to the General, McDonald, and at 4.00 P.M., the order was received to take Gesnes at once, without fail, and without regard to loss. Upon receipt of this order, knowing the situation, well aware that we were then sticking out to the front like a sore thumb, the Regimental Adjutant refused to take the order, thinking some mistake surely had been made, but it came again; You must take it. Colonel Parker proceeded to the telephone and insisted on having the order confirmed again. After being assured that the town was to be taken he replied, "We will take the town, but the 362d Infantry will need a new Colonel within an hour as I intend to lead the Second Battalion", and ordered Lt.Colonel J.B.Woolnough to lead the First Battalion.

He assembled his staff and asked them how many wanted to go along, telling them it would take the combined effort of all to take the town.

Census book form P
Colonel Parker has been censured for leaving his P.C., at this critical time, but from a viewpoint of the officers that crossed that field, they are all firmly convinced that the only way to capture Gesnes was to throw your all at it; therefore, when the last unit of your organization goes into action, he believed, as many of the older officers still believe, you should then proceed too.

One machine gun battalion moved into position in front of our P.C., an old stone quarry to give overhead fire to our troops and one battalion of the 361st moved over the right front to protect the flank, while another battalion of the same regiment widened the line along the right.

Again I hesitate to attempt to give a description of this field. German observation from Hill 255 northwest of Gesnes and the German airplanes that flew over our troops at will, kept the artillery from our front and both flanks accurately on our lines until the town was taken and the ridge beyond. Colonel Parker fell seriously wounded before reaching Gesnes, Lt. Colonel Woolnough, with the 1st Battalion on the right became separated and was given up for lost. The entire staff of the 1st Battalion were either killed or wounded and the regiment found itself, until Lt. Colonel Woolnough rejoined about 8:00 P.M., without a field officer. Montana men showed their metal, moving to almost certain death, they never wavered, but continued to advance until, as related above, they reached the ridge beyond Gesnes. The cry of "Powder (Poder) River", "Let 'er Buck", was the battle cry - From one side you would hear a shout: "Powder River", and across a space of fifty yards would come back the cry - "A mile wide and an inch deep", only to be responded by another man - "A mile deep and an inch wide". Here I should explain that

Poder River is apparently a small stream in Montana and the people attach a feeling to that district something to the feeling that we have for the mountaineer of Kentucky - that is, men of sturdy stock, shoot straight, etc.

In trying to give an account of this last days attack and in a measure describe the death dealing Hun, pouring from every method shot and shell upon those gallant men, the saddest is yet to come. With bowed heads, with a wail of despair in their hearts, they were forced to retire back to the same line that they kicked off from at 4:00 P.M., that date. Why, not from the Boche, but from higher authority of our own forces.

It has been explained, or better, an explanation has been offered, but not by the ones that crossed that field, they were afraid that the 362d Infantry would have been captured. There might have been another lost unit, but not captured, not that organization. Any organization that will go forward under the casualties that were inflicted that day, would never be captured. Also, the officers and men that witnessed the Huns scurrying for cover as the regiment took the Hill by assault, would readily understand that it would have taken leadership and morale, the latter especially, to turn the enemy around and bring him back.

Upon receiving the order to retire, it was not obeyed immediately, for good and sufficient reasons: First, supported by the Brigade Commander, the regiment wanted to hold their ground. They believed that if the town was worth taking at such a price, it was worth holding, they also believed that there being the U.S. Army on our right and left, if they were far to rear, and after seeing the Hun retreat in disorder, that the American soldier would come forward along side, or near enough if there were leaders to lead them, and as stated above this belief was shared by the Brigade Commander, until he received positive orders that the retreat must be made, and at once.

The rearward movement was made, and wounded taken along - this after using every means in our power to be permitted to stay. It became a case of each and every man helping wounded, and a military man can conceive the work the work of reorganizing the regiment after this move. However, the remaining men, hardly fitting here to say regiment, were reorganized after passing the battalion of the 361st Infantry that moved up far enough to put a screen out in front, in fact just a few yards in front kick off line at 4:00 P.M., until they could regain their other battalion that was holding the right of our advance. Those men that had the privilege of serving in France can appreciate the feeling that existed in the regiment for a few days, but as I am here to relate only the four days, will not attempt to describe the work cut out for the remaining officers of the regiment.

