

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

1-33

ADVANCED COURSE
1926-27

OPERATIONS
of
Company "B" 38th Infantry
Along the Marne River
July 22-23, 1918.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM F. FREEHOFF, INFANTRY.

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" It seems both fitting and proper that record here be made of the unwarranted and altogether shortsighted and dangerous policy of responsible officers at Camp Lee, Va., in sending diseased, degenerate and absolutely incompetent men to complete the organization of this regiment for overseas service. Of course, all the men from this particular camp cannot be classed as above, but they appeared in sufficient numbers to leave an indelible impression upon the memory of the regiment. The death and mortality rate took such a jump that the commanding officer appointed a board of officers to investigate and report upon the cause or causes of same. " (1)

(1) Lovejoy, p.24.

TRAINING

The training of the regiment, both at Camp Greene and in the rear area in France, was of a very strenuous nature. The organization was extremely fortunate at this period in having as colonel and lieutenant colonel, respectively, J. C. Castner and Halstead Dorey. These highly efficient and forceful officers constituted an ideal team for the training for war of inexperienced officers and new recruits and draftees, and under their

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MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

Lovejoy

"The Story of the Thirty-Eighth"

Third Division History

"History of the Third Division
United States Army in The World
War"

INTRODUCTION

The 38th Infantry was organized at Syracuse, N.Y., on June 1, 1917, under the Act of Congress approved June 3, 1916. The organization was effected by the transfer from the 30th Infantry of thirteen officers and five hundred seventy-four enlisted men of all grades - approximately one-third of the commissioned and enlisted strength of the latter regiment.

During the month of July rapid progress in organization was made. The officer strength ^{was built up to} twenty-three and recruits were constantly coming in from the various recruiting stations and rendezvous until at the end of the month the enlisted strength exceeded nineteen hundred. The band was enlisted as a body in Chicago and became an excellent aid to morale and spirit.

In August the assignment of newly commissioned lieutenants from various training camps in the East brought the commissioned total to fifty-six.

The regiment was stationed at this time in a camp on Stephens' Hill, about six miles north of Syracuse, where together with eight other infantry regiments, the training of the new officers and men was begun. The facilities at this camp for winter training were inadequate and during the latter part of October most of the regiments had been moved to other camps. On October 24th the 38th Infantry was transferred to Camp Greene, N.C., where it became a part of the 3d Division then in the process of organization.

At Camp Greene the full complement of officers and men was received. The officers received were of excellent material - well above the average - and their conduct in action later as leaders of the units of the regiment is

testimony to their capacity and ability. The enlisted men received here, on the other hand, were mainly draftees from southern and eastern National Army camps and were of low order both mentally and physically, and many were unable to withstand the rigors of a winter under canvas. As a result there were numerous deaths from pneumonia and influenza. The mentally deficient were disposed of through the medium of boards of officers convened in each battalion of the regiment. On the subject of draftees received, Colonel Joseph C. Castner, regimental commander, made the following characteristic remark:

" It seems both fitting and proper that record here be made of the unwarranted and altogether shortsighted and dangerous policy of responsible officers at Camp Lee, Va., in sending diseased, degenerate and absolutely incompetent men to complete the organization of this regiment for overseas service. Of course, all the men from this particular camp cannot be classed as above, but they appeared in sufficient numbers to leave an indelible impression upon the memory of the regiment. The death and mortality rate took such a jump that the commanding officer appointed a board of officers to investigate and report upon the cause or causes of same. " (1)

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TRAINING

The training of the regiment, both at Camp Greene and in the rear area in France, was of a very strenuous nature. The organization was extremely fortunate at this period in having as colonel and lieutenant colonel, respectively, J. C. Castner and Halstead Dorey. These highly efficient and forceful officers constituted an ideal team for the training for war of inexperienced officers and new recruits and draftees, and under their

rigorous system was developed a regiment prepared for the most exacting and arduous service.

