

CHAPTER XVII

BATTLE FOR THE MAIN DEFENSES OF THE HINDENBURG LINE



IN Field Orders No. 49, to be found in the Appendix, it was provided that one battalion of the 106th Infantry was detailed to the 54th Brigade in the attack of September 29th for the especial purpose of aiding in mopping up the territory assigned the 107th Infantry. But as has been stated, there was so little left of the 106th Infantry in the way of effective strength that it was necessary to form this battalion as a provisional unit constituted of the effective survivors of the regiment. So important was the coming mission of this unit that the Division Commander felt called upon to supervise personally the preparations for its organization. Accordingly during the morning of September 28th the Division Commander went to the vicinity of Villers Faucon, where the provisional battalion of the 106th Infantry was being organized. Colonel Taylor, the Regimental Commander, was found there with the work under way. It must be said that the prospect for organizing an effective battalion looked at first most unpromising. Scores of men of the 106th Infantry were lying about apparently exhausted. Many of them were in a stupor of sleep. Others, suffering from temporary shell shock and strain, apparently could not sleep and were comparing their experience with other survivors. All were muddy and unkempt-looking after their terrible ordeal, which of course had afforded no opportunity for anything but fighting. It was obviously a time for rather summary action, and Colonel Taylor was directed personally and with the aid of such officers as were immediately available to assemble the men with the least possible delay so that the Division Commander might talk to them. This was done. Within ten minutes there were perhaps 150 enlisted men standing about the Division Commander. They presented an appearance that would have appealed to the sympathy and indulgence of almost any heart. They were silent men. But in spite of their apparent exhaustion the faces of most of them, for the first few moments at least, wore looks of inquiry mixed with surprise. Indignation would be too strong a term, but nevertheless the officers present keenly sensed that these men felt they had done all that men should be called upon to do, and that they suspected that some additional and impossible demand was now to be made upon them. They were all brought sharply to attention and then ordered to relax and to listen. The psychological effect of their response to the command for attention was noticeable, while at the same time the direction to relax must have appealed to them. In a few words they were told of the result of their attack, of the disorganization they had created in the enemy's defense, of the numbers of the enemy they had slain, of the prisoners and war materiel captured, of the enemy points of resist-

ance that still existed, of the vital importance to the 4th Army of the coming attack, of the imperative need for thorough mopping up behind the advance of the 54th Brigade, of the lack of other troops for this purpose and of the necessity for calling upon the survivors of the 106th Infantry for another supreme effort. The faces of the men were carefully watched while this harangue was being delivered. Their bloodshot eyes showed respect and attention, but not an appreciation of the reasonableness of any further demands upon them, until the Division Commander added the following:

“And another thing, men, you must not forget that scattered about in the fields around The Knoll, Guillemont Farm and Quennemont Farm are numbers of your pals still lying there wounded. You don't propose to abandon them, do you? I think not; not even to the willingness of the 54th Brigade to look after them. You are going to get them yourselves. One other thing. If I know the 106th Infantry they will do even more than that. They will mop up in such manner that their work will leave nothing to be desired by the comrades lost in the attack of yesterday.”

It was this last appeal that developed the spirit of responsiveness—the appeal on behalf of the buddy and the pal for vengeance. When men are acting in the mass, and particularly when they are emotional, they are peculiarly responsive to the impulse of imitation. Standing near the Division Commander was a strapping big soldier splattered with mud and blood, who had followed the exhortation with gravest attention. When reference was made to the wounded men of the regiment still on the field and to the duty of the survivors to rescue them and as well to visit adequate punishment upon the enemy, it was noted that the face of this man suddenly displayed an intense emotion responsive to the suggestion. Accordingly the Division Commander turned to him and said, “How about you—do you prefer to hang around here and sleep, or will you be one of those to get out behind the 107th and tear things up?” The men all turned to watch his response, which was immediate and of the most positive character. He said he had personally killed a number of the enemy the day before, but that he did not consider his job finished and would go back behind the 107th or anywhere else to get another crack at the Hun. Quickly the influence of his example spread, until there existed a fine responsive spirit to the order. Colonel Taylor, Major Gillet, Captain McDermott and other officers of the regiment immediately continued their work of organizing the provisional battalion. All men not required for labor details were directed to sleep, and the preparations continued apace. Colonel Taylor and his surviving officers are entitled to very great commendation for the successful manner in which they organized this battalion under the conditions which then obtained. Anyone who has witnessed with his own eyes the aftermath of a battle can appreciate what this work entailed. Nothing so saps the vitality of men, tends to make them more irritable, forgetful and disheartened, than lack of sleep. These officers and their men had had no sleep since the morning of September 25th. Combine with this the experience in battle which had been theirs, the loss of so many of their comrades, and the natural feeling

that they were entitled to a period of rest, and the reader will have some conception of the task which Colonel Taylor and his surviving officers met in such soldierly and effective manner.

The provisional battalion was organized, equipped and supplied, and under command of Major Ransom H. Gillett reported for its duty on the following morning, as will be told in greater detail later in this chapter.

The foregoing account of the appeal made to the survivors of the 106th Infantry on this occasion may at some time in the future be read by some officer without battle experience who will ask himself why, if these men were soldiers, it was necessary to ask them whether they would obey an order which had been given. The psychology of discipline in war differs greatly from that of peace. The unemotional formalities of peace-time military routine are suitable for that period. Indeed they constitute a necessary background for an occasion such as has been described, for without such background the occasion would lack the character of the unusual. It is this feature of such an appeal which gives it much of its strength. Such appeals, made under such extraordinary conditions, are appreciated by soldiers; and the better trained and more dependable they are the greater will be the understanding and responsiveness. What is essential in battle is something more than a technical obedience of orders. There must be a loyal and understanding determination to execute them in accordance with their spirit. Peace-time training in leadership which fails to visualize the minds and hearts that exist beneath the armament and equipment of the soldiers is faulty training. History is replete with incidents in war illustrating the effectiveness of such appeals under the conditions given, but there is also evidence that during a long period of peace there is apt to develop a false military orthodoxy of the "hard-boiled" variety, which repudiates the necessity or desirability of recognizing any agencies for the execution of an order other than its expression and punitive action for its disobedience or neglect.

The morning of September 28th found the 54th Brigade in the line occupying the trenches from which the 106th and 105th Infantry Regiments had launched their attack of the 27th, with patrols working forward in an effort to connect up with combat groups of the 106th in their front.

In order to understand the difficulties of accomplishing this during daylight, the attention of the reader must be called to the very great power of the defensive in relation to the offensive when the conditions are favorable for the defensive rôle. Conditions are most favorable for the defensive rôle when the defensive positions are screened from observation and when the garrisons occupying them possess the security of dugouts and shelters and when their fields of fire offer ample and effective opportunity for the destruction of an approaching enemy. These were the conditions which obtained on September 28th. Always remembering that superior orders prohibited the commitment of the 54th Brigade to battle prior to the morning of the 29th of September, it was not permissible to direct the advance of the 54th Brigade by battle tactics, for example with the aid of a smoke screen and a supporting artillery barrage. Whatever was to be accom-



Crest of ridge at Guillemont Farm, looking east toward Bony. The clump of trees in the distance marks the German strong point at Bony. Picture taken during the summer of 1920

plished was to be done by infiltration and patrolling. With their accurate knowledge of their own defensive system, German combat groups had been pushed through the various gaps which existed in the objective line as established by the 106th Infantry, and following the paths of least resistance had established themselves in various places on the immediate front of the 54th Brigade. Patrols of the 54th Brigade from the moment they left the



Main Street, Bony

protection of their front line trenches were immediately under fire from one or more of these enemy groups. There were two ways for the patrols of the 54th Brigade to work their way forward. These were to advance over the top from shell hole to shell hole, or to secure a footing in the trenches and to fight their way forward by bombing. The difficulties involved in the first method accentuated the superiority of the defensive over the offensive under conditions of daylight. The offensive patrol must necessarily disclose its movements to a greater or lesser extent and must afford at least fleeting targets to enemy fire. The defensive groups, on the other hand, with good visibility, were relatively secure in their position. They could see without being seen. The second method required that the offensive groups should have with them a large supply of hand grenades. One man cannot carry many of these grenades without imposing too great a handicap upon his movements. In a bombing contest the number of grenades that can be carried is soon expended. The defenders, on the other hand, do not have to disclose their positions by movement. Indeed it is their mission to remain stationary. They have also at their immediate disposal grenades in large numbers, conveniently dumped for their use. As late as the summer of 1920, when the writer visited and inspected the Hindenburg Line defenses, there were still to be found in most all of the more important trenches hundreds of boxes filled with German grenades, while in pockets constructed in the trench walls there still remained small dumps of grenades ready for immediate use. Our men had become familiar with the German grenade, and it was their practice in bombing combats to use German grenades wherever they could be found, reserving for a crisis the more effective "Mills grenade" of the British service.

The night of September 27th-28th was a most anxious one at Division Headquarters. All were hard at work perfecting and supervising the details preparatory to the attack scheduled for September 29th, and at the same time were following the course of events then transpiring in relation to the attack of the 53d Brigade. When it developed that the 53d Brigade had not held the objective line throughout its length, and was not in complete possession of the three strong points, the question arose as to whether the barrage start line for the attack of the 29th should be pulled back to the start line of September 27th, so as to enable the 54th Brigade to make its advance with the protection to which, by all rules of the modern attack, it was entitled. To do this would be to abandon to chance the gallant men of the 106th Infantry and some of the 105th as well, who were still clinging to their exposed positions, and to subject the wounded who still remained on the field to the danger of destruction when the barrage passed over them. In favor of the plan it could be said that the fighting groups in front had doubtless been able to consolidate to some extent the positions held by them, that they would have the same opportunity for survival as would the enemy groups about them, and that in any event it would be better to risk the sacrifice of some of these men rather than to suffer the greater casualties that would be inflicted upon the 54th Brigade when without a proper barrage it began its advance against the

German machine gunners lying on its immediate front. On the other hand it was to be remembered that the detachments of the 53d Brigade which were gallantly holding their gains were entitled to every consideration even though some sacrifice were involved. To voluntarily assume the risk of destroying them because of a decision to increase the security of the 54th Brigade, no matter how logical it might be in the tactical sense, would be repulsive to the mass of the officers and men of the division, and destructive of morale.

The conditions were reported to the Australian Corps Commander and it was decided that the barrage for September 29th would fall at zero hour as originally planned and that it would be the duty of the 54th Brigade to fight its way forward so as to establish its start line as closely as possible to the prescribed infantry start line, before the arrival of the time for the troops to form up.

This decision came in the form of the following message received at 2:10 P. M. September 28th;

"In view of the uncertainty of the situation on the front of the 27th American Division, the Army Commander has decided that there will be no substantial alteration in the plan. The tanks will be reinforced as much as possible. The infantry will be formed up in attack order as far forward as the situation permits one hour prior to zero. The tanks will advance with the infantry, who will be prepared to fight their way if necessary to the forming up line. The barrage will come down as already arranged at zero and will remain for four minutes. It will then lift in accordance with the barrage map, except that all lifts throughout will be of four minutes per 100 yards. The halt will be at the place and for the period already arranged.

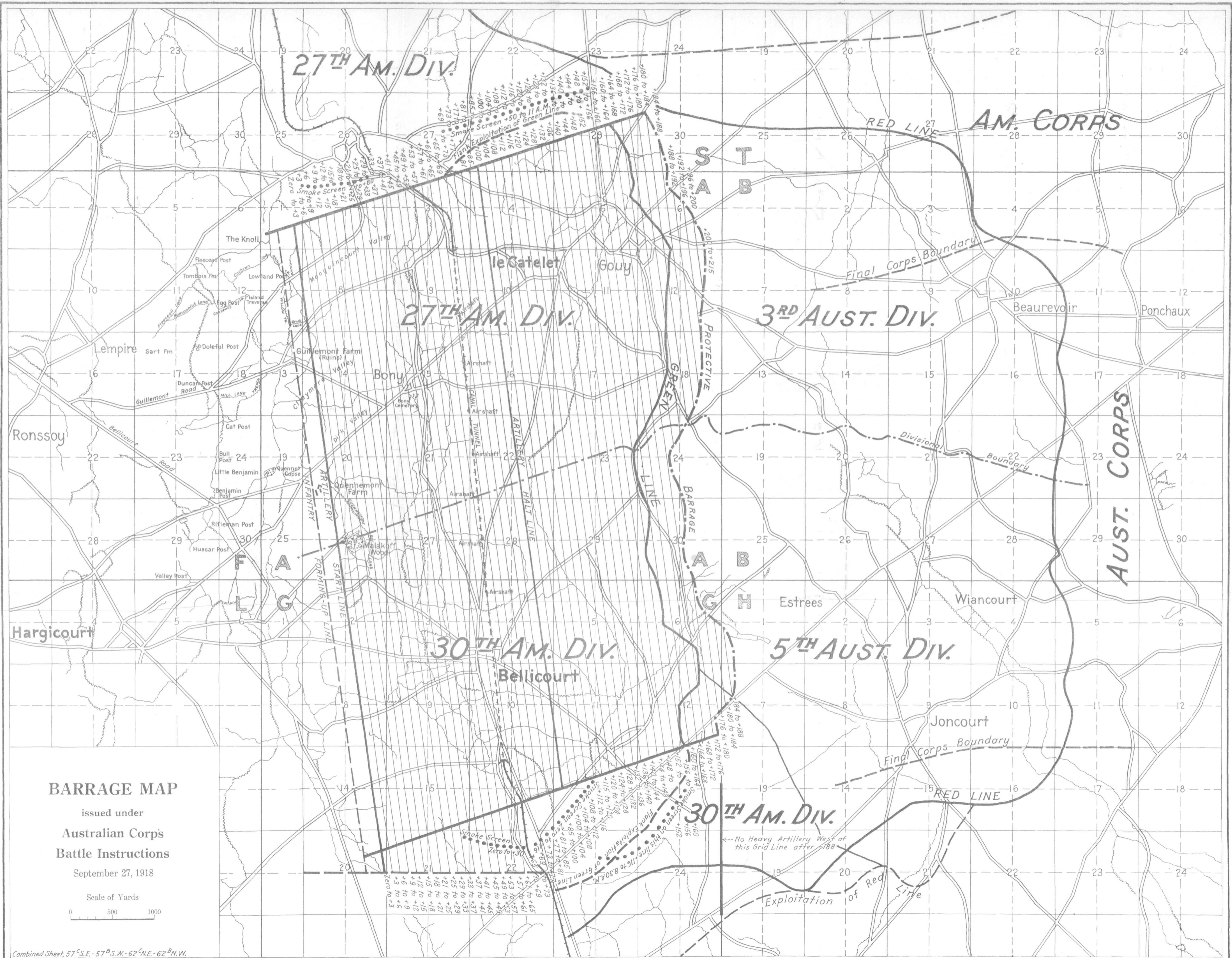
"AUSTRALIAN CORPS."

This decision was promptly communicated to the Commanding General, 54th Brigade, and the importance of his securing, by determined patrolling and infiltration, a start line as far forward as possible was urged.

Brigadier General Pierce early in the afternoon of September 28th thought his brigade was making progress in getting forward to the start line through the efforts of combat patrols, and that there was every prospect that the brigade would be within 200 yards of the start line in time to form up for the attack. This expectation, however, was not realized, and the brigade, as will be seen later in the story of the attack, was compelled to begin its advance more than 800 yards behind the barrage.

The orders for the battle of September 29th were prepared by the Australian Corps as already stated. Pursuant to these orders, zero hour was fixed for 5:50 on the morning of September 29th. The 30th American Division on the right and the 18th British Division on the left were to attack simultaneously, the 18th Division going as far as the canal. The operation was divided into two phases. Within the 27th Division sector the first phase was to commence with the advance of the 54th Brigade accompanied by tanks behind a rolling barrage. This was to progress a distance of 2,500 yards, which would carry the barrage about 400 yards east of the line of the tunnel as indicated on the accompanying map.

