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

ADVANCED COURSE  
1930-1931

OPERATIONS OF THE 108TH INFANTRY (27TH DIVISION US)  
IN THE BRITISH OFFENSIVE TOWARDS MAUBEUGE, SEPTEMBER  
27-30, 1918. (PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF AN ASSISTANT  
REGIMENTAL OPERATIONS OFFICER)

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MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

G.S.S.	"Monograph, II Corps."
Harrison	Personal Experiences.
HQ 27 Div	"Official Commendations of the 27th Division."
O'Ryan	"History of the 27th Division."

## INTRODUCTION

The allied plans for the last week in September, 1918, included an American attack in the Meuse-Argonne sector, a French attack in Champagne, a Belgian and allied force advance in Flanders, and a British offensive along the Somme in the direction of Maubeuge. These attacks were to be synchronized, for obvious reasons. It is with the British attack along the Somme, that we are interested.

### PART TO BE PLAYED BY THE II AMERICAN CORPS IN THE BRITISH ADVANCE TOWARD MAUBEUGE AND THE TERRAIN IN THEIR ZONE OF ADVANCE

The II American Corps, composed of the 27th and 30th Divisions, less their artillery, had been with the British since their arrival in France. They were armed with British rifles, bayonets, machine guns, Lewis guns, used British transport, and ate British rations. After serving with the Second British Army in Belgium, this corps was transferred to the Fourth British Army for the advance along the Somme Valley, in the direction of Maubeuge. (1)

(1) GSS, p 6

The 27th Division, at that time was composed of the 105th, 106th, 107th and 108th Regiments of infantry, the 104th, 105th and 106th Machine Gun Battalions, the 103d Engineers, the 103d Field Signal Battalion, and various other smaller units. The field artillery brigade was not with the division and did not rejoin until after the Armistice.

In this general advance scheduled for the last week in September, as already stated, the II American Corps was given a zone of advance opposite, and including, the so-called Tunnel Sector of the Siegfried

(2) O'Ryan  
p 253

Stellung, usually named the Hindenburg Line. The 27th Division was to relieve the 74th and 18th British Divisions, who were, at that time, in that sector. (2)

The Hindenburg Line was organized in the latter part of 1916 and had been greatly enlarged and strengthened since that time. The Siegfried Stellung was that portion of the Hindenburg Line that extended along the Bellicourt-St. Quentin Canal, and made full use of this canal as an obstacle. The Tunnel Sector, in the zone of advance assigned to the 27th Division, was that part, where the canal, which was one of Napoleon's projects, runs thru a tunnel, under high ground, for about 6000 yards, from a point south of Bellicourt and emerging about 1000 yards west of Le Catelet. From thence it runs northwest to and thru Vendhuile and thence again to the north.

The town of Vendhuile, well fortified and entrenched, guarded the northern exit of the canal. The canal itself, is about 39 feet wide, approximately 6 feet deep, and had a towpath on each side. The canal as such, was out of use during the war, but had been dammed near Bellenglise to keep sufficient water in the channel north of that point. The flow of water in the canal being from north to south.

The Siegfried Stellung, embracing three lines of trenches, lay west of the high ground above the tunnel. These trenches were of excellent construction, all heavily wired, and contained many machine gun emplacements of the latest type. Bony was the strong-point of this sector, with the "Knoll", Guillemont Farm and Quennemont Farm as strongpoints to the front. To the east, in the support and reserve positions,

were numerous trenches, well organized and all heavily wired. (3)

(3) O'Ryan  
pp 265-267

To return again to the tunnel. Numerous barges were moored in the tunnel and many shelters, some very elaborate, and dug-outs had been dug and both barges and dug-outs fitted up to quarter troops, affording an absolutely safe retreat for the garrison of both front and support lines. All this was electrically lighted. In addition, about fifteen exits had been constructed, affording egress to the trench system, both east and west of the tunnel. These exits had been concreted, camouflaged and were protected by machine gun emplacements, thus making this sector, not a trench position, but a fortress.

