

CHAPTER XVIII

ENEMY RETIREMENT FROM HINDENBURG LINE, THE PURSUIT TO LE SELLE RIVER, AND LE SELLE RIVER OPERATIONS



IN the preceding chapter it was explained how the attack made by the 27th and 30th American Divisions was followed on September 30th by the continued advance of the 3d and 5th Australian Divisions.

On October 1st the 27th and 30th Divisions retired for rest and reorganization close behind the forward areas, but out of shell fire.

Supporting troops of the 4th Army pushed through the break in the Hindenburg Line and took advantage of the great disorganization which had been created among enemy troops as a result of the constant hard fighting that had taken place. On October 1st General Rawlinson directed a prepared attack to be made at 6:05 A. M. on the morning of October 3d for the purpose of taking the high ground known as Mannequin Hill and the villages of Montbrehain and Beaurevoir, as well as Prospect Hill northeast of Gouy. This attack was generally successful. The enemy attempted to retain Ramicourt, but was driven out. At Montbrehain British troops captured about 1,000 German prisoners and a battery of field artillery. The enemy continued to withdraw. The line of the Beaurevoir-Gouy Road was reached with practically no opposition. Macquincourt Farm, near the north end of the tunnel, was one of the last points of resistance to give way.

On October 3d an Alsatian prisoner was captured who stated that roads and points in the back areas, as well as buildings and bridges, were being mined and prepared for demolition to retard pursuit.

On October 5th, the 2d Australian Division attacked Montbrehain. The attack was successful. Numerous prisoners were taken and the enemy seemed to be disorganized. As a result of this deep penetration beyond the breach made in the Hindenburg Line the enemy was compelled to withdraw along the entire front between Lens and Armentieres. On this day a warning order was received that the II American Corps would prepare to relieve the Australian Corps in the line, the 30th Division to take over the front line with the 27th Division in reserve, the latter division probably to move about October 9th.

Beyond the Hindenburg Line, French villages were intact and the country had not been devastated by the war. In fact it had been under German domination since 1914. As one proceeds easterly over the rolling country beyond the Hindenburg Line, the most serious natural obstacle to be met is Le Selle River. It was evident that the enemy would not retire



Army direction signs, Busigny, France



German motor truck captured by the 27th Division during Le Selle River operations

beyond Le Selle River, but along the line of the stream would make another stand.

On October 6th the II American Corps, composed of the 27th and 30th Divisions, was again assigned for active operations with the Fourth Army. As planned, the 30th Division took the lead with the 27th Division in support. On this day the 53d Brigade marched to the Tincourt area and the next day advanced to the Hervilly area, the 54th Brigade moving to the area vacated by the 53d Brigade.

The village of Brancourt was taken by the 30th Division during the advance of October 8th. With little opposition the same division advanced the next day to Becquigny and Busigny.

On October 8th, the 27th Division troops marched to the Tincourt area, which had just been vacated by the 54th Brigade, that brigade moving to the Bellicourt area.

On October 9th Division Headquarters moved from Bois de Buerre to Joncourt, the divisional troops and 53d Brigade advanced to Bellicourt and vicinity, while the 54th Brigade advanced to the vicinity of Brancourt.

On October 10th the 30th Division gained the westerly outskirts of Vaux Andigny, La Haie Menneresse and St. Souplet. Strong resistance was met from the westerly bank of Le Selle River, which was supported by heavy machine gun fire from the high embankment on the easterly side of the river. The pursuit of the enemy by the 30th Division in this sector had been most gallant and determined.

On October 10th the 54th Brigade marched to bivouacs just south and east of Premont, the 53d Brigade at the same time moving into the Brancourt area and the divisional troops to the vicinity of Montbrehain.

It became clear that the enemy intended to hold the line of Le Selle River in force. Dispositions of the enemy were unknown along the front, and the cloudy, rainy weather had made air reconnaissance unsatisfactory. The pursuit had ended, and the Fourth Army was confronted with the task of reconnoitering the enemy's position and delivering another prepared attack.

The 27th Division was ordered to relieve the 30th Division on the night of October 11th. This was done, and the 27th Division took over the line shown on the accompanying map and extending from St. Benin (exclusive) to Vaux Andigny (inclusive). This line was 11,000 yards in length and included not only the sector held by the 30th Division, but a part of the line held by the 6th British Division. At daylight on the 11th the 54th Brigade had marched to woods east of Premont, the 53d Brigade in close support at Premont and divisional troops on the march to the latter place. Division Headquarters opened at Premont on the same day.

This relief of the 30th Division was accomplished pursuant to Field Orders Nos. 59 and 60 and Orders Nos. 106 and 107, copies of which may be found in the Appendix as Exhibit 40.

The 54th Brigade held the front of the divisional sector. General



Division Headquarters at Busigny



*Removing wounded from Division Headquarters at Busigny after the shelling,
October 13, 1918*

Pierce's headquarters were established in Busigny. The 53d Brigade, less one battalion of the 105th Infantry, moved up in close support to bivouacs west and northwest of Busigny, Brigade Headquarters being established in the town of Busigny. The headquarters of the 108th Infantry were established at Escaufourt. That regiment held the line from St. Benin to the weaving mill immediately south of St. Souplet. The 107th Infantry carried the line from that point south to the westerly side of the village of St. Martin-Rivere, from which point the line bent back to the east side of La Haie Menneresse, whence it was carried to and around the easterly outskirts of Vaux Andigny, where it joined the British division on the south. Headquarters of the 107th Infantry were established at Escaufourt. Company D of the 106th Machine Gun Battalion was in support of the left of the 108th. Company C of the same battalion was on the high ground west of La Haie Menneresse. Companies A and B occupied ground immediately west of Vaux Andigny. The 106th Infantry was in support in the area west of Escaufourt, while the 105th Infantry was in support of the 107th Infantry. The occupation of the line was made quickly and in the manner most convenient to make prompt relief of the 30th Division, which had been carrying the burden of the pursuit. A reduction of the front of the line held would, of course, be essential before any prepared attack could be made.

At about 1:45 P. M. on Sunday, October 13th, the enemy put down a heavy crash of shell fire on the village of Busigny. Several of these shells struck in the courtyard of the chateau at Busigny, where Division Headquarters had just been located. Other shells fell in and about the Brigade Headquarters. At Division Headquarters a fragment of one shell struck Major Chester H. King, of the 104th Machine Gun Battalion, in the head, inflicting a serious wound which necessitated his prompt evacuation. At the same time several motorcycle dispatch riders attached to the divisional message center were badly wounded by shell fragments. The mobile electric light plant was damaged and several motorcycles destroyed.

Escaufourt and St. Souplet were receiving similar visitations of shell fire. At Escaufourt one shell burst outside the headquarters of the 106th Infantry, where Colonel Ward and a number of officers were located, a fragment striking Captain Euston F. Edmonds, attached to the 53d Brigade Headquarters, in the arm, causing a serious wound necessitating his evacuation.

On October 14th orders were received that the front held by the 27th Division was to be reduced the same night to the sector extending between W.14.d.5.0 on the south and Q.28.c.0.0 on the north, as shown on the accompanying map, the 6th British Division taking over the remainder of the line on the south and the 50th British Division taking over the remainder of the line on the north. This was accomplished pursuant to Field Orders No. 61. This reduced the 27th Division sector to about 4,200 yards. The strength of the infantry companies at this time averaged less than sixty rifles per company. The division was still without replace-

ments. This new front was later to be reduced for the purpose of the coming attack by dividing it equally between the 27th and 30th Divisions.

On the 14th of October the Division Commander determined upon a raid to be made by a detachment of the 54th Brigade into enemy territory for the purpose of securing prisoners, and thereby establishing the identity of opposing organizations, and as well to reconnoiter the character of the obstacles to further advance on the day of attack, interposed by Le Selle River. It had seemed to the Division Commander that in the past, raiding detachments had sustained losses out of proportion to the benefit gained and that such losses were usually to be attributed to the fact that the number of men making up such detachments were unnecessarily large. At any rate it was determined in this instance to give the impression to the enemy that the raid was one conducted by a substantial force, but actually to compose the raiding party of less than thirty men. Arrangements were made for the divisional artillery to place a barrage on a frontage of 1,500 yards on the enemy trenches fronting the 108th Infantry at St. Souplet, and to smoke both flanks and the enemy support areas, so as to deceive the enemy as to the character of attack to be made. The barrage was to rest for three minutes, after which the middle sector of the barrage, approximating 200 yards in width, would move forward, the remainder of the barrage fire continuing on enemy front line trenches, in order to hold the occupants in their shelters. The plan was that not more than a platoon should follow the moving part of the barrage and secure prisoners, while two other patrols, having gained the river, would move, one up the stream and the other down the stream, for the purpose of securing all necessary information concerning its depth, width and obstructions. The details of the conduct of the raid were left to Brigadier General Pierce, who delegated the 108th Infantry to make the raid. The officer selected to command the raiding party was First Lieutenant Charles R. Fritz, of Company I. Numbers of men volunteered and the party was promptly constituted of approximately twenty-one selected men. The party assembled at Q.33.d.3.9 at 3:45 P. M. on October 14th. The raid was made at 4 o'clock in the afternoon in broad daylight. It was a complete surprise. The intensity of the barrage and its considerable front led the enemy to believe that an attack was on. Under cover of the smoke Lieutenant Fritz's party waded the river, which was then about three feet deep. They came in contact with enemy groups in dugouts near Q.34.a.3.0, along the railway embankment, and at the railway station, and captured two non-commissioned officers and twenty-one enlisted men without loss to themselves, except two men slightly wounded. The prisoners were from the 414th Infantry Regiment of the 204th Division, recruited in Wurtemberg. The prisoners reported that they had been instructed to hold the line at all cost. They had shortly before come into the line from the Vosges Mountains. Le Selle River was found by the reconnaissance parties to be narrow and sluggish, but waist deep in places. One of these patrols was led by Second Lieutenant James W. Cross of Company L, who personally waded



Church at St. Souplet, France

the stream from the mill down to a point where the main bridge had been destroyed. This officer rendered a very complete report covering his observations. He reported that the banks averaged from five to six feet in height and were steeper on the east bank than on the west; that the stream itself averaged from ten to twenty feet in width and from three to four feet in depth; that its bed near the edge was soft but had a firm gravel bottom in the center, and that the ground from the river bank to the railway track had a gradual upward slope.



Main Street, St. Souplet, France

The raid was a complete success and its results fully justified the plans for its execution. The fact that we lost no men was particularly gratifying.

On the same day that this raid was made an order was received from the Corps Commander directing that a raid be made for the purpose of securing identifications. Arrangements having already been made for such an operation, which was in fact to be carried out on the day the order from the corps was received, it was possible to comply with this order with surprising promptness and with the results already described.

During the period of occupation of the front, from October 11th until the commencement of the attack of the 17th, there was constant patrolling and sniping, as well as shelling, to occupy the attention and to test the endurance and morale of the troops in their fatigued condition. At Imberfayt Farm, 800 yards north of La Haie Menneresse, occupied by the headquarters of the 2d Battalion of the 107th Infantry, the heavy shelling had caused a number of casualties. The line about La Haie Menneresse was subjected to constant enemy machine gun fire from the direction of the heights of Bellevue in W.27.a. St. Souplet was kept flooded with gas by enemy shelling.

On October 15th, pursuant to orders from the II American Corps, Field Orders No. 62 were issued in preparation for the attack to be made on the 17th. These orders directed that the front then held by the division be further reduced, by the 30th Division relieving that portion of the 54th Brigade holding the sector south of W.9.b.0.5. This reduction resulted in the divisional sector extending from Q.28.c.0.0 on the north to W.9.b.0.5 on the south. The 53d Brigade was directed to relieve the 54th Brigade in the right half of the new divisional sector, which gave each of the brigades a frontage of about 1,000 yards. The interbrigade boundary was fixed at Q.34.c.0.0. The enemy was holding a line on the east bank of Le Selle River as far south as St. Souplet, from which point the line continued on the west bank of the river facing our line and a short distance therefrom throughout the remainder of the divisional sector. The river had been dammed by the enemy so as to make considerable back-water in the river bed within the divisional sector. The permanent bridges at St. Souplet and Marsh Mill had been destroyed by the enemy. East of the river the ground rose gradually for a short distance. About 300 yards east of the stream a railway ran nearly parallel to the river and upon a railway embankment about thirty to forty feet high. The railroad was carried on a heavy stone bridge over the road running from St. Souplet easterly to Arbre Guernon and Mazingheim. To the east of this rose a low ridge which again sloped to a valley running to the northward, in which lay Bandival Farm. On the next rise ran the main Le Cateau-Arbre Guernon Road, the latter named village being at the extreme southern edge of the divisional boundary. Advantage Farm, an organized strong point, lay a short distance north of Arbre Guernon at the top of the rise. Farther eastward the terrain again rose to a ridge on which was located Jonc de Mer Farm and then sloped to a valley running to the



View of Bandival Farm, taken during summer of 1920

north, and rising again to another ridge on which was located La Jonquiere Farm. The two farms named were organized as enemy strong points. Beyond lay the valley of the St. Maurice River and then another ridge beyond which lay Catillon and the Canal de la Sambre.

The redistribution of troops in preparation for the attack was effected without incident as directed, on the night of October 14th-15th. The positions of the units in the line are indicated on the accompanying map.



Another view of Bandival Farm

On the 15th of October orders having been received from the II American Corps that the divisions of the corps would attack on the 17th in the sectors assigned them, and that at the same time the remainder of the 4th Army would also attack, the IX British Corps on the right and the XIII on the left, Field Orders No. 63 of the division were issued. These orders, which cover the operations which became known as the Battle of Le Selle River, will be found in the Appendix as Exhibit 41. As will be seen from the orders, the 54th Brigade with the 108th Infantry in the lead and the 107th in support was to attack in the left half of the divisional sector from St. Souplet, while the 53d Brigade with the 105th Infantry in the lead and the 106th Infantry in support was to attack on the south half of the divisional sector.