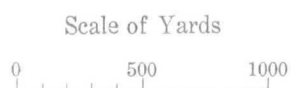
There the barrage was to halt for fifteen minutes. This halt was for the purpose of facilitating the mopping up, to allow for the reorganization



BARRAGE MAP

issued under
**Australian Corps
 Battle Instructions**

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of the line, and to give time for the 105th Infantry to follow the 107th Infantry on the left half of the divisional sector and to form for attack to the north for the purpose of enveloping the area about Vendhuile. The barrage was to consist of 10 per cent. of smoke, and the remainder, one half shrapnel and the other half high explosive shell. A glance at the map will show that the open canal lay on the front of the left half of the sector assigned to the 107th Infantry. It was therefore provided, in order that it might avoid the open cut of the canal, that the 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry would follow the 3d Battalion until the tunnel had been crossed, when it would extend its left to the north boundary of the divisional sector, come abreast of the 3d Battalion on its right and continue east to the objective line. The 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry was to attack on the front covered by the open cut going as far as the canal cut. The 3d and 2d Battalions of the same regiment were to be followed by the composite provisional battalion of the 106th Infantry already referred to which had been assigned to aid in mopping up. The 105th Infantry was to follow in rear of the 106th Battalion until it had cleared the tunnel, when, as stated, it was to change direction to the left and exploit toward the north. The 108th Infantry was to go through to the objective line in the sector between the right of the 107th Infantry and the left of the 30th American Division.

The second phase of the battle provided that the 3d Australian Division would follow the 27th Division as the attack progressed, and after the 54th Brigade was halted on the "Green," or objective line, would pass through it and attack to the east.

The remainder of the 106th Infantry had been directed in the order to follow the 3d Australian Division across the tunnel and then to act in accordance with orders to be given at the time. However, on account of its losses sustained in the attack of September 27th, the regiment could do no more than furnish the provisional battalion already referred to.

Nine brigades of British artillery were allotted to the 27th Division sector for firing the barrage. One interesting feature of the preparations for this attack, and one not generally known, is that forty-eight hours prior to the commencement of the attack the British artillery bombarded enemy gun positions and the area of enemy machine gun nests for the twelve preceding hours with mustard gas, and that this was the first occasion when this type of gas was used by artillery of the British army. It was believed that the German gas defense would not prove effective against this form of gas, for the reason that they had not theretofore been subjected to it. This view was confirmed by statements of German prisoners.

The 105th and 106th Machine Gun Battalions were to fire the machine gun barrage, the 105th being assigned to fire on the left regimental sector and the 106th on the right regimental sector. The 104th Machine Gun Battalion was assigned to support the left flank of the advance, one company to go forward when the Hindenburg Line was made good and to form west of the canal, facing north.

The details prescribed for the conduct of the attack appear in Field

Orders No. 49 and Orders No. 95 of the Division, which appear in the Appendix.

In preparation for the attack of September 29th, a final conference was held at noon on September 28th at the post of command of the Commanding General, 54th Brigade, at Lempire, F.10c.3.5. The conference was attended by the Division Commander, Brigadier General Brand representing the Australian Corps Commander, Colonel Ford, Chief of Staff of the division, and Brigadier General Palmer E. Pierce, commanding the 54th Brigade. At this conference there was discussed from every angle the problem presented by the presence on the front of the brigade of the combat groups of the 106th Infantry still holding on to the positions they had gained. As has already been stated, the representation of this condition to the Australian Corps Commander resulted in the message already quoted to the effect that the barrage would fall as originally ordered.

It was at 6 P. M. on September 28th that the Division Commander received a message from the Commanding General 54th Brigade that he had already pushed out his line beyond Egg Post and expected to be ready to jump off at zero hour the following morning within 400 yards of the barrage line and with the possibility of making the start on the prescribed line. As already mentioned, this message was most assuring, but the expectation of the Brigade Commander was not realized.

The combat patrols of the 54th Brigade were unable during daylight on September 28th to make any appreciable advance. Some of the German machine gun nests which had been established on their front were successfully enveloped and reduced. Others, however, maintained their position, and inflicted casualties whenever targets were presented.

Let us now turn to the units of the 54th Brigade and follow their activities in detail as they moved forward on the night of September 27th-28th to take over the front of the 53d Brigade.

On September 27th the 108th Infantry marched from its bivouac camp at J.10.b.8.3. on Ronsoy, approximately eight and one half miles. They rested at F.25.c.2.4 west of Templeux le Geurard. From there a detail from each company and battalion scout section reported to the 106th Infantry for the purpose of facilitating the details of relief of that part of the 106th Infantry which was to be made by the 108th Infantry. Approach roads were reconnoitered and all possible information gathered as to location of units of the 106th Infantry and the company and battalion headquarters that were to be relieved. On the night of September 27th-28th the regiment marched the remaining six miles to the front over roads and trails subjected to very heavy enemy shell fire and gas concentration.

The regiment went into the line with the 2d Battalion, commanded by Captain John S. Thompson, extending from F.29.d.1.0 near Valle Post, in the vicinity of Malakoff Farm, where it connected up with Company H of the 119th Infantry of the 30th Division on the right, north to the vicinity of Bull Post F.23.d.8.8. Battalion Headquarters were located at F.28.b.8.1. in Templeux Switch. Attached to the 2d Battalion was one

platoon of the regimental machine gun company, one section of one pounders and two Stokes mortar sections.

The 3d Battalion, commanded by Captain Frank J. Maldiner, extended the line north from the vicinity of Bull Post to the vicinity of Duncan Post at F.17.d.7.5. The headquarters of this battalion were located near Duncan Avenue Trench, in F.17.d.4.2. Two one pounder sections, four Stokes mortars and one platoon of the regimental machine gun company were attached to this battalion.

The 1st Battalion, commanded by Major Frederick S. Couchman, was to follow the leading battalions, covering the entire regimental front and mopping up the area covered by the advance.

Regimental Headquarters of the 107th Infantry was established near Pimple Post at F.28.c.8.5.

It was daylight by the time the battalions of the 108th Infantry were in their positions. The 3d Battalion sustained a number of casualties from machine gun fire while going forward. As soon as the relief had been completed, an immediate effort was made by the Regimental Commander, in pursuance of orders already mentioned, to gain contact with detachments of the 106th Infantry far to the front. Combat patrols were pushed out. They brought in one officer and seven enlisted men of the 106th Infantry, all wounded. Later in the day patrols which had succeeded in getting forward in some points were reinforced by other patrols. On parts of the front patrols could make no headway due to the intensity of opposing machine gun fire. At 6 P. M. a conference was held, attended by the field officers of the regiment, for the purpose of determining the recommendation to be made in relation to the start line. The result was a recommendation by the Regimental Commander that the start line be the definite and certain one they then held. Arrangements were made for pegging and taping the departure line for the following morning. Zero hour was announced to the Battalion Commanders. Supplies and ammunition were checked, as were the tactics to govern the advance of the various regimental units and detachments. The recommendation made in relation to the start line was approved and adopted by the Brigade Commander.

The 107th Infantry extended the line north from Duncan Post through Doleful Post at F.17.b.6.6. to the vicinity of Tombois Farm at F.11.b.4.4.

This line in a general way was about 1,000 yards west of the line fixed as the infantry start line for September 29th, and conformed to the original start line of the 53d Brigade in this sector.

The 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry, commanded by Captain Clinton E. Fisk, took over the front held by the 105th Infantry on the left of the divisional sector. Captain Fisk's post of command was located at Lempire. Lieutenant Hellquist of this battalion had gone forward during the battle of the 27th to reconnoiter and make arrangements for the relief of the 105th Infantry by his battalion. The relief was completed about 4 A. M. on September 28th. This battalion had received its orders to push out patrols with a view to advancing the line as far as possible. It was found impossible to do this during the daylight

hours of September 28th. The battalion commander reported that part of the 105th relieved was in Sart Lane in F.11.a. Companies C and B of the 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry were deployed and moved forward to London Road and Fag Support Trench as well as to the trench running parallel with Fleet Street toward Doleful Post. Companies A and D were in support in Sart Lane. During the process of the relief twenty-one casualties were inflicted by shell fire on Company A. When daylight arrived, patrols of the battalion found the enemy in close contact, with a strong force directly in their front at Fleeceall Post at F.10.b. Along the rest of the front there appeared numerous snipers and machine gunners. It was on this front that First Lieutenant Samuel Crump, Jr., commanding Company B, with five or six men captured three enemy machine guns, including those at Egg Post.

Due to the haste necessarily imposed upon the division in taking over the line, a considerable portion of the night of September 28th-29th was occupied in completing the supply of iron rations, ammunition, grenades, water and ordnance stores for the troops at the front. This necessitated the use of a large number of men as carrying parties, and in turn delayed the relief as stated until shortly before daylight, making it impracticable for the relieving regiments to get forward during the night of the relief. The start line for the 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry was pegged out from F.11.a.9.6. to F.11.d.3.1. in a straight line connecting with the 3d Battalion on the right. The tape was not laid until the night of September 28th-29th.

Now as to the 3d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, commanded by Captain Raphael A. Egan, which extended from the vicinity of Egg Post to Duncan Post. This battalion completed the relief about one o'clock on the morning of September 28th, and Captain Egan's post of command was established at Duncan Post. Company K of this battalion was deployed in shell holes and trenches about Duncan Post from F.12.d.8.9 to F.17.d.9.4. On the left of Company K, Company M was deployed in shell holes and trenches extending the line to and beyond Doleful Post. Behind Company K, Company I was in support in Kent Lane, while behind Company M was Company L, also in Kent Lane from F.17.a.4.1. to the vicinity of Sart Farm. The Battalion Headquarters was at F.17.a.4.2. During the night First Lieutenant Carey J. Walrath of Company M led a strong patrol forward to a point about 200 yards in front of Doleful Post. At 10:30 A. M. on September 28th both Companies K and M of this battalion sent patrols out in an effort to infiltrate forward. Enemy machine gun fire against them was very heavy, and the patrols suffered casualties. At 4 P. M. Captain Egan directed Lieutenant Walrath to again get forward with a strong combat patrol. Similar instructions were given Captain George B. Bradish, commanding Company K. Lieutenant Walrath's command was stopped after an advance of about 200 yards. Captain Bradish's combat group reached a position extending from F.18.c.7.8. to F.18.c.8.2, when they were stopped by heavy machine gun fire.

The decision as to the exact position of the start line for the morning

of September 29th was necessarily dependent upon the extent of success of the effort to get forward, and hence was necessarily to be made by the Regimental Commanders, subject to the approval of higher authority. The Brigade Commander reported that after the efforts of the day were made known to him, he approved the recommendations of his Regimental Commanders that the forming up line be practically coincident with that of the 53d Brigade on September 27th, in order that there might be no confusion due to enemy machine gun fire shortly before the start. In these recommendations the Australian officers serving with the 54th Brigade joined. The forming up line of the 107th Infantry therefore conformed in a general way with the line from which the 106th Infantry had started two days before.

The 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, commanded by Captain Rowland Tompkins, had moved from Allaines at 11:30 on the morning of September 27th. After a hot meal at St. Emilie the battalion moved to Ronssoy, where they went into a support position with Company E in Shamrock Trench, Company F in Thistle Trench, Company G in Rose Trench and Company H near Yak Post. The relief was effected without casualties except that Captain George P. Nichols of Company F was wounded about 6 P. M. The headquarters of this battalion was located at F.10.c.4. 5. This battalion was to follow the 3d Battalion in the attack.

The 105th and 106th Machine Gun Battalions, then commanded by Majors Kenneth Gardner and Mortimer D. Bryant respectively, succeeded in occupying the positions assigned them strictly in accordance with orders. These units accomplished this under the same extraordinary and difficult conditions that affected the forward movement of all the other units, namely, roads crowded with troops, wagons, ammunition columns, ambulances and motors, all moving in the darkness through shell fire and gas.

The provisional battalion of the 106th Infantry, comprising about 350 officers and men, were delayed in their advance to their battle position behind the 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, because some of the units composing the battalion lost their way in the darkness. The officers in charge, however, found the strayed detachments and the latter rejoined the battalion shortly before the zero hour.

The 105th Infantry reached its battle positions as prescribed by orders. The battalions moved forward in the following order: 2d, 1st, 3d Battalion. A one pounder was assigned to each battalion. The Stokes mortars went to the 1st Battalion. The pioneer platoon went to the 3d Battalion.

All other units of the division, including engineer, signal and sanitary troops, assumed their battle stations on time and in an efficient manner.

On the morning of September 29th the artillery and machine gun barrage fell precisely at 5:50 A. M., the zero hour. It is impossible in a word picture to portray the impressions of those who have witnessed and heard a bombardment of so formidable a character as the one of September 29th. Not only were all the machine guns of the division, more than

100 in number, engaged in firing the machine gun barrage, but there were also engaged twenty-three brigades of British light artillery and ten brigades of British heavy artillery. Nine of the brigades of light artillery were firing on the front of the 27th Division. After a bombardment of four minutes the artillery barrage began to lift its fire in increments of 100 yards, after four minutes of fire during each period of rest. A few moments after the barrage started the enemy's counter barrage fell along the divisional front. The attacking troops in forming had been closed well up for the purpose of avoiding, so far as possible, the effects of the enemy counter barrage when it would fall. The enemy counter barrage apparently did no great damage to the 107th Infantry. On the front of the 108th Infantry it fell in part across the line and inflicted a number of casualties.

One of the first messages received at Division Headquarters after the attack opened was from Corporal William E. Warren, one of the divisional observers, reporting that the barrage fell at 5:50 and that the attacking troops promptly advanced.

In battle, all organizations had code names which were employed in the transmission of messages. For example, the 54th Infantry Brigade on this occasion was known as "Fuzu," G-3 of the division as "Fuju," the 107th Infantry as "Tuve," the 106th Infantry as "Fuki" and the 108th Infantry as "Tumo."

At 6:05 A. M. on the 29th a message was sent from the 54th Brigade Headquarters to the G-3 of the division as follows:

From reports available Tuve (107th Infantry) and battalion Fuki (106th Infantry) in position when barrage came down at 5:50 A. M. Enemy promptly sent up S. O. S. flares, single green bursting into double green. Situation seemed normal for one hour before zero. Prior to that enemy seemed nervous and displayed extra activity.

A few moments later another message was received from the 54th Brigade as follows:

Tuve (107th Infantry) and Fuki (106th Infantry) Battalion in position at zero hour and Fufi (105th Infantry) formed up. Tanks on hand. Tuve (107th Infantry) got off to good start. No reports from Tumo (108th Infantry).

At 8.04 A. M. a message was received at Division Headquarters from the 54th Brigade, reporting that at 7:00 A. M. the attack was progressing satisfactorily, the 107th Infantry fighting its way forward successfully. The message reported the retaliation barrage was light and fell well back of our troops. The message also reported that thirty-one prisoners had already been taken from the 27th and 84th German Infantry Regiments, and that eight tanks were out of action.

Colonel Charles I. DeBevoise, commanding the 107th Infantry, reported at 9:00 A. M. that troops of the 3d Australian division, which were to pass through the 27th Division on the morning of the attack, were halted on the left at Kent Lane for thirty minutes, about 8 o'clock in the morning. At 8:35 they moved on.

At 9:10 A. M. Captain H. F. Jaeckel, Jr., Aide to the Division Commander, who was one of the forward observing officers, reported that he had just met Major Gillet commanding the mopping up battalion of the 106th Infantry and that the Major was returning, having been wounded in the arm by a machine gun bullet. The major reported his battalion at 7:30 A. M. making satisfactory progress in its advance and that he himself had crossed two lines of enemy trenches before he was wounded. He also reported machine gun fire very heavy, but enemy artillery fire falling in their rear.

At the same time Captain Tristram Tupper of Division Headquarters Troop, a forward observing officer, reported that the 3d Battalion of the 108th Infantry had suffered heavy casualties by fire from Guillemont Farm, but had continued their advance; that the enemy counter barrage at the start had fallen behind our leading elements, and that the 108th Infantry were reported to be on the objective.

At 9:35 A. M. a message was received from Lieutenant Colonel J. Mayhew Wainright, who was liaison officer with the British division on the left, stating that the 54th British Brigade reported that it was 500 yards west of Vendhuile and that on their front they were opposed by the 8th and 54th German Divisions.