DEPARTURE FOR FRANCE

On March 11, 1918, began the departure of the 38th Infantry from Camp Greene, N.C. The headquarters and 1st Battalion leaving on that date and the remainder of the regiment following on March 12th. The 1st Battalion arrived at Camp Merritt, N.J., on March 12th where such shortages in men and equipment as could not be made up at Camp Greene were received, and a very complete inspection made.

On March 21st the 1st Battalion and Machine Gun Company of the regiment, under the command of the captain of Company B, the senior officer of the detachment, left Camp Merritt and proceeded by rail to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they arrived on March 25th, and immediately embarked on the Canadian Pacific Mail Steamer CORSICAN, and sailed for Glasgow, Scotland. The command reached Glasgow about 3:30 PM on April 3d and at about 5:30 PM the same date, entrained for Camp Woodley, Romsey, in the south of England, where it arrived on the morning of April 4th. After a stay of five days at Camp Woodley, during which time many of the officers visited London and made such purchases of essential or desirable articles of uniform and equipment as their tastes and finances dictated, a march of about fifteen miles was made to the embarkation port at Southampton. Here on the evening of the 9th a British channel ship was boarded and the crossing to Le Havre^{was} made during the night. Arrived at

Le Havre on April 10th the command was marched a distance of about six miles to a British Rest Camp. A night was spent here and on the following morning the detachment was marched to the railroad station at Le Havre and formally introduced to the 40 hommes, 8 chevaux transportation of the French Army. The men were "pressed" in to the box cars and started for the training area in the Department of Haute Marne. Here the well-known stable billets were assigned and the training was resumed in earnest.

DEPARTURE FOR THE FRONT

After a period of intensive training in the area in the vicinity of Chateau Villain, during which time many officers and sergeants attended the schools at Chatillon-sur-Seine, the regiment was ordered to the front. The German advance through the Chemin Des Dames and the defeat of the British Fifth Army caused the French High Command to throw the 3d Division into the front along the Marne near Chateau Thierry.

The 1st Battalion entrained at Letrecy on May 30th and arrived at the railhead at Montmirail on the morning of June 1st. The railroad station and other buildings in the town were being used as hospitals to care for the wounded British and French who were pouring into the town. Here the 38th had the first "close-up" of the war. Many of the wounded had died in ambulances en route to the hospitals and other had died after arrival^{street.} There were hundreds of bodies yet to be disposed of by burial. The sight was a ghastly one and one long remembered^{by} the personnel of the regiment.

AT THE FRONT

The regiment was pushed rapidly to the Marne River where a sector of the front was taken over from the French 10th Colonial Division. This line extended along the river from the town of Chierry to a point just east of Fossoy - a front of about five kilometers. (See Map No.1) Enemy artillery was very active on this front and some casualties were sustained.

On the night of June 16th the first raid into enemy territory was made. The party was commanded by Lieut. Busk of Company B, and crossed the river at Gland. Just south of that town a group of enemy troops was met and a lively fight ensued during the progress of which Lieut. Busk was severely wounded in a pistol duel with a German officer. The patrol with great difficulty succeeded in re-crossing the Marne to its own lines.

any prisoners taken or lost?

IN A NEW SECTOR OF THE FRONT Map No. 2.

On July 3d the regiment was withdrawn from the Chierry-Fossoy sector and placed in a position to the east thereof astride the Surmelin Creek, where, on the 15th of July, it was to write one of the most brilliant pages of American military history and earn for itself the sobriquet "The Rock of the Marne". (See Overlay No. 1, Map No.2). In this latter position Company B was in support and was in the vicinity of Paroy. Trenches were in the process of construction on the high ground just southeast of Moulins when the German Offensive of July 15th began.

During the action of July 15th Company B was on the right of the line in the vicinity of Moulin Ruiné (See Overlay No.1, Map No.2) in the sector from which the French 131st Infantry had precipitately retired before the German attack early in the morning. During the day the company repulsed numerous hostile attacks from the right and right rear.

On the night of July 15th the front line troops of the 38th were withdrawn by the orders of higher authority to a line about three miles south of Paroy.