The artillery assigned to the division was that of the 4th Australian Division. Zero hour was fixed at 5:20 A. M. on October 17th. The barrage was to move forward at the rate of 100 yards in three minutes, first having rested for three minutes on the artillery start line. The infantry was to advance under this barrage to a line approximately along the Arbres Guernon-Le Cateau Road, a distance of about 3,000 yards from the jumping-off line, where the barrage was to halt for thirty minutes to give the infantry time to reorganize and mop up. At the end of this half hour the infantry was again to follow the barrage to the first objective, which was a line running north and south and located immediately east of Jone de Mer Farm. Here the first line was to organize a line of resistance and the troops designated to take the second objective were to advance and prepare to continue the attack. The artillery was to fire a protective barrage for thirty minutes and then lift and search the ground eastward. After the line had halted on the first objective for three hours, the second line battalions were to pass through the front line and continue the advance, with the assistance of tanks, supported by batteries cooperating directly with them, but without the creeping barrage. The advance was to be made in open warfare formation to the second objective, which was a line on the crest of the hill just west of Catillon, where the infantry was to halt, organize a line of resistance and immediately exploit to the line of the Canal de la Sambre. The machine gun battalions were to support the attack with a machine gun barrage, the 105th Machine Gun Battalion on the south half of the divisional sector and the 106th on the north half. The 104th Machine Gun Battalion was in the divisional reserve immediately south of Busigny. The 102d Engineers were directed to prepare foot bridges in readiness for the opening of the attack, and as soon as the first infantry wave crossed Le Selle River behind the barrage, were to carry the foot bridges forward and place them at designated points indicated in special instructions given them. At the same time a large detachment of engineers was to undertake the repair of the bridge over the river at St. Souplet, which had been blown up, or the construction of a temporary bridge strong enough to enable the artillery to cross. Another detachment of engineers was directed to follow the infantry across the stream and to clear away the debris of the

stone railroad bridge which had been blown up and which was effectively blocking the road from St. Souplet to Arbre Guernon. Ten heavy tanks of the 301st Tank Battalion were assigned the division, but as it was believed that these tanks could not cross Le Selle River as far north as the 27th Division sector, it was planned that they would cross where the stream presented less of an obstacle further to the south, and then move north to assist the infantry as soon as practicable after crossing. One squadron of the 20th British Hussars was assigned the 27th Division by the IV Army. Each of the infantry brigades was furnished with a detachment of troopers from this squadron, while the remainder were held under orders of the Division Commander.

In preparation for this attack the Division Commander sent a personal communication to the Brigade Commanders dated October 15th. This was in the form of a memorandum of discussion covering features of the coming operations and the difficulties to be met. The memorandum emphasized the importance of applying particular methods to meet expected difficulties. The paper is included here, as it will give the reader an intimate insight into the character of the operations as planned.

The following is a memorandum of points which should have special attention in the coming operations. As the time is short and as these points should have careful attention of the Regimental and Battalion Commanders as well, six copies are furnished each Brigade Commander for prompt distribution to those concerned if such action is deemed desirable.

1. The location of the barrage starting line indicates the necessity for a withdrawal of units of the 53d Brigade which now hold positions in advance of that line. This situation should make easy the accurate taping of the start line of the 53d Brigade. Outposts beyond the barrage start line should not be entirely withdrawn until fifteen or twenty minutes before zero hour in order to prevent hostile patrols or enemy light machine gunners from advancing inside our barrage line.

2. In the 54th Brigade sector the buildings of St. Souplet should aid materially in locating the precise start line.

3. In both brigades the line should not be taped until after dusk of the evening preceding the attack, but the line for the tape should be pegged in advance by competent officers and this checked by the Battalion Commanders concerned. Much of the success of a barrage operation depends upon the start.

4. The first obstacle to be met is Le Selle River. The leading battalions in order to keep up with the barrage will have to cross this river by wading it. Simultaneously with this advance engineer detachments will endeavor to place foot bridges at the rate of four on each brigade front more or less evenly distributed for the convenient passage of following troops. It should be borne in mind, however, by all concerned, and particularly by the Battalion Commanders of the next battalions to cross, that the essential thing is to cross at the time prescribed by brigade or regimental orders. Therefore, if the foot bridges are not ready they must cross by wading. If possible, as an insurance against men falling into holes in the stream bottom, it would be well to provide hand ropes to be passed across the stream and either secured to some fixed object on the other side or held by three or four men so that men crossing may maintain a hold on the rope, using it as a hand rail. The engineers have undertaken to provide such assistance.

5. Some enemy machine gunners may be encountered on the line of the railroad and in the sunken road immediately east of it in the sector of the 54th Brigade. Men in the leading battalions should not be permitted to do more than disarm enemy soldiers who surrender and turn them over to supports immediately following, who in

turn should wave them to the rear. Such detailed instructions should be given to all the men of the battalions in relation to this matter that the strength of companies will not be frittered away by men going back with prisoners. There will be Military Police in St. Souplet and many troops following the leading battalions, so that there will be no occasion for concern that prisoners will get away or act badly.

6. If the enemy is to offer serious resistance in the beginning of the attack it is believed that this resistance will be offered on the line of new entrenchments prepared by him along the ridge 400 yards east of and parallel to the railroad. The leading elements should pass quickly over these entrenchments so as not to lose the barrage, leaving to mopping up details the duty of securing the occupants of these trenches. The same comments made in relation to the handling of prisoners that may be taken on the line of the railroad hold in relation to this trench line, for it is essential that the strength of the leading units be not impaired at this stage of the advance.

7. Upon reaching this line, the advance will have covered a distance of 900 yards on the left and about 1,500 yards on the right of the divisional sector. This line of entrenchments appears to constitute a desirable trace for a position facing east. About the time our line arrives on the general line of this trench there may be cause for concern in relation to our flanks. For that reason it might be well to consider placing at least one and perhaps two Lewis guns from the reserve battalion in those trenches at either end of our sector line. These parties should be provided with bombs for defensive purposes. At the north end of our sector from this point, it will be seen from the map that such a position affords excellent flank field of fire and should provide effective flank security until it is assured that the British division on our left has covered up to that line. A position in this trench at or near the top of this knoll would seem to be an excellent location for one or more Stokes mortars and a rest place for one or more of the one-pounders which are to accompany the advance of the 108th Infantry. From this position these weapons could deal effectively with possible resistance in the sunken road and farm in the hollow near Q.29.central. Similar comment applies in a measure to the use of these weapons by the 105th Infantry Regiment from the same trench system at the southern divisional boundary. From such position the one-pounders could deal with targets in the village at W.8.b. and the Stokes mortars with targets within the limits of their range. With the adjoining divisions in possession of this trench system on our flanks, it should be a matter of honor with these detachments to hurry on to engage in other and similar missions further forward.

8. Between the trench system referred to and the pause line it is not believed that much resistance will be encountered except possibly from Bandival Farm in the hollow near Q.29.central, the hedge shown by the red dotted line in parallelogram form extending northwest from the orchard in Q.36.a.9.7. and the sunken roads in the valley 600 yards north of Bandival Farm. To secure the left flank of the 108th Regiment during the thirty-minute pause it might be well to provide for a special flank protection on the nose of the ridge at Q.29.b.3.7. A Stokes mortar advancing from the first flank position to Bandival Farm after that place is mopped up should be in good position to deal with opposition from the sunken roads referred to. These also could effectively be dealt with by the one-pounder from the first flank position.

9. The thirty-minute pause will enable leading troops to organize these places. It will also enable them to dig in to some extent along the road extending northwest from Q.30, and south through the copse on the interbrigade boundary line. It will also enable supporting and reserve troops to readjust their units and to orient themselves.

10. In spite of time tables it is probable that troops will not know what time they arrive on the pause line. They will pause because the barrage will stop and then it is hoped they will recognize the road and copse referred to and dig in, providing for the security of their flanks. It is important, however, that they do remember that the sudden increase in the intensity of the protective barrage constitutes the warning signal that in two minutes the barrage will again move forward. Therefore they should be ready to move with the barrage.

11. From a study of the map it would not seem that there is much resistance to be expected in the 54th Brigade area until its arrival on the line of the first objective. Some resistance may be offered by machine gun fire from Le Quennelet in Q.24.a. Again it would seem to be desirable to provide special flank security in this location by provision for a special party to occupy the ridge at Q.24.central until the British division on our left secures Le Quennelet. Some resistance may also be encountered at La Roux in R.13.d., as well as from Jonc de Mer Farm and copse in R.25.b.

12. In the case of the 53d Brigade greater resistance is to be expected, for there is the village of Arbre Guernon to be taken and mopped up. It may be that the resistance here may not be strongest from the village itself, but rather from the edges of hedges about the road leading north and west from the village. The mopping up parties should be warned of such possibility. One or two Lewis guns quickly gotten into the upper floors of buildings on the southern outskirts of this village should provide excellent flank security for the 53d Brigade at this stage of the advance.

13. Upon reaching the first objective the leading elements should not endeavor with their low strength to consolidate a line of resistance. The line of resistance should be organized in groups and in depth, each group digging in, in several positions having the best possible fields of fire. In the 54th Brigade the remains of Roux Farm and the copse should constitute the means for organizing a local strong point, and it will be noted that its field of fire is good. The detachments to occupy and hold this place should be warned to observe sharply the valley running north toward Basuel, for it is up such valleys that the enemy usually trickles his forces to assemble for counter-attack purposes. During the three-hour halt on this line the heavy artillery will bombard this valley as well as the next valley to the east thereof. Similar comment applies to Jonc de Mer Farm and copse on the interbrigade boundary. It might be well to organize this as a local strong point in establishing the line of resistance. Further to the right in the 53d Brigade sector, excellent fields of fire are to be had on the hedges shown by the red dotted lines at R.31.b.9.8. Right here it should be emphasized that upon attaining this line, a red flare should be burned by each squad as a signal to observers that the line has been attained. Later, if called for by aeroplanes sounding "A" on the Klaxon horn and dropping a white light, the flare signal should be repeated on this line. Flares should not be burned for any reason during the thirty-minute pause prior to attaining the first objective, unless specially called for by the aeroplane. In any event, sufficient flares should be maintained for use on the line of the final objective.

14. In proceeding beyond the first objective, practically all the operation conditions change, for as stated at the conference, the division then goes into open warfare. From this point on there will be no barrage. The heavy artillery will shoot special targets well in advance and will engage hostile battery locations. The troops designated to engage in this open warfare advance will have been brought up during the three-hour halt as directed by the Brigade Commanders and at the termination of the three-hour halt will without further signal or warning take up open warfare formations and continue the advance to the final objective.

15. I know from observation that the tendency is toward insufficient elasticity of movement in such operations, particularly in a terrain of the character presented by the area to be covered. By that I mean that the patrols should in the first instance proceed well in advance of their elements, so that in the case of the 54th Brigade sector, they may gain the ridge 1,000 yards in front of the first objective. If these patrols signal the ridge clear, the distance between elements may be reduced until the ridge is gained and held with proper disposition in depth. Similar principles would apply to the 53d Brigade sector, with additional precautions in relation to the strong point at Le Jonquiere Farm and copse, which I suspect may turn out to be a serious obstacle in view of its approaches from the enemy side, its commanding position for purposes of observation and fire, and the cover afforded in the vicinity. One-pounders advanced to Jonc de Mer Farm and the supporting fire of the light batteries directly attached to the regiments, together with the possible assistance to be afforded by the tanks, should furnish means necessary to overcome resistance.

16. With possession of La Jonquiere Farm I believe the only remaining difficulties of a serious nature will be fire from LaRoux, Tonnoille Farm in N.28 central, from Catillon and the road leading northwest from the latter place with the copse about it.

At this point I should say that in relation to all of these obstacles I have arranged to-night for heavy destructive shoots against all of them by both light and heavy artillery throughout the day, to-morrow and to-morrow night as well.

17. With the attainment of the final objective, the line should be entrenched as speedily as possible and preparations made to stand off possible counter-attacks. The danger point, I think, will be from the north, and I believe, therefore, that not only should the commanding position at R.9. central be well organized, but there should be if possible machine gun supports to that position and machine guns also placed so as to cover the two draws on either side of that ridge leading to the north. Field artillery and Stokes mortars should so be placed as to effectively cover these two draws. Liaison with the units on the north will fix the limits of their line and the location and character of their points of resistance.

18. The area of exploitation beyond the final objective should be covered by patrols with the least practicable delay, with a view to contact with the enemy and ascertaining the extent of his retirement. Information from these patrols should be sent back with the least delay. The quickest means of communication will probably be by wireless.

The foregoing are suggestions and are not intended as specific directions, which might hamper those charged with carrying on the local operations. They are not needed by the Regimental and Brigade Commanders, but will doubtless prove of value as a guide at least in coordinating the work of the two brigades and in aiding the work of the Battalion Commanders.

JOHN F. O'RYAN, Major General.

October 16, 1918.

SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORANDUM FOR BRIGADE COMMANDERS PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS.

1. Zero hour will be communicated to you by a Division Staff Officer.
2. Synchronization of watches will be effected upon the arrival of a Division Staff Officer, as soon as proper time is received from the corps.
3. Compass bearing should be taken on boundaries and prominent points to serve as a means of accurate identification of position.
4. Mopping up parties should be assigned special tasks.
5. In addition to flank protection, liaison should be maintained from rear forward.
6. Means of communication:

Signal lamps. It has been found in recent operations that the most successful means of maintaining communication has been by use of signal lamps.

The terrain over which this operation will take place affords excellent opportunity for their successful use. Stations should be established in advance, and operators fully informed of their positions.

Telephone, buzzer and wireless; message rockets; runners. Routes for runners should be selected as far as practicable before the operation. Such routes, in order to reduce casualties, should avoid areas most likely to be shelled.

Mounted orderlies.

7. Supplies:
 - Battle stores.
 - Grenades.
 - Flares.
 - Discs.
 - Rockets.
 - Hot food—necessary arrangements for.
 - Rations.

8. Dressing stations. Information concerning them should reach all concerned.

9. Information:

Send back frequently, even if negative. Be accurate.

Quote time in body of message as well as time sent.

Determine exact locations.

Send staff officers to secure information as an additional means.

Observe the roads for men returning from the front and question them for purpose of ascertaining duties upon which they are engaged. Get their estimate of the situation if they have returned from the front line.

10. Correct false impressions. It has been found that in recent operations men returning from the front line frequently bear wild tales as to losses and conditions in the front line. The impressions are usually based on local conditions within a limited area.

11. Wounded should be accompanied only when absolutely necessary, and then by the least possible number.

12. Prisoners. Guards should be small and should return immediately to the line. Prisoners *should* be treated with the consideration imposed by regulations. (Reference G. O. 159.)

13. Stragglers. This subject is of especial importance now, in view of the present strength of organizations. Use all available means to prevent stragglers reaching the rear.

Watch your headquarters to see that there are no unauthorized men present.

14. Roll call. After the operation a roll call should be made immediately to determine the actual number of men present and so far as practicable to fix the number of casualties.

Even during the operation constant effort should be made to ascertain the strength of the unit under your command.

This applies particularly to company and platoon commanders, and commanders of small units.