This strong position had been unsuccessfully attacked by the British 74th Division on September 18, on September 21, and again on the night of September 21-22, in an endeavor to capture the advanced positions of the "Knoll", Quennemont Farm and Guillemont Farm, so as to bring the line in prolongation of the line already held to the right and to establish this line as the start line for the main operation to come later.

(4) O'Ryan  
pp 251-252

(4)

The 27th Division, which had been training with tanks in the Beuquesne Area, was detrained and debussed in the Tincourt Area on September 23 and 24 and moved up to relieve the battered British 74th Division. The 106th Infantry (US), supported by the 105th, was to take over the British position and to take these advanced posts, which the British had been unable to capture, and thus bring the line in this sector up to the position designated as a start line for the main attack on September 29th. (5)

(5) GSS, p 9

(6) GSS  
pp 9-11

This attack of the 106th Infantry on September 27, of one regiment, as the other regiment, the 105th, was not to be involved more than necessary, was made on a 4000-yard front, and the objective was 1100 yards in advance. It failed (6), and the failure was to play an important part in the later main attack, as we shall see.

(7) O'Ryan  
pp 713-714

The main attack along the front of the Fourth British Army was scheduled for September 29 and was to be made in this sector by the 27th Division, with the 54th Brigade in the assault, regiments abreast, the 108th on the right and the 107th on the left. The objective was the "Green Line", as shown on the map. The 30th Division (US), was on the right of the 27th Division and the 18th British Division on the left. One battalion of the 106th Infantry was to accompany the 54th Brigade as "moppers-up". (7) Twelve tanks were to accompany the assault and nine brigades (216 guns) of British and Australian artillery were to fire a creeping barrage, with lifts of four minutes per 100 yards, which would carry the barrage to a point 400 yards east of the tunnel, where it would rest for fifteen minutes. This barrage was fifteen per cent smoke, forty-five per cent shrapnel and forty-five per cent H. E. The 105th and 106th Machine Gun Battalions were to form a machine gun barrage. The 104th Machine Gun Battalion was to support the left flank of the division and to cover counterattacks from the vicinity of Vendhuile. (8)

(8) O'Ryan  
pp 300-301

For forty-eight hours prior to the attack an artillery bombardment was to be put over, and for the early portion of the bombardment "yellow cross" or

(9) O'Ryan  
p 301

mustard gas, was to be used. This was the first use of this gas by the British artillery and as the enemy had not been subjected to it heretofore, it was believed that it would be very effective. (9)

(10) O'Ryan  
p 713

Another phase of the attack was that the 3d Australian Division was to pass through the lines of the 27th Division at the "Green Line". Their objective was the "Red Line", as shown on the map. The Australians were also to be supported by artillery and tanks. (10)

#### OPERATIONS OF THE 108TH INFANTRY

In pursuance of these orders the 108th Infantry left their bivouac in the vicinity of Templeux le Geurard on the night of September 27-28 and marched to their position under heavy artillery fire of gas and H. E. Taking over from the 106th Infantry by daybreak of September 28. The positions of the 106th were difficult to locate, due to the disorganized condition of that regiment, and many casualties occurred in the relief. Regimental headquarters were located at F 28 c 8-5. First Battalion Headquarters at F 28 d 8-9, Second Battalion at F 29 b 5-7 and the Third Battalion at Duncan Post, F 17 d 6-7.

The regiment was to attack two battalions in line. The 2d Battalion, Captain Thompson, on the right, connecting up with the 119th Infantry, of the 30th Division, on their right. Attached were one platoon of the Machine Gun Company, one section of trench mortars and one section of one-pounders. The 3d Battalion, Captain Maldiner, on the left, with one platoon of the Machine Gun Company, two sections of trench mortars, and one section of one-pounders attached. One section of one-pounders was out of

action due to a broken part, that could not be replaced at that time. The 1st Battalion, Major Couchman, was in support, with one platoon of the Machine Gun Company attached to it. (11)