During the night of July 18th Company B was again pushed to Paroy. The command post was established in a cellar of a house on the Mezy road, and strong combat groups, consisting of entire platoons, were posted as shown on Overlay No.2, Map No.2. Throughout the night these groups were in contact with enemy patrols. Many wounded of the regiment left on the field when the regiment withdrew on the 15th were picked up. The hostile artillery fire was very heavy and one pounder shells swept the streets of Paroy. An attempt was made to take these one pounders but they were strongly protected by infantry and machine guns and repulsed the attacks of Company B's patrols.

On July 19th and 20th snipers were very active on the high ground north and northeast of Paroy. The Surgeon of the 2d Battalion, 38th Infantry, and several enlisted men of Company B were killed in the yard of the house used as the company command post.

Active patrolling was conducted during the day and night until on July 21st it was determined that but few of the German troops remained south of the Marne in this sector. Hostile artillery, however, from positions

north of the river was very active. Some gas was used.

COMPANY ORDERED TO ADVANCE

At about 10:30 PM July 21st the commanding officer, Company B, was called to the command post of the 1st Battalion, just north of Paroy (See Overlay No.2, Map No.2) where he received the following information and instructions: that the regiment would advance that night or early the next morning crossing the Marne at Mezy on a pontoon bridge which was being thrown across the river by the 6th Engineers; that the 3d Battalion would cross first, capture Charteves and advance along the west of the ridge running north therefrom; that the 1st Battalion would follow the 3d Battalion, cross the river, advance along the Charteves - Jaulgonne - Le Charmel road, capture Jaulgonne, and continue the advance to Le Charmel; that the advance beyond Jaulgonne was not to be made until so directed the regimental commander; that the 2d Battalion would follow the 1st Battalion as regimental reserve; that Company B was to be the advance guard for the 1st Battalion and was to cross the Marne as soon as the 3d Battalion had cleared the bridge; that the remainder of the battalion would follow Company B at 500 yards. The battalion commander also stated that he had exchanged notes with the commander of the French battalion on his right at Courtemont Varennes and had arranged to establish liaison at Barzy-sur-Marne after the capture of Jaulgonne

by the 1st Battalion. The battalion commander directed the commanding officer of Company B to notify him when Company B commenced crossing. This notification was to be through the commanding officer of Company D who had been directed to maintain liaison with Company B.

Upon the receipt of these instructions the captain of Company B returned to his command post in Paroy, assembled his platoon leaders and issued orders in substance as follows: our regiment crosses the Marne tonight or early tomorrow morning and advances northward. The 3d Battalion, now at Mezy, crosses first followed by the 1st Battalion. This company will form the advance guard for the battalion, and will cross the river as soon as the 3d Battalion has cleared the pontoon bridge now being constructed. The company will cross the river and advance along the Charteves-Jaulgonne - Le Charmel road in the following order: 1st platoon as advance party; 2d, 3d and 4th platoons as support, following the advance party at 250 yards. The captain will march with the advance party. The company will march at once to Moulins in the order, 1st and 2d platoons, with 100 yards distance between platoons along the Paroy-Moulins road; 3d and 4th platoons, with 100 yards distance between them, along the Surmelin Creek. I shall precede the company along the Paroy-Moulins road and direct you to positions in Moulins. Return to your platoons and conduct them to Moulins. The two routes were used on account of the heavy artillery fire which was falling upon Paroy and the roads leading north and south therefrom.

The platoon leaders, two lieutenants and two sergeants, (the company lost two officers killed and two wounded on July 15th) returned to their platoons and marched the company to Moulins where at about 11:30 PM cellars and other available shelter from artillery fire were occupied. Liaison was immediately established with the 3d Battalion at Mezy, and in a few minutes two men reported from Company D to maintain contact.

At about 1:00 AM July 22d the regimental commander called the battalion commander by telephone and informed him that the company of the 9th Machine Gun Battalion which was to be attached to the 1st Battalion had been part of a covering force at the bridge building at Mezy and having suffered heavy casualties, had disintegrated; that as soon as they could be reassembled they would be sent to the 1st Battalion. The colonel cautioned the battalion commander that he felt sure stubborn resistance would be encountered and that the troops were not to be informed that the battalion was starting the advance without machine gun support.