At 10:30 A. M. the 133d Field Ambulance (British), which was attached to the 27th American Division, reported that up to 10 o'clock they had handled 1200 wounded.

At 10:35 A. M. the 54th Brigade reported the situation on the front of the 107th Infantry obscure and that reports being received were conflicting; that the leading battalion of the 107th Infantry had gained their objective, but were compelled to withdraw; that more than sixty prisoners were then being evacuated; that the leading battalion of the 108th Infantry was then in the Hindenburg Line.

Shortly thereafter an airplane reported that at 10:30 A. M. our troops were seen in the vicinity of both Bony and Gouy.

At 11:00 A. M. a message was received from Major Turnbull, the 54th Brigade Adjutant, reporting that enemy counter barrages fell behind the left battalion at the start, and that at 8:10 A. M. the regiment (108th Infantry) was reported to be in the main defenses of the Hindenburg Line.

At 11:07 A. M. a message timed at 8:30 A. M. was received from General Blanding, commanding the 53d Brigade, stating that Lieutenant De Loisselle of the 106th Infantry, returning wounded, reported that he personally reached enemy trenches in A.S.d.central, where he and his command had been dealing with enemy machine gun nests passed over by the leading elements of the 54th Brigade.

At 12:45 P. M. General Pierce reported the situation in the vicinity of The Knoll dangerous; that Colonel Jennings, commanding the 108th Infantry, reported he was dealing with the situation at Guillemont Farm, from which heavy fire was falling on his support troops.

Shortly thereafter, Colonel Stanley H. Ford, the Divisional Chief of

Staff, visited the headquarters of the 108th Infantry and there joined Colonel Jennings, the Regimental Commander, and Captain Harry H. Farmer, commanding the 3d Battalion, who were in conference to determine the situation on the front of the 108th Infantry. Colonel Ford, accompanied by Captain James F. Oakleaf, Regimental Intelligence Officer, went forward to one of the Battalion Headquarters to check up the situation on the front of the 108th Infantry.

At 1:40 P. M. a message timed 12:30 P. M. was received from Captain Tupper stating that there was considerable gas shelling in the area occupied by the machine gun battalions, and that Major Bryant, commanding the 106th Machine Gun Battalion, had been slightly gassed, but was continuing on duty.

At 3:15 P. M. Captain Stanley Bulkley, commanding the 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry, reported his battalion occupying Knoll Support Trench in A.7.a and that some men of the 107th Infantry were also there.

At 3:17 P. M. a message was received, timed at 2:45 P. M., from Australian Corps reporting as follows:

Contact machines report flares called for at 1:20 P. M. No reply. Our troops seen in trench system A.9 to A.27. At 1:15 P. M. three tanks were astride trench A.21.central and stationary. Apparently O. K. Crews in trench alongside. Five tanks burning on road A.14.8.8. Our guns in action A.20.c.2.6. Pilot reports 1:20 P. M. our guns firing from old enemy posts A.11.d.5.5. Fairly heavy machine gun fire encountered over canal tunnel, A.15.b.2.2. At 1:40 P. M. smoke bombs dropped on B.1.a, and B.15.b.4.6. Pilot reports two groups of men about fifty to sixty moving southeast B.28.a, thought to be ours.

The three tanks referred to in the above message were close to the position then held by the 2d Battalion of the 108th Infantry, immediately south of Bony, which will be referred to later.

The following untimed message was received from Captain Mort, an Australian observation officer:

Have only found 49th Battalion Australians. Tried to open up communication with outpost, but without success. A party of Americans in the canal mopping up machine guns in Bony. Shells of big caliber in A.26 and 27, mixed with gas. Majority of Australians are wandering about, not knowing where other parts of their battalions are.

At 4:10 P. M. Lieutenant Colonel Crowther of the Australian Corps reported that the 3d Australian Division in support of the 27th Division had closed up with the 10th Australian Brigade, extending from Cat Post at A.24.A.8.8 to 100 yards west of Guillemont Farm to Valley Street. He also reported "possession at The Knoll obscure. Was held by Americans at 1 P. M. Elements 108th Infantry reported on green line. Our troops certainly in Bony, but so are the Boche."

The foregoing messages and extracts from messages are samples of the conflicting information that comes to the divisional message center during a battle.

Let us now turn to the march of events as observations at the time and subsequent reports indicate they occurred.



Men of Company M, 105th Infantry, bringing in German prisoners, among the first to be captured during the Hindenburg Line Battle. Prisoners are being used as stretcher bearers



German prisoners aiding in the evacuation of wounded

Taking up the story of the attack, beginning on the right, the 2d Battalion of the 108th Infantry, which held the extreme right of the divisional front, got away as soon as the barrage opened. They had, as has already been pointed out, a considerable distance to go before gaining the barrage. Shortly after they started forward they encountered heavy machine gun fire from a number of machine gun nests at A.25.central. These were silenced by outflanking and bombing them with hand grenades. This naturally caused a delay in the advance, but as soon as possible the forward movement was resumed. Several small parties of the 106th were found holding parts of the objective line of September 27th and these were passed over. During the progress of the continued advance of this battalion numerous casualties were inflicted by machine guns and shell fire, though no resistance by massed enemy forces was met until the troops arrived before the main defenses of the Hindenburg Line. There the wire entanglements were very thick, and at this place the leading elements met extremely heavy fire from the garrison in possession. By this time heavy smoke had settled over the field. Many officers and non-commissioned officers had fallen. It was here that less than 200 men, all that remained of the 2d Battalion, commanded by Captain Sandberg, accomplished the seemingly impossible. Prior to the battle the writer had never seen a more formidable looking company of infantry than this command. That opinion, shared by many officers, existed as far back as the Mexican Border days.

On this occasion the command forcibly demonstrated justification of the regard in which it was held. Facing the mass of wire for a few seconds, during which they received a veritable barrage of hand grenades as well as rifle fire, they assaulted by common impulse, every man getting through the best way he could. This was done with a recklessness, valor and determination that proved irresistible. They rushed forward in small groups and as individuals, through the wire, through passes existing in the wire, and in some cases over the top of the wire where it was very thick, all through a heavy pall of smoke. Many of them threw hand grenades when well within range of the trenches. A moment later they were in the trenches and there followed an orgy of fighting and killing. Their numbers were not great—less than 200. Lieutenants Samuel A. Brown and Harrison J. Uhl distinguished themselves by their conduct on this occasion. Their detachment succeeded in capturing over 100 prisoners, four field pieces, a large number of machine guns, anti-tank rifles and other military property. For his action on this occasion Lieutenant Brown was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Sergeant Frank Gaffney, an automatic rifleman of Company G of this battalion, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his part in this fighting. Witnesses report that he was a veritable human hurricane, using rifle, pistol and bomb. He pushed forward alone with his gun after all the members of his squad had been killed or wounded, and killed the crew of an enemy machine gun, captured the gun, bombed several dugouts, killed four more enemy soldiers with his pistol and held the

position while reinforcements arrived, when eighty prisoners were taken. Many individual soldiers of the garrison fired directly at Sergeant Gaffney before they were killed or subdued and taken prisoner, but none hit him. In a later battle this very gallant soldier received a wound which resulted in the loss of an arm.

The survivors of the 2d Battalion of the 108th Infantry, which gained access to the main trenches of the Hindenburg Line south of Bony, after killing or subduing the enemy defenders, blocked the trenches of the sector held by them, established outguards and systematically mopped up. The result was that they gathered 159 prisoners, survivors of their attack. Hardly had they organized their defense when they were subjected to a fierce counter-attack which broke down under their fire. This attack was later supplemented by other bombing attacks directed from Bony, a short distance north of their position. This battalion held the main defenses of the Hindenburg Line from the divisional boundary to a position immediately south of Bony in A.21.central.

Having maintained its position successfully against all counter-attacks, the battalion evacuated their prisoners to the rear under cover of darkness. It is to be remembered that hand in hand with the work of repulsing the enemy counter-attacks there devolved upon this small force the task of keeping their prisoners in subjection, and the prisoners almost equaled in number the effective strength of the unwounded men of the battalion.

Throughout the day the battalion was subjected to very heavy enfilading field artillery and machine gun fire from Bony. About noon, however, troops of the 3d Australian Division, in their progress forward and in the process of "leap-frogging" the 27th Division, arrived in the trenches held by the battalion. Promptly thereafter detachments were formed including Australians, and the work of attacking Bony from the south down the approach trenches was gotten under way.

The left battalion, that is to say the 3d Battalion of the 108th Infantry, almost immediately after the start met heavy fire from Guillemont Trench and Guillemont Farm.

The first wave was badly cut up while crossing the trenches south of Guillemont Farm and Claymore Valley. Succeeding waves of this battalion also suffered heavy losses while crossing the same area and in mopping up. Elements of the battalion, however, got through and into Dirk Valley, where they established themselves in the sunken roads immediately in front of Bony at A.14.d.9.0. and A.14.d.8.2. It is within the confines of this road fork that the present Bony cemetery is located. Due to the severity of the fire directed on them from Bony and to the sparsity of their numbers, they were unable to make any further advances until late in the afternoon, when they were joined by the leading elements of the 3d Australian Division. Thus reinforced, they reduced a number of machine gun nests which had up to that time stopped their further advance, and established their line so as to connect up at intervals with the battalion of their own regiment on the right.

Many acts of heroism marked the conduct of the 3d Battalion during

the progress of the attack. Space permits reference to but one of such cases. It is that of Sergeant William H. Burke, of Company M, and is mentioned because of the very exceptional fighting record of this soldier. While a private of the Company, he had been specially commended for his gallantry in action while the regiment was in Flanders. On August 12th, when his Company was in the line near Mont Kemmel, Belgium, an enemy patrol made a raid. Private Burke, seeing their advance, left his trench and counter-attacked the enemy party single-handed and alone. With his rifle he wounded several of the enemy, resulting in the flight of the remainder. This was a forecast of the conduct of Burke in later engagements. On September 29th, he then being a sergeant, he was acting as compass guide for the 3d Battalion of his regiment. While in advance of the battalion during the progress of the attack, he was wounded and ordered to the rear. At the aid station his wounds were bandaged and he was ordered to the casualty clearing station. He avoided evacuation, removed the hospital tag from his blouse, and worked his way forward to his own battalion headquarters, where he was again ordered to the dressing station, this time in arrest. He then left the battalion headquarters and, going forward, rejoined his own company, where he pleaded with the captain for permission to remain with the command. As the company at this time was very short of men, his plea was granted. Shortly thereafter he resumed the job of compass bearer in another advance. During this advance he was again wounded. Against his protests he was again evacuated, this time on a stretcher. Captain James Riffe, whose courage and cool judgment are well known in the division, reported that he had never seen a man in action who showed such complete disregard for his own safety. The Regimental Commander reports that Sergeant Burke was recommended for a Distinguished Service Cross. The papers, however, through some mishap, never reached Division Headquarters, so this very gallant soldier was not awarded this honor. He was, however, awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

The first battalion of the 108th Infantry, covering the entire regimental front, and following the supporting companies of the 2d and 3d Battalions at a distance of approximately 100 yards, advanced over the area covered by the forward battalions and reduced a number of machine gun nests which, carefully camouflaged, had evaded the attention of the leading battalions. They also gathered a considerable number of individual prisoners. Many of the latter were used as stretcher bearers for the evacuation of the wounded, which work was immediately gotten under way.

In the 108th Infantry, practically all wire communication was constantly interrupted by hostile fire. Visual signaling was not possible, due to the dense banks of smoke that hung close to the ground. The sole reliance in the field of communication was therefore the runner.

Most of the tanks assigned to cooperate with the 108th Infantry were put out of action shortly after the start. It is reported that they rendered little assistance to the Infantry.

Very careful consideration had been given in this regiment to the problem of adequate mopping up. The personnel of the regiment was highly trained, well disciplined and intelligent. They thoroughly understood the importance of mopping up. The difficulties and the importance of the task had been impressed upon them by the experience of the 106th Infantry two days before. Nevertheless, so complex was the enemy's defensive system and so resourceful and determined were the enemy machine gunners who had been placed at isolated posts, that a number of these machine gunners succeeded in evading detection and destruction during the earlier phases of the attack. Later in the day they began firing from nooks and crannies upon support parties, ration and carrying parties moving to the front, and as well upon stretcher bearers and wounded going to the rear. They were ultimately cleaned out.

The Machine Gun Company of the 108th Infantry was commanded by Captain Clarence S. Martin, and as already stated was divided for purposes of the attack. The first platoon was commanded by First Lieutenant Ralph W. Laughlin and was assigned to the 2d Battalion. The second platoon, commanded by First Lieutenant Henry O. Somer, went with the 3d Battalion, while the third platoon, commanded by First Sergeant Charles Bates, went to the 1st Battalion. Each platoon had four heavy Vickers machine guns, each gun being provided with fourteen belt boxes of 250 rounds per box. In the first platoon Lieutenant Laughlin was killed early in the advance. Sergeant Holahan, the next in command, was also killed. Sergeant Miller was severely wounded in the shoulder, but continued with the platoon throughout the day. The second platoon, under Lieutenant Somer, first went into action about 200 yards in advance of Benjamin Post in Mill Lane against enemy machine gun nests. From this point the platoon later advanced. Sergeant Dower had gone ahead for the purpose of identifying troops on their immediate front. These were found to be of the 107th Infantry. Lieutenant Somer then directed the platoon to side-slip to the right so as to cover the troops of the 108th Infantry. It was during this movement that Lieutenant Somer was killed. Sergeant Dower then assumed command of the platoon, but in the heavy smoke cloud he and Sergeant Trowbridge became separated from the platoon. They later went forward with Australian troops and rejoined the platoon the following day. The command of the platoon for the remainder of the battle fell to Sergeant Clarence M. Olsen, under whose command it went forward with the 39th Australian Battalion, operating with it until relieved the following day.

The third platoon, under Sergeant Bates, being with the reserve battalion, had to pass through the enemy's counter barrage. Thirteen casualties were inflicted upon the platoon in this advance.

One of the most important phases of battle preparation has to do with the matter of rations, battle stores, ammunition and supplies. Accounts of battle preparation in this field of effort are not interesting to the non-military reader. They are of vital importance, however, to the welfare and efficiency of the troops. Battle preparations change with the time and

with the conditions, and no true story of a battle would be complete without at least an outline of what was done to keep the troops supplied with the material things needed by them in combat.

As a sample, therefore, of the supply arrangements for the modern battle, the reader who is interested is referred to the Division Order No. 95 and to the following account of the application of this order to the 108th Infantry. This account will suffice as an example of what went on throughout the division.

The rations were issued by the regimental supply officer to the battalion supply officers. While the regiment was in the line, the company kitchens and water carts remained at the transport lines about two miles in rear of regimental headquarters. Company rations were cooked at the transport lines and carried to the battalion headquarters at night on limbers drawn by mules and horses. From these points, carrying parties from the companies carried the rations forward to the men in the trenches.

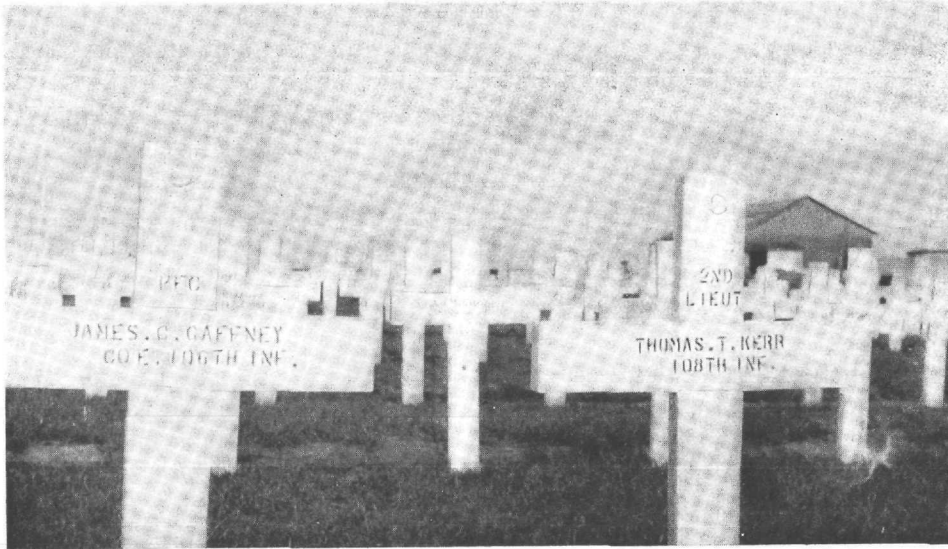
In preparation for battle all troops were furnished with assault rations. These were issued to the battalions on the morning of September 28th. One of the battalion dumps containing assault rations was destroyed by a direct hit by an enemy shell before the carrying parties had reached it.

