

# Chapter Eight

## **Found in *The Thirty-Seventh Division***

The front to be occupied by the American Army was to be between the Meuse and the western edge of the Argonne forest. The army was to consist of three corps—the First under General Liggett, the Fifth under General Cameron and the Third under General Bullard. The divisions, from left to right, were the 77<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 91<sup>st</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 79<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup>, and 33<sup>rd</sup>....

Of the three army corps attacking, the Fifth was at the center; and of the three divisions in the Fifth Corps, the Thirty-seventh was at the center, as it moved into position on the night of 24<sup>th</sup> September....

Immediately in the center of the sector assigned the Thirty-seventh was the pile of crumbling stone that had once been Avocourt. Between Avocourt and the northern edge of the woods was Montfaucon. The right boundary line of the sector passed just to the left of the village. The left boundary line of the sector curved to include Ivoirry, about three kilometers west and about 800 meters to the north of Montfaucon. (vol. 2, 174)

Infantry brigade commanders were ordered to draw up their plans of attack including proposed dispositions, instructions and assignments and submit them to division headquarters at 11:00 A.M. on 25<sup>th</sup> September. The advance infantry regiments were to be formed with two battalions in the front line and one battalion in support. The remaining units of each brigade less that portion assigned to the divisional reserve, was to constitute a brigade reserve. The officer commanding the provisional infantry regiment detailed as divisional reserve, was to command the reserve and was ordered to place his troops in position in the Bois de Verrieres and the Bois de Chattancourt, six minutes before the attack. These woods were several kilometers to the south of the front line positions.

Packs were to be turned over to regimental supply officers; and overcoats and slickers were to be made into rolls and carried instead of packs. Each rifleman was to carry an extra bandoleer of ammunition; all available rifle and hand grenades and entrenching tools were to be carried; canteens were to be filled and two days' reserve rations carried. A hot meal (which was to be the last for a long time to come) was served the men as near "H" hour as possible. (vol. 2, 181-182).

A pouring rain had preceded the Thirty-seventh into the Recicourt area. While it waited to attack, every lead in the forests in which the division camped dripped water for three days and nights, without ceasing, it seemed;... But the weather cleared during the afternoon on 25<sup>th</sup> September. It was clear but dark as the units of the division found their way to their stations during the hours before midnight, although a heavy ground mist made movement through the woods very difficult. And it was clear when, at eleven-thirty, the heavy guns all along the front held by the First American Army flashed and roared the opening of the intensive artillery preparation. (vol. 2, 197-198)

### **From 3rd Battalion War Diary for September 26, 1918**

Battalion as part of Divisional Reserve formed up at 67.33-13.20 for advance. MAP REFERENCE-"AVOCOURT #216."

All messages except those lost of field of battle attached.

2 days rations with troops. Weather: clear. Roads: poor (shell fire). Health: good.

William L Marlin  
Major, 148th Infantry  
Commanding, 3rd Battalion

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Henry Hiser**

**Private, First Class, Company B, 136<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun  
Battalion**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Avocourt, France, September 26, 1918. When the advance of his platoon was held up by fire from a hostile machine-gun nest, Private Hiser advanced alone ahead of the platoon, worked his way around the flank and rear, and single-handedly killed the officer in command and a gunner and captured 15 prisoners, thereby enabling his platoon to advance.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Sam A. Andrews**

**First Lieutenant, 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. Lieut. Andrews displayed brilliant courage and leadership in leading his platoon against and capturing a strong enemy machine-gun nest. In this exploit he was killed, but his notable coolness and determination furnished an inspiration to his men.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Fred C. Redick**

**Captain, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. Severely wounded in the head and leg while leading his company, he refused to go to the rear, though he was ordered to do so by the battalion commander and attending surgeon, continuing in the attack and inspiring his men by his conspicuous bravery.

### From 37th Division War Diary for September 26, 1918

The Division went over the top at 5.30 A.M., September 26, 1918, 145th Infantry on right, 1st and 2nd Battalions in line with 3rd Battalion as regimental reserve.

1st Battalion, 146th Infantry, Brigade Reserve. 147th Infantry, 1st and 3rd Battalions, in line with 2nd Battalion as Regimental Reserve. 148th Infantry, 2nd and 3rd Battalions as Brigade Reserve - 3 Companies 135th Machine Gun Battalion operating with 73rd Brigade and 3 Companies 136th Machine Gun Battalion operating with 74th Brigade. The Division Reserve consisted of 1st Battalion, 148th Infantry and 2nd and 3rd Battalions 146th Infantry, and 134th Machine Gun Battalion. 113th Field Artillery attached to 73rd Brigade.... 99th and 154th Aero Squadrons attached to 37th Division.

The Advance continued successfully during the day and the line settled for the night just north of Ravine de la Fuon about 3 kilometers north of Avocourt. The first prisoners began to arrive at Division cage... and during the day approximately 800 were captured, also quantities of ammunition, machine guns and some field pieces both light and heavy. The weather cleared from rain and fog and greatly assisted this day's operations.

989 Officers

25622 Men

Fair - Weather

Muddy - Roads

Excellent - Health

Trenches and bivouac.

Summer Waite,

Major, General Staff, Acting G-3.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation****Norris W. Gillette****Captain (then, First Lieutenant), Medical Corps, 148<sup>th</sup>  
Ambulance Company**

For extraordinary heroism in action in Bois de Septsarges, near Montfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. While in command of a medical detachment working forward through the woods on the right flank of the 73rd Brigade Sector, Lieutenant Gillette encountered a large number of men in confusion who were without officers and under fire from enemy snipers located both at the edge of the woods and at a strong point on a knoll beyond it. By his remarkable courage and tact, and through the power of his inspiring heroic example, the scattered troops were reorganized into squad and platoon groups and took up a position from which they as part of a battalion later moved forward and drove the enemy from the woods and overcame the enemy's strong point.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation****Robert C. Bunge****Captain, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. While in command of a combat liaison group operating between the 37th and 91st Divisions, and under heavy hostile artillery fire, Captain Bunge, although painfully wounded by a shell fragment and burned with gas, courageously remained in command of his company, maintained contact with the enemy, and directed the company movements. When the attack was continued on September 27 and his company was acting in the same capacity, while passing through a terrible hostile artillery barrage he received a serious fracture of the skull from enemy shell fragments, and refusing to be evacuated he tenaciously continued with his group. Later on the same day, while leading his company, he

was again seriously wounded by shell fire, which necessitated his evacuation.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Charles C. Chambers**  
**Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry Officers' Reserve Corp (then**  
**Major), 135<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion**

For extraordinary heroism in action in Bois de Septsarges, near Montfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. While voluntarily going forward on a mission of establishing liaison between a front-line unit of his own division and the division on the right, Major Chambers encountered a large number of men falling back in confusion, badly disorganized and without leaders, as a result of a heavy artillery fire and machine-gun fire from pill boxes in the woods and from a strong point on the heights beyond. With the greatest energy, courage, and leadership, at a most critical time and under a heavy fire, he reorganized the scattered troops, put them in trenches, and later led them forward, overcoming a stubborn resistance from machine guns, drove the enemy from his position, reestablished the front line and accomplished his liaison mission. By his calmness, decision, and courage he inspired great confidence among the scattered and confused troops.

G-3 Section V ARMY CORPS, A.E.F.  
 No. 27 Ville-sur-Cousances, September 26, 1918

12 Noon to 12 Noon, September 25/26

1. HOSTILE SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY:  
 The enemy continued to exhibit increased activity in his sector in the Argonne. There has been a

considerable number of aerial reconnaissance, and heavy harassing fire.

2. INFORMATION RECEIVED OF ENEMY DURING DAY: Traffic and circulation on roads and railroads continued abnormal in the afternoon of the 25th and during the late afternoon several groups of soldiers of about 20 each were seen to enter trenches opposite west of our sector. Reconnoitering planes however at an earlier hour brought information that the enemy line was thinly held. The 37th Division has identified the enemy opposing them as the 157th Inf. Regt., 54th Foot Artillery Bn., and the 1st Guard Division. The 5th Guard Division is also reported as being directly in the rear of enemy's supports. Majority of prisoners taken did not know of presence of American troops opposite them.