THE ADVANCE

The town of Mezy and the bridge site on the river had been under a violent artillery fire from enemy light and large caliber guns since about 10:00 PM July 21st. As a result Company F, 6th Engineers, which company was constructing the pontoon bridge, using German materials, suffered considerably and the completion of the bridge was delayed. Several times long sections were destroyed by direct hits of shells.

At about 4:00 AM July 22d the bridge was completed and the troops of the 3d Battalion started across. At about 5:00 AM the 1st Platoon of Company B began the crossing and the battalion commander was so informed through the liaison group from Company D. The 1st Platoon cleared Charteves and awaited the remainder of the company, taking up a defensive position astride the road. When the company had reached the north bank this information was sent to the battalion commander and the advance toward Jaulgonne started.

The nature of the terrain north of the Marne was ideal for the rear guard action of the enemy. There were numerous large boulders and clumps of trees and bushes behind which machine guns were skillfully sited and when threatened by the advancing troops rear guns covered the withdrawal. The ground slopes rapidly upward and throughout the advance the enemy had excellent terrestrial observation as well as from the air from captive balloons just north of Le Charmel.

When the head of the advance party reached the bend in the road about one thousand yards east of Charteves a heavy rifle and machine gun fire from a position about five hundred yards north was encountered. Several casualties were sustained. The advance party immediately deployed, advanced against the resistance and drove the hostile elements towards Jaulgonne. From this point on the resistance became more determined. The left of the deployed line of the advance party was extended by putting the 2d and 3d Platoons in on this flank. The 4th Platoon followed in support. A runner was sent to the battalion commander apprising him of the situation and of the formation of the company.

The advance was continued by infiltration - small groups moving forward in thin lines by short rapid bounds. By this method, moving up in dead space and taking advantage of all available cover, the company slowly drove the enemy back into Jaulgonne where he made a stand and held on until the 3d Platoon, working around the north west of the town, outflanked the positions. At 7:30 AM the company entered Jaulgonne, captured about 40 prisoners, and moved to the northern limits of the town. Security detachments were sent out to front and flanks and the advance was halted in accordance with orders from the battalion commander.

At about 8:00 AM the battalion commander arrived in Jaulgonne. At this time some enemy parties hidden in cellars and on roofs of buildings opened up a hot fire with rifles and machine guns. The battalion commander partitioned the town into four parts, assigned a platoon of Company D to each part as mopping up parties, and in a few minutes the hostile fire was stopped.

At about 8:30 AM the battalion commander sent an officer with a detail to Barzy-sur-Marne in accordance with the arrangement of the night before with the French battalion commander at Courtemont Varennes. This detail encountered heavy fire just west of Barzy-sur-Marne. An effort was made to enter the town from the north but everywhere a hot rifle and machine gun fire was drawn. The patrol thereupon returned to the battalion commander at Jaulgonne and reported the result of the reconnaissance. The French had failed to advance simultaneously with the Americans.

During the time Jaulgonne was being mopped up enemy artillery fire from the vicinity of Le Charmel and the area west thereof was very active. Company B in position along the northern limits of Jaulgonne was under a continuous fire from rifles, machine guns and one pounder cannon from the north and northwest. Very few casualties resulted from this fire, however, due to the good cover in folds of the ground and behind buildings.

About 10:30 AM contact was established with the 3d Battalion on the left. Company D, 9th Machine Gun Battalion, reported to the battalion at this time and one platoon of the company was attached to the advance guard and placed in the column in rear of the advance party.