Troops in battle must have water, and water fit to drink is seldom if ever available on the battle-field, except when it is transported there in containers. Such water as exists in shell holes is usually polluted and permeated with gas. On September 28th, 1,500 water bottles were delivered at the transport lines of the 108th Infantry. Even there, water was so scarce that these bottles, which were to contain an extra supply of water for the troops in the line, were filled and delivered to them with greatest difficulty.

In the British army troops in the line are supplied with petrol tins in which to transport water and hot coffee. Three hundred of these petrol tins were issued to the 108th Infantry and divided one hundred to each battalion. Each tin carried water for seven men or hot coffee for fourteen men. The number of petrol tins allowed the division was insufficient for its strength, although adequate for a British division. Accordingly they had to be supplemented by powder cans, although the latter were not as readily transported or handled as the petrol tins.

In order to keep the food hot in transit from the company kitchens to the front, the food, after preparation, was carried forward in hot food containers. These were of various types, but in principle were constructed like fireless cookers. These, supplied by the British, held hot food for thirty-two men. A battalion of 700 men should therefore be allowed twenty-two of these containers. Less than that number, however, were available on September 28th. Nevertheless, a hot meal was insured at least once a day for every man in the regiment. One of the difficulties in relation to the use of containers, petrol tins, etc., is getting them back in time to be filled and sent forward again for the next meal.

Wire cutters were issued to the regiment shortly before the assault.



Graves of 27th Division dead in Bony Cemetery. Picture taken in the summer of 1920

Battle stores, such as rifle and machine gun ammunition, hand and rifle grenades, smoke bombs, flares, rockets, Very light pistols, etc., were, in similar manner, carried forward on limbers during the night to battalion dumps, from which points they were distributed to the companies by means of carrying parties.

From the foregoing it will be seen that during trench warfare and in preparation for an assault thousands of soldiers were employed as carry-



View of 27th Division graves in Bony Cemetery. Picture taken during the summer of 1920

ing parties, moving about over shell-swept areas, in trenches and over shell-pitted fields, carrying heavy burdens of food, ammunition and other supplies, while handicapped by darkness and mud.

In the 2d Battalion of the 108th Infantry First Lieutenant Frank L. Simes of Company H and First Lieutenant John J. Welch, commanding Company G, were killed, and First Lieutenant Delancey King, commanding Company F; Captain A. M. Barager, commanding Company H, and First Lieutenant Edward H. O'Rourke of Company G were wounded.

In the 3d Battalion the four officers with Company I, namely, Captain Joseph W. Smith, First Lieutenants Harold G. McKay and Harry H. Crosby and Second Lieutenant Thomas T. Kerr, were killed. Second Lieutenants Benjamin Fuller and John E. Lathrop of Company L and First Lieutenant Harry B. Bently of Company M were also killed, while Captain James Riffe and First Lieutenant Jesse I. Varney of Company L and Captain William L. Hodder, commanding Company M, were wounded.

In the 1st Battalion, First Lieutenant Edward F. Winneck of Company B was killed, and Captain Arthur T. Smith, commanding Company A, and First Lieutenant Edward M. McCabe of Company C were wounded.

The Regimental Signal Officer, Second Lieutenant Cecil H. Page, was also wounded during this attack.

Officers of the 27th Division and of the 3d Australian Division, who had opportunity to witness the conduct of the 108th Infantry in this battle, are unanimous in their praise of the magnificent morale displayed by all ranks from the time they assumed their attack positions until the termination of the engagement. The regiment in this battle captured 16 German officers and 594 German enlisted men. A large number of enemy soldiers were slain. The regiment also captured a large number of machine guns, field pieces and mortars. The losses of the regiment on September 29th and 30th were 12 officers and 174 enlisted men killed, 1 officer and 25 men died of wounds, 9 officers and 557 men wounded and 1 officer and 144 men gassed.

Let us now turn to the 107th Infantry. This regiment was also most thorough in its preparation for the attack. All of its units were in their battle positions on time, and at zero hour swept forward in their effort to overtake the barrage. The enemy counter barrage, as already stated, fell behind the 107th Infantry, but immediately the advance began, the enemy machine gun nests on the front, promptly supported by the enemy defensive machine gun barrage, began to cause casualties. The leading waves of the 107th Infantry swept across the enemy trenches known as Fag Trench, Causeway Lane, Island Traverse and the trench running south therefrom toward Guillemont Farm. From this line they swept on to Willow Trench, which runs across the head of Macquincourt Valley from Lowland Post south to Guillemont Farm. While the moppers up were engaged in cleaning out Island Traverse, Fag Trench, Causeway Lane and the trench leading to Guillemont Farm, the leading and supporting elements swept into and through Willow Trench. A considerable number of the enemy were killed or taken prisoner in this area. The leading ele-

ments continued east, but as they approached Lone Tree Trench, running from The Knoll Support Trench south to Grub Lane and thence on to the east of Guillemont Farm, they sustained such severe machine gun fire from this trench that this part of the line was brought to a halt, taking cover in shell holes and in Willow Trench.

The 3d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, commanded by Captain Raphael A. Egan, had reached its position on the tape before 5:30 A. M., sustaining some casualties in the maneuver. As indicated on the graphic, Companies I and L were the leading units of the battalion from north to south, with Companies K and M in immediate support. The support companies followed sixty yards in rear of the leading companies. Captain Egan established his post of command between the support companies. The battalion was deployed in combat groups. From the moment the barrage fell, the enemy machine gunners lying in the foreground between this battalion and the barrage opened up a heavy fire. Nevertheless the battalion immediately began its advance, moving off with great precision and steadiness. Enemy machine gunners and snipers encountered in this advance were bayoneted or shot unless they promptly surrendered. At Lowland Post in A.7.b.6.1 and about Guillemont Farm the battalion ran into highly organized and heavily manned posts. Here heavy casualties were inflicted upon it. Captain Egan and his Adjutant, First Lieutenant Charles H. Floyd, were both wounded by machine gun bullets. Captain Fancher Nicoll, commanding Company L, and First Lieutenant Percy M. Hall, commanding Company I, First Lieutenant Murray Cramer, commanding Company M, Second Lieutenant Ben M. Rambo of Company K, First Lieutenant Carey J. Walrath of Company M, and Second Lieutenant H. W. Robinson, Battalion Intelligence Officer, were all killed, while First Lieutenant Robert A. Byrns of Company L was seriously wounded.

At 11:30 A. M. Captain George F. Bradish, who had succeeded Captain Egan in command of the battalion when the latter was wounded, crawled from his position at the extreme front to secure the aid of Stokes mortars or tanks in an effort to reduce enemy opposition. He found the tank captain and arranged for the support of several tanks. These were guided to a point opposite the objective by Captain Bradish personally, who then organized his troops into small detachments for the purpose of following the tanks in another assault. When the tanks began their advance they were soon destroyed by enemy shell fire and mines. In the organization of this effort, Captain Bradish was most efficiently assisted by First Lieutenant Griswold B. Daniel of Company K and First Lieutenant Claude G. Leland of Company I. The troops made their effort most gallantly, but sustained very heavy casualties. A number of the survivors fell back to the trench in F.11.d.7.4 and F.18.a.6.7, near Tombois Farm. Captain Bradish stopped this retirement and reorganized the line in the vicinity as a support group. In about twenty minutes they were reinforced by a company of the 105th Infantry and again went forward and occupied Willow Trench from A.7.b.6.2 to A.7.d.7.2. Here they were counter-attacked several times, but repulsed with heavy casualties all enemy efforts

to oust them. In the afternoon the leading elements of the 3d Australian Division joined them in Willow Trench. At 6:30 P. M. troops of this battalion with Australians made some further progress.

At 5:30 A. M. on the following day, September 30th, Australian detachments took over the battalion front and the battalion occupied support positions, disposed in depth. On October 1st at 1:30 P. M. the battalion was withdrawn, proceeding to St. Emilie, from which point it moved to a point one mile south of Saucourt, where it bivouacked for the night.

The 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry was the left battalion, designated to move forward to the line of the open canal. The departure line having been established by Lieutenant Hellquist, Battalion Scout Officer, with a detachment of men, the battalion occupied its battle position in ample time for the attack. The start line ran from F.11.a.9.6 to F.11.d.3.1, connecting with the third battalion on the right. On the left, Fleeceall Post, in the hands of the enemy, was not more than 200 yards distant. The occupation of battle position was effected without serious casualties. Companies C and B were the assaulting units, with Companies D and A in support in the order named from north to south, the latter companies furnishing mopping up detachments. Company D was especially charged with the protection of the left flank. The start was made more than 1,000 yards behind the barrage. The battalion went forward, however, with precision and determination, although from the beginning they began to suffer casualties. Enemy groups encountered were quickly overcome until the battalion reached the general line, Knoll Support Trench-Willow Trench, when they were stopped by a tornado of machine gun fire from the north and east. En route to this line, Fleeceall Post was quickly overrun and a considerable number of machine guns and sixty prisoners captured. Prisoners and guns were also taken in Fag Support, Fag Trench, Egg Post and Island Traverse. A great number of enemy dead were found on and about The Knoll as a result of the fighting during the previous battle. Parties of this battalion reached Macquincourt Trench in A.2.c.3.4. These detachments were from Company D. One platoon of Company C held for some time a position in front of the Lone Tree Trench, but were counter-attacked and forced to fall back. Other detachments in the heavy smoke fought their way to Hidden Trench in a.2.D and to the wire in front of trenches in A.3.a and c. Some wounded men of this battalion were later evacuated from positions immediately south of Vendhuile.

The 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry had the hardest task imposed upon any unit in this great attack. Not only were they to advance against the open cut of the canal, between which and their start line lay that formidable position known as The Knoll, but they were to constitute the left flank guard of the division in its advance. It is not known whether any high ranking officer believed at the time that any single battalion of troops could fight its way to the open cut of the canal between Vendhuile and the north mouth of the tunnel under the conditions as they existed on the morning of September 29th. However that may be, it was essential that in the attempt to drive through the tunnel system

skilled troops of the greatest resolution should occupy this critical part of the line, and by their confidence, determination and willingness to bear sacrifices, insure the security of the left flank of the corps against the avalanche of fire and powerful counter-attacks which it was known would be directed against the flank from the vicinity of Vendhuile.

During the early part of the attack the writer questioned an educated and efficient-looking German officer who had been taken prisoner while making an inspection at the extreme front near The Knoll. Like many German officer prisoners, he was at first reticent, but having permitted himself to become engaged in an argument concerning the possibility of any troops breaking through the Hindenburg Line, finally stated with some warmth that he hoped they would be successful in advancing as far as the tunnel, for in that event it would mean the destruction or capture of all attacking troops, by reason of the ability of German forces to roll them up by flank drives from Vendhuile which nothing could stop. The boast is mentioned as indicating the confidence of the enemy in the strength and possibilities of the natural flank position of Vendhuile. The confidence in this flank position would have been well justified had ordinary troops been interposed against the tide of counter-attacks which drove down from the north for the purpose of rolling up the assaulting lines. But the 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry were not ordinary troops. They were more than seasoned veterans, for in addition to battle experience and technical training they possessed in fullest measure pride of organization, high sense of honor and a strong sense of accountability to the home land and the family. The roster of the dead contains the best names of the city of New York—best in the sense of family tradition and all that stands for good citizenship in the history of the city. This comment applies as well to the dead of the remainder of the regiment and in the same way to the remaining units of the division, which represented other cities and localities of New York State.

Throughout the day and night of September 29th and the morning of September 30th this battalion, and companies of the 105th Infantry under Captain Jacob S. Clinton, withstood a series of the fiercest and most determined counter-attacks designed to sweep down behind and through the length of the corps line. The earlier of these counter-attacks were made after artillery preparation, by masses of troops attacking in the open. So deadly was the rifle fire of the 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry and the troops of the 105th Infantry, and so tenaciously did they hold their positions, that these counter-attacks were broken down with heavy losses to the enemy. The losses sustained by our troops, however, were so considerable that soon additional companies of the 105th Infantry sent to reinforce them became merged with them. The losses were so numerous among the officers, the system of shell holes and demolished trenches which the troops occupied were so complicated, and the shelling and machine gunning so constant, that it was only with greatest difficulty, amid the tangle of trenches, wire, corpses, wounded and fighting men, that the surviving officers were able to establish any kind of dispositions in depth. And this

latter action was imperative, because even the soldiers in the ranks then knew that the mission of the battalion was no longer to continue to attempt the impossible, but to provide at any cost for the security of the left flank of the corps.

Later in the afternoon of the 29th and during the early evening, enemy counter-attacks took the form of carefully organized bombing expeditions down the available trenches of approach. Apparently these bombing attacks were headed by expert bombers, who were supplied with grenades by a chain of men to the source of supply, the advance being supported by the fire of rifle grenadiers and light minnenwerfers. The defenders were largely dependent upon the available supply of captured German hand grenades in making their resistance, and obviously could not be as well organized in their scattered positions as were the attacking columns. The result was that in some places detachments of the 105th and 107th Infantry were forced back under the assaults of the enemy bombing parties. In this way the enemy made more progress in their counter-attacks than they had earlier in the day with massed formations of troops.

It is to be remembered that in resisting bombing attacks through trenches the rifle is of little value. The attacks were finally stopped by the initiative and daring of individual non-commissioned officers and private soldiers of the two regiments who left their positions and with grenades in their hands rushed over the open to the flanks of the enemy bombing parties and bombed them from right and left.

The 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry with the aid of detachments from the 105th Infantry was successful in securing the left flank, not only of the division, but of the corps; and it was the sacrifice and the valor and the skill of these troops which made it possible for the divisional units further to the south to overcome the enemy resistance in the tunnel sector and to capture and break through the famous Hindenburg Line. As will be told further along in the story of the division's activities, with this break through accomplished, and with the left flank refused and firmly held, the attack on succeeding days was launched, not to the east, but towards the north from the easterly side of the tunnel. It was the progress of these later attacks which compelled the enemy to evacuate Vendhuile in order to avoid envelopment.