3. HOSTILE MOVEMENTS, CHANGES AND CONDUCT DURING DAY: It may be generally stated that the principal movement of the enemy in the face of our attack has been one of rapid retirement. In a few local cases stubborn resistance in the form of machine-gun nests has been encountered, but those have been quickly overcome by our troops. Fires, demolitions, and explosions of dumps and stores, together with the destruction of the principal roads, indicate that the enemy has not yet reached the position decoded upon for serious defensive action. In many cases, owing to their rapid retirements, our forces were unable, at all times, to maintain contact, but during the late forenoon the pace of the retreat seems to have decreased. Up to noon, the 37th Division, the center unit of this corps, reported that they had met with every little hostile resistance. The opening of our

artillery preparation met with little response from the enemy and even when our fire increased their reaction was very feeble, being directed principally upon Avocourt. At 5:50 a.m., a Boche signal for barrage met with no response from their batteries. The offensive brought to light four new hostile balloons, Samogneux, Lisse, Dun-sur-Meuse, and Milly. At 10:30 a.m., the enemy opened some artillery fire on the Avocourt Road, but no other hostile activity was observed by a reconnoitering plane at this time. Main approaches and roads to Montfaucon are barricaded and hostile anti-aircraft activity was encountered here. However, later information just before noon states that the town seems deserted

....

5. OWN SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY: Very favorable for the successful exploitation of operations planned. All infantry, artillery and auxiliary units in place, and weather conditions ideal.

6. OWN CHANGES, MOVEMENTS AND ACTION DURING DAY: The 32nd Division (corps reserve) under orders from V Corps moved to Brahant-en-Argonne area. Movement by marching started at 19 hours, September 25, P. C. closed at Autrecourt at 6 o'clock the artillery preparation was commenced, and was gradually increased in its intensity during the night. The infantry advance started at 5:30 under protection of a rolling barrage. All units reported that attack started on time and the right brigade of the 91st Division states that both of its regiments reached enemy's front line without casualties or opposition. Later information from this division at 20 o'clock established the left of their line in the Trachee

de la Salamandre with few casualties and with the capture of some guns. Our troops were observed along the northern edge of Bois de Montfaucon at 9:10 o'clock. About this time the division to the right of us was just south of Cuisy and tanks were on the line between Cheppy and Varennes, on our other flank. At 9:52 the 79th Division reports the movement of their P. C. to 15.3-71.2, 1 km. N.W. of Esnes. Mopping up operations are being carried on in Bois de Cheppy, Bois de Malancourt, and Bois de Montfaucon, and the small ravines within them. Conflicting reports have been received about the progress of our center division (37th), but indications are that its advance has been more hindered by the enemy than was the case in the two flank divisions. Artillery observers report that American troops were seen between Eclisfontaine and Epinonville. This is the most advanced detachment of which we have information. Excellent artillery preparation and barrage were most helpful in making the advance.... Few reports had been received of activity of tanks up to noon....

10. RESULT OF ACTION, OWN AND ENEMY: The attack has been successfully pushed by all divisions and a rough line of the front at noon may be said to run through Cuisy and Cheppy. Full reports, however, are not in and in many cases we have information that the advance is far beyond this line. Hostile ammunition dumps in vicinity of Montfaucon blown up.... The 37th Division has recorded over 400 prisoners at its P. C. at noon. Up to 9:10 a.m., the 79th Division had evacuated 150 prisoners in Esnes, with 2 machine guns captured.

...

12. ESTIMATION OF SITUATION: All indications point to an early attainment of the corps objective.

...

14. VISIBILITY, from poor to fair. ROADS (in enemy territory) destroyed. MORALE, excellent....

T. H. Emerson  
Colonel, Engineers,  
A. C. of S., G-3.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**William S. Kelly**  
**Private, First Class, Headquarters Company, 147<sup>th</sup>**  
**Infantry**

For gallantry in action near Ivoiry, France, September 26, 1918, while assisting a wounded comrade to a place of safety under heavy enemy fire.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**James V. Schairer**  
**Private, Medical Detachment, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. Seeing two men fall wounded, Pvt. Schairer immediately went to their assistance, unmindful of the extreme danger that he was exposed to, and after dragging the men to a shell hole administered effective first aid. A few days later he was killed in the performance of his duties.

### **Found in *The Thirty-Seventh Division***

Major William L. Marlin, commanding the Third Battalion of the 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, gives the following account of the operations of that until around Montfaucon on 26<sup>th</sup> September:

The order of battle of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division on the morning of September 26, 1918, was 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade on the right and 74<sup>th</sup> Brigade on the left. In the 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade the 145<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry led the attack and in the 74<sup>th</sup> Brigade the 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry was in the front line. One battalion of the 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry was detailed to 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade reserve and two battalions to Division reserve. Two battalions of the 1548<sup>th</sup> Infantry were detailed to 74<sup>th</sup> Brigade reserve and one battalion to Division reserve. My battalion, which was the Third Battalion of the 148<sup>th</sup>, was detailed to Division Reserve and reported to Colonel Pickering, Commander of the Division Reserve, on the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> of September at about eleven o'clock.

The Third Battalion of the 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry was the leading unit of the Division Reserve and followed the attack on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup>, passing through Avocourt at about 9:00 A.M. The reserve caught up with the leading troops at the northern edge of the Bois de Montfaucon at about 4:00 P.M.

At about 5:00 P.M. of the 26<sup>th</sup>, the situation was as follows: "The 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry had reached the northern edge of the Bois de Montfaucon and the top of the slope just north of the woods. Montfaucon was still held by the enemy. The 79<sup>th</sup> Division had not yet advanced as far as the 37<sup>th</sup>. The front line had apparently reached as far north as the physical condition of the men in the attack would permit them to go. The head of the Division Reserve was at the cross roads at the northern end of the plank road through the Bois de Montfaucon. At this point a conference was held between General Farnsworth and Colonel Pickering. Major Moynahan, of the 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and myself were standing nearby.

General Farnsworth ordered Colonel Pickering to send the two leading battalions of the Division Reserve forward for an attack on Montfaucon. One battalion was to attach and seize

the hill just to the west of Montfaucon, while the other battalion was to attack the city from the southwest under cover of this leading battalion. General Farnsworth endeavored to secure artillery support for this attack, and the artillery were to fire on Montfaucon until 5:45 P.M.

I led my battalion through the lines of the 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry, reformed on the high ground just north of the Bois Montfaucon and at about 5:45 P.M. launched the attack on the hill to the west of the city. I instructed the Captain of the company on the right to guide the right of his line on the machine gun emplacement located just west of Montfaucon and on top of the hill. My battalion went forward and received fire from machine guns in the orchard west of Montfaucon, the machine gun emplacement on top of the hill and from the city of Montfaucon. Pushing steadily forward we drove the Germans out of the orchard, capturing an anti-aircraft battery and ammunition dump, including two guns, a major of artillery and three others. The battalion gained the top of the hill just at dark and rested and occupied the trenches constructed by the Germans and protected by wire which ran east and west along the ridge. Outpost groups were established and the Germans who still occupied the machine gun emplacement were driven out. (vol. 2, 255-256)

Capt. Thomas H. Morrow, who commanded Co. K, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, during the offensive, writes as follows regarding the operations of the Third Battalion of that regiment:

I commanded Company K, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry. The Third Battalion was Division Reserve when we jumped off. Late the afternoon of 26<sup>th</sup> September my company mopped up the Bois de Chehemin. The battalion reformed on the ridge north of this woods and we received orders to storm the ridge running between Montfaucon and Ivoir. The battalion formed for the advance with my company on the left front. It was almost dusk when we advanced against the ridge and we were met with rifle fire and heavy machine gun fire from the ridge and the edge of Montfaucon on our right flank.

The enfilade fire from Montfaucon was quite heavy and we could see the flashes of the machine guns and the moving figures of the Germans, although it was almost dusk. The ridge, which was our objective, had an orchard on its south side and when we arrived there the trees protected us from the view of the Germans in Montfaucon. As we advanced against this ridge I saw no American troops on either our right or left and I am certain that there were none in Montfaucon.

We took the ridge, captured several cannons and considerable enemy material. That night our flanks were in the air and we were occupying the so-called Crocodile Trench, which ran along the top of this ridge (an old German trench).

The next morning a counter-attack seemed impending. The fog lifted and we could see a number of American troops south of Montfaucon and about to assault it. I was then in the Crocodile Trench probably one thousand yards from Montfaucon. We were bombed from aeroplanes and severely bombarded all that day and I lost track of these troops on our right above mentioned. However, snipers from Montfaucon bothered us all the day and whenever our men got out from the cover of the orchard on the south side of the ridge they were in danger of snipers' bullets.

Col. Pickering was over to see us some time in the afternoon. He then commanded the Division Reserve from which our battalion had been detached on the 26<sup>th</sup>, to take the ridge.