The battalion commander, at 11:00 AM, gave the order to advance and Company B moved out of Jaulgonne with security detachments to front and flanks. The normal advance guard formation was adopted, the point and flank detachments forming a line deployed and the support platoons furnishing detachments for protection further to the right and left flanks. The French having failed to cross at Barzy-sur-Marne, the right flank was open and exposed to fire at close range from small groups of the enemy which had been in Jaulgonne. This made progress very slow. To expedite the advance as much as possible the battalion commander sent Companies A and C along the road which parallels the Chartevès-Jaulgonne-Le Charmel road on the east. This strong flank guard

permitted the return to the column of the right flank detachment of Company B. From now on the fire received was from the front and left flank whence it came in considerable volume.

At about 12:30 PM the battalion commander sent an officer with a platoon as a combat-liaison group to the left to keep him in contact with the 3d Battalion. Contact, as has been stated, was made at about 10:30 AM; but this was by a small patrol and was not maintained. The advance in accordance with orders was made without regard to flank units. The leader of the combat-liaison group found the right of the 3d Battalion engaged in a heavy fight in front of Les Franquets Ferme; without informing the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion of the situation or his action, this officer with his group joined the 3d Battalion in the fighting.

The advance north was slow. It was necessary at frequent intervals to send strong groups to the right front to outflank hostile machine guns and one pounders which from successive positions held the road under direct fire. Enemy artillery and aircraft were very active.

At about 3:00 PM the point of the advance party was entering the outskirts of Le Charmel. Here a very heavy fire stopped the advance. The advance party and two support platoons of the ^{support} deployed and were moving forward when an order from the battalion commander directed the company to halt. The deployed line drove back into Le Charmel small groups of the enemy who were debouching therefrom. Hostile groups were seen also west of the town apparently attempting to envelop the left of the company. A quick counterattack by the 3d Platoon drove these groups to cover. At this time a heavy fire was opened on the head of Company A now entering Le Charmel from the right. In this action the

officer commanding the leading platoon of Company A and several enlisted men were wounded. The captain of Company A ordered a retirement. The enemy followed, captured the severely wounded officer, and from that flank opened a fire upon Company B. As the order to retire had not been received by Company B, the captain decided to remain in the position. He accordingly ordered the 4th Platoon to engage the hostile forces on the right. Before this attack was started, however, an order to withdraw was received.

The company fell back along the road by successive positions to a point just opposite the quarry southwest of Argentol. Here a position was taken up with a view to covering the retirement of Companies A and C now observed by the commanding officer of Company coming down the road to the right. At this point enemy airplanes, flying low, raked the company causing casualties and considerable scattering of the men in an endeavor to escape the air attack. Within a short radius of the company four allied planes were seen to go down before German attacks. Taking advantage of the confusion resulting from the air attacks the hostile ground troops moved in closer and delivered heavy fire from rifles and machine gun upon the company. Fortunately, at this point the road runs through a cut and the high banks afforded good cover. (See Overlay No. 3, Map No.2).

At this position the road bends and a few yards south thereof the battalion commander accompanied by the captains of Company D, 38th Infantry, and Company D, 9th Machine Gun Battalion, with several other officers and about eight runners, had halted under a large tree just across the road from the point where the left flank of Company B rested.

From this point the captain of Company D had sent out a group under an officer to establish a march outpost. The activity of this group forced the fire of an enemy party which was in a position about 100 yards from the left flank of Company B. This fire, directed upon the group under the tree, resulted in the death of the captain of Company D, 38th Infantry and five enlisted men. The captain of Company D, 9th Machine Gun Battalion, was severely wounded. His right arm was practically blown off, either by an explosive bullet or impact at short range against the bone. The 1st lieutenant of Company D, 38th Infantry, was severely wounded and ^{also} the remaining enlisted men. None escaped death ~~or~~ severe wounds. The captain of Company B, hearing the groans of the wounded, ran across the road and beheld the spectacle described. Hastily placing a tourniquet upon the arm of the machine gun captain, he returned to his company which at this time was pinned down by the hostile fire. Rifle and machine gun fire was grazing the top of the road bank and striking in the road in rear like raindrops in a puddle of water. As nothing could be done where he was the captain decided to charge the hostile elements in front. Accordingly he ordered one lieutenant to lead the left of the company, the other lieutenant to lead the right of the company, he, himself, took the center and made a bayonet charge upon the nearest hostile forces. These were driven off with loss. Several machine guns were abandoned and about fifteen prisoners were taken. Both lieutenants of

Company B were severely wounded. This brought the officer casualties of the company to six since July 15th. The temporary cessation of enemy fire covered the retirement of Companies A and C.