One of the best company officers in the division, First Lieutenant Samuel Crump, Jr., of Company B, was killed in this attack of the 1st Battalion. The remaining two officers of the company, First Lieutenant Ford M. Terry and Second Lieutenant John McAnerney, were wounded. First Lieutenant Ralph P. Buell, who commanded Company C, and who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his great gallantry during this action, was also severely wounded. Captain Kenneth C. Wilson, who commanded the one pounders, was wounded. Out of five officers on duty with the Machine Gun Company, all were killed or wounded except Second Lieutenant Kenneth Gow, who was the transport officer. These were Captain Walter G. Andrews, First Lieutenant Harry Adsit and Second Lieutenant Paul H. Gadebusch, all wounded, and First Lieutenant

Edward Willis, killed. Lieutenant Gow was later killed in the battle of Le Selle River. The conduct of the Machine Gun Company of the 107th Infantry was exceptionally commendable. Prior to zero hour the company assumed its battle position in Sart Lane with one of the lieutenants in charge of each platoon. It was behind the 1st Battalion. As the company reached the rise of ground at the end of London Road, it came under heavy machine gun fire from the vicinity of Guillemont Farm and Lone Tree Trench. The advance continued through the valley although heavy casualties were sustained at Willow Trench. The company could get no farther. It was here that Lieutenant Willis was killed and Lieutenant Gadebusch wounded, as well as fifteen enlisted men killed and wounded. Lieutenant Adsit advanced part of his platoon across this trench toward Lone Tree Trench. There he was lost to view in the smoke cloud. After severe and close fighting, his platoon was forced back to Willow Trench, where a support position was organized. Lieutenant Adsit's platoon remained in Willow Trench as the forward echelon of the company, the remaining two platoons being disposed at Castle Bar Sap in F.12.a.0.6. Determined counter-attacks were made against the position of the forward platoon, the enemy using bombs and pistols. These attacks, however, were repulsed. In this position were about thirty soldiers of the Northampton British Regiment, who had strayed from their own sector. In attempting to retire to their own units at about 2:30 in the afternoon this detachment was almost completely wiped out. It was for their gallant action in this battle that Sergeants Alan L. Eggers and John C. Latham and Corporal Thomas E. O'Shea of the Machine Gun Company were awarded Congressional Medals of Honor. Upon hearing a call for help from a comrade when they were well within the enemy's lines, they left their shelter and, under heavy enemy machine gun and trench mortar fire, proceeded in the open for a distance of thirty yards, and rescued a wounded officer and assisted two soldiers from a burning tank to the cover of a nearby trench. Crossing this shell-swept area Corporal O'Shea was killed. The other two soldiers returned to the tank, dismounted the Hotchkiss gun, and with it covered the wounded officer and men throughout the day. Under cover of darkness they brought the gun with the wounded back to the support lines.

At 1:30 P. M. about thirty Australians constituting advance elements of the 3d Australian Division joined the troops in Willow Trench. During the night of September 29th two enemy attacks were made against the position held by Lieutenant Adsit's platoon, but were shattered by his fire.

At 7:30 on the morning of September 30th a detachment with several Australians patrolled to the front and successfully bombed several enemy positions. At 8:00 A. M. a number of wounded of the Machine Gun Company were successfully evacuated. On October 2d the company was withdrawn and furnished burial details for its regiment.

The 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, commanded by Captain Rowland Tompkins, lined up about 100 yards in rear of the 3d Battalion in

order to allow room for the forming up of the provisional mopping up battalion of the 106th Infantry. In the 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, Companies H and E were the assaulting units, G and F the supporting units, in the order named from north to south. All were in position by 5:20 A. M. No casualties were sustained while awaiting the zero hour, although six casualties occurred while the battalion was moving forward to the line. Battalion Headquarters at 5:00 A. M. had been moved to F.17. c.3.9. One tank accompanied the battalion at the start. The battalion moved off promptly when the barrage fell. It was stopped in front of Lone Tree Trench and Guillemont Crescent Trenches in the heavy smoke screen. Heavy machine gun fire came from the north as well as from the east. A number of groups of this battalion succeeded in continuing on with groups from the leading battalion. One of these, consisting of about thirty men under Sergeant John H. Napper of Company G, reached the main Hindenburg line in A.9.a.5.5, near the north end of the tunnel. Other groups of both battalions got forward to the tunnel, but finding themselves unsupported fought their way back from The Knob to Willow Trench. Early in the attack Captain Harry W. Hayward and First Lieutenant Benjamin T. Hammond and Stephen M. Schwab, all of Company E, were killed, while Captain George P. Nichols, and First Lieutenant Roe M. Dennis of Company F, Captain Marston E. Drake of Company G, First Lieutenant Arthur J. McKenna of Company H, as well as First Lieutenant David C. Bull, medical officer of the battalion, were wounded.

Captain Kenneth C. Wilson of the Headquarters Company organized a detachment and occupied and held South Guillemont Trench. Trenches such as Willow and South Guillemont were used as the basis of the line when it became immobilized, the troops being disposed in depth. The front line troops were in trenches and shell holes in front of the trenches named, while supporting groups were established in rear. Heavy fighting with bombing attacks and counter-attacks continued throughout the afternoon and night of September 29th. Toward morning enemy snipers were withdrawn. This position was held by the battalion until 1:30 P. M. on October 1st. The depleted strength of this battalion had been reorganized in its position on September 30th into three provisional companies of about eighty men each, these companies being commanded respectively by Second Lieutenant Marsh S. Lockyear, Battalion Intelligence Officer, First Lieutenant James T. Bergen of Company H, 105th Infantry, who had been with the battalion, and First Lieutenant Beverly L. F. Burnham, Battalion Gas Officer. On the morning of October 1st troops of the 3d Australian Division, continuing the attack, were supported in this part of the line by the survivors of the 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry until early afternoon of that day, when the battalion was withdrawn, first to Ronssoy and thence to a hut camp near Bussu.

Major Raymond A. Turnbull, Medical Corps, commanded the Sanitary Detachment of the 107th Infantry. Shortly after the attack commenced, walking wounded began to appear at the aid stations. These came not only from the battalion of the 107th Infantry, but on the right from the

108th Infantry, from the Tank Corps and from British and Australian units as well. For a time there was considerable congestion at the aid station located in F.16.c.3.3. The ambulance head was located in Ronssoy at F.21.a.8.4. A forward dressing station was established on the Bellicourt Road in F.22.b.9.4 by Lieutenant Benedict. At 10:00 A. M. the forward station was opened by Lieutenants Gray and Bancel in a shell hole at F.17.c.5.3 and was used by them throughout the day under rather heavy fire. This station was later moved into a dugout near by and remained in operation until 2:00 P. M. on October 1st. At 4:00 P. M. Lieutenant Bancel established a collecting point for wounded on the London Road near Egg Post. Due to machine gun fire much difficulty was experienced at this place in evacuating wounded. Wounded here were evacuated via Pomponius Lane, through Lempire Post to the battalion aid station at F.15.d.8.8. At 5:00 P. M. a volunteer detail of sixty stretcher bearers searched the areas in F.16, 17, 18 and 19 for wounded and secured and evacuated approximately sixty men. During the afternoon of September 29th the 3d Battalion aid station was taken over by the 105th Infantry. One of the aid stations was advanced to F.23.b.4.2. The wounded were evacuated by ambulances which came up the Guillemont Road. The Sanitary Detachment was kept on duty until 4:00 P. M. October 1st, when the regimental aid station was closed.

The one pounders and Stokes mortars assigned to the 1st Battalion reached the vicinity of Willow Trench, when they were held up by machine gun fire from Lone Tree Trench. Three Stokes mortars fired on the enemy position and obtained hits. One Stokes mortar was put out of action by an enemy hit on the base plate. Due to casualties, the separation of the squads in the smoke, and to the great expenditure of ammunition, an adequate supply was not on hand on one or two critical occasions. The one pounder squad under Sergeant O'Gorman was in Willow Trench with the infantry. In the smoke one of the tanks crossed Willow Trench and drove the trail of the one pounder gun into the ground, disabling it. Sergeant O'Gorman's squad thereafter fought as infantry. They took part in local attacks and in repulsing counter-attacks and successfully used a great number of German hand grenades in these combats. The Stokes mortar squad with the right battalion was located at Doleful Post, and with the two one pounder guns there came under heavy enemy fire shortly after the start. The infantry of the battalion to which they were assigned advanced with such speed that these guns could not keep up and soon the thick smoke cloud obscured everything. Captain Wilson went forward on a personal reconnaissance to Guillemont Farm and the mopping up by detachments of the 107th and 106th Infantry going on in that vicinity came under his personal observation. He reported it was being most systematically carried out and that large numbers of enemy soldier had been killed as well as taken prisoners.

Second Lieutenant John C. Freeman, Regimental Signal Officer, reported that lines to brigade headquarters were constantly broken by shell fire, but that one line had been established at 6:45 A. M. on September

29th. Continual touch was maintained by the regiment with the 1st and 2d Battalion Headquarters. Communication was not maintained with the 3d Battalion Headquarters after it went forward. Visual signals were attempted, but the thick smoke rendered them useless. Lamp signals were also found to be useless because of the smoke. Lateral telephone communication with the 108th Infantry and with the 54th British Brigade on the left was maintained without much difficulty.

A reference to the map will indicate the line gained by the 107th Infantry, with the help of the 105th Infantry. In estimating the results of the great valor, skill and sacrifice displayed by this regiment during the battle of the Hindenburg Line, it must ever be kept in mind that while its prescribed mission was to reach the canal with one battalion and to cross the tunnel near the north end with the remaining two battalions, its vital mission was to secure the left flank not only of the division, but of the corps, and to insure this in the face of obstacles and conditions which had been carefully prepared by the enemy to make such accomplishment impossible.

Subsequent to the battle several veteran British officers of wide experience told the writer that in their opinion the success of the Hindenburg Line thrust was the result not only of the discipline and skill of the troops that headed the attack, but also their willingness and ability to bear heavy losses with unimpaired morale. They referred further to the fact that troops with long experience in war would have recognized the magnitude of the task imposed upon them, and that their tendency would be to shrink from suffering losses which very easily they could persuade themselves to believe would be useless.

We all remember the incident at Cold Harbor during the Civil War, when the tremendous losses sustained in two previous assaults caused the veteran Union troops to refuse, by common impulse, to make the third attempt when it was ordered.

The 107th Infantry soldiers, during preparations for this attack, reported to their Regimental Commander that soldiers of the adjoining British division had told them that they were to attempt the impossible and that the only result would be heavy losses. The Regimental Commander reported that these direful prophesies had no apparent effect upon his men, whose confidence and morale were at the highest pitch. The incident, however, serves to indicate that perhaps the regiment would not have been as efficient for the purposes of this battle had it, prior thereto, been subjected to experiences such as had been suffered by divisions of the British army in their long war trials.

The losses in the 107th Infantry in this attack were great. There were 11 officers and 332 enlisted men killed; 34 enlisted men died of wounds; 15 officers and 721 enlisted men wounded; 53 enlisted men gassed and 7 missing in action.

As already stated, the provisional battalion of the 106th Infantry, commanded by Major Ransom H. Gillet, reached its battle positions immediately before the zero hour, as mopping up units for the 3d Battalion

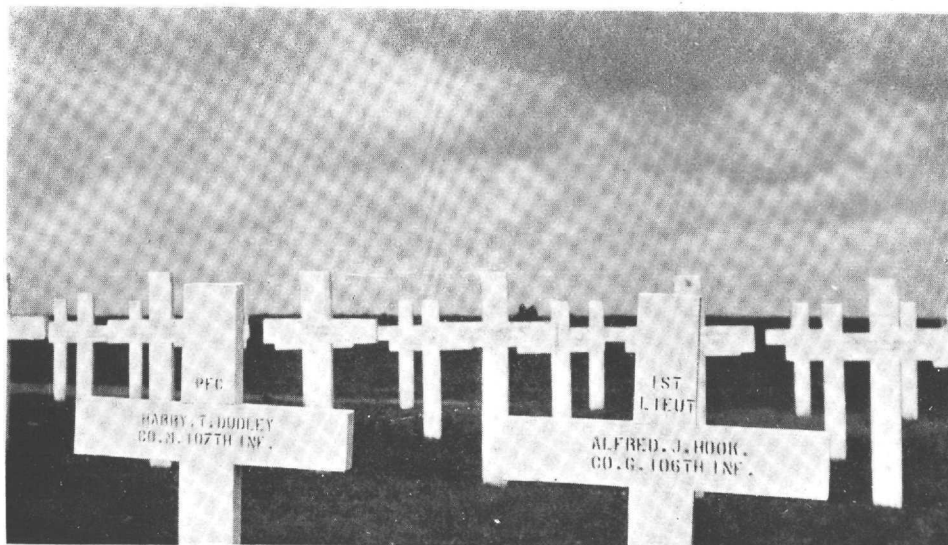
of the 107th Infantry. In the fierce fighting which took place shortly after the advance commenced, some of these detachments became merged with platoons of the battalion in their front. Others in the heavy smoke cloud diverged to the right and followed the left battalion of the 108th Infantry. One of the latter groups was commanded by Sergeant Joseph A. Cook of Company F, 106th Infantry, who had reached the objective of September 27th to the south and east of Guillemont Farm and who had survived that experience. On this occasion after most of his platoon had been killed or wounded, the Sergeant ultimately found himself in a trench of the main Hindenburg Line system and a short distance south of Bony. As the smoke lifted, his party came under machine gun fire from a concrete machine gun emplacement in the trench they occupied and a short distance to the north of them. An attempt to bomb this position from the trench failed. Their rifle fire seemed ineffective. Thereupon the Sergeant, while the remainder of his detachment kept the emplacement under rifle fire, left the trench and jumping from shell hole to shell hole gained one within bombing distance of the enemy post. From this point he successfully threw four bombs into the pit. Advancing cautiously he found two of the enemy soldiers expiring and two others badly wounded. Enemy soldiers who may have been survivors, together with some others who had occupied adjoining positions, ran off toward Bony, and as the Sergeant expressed it, "made some fine targets for the rest of our men."

This position was secured and was probably the most northerly point in the main Hindenburg Line defenses held by our troops. The point was located in the vicinity of A.21.b.central. Later the Sergeant accurately described the position, including the tunnel immediately in his front. In the afternoon of September 29th the survivors of his party were connected up with a small party of the 108th Infantry on their right and still later by several Australian soldiers of the 3d Australian Division. During the day, however, numerous efforts were made by enemy parties to dislodge them from their position, but without success.

First Lieutenant Franklin J. Jackson, Stokes Mortar Officer of the 106th Infantry, a very capable and energetic young officer, was killed while making a personal reconnaissance east of Ronsoy. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary gallantry in this action.

Another gallant young officer of this regiment, First Lieutenant Alfred J. Hook, was killed leading his company in attack. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary gallantry in taping off the line of departure for his company under heavy enemy fire just prior to the attack.

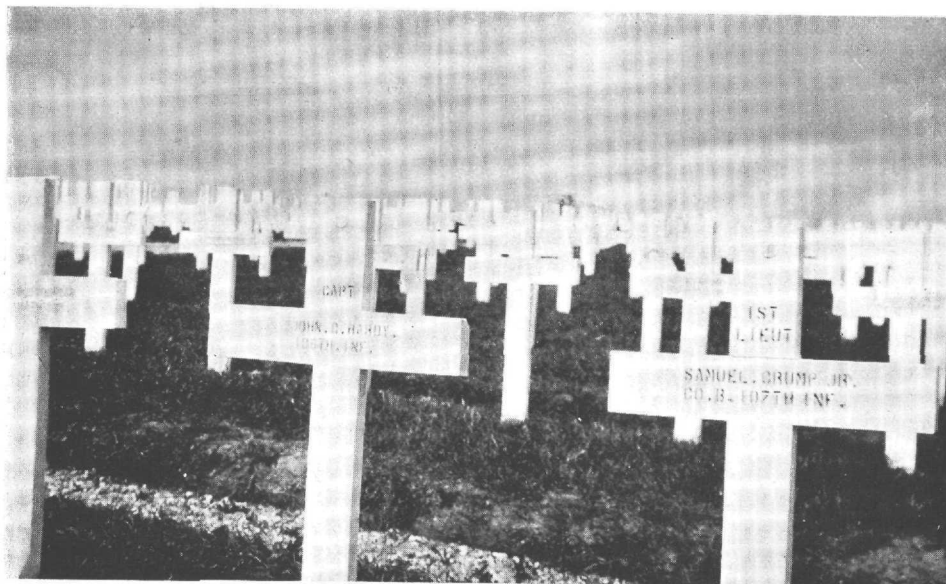
Considering the small numbers composing the mopping up parties of the 106th Infantry Battalion, the heavy casualties sustained by them, and the great fatigue under which they labored as a result of their efforts on September 27th, it is remarkable that they accomplished as much as they did. Wherever these detachments found themselves in the smoke, they fought and bombed enemy groups with the greatest determination and



*Another view of 27th Division graves in Bony Cemetery,
taken during the summer of 1920*

gallantry. Dead soldiers of their units were found at formidable points in and about Guillemont Farm in close proximity to enemy dead where they had fallen in combat with the latter. The losses of this battalion were 1 officer and 11 enlisted men killed or died of wounds, 8 officers and 29 enlisted men wounded, 4 enlisted men gassed and 8 enlisted men missing.