Colonel Parker, although wounded and unable to proceed at the head of the organization, continued to command as best he could from his position, and sent two messages that I have been informed by people that should know, reached Division P.C., and were made of record. As explained, Colonel Parker fell before reaching Gesnes, and after being assured that everything that could be ^{would be} done for the Regimental Commander possible under the situation, the Regimental Adjutant went on with the troops in their dash for Democracy, until the ridge beyond the town was taken, and after ordering the reorganization for defense, the Adjutant returned back through Hell, to the Colonel and had the following dictated to him: "We have taken Gesnes and the ridge beyond, have dug in, have food and water, and can and will hold until Hell freezes over". Back to the rear P.C., for said Adjutant for the purpose of moving it forward, and when arriving finding it necessary to borrow men from the 361st Infantry, as all our Signal Corps men had been used as runners and only God could tell where they were at this time. The P.C. was moved forward, this after

Reconstruction?

the word had come to retire. Another message worthy of note. "We have made a hole in the German Line. Send fresh troops to carry the ball and we can go to Sedan".

Alas, after all, the 362d Infantry did not take Gesnes. This has been made so by the historical writer of the World War. We are given credit for having patrols in said town. The officers and men that made the supreme sacrifice on that field, I hope, did not die in vain, the only regiment to place themselves on the Army Objective on the fourth day of the Argonne Offensive did not get the credit for taking it. Admitted, it was given up and another organization paid in blood for the retaking, but it would seem that a full explanation would read better to the loved ones of those that died that Y O U might live, if full particulars, would be stated not saying or believing that any attempt has ever been made to discredit the organization, but simply stating facts.

It is the belief of the writer, and this after careful study and conferences with other officers, that the advance and taking of Gesnes was only made possible by the training of the officers and enlisted men of the regiment and the leadership displayed by that great soldier - John Henry Parker. It was the writer's privilege to have known and served in several capacities under this man and without hesitation announce that only a Fire Eater, a man that feared neither Man nor Devil would walk at the head of that organization under those conditions. As stated before, critics state, and it is now the policy for the commander to stay in observation, this of course admitted that you lose control of the mass for a few, but nevertheless, if you carefully study our attack order you will see that it said: "Take Gesnes, without fail, regardless of loss". That could only mean one thing - The Regimental Commander was the man held responsible, his regiment was the organization to be sacrificed on the altar - it was to the death, and I firmly believe that when he notified the brigade

? Regue in report, general's faulty construction

that another colonel would be needed in one hour, he expected to meet the fate that was meted out, or worse.

Another leader entered to a great degree in the success of the 181st Brigade none other than the Commanding General. A soldier only had to see this man on the battle field to feel that wonderful influence that radiated from every white hair from that great old soldier's head. A wonderful leader - a man among men. I feel sure that those brave men of the regiment felt it an honor to die for those two men and proud of the fact that they belonged to a race that turned out such leaders.

The following letter of recognition from the Commanding General of the Fifth Army Corps was received by the Division Commander during the night of October 3 - 4, while relief by the 32d Division was being effected:

"Hq. Fifth Army Corps,

American Expeditionary Forces,

France, 3d October, 1918.

From: Commanding General, V Army Corps.

To: Commanding General, 91st Division.

Subject: Relief of 91st Division.

Under orders from the First Army, the 91st Division will be relieved from the front line tonight and placed in Corps Reserve.

The Corps Commander wishes you to understand that the relief results solely from the realization by higher command that your Division has done its full share in the recent success, and is entitled to a rest for reorganization. This especially as during the past three days, it has incurred heavy casualties when circumstances would not permit either advance or withdrawal. (8)

AT A TIME WHEN THE DIVISIONS ON ITS FLANKS WERE FALTERING AND EVEN FALLING BACK, THE 91ST PUSHED AHEAD AND STEADFASTLY CLUNG TO EVERY YARD GAINED.

In its initial performance, your division has

established itself firmly in the list of the Commander-in-Chief's reliable fighting units. Please extend to your officers and men my appreciation of their splendid behavior and my hearty congratulations on the brilliant record they have made.

George H. Cameron,
Major General, Commanding."

GAINS AND LOSSES.

In the four days of fighting the regiment, including the Gesnes affair, lost seventy percent. On the afternoon of September 29, 1918, the regiment started over with just a few men less than 2000 and the next morning we mustered about 900 men. In these figures here, I have used every means possible to check up and give a correct report of the losses, even writing to the Regimental Personnel Adjutant, Colonel John H. Parker, retired, Colonel J.B. Woolnough, and have conferred with every one else that could give information on the subject. I remember reporting the losses as approximately 50% on the morning of September 30, and to have discreditance placed on the report by the Division Commander. I suppose he remembered our teaching along the line, breaking point, before the war, however, careful count made no difference, except to increase the figures given.

We claim as gains, the Army Objective, Prisoners, and Material captured - no record but our share.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.