15. Police of battle-field. Upon conclusion of the operation it is important to determine the number of machine guns and other arms captured, and to identify their locations, and if practicable to secure such captures. However, this does not contemplate that troops should be sent to the rear for the purpose.

Plans will issue for the evacuation of wounded and dead.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL O'RYAN.

STANLEY H. FORD,

Colonel, G. S.,

Chief of Staff.

Orders No. 111 accompanied Field Orders No. 63. These orders will be found in the Appendix as a part of Exhibit 41.

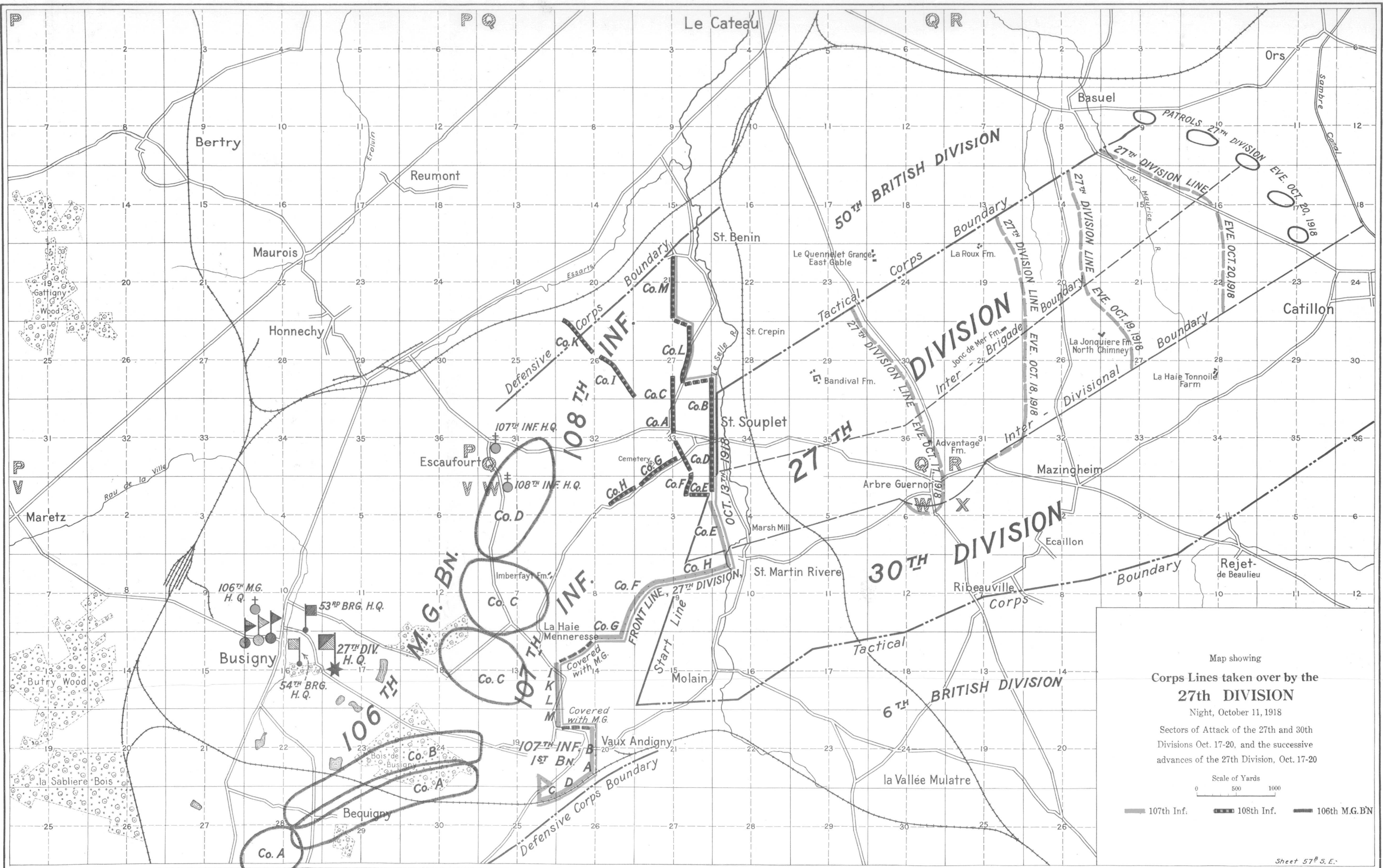
The division at this time was a very different division from that which had joined the Fourth British Army a month before. The division had joined that army with units in the full power of their strength, except that the 53d Brigade units had suffered some losses in Flanders. But at this time the very heavy casualties of the Hindenburg Line operations had greatly reduced the strength of all units, and extraordinary as it may seem, no replacements had been received to make up for these great losses. Accordingly the rifle strength of the regiments at this time was as follows:

105th Infantry.....	732
106th Infantry.....	405
107th Infantry.....	648
108th Infantry.....	592

or a total rifle strength for the division of but 2,377 men, instead of more than 12,000 which the division should have had. But what the division lacked in numbers, was made up in substantial measure at least, in the experience and skill it had acquired. The confidence exhibited in the Hindenburg Line Battle was still in evidence, but now it was accompanied by experienced understanding and deliberation of preparation and movement. During the operations of Le Selle River, the men of the division captured many more prisoners and with much less loss than was the case in the Hindenburg Line Battle. This, of course, was mainly due to the strength of the Hindenburg Line defenses and to the determined resistance offered there by the enemy, as compared with the conditions existing in the enemy ranks during the operations of Le Selle River. At the same time, however, it is believed that the results were materially affected by the greater experience and more certain skill possessed by the division in the latter operations.

Preceding the battle of October 17th, the usual divisional, brigade, regimental and battalion conferences were held. All troops reached their battle stations on time and in the manner prescribed by orders. On the morning of the attack there was a heavy mist which added to the density of the smoke barrage which had come to be a feature of attacks at this time. At zero hour, the barrage fell along the westerly side of the river where the enemy still held vantage points, particularly south of St. Souplet. There had been continuous house-to-house sniping and patrol fighting on the easterly edges of St. Souplet during the preceding week.

At 5:20 on the morning of October 17th, when the barrage fell, the troops moved forward. On the front of the 108th Infantry in the left half of the divisional sector, that regiment attacked in column of battalions, the 1st Battalion under command of Major Frederick S. Couchman, in the lead. The battalion attacked with two companies in the line and two in support. It was followed by the 3d Battalion, commanded by Captain Samuel H. Merrill. This battalion furnished the mopping up parties. The 2d Battalion followed as regimental reserve. The river was crossed with little difficulty by wading, except that some of the men got into water deep enough to wet their gas masks. The damaged respirators were replaced from battalion and regimental reserve. The first strong resistance met by the 108th Infantry in its advance, was from the westerly side of the railroad embankment. In overcoming these enemy parties and climbing the high railroad embankment, the leading elements of Couchman's battalion fell behind the barrage. These elements, however, quickly resumed their forward movement. Much opposition was expected to be met at Bandival Farm in Q.29.c. central. Our artillery had shelled this place heavily and the machine gun battalions had visited it with a hurricane of machine gun bullets for a considerable period of time and up to within a few minutes of the arrival of the leading waves of the 108th Infantry. The place was mopped up with little difficulty and a large number of prisoners taken. Bandival Farm (known locally as Baudival Farm) was visited by the writer and Colonel Wainwright in the



Map showing
**Corps Lines taken over by the
 27th DIVISION**
 Night, October 11, 1918
 Sectors of Attack of the 27th and 30th
 Divisions Oct. 17-20, and the successive
 advances of the 27th Division, Oct. 17-20

Scale of Yards
 0 500 1000

107th Inf. 108th Inf. 106th M.G. Bn



108th Infantry Headquarters, St. Souplet

summer of 1920, and everywhere on the westerly side of the buildings were to be found the marks of machine gun bullets. The buildings generally were in a shattered condition from shell fire. The 108th Infantry established one of its aid posts in this farm, but that evening and the two following days, the place was subjected to severe artillery fire by the enemy batteries. The most effective enemy machine gun positions encountered were those in the open, away from farms and other prominent objects. Considerable loss was inflicted on the leading battalion of the



107th Infantry Headquarters, St. Souplet

108th Infantry in the sunken road immediately north of Bandival Farm. The British division adjoining the 108th Infantry on the north also suffered casualties in this locality.

By nine o'clock in the morning elements of the leading battalion had reached the road running northwest to southeast through Q.30, that is to say, the road from Arbre Guernon to Le Cateau. Here resistance was met in the form of heavy flank fire from the heights in the area of the British division at Q.23. central and from Jonc de Mer Farm at R.25.a. Under very heavy enemy machine gun and shell fire the leading battalion of the 108th Infantry, now reinforced to some extent by elements from the following battalions, held the line gained for three hours. At this time a heavy counter-attack developed against the right elements of the British division on the left and the latter were forced to fall back several hundred yards. This exposed the left flank of the 108th Infantry to envelopment, and their line on the left was thereupon strengthened and refused, that is to say, bent back so as to maintain connection with the British. Later, the line of the 108th Infantry, on account of the severity of the flank fire directed against it, withdrew to the ridge immediately southwest of the road from Arbre Guernon to Le Cateau and about 250 yards therefrom. There the battalion dug in and consolidated its line. The 108th Infantry in its advance had covered about 2,500 yards. They captured several hundred prisoners, numerous machine guns and anti-tank rifles, together with four field pieces.

What was particularly noticeable in inspecting the area covered by this advance was the very considerable number of German dead. Along the railroad embankment already mentioned a large number of dead were found. If the reader will look at the map, there will be seen in square Q.35.a. a dotted line showing a hedge. Other hedges which existed are not shown on the map. Enemy soldiers had constructed pits and short stretches of trenches at the base of these hedges where good fields of fire were offered. The writer personally saw groups of as many as twenty enemy dead in several of these places. It was difficult to determine from a casual examination of these bodies what percentage of them had been killed from shell fire and what percentage by direct action of the infantry soldier, but it is evident that the 108th Infantry did very effective work in its advance of October 17th.

At 9:00 P. M. on October 15th, two days before the attack, the Division Commander had directed the divisional field artillery to be prepared to fire, between 9 and 9:30 A. M. the following morning, a light barrage along the divisional front and at the same time to smoke the area. This barrage was to remain on the enemy front for three minutes and to move forward at the usual rate. No troops, however, were to follow the barrage. As the barrage cleared each line of suspected enemy trenches, all guns not employed for the firing of the barrage were to fire on the trenches with shrapnel, allowing two minutes after the barrage cleared for enemy soldiers to leave their shelters, assume their battle stations and commence firing through the smoke that obscured them. In other

words the sudden shrapnel fire brought to bear directly upon the trenches and following the barrage, was a substitute for attacking infantry. The heavy smoke was for the purpose of preventing the enemy knowing that infantry were not following the barrage. It was believed that the enemy soldiers would hardly have reached their positions and begun to fire when the shrapnel squalls would fall upon them. The dispositions of the guns which were to fire the shrapnel after the barrage fire had passed over the trenches were located at different distances from the targets, and hence it was essential that these guns would not fire at the same time, but that they would fire so that their shots would arrive at the enemy trenches simultaneously. This order to the artillery was carried out on the morning preceding the opening of the attack, and it is believed that the shrapnel fire accounted for many of the German dead so numerously distributed along the enemy trenches on the ridge east of Le Selle River.

On the same day and in similar manner Bandival Farm received the same treatment. Arbre Guernon also was included in this progressive artillery attack, as well as La Roux Farm and Jone de Mer Farm.

Theretofore the custom in the British artillery assigned the 27th Division had been to harass particular enemy points of resistance by special shoots directed against such points. The target, in other words, would be shelled for a stated period of time. After the first few shots arrived, however, all the enemy had taken cover. It was the same with us, when the enemy visited points in our area with its artillery fire. It is surprising how quickly human beings can disappear from the face of the earth with the arrival of one or two shells. Accordingly in relation to the shoots prescribed by the Division Commander on this occasion, and which became known as "shell tornadoes," it was stated in his memorandum to the artillery commander:

"The paramount factor in this plan of harassing fire is the employment of a large number of guns for each crash, in lieu of rapid fire by a small number of guns. Loss is inflicted on enemy personnel by the aggregate of the first shots fired from all the guns employed and much depends upon their simultaneous arrival at the target."

It seems to be well established that this form of shell storm fire proved much more effective in inflicting casualties upon the enemy than the long-drawn-out form of harassing fire, and probably accounted for many of the large number of enemy dead found in the area covered by the first day of the division's advance.

The attention of the reader is directed to three photographs which appear in connection with the text. They are three oblique aerial views taken from different points and showing the country between St. Souplet and Arbre Guernon. They were taken on October 14th. These photographs are quite remarkable for their clearness.

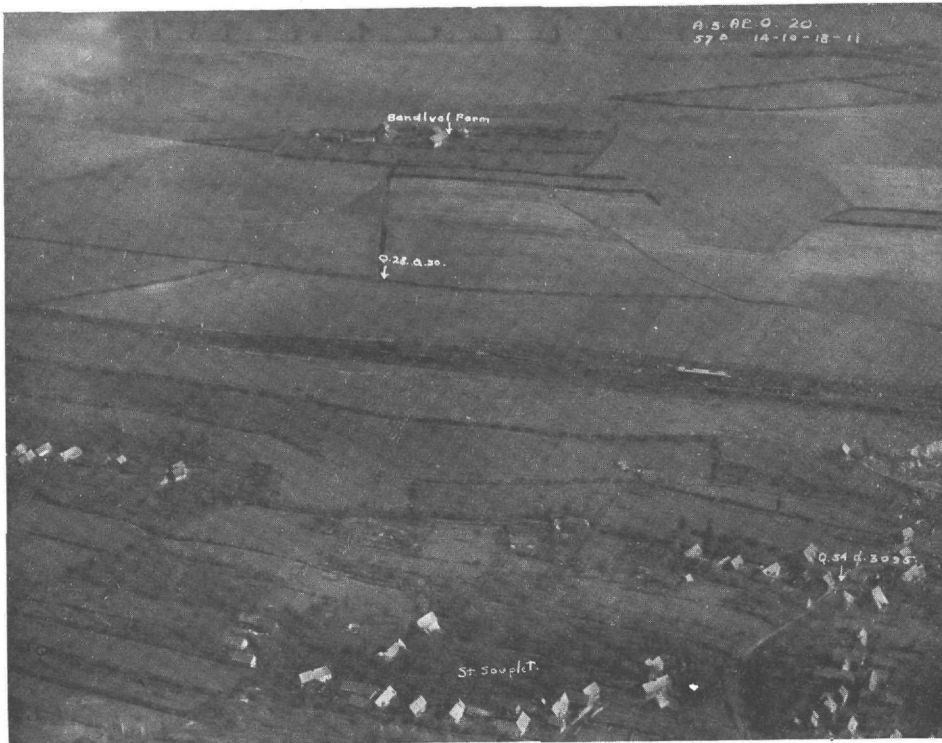
The first shows the easterly outskirts of St. Souplet, the railroad embankment and right of way, and the debris of the destroyed railroad bridge blocking the roadway. In the photograph, to the right of the chalk bluff running across the front of the picture, is shown the trench line



Country between St. Souplet and Arbres Guernon, aerial photograph taken October 14, 1918

which shortly before had been constructed by the enemy. The communicating trench connecting it with the sunken road behind it also appears. The road between St. Souplet and Arbres Guernon is clearly indicated, as is the open character of the rolling country in this section of France. This form of terrain afforded excellent fields of fire for the defenders. An inspection of the photograph will also show the hedges surrounding some of the fields, and which offered such excellent cover for enemy machine gun parties. It was across this country that the 108th Infantry advanced on the morning of October 17th. In the upper left-hand corner of the first photograph will be seen four poplar trees. These mark the road leading from Arbres Guernon (on the right of the photograph) to Le Cateau toward the north (left of the photograph). In looking at these photographs the reader is looking towards the east.