(11) O'Ryan  
pp 302-303

On arrival in the line, patrols were sent forward, endeavoring to occupy the 1100 yards which the 106th had tried to take and failed. These patrols met with no success, except to confirm the report that detached groups of the 106th and many of their wounded were in this disputed area. This area was swept by machine gun fire from the enemies' advanced posts and from Bony. (12)

(12) O'Ryan  
p 303

Orders from superior headquarters prevented the 54th Brigade from making an attack to gain this area and thus to attain the designated start line. (13) A conference was therefore held as to the question of the proper place to jump off, which question the enemy had apparently already decided, and also as to where the barrage was to begin. Due to the fact of the detached groups and wounded of the 106th in the brigade front, it was finally decided that the start line would be pegged at the original position held by the 106th, that the number of tanks would be increased, and that the barrage would fall 1100 yards in front of the start line, thus placing it beyond, or rather behind, the enemies' advanced posts, but also beyond those detached groups of the 106th, already mentioned, who were unable to advance or retire, due to the heavy enemy artillery and machine gun fire. (14)

(14) GSS, p 124;  
O'Ryan  
p 300

So the original position held by the 106th was taped as the jump-off line. This taping seems to be peculiarly a British ceremony. A band of white cloth

tape, about three inches in width, is secured or pegged to the ground along a designated line and the leading elements of the assault form on that line and move forward at the zero hour.

Supplies were sent forward. An extra water-bottle, canteen in American language, full of water was issued to each man, along with extra ammunition. Gas masks, first-aid packets, shell dressings, an overgrown first-aid packet, were checked. Grenades, Very lights and rockets were issued. Each machine gun was furnished with 3500 rounds per Vickers gun, there being four guns to the platoon. (15) Each platoon of the rifle companies had four Lewis guns, and numerous filled drums therefor. Each company was plentifully supplied with hand grenades, and the band section, which was with the rear echelon, had the task of arming these grenades before they were sent forward. It is sad to relate that the bandsmen were not over-enthusiastic over this addition to their duties.

A forward signal party was to accompany the assault. This party was composed of the Regimental Signal Officer, Lieutenant Page and 47 men of the Regimental Signal Detachment, also a party of men from the rifle companies who were to assist in carrying a portion of the four tons of signal equipment that had been issued to the regiment and a fair share of which seemed to be necessary to equip this forward party. They had pigeons, five miles of wire, and various methods for visual signaling, and were to keep in contact with regimental headquarters by these means.

(16)

While these preparations were going on, the rear echelon was endeavoring to forward hot rations

(15) O'Ryan  
p 313

(16) GSS,  
p 159

from the "cookers", or rolling kitchens, several miles in the rear. Hot food containers, made on the general principle of a thermos bottle, were filled with stew and sent forward. Water, which was scarcely to be found in this area in a drinkable condition, was shipped forward in five gallon petrol tins, and when the filling party had neglected to clean out the gasoline, as they oftentimes did, the contents were not exactly palatable, even to a thirsty man. The enemy constantly maintained a heavy artillery fire on roads, trenches, suspected assembly points and on P.C.'s. And so the ration parties had a difficult task before them. The ration limber of Headquarters Company arrived with the rear section missing, due to a direct hit on it.

The British limbers, made on the idea of an artillery limber and caisson, drawn by four horses, with drivers mounted on the near horses, is an excellent vehicle for travel over shot-scarred roads and shell-torn areas. Its main objection is its limited capacity.

The signal detachment, composed of one officer and seventy-six men, of the signal platoon of Headquarters Company, and fifty-odd men attached from the 102d Field Signal Battalion, had laid wire to brigade and to the battalion P.C.'s soon after arrival in this sector. The arrival of the tanks cut what wire the enemy shell had overlooked and the signalmen had a busy night. Blinkers could not be used to the rear on account of the visibility, which was nil. The orderly section of Headquarters Company was not large enough to supply runners for regiment and battalions under the circumstances, so the Pioneer Platoon of Headquarters Company was inducted into service to carry messages. As these men had been hand-picked for their

physique and not for their mental capacity, they were not exactly a success. However, by the use of all these means, communication to the front and rear was never delayed for any length of time.