Captain William E. Blaisdell, who had commanded the 3d Battalion on September 27th, and who in this attack commanded the left company of



*Another view of 27th Division graves in Bony Cemetery,
taken during the summer of 1920*

the composite battalion, was killed. Two of the other officers of his company, First Lieutenant Edward L. Ryan and Second Lieutenant Harold C. De Loiselle, were wounded. In the center company made up from the 2d Battalion of the regiment, three of the four officers were wounded. They were Captain Arthur V. McDermott, First Lieutenant Erdmann Brandt and First Lieutenant L. H. Doty. The company from the 1st Battalion had two of its officers wounded, namely, First Lieutenants Arthur B. Elliman and Joseph L. Gilman. The commander of the provisional battalion, Major Ransom H. Gillet, was wounded early in the morning by a machine gun bullet.

In this battle Sergeant Thomas Armstrong of Company H won the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary heroism in alone attacking and driving off an enemy patrol and later remaining with his Captain, who was wounded, and preventing his capture by the enemy, in which combat he killed two enemy soldiers who attacked them.

The 105th Infantry under Colonel James M. Andrews was to follow the 107th Infantry and the battalion of the 106th Infantry across the canal, and then change direction to the north so as to deploy and exploit the territory northwest of Le Catelet, and, threatening Vendhuile, compel its evacuation. Colonel Andrews had imposed upon each of his battalions a separate and special mission.

When the barrage opened, the battalions moved forward as planned. At 7:45 A. M. Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Berry and Captain John W. Frost, Regimental Operations Officer, were sent forward to open advance Regimental Headquarters at Duncan Post. At 8:45 A. M. Lieutenant Colonel Berry sent back word that he had established temporary headquarters in a dugout on the road in F.16.d. 7.5, due to conditions which obtained at the time at Duncan Post. Regimental Headquarters was then moved to the place temporarily selected. At 11:55 A. M. a message was received from the 3d Battalion that leading troops had taken and occupied The Knoll and were in touch with a company of Royal Fusiliers on the left. At noon Regimental Headquarters was moved to Duncan Post, which was at the time occupied by Captain Frank J. Maldiner, commanding the 3d Battalion of the 108th Infantry. At 1:50 P. M. Captain Frank R. Potter, commanding Company F of the 105th Infantry, reported to the Regimental Commander that British troops on his left had withdrawn and that he was still occupying Willow Trench. Troops of the 105th Infantry were moved up in support of the 107th Infantry to help stem enemy counter-attacks already described. The heavy fighting on the left has also been described. Soon the various companies of the 105th Infantry were utilized in helping to stop the enemy counter-attacks in that sector. Troops of the 105th Infantry in the heavy fighting which followed found themselves in Willow Trench, Cochrane Avenue, Fag Trench, Island Traverse, Causeway Lane and part of Knoll Switch and positions in support. During the night Australian troops moved up in close support ready to continue their advance the following morning. At 6:20 P. M. on September 30th the 105th Infantry was directed to withdraw to the vicinity of St. Emilie. Numbers

of men of the regiment with similar outlying detachments of the 107th, 106th and 108th had gone forward with leading units of the 3d Australian Division when the latter division moved forward in its attack to the north-east on September 30th, and hence could not be reached. Captain Clinton's 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry, for example, which had gained and tenaciously held the left of The Knoll, did not begin its withdrawal from the line until the early morning of October 1st. The losses of the 105th Infantry in this battle as reported by the Regimental Commander were 4 officers killed and 10 wounded; 91 enlisted men killed and 504 wounded.

In the 1st Battalion, First Lieutenant John J. Callahan, commanding Company A, First Lieutenant Kevney O'Connor and Second Lieutenant John T. Clissett, Jr., of Company B; First Lieutenant Harry Merz and Second Lieutenant Clement A. G. Feldt were wounded. The Battalion Commander, Captain Henry Maslin, and his Adjutant, First Lieutenant Ogden J. Ross, were also wounded.

In the 2d Battalion, Captain James S. Slossen, commanding Company E, the two officers with Company G, First Lieutenants Earl W. Maxson and Edward Warschauer were killed and Second Lieutenant Edward Van Holland was wounded.

In the 3d Battalion, Second Lieutenant Harold J. Hobbs of Company I was killed and the Battalion Commander, Captain Stanley Bulkley, wounded.

The signal work of the regiment was efficiently carried on when the extraordinary conditions are considered, but it was embarrassed by the disability of the officer in charge, Second Lieutenant Paul A. Florian, who was wounded early in the battle.

Many of the officers and enlisted men of the regiment distinguished themselves. The three Battalion Commanders, Captains McArthur, Maslin and Bulkley, led their battalions with skill and determination, the latter two being wounded as stated above. Captain Bulkley, who commanded on the left, was succeeded by Captain Jacob S. Clinton.

The Knoll never left the possession of the troops of the 105th and the 1st Battalion of the 107th after they took it on the morning of September 29th. The attached sketch shows the disposition of troops about The Knoll on the night of September 29th.

In this battle Private Anthony Sclafani of Company A won the Distinguished Service Cross for shielding a Lewis gunner in an exposed position with his body, while the gunner poured fire into the enemy. This act was performed despite the fact that Private Sclafani had been wounded once in reaching the Lewis gunner and twice more while shielding him. He finally lost consciousness, but after his wounds were dressed insisted on leaving the field unaided.

The 105th Machine Gun Battalion, under command of Major Kenneth Gardner, participated in the firing of the machine gun barrage on the morning of September 29th. The companies from left to right were commanded as follows: Company A by Captain Lucius H. Biglow, Jr., Company B by Captain Nathaniel H. Egleston, Company D by Captain Stanton

107th Infantry—Assaulting Troops, Left of Division Sector			
C 1st Lt. Ralph P. Buell (w).	B 1st Lt. Samuel Crump, Jr. (k). 1st Lt. Ford M. Terry (w). 2d Lt. John McAnerney (w).	I 1st Lt. Percy M. Hall (k). 2d Lt. Claude G. Leland.	L Capt. Fancher Nicoll (k). 1st Lt. Robert A. Byrns (w).
D 2d Lt. Thomas G. Simpson.	A 1st Lt. Clarence E. Hall.	K Capt. George B. Bradish. 1st Lt. Griswold B. Daniell. 2d Lt. Ben M. Rambo (k).	M 1st Lt. Murray E. Cramer (k). 1st Lt. Carey J. Walrath (k).
1st Battalion Capt. Clinton E. Fisk. 1st Lt. Richard M. Raven, Adj. 2d Lt. Oscar H. Hellquist, Int. Off. 1st Lt. Charles T. Graham Rogers, Gas Off.		3d Battalion Capt. Raphael A. Egan (w). 1st Lt. Charles A. Floyd, Adj. (w). 2d Lt. Harry W. Robinson, Int. Off. (k). 2d Lt. Alexander E. Ostrander, Trans. Off.	
Supporting 1st Battalion M. G. Capt. Walter G. Andrews (w). 1st Lt. Harry Adair (w). 1st Lt. Edward Willis (k). 2d Lt. Kenneth Gow, Trans. Off. 2d Lt. Paul H. Gadebuseh (w).		H 1st Lt. Arthur J. McKenna (w).	E Capt. Harry W. Hayward (k). 1st Lt. Benj. T. Hammond (k). 1st Lt. Stephen M. Schwab (k).
2 37mm. 4 T. M. 1st Lt. Richard H. McIntyre (e). SIGNAL PLATOON 2d Lt. John C. Freeman.		G Capt. Marston E. Drake (w).	F Capt. Geo. P. Nichols (w). 1st Lt. Roe M. Dennis (w).
		2d Battalion SIGNAL PLATOON Capt. Rowland Tompkins. 1st Lt. William S. Hawkins, Adj. 2d Lt. Marsh H. Looklear, Int. Off. 1st Lt. David C. Bull, M. C. (w). 1st Lt. Beverly L. F. Burnham, Gas Off.	
Colonel Charles I. DeBevoise. 1st Lt. Edward H. Kent, Adj. Capt. Thomas J. Brady, Op. Off. Capt. Henry B. Heylman, Pers. Adj. 1st Lt. Edwin S. Munson, Gas Off. 1st Lt. Hiram W. Taylor, Sup. Off.		Major Nicholas Engel. 1st Lt. Eugene L. Mullaney, Int. Off. 1st Lt. William G. Le Compte, Transp. Off. Major Raymond A. Turnbull, M. C. Capt. Dudley C. Hughes, D. C. Capt. Francis P. Riggs, D. C.	1st Lt. David B. Warren, D. C. Chaplain Peter E. Hoey. Chaplain Edwin F. Koeber. Chaplain Hugh W. Stewart. 1st Lt. Edwin L. Holloway, Liaison Off. with 108th Inf.

Det. Co. F, 102d Eng.

301st Tank Battalion

Det. Co. F, 102d Eng.

108th Infantry—Assaulting Troops, Right of Division Sector			
L Capt. James Riffe (w). 1st Lt. Jesse I. Varney (w). 2d Lt. Benjamin Fuller (k). 2d Lt. John E. Lathrop (k).	I Capt. Joseph W. Smith (k). 1st Lt. Harold G. McKay (k). 1st Lt. Harry H. Crosby (k). 2d Lt. Thomas T. Kerr (k).	F 1st Lt. Delancey King (w). 2d Lt. Henry C. Mendenhall. 2d Lt. Robert McKay.	E Capt. Charles A. Sandberg. 2d Lt. Samuel A. Brown, Jr. 2d Lt. Harrison J. Uhl.
M Capt. William L. Hodder (w). 1st Lt. Harry B. Bentley (k).	K 2d Lt. Fredk. K. Pierce. 2d Lt. Louis G. Weber.	H Capt. Albert M. Barager (w). 1st Lt. Frank L. Simes (k).	G 1st Lt. John J. Welch (k). 1st Lt. Edward H. O'Rourke (w).
3d Battalion Capt. Frank J. Maldiner. 1st Lt. Frederick G. Spawton, Adj. 2d Lt. Wm. R. Shelley, Scout Off. Capt. Philip C. Hacker, M. C. Capt. Joseph T. Loughlin, M. C.		ATTACHED 4 M. G. 1st Lt. Henry O. Somers (k). 1 37mm. Sergt. Leins. 4 T. M. Signal Det.	2d Battalion ATTACHED 4 M. G. 1st Lt. Ralph W. Laughlin (k). 1 37mm. 1st Sgt. F. Donnelly. 1st Lt. F. R. Mason, M. C. John C. Ward, Chaplain.
D 1st Lt. Charles J. Donnocker. 2d Lt. Frank H. Brietbeck.	C Capt. Harry H. Farmer. 1st Lt. Edward M. McCabe (w).	A Capt. Arthur T. Smith (w). 1st Lt. James A. Kipp. 2d Lt. Erwin A. Dennis.	
B Capt. Samuel H. Merrill. 1st Lt. Edward F. Winnek (k). 2d Lt. Jay R. Piero.			
1st Battalion Major Frederick S. Couchman. 2d Lt. Allen H. Williams, Adj. 2d Lt. Walter N. Horschburgh, Scout Off. 1st Lt. Sidney D. Palmer, M. C.		ATTACHED 4 M. G. 1 37mm. Signal Det.	
Colonel Edgar S. Jennings. Capt. George A. Elliot, Adj. Capt. Edwin G. Ziegler, Op. Off.		Capt. Clarence S. Martin, M. G. Off. Capt. Henry D. Bagnall, Int. Off. 2d Lt. Cecil H. Page, Sig. Off. (w).	Major Charles W. Lynn, M. C. 1st Lt. Elmer P. Brecht, T. M. Off. 1st Lt. Kennard Underwood, Trans.

Composite Battalion 106th Infantry. Support 107th Infantry To Aid In Mopping Up Behind 2d and 3d Battalion 107th Infantry.		
Co. Z (3d Battalion) Capt. Wm. E. Blaisdell (k). 1st Lt. Edward L. Ryan (w). 1st Lt. Chester P. Jones. 2d Lt. Harold C. De Loisselle (w).	Co. Y (2d Battalion) Capt. Arthur V. McDermott (w). 1st Lt. Erdmann N. Brandt (w). 1st Lt. Lucius H. Doty (w). 1st Lt. Albert G. Reinert.	Co. X (1st Battalion) 1st Lt. George Archer. 1st Lt. Arthur B. Elliman (w). 1st Lt. Joseph L. Gilman (w). 1st Lt. Herbert G. Rosboro.
3 provisional companies, each formed of survivors of a battalion.		Major Ransom H. Gillet (w). 1st Lt. Ames T. Brown, Adj.

105th Machine Gun Battalion. M. G. Barrage and Special Target Fire.			
A (62C. F.17a) Capt. Lucius H. Biglow, Jr. 1st Lt. Joseph F. Cook. 2d Lt. Harold L. Downey. 2d Lt. Harry B. Jennings.	B (F.10.b) Capt. Nathaniel H. Egleston. 2d Lt. George Matthews, Jr. 2d Lt. Richard G. Lyon. 2d Lt. Richard D. McCaskey.	D (F.17.b) Capt. Stanton Whitney. 1st Lt. Alwyn Ball, 3d. 2d Lt. Bert R. Anderson.	C (F.10.c) Capt. Robert R. Molyneux. 1st Lt. Edward Flash, Jr. 2d Lt. Joseph G. Galvin.
Major Kenneth Gardner. 1st Lt. Theodore Crane, Adj.	1st Lt. Knowlton Durham, Int. Off. 1st Lt. Raymond A. McLeer, Sup. Off.	2d Lt. Fred. Snare, Jr., Trans. Off. 1st Lt. Archer B. Bass, Chaplain.	Capt. Chas. D. Kayser, M. C. 1st Lt. Joseph Mulcahy, D. C.

106th Machine Gun Battalion. M. G. Barrage and Special Target Fire.			
D (Benjamin Trench) Capt. Charles N. Morgan. 1st Lt. George C. Donnelly. 2d Lt. Walter H. Wells. 2d Lt. Reginald H. Wood. 2d Lt. Everett W. King.	C (Switch near Bellicourt Road) 1st Lt. Nicholas E. Devereux, Jr. Lt. Walter L. Glass. Lt. John Perkins. Lt. Edward Zimmer.	B (Switch near Artaxerxes Alley) Capt. Harold Bousfield. Lt. Randolph M. Fuller. Lt. Paul B. Selby. Lt. Harry Von Der Leith.	A (Artaxerxes Post) Lt. Edgar T. Beamish. Lt. Roger A. Wellington. Lt. Myles McDonnell. Lt. Earl Hawkins.
Major Mortimer D. Bryant.	2nd Lt. Lawrence Beattie (w).	1st Lt. Harry K. Tebbut, D. C.	1st Lt. Clarence H. K. Blauvelt.

105th Infantry—Support for Left Flank and Exploitation		
2d Battalion Capt. Charles A. McArthur. 1st Lt. Rht. Williamson, Adj. 2d Lt. Llewellyn H. Davis, Int. Off. Capt. Elmer H. Ormsby, M. C. 1st Lt. Maurice Exiner, M. C. 1st Lt. George E. Ramsey, Trans. Off.	F Capt. Frank R. Potter. 1st Lt. Lawrence P. Clarke. 2d Lt. Edward Van Holland (w).	E Capt. James S. Slosson (k). 2d Lt. Frank P. Buck.
	G 1st Lt. Earl W. Maxson (k). 1st Lt. Edward Warschauer (k).	H Capt. Raymond F. Hodgdon. 1st Lt. James T. Bergen.
1st Battalion Capt. Henry Maslin (w). 1st Lt. Ogden J. Ross, Adj. (w). 1st Lt. Harold A. Blakeley, Gas Off. 2d Lt. Charles J. Doyle, Int. Off. 1st Lt. James C. Donovan, M. C. 1st Lt. Donald D. Campbell, M. C.	A 1st Lt. John J. Callahan (w). 2d Lt. Stephen B. Elkins.	B 1st Lt. Kevney O'Connor (w). 2d Lt. John T. Clissett, Jr. (w).
	C 1st Lt. Harry Merz (w). 2d Lt. Clement A. G. Feldt (w).	D 1st Lt. Leo F. Giblyn. 1st Lt. Benjamin Buckley.
3d Battalion Capt. Stanley Bulkeley (w). 1st Lt. Carl G. R. Ross, Adj. 1st Lt. Cary Walrath, Int. Off. 2d Lt. Frank B. Howe, Jr., Trans. Off. 1st Lt. Leonard J. Howard, Sig. Off. 1st Lt. James R. Haigler, M. C. 1st Lt. James R. Liss, M. C.	I 1st Lt. Alexander Granat. 2d Lt. Harold J. Hobbs (k).	K 1st Lt. John D. Snedeker. 2d Lt. Ramon L. Hall.
	L 1st Lt. Thomas G. Carlin. 2d Lt. John C. Cipperly.	M Capt. Jacob S. Clinton. 2d Lt. Walter W. Slayton.
Colonel James M. Andrews. Lt. Col. Charles W. Berry. Capt. John W. Frost, Op. Off.	Capt. Lewis H. Gibbs, Adj. Capt. Stephen H. Fifield, Pers. Adj.	Capt. Roscoe B. Trumble, Sup. Off. 2d Lt. Paul A. Florian, Sig. Off. (w).