The second photograph is another oblique view taken above the north-eastern outskirts of St. Souplet. It shows the railroad embankment and right of way running across the photograph, midway between the top and bottom. The railroad station is shown in the right center of the photograph. Near the lower right-hand corner of the photograph will be noted the coordinates Q.34.d.3.0.9.5. These coordinates were marked there evidently in error by the photographic service of the Fourth British Army, as these coordinates on the map mark the railroad bridge, which

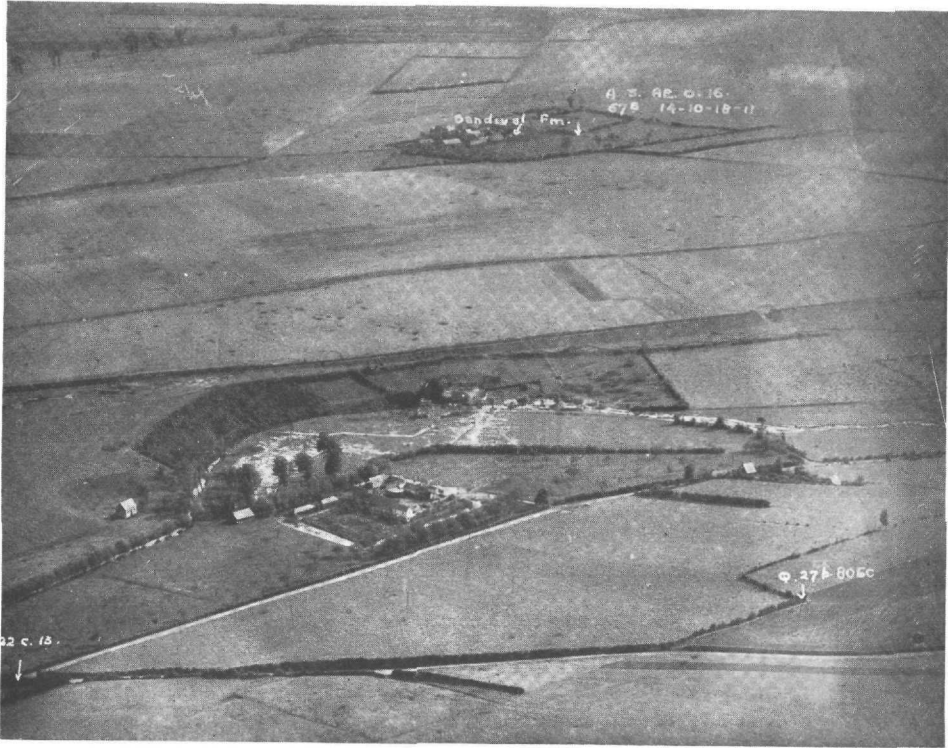


View of the railroad station and railroad yard east of St. Souplet, of Bandival Farm, and the highway extending from Arbre Guernon to Le Cateau

as a matter of fact is just off the right side of the photograph. The photograph affords an excellent view of Bandival Farm with the sunken road approaching it from the west. Beyond Bandival Farm may be seen the tall poplar trees which mark the highway running from Arbre Guernon to Le Cateau and which was taken by the 108th Infantry on October 17th after it had swept over the railroad and mopped up Bandival Farm.

The third photograph is another aerial view of Bandival Farm, taken from a point in the air about 1,500 yards north of St. Souplet. In this photograph also will be seen the poplar trees which mark the Arbre Guernon-Le Cateau highway. This photograph clearly shows the line of the railroad with its high embankment extending across the photograph from right to left and just beyond St. Crepin, the hamlet shown in the immediate foreground. The left of the 108th Infantry in its advance across the territory shown in this photograph came into the picture to the right of the destroyed railroad bridge shown in the photograph and moved diagonally across the photograph, so as to include Bandival Farm, to the point where the roadway with the poplar trees leaves the left of the photograph.

On the south half of the divisional sector the 105th Infantry attacked in column of battalions with the 1st Battalion, commanded by Captain George F. Bradshaw, in the lead, followed by the 2d Battalion, commanded



View of Bandival Farm with Arbre Guernon in the distance beyond. Taken from a point 1,500 yards north of St. Souplet

by Captain Charles A. MacArthur, and the 3d Battalion, commanded by First Lieutenant Charles R. Whipple, in the order named.

At 5:20, when our supporting barrage fell, the enemy's counter barrage almost immediately fell along the front held by the 105th Infantry. Lieutenant James T. Bergen, commanding Company E, and Lieutenant A. G. Cunningham of Company H were killed as a result of this fire, while Captain Raymond F. Hodgden, commanding Company H, and First Lieutenant Leo F. Giblyn, commanding Company D, were wounded. A number of enlisted men were killed and wounded. The Machine Gun Company, which was to move forward behind the leading battalion of the regiment, also suffered heavy casualties.

The attacking troops were almost immediately lost to view in the dense smoke and mist. Early reports showed the attack was progressing favorably. At 8:35 A. M. Regimental Headquarters moved from Escaufourt to St. Souplet. At 9:15 A. M. Colonel Andrews received a message from Captain Frank R. Potter, commanding Company E, stating that his company had arrived at Arbre Guernon and was engaged in clearing the town. It was also reported that Companies G, H and I had also reached Arbre Guernon. Company G, commanded by First Lieutenant Benjamin Buckley, was farther north. With the message from Captain Potter there arrived under guard as prisoners, three enemy officers and 133 enemy



View of Imberfayt Farm, taken during the summer of 1920

enlisted men. Company C and other detachments of the 1st Battalion had at this time advanced through Arbre Guernon and were attempting to proceed northeast upon the first objective. At 12:27 P. M. the Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion reported that his line was established on the eastern outskirts of Arbre Guernon and that he was held up by intense enemy machine gun fire.

It will be remembered that the leading battalion of the regiment was the 1st Battalion. When the enemy barrage fell on this battalion it caused so many casualties that there was some confusion, with the result that



View of La Roux Farm, taken during the summer of 1920

the 2d Battalion went through carrying with them many of the men of the 1st Battalion. When the 2d Battalion with Company C and other attached groups of the 1st Battalion arrived at Arbre Guernon, the 2d Battalion proceeded to mop up the village, while Company C, with other elements of the 1st Battalion which had gone forward, reorganized and endeavored to continue the advance beyond Arbre Guernon. Due to lack of numbers, the enemy resistance was sufficient to stop further advance and accordingly the leading elements of the 105th Infantry consolidated their line for the night on the easterly outskirts of Arbre Guernon, continuing their line around the village to the south and west. The left of the 30th Division on the right had not been able to get forward up to the time the line was established, and accordingly the right of the 105th Infantry was refused as a defensive flank until it joined with the 30th Division. During the afternoon and evening, the 30th Division established its front on a line with the 105th Infantry.

Captain MacArthur's battalion had two companies in line, with the remaining two companies in support when they followed the 1st Battalion. Direction was difficult to keep owing to the mist and smoke, and as well the heavy shelling, which seemed to affect the compasses. The left of the battalion line skirted the southern portion of St. Souplet as it crossed the river. At the railroad track and embankment some casualties were sustained, but a considerable number of machine guns and prisoners were taken. The line of the railroad was thoroughly mopped up and other machine gun nests overcome in the advance toward Arbre Guernon. Patrols approached both flanks of the village while groups pushed forward from the front. Bursts of machine gun fire were received during this advance, but the place was taken and mopped up with the result that a large number of prisoners and materiel were captured. Captain MacArthur moved his battalion headquarters to Arbre Guernon and having reorganized his forces, made an effort with the aid of a tank to advance the line. The tank, however, was put out of action.

The 3d Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Carl G. R. Ross, had much difficulty in getting to its battle stations. The battalion followed the 2d Battalion through Busigny at 3:20 A. M. and moved to its position south of St. Souplet. En route in the darkness, they were subjected to very heavy shelling and concentrations of gas. Masks were continuously worn. Shells striking in Company L broke the column so that part of Company L and all of Company M were for a time separated from the rest of the battalion, but arrived in their positions shortly before the barrage opened. Battalion Headquarters were established in a ditch near the cross road near W.2.b.5.3. When the barrage fell the 3d Battalion followed the 2d Battalion in artillery formation at a distance of about 300 yards, Companies I and L in the lead on the left and right respectively, being followed by Companies K and M. The battalion evacuated 200 prisoners taken by the leading battalions.

When the battalion reached the line of the railroad, it having been charged with the protection of the right flank of the regiment, its disposi-



Arbres Guernon, taken during summer of 1920

tions were reorganized and a wait of two hours resulted. The left of the 30th Division had been unable to get forward. Contact with that division, however, was made and when its left regiment went forward, the advance of the 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry continued toward Arbres Guernon. The advance was made in line of skirmishers and without resistance, the leading battalions having apparently cleaned up the area covered by them. When near Arbres Guernon and within supporting distance of the troops there, the Battalion Commander received a message from Captain Potter of Company E, asking for reinforcements. This was



View of La Jonquiere Farm, taken during the summer of 1920

at 11:25 A. M. Lieutenant George with Company M was immediately sent forward to Arbre Guernon. On approaching the ridge leading north from Arbre Guernon, strong machine gun fire was met. Units of the 3d Battalion, however, pushed forward to strengthen the left of the regimental sector. Lieutenant Alexander Granat of Company I at this point made a personal reconnaissance of the left of the regimental front and established liaison with the right of the 108th Infantry, which shortly before had retired behind the Arbre Guernon-Le Cateau Road as already narrated. By this time men of the 105th Infantry had captured and mopped up Advantage Farm, 500 yards north of Arbre Guernon. In going forward this battalion lost Lieutenant Walrath, who was severely wounded near the trenches in W.2.d. The battalion at this time was very ably commanded by Lieutenant Carl G. R. Ross of Company M, Lieutenant Whipple having been wounded. Lieutenant Ross upon arrival in the vicinity of Arbre Guernon reported to Captain Mac Arthur, commanding the 2d Battalion, who had assumed command of the troops of the 105th Infantry on the extreme front.

The Machine Gun Company of the 105th Infantry, commanded by Captain Howard Bird, had eight guns with the leading battalion and the remainder of the guns with the 3d Battalion. The Captain accompanied the leading battalion. Lieutenant Higbee, commanding the third platoon of the Machine Gun Company, went with the 3d Battalion. The Machine Gun Company assumed its battle positions on time. Captain Bird's command was in position in the sunken road at W.3.c.9.5. one hour before zero. Captain Bird reports that two minutes before zero hour troops on the south of the divisional sector opened up a machine gun barrage with the result that the enemy artillery counter barrage promptly replied, its fire overlapping on the right of the 27th Division front. Three large shells struck along the road in the vicinity of the Machine Gun detachment and inflicted so many casualties that the detachment was for the time demoralized. These casualties amounted to ten dead and forty-five wounded, among the company personnel and the carriers. The machine gun platoon with the 3d Battalion went forward and assisted in the fighting in the vicinity of Q.36.b, north to Advantage Farm. From among the survivors of the remainder of the company, two squads were equipped and sent forward to the railroad bridge in support. Captain Bird went forward and conferred with Captain MacArthur at Arbre Guernon. The latter directed that in view of the paucity of numbers in and about Arbre Guernon and Advantage Farm, additional machine guns be brought up to repel possible enemy counter attacks. By the early evening twenty-one guns were disposed with good fields of fire for the defense of the line of the 53d Brigade against enemy counter-attacks. These guns were supplied by the Machine Gun Companies of the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments and by detachments from the 105th Machine Gun Battalion.

The 105th Machine Gun Battalion, commanded by Major Kenneth Gardner, had in the mean time moved forward to a supporting position. Dispositions in depth were made to repel possible enemy counter-attack.

108th Infantry—Left of Division Sector			
Assaulting Troops October 17th. Support October 18th to 19th. Front Line Night of October 19th.			
K 2d Lt. Russell W. Hallock (w). 2d Lt. Fred J. Pierce. 2d Lt. Adam J. Schaezner.	I 2d Lt. Crist R. Fritz (w). 2d Lt. Roy E. Adams.	B 1st Lt. James J. Roos (k). 2d Lt. Jay R. Fiero (w). 2d Lt. Richard D. Wright (w).	A 2d Lt. Erwin A. Dennis. 2d Lt. Dick D. Smith (k).
M 2d Lt. Timothy O'Connor (k). 2d Lt. Edward O. Mitchell (w).	L 2d Lt. Harold B. Crowson. 2d Lt. James Cross (w).	D Capt. Charles J. Donnoeker. 1st Lt. Rudolph C. Dittus. 2d Lt. Frank H. Brietbeck (k).	C Capt. Harry H. Farmer (w). 2d Lt. Wm. T. De Rade.
2d Battalion Capt. Samuel H. Merrill. 1st Lt. Frederick G. Spawton, Adj. (w). 1st Lt. William D. Coulter, Gas Off. 2d Lt. William R. Shelley, Scout Off. 1st Lt. Archie L. Blades, Supply Off. Capt. Joseph T. Loughlin, M. C.		1st Battalion Major Frederick S. Couchman. 1st Lt. Allen H. Williams, Adj. 1st Lt. Charles Rudolph, Jr., Gas Off. 2d Lt. Walter N. Horsburgh, Scout Off. (w). 1st Lt. Wheeler C. Case, Sup. Off. Capt. Sidney D. Palmer, M. C.	
F 2d Lt. Howard M. Karr. 2d Lt. Niel C. Prangden (w). 2d Lt. Claude H. Spicer (w).	E Capt. Charles A. Sandberg (w). 1st Lt. Samuel A. Brown, Jr. 1st Lt. Harrison J. Uhl, Jr.	H 1st Lt. Jacob W. Vogt (w). 2d Lt. Harry Campbell (w).	G 1st Lt. Fred C. Davis. 2d Lt. Theodore C. Veit (w).
2d Battalion Capt. John S. Thompson. 1st Lt. Charles F. Mosher, Adj. Capt. George L. Miller, M. C.			
Colonel Edgar S. Jennings. Capt. George W. Elliott, Adj. Major Charles W. Lynn, M. C.	Capt. Henry D. Bagnal, Op. Off. 1st Lt. James F. Oakleaf, Int. Off. Capt. Clarence S. Martin (w).	2d Lt. Merton W. Brush, Sig. Off. 1st Lt. Kennard Underwood, Trains Off.	Chaplain John C. Ward (w). Chaplain Michael T. Hoffman. Chaplain Arthur G. Bagby.