At 5:50 AM on the morning of September 29 the barrage fell 1100 yards in advance of the jump-off line and the assault battalions moved forward, as per schedule, in several waves. So thoroughly was the regiment imbued with the spirit of trench warfare that the battalion commanders and staffs remained in their P. O's. This left the direction of affairs to the company commanders. The weather was foggy, visibility poor, and the ten per cent of smoke in the barrage added to the troubles. The enemy counter-barrage went mostly over the assault waves, (17) but the enemy machine guns were better directed.

(17) GSS,  
p 125

When the first wave arrived in the vicinity of the enemy advanced posts, trouble started. Being without battalion commanders, the battalions broke up into companies, company commanders fell and the companies broke up into platoons and the platoons up into groups, under the well directed machine gun fire. The regiment was under-officered when it took over, due to the fact that so many officers had been ordered away in the pursuit of military knowledge at the many and varied schools maintained to teach warfare in its especial branches, and the officer casualties were heavy from the start. This added to the disorganization.

The advance signal party had its signal officer wounded early in the action and a few well directed shells completed the dispersion. The riflemen slunk away to join their companies and the signalmen dropped their burdens. There is no record of their having

functioned as signalmen, but most pushed on and took some part in the assault.

The accompanying tanks for the 108th Infantry had been increased to fifteen after the conference. These were from the 301st American Tank Battalion Company A. They were British Mark V star tanks. As the tank corps understood their instructions they were to pick up the infantry at zero minus one hour and accompany them to the intended start line. If the infantry was not ready to move the tanks were to push forward to the intended start line alone. On arrival the tanks found that the line originally designated as the start line for September 29 had been changed. So the tanks pushed forward to carry out their orders. As a result the tanks passed over the 108th's start line some time before the zero hour, 5:50 AM and were on their way toward the main position when the barrage fell. Consequently, the tanks were without infantry support and fought a little war of their own. Two tanks hit land mines which the British had planted and had forgotten to mention. Others were put out of action by the enemy artillery or anti-tank defenses, five reached the main defenses of the Hindenburg Line, and but two were functioning as dusk fell. The smoke and fog added to their difficulties and the lack of infantry support prevented their effective use in holding the ground that they had so manfully gained. One of the tank officers described their part of the operation as "A hell of a mess from start to finish".

(18) Harrison

(18)

To return to the regiment. The 2d Battalion, in its advance, had the strongpoint of Quennemont Farm

on its left flank. This delayed the advance almost from the jump-off. It is not known whether Quennemont Farm was taken, but not mopped up, or whether the entire battalion infiltrated around it to the south. In either case, Quennemont Farm held up the Australians in their advance later and was taken by them and completely mopped up. Company E, undoubtedly the best rifle company in the regiment, functioned well under the command of Lieutenant Brown and its losses were the smallest in the battalion. It formed a nucleus for the by now, almost disorganized battalion. However, the battalion advanced, by one means or another, were joined later in the day by the Australians in their advance, and by dusk, the remnants, with some Australians, were established along Topal Lane and in the main trenches south of Bony (19), connecting up with the 2d Battalion of the 119th Infantry 30th Division, which was also in the main line, south of Bony and partly in the sector of the 108th. The 30th Division had made more rapid progress in their zone of advance from the beginning and had aided the 2d Battalion of the 108th by this forward movement.

(19) O'Ryan  
p 810

The 3d Battalion, on the left, had hard going from the beginning. Guillemont Farm, on their left front and Quennemont Farm to their right, sprayed them with heavy machine gun fire. Unable to capture Guillemont Farm, they began to shove forward up Dirk Valley (20), between Guillemont and Quennemont Farms. On arrival in this valley, they were under fire from the main position at Bony. Unable to advance against this fire, and unable to retreat, if they so desired, by the fire from the two farms, they were immobilized and there remained until the Australians mopped up

(20) GSS p 131

Quennemont Farm and joined them later on in the day. Guillemont Farm was not taken until September 30th.