It was now about 4:00 PM and the battalion commander directed the captain of Company B to take his company and connect the battalion with the 3d Battalion, now somewhere to the left rear as indicated by the sound of firing from that direction. The position of the 3d Battalion was not ~~known~~ ^{definitely} known.

The hostile fire was still heavy when Company B moved to the left rear and began the search for the 3d Battalion. The march was made in the direction of the firing and after about twenty minutes fire was drawn from the direction of Les Franquets Ferme. The mission of the company was to gain contact with the 3d Battalion, so the fire from Les Franquets Ferme was not returned, and the company veered off to the south until the woods in front of the ferme was reached. Moving along the edge of these woods, the 3d Battalion was found with its right engaged with the enemy in the buildings of the ferme.

Shortly after contact with the 3d Battalion was made a runner from the battalion commander arrived with an order to extend the line from the right of the 3d Battalion. The company went into position along this line at the edge of the woods. Desultory fire continued during the remainder of the afternoon. (See Overlay No. 3, Map No. 2)

During the night of July 22-23 patrols were sent out from the company and several prisoners were captured. From

one of the prisoners it was learned that a fresh German division had come up and that a counterattack had been ordered. Although the counterattack was not made, brisk fights with small enemy parties were numerous during the night of the 22d July. A very persistent fire from Les Franquets Ferme with machine guns and one pounders was kept up. Artillery was active as usual.

The line now held by the company was improved by "digging in" during July 23d. At about 10:30 AM on the 23d a heavy machine gun fire was received from the woods just north of Barzy-sur-Marne. About two companies of troops had been observed to enter these woods a few minutes before, but neither the captain of Company B, nor any of the officers of the 3d Battalion, could identify these as German troops on account of the haze. It was not known whether the French had yet crossed the Marne. Being in doubt the company commander informed the supporting artillery of the occurrence and of the coordinates of the woods entered. In a few minutes a heavy concentration was placed upon the woods and the hostile fire soon ceased.

During the afternoon of July 23d nothing unusual occurred, and during the night July 23-24, the 1st Battalion was relieved by a battalion of the 30th Infantry. The 1st Battalion of the 38th Infantry went into support in the town of Jaulgonne.

"This ended the 38th's advance. A bridgehead, covering a wide front, had been established to protect the pontoon structure at Mezy and to assure another, at Jaulgonne. In his report Colonel McAlexander points out several significant

features of the sharp, incessant fighting of July 22d:-

'During all these manoeuvres our troops had been subjected to severe shelling and constant machine gun fire. In addition, enemy aeroplanes continually swooped down across our lines, raking them with machine guns. Considering the strong opposition of the enemy, the lack of food and sleep of our own men and the nature of the terrain crossed, the advance made on the first day was indeed a remarkable one. The difficulty of liaison through this wooded country was a serious one.....'

It was not until the middle of the morning of July 22d that artillery was used to support the infantry attack. Indeed, the 3d Battalion made its advance without a single shot from allied guns. By 11 o'clock artillery came to help the 1st Battalion." (2)

(2) Third Division
History. P. 162.

LESSONS

The action of Company B, 38th Infantry, in this movement is replete with lessons, most of which are embodied in the Principles of War. They are as follows:

(1) The principle of the offensive was everywhere evident. In all cases the attack was pushed vigorously and spiritedly and ceased only upon orders from higher authority. The men, tired and hungry though they were, showed that they were thoroughly pervaded with this important principle of war.

(2) The principle of mass was exemplified in the early stages of the advance north of the Marne. Upon meeting resistance just south of Jaulgonne the line established by the advance party was augmented by the 2d and 3d platoons; the 4th platoon being held in support for commitment to action wherever needed.