105th Infantry—Right of Division Sector			
D 1st Lt. Leo F. Giblyn (w).	C 1st Lt. Benjamin Buckley (k). 2d Lt. Charles J. Doyle (w).	B 1st Lt. Harold O. Blakeley (w).	A 1st Lt. Jacob L. Van Schoonover
1st Battalion Capt. George F. Bradshaw. 1st Lt. Stephen B. Elkins, Adj. 1st Lt. Christopher B. Deganaar, Int. Off.			
E 1st Lt. James T. Bergen (k).	H Capt. Raymond F. Hogdon (w). 2d Lt. Arthur H. Norris (w).	F Capt. Frank R. Potter. 1st Lt. Lawrence P. Clarke (w). 2d Lt. Walter W. Quigel.	G 1st Lt. Thomas F. Brown (w). 1st Lt. Arthur H. Cunningham (k).
2d Battalion Capt. Charles H. MacArthur. 1st Lt. Robert D. Williamson, Adj. 2d Lt. Harold W. Graham, Int. Off. Chaplain David T. Burgh.			
M 1st Lt. Carl G. R. Ross (w). 2d Lt. Walter W. Stayton. 2d Lt. Henry J. Camman (w).	L 1st Lt. Thomas G. Carlin (w). 2d Lt. John C. Clipperly (w).	K 1st Lt. Marvin L. Atkins.	I 1st Lt. Alexander Granat. 2d Lt. Robert J. Geis. 2d Lt. Willis J. Nolan.
3d Battalion 1st Lt. Charles H. Whipple. 1st Lt. Ernest C. Dreher, Adj. 1st Lt. Cary J. Walradt, Int. Off. Capt. Robert S. Hall, Liaison Off. 30th Div. Chaplain Walter S. Cross.			
Colonel James M. Andrews. Capt. Lewis H. Gibbs, Adj. Capt. John W. Frost, Op. and Int. Off. Capt. Stephen H. Fifield, Pers. Adj. 1st Lt. John D. Snedeker, Int. Off. Capt. Roscoe B. Trumble, Sup. Off.	1st Lt. John F. Mahoney, Sup. Co. 1st Lt. George E. Ramsey, Sup. Co. 1st Lt. Michael J. Connery, Sup. Co. 1st Lt. Frank D. Howe, Sup. Co. 1st Lt. Leonard J. Howard, Sup. Co. Capt. George W. Papen, Jr., M. C. 1st Lt. James C. Donovan, M. C. 1st Lt. James R. Liss, M. C. 1st Lt. Elmer H. Ormsby, M. C. 1st Lt. Maurice Exiner, M. C.	M. G. Co. Capt. Howard Bird 1st Lt. Lester C. Higbee. 2d Lt. Archie B. Gwathmey. 2d Lt. Glenn S. Wasson. 2d Lt. George F. Evans.	

107th Infantry—Left of Division Sector			
Support to 108th Infantry October 17th. Front Line October 17th to 19th inclusive.			
E 1st Lt. Richard M. Raven (k).	F 1st Lt. John A. Korschen. 2d Lt. George L. Baker. 2d Lt. Benjamin J. Potter (k).	G 1st Lt. Royal C. Johnson.	H 2d Lt. Carl J. Stock (k).
2d Battalion Capt. Rowland Tompkins. 1st Lt. William S. Hawkins, Adj. (w). 2d Lt. Marsh S. Lockyear, Int. Off. (k).			
I 1st Lt. Claude G. Leland. 2d Lt. Joseph P. Murphy. 2d Lt. Luther M. McBee.	K 1st Lt. Griswold B. Daniell. 2d Lt. William J. Boehm (w).	L 1st Lt. Allen F. Reagan.	M 1st Lt. George B. Bragdon. 2d Lt. Joseph F. Snyder.
3d Battalion Capt. George B. Bradish (w). 2d Lt. Harry L. Roaler, Adj. (k). 2d Lt. John B. Jessup, Int. Off. 2d Lt. Alexander E. Ostrander, Transp. Off.			
A 1st Lt. Frederick D. Conklin. 1st Lt. Clarence E. Hall (w).	B 1st Lt. Ford M. Terry (w).	C Capt. Harry L. Stratton. 1st Lt. John F. Greaney (w).	D 1st Lt. Thomas G. Simpson. 2d Lt. Roland D. Davis. 2d Lt. David R. Nimocks.
1st Battalion Capt. Clinton E. Fisk (k). 1st Lt. Arthur C. Lumley, Adj. (w). 1st Lt. Charles T. Graham-Rogers, Gas Off. (w). 2d Lt. Oscar E. Hellquist, Int. Off. (k).			M. G. 1st Lt. Harry Adsit (w). 1st Lt. Kenneth Gow (k). 2d Lt. Horace C. Johnson.
Colonel Charles I. Debevoise. Major Nicholas Engel. Capt. Thomas J. Brady, Op. Off. 1st Lt. Eugene L. Mullaney, Int. Off. 1st Lt. Edward H. Kent, Adj. 1st Lt. Edwin S. Munson, Liaison Off. with 105th.	1st Lt. Edwin L. Holloway. 1st Lt. Hiram W. Taylor, Sup. Off. 1st Lt. Edward C. Lecompte, Transp. Off. Capt. Henry B. Heylman, Pers. Adj. 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. Keever. Chaplain Hugh W. Stewart.	H. Q. Co. Capt. Kenneth C. Wilson 1st Lt. Arthur Talbot. 2d Lt. Harry F. Allen, T. M. 2d Lt. John H. Freeman, Signal Off.

106th Infantry—Right of Division Sector			
Support			
E 1st Lt. Winslow B. Watson (w). 2d Lt. Norman E. Hudson (w). 2d Lt. Ivan L. Fenty (w).	F 1st Lt. Frank C. Vincent (w). 1st Lt. Martin H. Shuford. 2d Lt. Allen G. Carson.	G 1st Lt. David R. Adamson.	H 1st Lt. George R. Dunsbaugh (w). 2d Lt. Robert S. Moore (w). 2d Lt. Harold B. Longfellow (k).
2d Battalion Capt. Rutherford Ireland (w). 1st Lt. Frederick K. Long (w). 2d Lt. John C. Clark (w). 1st Lt. Lee A. Hadley, M. C.			
A 1st Lt. Arthur B. Gutzzeit (w). 2d Lt. Grant H. Sibley.	B 1st Lt. Robert H. Trask. 2d Lt. Harry F. Lossing.	C 1st Lt. Herbert H. Davis. 2d Lt. Thomas Spencer (w). 2d Lt. William E. Ludtke.	D 1st Lt. Arthur J. Henrici (w). 1st Lt. James B. Post. 2d Lt. Otto W. Marquard (w).
1st Battalion 1st Lt. Ames T. Brown (w). 2d Lt. Irving G. Davis (w). 2d Lt. James E. Polka (w). 1st Lt. Robert S. Cleaver, M. C. 1st Lt. Watson S. Rowan, M. C.			
I 1st Lt. George W. Turner.	K 1st Lt. H. F. Marshall (w). 1st Lt. Orville E. Clifford.	L 1st Lt. Chester P. Jones. 2d Lt. John C. Gilmore.	M 1st Lt. Walter D. Keller. 2d Lt. John H. Potts.
3d Battalion Capt. Robert M. Dashiell. Capt. Walter C. Tilden, M. C. (w). 1st Lt. William B. Clayton (w). 2d Lt. Mason Walker (w). 2d Lt. Charles J. O'Hara (w). Capt. Joseph E. Adams, M. C.			
Colonel Franklin W. Ward. Lt. Col. John M. True. Capt. James P. Cooke, Adj. Capt. Murray Taylor, Op. Off.	1st Lt. Thomas L. D. Cronin, Int. Off. Capt. Nils P. Larsen, M. C. Capt. Frank F. Farwell, Sup. Off.	M. G. Capt. Stewart D. Tiffany. 1st Lt. Leaman S. Broughton. 1st Lt. Charles A. Rice (w). 2d Lt. Charles B. Smith.	

105th Machine Gun Battalion			
Support			
B Capt. Nathaniel H. Egleston. 1st Lt. John Reynolds. 2d Lt. George Matthews, Jr. (w). 2d Lt. Robert D. McCaskey. 2d Lt. Richard G. Lyon.	A Capt. Lucius H. Biglow, Jr. 1st Lt. Joseph F. Cook. 1st Lt. Wm. C. Barthman. 2d Lt. Harry B. Jennings. 2d Lt. Harold L. Downey.	C 1st Lt. Robert H. Leake. 1st Lt. Edward S. Flash, Jr. 2d Lt. Ward W. Farnham. 2d Lt. Joseph G. Galvin (w).	D Capt. Stanton Whitney. 1st Lt. Alwyn Ball, 3d. 2d Lt. Bert R. Anderson. 2d Lt. Frank H. Grace.
Major Kenneth Gardner. 1st Lt. John J. Fleming, Adj. 1st Lt. Knowlton Durham, Int. Off.	1st Lt. Raymond A. McLeer, Sup. Off. Capt. Charles D. Kayser, M. C.	Capt. Joseph Mulcahy, D. C. 2d Lt. Frederick Snare, Jr., Trans. Off. Chaplain Archer D. Bass.	

106th Machine Gun Battalion			
Support			
A Capt. John S. Roberts. 1st Lt. Edgar T. Beamish. 1st Lt. Roger H. Wellington. 2d Lt. Myles McDonell. 2d Lt. Earl G. Hawkins.	C Capt. Abner H. Platt. 1st Lt. Walter L. Glass (w). 1st Lt. John B. Perkins. 2d Lt. Horace Zimmer.	B 2d Lt. Randolph M. Fuller. 2d Lt. Paul B. Selby. 2d Lt. Harry Von Der Leith.	D Capt. George H. Morgan. 1st Lt. Albert L. Sopp (w). 1st Lt. Everett W. King. 2d Lt. Reginald H. Wood (w). 1st Lt. Walter H. Wells.
Major Mortimer D. Bryant (w). 1st Lt. Lawrence Beattie, Jr. 1st Lt. Nicholas E. Devereux, Jr.			
1st Lt. Clarence H. K. Blauvelt. 1st Lt. Harry K. Tebbutt, Jr., M. C. 1st Lt. Isadore A. White, D. C.			

Order of Battle
LE SELLE RIVER OPERATIONS
 OCTOBER 17 to 19, 1918

K—Killed or Died of Wounds W—Wounded

In relation to the supporting regiments, the 107th Infantry was still under command of Brigadier General Charles I. DeBevoise, who as a result of his exceptionally efficient service during the Hindenburg Line Battle had been recommended by the Division Commander for promotion to the grade of Brigadier General. Authority was received on October 15th to swear in Colonel DeBevoise in the new grade and this was done the same day. General DeBevoise, however, applied to be allowed to continue in command of his regiment until the termination of the coming operations for the crossing of Le Selle River. This request was granted and he continued as Regimental Commander until the termination of Le Selle River operations. Major Mortimer D. Bryant, of the 106th Machine Gun Battalion, who had demonstrated marked qualities of leadership, tactical skill and courage, was promoted and placed in command of the 107th Infantry. This was a case where an officer jumped a grade in his promotion. Major Bryant had no intimation of his promotion until it was announced to him. General DeBevoise succeeded Brigadier General Albert H. Blanding in command of the 53d Infantry Brigade. This latter officer had been temporarily attached, and left the division with an excellent record of accomplishment.

The 107th Infantry followed the 108th on the morning of the 17th of October, with the 2d Battalion, commanded by Captain Rowland Tompkins in the lead, followed by the 3d Battalion, commanded by Captain George B. Bradish, whose command was followed by the 1st Battalion, commanded by Captain Clinton E. Fisk. The 107th Infantry crossed the river in rear of the 108th and took up a support position along the road about 400 yards east of the railroad. In the afternoon, the 107th Infantry sent detachments forward in closer support of the 108th, taking up positions in Bandival Farm Hollow.

The 106th Infantry experienced considerable difficulty in getting through the gas and shell fire in the area between Busigny and Escauffort. Their numbers were inconsiderable. However, such strength as the regiment possessed was placed in support of the 105th Infantry in its sector. The leading battalion was the 1st, under command of Captain Ames T. Brown, followed by the 2d Battalion, commanded by Captain Rutherford Ireland, and the 3d Battalion, commanded by Captain Dashiell.