The 1st Battalion, following in close support, advanced about 400 yards and was then halted by enemy fire, mostly machine gun, from both Guillemont and Quennemont Farms, and remained in a defensive position along that line. (21)

(21) GSS, p 129

The general position in the afternoon was this, the 2d Battalion to the south of Quennemont Farm and in the main line south of Bony. The 3d Battalion mostly up Dirk Valley, held up by fire from Guillemont Farm and Bony, and the 1st Battalion to the west, cut off from the assault and immobilized by fire from Guillemont and Quennemont Farms. It might be stated here that both these farms and also Bony, were nothing but ruins at this time, all heavily entrenched and surrounded by machine gun emplacements.

One one-pounder section received a direct hit from a H. E. early in the action. The gun was not damaged, but the crew were nearly all casualties. The trench mortar sections fired practically no shots. The distance, either was too great, or else some officer, prevented the sergeant, section chief, from firing, being of the opinion that this firing would mean more enemy fire in retaliation. Later, a composite one-pounder trench-mortar section was formed under Lieutenant Brecht, of Headquarters Company, but was organized too late to be of any real use before darkness fell.

The platoons of the machine gun company attached to the three battalions functioned well and aided greatly in maintaining the defensive positions when organized. The enemy were not backward in launching counterattacks and the afternoon was spent mostly in

repulsing them. Herein the machine guns aided greatly.

Information from the front to regimental headquarters was very meager, being brought mostly by wounded on their way to the rear. So that the Intelligence Section of Headquarters Company was sent forward with a definite mission to locate our own elements and report. By dusk the report was in and checked by messages from the various groups and from the Australian troops who had gone through.

By the afternoon the assault had degenerated into a series of combats by various groups, some trying to advance and some endeavoring to repel counterattacks. Some of the groups had contact to the front and rear and some were almost entirely cut off.

This was the situation until the 3d Australian Division arrived. They crossed the start line at 7:00 AM. (22) Many points passed over by the 108th trying to catch up with the elusive barrage, had been re-garrisoned by the enemy and had to be retaken by the Australians. With four years of experience in trench warfare behind them, they mopped up in excellent shape and slowly worked forward, gaining contact with the scattered groups of the 108th. In most cases the Americans joined up with the depleted Australian companies and Aussies and Americans moved forward together.

At about 11:00 AM, a message had been received from brigade, stating that the air force reported that about a battalion of Germans were in Gouy dressed either in American or British uniforms. (23) This later proved to be a battalion of the 107th, who were later rescued.

The combined Australian-American attack continued all afternoon. Quennemont Farm was mopped up, but Bony and Guillemont Farm still held out at dusk. The line,

(22) GSS, p 126

(23) O'Ryan  
p 307;  
Harrison

that night, held by both Americans and Australians, ran about Guillemont Trench - Claymore Trench - A 20 central - A 21 central - south along the Hindenburg Line. (24)

(24) GSS  
p 132

The night of September 29-30 was marked by heavy enemy shell fire, even worse than the preceding night. And the enemy had a large supply of sneezing gas shells that he was using without any regard to gas tactics. His artillery functioned all night, destroying our wire communications time after time, and the signal detachment, already depleted by the loss of the advance party, had difficulty in keeping the lines open. At one time the Australian lieutenant, who had been borrowed to replace our signal officer, himself took a repair kit and went out to repair the wire, as there was no other personnel available.

About midnight, September 29-30, the 3d Australian Division took over the division sector. (25) The Australian division moved forward again the following morning, September 30, accompanied by practically all of the unwounded 108th who were with them. This assault was finally successful on October 3, but comes under the operations of the 3d Australian Division.