(3) The instructions received required an advance along the Charveves-Jaulgonne-LeCharmel road. This objective was constantly kept in mind and observed. There were no temporary deviations from the mission. The company pushed on regardless of the action of units on its flanks.

(4) In all movements of the company the principle of simplicity was observed. There were no complicated orders or requirements. The mission was clearly stated and as clearly executed.

(5) In all movements of the company covering detachments were used. The action and mission of the company being a security one, namely the advance guard of the battalion, protection was provided for the march. Local security was provided for the advance party. The principle of security is here seen.

(6) The principle of cooperation^{was} exemplified by the action near Le Charmel and again farther south when the retirement of the companies on the right flank was covered. This principle was violated by the French troops on the right flank of the battalion.

(7) The principle of movement was always seen. In attacking hostile resistance along the road south of Jaulgonne, at Le Charmel and in the bayonet charge south of Le Charmel, the movements were rapid and timely.

(8) The principle of economy of force was illustrated in the action just north of the Marne and in later action in front of Le Charmel. Only that part of the company necessary to overcome the resistance was used in the attack and defense. The remainder of the force was held in support.

(9) An excellent example of the principle of surprise was the attack of the enemy force upon the party under the tree near the stone quarry south of Le Charmel. The fire was a complete surprise and caught the group at a decided disadvantage.

(10) The lack of machine gun support at the outset convinced all concerned with the necessity of a machine gun unit as an integral part of the infantry battalion. If such had been the case in 1918 the assault battalion would not been dependent upon an outside agency to furnish this important assistance. If machine guns were necessary for protection at the bridge building they would have been taken, in all probability, from the reserve battalion.

(11) One of the most important lessons of this operation, is to my mind, the one taught by the failure of the combat-liaison party sent out to the left flank to establish contact with the 3d Battalion. The mission of this group was primarily to get in touch with the 3d Battalion and keep the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion informed of its movements. The patrol was made strong enough to fight a good action in furtherance of its mission. The commander of the party knew that he might be compelled to fight his way to or from the flank of the 3d Battalion, but he should have known also that any action on his part that even for a moment deviated him from his liaison mission should have been communicated to his battalion commander. Whether the action of this officer was attributable to an excess of zeal or sheer ignorance of his mission cannot be said. Suffice it to say that such a detachment should be