The expected counter-attack did not materialize, but we suffered a number of casualties from the heavy bombardment we received when on this ridge. About nigh fall on the 27<sup>th</sup> we were relieved by other troops and drawn off to another position in front of Ivoiry, which we passed through the next day in the advance. (vol. 2, 257-258)

Capt. F.W. Marcolin, commanding Headquarters Company, 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry, writes as follows regarding the operations of the 145<sup>th</sup> and 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry around Montfaucon:

...

In spite of the fact that the supporting fire from auxiliary weapons was not entirely effective; the troops referred to by Lt. Col. William L. Marlin, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, advanced from the edge of the Bois de Montfaucon, and finally, after several attempts, succeeded in reaching the ridge west of Montfaucon and establishing themselves at that point.

I would judge that his was in the neighborhood of 6:00 P. M., 26<sup>th</sup> September 1918. The fact that such occupation took place, is borne out by the comparative ease with which our Division outflanked Montfaucon on the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> September, that is conditions indicated that not only the outskirts of the town had been taken on the evening before by mixed detachments of the 145<sup>th</sup>, 146<sup>th</sup>, and 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, but that through the diminishing of German resistance due to the outflanking movement on the part of the troops of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, the 79<sup>th</sup> Division had been able to occupy the town in question. (vol. 2, 263-264)

### **From 37th Division War Diary for September 27th, 1918**

The attack was resumed at 5.30 A.M. and advance continued. The town of Ivoiry was taken about 9.00 A.M. and about 500 meters north of Ivoiry the enemy delivered his first counter attack, the counter attack was easily repulsed and the advance continued to general line Montfaucon to just south of Cierges, where counter attack was again delivered by the enemy. This counter attack was repulsed, but due to conditions of roads, artillery support could not be brought forward and our troops were unable to advance against enemy artillery, which covered entire line. One enemy battery of four 155's captured during day in forward position was turned on the enemy and our own artillery beginning to arrive, our troops were able to occupy enemy 2nd line position and

hold. At about 14 hours Montfaucon was entered by elements of the 73rd Brigade and 32 prisoners (the last of the enemy) were taken. At dark our line halted approximately along Ivoir-Montfaucon road. The weather greatly hindered operations, rain made the roads practically impassable.

980 Officers  
25644 Men  
Rain - Weather  
Poor - Roads  
Dugouts and Trenches.

Summer Waite,  
Major, General Staff,  
Acting G-3.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Clay Eversole**  
**Private, Medical Detachment, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France September 27, 1918. During the advance of Company K, 148th Infantry, Pvt. Eversole frequently exposed himself to great danger by carrying a number of wounded men through heavy machine-gun fire from an open field to a place of safety.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Charles M. Smith**  
**Sergeant, Company F, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 27, 1918. While leading a reconnaissance patrol sent out to locate enemy machine-gun nests he was severely

wounded. Lying helpless where he fell, he disregarded his own wounds and continued to direct his men. Through his courage and fortitude many enemy machine guns were located and subsequently destroyed.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Newton Rex**  
**Corporal, Company F, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 27, 1918. Leading a patrol of 12 men from his own and another company, he encountered 35 of the enemy in a ravine. Under a terrific enfilading fire from seven machine guns, he led an attack on the enemy in which five of the latter were killed and 15 captured, together with the seven machine guns.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Orum Lee**  
**Sergeant, Company H, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 27, 1918. Sergt. Lee, with an officer and noncommissioned officer, advanced 200 yards beyond the objective of the patrol in the face of heavy machine-gun fire and captured three 77 MM. field-pieces and two light machine guns.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Ernest R. Rumbaugh**  
**Corporal, Company H, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 27, 1918. Corporal Rumbaugh, with an officer and noncommissioned officer, advanced 200 yards beyond the

objective of the patrol in the face of heavy machine-gun fire and captured three 77 MM. fieldpieces and two light machine guns.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Fred Kochli**

**Captain (then, First Lieutenant), Company H, 146<sup>th</sup>  
Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, on September 27, 1918. Lieut. Kochli, with two non-commissioned officers, advanced 200 yards beyond the objective of the patrol in the face of heavy machine-gun fire and captured three 77 MM. fieldpieces and two light machine guns.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Daniel S. McSweeney**

**Sergeant, Company B, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoiry, France, September 27, 1918. Leaving a place of shelter, he voluntarily crawled about 400 yards in advance of the front-line elements of his battalion and attempted to rescue a wounded officer. He then crossed an area swept by intense enemy machine-gun fire and attempted to capture an enemy machine gun which was causing heavy casualties in his company. While so engaged he was severely wounded by enemy fire.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Luther J. Langston**

**First Sergeant, Company A, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoiry, France, September 27, 1918. When his platoon was halted by the fire of concealed enemy machine guns, Sergt. Langston dashed ahead of his organization and,

alone, captured the enemy machine-gun, forcing five of the enemy to surrender. This act of heroism enabled his organization to resume the advance.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**John R. Hubbard**  
**Regimental Sergeant Major, Headquarters Company,**  
**148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action on September 27, 1918, near the village of Ivoiry, Montfaucon, France, while engaged in receiving and dispatching urgent messages and orders under intense shell and machine-gun fire, maintaining liaison with regimental and brigade headquarters and observing and directing the fire of the divisional artillery. Constantly exposed to direct enemy fire, with great courage and coolness, he continued throughout the day to perform his duties until late afternoon, when he was killed by enemy shell fire.

**From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for September 27, 1918**

Regiment advanced from Bois de Montfaucon at 6 am. Two battalions in front line, one as regimental support, advance continued to hill south of Ivoiry.... Colonel Jas. A. Lynch became a slight casualty.

**Medal of Honor Citation (Posthumous)**  
**Albert E. Baesel**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 37<sup>th</sup> Division**

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Ivoiry, France, 27 September, 1918. Upon learning that a squad leader of his platoon had been severely wounded while attempting to capture an enemy machinegun nest about 200 yards in advance of the assault line and somewhat to the right, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Baesel requested permission to go to the rescue of the wounded corporal. After thrice repeating his request and permission having been reluctantly

given, due to the heavy artillery, rifle, and machinegun fire, and heavy deluge of gas in which the company was at the time, accompanied by a volunteer, he worked his way forward, and in spite of a heavy direct machine-gun fire succeeded in reaching the wounded man, whom he just succeeded in placing upon his shoulders when both were instantly killed by enemy fire.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Kochli, Fred**

**Captain (then first lieutenant), Company H, 146th Infantry,  
37th Division**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, on September 27, 1918. Lieut. Kochli, with two noncommissioned officers, advanced 200 yards beyond the objective of the patrol in the face of heavy machine-gun fire and captured three 77mm. fieldpieces and two light machine guns.

**From 3rd Battalion War Diary for September 27, 1918**

1 day rations with troops. Weather: clear.  
Health: good.

At 6:30 am moved out as part of Divisional Reserve (road good as far as 69.30-11.80). Heavy congestion of traffic. Great difficulty in keeping unit intact. Proceeded Avocourt-Bois Montfaucon-Bois Chehemmin.

At 18:10 at northeast edge of Bois Chehemmin formed for attack at ridge west of Montfaucon. Mission to outflank Montfaucon-accomplished-consolidated position on ridge between Montfaucon and Ivoiry.

**From James M. Cain's Short Story**  
**"The Taking of Montfaucon"**

I pulled up and hollered out:

"What way to the hunred and fifty-seventh Brigade PC?"  
 [Of the 79<sup>th</sup> Division]

"The what?" they says. ...

"Never hear tell of it," they says.

"The hell you say," I says. ...

Because that was one of them gags they had in the army. They would ask a guy what his outfit was, and then when he told them they would say they never hear tell of it.

So I rode a little further and come to another bunch. "Which way... "

But they never said nothing at all. Because they was doughboys going up in the lines, and when you hear talk about doughboys singing when the're going to fight, you can tell him he's a damn liar and say I said so. Doughboys when they're going up to the lines they look straight in front of them and they swaller every third step and they don't say nothing....

"What outfit, buddly?" I say to the next bunch I come to. But all they done was look dumb.... I come to another bunch, and I ask them.

"AEF," a guy sings out.

"What the hell," I says. "You think I'm asking for fun?"

"YMCA," says another, and I went on. And then all of a sudden I knowed why them guys was acting like that, and why it was was this: Ever since they come to France, they had been told if somebody up in the front lines asks you what your outfit is, don't you tell him because maybe he's a German spy....