(25) GSS  
p 133

On October 1, the 108th Infantry was withdrawn to the Peronne Area. (26) Those officers and men who had advanced with the Australians were allowed to remain with them until the operation was over. It was several days before they rejoined. (27)

(26) O'Ryan  
p 343

(27) GSS,  
p 133

The losses in this operation of the 108th were 23 officers and 900 men. They captured 16 German officers, 594 men, besides much material. (28)

(28) O'Ryan  
p 316

Opposing the 27th Division were the following units of the German IV Corps, 54th Division, 121st

(29) HQ 27 Div,  
p 3

Division, 2d Guard Division, 232d Division, 185th  
Division and 75th Division. (29)

#### CRITICISM BY THE AUTHOR

There is a great deal to criticize in this operation. But, it is difficult in some cases, to find the correct solutions.

The failure of the 106th to take its objectives on September 27 made many difficulties. Could not the preliminary operation on September 27 have been included as a part of the main operation on September 29, thus giving the division a stronger force with which to attack? It seems a justifiable criticism. The attack on September 27 was a piecemeal operation, made by a weak force on too large a front, violating the Principle of Mass. A British division had already hammered three times at these advanced posts and had each time, been driven back. The only reason for this attack that can be deduced, is the obsession of the British High Command for a straight line for the jump-off and the possibility that the barrage table would have to be refigured. Neither of these objections will hold much water.

Then, should not the barrage have been laid down on the start line, irrespective of the groups of the 106th, alive or wounded, in its front? These groups were exaggerated as to strength, but most generals would hesitate, and justly, before subjecting their own men to the fire of their own barrage.

The advance of the tanks prior to the infantry was a sad mistake, depriving both the tanks of the infantry support and the infantry of the use of the tanks to crush strongpoints, cut wire and to put machine gun nests out of commission. This was apparently

due to the failure of the tank commander to receive the proper instructions.

The Principle of Surprise was entirely absent. The 108th's attack, followed by the forty-eight-hour bombardment warned the enemy that something was going to happen, if he did not already have some knowledge about it. The British air force reported much enemy activity prior to the attack. Then the too-far in advance barrage, followed by the tanks warned him exactly when the attack was to occur.

The mustard gas used in the bombardment seemed to have no particular effect.

It is believed that a coordinated attack with tanks and infantry from the jump-off line, with a barrage starting as it did, 1100 yards in advance, but with longer halts, would have been more successful. An equal force of Australians, in place of the battalion from the 108th for moppers-up would have cleaned up the dug-outs and shelters overlooked by the less experienced Americans and would have prevented the fire from the flanks that held up the following elements of the assault.

As to the operations of the 108th proper. This was not a trench raid, but an advance to take, hold and consolidate, and every battalion commander should have been with his command directing the attack. The only supervision possible from the battalion P.O's was by runner and as a consequence the battalion commanders exercised no control over their battalions. Battalion commanders are chosen, presumably, for their larger knowledge and experience and this knowledge and

experience necessary for the proper accomplishment of their mission was not where it could be of use when required. The battalion commanders could have, if present, coordinated their commands and made efforts to move forward that were impossible under the circumstances. The absence of the battalion commanders is probably the feature most deserving of criticism in the operations of the 108th Infantry.

Failure to mop up is explained by two facts. One, the desire to catch up with that will-o-the-wisp, the barrage and the other, lack of training and experience, mostly lack of experience. And experience, in this case, as in many others, is the best teacher.

The smoke and fog precluded much use of the one-pounders and trench mortars at the beginning. Being in sections, commanded by sergeants, opportunities to fire, later in the day, especially by the trench mortars, were denied by some officer who did not desire retaliation on that part of the line, or the position, held by him. This could have been avoided by the presence of the battalion commander or by combining the trench mortars and one-pounders into platoons, commanded by an officer, as obtains at present.

The advance signal party was a failure from the start. This body of men, too large, and carrying so much equipment, was too good an opportunity for the enemy to resist, and so they were made the target of fire. A smaller party, with wire, probably could have moved forward later and established such communication as would have been necessary.

The presence of the battalion commanders in

their P.C's precluded the establishment of a message center near the scene of operations. This deprived regimental headquarters of information as to the status of affairs. The use of the Intelligence Section in reporting on our own situation worked well and was used later with much success.