The Battle of the Argonne and the Meuse represented but a part of the offensive undertaken by General Foch in the fall of 1918, for the British and French had also been energetically attacking since the end of September on the front in Flanders and northern France. This attack, while still on French soil, struck one of the main arteries of the German army, the Metz - Sedan railway, by which essential part of the army were being supplied and for which no substitute was to be had. There was nothing new in the attack, as the same

plan had been used before.

In addition to a strategical important task, the American Army had the advantage of possession of unlimited reserves and material, true the bringing up of ammunition and supplies were not always well handled, but the "Never say die" spirit of the American Soldier, the spirit that if you had no ammunition you are still equipped with your bayonet, if you break the bayonet use the rifle as a club, and if you break your rifle, choke the enemy to death, such a soldier can never be conquered - he will always close with the enemy.

Some of the German writers speak of the long columns of Americans, beardless youths from beyond the ocean, radiating health and strength. "America was the Savior of France".

The American soldier went into the battle in the first enthusiasm of war, which had long since become an earnest conception of duty with Germans, English and French, and in an ignorance of the horrors of modern warfare; while the French, gallant soldiers there were, would only attack if their red wine had arrived and then after artillery preparation, the American went forward with that desire to close, the spirit of the bayonet ever evident, accepted terrific losses quite naturally and the propaganda, true or exaggerated, the wickedness of the Boche was evident, and a certain hatred of the foe was an ever increasing stimulation to our army.

Those same German writers are quite frank in stating that the Independent Socialist Party was carrying on sabotage of the war and found fertile field with hungry people in Germany, also, they claim the influenza was working havoc among the troops, and there can be no doubt that the American had succeeded on September 26, 1918, in that which is the primary principle of all successes in war - surprise of the enemy.

Since the World War, careful study has been made of traffic control, priority of roads and the use of

engineer troops in the Theater of Operations and our Staff and Command School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, have problems in road graphs. Subsequently in this article, I mentioned lack of roads to the front, also, the fact that the artillery could not keep up. Anyone that attempted to move to the front or the reverse during these operations will bear me out in saying that if there was any effort made to control, except have a M.P. at a crossroad, it simply did not work.

Not with an idea of finding fault with the Artillery, as I am not familiar enough with their problems in the Argonne, to say, except to state that they did not keep up. Accompanying guns, as ordered, did very little if any good.

The Air Service was also noticeable by their absence, an explanation given as we advanced they became farther from their landing field which made it impossible for them to give support.

Machine Gun Battalion gave excellent service and this can be explained by the fact that they were an integral part of the brigade and had to take orders, where the artillery and air service were simply supporting, which makes, or did make, all the difference in the world.

The Corps Orders for the attack, in fact the Army handed down the order; each division, regardless of the division on their right and left will push the attack home, ie., not waiting or attacking in conjunction with each other. The 91st Division was ahead throughout the four days, therefore, received fire from the front and flanks, both artillery and auxiliary weapons, as you will note it became necessary for the 362d Infantry to go to the right, out of their zone of action and capture the town of Ivriory. This point, while a good one sometimes, will always put the unit ahead in a dangerous position, flanks more or less open and last, but not

least, the division behind generally ask and obtain more artillery to support their advance when they try to push up forward - result, the barrage covers several hundred yards more than their sector and you have the extreme pleasure of having your own artillery laying down a barrage in your rear that gradually creeps up and up and finally, if you live to tell the tale, passes on and gets out where there may be some of the enemy. This is a beautiful feeling, you feel almost as secure as to step in front of and stand while a railroad engine bears down on you. There is only one that can beat it for an impossible situation and that is when the enemy planes fly over your head low enough for you to hit them with your forty-five, which happened on the 29th, except we were too busy to fire at them.

In the advance on the third and fourth days, the enemy's balloons were in plain sight, quietly overlooking every move we made, in telephone communication with the artillery and other troops. It would seem that some method could have been advanced to have made them at least feel insecure. As mentioned before, the German planes did as they pleased, flew over at random and when they sweep down your line, you could expect artillery fire immediately and always received it.