I thought I might as well pretend to be an officer and scare somebody into telling me where I'm at. So the first ones I come to was a captain and a lieutenant setting by the side of the road, and they was wearing bars. But me not having no

bars didn't make no difference because up at the front some officers wore bars but most of them didn't....

"Which way is General Nicholson's PC?" I says, and the captain jumped up and saluted.

"General Nicholson?" he says. "Not around here, I'm pretty sure, sir," he says.

"Hundred and fifty-seventh Brigade?" I says, pretty short....

"Oh, no," he says. "That wouldn't be in this Division. This is all Thirty-seventh."

G-3 Section  
Ville-sur-Cousances,

V ARMY CORPS, A.E.F.,  
September 27, 1918.

12 Noon to 12 Noon, Sept. 26 to 27

1. HOSTILE SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF THE DAY: About noon the rate of retirement of the enemy had materially decreased and in many places, even earlier, our troops were held up by stubborn machine-gun fire. Due to the lack of thorough mopping up, many hostile snipers and isolated machine-gun crews harassed our engineer troops. These were engaged in work along the roads, just in rear of the advance.

2. INFORMATION RECEIVED OF ENEMY DURING THE DAY: The enemy held Montfaucon entire day, despite numerous reports to the contrary, and were successfully defending it up to noon of the 27th, when it was reported captured. (This capture is confirmed but time has not been verified.)... Captives also report that the 151st Prussian Guard was brought up and placed in line. A Uhlan captured yesterday in sector on our left states that the 2nd Division of Uhlans is in back of third position in the sector of the 77th Division.

No activity of these troops has been yet reported. During the afternoon interrogation of German prisoners established the fact that they had expected an attack on a large scale.

3. HOSTILE MOVEMENTS, CHANGES AND CONDUCT DURING DAY: Serious resistance was encountered by the center and right divisions in their endeavor to reach the corps objective. The advance of the 79th Division was checked at Montfaucon for over 24 hours and the 37th Division encountered similar opposition across their path just west of this town. During the early afternoon enemy artillery became very active on the line Montfaucon to the east, and also their guns were located to the north and west of this line. Enemy air patrols operating over Montfaucon at this time, and other activity of hostile avions, resulted in two Allied balloons being brought down in flames. ...

5. OWN SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY: Center and right divisions had been checked in their endeavor to reach the corps objective. The 91st Division on the left had occupied the left portion of their objective but their line sagged towards the east on the other flank.

6. OWN CHANGES, MOVEMENTS AND ACTIONS DURING DAY: The advance of the 79th was hindered by machine-gun fire during entire afternoon. Resistance in Montfaucon and vicinity proved so serious that this division awaited the arrival of their artillery before they could advance further. Guns were delayed in coming up by bad conditions of roads and by congestion on those that could be utilized. Engineer units are working continuously to put them in shape for heavy traffic. A special report from the 79th Division is as follows:

Our 304th Engineers have been under fire all day (Sept. 26). Vicinity of 1173 (Bois de

Montfaucon), while they have been repairing this road. The engineers, themselves have cleaned up one machine-gun nest and taken some prisoners in this vicinity. The 91st Division reported at 14:55 o'clock that the corps objective had been reached and that two battalions of their artillery had advanced across trenches behind them that would be supporting infantry later in the day.

Movement of one group of 105's and one of 155's up to the 79th Division sector commenced at 15 o'clock. Tanks assisted in the cleaning up of wood in this sector. P. C. of 32nd Division moved from Brabant-en-Argonne to Verrieres-en-Hesse Greme at 18 o'clock. The 91st Division reports their line at 18 o'clock as running from a point one kilometer north of Very through the town of Epinonville. Great congestion occurred on all roads leading up through corps sectors during afternoon and night. At 19:10, 79th Division reports P. C. moved to a point 500 meters N. W. of Esnes. At nightfall a message was received from this division expressing the opinion that the machine-gun nests, on its right and left, had been mopped up. Our left division at 19:25 o'clock gave their order of battle from right to left as follows: 363rd, 364th, 361st and 362nd Regiments of Infantry, practically occupying the corps objective on the left and bending around just below Epinonville on the right. Information from tank commander states that at 16 o'clock they had cleaned up Bois de Cuisy after many difficulties. Other units were progressing very slowly in Bois de Montfaucon. The 37th Div., in a midnight report, states that their line runs along the northern slope of Hill 256 south of the town of Ivoiry and then along the Trachee de Montfaucon. P. C. 79th Div. reported moved to Haucourt at 7:15

a.m. After having been repulsed the 79th Division again attacked Montfaucon and about noon were in possession of it....

10. RESULTS OF ACTION, OWN AND ENEMY: The 37th Division at 16 o'clock reported 10 officers, 88 noncommissioned officers and 627 privates taken prisoner by the division.

At 6:55 o'clock the I Corps reports everything going smoothly.

At 20:40 o'clock the 91st Division reports that they had captured 10 officers and 1,451 men...

12. ESTIMATE OF SITUATION: Center and left divisions have not advanced as rapidly as expected, being held up by strong point in Montfaucon. This place has not been taken and with strong artillery support which is now available opposition in Bois de Beuge should be quickly overcome.

13. PLANS FOR FUTURE: Vigorous continuance of the attack.

14. VISIBILITY: From poor to good. ROADS being repaired. MORALE excellent. SUPPLIES: difficult in forwarding them due to conditions of roads....

T. H. Emerson,  
Colonel, Engineers,

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Leland M. Barnett**  
**First Lieutenant, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoirry, France, September 27, 1918. Becoming detached from battalion headquarters, Lieut. Barnett, battalion adjutant, voluntarily

undertook to locate machine-gun nests tinder heavy shell and machine-gun fire, continuing in this hazardous work until he was killed.

### **From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for September 27, 1918**

Regiment advanced from hill south of Ivoirry, two battalions as Brigade reserve, one as Division reserve, continued to vicinity south and south west of Cierges.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**George E. Ackley**  
**Sergeant, Company L, 148th Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 27, 1918. While leading his platoon he stormed and destroyed two machine-gun nests. Later he again displayed utter disregard for his personal safety when he extricated his platoon from a perilous position, forcing a passage through the enemy and rejoining the remainder of the company.

### **From 3rd Battalion War Diary for September 27, 1918**

Battalion ordered from Divisional to Brigade Reserve. All copies of messages except those lost on field of battle attached.

Weather: clear (rain at night). Health: good.

At 14:30 Battalion relieved by 146th Infantry and returned to Divisional Reserve. Bivouacked on southern slope of ridge 76:00-between 10:00 and 11:00.

William L Marlin

Major, 148th Infantry  
Commanding, 3rd Battalion

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Mark W. Mails**  
**Private, First Class, Company F, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 28, 1918. After his platoon had withdrawn about 50 yards to an established line, a wounded comrade was seen lying ahead in the position they formerly occupied. The enemy had just launched a strong counterattack, but Pvt. Mails, with another soldier, volunteered to go to the assistance of the wounded man. In the face of terrific fire of enemy artillery and machine guns, and the fire of their own comrades, who were resisting the attack, Pvt. Mails succeeded in bringing his man to a place of safety.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Louis Pearl Patten**  
**Captain, Company A, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near the Forest of Argonne, France, September 28, 1918. Capt. Patten was seriously wounded in the shoulder while leading his company, but after being tagged for evacuation at the dressing station, his insistent request for permission to return to his command

was granted and he continued to lead his company until the division was relieved.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**George W. Atkins**

**Sergeant, Company D, 135<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 27-28, 1918. After being twice wounded, Sergt. Watkins continued to lead his section in action against the enemy under severe machine-gun and direct artillery fire. Though he had been ordered to the rear by his platoon commander, he returned to his section as soon as his wounds had been dressed.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Thomas B. Welker**

**Private, Company B, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 28, 1918. When his company had become disorganized under intense machine-gun fire, Pvt. Welker assumed leadership of a group of men and courageously charged a machine-gun nest in plain view of the enemy, losing his life in this heroic attempt.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**James Neely**