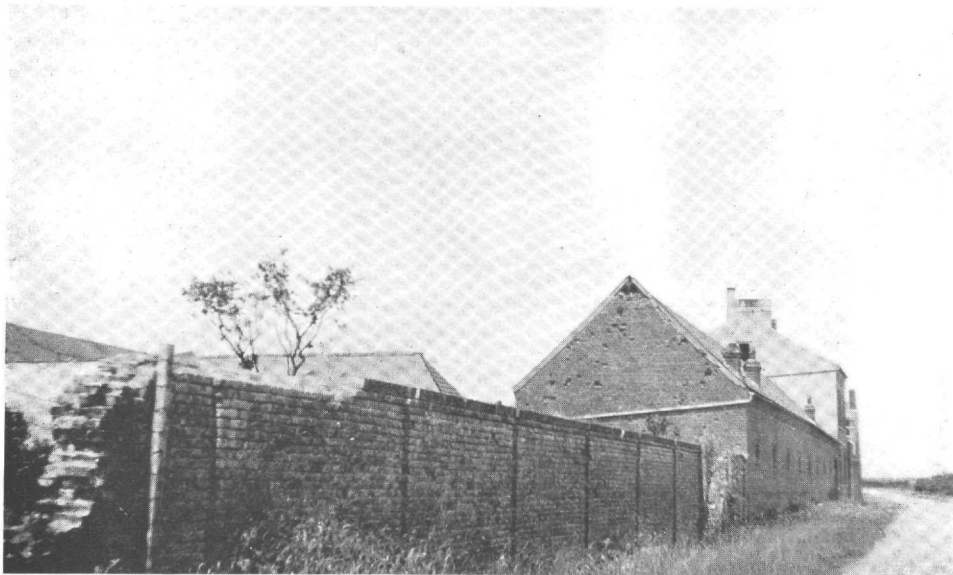
En route to its battle station, the 106th Infantry had to cross the trench system on the westerly side of Le Selle River opposite Marsh Mill, which is 1,000 yards south of St. Souplet. This trench system had evidently been constructed by the Germans for training purposes at a time when this area was well back of their front line. The trench system appears on the map. It is more graphically shown in the accompanying aerial photograph. An inspection of this photograph will show a large number of shell craters, all of which appear within the perimeter of the trench system. Such accurate shooting is not possible, and evidently the craters were made for training purposes by blowing holes in the ground with powder charges. This trench system, as will be noted from the map, was rather extensive, and in the complete obscurity provided by the mist



106th Infantry Headquarters, St. Souplet

and smoke, the trenches were a serious obstacle to be overcome by the 106th Infantry, although they knew that they lay in the path of their advance.

It was while this regiment was mixed up with these trenches that such excellent work was done by Colonel Franklin W. Ward, Lieutenant Colonel John M. True and Captain Murray Taylor, the Regimental Operations Officer, in straightening out units and reorganizing the advance. Amid exceedingly heavy shell fire and much gas these officers moved about



View of Advantage Farm, Sopea, during the summer of 1920

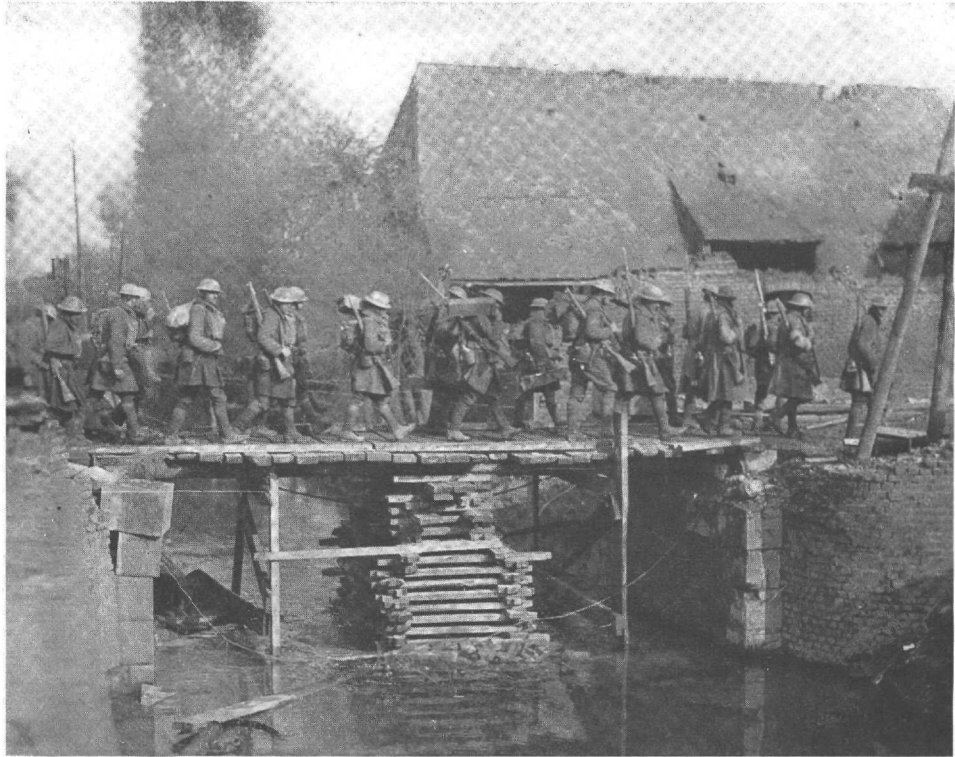
with the greatest energy and by their personal supervision got the regiment across the river in its own sector between St. Martin Rivere on the south and the vicinity of the weaving mill on the north.

The 2d Battalion of the 106th Infantry in its advance had borne a little to the right of its correct line of march and had come under heavy machine gun fire from St. Martin Rivere, which was just outside the divisional boundary on the south. The fire from this place proved sufficiently attractive to this battalion of the 106th Infantry to cause it immediately to attack the place, which was done with such dash, that with the aid of four tanks, the position was quickly gained and mopped up. After this distraction, they continued on to the railroad embankment. In the fighting at St. Martin Rivere they had gained touch with the left of the 30th Division, but in the advance to the railroad embankment this contact had been lost. Patrols were sent out from the battalion and contact with the 30th Division regained at 10:30 A. M.

The 1st and 3d Battalions of the 106th Infantry having cleared the practise system of trenches already described, gained Le Selle River and there awaited further orders. It was at this time that the 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry, which was the reserve battalion of that regiment, pushed on toward Arbre Guernon.



Westerly side of the St. Martin Rivere, on Le Selle River, showing the practice trenches of the Germans. These trenches provided difficulties for the 105th and 106th Infantry in crossing them October 17



108th Infantry crossing temporary bridge constructed by the 102d Engineers across Le Selle River at St. Souplet

Shortly thereafter, the 2d Battalion of the 106th Infantry began its further advance, and arrived at Arbre Guernon at 12:15 P. M. The 2d Battalion was followed by the 1st and 3d Battalions of the same regiment, and these latter units moved up in support on the sunken road near Arbre Guernon, where they arrived at 1:30 P. M. In referring to these units as battalions, the reader must bear in mind their strength, which has already been referred to. The entire rifle strength of the 106th Infantry at this time was less than 400 men. The 1st Battalion had considerably less than 100 men on this occasion.

The tanks which had been assigned to the support of the 27th Division, it will be remembered, were to cross Le Selle River south of the divisional sector, and then having moved north in the territory east of the river were to come up to the support of the leading infantry elements in the attack. The tanks, however, having crossed the stream, lost their way in the mist and smoke and with the exception of one of their number played no part in the attack, at least in the area of the 27th Division. One tank did reach the vicinity of Arbre Guernon in time to receive orders from Captain MacArthur to take part in the effort shortly to be made to push the advance beyond Arbre Guernon, as already narrated. The tank, however, was destroyed by shell fire after an advance of not more than 1,000 yards.

The 102d Engineer Regiment was at this time commanded by Colonel A. H. Acker, who had succeeded Colonel Pillsbury. The battalions were commanded by Majors Lane and Crimmins. Severe losses were sustained by the regiment in placing the foot bridges across Le Selle River. This work was very gallantly carried out by them. Sergeants Clements, Fitzgerald, Williams and Pfeiffer won well-merited commendation for their valor and determination in advancing and placing the heavy foot bridges across the river. While engaged in this hazardous duty Sergeant Pfeiffer was severely wounded. The detachment under First Lieutenant Herbert E. Ross commenced and continued the construction of the bridge over the river at St. Souplet with the greatest courage and skill. The same comment applies to the detachment of engineers under First Lieutenant Maxwell P. Gray, engaged in clearing away the debris of the destroyed railroad bridge.

By noon the engineers had sufficiently finished the bridge over Le Selle River as to render it available for vehicular traffic.

In these operations the 102d Field Signal Battalion performed several extraordinary feats. Hardly had Captain MacArthur's command gained control of the situation at Arbre Guernon when Lieutenant Colonel William L. Hallahan, the Division Signal Officer, sensing the importance of connecting up with the place by wire, impressed into his service several litter bearers and a few signalmen, and under exceedingly heavy fire personally conducted them with the necessary wire to Arbre Guernon. Due to his personal courage and initiative, wire communication was established almost as soon as mopping up had been completed, and it was thereafter maintained with very few interruptions. In recognition of his splendid service on this occasion Colonel Hallahan was awarded the Distinguished Service Order by the British Government.

By the evening of October 17th the division had advanced the line on the divisional front to the ridge 200 yards west of the Abre Guernon-Le Cateau highway with outposts close to the highway. On the right half of the divisional sector the line was advanced to Advantage Farm and Arbre Guernon, both of which places were securely held with outposts in front. Behind this line, which was held by the depleted battalions of the 108th Infantry on the left and the 105th Infantry on the right, the 107th Infantry was in support in the Bandival Farm Hollow, with the 106th Machine Gun Battalion occupying positions to support the front line. Behind the 105th Infantry was established the supporting line of the depleted units of the 106th Infantry, which were generally located in and about the road west of Arbre Guernon. During the evening of October 17th all of these units were reorganized and in some cases redispensed where the tactical situation might be bettered. It will be seen therefore that a very material advance had been made and a large number of prisoners and materiel captured. The materiel included a locomotive and railroad train of fifteen cars, several motor trucks, one of which was brought back to the States as a souvenir and is now on exhibition in the Armory of the 107th Infantry in New York City. Scores of heavy



Bringing in wounded on wheel litters in the vicinity of Mazingheim. In the background, members of the 105th Machine Gun Battalion still firing their Vickers guns



Permanent bridge built across Le Selle River at St. Souplet after the Armistice. Picture taken during the summer of 1920

anti-tank rifles were also taken in this advance, together with the ever present machine guns, both light and heavy, and light minnenwerfers.

Most of the prisoners captured were from the 413th, 414th and 120th Infantry Regiments of the 204th German Division and the 1st and 3d Marine Regiments of the 3d German Naval Division. Following is a list of prisoners captured and recorded as having passed through the prisoners of war cage up to 3:30 P. M. on the 17th:

OFFICERS					
Captains.....					1
Lieutenants.....					21
Sub-Lieutenants.....					1
					23
OTHER RANKS					
	1st	2d	3d	Machine Gun	
3D NAVAL DIVISION	Battalion	Battalion	Battalion	Company	Total
1st Marine Regiment.....	12	21	40	..	73
3d Marine Regiment.....	5	2	5	6	18
					91
204TH DIVISION					
413th I. R.....	..	2	97	..	99
414th I. R.....	32	92	47	..	171
120th I. R.....	6	17	4	..	27
27th F. A. R.....	..	..	..	..	10
8th M. W. Co.....	..	..	..	..	12
563d San. Co.....	..	..	..	..	2
74th M. G. (Heavy).....	..	..	..	..	3
					324
24TH DIVISION					
138th I. R.....	..	..	2	..	2
133d I. R.....	..	..	3	..	3
					5
243D DIVISION					
479th I. R.....	45	19	1	..	65
122D I. R.....	..	..	83	..	83
					158
OTHER UNITS					
476th M. W. Co.....	..	..	..	..	1

From the above table it will be seen that in this day's fighting the division captured 23 officers and 574 other ranks.

The attack was to be resumed the following morning. The Division Commander was advised by the Commanding General of the II American Corps of the hour of this attack and the line upon which the barrage for the attack would fall. This line on the front of the 27th Division ran about 200 yards east of the Arbre Guernon-Le Cateau highway. As has already been pointed out, the highway mentioned, from a point a little north of Advantage Farm to the divisional boundary line on the north, was in the possession of the enemy. Accordingly, if the barrage was to fall as

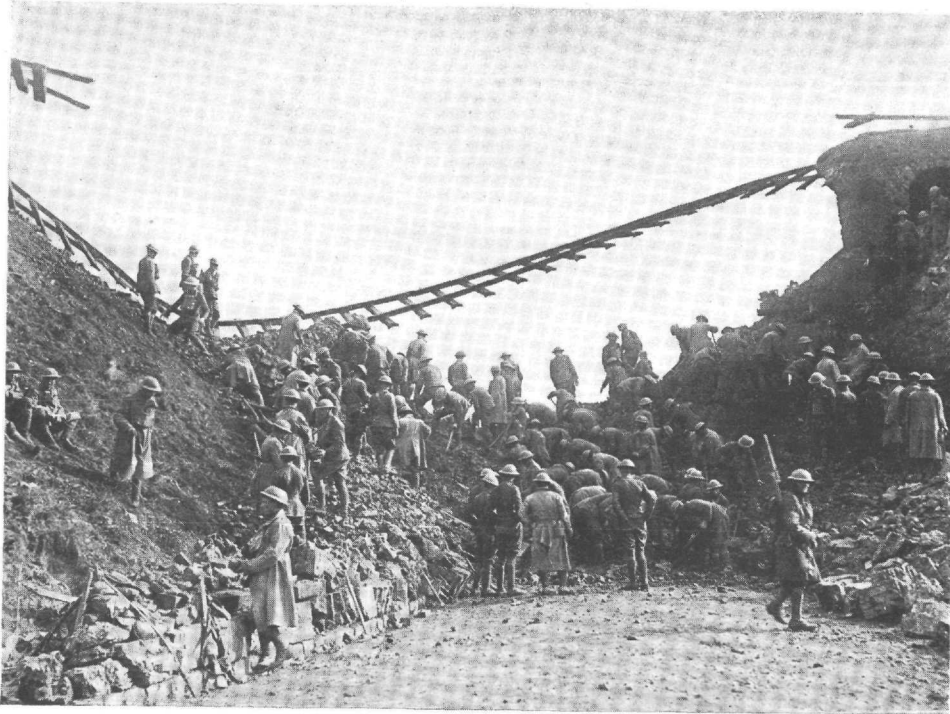
planned, it would fall behind the first line of the enemy resistance. The Division Commander therefore objected to the barrage as planned and requested that the barrage line be carried back so as to fall on that part of the Arbre Guernon-Le Cateau highway which lay north of Advantage Farm. The Corps Commander referred the Division Commander to the General Commanding the British Royal Field Artillery attached to the corps, as it was understood that this officer had fixed the artillery start line. Wire communications existed between Division Headquarters and the Corps Artillery Headquarters, and accordingly Brigadier General Burgess, 4th Divisional Field Artillery, who at that time was the Chief of Artillery of the 27th Division, represented the Division Commander in explaining to the Corps Artillery Commander the views of the 27th Division in relation to the artillery barrage start line for the following morning. The Corps Artillery Commander objected to any change in the barrage start line, stating that all the batteries were then being notified of the details of the barrage and that the orders could not be changed. It was further explained that the artillery start line was really an army matter, as other divisions of the 4th British Army on the right and left of the II American Corps were to attack at the same time, and that the barrage would be general along the army front. The matter was therefore taken up directly by the Division Commander with the General Officer Commanding the 4th Army Artillery, who held with the Division Commander that while the time for the start of the barrage and the general line of the barrage were fixed by the army on occasions when the attack was an army attack, nevertheless within the front of a division, the divisional artillery start line, so long as it conformed to the general start line of the army, could and should be fixed by the Division Commander and its ends at the divisional boundaries joined up with the artillery start line of the adjoining divisions by appropriate allowances made in the firing data for guns firing on the extreme flanks. The desired change was therefore made, and due to the great zeal and energy of General Burgess, all batteries of the divisional artillery were notified in time.