The 362d Infantry was quietly trained in a new method of advance. That is, in place of squads, we formed gangs, each gang built around the automatic rifle. These gangs numbered from eight to fourteen men. The advance, while similar to the wave formation but differed in that the gang was deployed more in depth. The two scouts out in front, followed by the leader, and in turn by the rest of the gang, spread out and echeloned in depth to cover their zone of action. This had the advantage of not affording a long line for machine guns to fire enfilade fire down the line and zone, a very scattered target for any kind of weapons. For further description

assume we were advancing on a front of one thousand yards, with Company "A" and "B" in the assault. The formation assumed and the organization at that time meant two platoons ahead and two in support, in other words, two platoons of Company "A" for instance would have a front of 500 yards for almost one hundred and ten men to cover. Therefore, the platoon leader would designate one man, give him his attack directions and place him in the center of his zone, and the seven, eight or ten gangs would start within their zones, scouts ahead, taking advantage of cover and feeling out the enemy. As often happened, machine guns would open up on a certain part of the line and the scouts would flop, take up the fire and the firing line would be built up along the line of scouts. Other gangs, say to right or left or both, would continue to advance and of course bring flanking fire, say from rifle grenades on said machine guns.

This system worked to great advantage throughout the Argonne and Belgium with less losses than would have incurred in any other formation, and as explained before and admitted the 91st, particularly the 181st Brigade were always ahead in the Argonne.

As shown before, the troops fought well and were apparently well led. Those training camp officers had come through with a vengeance and were accepted as real honest to God soldiers.

LESSONS.

The real lesson learned, or at least accepted, resulted in our Congress finally giving us a National Defense Act. Our wars always in main fought with the civilian, yet this war found us as always before, without any means or ways to raise an army. The false idea that a million men would spring to arms over night, was exploded with a terrible rebound. Recruiting was open for several months and the only

crowded places were where the would be officer mobbed the place where he expected to receive his commission and thereby beat the draft.

Not saying that our Americans did not fight when they were finally drafted, that would be foolish and contrary to facts, but simply stating that voluntary enlistments, springing to arms overnight, did not work.

Congress finally passed the selective draft and we were on our way.

General Pershing no doubt spent many wakeful nights during the time that the First Army was in the initial stages, wondering and hoping. The 362d Infantry for instance, had just two regular army officers, and on such regiments he was, in fact our Nation depended on them to bring the Hun, that army of professionals to their knees. What was done in history, and General Pershing, if not before, now realized that again we relied upon the citizens army to win our wars; therefore, this man in his quiet effective way set about convincing the people that preparedness was the only way - hence our now National Defense Act.

As passed in 1920, it would pass the test of time, real advantages of national resources and population were taken and at last we have, even after the Pacific has torn apart some of the real body, the only Defense Act the United States has ever had.

It hardly seems appropriate to quote Napoleon, but it seems so to hit the case, that I will quote: '1- When once the offensive has been assumed, it must be sustained to the last extremity . (9).

(9)
Napoleon's
VI Maxim

Here this applies to our attack on the 29th. We apparently did exactly what the enemy wanted us to do, hit straight to the front. 2 -Infantry and artillery are (10) nothing without each other; therefore they should always be disposed to assist each other. Especially should artillery

(10)
Napoleon's
XL Maxim

be ready to assist Infantry held up by strong enemy resistance. This was carefully explained in subsequent paragraphs, that the artillery failed, probably through no fault of their own to keep up so they could put fire on the enemy.

3 - Air Service should be so disposed to furnish communication to the troops they support, this failed in the first four days of the Argonne.

4 - Ammunition and food must be kept up, this, while not a complete failure, was so close to a failure that it had its effect on the combat units. Of course, roads and other means of communication spell victory or defeat to any army, and therefore, full advantage should be taken of them.

5 - Morale and leadership go hand in hand. With leadership and morale the battle is half won. Apparently the 362d Infantry had both, as they accepted their losses, always keeping their face to the enemy, and forever seeking to close with him, thereby keeping the spirit of offensive on the proper side.

6 - The principle of Mass and Concerted Effort was ably demonstrated on the 29th. When the proper time comes, give him all you have, then notify higher authority of your action.

7 - Auxiliary weapons of an infantry regiment must be an integral part of the unit making the main effort, and not having the mission of supporting. This was the real reason why the machine gun became a part of the battalion and under the command of unit commander.

8 - Sufficient staff with each headquarters to enable or allow the unit commander to assume the offensive and not keep a paper battle with the higher headquarters, as continually happened during the late war. It proved itself conclusively, hence the new organization.

9 - Organization should be led up to a major operation, if possible, thereby training officers in the art of warfare, actual warfare, that cannot be done by maneuvers. The 91st

Division jumped directly into the Argonne, and officers had never been called upon for the real test.

10 - Relieving organization commanders on the eve of battle, works a great disadvantage to the organization.

On the whole, the 181st Brigade fought well, and only minor errors of junior commanders caused any inconvenience.

ZONE OF ACTION 91st DIVISION ARCONNE - MEUSE OFFENSIVE SEPT 26th - 29th 1918.