**Private, Company F, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 28, 1918. After his platoon had withdrawn about 50 yards to an established line, a wounded comrade was

seen lying ahead in the position which they formerly occupied. The enemy had just launched a strong counterattack, but Pvt. Neely, with another soldier, volunteered to go to the assistance of the wounded man. In the face of artillery and machine-guns and the fire of their own comrades, who were resisting the attack, Pvt. Neely succeeded in bringing his man to a place of safety.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Ben Mileski**  
**Private, Company I, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 28, 1918. When a platoon of Company I, 147th Infantry, was held up by machine-gun fire from the left flank, Pvt. Mileski, without orders, rushed forward through heavy machine-gun fire, killed the machine gunner, and caused a number of the enemy to surrender.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**Frank L. Stratthan**  
**Mess Sergeant, Company K, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action near Ivoiry, France, September 28, 1918. Under heavy enemy machine-gun and artillery fire he entered the town of Ivoiry with his rolling kitchen, drove it into the remains of a building, and in spite of intense enemy fire continued to serve hot food to the exhausted and wounded men of his regiment, thus materially raising the morale of the men, enabling many of them to return refreshed to the lines and continue fighting.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**William Seigle**

**Private, Company A, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoir, France, September 28, 1918. He repeatedly volunteered and carried messages under enemy bombardment until he was severely wounded.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**

**C. Upham Gillis**

**Color Sergeant, Headquarters Company, 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action near Montfaucon, France, September 28, 1918. When his regiment was hard pressed and was temporarily held up under a heavy artillery and machine-gun fire Sergeant Gillis armed a number of men with rifles and automatic rifles of the wounded and killed off the regiment and gallantly led them forward to become a part of the firing line, in order to assist in repulsing an impending counterattack, remaining with them until wounded, and then returned to the detail after having his wounds dressed.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Vartan Aghababian**

**Private, First Class, Medical Detachment, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action northwest of Montfaucon, France, September 28, 1918. He voluntarily accompanied the first attack wave of the 146th Infantry, seeking out the wounded under terrific enemy machine-gun and artillery fire, carrying them to places of safety and applying first aid until he himself was seriously wounded. This soldier's heroic conduct and devotion to his comrades greatly inspired the men of his regiment.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**William H. Meyers**  
**Colonel, Infantry Officers' Reserve Corps, Lieutenant**  
**Colonel, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action near the town of Cierges, France, September 28, 1918. In command of the 3d Battalion of the regiment in its attack and finding it faltering in the face of terrific machine-gun fire, he advanced through the center of the battalion and led the attack. Encountering an enemy strong point, he led a charge against a concrete machine-gun nest, capturing the gun and its crew. Despite three wounds he remained in command of his advance elements until the fall of darkness.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Cecil B. Whitcomb**  
**Sergeant, Headquarters Company, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26-28, 1918. Attached to the Regimental Intelligence section of the 140th Infantry, he, with several men of his section, accompanied the first attacking wave of the regiment on September 26th. Losing contact temporarily with the assaulting wave on account of a smoke barrage, he halted momentarily, and upon resuming the advance encountered enemy machine-gun and sniper fire near a swale in the Bois de Montfaucon. Leaving his men in a place of safety Sergeant Whitcomb discovered an enemy machine-gun nest which covered a bridge across the swale. He captured several unarmed enemy soldiers and an officer; the latter he forced to return to the machine-gun nest and to deliver to him the gun crews, a number of men, as well as several enemy snipers who had been inflicting heavy casualties upon his men; this action permitted the infantry to advance without further heavy losses.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation  
Nathaniel C. Triplet  
Mechanic, Company F, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 27-28, 1918. He was a member of a patrol which encountered severe hostile machine-gun fire. He assisted in getting several wounded men to cover and administered first aid until his supply of bandages was exhausted. Returning to company headquarters across a field swept by artillery fire, he secured more bandages, came back with them to his comrades, and resumed his first aid work. On the following day he again displayed exceptional courage under machine-gun and shell fire by carrying a wounded officer to safety.

**From 37th Division War Diary for September 28th, 1918**

The attack was resumed at 5.30 this morning and at 7.35 the 73rd Brigade reported to be entering the Bois de Beuge, and the 74th Brigade the Bois Emont.

At 10.40 the enemy destroyed our observation balloon at Montfaucon; Balloon destroyed by enemy planes. Enemy planes very active all day in spite of the weather and continually harassed our infantry with machine gun fire and... directed enemy artillery. One enemy plane brought down near Montfaucon.

Enemy artillery fire, and bad weather, resulting in exhaustion to our troops prevented any considerable advance.

Material captured during days operations included, in addition to field pieces and machine guns, thousands of rounds of artillery and small arms ammunition, 5 railway cars and one 3-ton truck.

980 Officers  
 256483 Men  
 Rain - Weather  
 Muddy - Roads  
 Trenches and Bivouac.

Summer Waite,  
 Major, General Staff,  
 Acting G-3.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Samuel J. Covert**  
**Private, Sanitary Detachment, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 28, 1918. Voluntarily leaving cover, he went through intense machine-gun and artillery fire to the assistance of a wounded soldier and was himself killed while administering first aid to the latter.

G-3 Section V ARMY CORPS, A.E.F.,  
 Ville-sur-Cousances, September 28, 1918.

12 Noon to 12 Noon, September 27/28

1. HOSTILE SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY:  
 The taking of Montfaucon by our troops caused a further withdrawal of the enemy before the advance of the 37th and 79th Divisions. The hostile delaying action in the vicinity of this town halted for one full day the progress of our center and right divisions. Reports indicate that the enemy had but few troops engaged in the defense of

Montfaucon and that they relied principally upon machine-gun fire to check our forces.

2. INFORMATION RECEIVED OF ENEMY DURING DAY: Hostile troops opposing the advance of the V Corps are identified as follows: (From west to east) 1st Guard Division, 5th Guard Division, 37th Division, 117th Division, and 7th Reserve Division.

Information is also received that units of many of the opposing divisions are far below the average strength in effective, companies averaging between 50 to 80 rifles. During the day numerous convoys moving northward had been reported. The principal resistance by the enemy has been from machine-gun groups and scattered artillery fire. No counter-attacks of serious proportions have been reported. A captured officer gave the information that we might expect determined resistance when we reached the vicinity of Dun-sur-Meuse. Prisoners from the 5th Guard Division captured at 15:30 o'clock, state that they had been in rest camp at St-Juvin for six days. They were brought forward the night of the 26th. They claim the Germans have but few reserves.

3. HOSTILE MOVEMENTS, CONDUCT AND CHANGES DURING DAY: The enemy continued his harassing fire on the entire corps front during the early afternoon of the 27th, making the advance very slow and halting it entirely in many places. Following the capture of Montfaucon the enemy delivered a severe bombardment between this town and Ivoiry, shells of large calibre falling in the region of Ivoiry. This shelling was followed by a counter-attack which was checked.

During the afternoon harassing fire on our first line and outposts in region of Eclisfontaine

was fired by hostile batteries causing a slight retirement of the 91st Division.

Boche planes, working with artillery, caused the shelling of troops and train of the 91st Division. Several enemy batteries were observed with horses hitched to them, N.E. of Ivoiry, showing the complete retirement of the enemy.

Fire from enemy's batteries and minenwerfer from Bois de Beuge, and on the road north of it, greatly hindered the advance of the 37th.

Numerous hostile planes were observed during the late afternoon, one was brought down in flames about 18:23....

5. OWN SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY: The V Corps continued its attack with same divisions in line. The 91st Div. on the left, the 37th in the center and the 79th on the right. The 91st Div. was about 1 km. in advance of the left half of their portion of the corps objective and running east, their line skirted south of Epinonville and then bent down in the direction of Ivoiry. The 37th Division held positions, roughly speaking, about one kilometer south of Ivoiry and running in an irregular line northeast of this point. The 79th Div. occupied a line about one-half kilometer beyond Montfaucon which they had captured shortly before noon.

6. OWN CHANGES, MOVEMENTS AND ACTION DURING DAY: The advance of our troops was hindered everywhere by machine-gun fire and intermittent shelling by the enemy. The movement of the 37th and 79th Divisions commenced again during the afternoon. The 37th Division met determined resistance from the direction of Bois de Beuge, and artillery fire from the direction of Cierges.

Request was made for artillery concentration on these points. The 91st Div. states at 14:35 they were receiving enfilade fire from German artillery from a position Northwest of Very. Aviation reports received at 17 o'clock indicate that friendly troops were advancing about 250 meters north of the Epinonville-Ivoiry Road with small groups of the enemy occupying shell holes about 300 meters in advance. The advance of the artillery continues with the forward movement, but great difficulty is experienced in hauling it and supplies forward.

...

10. RESULTS OF ACTION, OWN AND ENEMY: The action of the day resulted in overcoming obstacles in the paths of the 37th and 79th Divisions and permitted the forward movement to be again commenced.

To noon, the number of prisoners having been sent through the corps cage was approximately 3,000. This of course does not represent total capture, but the number only that have been evacuated to these headquarters. Casualties lists not available, and authentic reports on captured material have not been received.