Accordingly Field Orders No. 64 of the division, which appear in the Appendix as Exhibit 42, were issued. The attack was fixed for 5:30 on the morning of October 18th. The barrage start line was prescribed in a memorandum which followed the order and was not included in the order because at the time the order was issued the subject of the barrage was still under discussion. In the memorandum mentioned, the barrage start line was fixed as follows:

"Q.24.c.4.8 due south to and including the Le Cateau Road, thence southeast on the road to Q.36.b.7.1, thence in a straight line to X.1.a.7.9."

In the memorandum it was directed that shortly before zero hour patrols east of the infantry start line, which was fixed at 250 yards west of the artillery start line, should withdraw to the latter line.

The brigades were to continue the attack in the sub-sectors already assigned them. In the brigade orders it was prescribed that in the 54th Brigade the 107th Infantry, going through the 108th Infantry, would carry



The cut at St. Souplet, October 18, 1918



108th Infantry bringing in German prisoners near St. Souplet, France. October 17, 1918

forward the attack, supported by the 108th Infantry, while in the 53d Brigade the attack was to be continued by the 105th Infantry, still supported by what was left of the 106th Infantry. This was necessary in the case of the 53d Brigade because of the inadequate numbers of the 106th Infantry to cover the front of the attack.

The divisional reserve was to consist of the 104th Machine Gun Battalion, the 102d Engineers, less one battalion, and one squadron of the 20th British Hussars. The 105th and 106th Machine Gun Battalions, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Edward McLeer, Jr., Divisional Machine Gun Officer, were to fire supporting shoots on special targets that had been designated for attention during the progress of the artillery barrage. Upon completion of the barrage, command of these battalions automatically reverted to the infantry brigade commanders.

Orders Nos. 112 and 113 are also included in the Appendix as part of Exhibit 42.

When the attack opened, the barrage fell as planned, on the Arbre Guernon-Le Cateau Road from a point immediately north of Advantage Farm to a point near the northern divisional boundary. The 107th Infantry on the left, and on this front, swept forward closely behind the barrage and with little loss, overcame the enemy groups occupying the roadway, who if the barrage had fallen behind them would have inflicted considerable casualties on the attacking infantry. The 107th Infantry got forward in most satisfactory fashion until the line of Jonc de Mer Farm—La Roux Farm was met. These farms occupied the easterly side of the plateau shown on the map. This line was well held by enemy machine gun parties and supporting infantry groups. Their strength and the intensity of their fire were sufficient to stop the attack before this line. General DeBevoise, commanding the 107th Infantry, promptly determined upon a concentration of effort to capture La Roux Farm near the northern divisional boundary line. Dispositions were made accordingly, and La Roux Farm, with the machine gun positions in the hedges about it, was assaulted and captured. Within two hours after the attacking line had been stopped, the position was mopped up and prisoners evacuated. Shortly after this success, Jonc de Mer Farm, which was on the inter-brigade boundary, was attacked from both flanks by detachments of the 107th Infantry on the left and the 105th Infantry on the right, with the result that it also fell into our hands.

By this time the 50th British Division, on the left of the 27th Division, had moved its line forward so that its right flank was in touch with the 107th Infantry at La Roux Farm. The left part of the line of the 50th British Division, however, was held up, and this seemed to slow down their progress.

In the area of the 53d Brigade, the 105th Infantry went forward at zero hour and almost immediately met with heavy enemy machine gun fire from the many hedges on their immediate front. Heavy enfilade fire was also received from the 30th Division area on the right. The advance of the 105th Infantry was therefore delayed by the fighting which re-

sulted and the barrage was lost. Progress, however, was slowly but steadily made by the determination and skilful action of combat patrols which enveloped enemy machine gun positions one after the other, killing or capturing the defenders. When their line had been advanced to the vicinity of Jonc de Mer Farm, it was held up as already explained until the farm was captured with the aid of detachments of the 107th Infantry on the left.

In the area of the 30th Division, it seems that their attack was embarrassed by the fact that the IX British Corps on their right had received an order not to begin its attack until 11 o'clock in the morning. In order that the right of the 30th Division might not lose contact with the left of the 6th British Division on its right, it was necessary for the right brigade of the 30th Division to refuse its right flank as the brigade advanced. This resulted in the 30th Division being delayed. Accordingly, when the line of the 105th Infantry had reached Jonc de Mer Ridge and had been unable to connect up with the left of the 30th Division, patrols were sent out to establish communication. These patrols came under heavy enemy fire from the direction of Mazingheim, in the area of the 30th Division. The right flank of the 105th Infantry was then refused toward the hedges immediately east of Arbre Guernon. This extension of the line of the 105th Infantry was promptly reported over the wire from Arbre Guernon and at 3:00 P. M. Company F of the 102d Engineers, in strength almost equal to one of the infantry battalions, was sent forward in support of the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments, which by that time had become merged. Company F of the engineer regiment commanded by Captain Peter F. Burns, was sent to Advantage Farm, then about 2,000 yards behind the front line.

When the 105th Infantry went forward on the morning of October 18th, the 3d Battalion of the regiment was commanded by First Lieutenant Charles R. Whipple. The leading waves on the left half of the battalion sector constituted not more than forty men under command of Lieutenants Alexander Granat and Marvin L. Atkins. It was these detachments which with the right elements of the 107th Infantry cleaned up Jonc de Mer Farm. The greatest resistance was met from the line of the sunken road leading southeast from Jonc de Mer Farm to Mazingheim. After some stiff fighting on the front of the 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry, about 150 of the enemy were driven off down the road toward Mazingheim. A very considerable number of their dead were left behind. Patrols occupied Jonc de Mer Ridge, which was found to be very well organized with dugouts and shelters. Two trench mortars, six light machine guns, five heavy machine guns and three anti-tank rifles and a large quantity of German hand grenades and small arms ammunition were captured along this road by this small detachment of the 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry. A number of prisoners were taken from the deep dugouts. Lieutenant Whipple, the Battalion Commander, in his report of the activities at this time paid special tribute to the valor, determination and skill of the small group that constituted his battalion.

It appeared from all reports received, that the enemy defense had

been considerably demoralized. Their resistance was dependent upon machine gun groups, supported by infantry detachments, the whole in turn supported by enemy artillery fire from the heights of Catillon.

A defense of the character mentioned could have been quickly overcome by an aggressive advance by troops possessing requisite numbers and free from overfatigue. The troops of the 27th Division, however, at this time, had been in the line since the night of October 11th-12th—in other words for seven days and seven nights of practically continuous fighting. During this time they had been actively engaged against the enemy and their strength had been depleted until companies of the infantry regiments had a rifle strength of twenty or thirty men each. The enemy machine gunners were skilful and courageous. In most cases they fired their guns to the last. Their supporting infantry detachments, however, were lacking in morale and frequently sought an opportunity to surrender. Under these conditions the Division Commander directed that the 53d Brigade on the right and the 107th Infantry on the left would push forward the line by a night attack during the night of October 18th-19th.

Very early on the morning of the 19th, therefore, the leading elements of the division went forward in attack. The advance was successful. The line was advanced across Jonc de Mer Valley to the ridge lying between Jonc de Mer Valley and the St. Maurice Valley. This line included La Jonquiere Farm and North Chimney. Patrols were sent forward to the St. Maurice stream. By daylight the 27th Division line was in process of consolidation on the ridge mentioned, with the 108th Infantry in support of the 107th and Company F, of the 102d Engineers, in support of the merged regiments of the 53d Brigade on the right half of the divisional sector.

It was on the morning of the 19th that the Division Commander received information that the 118th Infantry on the left of the 30th Division had been held up in front of Mazingheim, after sustaining a considerable number of casualties. A glance at the map will show that Mazingheim at this time constituted a serious menace to the right flank of the 27th Division, but on the other hand the position of the leading troops of the 27th Division constituted a menace to the right flank of the German forces at Mazingheim. Arrangements were therefore made over the telephone between the headquarters of the 27th and 30th Divisions that reserve troops of the 27th Division would move into the area of the 30th Division and threaten Mazingheim from the north. While arrangements were being made to carry out this plan, troops of the 30th Division were reorganized for a renewal of their attack on Mazingheim. The reserve troops of the 27th Division organized for the flank attack were constituted of one troop of the 20th British Hussars, one platoon of Company B, 104th Machine Gun Battalion, commanded by First Lieutenant Clarence R. Hancock, and Company F, of the 102d Engineers. This detachment having gained the orchard in R.26.d deployed and began skirmishing toward the south. The demonstration was sufficient to cause the with-

drawal of the German troops from Mazingheim, and shortly thereafter troops of the 30th Division entered that place and extended their line to the left so that contact between the two divisions was reestablished.

On the evening of the 18th of October the Division Commander had discussed with General Burgess, the Divisional Artillery Commander, the practicability of supporting the advance of October 19th with an accompanying battery in each brigade sector, these batteries to move forward boldly and to aid with their fire action the reduction of opposing machine gun nests. The plan was not recommended by the Divisional Artillery Officer, who believed that unnecessary casualties would be sustained by the batteries without any increase in their ability to reduce enemy opposing positions by reason of occupying positions so far forward. After careful consideration of the entire matter the Artillery Commander was directed to send the batteries forward. This was done. Direct liaison was established between the batteries and the leading Battalion Commanders, and under the conditions as they existed on the 19th and 20th of October these batteries were enabled to render very prompt and effective support to the small infantry groups that constituted our attacking waves.

On the morning of October 19th the Division Commander visited the battery in the 53d Brigade sector. The command had succeeded in gaining a position on the reverse slope of the ridge west of Jonc de Mer Farm and apparently had not been discovered by the enemy. In any event the battery escaped heavy shelling throughout the day and rapidly and successfully fired upon enemy points of resistance.

In going forward through the battery position to the lines of the 108th Infantry on this occasion, the Division Commander's party, which included Captain Joseph D. Eddy and Private Leslie Hunt, orderly, passed through the heavy shelling along the line of Le Selle River and the roads beyond, in a very short space of time, because the three persons constituting the party were mounted. On previous visits of inspection in battle areas, movement had always been on foot. That had been the custom. Such movement necessitates slow progress and at times dodging into shell holes to avoid shell splinters. Mounted, however, the rider is enabled to get through a shelled area much more rapidly and may frequently avoid such area by moving quickly to one flank or the other. As a result of the battle conditions which had obtained up to the time of the operations of Le Selle River, mounted men were never seen in the forward area of divisions in attack. The experience on this occasion prompted the immediate dispatch of detachments of the 20th Hussars to serve as mounted messengers between battalion, regimental and brigade posts of command. During the succeeding days of Le Selle River operations, the troopers of the 20th Hussars rendered most prompt and efficient messenger service with very few casualties. For the first time in active operations, messages were carried with the least possible delay from advanced points to the nearest telephone station or direct to the regimental or brigade post of

command. There was in consequence of this innovation a marked increase in the efficiency of communication and intelligence.

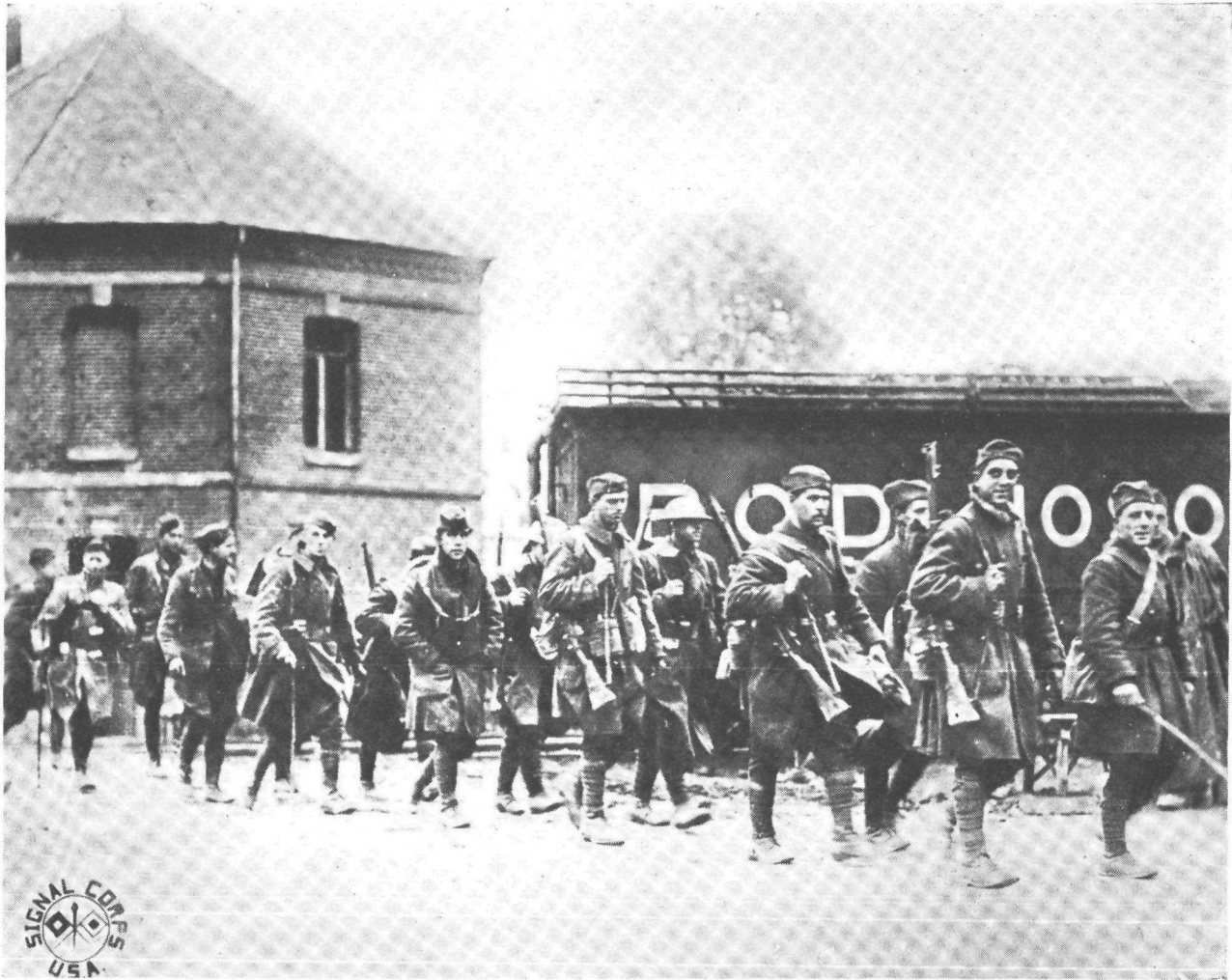
On the night of October 19th the 108th Infantry relieved the 107th Infantry. This relief was completed by 2 o'clock in the morning of October 20th. The 108th Infantry pushed out patrols to the Catillon-Bazuel Road, overlooking the town of Catillon and the Canal de la Sambre. On the right half of the divisional sector the 105th Infantry, with the survivors of the 106th intermingled with them, pushed out their patrols to the right at R.22. central, also overlooking Catillon. The main line of resistance was established along the easterly bank of the St. Maurice River.