### LESSONS

This operation teaches several **valuable** lessons. In the divisional operation, the Principle of Mass was violated in the piecemeal attack by a part, the 106th Infantry.

The Principle of Surprise was not used. The enemy having full knowledge that something out of the ordinary was going to occur, due to the forty-eight-hour bombardment, the barrage, and the advance of the tanks, prepared accordingly.

The Principle of Cooperation was violated in the independent advance of the tanks. Teamwork between the infantry and the tanks was nil, neither was in supporting distance of the other.

The Principle of Simplicity **was also** violated. There was no unity of command after the regiment jumped off. The entire operation was fought by junior officers and in many cases, by noncommissioned officers, mostly on their own, and here and there joining together for mutual support, or for lack of a leader.

### CONCLUSION

The 108th Infantry accomplished a part of its mission in spite of the difficulties under which it operated. The credit for this should go, however, not to the higher command, but solely to the company

officers and noncommissioned officers who fought a strongly entrenched enemy without the direction, supervision or coordination of superior authorities.

At considerable loss of officers and men they moved forward under circumstances new to them and made the best of a difficult situation. With a slower barrage, accompanying tanks, and with unity of command, it is believed that the regiment would have accomplished its mission in full. That it only accomplished a part is not due to any fault of those tried and only partially succeeded.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why was the Allied attack in the latter part of September 1918 to be synchronized?

- (1) Because the enemy would not know where the main attack was launched
- (2) Because it was easier for the Allies to attack at one time
- (3) Because the enemy could not move reserves and supplies from one sector to another to offset each attack.

Answer 3

2. When was the Hindenburg Line first established?

- (1) 1914
- (2) 1917
- (3) 1916

Answer 3

3. Why was the Tunnel Sector of the Hindenburg Line (Siegfried Stellung) so excellent for defense?

- (1) Because of the protection afforded to troops, the strong defenses and the easy access to the trenches when the troops were needed
- (2) Because of the high ground under which the tunnel ran
- (3) Because the tunnel ran parallel to the line of defense.

Answer 1

4. Why was a barrage used preceding the attack?

- (1) To cut the wire
- (2) To keep the enemy from manning his trenches and machine gun emplacements until the assault was upon him
- (3) To drown the sound of the tanks advancing.

Answer 2

5. Why was the attack formation of the 108th Infantry two battalions in assault and one in support?

- (1) Because it is prescribed by custom
- (2) Because the support can fill gaps in the assault line
- (3) Because the support battalion can cover the flanks and rear of the assault, can counterattack and maneuver to assist the assault.

Answer 3

6. Why were sections of the trench mortar and one-pounder platoons and platoons of the machine gun company attached to battalions and not used respectively as platoon and company units?
- (1) Greater fire power could be developed by attaching to battalions
  - (2) It would give each battalion the necessary accompanying weapons, immediately at hand, for such use as the battalion commander would prescribe
  - (3) It would make smaller targets for the enemy.

Answer 2

7. Why were Lewis guns carried four to each rifle platoon?
- (1) To increase the fire power of the platoon
  - (2) Because they were more accurate than the rifle
  - (3) Because they were to neutralize the enemy machine gun fire.

Answer 1

8. Why were tanks used to accompany the assault?
- (1) To break enemy wire and to crush their machine gun emplacements and strongpoints
  - (2) To destroy the enemy morale
  - (3) To draw fire from the enemy artillery.

Answer 1

9. Why were moppers-up necessary?
- (1) To permit the assault to advance more rapidly by preventing its becoming disorganized by having to investigate dugouts, etc., and to kill or capture the enemy remaining in security who had been passed over by the assault undiscovered and thus preventing them from offering resistance by rear or flank fire on the assault
  - (2) To act as a reserve in a case of need
  - (3) To use for counterattacks.

Answer 1

10. Why did the absence of the battalion commanders militate against the success of this operation?
- (1) Because communication to the rear was not complete

- (2) Because the companies could not maintain direction without them
- (3) Because the attack was without them, uncoordinated, local supports and accompanying weapons not properly used and leadership of the battalion was absent.

Answer 3