...

14. VISIBILITY: From poor to fair. ROADS: Repair being pushed. SUPPLIES: Road and traffic conditions still prevent prompt delivery. MORALE: Excellent.

T. H. Emerson,  
Colonel, Engineers,  
A. C. of S., G-3

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Cecil B. Whitcomb**  
**Sergeant, Headquarters Company, 145th Infantry, 37th**  
**Division**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26-28, 1918. Attached to the Regimental Intelligence Section of the 145th Infantry, he, with several men of his section, accompanied the first attacking wave of the regiment on September 26th. Losing contact temporarily with the assaulting wave on account of a smoke barrage, he halted momentarily, and upon resuming the advance encountered enemy machine-gun and sniper fire near a swale in the Bois de Montfaucon. Leaving his men in a place of safety Sergeant Whitcomb discovered an enemy machine-gun nest which covered a bridge across the swale. He captured several unarmed enemy soldiers and an officer; the latter he forced to return to the machine-gun nest and to deliver to him the gun crews, a number of men, as well as several enemy snipers who had been inflicting heavy casualties upon his men; this action permitted the Infantry to advance without further heavy losses.

**Found in *The Thirty-Seventh Division***

At twenty minutes after midnight on 28<sup>th</sup> September, Fifth Corps Headquarters issued Field Orders No. 45:

“Indications point to withdrawal on the part of the enemy. The Fifth Corps will continue the attack today at 7:00 o’clock....

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 145<sup>th</sup> Inf. Was in the attacking line on the right, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. 145<sup>th</sup> Inf. In support. The 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. 145<sup>th</sup> Inf. Was a part of the Division Reserve. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. Companies F and G were in the first line, with E and H in support. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 146<sup>th</sup> Inf. was designated as the attacking unit on the

left of the brigade sector, followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bns., respectively.

On the left of the sector, the 147<sup>th</sup> Inf. led the attack, with its 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bns. In line, and its 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. In support. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 148<sup>th</sup> Inf. relieving the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. Of that regiment as part of the Division Reserve and moved to hill 266, a little more than a kilometer east (and slightly to the north) of Ivoirly where, the battalion war diary gleefully relates, the “ration train came up and men were fet: at 3:00 P.M., the Division Reserve ordered to Cierges via Bois Emont. Resistance met in this wood, but Companies E and F got through when the enemy gassed the woods and G and H were ordered back and took up a position east of Epinonville.” The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. 148<sup>th</sup> Inf. advanced as part of the Brigade Reserve. The 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. 148<sup>th</sup> Inf. advanced as a supporting battalion on the right of the brigade sector, 1000 meters in rear of the first line. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. 148<sup>th</sup> Inf. as part of the Brigade Reserve, took position to advance through Ivoirly. (vol. 2, 286-287)

“During that afternoon,” Gen. Farnsworth’s report stated, “the 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade was greatly weakened and the 74<sup>th</sup> somewhat weakened by gas casualties in the Bois de Beuge, the valley of l’Angon, and in the Bois Emont.”

“The men,” his report continued, “were now much exhausted from being continually wet and from constant exposure for two days to artillery fire which at times was very intense for periods of half an hour to an hour and a half. During this day (28<sup>th</sup> September) there had been crowding up of rear elements into front lines due to the slowness of the advance and to the eagerness of those in the rear elements to push the movement along. The result was that more men were actually occupying the line of resistance each night than there should have been; the men were more subjected to fire than they should have been; they got but little rest; and they had no shelter from the weather....” (vol. 2, 289)

### From 37th Division War Diary for September 29, 1918

The attack continued today beginning at 7.00 A.M. - the 74th Brigade moved forward to attack from Cote 265. Enemy airplanes appeared over the line... immediately followed by artillery and machine gun fire, which compelled our troops to seek cover in shell holes. The same conditions took place in the 74th Brigade and inflicted heavy losses on both Brigades. One Bn. of the Division Reserve was ordered to proceed through the Bois Emont... up the machine gun nests, it had proceeded by at short distance when Major Houts (commanding) was killed, and the battalion stopped.

Shortage of artillery ammunition, due to road conditions, prevented active retaliative fire and our troops were compelled to dig in and hold where they were, after having penetrated Cierges and having been forced back.

At 15.30 one battery of hostile artillery was put out of action and one hostile observation balloon shot down.

Casualties for operation about 250 killed and missing, 1150 wounded, 450 gassed.

955 Officers  
 25109 Men  
 Rain - Weather  
 Muddy - Roads  
 Excellent - Health  
 Trenches and Bivouac.

Summer Waite,  
 Major, General Staff,  
 Acting G-3.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Frederick W. Galbraith, Jr.**  
**Colonel, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoiry, France, September 29, 1918. When an enemy counter-attack was imminent he went into the front lines under a violent artillery and machine-gun barrage, and by the coolness and certainty of his orders and the inspiring example of his personal courage reorganized his own command and took command of other units whose officers had been lost or diverted in the confusion of battle. Knocked down by a shell, he refused to be evacuated and continued to carry on the work of reorganizing his position and disposing the troops to a successful conclusion.

**From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for September 29, 1918**

Regiment advanced - preceded by light tanks - ... Cierges, two battalions in front line, one in support.... Colonel Best relieved of command, Major Marlin... C.O.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Ernest G. Bozenhart**  
**Private, Medical Detachment, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoiry, France, September 29, 1918. Making his way through heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, he rendered valuable medical treatment to the wounded and assisted in bringing the men to safety and forwarding them to a first aid station. In the performance of his duties he was shortly afterwards killed.

### From 3rd Battalion War Diary for September 29, 1918

Bois Emont gassed, moved Battalion Post Command from 07.10-80.20 to 06.60-79.16. Line held 80.20 extending from Bois Emont to Bois de Cierges. Flanks 100 yards into either woods.

Weather: Cloudy (rain at night). Health: good.

Moved from 76.00-10.50 to 76.80-08.80 and took position for advance on Cierges as part of Brigade Reserve.

Advanced through Ivoiry. Halted on ridge north of Ivoiry and reorganized P.C. at 79.15-08.50.

Moved on to envelope Cierges from the west. Arrived at 79.60-06.80 and formed for attack and advanced north between Bois Emont and Bois de Cierges under hostile machine gun fire. Consolidated position from northwest edge of Bois Emont to east edge of Bois de Cierges. P.C. at 07.10-80.20. Line extended on both flanks.

William L Marlin  
Major, 148th Infantry  
Commanding, 3rd Battalion

### **Distinguished Service Cross Citation Philip R. Colebank First Lieutenant, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Ivoiry, France, September 29, 1918. This officer with two soldiers went out in the face of heavy machine-gun and artillery fire to bring in a wounded soldier. As they reached the wounded man a shell burst, killing him instantly.

G-3 Section  
No. 31

V ARMY CORPS, A.E.F.,

Verrieres-en-Hesse Ferme, September 29, 1918.

12 Noon to 12 Noon, September 28/29

1. HOSTILE SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY:

At the beginning of the period covering this report the enemy was slowly withdrawing before our advance. He continued his interdiction fire and constantly harassing our troops with considerable machine-gun and T. M. activity.

2. INFORMATION RECEIVED OF ENEMY DURING DAY:

The presence of a new division is reported on our front in the vicinity of Eclisfontaine.... No new enemy work has been reported by the Air Service. A prisoner from the 108th Labor Battalion states that the whole eastern edge of woods along road Montigny to Mont-devant-Sassez is mined. An ammunition dump and pioneer park reported at Montigny.

3. HOSTILE MOVEMENTS, CHANGES AND CONDUCT DURING DAY: The enemy's tactics are approximately the same as they have been since the start of the offensive.

Small machine gun groups, favorably located have proved a constant hindrance to the attackers. Artillery activity of the enemy is on the increase and with the assistance of their observation planes they are beginning to accurately locate our forces. Strong hostile opposition was made by the enemy in the vicinity of Cierges and a concentration of their forces was reported here at about 16 o'clock. Enemy gassed the front line and rear elements of our center division during the night 28/29 and again in the early morning....

5. OWN SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY:  
Favorable. Serious opposition on a large scale has not been encountered.

6. OWN CHANGES, MOVEMENTS AND ACTION DURING DAY: In the early afternoon our troops were observed passing into Bois de Beuge, while bodies of the enemy were reported on the northern edge.

All our divisions made steady but slow progress during the afternoon but were constantly opposed by resistance which gradually became stronger.