The success of the division during Le Selle River operations was not gained without the loss of some of our best officers and enlisted men. One of these was Captain Clinton E. Fisk, who commanded the 1st Battalion of the 107th Infantry, and who was killed by a shell on the 18th of October near the Arbre Guernon-Le Cateau Road. His loss was keenly felt throughout the division, not only because of his fine character and professional value as a soldier, but for sentimental reasons. Captain Fisk had served in the 107th Infantry for a great many years antedating the war and was the son of Colonel Willard C. Fisk, who commanded the regiment at Camp Wadsworth and brought it to France.

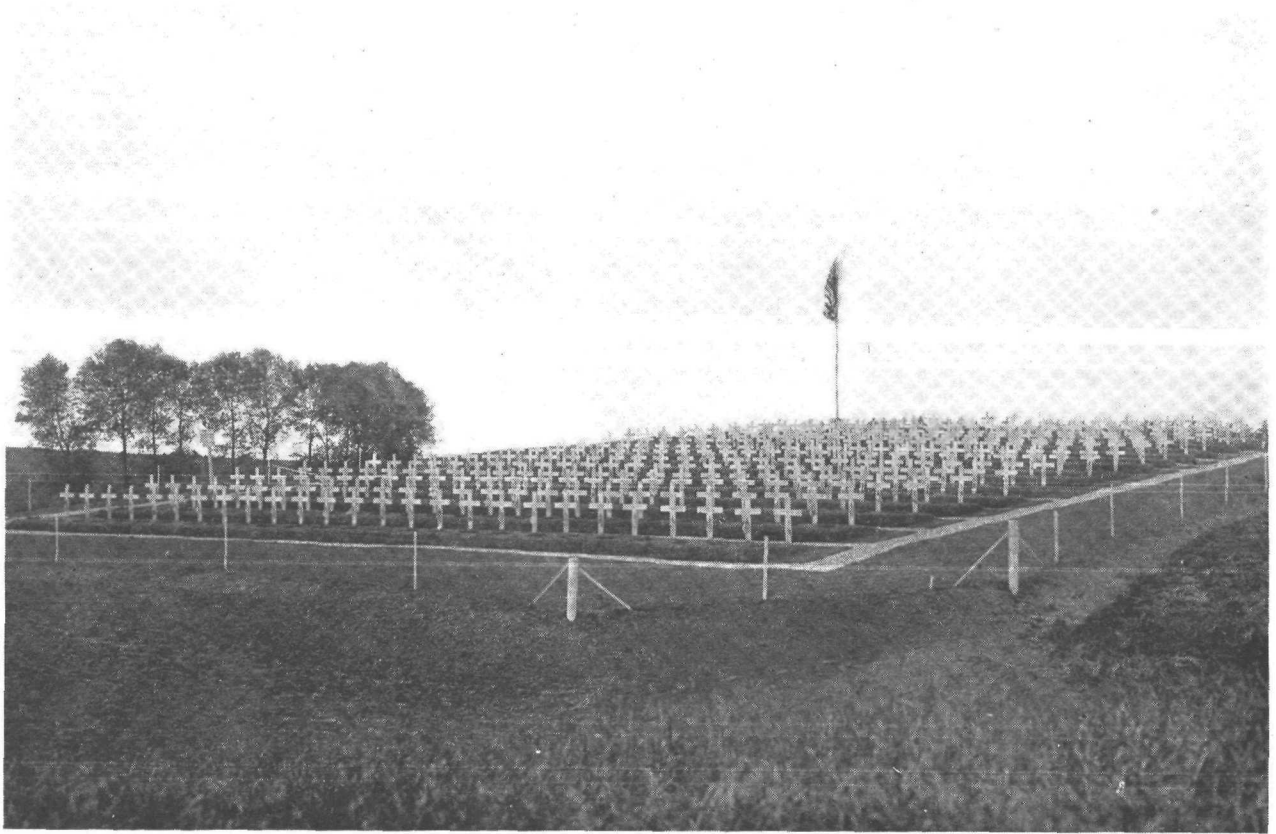
Special credit is due the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments for the fortitude displayed by officers and men in their continuous effort without relief from the beginning of the battle on October 17th. By this time the entire fighting personnel of the division was on the verge of complete exhaustion. Since October 11th they had been continuously under shell fire and gas bombardment, the leading elements always under machine gun fire. The troops, however, were required to hold their positions throughout the day of October 20th, the divisions on the right and left in the meantime getting forward in prolongation of the 27th Division line. The 50th British Division on the left captured Bazuel and secured the left flank of the 27th Division. Finally the 27th Division was relieved on the night of October 20th-21st by the 6th British Division. What was left of the infantry of the division assembled in the vicinity of St. Souplet and Busigny on October 21st. At St. Souplet the Red Cross detachment under Captain Stephen N. Bobo rendered particularly effective service in supplying the men with hot chocolate and cigarettes, as they were marching through that place.

During these operations the division captured a very large number of prisoners. They were so numerous at times that count was not made of some of the detachments going to the rear. Some detachments of prisoners were taken direct to the corps prisoner of war cage, while others were taken into the area of the 30th Division. However, the records of the divisional prisoners of war cage show that in these operations the division captured and recorded the capture of 48 officers and 1,463 other ranks.

The casualties in these operations were 12 officers killed, 33 wounded



Soldiers of 106th Infantry returning from the line after Le Selle River operations



Cemetery at St. Souplet. Picture taken during the summer of 1920

and 22 gassed; enlisted men, 156 killed, 36 died of wounds, 833 wounded and 401 gassed. No officers or men were captured by the enemy. The total casualties, therefore, were 194 killed and died of wounds, 866 wounded and 423 gassed.

A very great quantity of enemy armament, stores and materiel was captured during these operations. So few men were available, however, for any other purpose than fighting, that little effort was made to gather the captured property. The division found it difficult through lack of numbers efficiently to evacuate the wounded and bury the dead, without further depleting its strength to make up details for marking and recording captured materiel.

The conduct of officers and men of the division throughout the trying period of Le Selle River operations was magnificent. Always there was loyal response to the demands made upon them, and at times and toward the end of the operations it must have seemed to the men of the infantry regiments particularly, that they were being pushed beyond the limit of human endurance. It is difficult to imagine any sentiment of the human heart more worthy than the sentiment of enduring self-sacrifice for the common good. This sentiment was exemplified in superlative fashion by the officers and men who made up the depleted combat units of the 27th Division during the operations of Le Selle River from October 11 to 20, 1918.

On the morning of the relief, the Division Commander and one or two of the Staff saw the survivors of the 54th Brigade go through St. Souplet on their march to the rear. Some of the men were apparently asleep while they walked. They were covered with mud and many of them were bleeding from cuts and minor injuries. At first glance they seemed to be in a semi-stupor, but everywhere individual men upon seeing the inspecting party made a supreme effort, if only by a glance, to indicate that their spirit still survived. It is natural for every commander of troops that have behaved well in war, to feel pride in the conduct and record of men he has commanded under the extraordinary and trying conditions of active operations. Nevertheless, making due allowances for this natural feeling, it is the deliberate opinion of the writer that no general officer in war ever commanded more intelligent, determined, better disciplined and loyal military organizations than those which made up the 27th Division during the period of the World War.

After the close of Le Selle River operations, official commendations were given the Division for its part in the fighting and the results netted the Fourth Army. The following communications are some of those which commend the officers and men for what was done by them during this period.

HEADQUARTERS, 27th DIVISION, U. S. A.

AMERICAN E. F., FRANCE

October 21, 1918.

BULLETIN No. 103.

Since the 25th of September—a period of nearly a month—the Division has been engaged almost continuously in fighting and marching. Some of this fighting involved

a leading rôle in one of the fiercest battles of the war—the breaking of the great Hindenburg defense line. We have suffered the loss of some of our best officers and men, but unfortunately such losses are incidental to battles of such magnitude. Only divisions highly trained and disciplined, possessing the greatest confidence and morale and at the very top notch of their strength could have accomplished what the Division and our comrades of the 30th Division accomplished in that great battle. Only such divisions could have met the sacrifices demanded, and with morale unimpaired have renewed the advance in the manner characteristic of the operations of the past two weeks.

This is not the occasion to describe the Hindenburg defenses or the details of the battle for breaking them. That will doubtless be done after the war. The same comment applies to the details of the operations since that engagement. Nevertheless, the Division Commander cannot withhold this expression of his admiration and respect for the valor and discipline as well as the endurance and spirit manifested by officers and men throughout this long period of fighting. These sentiments are stimulated by the events of the past week. When reduced in numbers, the Division attacked the enemy, took the town of St. Souplet, forced the crossing of Le Selle River, and against strong opposition successfully assaulted the heights on the other side. Since that date the Division has attacked daily taking by force the town of Arbre Guernon and a number of strongly fortified farms and forcing a withdrawal of the enemy to the Canal de la Sambre.

In this latter advance the Division captured more than 1400 German officers and enlisted men, and a vast amount of military property including field guns, a great number of machine guns both light and heavy, anti-tank guns, trench mortars, dumps of ammunition and railroad rolling stock. In all this fighting the character of the enemy's resistance and the extent of his losses are indicated by the large number of enemy dead on the field.

The efforts of the past month constitute a record to be proud of, and their value is indicated in the commendatory letter from the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Forces which has been published for the information of the Division. Officers and men have justified estimate made of the Division when, after its arrival in France, it was selected to hold the Mont Kemmel sector against the expected great effort of the enemy to drive through to the sea. They have justified the opinions of their fighting qualities formed when this crisis, with the evacuation of Mont Kemmel had passed, and the Division promptly attacked and took Vierstraat Ridge, being, with the 30th Division on our left, the first American troops to fight on Belgian territory.

JOHN F. O'RYAN, Major General.

OFFICIAL BRITISH REPORT

Saturday night, Oct. 20, 1918.

In the course of the last three weeks the 27th and 30th Divisions of the II American Corps, operating with the Fourth British army, have taken part with great gallantry and success in three major offensive operations, besides being engaged in a number of lesser attacks. In the course of this fighting they have displayed soldierly qualities of a high order and have materially assisted in the success of our attacks.

Having fought with the utmost dash and bravery in the great attack of September 29th in which the Hindenburg Line was broken and having on that occasion captured the villages of Bellicourt and Mauroy, with a large number of prisoners, on Oct. 8th the troops of the II American Corps again attacked in the neighborhood of Montbrechain. In three days of successful fighting they completed an advance of ten miles from Maton to St. Souplet, overcoming determined resistance and capturing several strongly defended villages and woods.

Throughout the past three days the II American Corps has again attacked daily and on each occasion with complete success, though the enemy's resistance has been

most obstinate. Fighting their way forward from St. Souplet to the high ground west of the Sambre Canal, they have broken the enemy's resistance at all points, beating off many counter-attacks and realizing a further advance of nearly five miles.

Over five thousand prisoners and many guns have been taken by the II American Corps.

OFFICIAL TELEGRAM FROM GENERAL H. S. RAWLINSON
COMMANDER OF THE FOURTH BRITISH ARMY

II AMERICAN CORPS.

Now that the American Corps has come out of the line for a well-earned period of rest and training, I desire to place on record my appreciation of the great gallantry and the fine soldierly spirit they have displayed throughout the recent hard fighting.

The breaking of the great Hindenburg system of defense, coupled with the captures of Grandcourt, Busigny and St. Souplet, and finally the forcing of the passages of the La Selle constitute a series of victories of which each officer, N. C. O. and man have every reason to feel proud.

The Corps has been very well supported by the Artillery of the Australian Corps, to whom I desire to offer my best thanks for their skill and endurance during the long months they have now been in action.

The efficiency with which the staff work of the Corps has been carried out on this their first experience as a fighting Corps in the line of battle has filled me with admiration, and I attribute it largely to the zeal and unity of purpose which has throughout animated the whole Corps.

The outstanding feature of their recent victories has been the surprising gallantry and self-sacrifice of the regimental officers and men. I congratulate them on their prowess and offer them one and all my warmest thanks for the leading part they have taken in the recent operations.

It is possible now to give the Corps a period of rest, during which special attention should be paid to the training of the smaller units in minor tactics such as the attack of strong points and machine gun nests. The experience they have had of actual combat will assist them to improve their fighting efficiency in this respect.

In thanking the Corps as a whole for the great services they have rendered to the Allied cause, I desire to wish all ranks the best of good fortune in the future.

H. S. RAWLINSON,
General, Commanding Fourth Army.

Adv. Hqrs. Fourth Army.

On the days following the relief, the division continued its march to the Tincourt area. The movement of relief and march to the Tincourt area were covered by Field Orders No. 65 and Orders No. 114, which are included in the Appendix as Exhibit 43.

When the Tincourt area was reached, the division entrained at Roisel for a rest area. The area selected was known as the Corbie area and included the destroyed towns of Villers Bretonneux, Corbie, Hamel and other places which had marked the high water mark of the German offensive of the preceding spring. The area was not an inviting one for troops that sorely needed rest and recuperation. Most of the places included within the rest area were little more than ruins, particularly Villers Bretonneux. However, similar comment might be made of other areas assigned to other combat troops for purposes of rest. In comparison with what they had been through, however, the half-demolished buildings of the rest area seemed like havens of comfort.

Official records show that the 27th Division, during its operations, captured a total of 2,357 prisoners. These are divided as follows:

	Officers	Other Ranks
Vierstraat Ridge .....	..	47
Hindenburg Line	17	782
Le Selle River	48	1,463
	—	—
Total	65	2,292

The story of the activities of the division from the time of its arrival at Corbie until it left that area will be continued in the next chapter.