Det. Tanks

106th Infantry (2 Battalions)	Div. Res.
2 battalions ordered to Area 10 as Division Reserve. All available rifle strength in provisional battalion. These 2 battalions not available as combat troops.	
Colonel Wm. A. Taylor. Capt. Murray Taylor, Act. Adj. 1st Lt. William A. Hunter, Int. Off.	

102d Engineers		Div. Res.	
F Det. 107-108. 2 Plat. Reserve. Ronssoy.	E 3 Plat. Ronssoy. 1 Plat. Reserve.	D Construction work, Div. Hdqtrs.	C B A Road maintenance work. Ste. Emilie.
Lt. Col. William S. Conrow.		Ste. Emilie.	

104th Machine Gun Battalion		Div. Res.
A 1st Lt. Joseph B. Vanderbilt. 2d Lt. John M. Cummings.	B 1st Lt. Harley W. Black. 1st Lt. Clarence E. Hancock. 2d Lt. Donald Armstrong.	Ronssoy.
Major Chester H. King.		

Order of Battle

HINDENBURG LINE

SEPTEMBER 29, 1918

K—Killed or died of wounds
W—Wounded

Whitney and Company C by Captain Robert R. Molyneux. None of the officers of the battalion were wounded. Thirty-five guns were employed. Upon the completion of the barrage the guns were laid on the S. O. S. line and preparations made to move forward to St. Emilie, where the battalion arrived at 4:45 P. M. Late in the afternoon of September 29th, in order to stiffen the advance of the left flank, guns were placed in position at Thistle Trench, Lempire Post, St. Patrick's Lane, Yak Post, the trench at F.10.a.8.2 and at Duncan Post, with reserve guns in Kent Lane and Pomponius Avenue. The latter were planned to be placed in Doleful Post, Egg Post and Fag Support, but these places were found to be crowded with Australian and British machine gunners. At 9:50 P. M. Company B fired 4,000 rounds of harassing fire on targets in the vicinity of Tino Trench. The battalion remained in position throughout the day of September 30th, the withdrawal being completed at 12:50 P. M. on October 1st.

The Battalion Commander reports that throughout the battle every man in the battalion received proper and sufficient rations, and that the ammunition supply was adequate. Damaged machine guns were replaced by the Divisional Machine Gun Officer, Lieutenant Colonel McLeer, almost as soon as they were disabled. Due to the larger number of wounded in the infantry regiments calls were made upon some of the companies to aid in their evacuation.

In relation to the wounded men, Private Martin of Company C, 105th Machine Gun Battalion, was especially commended at the time for his constant and courageous aid to the wounded of infantry commands in the vicinity of Doleful Post.

The 106th Machine Gun Battalion, commanded by Major Mortimer D. Bryant, occupied an area behind the 108th Infantry, generally in F.22, 23 and 29. The companies were commanded as follows: Company A, First Lieutenant Edgar T. Beamish, Company B, Captain Harold W. Bousfield, Company C, First Lieutenant Nicholas E. Devereux, Jr., and Company D, Captain Charles N. Morgan. Second Lieutenant Lawrence Beattie, Battalion Adjutant, was wounded.

Each company used twelve guns. Needed supplies for all guns were reported by the Battalion Commander to have been furnished on time. The battalion fired the barrage as directed by the divisional Field Orders. Two hundred and fifteen thousand rounds of ammunition were expended in the firing of this barrage. After the completion of the barrage the companies were disposed in support of the 108th Infantry, but were not called upon to fire. They were relieved about noon on October 1st and marched to Villers Faucon.

The 104th Machine Gun Battalion under command of Major Chester H. King moved up from St. Emilie, occupying a position of readiness at F.16.d.4.3., but was not called upon to fire. Its two companies were commanded respectively by First Lieutenants Joseph B. Vanderbilt and Harley W. Black.

The German forces on the front of the 27th Division in the battle of the Hindenburg Line were the units of the IV Corps. These were,

on the north, the 8th Prussian Division, which had opposed the 27th Division in the battle of Vierstraat Ridge in Flanders, and which in this battle held Vendhuile and the outworks of the Hindenburg Line as far south as the Vendhuile-Lempire Road. South of the 8th Prussian Division was the 54th Division, which carried the line to a point midway between Guillemont Farm and Quennemont Farm. South of the 54th Division was the 121st Division, which carried the line to the area of the 30th American Division. In reserve at Le Catelet was the 2d Guard Division, commanded by Lieutenant General V. Friedburg, the infantry of which was composed of the Kaiser Alexander Garde Grenadier Regiment No. 1, the Kaiser Franz Garde Grenadier Regiment No. 2 and the Koenigin Augusta Garde Grenadier Regiment No. 4.

During the winter of 1920 Lieutenant Colonel Edward Olmsted, G-1 of the 27th Division, received a letter from the Chief of Staff of the 2d German Guard Division, Captain Karl von Unger, giving some information from the German point of view concerning the Hindenburg Line Battle. Some very interesting facts were given in this correspondence. Among other things this German officer states in reference to the attack of September 27th, made by the 53d Brigade, that "hand-to-hand fighting had occurred repeatedly, which was seldom the case with other adversaries."

This German officer had been asked by Colonel Olmsted to express an opinion concerning the reason why the German forces were unable to prevent the "break through" of the tunnel sector of the Hindenburg Line. He wrote, "If even in normally conducted warfare all failures cannot be traced back to tactical errors, it is impossible under the conditions described to state a tactical reason why our front was penetrated in the tunnel sector while it held at other points."

In another part of the letter Captain Von Unger referred to lack of sufficient numbers to deal by counter-attack with local penetration and then stated, "Had we possessed a number of troops only in some measure sufficient (in view of the weakness of the individual units you must not judge by the number of divisions) your attack would never have been crowned with such great success."

Prior to the battle the 102d Engineers were occupied with a great diversity of work, principally having to do with roads and approaches to the front, so that the artillery, tanks and other auxiliary units might readily advance. A detachment of the engineer regiment constructed shelters of loose stone and sheet iron for the officers and men at the division post of command.

In the narrative of the battle mention was made of the details furnished by the 102d Engineers to the British tunneling companies charged with the mission of investigating enemy dugouts and removing mines and traps where found. Other detachments, it will be remembered, were given the mission of removing land mines wherever they might be located in captured territory. In this connection Sergeant Solomon E. Schiff of the Sanitary Detachment, 102d Engineers, was later commended

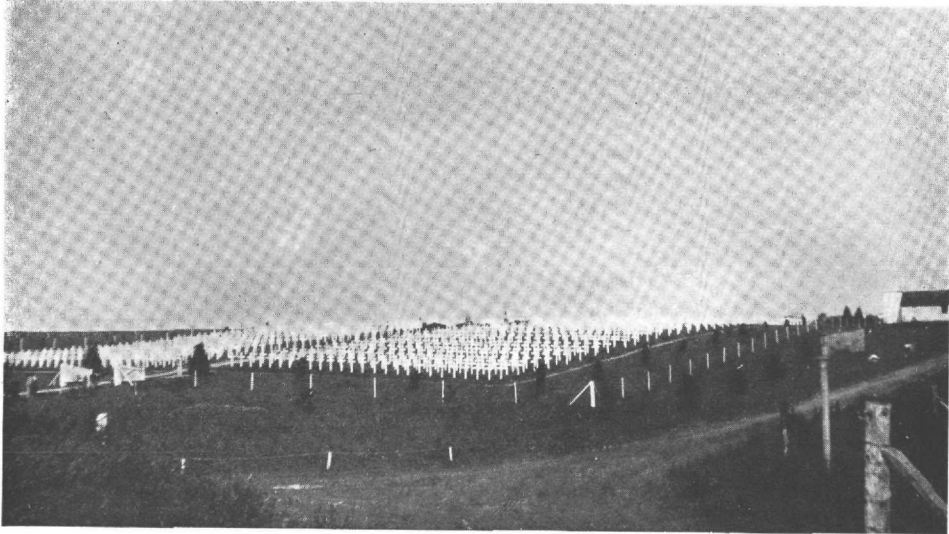
for his gallantry and determined devotion to duty in removing fuses from land mines which had been placed in the enemy wire.

On the night of September 29th, when the progress of the battle on the left flank of the division had demonstrated the dangerous possibilities at that place if the troops about The Knoll should not hold, the Commanding Officer of the engineer regiment was instructed to place one battalion of his regiment in support of the troops at The Knoll. This was accomplished, but as has already been stated no occasion arose during the night of September 29th or the following day for their intervention.

The regiment was commanded by Colonel Pillsbury, who shortly thereafter went to the II American Corps as Corps Engineer. The second in command of the regiment was Lieutenant Colonel William S. Conrow, while the battalions were commanded by Majors William E. Lane and Harvey Garrison.

The 102d Field Signal Battalion, always a most efficient organization, played its part in the battle under the extraordinary difficulties which have already been described, difficulties which particularly affected any efforts in the field of communication. All forms and methods of signaling which depended upon visibility became ineffective because of the mist and smoke with which the field of operations was covered. The experience in this and other battles seemed to indicate that there is no field of effort or arm of service where greater need exists for the development of wholly new methods and appliances than in the Signal Corps. This statement is of course not intended as any reflection upon the corps or its methods and appliances as they existed during the war and in anticipation of war. For twenty years it had been the acclaimed boast of armies that no longer would smoke obscure the battle-field. Yet toward the end of the war, in an effort to neutralize the effectiveness of enemy machine gun fire, the use of smoke was developed to a degree which made the "smoke of battle" of the old days seem like a thin mist. Very much of the modern methods and appliances of communication on the battle-field had been developed upon the principle that nothing is quicker than the observed signal. Hence we had men highly trained in the use of the flag, semaphore, heliograph and signal lamp. Nevertheless almost as soon as a battle opened the scene was obscured by a thick opaque smoke which made such signals impossible of use. Reliance was therefore had upon the buzzer, the telephone, wireless and the runner. It may be said in a general way that the only method of communication which stood the test was the runner and to some extent the telephone. It all means that in a great modern battle the army, in the transmission of messages and orders in the forward areas, had to revert in the main to the methods employed by Hannibal and Cæsar, to go no further back in history.

The troops of the Signal Battalion met the extraordinary conditions confronting them with courage and resourcefulness. Their detachments and details of men seemed to be everywhere, and their losses were considerable. The companies of the battalion were commanded as follows: Company A by Captain Herbert L. Watson, Company B by Captain



View of Bony Cemetery, looking from Guillemont Farm

Gordon Ireland, and Company C by Captain Lawrence J. Gorman, while the battalion was commanded by Major Arthur L. Howe. The signal work during the battle was under the immediate charge of the Division Signal Officer, Lieutenant Colonel William L. Hallahan.



Monument erected by the 102d Engineers at Guillemont Farm to the memory of the men who lost their lives there

The sanitary troops are entitled to special mention for the manner in which they carried out their work of relieving the wounded. Reference to the report of the Division Surgeon, which is contained in a later chapter, will indicate the very large number of wounded passed through the dressing stations during the battle. The medical officers of regiments and other combat units, and as well those of the ambulance companies in charge of dressing stations, were constantly under fire, and with little rest and almost no sleep continued in the performance of their duties throughout the battle period. It would be difficult to select particular medical officers for special mention, there were so many of them who

did well, but nevertheless the names of the following should be mentioned as rendering service of particular worth.

First of all, there was Lieutenant Colonel Walter C. Montgomery, the Division Surgeon, who had succeeded Lieutenant Colonel Edward R. Maloney when the latter had become physically disabled in Flanders. Colonel Montgomery's preparations for the battle were most thorough and his great energy and determination enabled him to maintain an intimate and understanding grip on the medical situation throughout the period of operations.

In the 105th Infantry there was Captain George W. Papen, Jr., who had already won the regard of the officers and men of his regiment and who on this occasion more than measured up to the estimate they held of him.

In the 106th Infantry Captain Nils P. Larsen was in charge of the medical arrangements. He was acting in the absence of Major Lucius A. Salisbury, who had been wounded in Flanders. The conduct of Captain Larsen was on a par with the standards of courage and determination of the 106th Infantry. He was ably assisted by Lieutenants Hadley, Cleaver, Tilden, Rowan and Adams.

The work of the medical officers of the 107th Infantry under Major Raymond A. Turnbull has already been mentioned in the account of the part played by that regiment.

In the 108th Infantry the senior medical officer, Major Charles W. Lynn, and his assistants evacuated the wounded of that regiment with great care and diligence.

Major Moses A. Stivers, Director of Field Hospitals, and Major William J. Cranston, Director of Ambulance Companies, as well as Captain Martin De Forest Smith and others, were commended for their cool courage, resourcefulness and efficiency in the care and evacuation of the wounded in this battle.

The chaplains of the division won special distinction during this period. The respect and regard held for them by the personnel of the units to which they were attached were strengthened by the courage and devotion to duty they displayed in this battle.

Chaplain John C. Ward of the 106th Infantry was wounded and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the British Military Cross for his exceptional gallantry and devotion to duty in going forward under heavy fire and caring for the wounded and searching for the dead, continuing this hazardous work after being twice warned by officers of his regiment that it was sure death for him to continue.

Chaplain Francis A. Kelley of Division Headquarters was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the British Military Cross for repeated acts of heroism under heavy fire during this battle.

Chaplains Peter E. Hoey and Edward F. Keever of the 107th Infantry, both exceptionally modest and courageous men, were cited for their gallantry during the battle.

Chaplains David T. Burgh and Royal K. Tucker of the 105th Infantry

were cited and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for their remarkable devotion to duty under heavy shell and machine gun fire.

Chaplain Horace R. Fell of the 102d Engineers and Chaplain Michael T. Hoffman of the 108th Infantry were cited for their courage and devotion to duty.

In the 106th Infantry, Chaplains Frank I. Hanscom and George C. Eillers, who were held in high regard by officers and men of that regiment, won special distinction and were cited for their work on this occasion.

The saddest and most difficult work following a battle is the burial of the dead. This disagreeable duty comes at a time when officers and men are exhausted by nervous strain and lack of sleep. The fighting during the Hindenburg Line Battle was so fierce and continuous that little could be accomplished toward securing and interring the bodies of the dead until the division had been relieved. As more than 1,000 men of the division had been killed in this battle, and as most of their bodies, particularly on the left of the divisional sector, were lying in areas still under shell fire, the burial parties worked in great danger as well as under extreme difficulties. The Divisional Burial Officer was 2d Lieutenant Summerfield S. Curtis. He was supplied with details of men from each regiment for the conduct of his work. The chaplains also were pressed into service, not only for the purpose of conducting appropriate religious ceremonies, but also to aid in the work of identification of bodies and making authentic record of their interment. Search of the fields, dug-outs and trenches was systematically made by squads assigned to particular areas. The contents of the clothing were secured, placed in sacks, sealed and properly tagged for shipment to the Effects Bureau in the Service of Supply. The bodies were then carried on litters to the nearest road, where they were laid along the edge of the road awaiting removal by limbers and wagons to cemeteries which had been established at St. Emilie, Ronssoy, Bony and other points in the vicinity.