At about 14:55 the 79th Division sent in report that their advance elements were entering the Bois des Ogons and the Bois du Fays. Progress is being steadily made and it appears that the enemy is slowly falling back. The 37th Division at 4 p. m., sends the information that they were pushing ahead, all their light artillery has caught up and also 3 battalions of heavy.

The line at 19 o'clock may be roughly described as follows:

The 91st Division holding a line running along the northern edge of Bois Communal de Baulny, Bois Communal de Cierges, connecting with the 37th Division whose front is slightly curved to the south, about 300 meters below Cierges, and then to the northeast around the northern edge of Bois de Beuge. The line then bends up sharply to the northeast running slightly to north of the center of Cote 274 and continues in the same direction to the eastern limit of the 79th Division zone of action. The attack was continued along the entire front this morning. Communication with the front line was very difficult and only a few messages were received.

The 37th Division reported that they opened their attack at 7 a.m., and that they were

advancing in Cierges. Machine-gun and rifle fire not very heavy, but there was considerable artillery activity from direction of Romagne. The front lines and reserves of this division were gassed last night and again this morning, just before the attack. The town of Cierges was reported captured and passed at 8:30 a.m.

Latest information on the line of 91st Division, from Air Service reports, has its right flank just west of Gesnes and running along and just beyond the Gesnes-Exermont Road, with a front of about 2 kilometers and still advancing. Complete reports not received up to noon from center and left division, but understand they are progressing steadily. P. C., V Army Corps will open at 22 o'clock, Sept. 29, at Verrieres-en-Hesse Ferme....

12. ESTIMATE OF SITUATION: Favorable for continuance of advance....

14. VISIBILITY: Generally poor. ROADS and traffic conditions improving. MORALE: Excellent.

T. H. Emerson,  
Colonel, Engineers,  
A. C. of S., G-3

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Victor Heintz**  
**Captain, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 29, 1918. Heeding a call for help from a severely wounded soldier, Capt. Heintz immediately left his place of shelter and crawled through heavy artillery and machine-gun fire to the aid of the man and carried him to a place of safety.

## **From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for September 29, 1918**

Regiment holding dug-in position south and east of Cierges awaiting relief. Three battalions less two companies in front line, two companies in support.

### **Gallantry in Action Citation**

**William E. Suter**

**Private, First Class, Company B, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action at Cierges, France, September 29, 1918. While serving as a runner he repeatedly crossed terrain under intense enemy machine-gun and artillery fire. His courage and soldierly devotion to duty greatly encouraged the men with whom he served.

### **Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**John Lawrence Letzing**

**First Lieutenant, Company B, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action north of Montfaucon, France, September 29, 1918. During the attack Lieut. Letzing exposed himself to heavy artillery, rifle, and machine-gun fire to lead tanks against enemy machine-gun position. After the tanks had been withdrawn he walked up and down the firing line of his platoon and encouraged his men to greater efforts.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**Thomas S. Falkner**  
**First Sergeant, Company I, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action near Montfaucon, France, September 29, 1918. His company having exhausted its ration supply, he voluntarily led a detail under enemy observation and intense enemy fire and secured rations for the company. The courage and devotion to duty greatly inspired the men with whom he served.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Nicholas L. Tamme?**  
**Private, Headquarters Company, 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action south of Cierges, France, September 29, 1918. Volunteering to attempt the recovery of the barrel of a 37 mm. gun abandoned the previous day when the gun crew was gassed and when his battalion had retired to a more advantageous position, Private Tairmie advanced alone in broad daylight and under observation of the enemy 200 yards in advance of his own lines under intense machine-gun fire recovered the missing part and returned in safety to his own lines. His conduct was a splendid example of devotion to duty and proved an inspiration to the men of his battalion.

**From 37th Division War Diary for September 30, 1918**

Attack suspended for the day.

Colonel Best relieved of command of 148th Infantry, account physical exhaustion. During night 147th Infantry withdrawn to north end of Bois Communal. Enemy continues to shell Montfaucon. Orders issued in compliance with

5th Corps order relief of 37th Division by 32nd Division.

The relief started during afternoon of 30th and continued throughout the nights.

916 Officers  
 24646 Men  
 Cloudy & Rain - Weather  
 Muddy - Roads  
 Excellent - Health  
 Trenches & Bivouac.

Summer Waite,  
 Major, General Staff,  
 Acting G-3.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**Richard J. O'Brien**  
**Second Lieutenant, Company B, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action in Bois Emont, near Cierges, France, September 30, 1918. He was mortally wounded while seeking places of shelter for the men of his platoon. He declined first aid until all the wounded men of his command had received medical attention. His splendid leadership and devotion to his comrades greatly inspired the men of his battalion.

**Gallantry in Action Citation**  
**Abner L. Fraser**  
**Captain (then First Lieutenant), Chaplain, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For gallantry in action September 30, 1918, near Cierges, France. Voluntarily directing and assisting in the burial of the dead of the regiment, under heavy shell fire and under observation of the enemy in

broad daylight. His utter disregard for his own safety and his devotion to duty proved an inspiration to the men of his regiment.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Floyd A. Hughes**  
**Mechanic, Company C, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26-30, 1918. This soldier was constantly on duty as a runner during the offensive west of the Meuse River, many times carrying messages through heavy machine-gun and shell fire. On September 30, when the enemy was reported to be forming for a counterattack on the left flank, he volunteered to take the information to the battalion commander. Passing through heavy shell fire, he delivered the message in time to enable the battalion commander to protect the threatened flank, but he was killed by a shell on his return trip to his company.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Milo E. Terry**  
**Captain, Company H, 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26 to 30, 1918. Although severely wounded while leading his company in the assault, he refused to be evacuated and courageously continued in command of his company for four days in action under heavy fire of all arms and constantly in contact with the enemy. On September 30, he was again severely wounded, but remained with his company until evacuated in a delirious condition after the company's relief had been completed. By his intrepid conduct and disregard of personal danger, he inspired the men of his company and contributed greatly to the success of the operation.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Timothy J. Moynahan**  
**Lieutenant Colonel, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Cierges, France, September 28-30, 1918. Displaying remarkable personal courage and leadership, he personally led his battalion, without support on either flank, through terrific artillery bombardment, in the face of direct machine-gun fire and enfilading fire from 1-pounder guns on the right, capturing his objective on the ridge east of Cierges and repelling four hostile counterattacks.

G-3 Section

V ARMY CORPS, A.E.F.,  
Verrieres-en-Hesse Ferme, September 30, 1918

12 Noon to 12 Noon, September 29/30

1. HOSTILE SITUATION AT BEGINNING OF DAY: The enemy is strongly resisting the advance of this corps.

His line has been reinforced and volume of hostile artillery fire has increased.

2. INFORMATION RECEIVED OF ENEMY DURING DAY: We received a report about noon that an enemy radio message had been picked up by an Allied station ordering a retreat....

3. ENEMY MOVEMENTS, CONDUCT AND CHANGES DURING DAY: The enemy is making stubborn resistance along entire front.

Local counterattacks have been made on our line and also on those of the adjoining corps. Heavy artillery fire, of high explosives, gas and

shrapnel, is making progress very difficult. A large concentration of hostile forces was seen during afternoon of the 29th, just southwest of Romagne, and roads in that vicinity. Caissons were observed moving north from Batheville at this time. About noon the 30th, aerial observer reported that seven small German tanks and one large tank, going south through the field, two kilometers south of Romagne. A long truck train was seen on the St-Juvin-Romagne Road was going towards Romagne.

...

6. OWN MOVEMENTS, CHANGES AND ACTION DURING DAY: About noon liaison officer with 37th Division states that their line had advanced north of Cierges and still progressing with the assistance of tanks. Corps observer reports at noon, at Montfaucon, that our lines are advancing slowly, being constantly harassed by high explosives, shrapnel and gas. The 91st Division at this time had passed the Gesnes-Exermont Road and was slowly moving forward. The 79th Division reports troops in Nantillois and beyond it, no indications of a counterattack.... At noon today the 37th Division states no change in front line except slight adjustment to conform to line prescribed by corps. Enemy artillery activity continues. Montfaucon being shelled with shrapnel and high explosives. The 32nd Division arrived during the morning in the rear of the 37th Division which they will relieve. Relief by small detachments will be attempted during day.

...

13. PLANS FOR FUTURE: Relief of two front line divisions. The 79th Division by the 3d Division and the 37th Division by the 32nd Division.