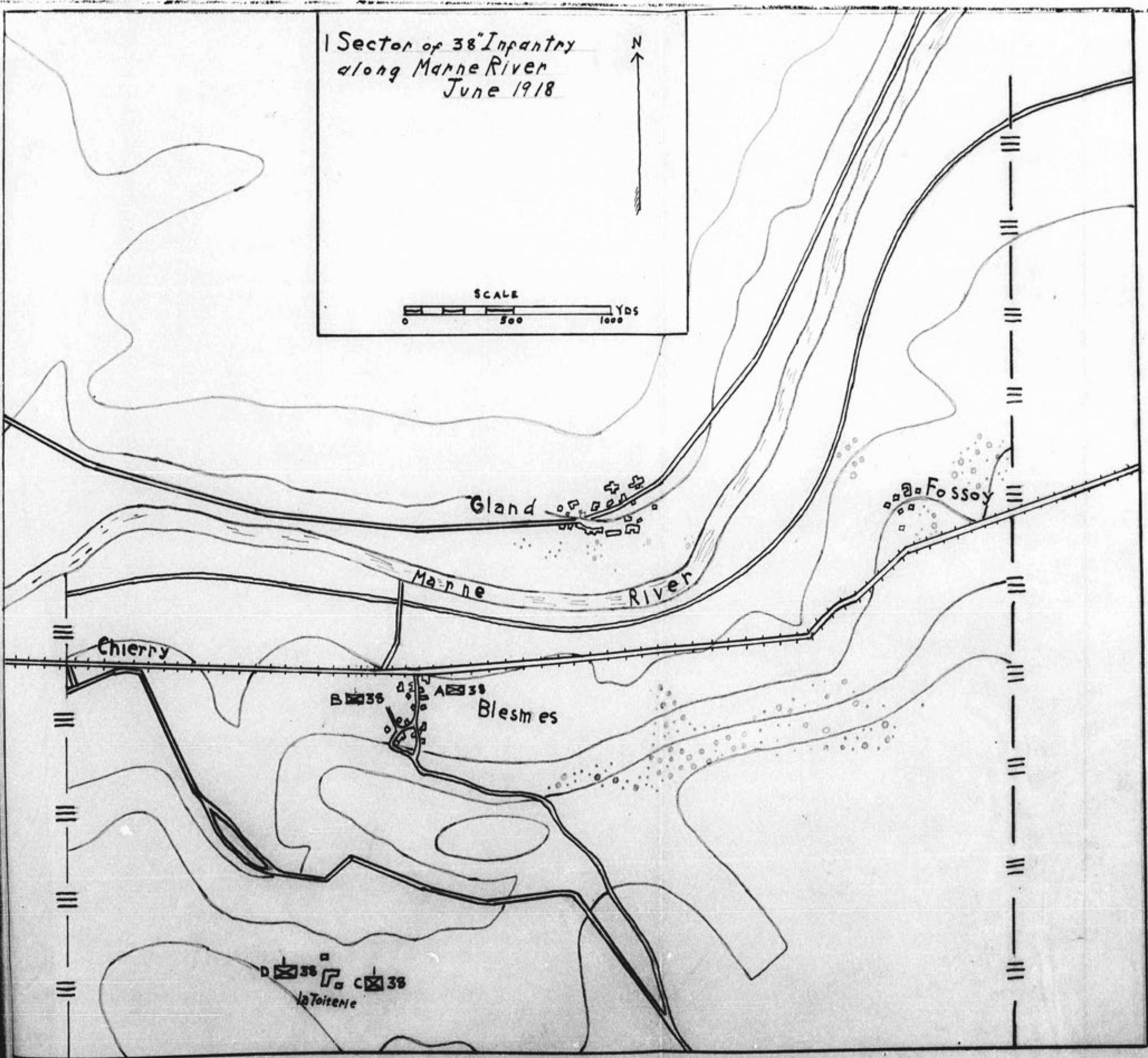
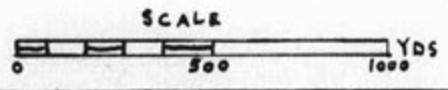
given a definite mission and care should be exercised to insure that the commander knows this mission and that in any forced deviation therefrom he will act with good judgement

(12) It is well to mention here that the troops of this company were not fresh troops on the morning of July 22d, but troops who had been under a severe nervous strain for over a week, during which time they got very little sleep. Food was received at long intervals. It is gratifying to note that notwithstanding their fatigue, both physical and mental, they upheld the traditions of the infantry, always advancing another step and firing another shot.

TEN QUESTIONS

1. When was the 38th Infantry organized?
Answer. June 1, 1917.
2. From what regiment was the 38th Infantry organized?
Answer. 30th Infantry.
3. Of what division was the 38th Infantry a part?
Answer. The 3d Division.
4. On what front did the 38th Infantry receive its first front line experience?
Answer. On the French front along the Marne River just east of Chateau Thierry.
5. What nick-name did the 38th Infantry receive as a result of its action on July 15, 1918?
Answer. The Rock of the Marne.
6. When did the 38th Infantry cross the Marne River?
Answer. July 22, 1918.
7. What company was advance guard for the 1st Battalion?
Answer. Company B.
8. Did the French battalion advance simultaneously with the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry?
Answer. No.
9. Was the combat-liaison mission to the 3d Battalion successful?
Answer. No.
10. Did the company show the spirit of the offensive?
Answer. Yes.

Sector of 38th Infantry
along Marne River
June 1918



Chierry

Gland

Fossoy

Marne River

B 38 A 38
Blesmes

D 38 C 38
la Toitene