It is regrettable to have to report that when the burial parties arrived they found the pockets of many of the dead had been turned inside out and the contents removed. In most cases money and anything of value had been taken, while frequently letters, photographs and other papers were scattered about. After the Hindenburg Line Battle, whenever it was necessary, the battle-field was guarded for the purpose of preventing looting of the bodies of the dead. There can be no doubt about it—familiarity with the brutalities of war tends to dull appreciation of the refinements of civilized life.

The 301st Tank Battalion, commanded by Major Roger Harrison, was assigned to the division for the attack of September 29th. It consisted of three companies: Company A, with fifteen tanks, commanded by Captain Kit Varney, who was killed on September 29th; Company B, consisting of ten tanks, commanded by Captain Victor L. Ralli; and Company C, commanded by Captain Ralph Clark, consisting of fifteen tanks. The seven remaining tanks were held in reserve. The signal tank was in charge of Captain C. Reynell. Company A was assigned to the 108th Infantry on the right, Company B to the 105th Infantry in support, and



Bony Cemetery, looking from Bony village

Company C to the 107th Infantry on the left. The tanks were guided to their positions with the various companies of the attacking battalions by guides furnished by the infantry companies.

Each tank commander took into action with him necessary maps showing roads to be followed, obstacles to be encountered, barrage table



The "Ausies" come forward

with objective drawn upon it, and a number of oblique photographs of the relevant terrain. Opportunity had been afforded tank officers for several days prior to the attack to reconnoiter the approaches to their start positions and to study the maps and data available.

The tank equipment is shown in the following table:

	Mark V Star Male	Mark V Star Female	Mark V Star Composite	Mark V Male	Mark V Female	Mark V Composite	Total
Company A...	9	2	4	...	...	...	15
Company B...	7	2	...	3	1	3	16
Company C...	...	...	...	7	...	9	16

Note.—All Mark V tanks carried grips.

In addition, one Renault tank was issued to Battalion Headquarters, but due to a broken track, damaged shortly before the battle, it was never used.

On September 25th all tank officers of the battalion attended the conference at Division Headquarters, at which all available information was given them. Upon the completion of the conference they conferred with the Brigade Commander, who approved the details of the plan of operations for the tanks. From September 25th until the 29th, company and section commanders conferred daily with the infantry commanders with whom their units were to be associated.

The report of the tank commander shows that on September 29th, Company A cooperated with the 108th Infantry, but Company C never gained contact with the 107th Infantry on the left. The tanks of Company B were knocked out before they could render any service. In cases where tanks were ditched in trenches and sunken roads, the cause as stated by the tank commander was that the smoke through which the tanks traveled was so thick that the obstacles could not be seen. He reports that tanks lost their way in the smoke immediately after leaving the tape and had nothing to depend upon except the compass. Some of the tank officers reported their compasses defective and that they were seriously handicapped in consequence. Some of the crews reported difficulties with the Hotchkiss guns and belts, but no difficulty with the six pounders. All tank crews reported that the tanks drew concentrated fire. Nearly all crews were handicapped by lack of pistols. Incidents were reported where tank crews were taken prisoner in consequence of lack of arms, after evacuating their tanks.

Two tanks ran on ground mines which were later reported to have been laid by the British when they occupied the area prior to the German offensive of March, 1918, and information concerning which had not been given to American troops. Most of the casualties to tanks were caused by direct hits from enemy artillery fire. A number of tanks continued in action after being hit a number of times by armor-piercing bullets.

The tank crews report much help derived from the use of the ampule ammonia which had been furnished by the Medical Corps.

The casualties in the tank battalion were 3 officers and 17 enlisted men killed, 7 officers and 55 enlisted men wounded and 7 enlisted men missing.

Two tanks under Lieutenants Webb and Hart of Company A were reported to have crossed the Hindenburg Line and returned safely. In Company B one tank under Lieutenant Ellingwood reached the Hindenburg Line, but was stopped on account of mechanical trouble. In Company C one tank commanded by Lieutenant Dunning went through, across the Hindenburg Line and the tunnel, but on its return was put out of action by a direct hit.

The writer on the morning of October 1st reached Bony in making an inspection of the field and saw the track of one of our tanks which crossed the Hindenburg Line several hundred yards south of Bony. The track was plainly visible. Where it crossed the main trench one of the treads ran upon and partially crushed the wooden cover of a pit sunk into the parados of the trench. The track could be seen leading to the spoil over the tunnel a short distance beyond. It could not be followed farther because of shell fire.

The motor transport of the division was in charge of Major Walter L. Bell and carried out its arduous duties with great devotion. After the battle, officers of the Australian Corps, with whom the division was intimately associated, specially commended the manner in which supplies were furnished to units of the division in the short space of time allowed for the purpose. They also specially commended the work of furnishing battle stores to the units in the line, which work was in charge of Captain Raymond T. Moniz.

The units of the division in the battle of September 29th captured and passed through the divisional prisoner of war cage 14 officers and 532 enlisted men, captured and passed through the Australian divisional cage 1 officer and 113 enlisted men and captured and passed through the 30th divisional cage 61 enlisted men. There were also captured and evacuated as wounded 2 officers and 57 enlisted men, making a total of captures of 17 officers and 763 enlisted men.

There are some features of the battle which the reader interested in the operations will find of special interest. In the first place the canal where it ran in the open cut constituted an obstacle for tanks that could not be overcome. Accordingly, the sector where the canal ran through the tunnel offered the only opportunity for tanks to go through the Hindenburg Line, and was prepared for defense by the enemy in the manner that has been described. In the effort to break through the line, it was important that the attack of the 4th British Army be made along its entire front so that the enemy might not know definitely in which particular sector the real thrust would be made. It will be remembered, however, that when the 4th Army had battled its way to the line fronting the canal, the III Corps had failed to take the outworks in the sector later assigned to the 27th Division, and that there followed the battle of September 27th for the purpose of gaining the outworks. The persistency of the effort which had been made in this sector fronting the northern

half of the tunnel must have indicated to the enemy that when the main attack would be launched along the entire front, the real effort would be made through the tunnel sector. The presence of American troops on the front of the tunnel sector, as indicated by the attack of September 27th when prisoners were taken, must have furnished corroborative evidence that these fresh and confident troops were on the front which was to be the scene of the real thrust.

If this is true, it is proper to assume that the forces defending this sector were augmented at the expense of forces holding other parts of the front. Something of the kind is indicated by the fact that the 46th British Division immediately south of the 30th Division succeeded in crossing the open cut of the canal south of Bellicourt with little trouble, although, in anticipation of great difficulties, they were provided with life belts and rafts for the purpose. As a matter of fact, a very deep penetration was made by the British troops south of the tunnel sector, which apparently was made possible by the concentration of enemy forces in defense of the tunnel sector, where the enemy probably and correctly believed the main effort was to be made.

The aftermath of every battle naturally gives rise to speculations concerning the features of its preparation and execution. Would it not have been better not to have made the preliminary attack of September 27th, but to have included that operation as part of the main operation? Would not such decision have avoided the bad start given the 54th Brigade on September 29th and thus permitted that brigade to have gone through with less loss than it actually sustained? Should not the 54th Brigade have been committed to the attack of September 27th to any extent necessary to secure the gains of the 53d Brigade? On September 29th should not the rolling barrage have been laid down on the immediate front of the 54th Brigade irrespective of the detachments of the 106th Infantry still on the front? Would it not have been better if less smoke had been used on the morning of September 29th? Should not the American divisions have had more time to prepare for this greatest of all battles? Should not the British division immediately to the north of the 27th Division have made some headway toward Vendhuile and have secured the left flank of the American Corps? These and many other questions might be asked and probably have been asked by those who participated in the attack.

One answer, however, to all such questions is that the 4th Army, chargeable with the breaking of the Hindenburg Line between Cambrai and St. Quentin on September 29th, accomplished its mission, and the mission was accomplished by the employment of the methods and the carrying out of the operations which have been described. The 4th Army had seen much fighting between August 8th and September 25th. They had sustained many losses during that period. Officers and men were tired. If the momentum of their advance was not to be unduly slowed down, but on the contrary was to have sufficient power to break through the Hindenburg Line, their strength must be augmented by fresh, confident troops, and it was good judgment that such troops should have

been placed in the van so as to take over the burden of the attack against so strong a position, and as well the losses which were sure to follow. What was needed for the time and the occasion were just such divisions as became available when the 27th and 30th American Divisions were assigned to the 4th Army. The officers and men of these divisions sought the opportunity to fight. They were full of confidence. They were almost light hearted concerning the obstacles confronting them. With the opening of the attack they had enough fighting to satisfy the most belligerent among them, but they fought and fought and fought, leading elements going on with the Australians when they continued the drive. General Monash in his book describes this in the following language:

Very considerable numbers of American soldiers had become mixed up with the Australian battalions, and, in their eagerness, had gone forward with them, regardless of the particular rôles or objectives which had been originally assigned to them. It was found to be a matter of some difficulty to induce these men to withdraw from the fighting and to rejoin their own units, so keen were they to continue their advance.

It was good judgment also for the Army Commander to have directed the American advance to be followed and exploited by the Australians. While such speculations as have been referred to are perhaps interesting, they have no particular value. In the opinion of the writer, the decisions made by the 4th Army Commander and by the Commander of the Australian Corps in relation to the conduct of the battle were fully justified by the results of the battle.

This chapter on the Hindenburg Line Battle is an appropriate place to make some observations concerning the Australian soldiers, with whom we fought on that occasion.

The Australian soldier was a distinctive type. Much misinformation concerning him exists in the minds of our American public, who, while acclaiming his martial valor and individual skill, seem to assume that in the mass he was lacking in discipline. This view, if it exists, is not correct. The Australian army was solely a volunteer force. Not a man in it was present except by his voluntary action. This naturally affected his physical fitness and its morale. There were no troops in the war which equaled the physical standards of the Australians. The American army had thousands, perhaps some hundreds of thousands of men who measured up to the very best physical specimens to be found among the Australians, but we also had many thousands of men drafted into the army who were not fighting men, and who knew they were not. The Australians had none of this class. It is true that the Australian soldier was lacking in "smartness" of appearance and manner, and good humoredly took a seeming pride in the cold astonishment he created among others by his indifference to formality and his blunt attitude toward superior officers. But if by discipline we mean experienced and skilled team work in battle, then it must be said that the Australian troops were highly disciplined. Their platoons and companies possessed, as did ours, a highly developed gang spirit which prompted the members of "the gang" to work together in mutual support, but in addition to this, and by virtue

of their long experience in the war, they had come to realize the essential importance of military technique. They knew, from harsh lessons they had received in earlier battles from the harsh enemy instructor, that the shooting and bombing of the individual man at the front may be fruitless unless his group maintains contact with other groups on right and left, and at the same time sends a constant and reliable stream of information to the rear, so that the great auxiliary power of the division may be intelligently employed to aid them. The operations and the supply technique of the Australian divisions were of the very best, and so it was that the rough-and-ready fighting spirit of the Australians had become refined by an experienced battle technique supported by staff work of the highest order. Their record demonstrated, that for Australian troops at least, the refinements of peace-time precision in drill and military courtesy and formality were unnecessary in the attainment of battle efficiency. The Australians were probably the most effective troops employed in the war on either side.

Immediately after the relief of the division from the line after the Hindenburg Line Battle, official commendations of the work of the division began to arrive at Division Headquarters. Some of these follow:

HEADQUARTERS II CORPS
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

FRANCE, October 4, 1918.

From: Adjutant General.

To: Commanding General, 27th Division, American Expeditionary Forces.

Subject: Operation against Hindenburg Line of September 2, 1918.

1. Following is letter received from the Commanding General, Australian Corps:

AUSTRALIAN CORPS

CORPS HEADQUARTERS, October 2, 1918.

My Dear General:

As the II American Corps has been withdrawn from the line, and my official association with you and your troops has been, for the time, suspended, I desire to express to you the great pleasure it has been to me and to the troops of the Australian Army Corps to have been so closely allied to you in the recent very important battle operations which have resulted in the breaking through of the main Hindenburg Line on the front of the 4th British Army.

Now that fuller details of the work done by the 27th and the 30th American Divisions have become available, the splendid gallantry and devotion of the troops in these operations have won the admiration of their Australian comrades. The tasks set were formidable, but the American troops overcame all obstacles and contributed in a very high degree to the ultimate capture of the whole tunnel system.

I shall be glad if you will convey to your Division Commanders my appreciation and thanks for the work done and to accept my best wishes for every possible success in the future.

Yours very sincerely,
(signed) JOHN MONASH.

Major General G. W. Read, N. A.,
Commanding II American Corps.

2. In communicating to you this expression of the sentiments of the Commander of the Australian Corps, the Corps Commander desires to make known to you his appreciation of the splendid fighting qualities of your division, and of the results they

accomplished in their part in breaking this formidable portion of the Hindenburg Line. It is undoubtedly due to the troops of this corps that the line was broken and the operations now going on made possible.

The unflinching determination of those men, their gallantry in battle and the results accomplished, are an example for the future. They will have their place in history and must always be a source of pride to our people.

(Signed) STEPHEN C. CLARK,
Adjutant General.

LETTER FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, 3d AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

FRANCE, October 14, 1918.

Major General J. F. O'Ryan, 27th Division.

General:

On behalf of all ranks of the 3d Australian Division, I desire to express our sincere appreciation of the fighting qualities displayed by the 27th Division U. S. on the 27th and 29th of September last. The gallant manner in which your troops faced an extremely difficult task, the determination of their attack on a strongly entrenched position, and the undaunted spirit with which they met their losses make us hope that we shall again have the honor of fighting alongside the division under your command. The confidence of the men in their officers appealed to us as a particularly happy omen for the future success of the 27th.

Very respectfully,
I. GELLIBRAND,
Major General.
Commanding 3d Australian Division.

OFFICIAL TELEGRAM FROM GENERAL PERSHING

(Dated October 10, 1918)

Commanding General, 27th Division:

The following repeated for your information quote number 160603. The Commander in Chief desires you to convey to the officers and soldiers of your corps his appreciation of the magnificent qualities which have enabled them, against powerful resistance, to advance more than ten miles and to take more than 6,000 prisoners since September 27th. McANDREW. Unquote added 27th and 30th divs. II American Corps.

OFFICIAL TELEGRAM FROM SIR DOUGLAS HAIG, K. T., G. C. B.,
G. C. V. O., K. C. I. E.,

FIELD MARSHAL, COMMANDER IN CHIEF, BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

(Dated October 20, 1918)

General Read, II American Corps: I wish to express to you personally and to all the officers and men serving under you my warm appreciation of the very valuable and gallant services rendered by you throughout the recent operations with the 4th British Army. Called upon to attack positions of great strength held by a determined enemy, all ranks of the 27th and 30th American Divisions, under your command, displayed an energy, courage and determination in attack which proved irresistible. It does not need me to tell you that in the heavy fighting of the past three weeks you have earned the lasting esteem and admiration of your British comrades in arms whose success you have so nobly shared.

D. HAIG.



ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CITATION

EXTRACT

SPECIAL ORDER
NO. 86

HEADQUARTERS 27th DIVISION, U.S.A.

AMERICAN E. F. FRANCE

Private George J. Cuddy, deceased
1210551 Company F, 107th Infantry

Camp Union, N. Y.
March 27, 1919.

- For exceptional valor and inspiring example during the battle of the Hindenburg Line, France, September 29, 1918. This soldier was shot thru the throat and both cheeks by machine gun bullets when his company entered the enemy machine gun barrage during its advance. He was ordered to the rear. Unable to speak, he shook his head and immediately started forward, furnishing to his company an inspiring example of determination at a critical moment. Shortly thereafter he received a third and fatal wound.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL O'RYAN

THE FOREGOING IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE SPECIAL ORDER QUOTED



APPROVED

John F. Ryan
MAJOR GENERAL, COMMANDING

J. P. Murphy
Assistant
ADJUTANT GENERAL, DIVISION ADJUTANT