14. VISIBILITY: Poor. ROADS: Being repaired. SUPPLIES: Delivery conditions improved. MORALE: Excellent....

T. H. Emerson  
Colonel, Engineers,  
A. C. of S., G-3.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Albert L. Hechtl**  
**Sergeant, Company C, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26 to October 1, 1918. Throughout the five days' offensive he commanded his platoon with rare coolness and was always in the first wave of his company, facing the greatest danger. He personally took charge of a thin line of outposts on the flank and broke up a German counter-attack that was forming under the protection of a barrage. On the fourth day of the drive this soldier was severely gassed, but he concealed this fact from his officers until he was exhausted.

**Found in *The Thirty-Seventh Division***

That night, 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> September, it was apparent to all that the division had spent at least its initial force and that the constant shelling, hunger, cold and the almost unceasing rains had done their work. Field Order No. 46, Fifth Corps Headquarters stated that "the attack of the corps will not be continued tomorrow. The present lines will be held and every effort made to prepare for a resumption of the offensive on the following day". The order established as a line of defense, a line one kilometer north of Nantillois, through the northern

edge of the Bois de Beuge, through the center of the Bois Communal de Cierges, and thence southwest to Hill 231, north of the Bouleaux woods. It directed that a "covering force of at least one regiment for each division would be pushed sufficiently forward to protect this line, supported by at least one regiment of artillery." And at 5:45, Field Orders No. 48, Fifth Corps Headquarters, ordered the relief of the division. (vol. 2, 323).

### **From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for October 1, 1918**

Regiment relieved, proceeded to Bois de Montfaucon, later to area 1 kilo. north of Recicourt, arriving... bivouac camp....

Total losses 26 Sept-1 Oct 18: Officers, 5 killed, 25 wounded... Enlisted men, 79 killed, 523 wounded, 107 missing.

### **Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

**Vincent C. Porter**

**Corporal, Company C, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26 to October 1, 1918. Though he was acting as company clerk throughout the drive west of the Meuse River, he volunteered for service as a runner and also took charge of the delivery of rations under constant shell fire in a highly exposed position. He performed valuable service in giving first aid to wounded, and at one time carried a wounded soldier much heavier than himself up a hill through shell and machine-gun fire.

**Distinguished Service Cross Citation**  
**Percy S. Blond**  
**First Sergeant, Company C, 146<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

For extraordinary heroism near Montfaucon, France, September 26, to October 1, 1918. Crossing an exposed area under heavy shell and machine-gun fire, he went forward and rescued a wounded comrade carrying him 200 yards up a steep slope. On another occasion during a severe artillery and machine-gun bombardment, he crept alone to an advanced post and carried back another wounded soldier. During the five days' action he gave first-aid treatment to 20 members of his company, inspiring every one by his valiant conduct in ministering to the wounded.

***From The Thirty-Seventh Division***

It should be noted here that there are no reliable reports available as to the number of casualties suffered on the successive days during which the division was engaged in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Neither are there reports indicating the number of officers and men present for duty with the division. Scores, if not actually hundreds of men lost their way early in the advance and fought with neighboring divisions for days. Similarly, men became separated from platoon, company, battalion, regiment and brigade, and attached themselves to units other than their own, pursuant to orders. During the entire offensive, however, the division lost 16 officers killed 113 wounded and two missing: 352 men killed, 2,287 wounded and left the sector with 690 missing. By 18<sup>th</sup> October, however, when Maj. Gen. Farnsworth rendered the report from which these figures are taken, the number of missing had been reduced to 128 by known deaths, location of men in hospitals, and by the return of men who had become separated from their organizations. (vol. 2, 219)

### **From 3rd Battalion War Diary for October 1, 1918**

P.C. at 06.60-79.16. Battalion relieved by 32nd Division. Marched to Recicourt where battalion bivouacked.

5 days rations and 5 days forage in supply train. Weather: fair. Roads: poor, traffic heavy. Health: good.

Thomas H. Morrow  
Captain, 148th Infantry  
Commanding, 3rd Battalion

### **From 3rd Battalion War Diary for October 2, 1918**

Day spent equipping troops and reorganizing. Inspection.

5 days rations and 5 days forages in supply train. Weather: fair and good. Roads: soft. Health: fair.

Thomas H. Morrow  
Captain, 148th Infantry  
Commanding, 3rd Battalion

FIELD ORDERS  
No. 34

FIRST ARMY, A.E.F.,  
October 3, 1918--18 h.

3. RELIEFS:...

(b) The 37th Division now assembling in the rear zone of the V Corps will be relieved from duty in that corps as soon as it is assembled and ready to move by bus and marching. The corps commander will determine the date that the division (less artillery) is ready to move and will give these headquarter timely notice of same. The artillery attached to the division will remain with the V Corps until its relief can be effected.

Upon relief from V Corps the division will be assembled for rest and refitting in the region of Toul, as a reserve of the IV Corps.

Special orders will be issued directing the movement.

By command of General Pershing:

H. A. Drum,  
Chief of Staff.

### **From 3rd Battalion War Diary for October 3, 1918**

P.C.-Recicourt. Battalion entrained in motor trucks and moved towards back area. Traveling all night.

5 days rations and 5 days forage in supply train. Weather: fair. Roads: soft. Health: fair.

Thomas H. Morrow  
Captain, 148th Infantry  
Commanding, 3rd Battalion



The enemy's first position ran generally through Malancourt--Vauquois--Boureuilles. There was an intermediate position through Cuisy and Cheppy, and a second position through Montfaucon. Through Conel-Romagne heights and Gradpre, there was a third position, the Kriemhild Stellung, a part of the famous Hindenburg Line. At the time of the attack, the enemy held the front with about six divisions.

4. The mission assigned required first, a penetration of about sixteen kilometers to reach the line Dun-sur-Meuse--Grandpre and second, an additional penetration of about sixteen kilometers to reach the Stenay--La Chesne line. In order to accomplish this double mission, two operations were planned, one for each penetration. The preliminary plans were prepared September 7, and forwarded to General Petain September 10. The sector from the Moselle to the Meuse was to be held from right to left by the American IV Corps, the French II Colonial Corps and a French corps. September 22 was given as the date when the attack would be ready.

5. The general plans... were amplified into a set of battle instructions drawn up in the form of a proposed field order. The battle instructions were issued September 16, together with Operations Map No. 12. Additional instructions were given the army corps September 17. The French Second Army was to control the movements of all divisions in its army area. The normal elements of this army were to occupy the front line positions during the concentration in order to conceal the movement. The American First Army was to take over command of the sector west of the Meuse on September 20. The French battalions in the front lines were to be completely relieved by the night

D - 1D. The battle instructions directed corps and services to submit their plans in the form of the appropriate field order and annex to the field order.

6. Field Orders No. 20, with its annexes, were prepared September 20, and issued September 20 and 21. The attack of September 26 was made under this field order. The plan of operations was as follows: To attack west of the Meuse with three army corps and hold east of the Meuse with three army corps.

In the attack, the general missions of the army corps were:

a. Right Corps: To protect the right of the operation by building up a defensive line along the Meuse and by assisting in neutralizing with its artillery the enemy artillery and observation on the heights east of the Meuse. By advancing its left division, it was to assist in the capture of Montfaucon and in the penetration of the Kriemhild Stellung.

b. Left Corps: To reduce the Argonne Forest by flanking it from the east and to assist in cutting off hostile artillery fire and observation from the eastern slopes of the Argonne. With its right division it was to assist in the capture of the Bois de Gesnes.

c. Center Corps: To make the deep drive to penetrate the Kriemhild-Stellung.

d. General Missions: Corps were to advance independently to the corps objectives.

Corps were to advance to the American Army objective in conjunction with the center corps.

All corps were to obtain the corps objective before further advance was to be made.

Advance beyond the American Army objective was to be ordered by the army.

The Kriemhild-Stellung was to be reached by the afternoon of D day....

Prepared by Operation Sector  
3d Section, General Staff  
First Army, A. E. F.

R. T. WARD,  
Colonel, General Staff.

*The Stars and Stripes*, French, October 4, 1918

## FIRST ARMY AGAIN IN MAJOR ATTACK, GAINS IN ARGONNE

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### **Americans Strike Between River Meuse and Great Tangle of Forest**

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### **NEW DIVISIONS IN BATTLE**

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### **Yanks Who Push Ahead Northwest of Verdun Never Knew Rigors of Winter in France**

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At dawn on September 26, 1918, the First American Army, flushed with its first swift success at St. Mihiel, struck its second blow on a wide front northwest of Verdun--struck and drove the Germans from many a town and village, from many a hill and valley they had held since the first weeks of the world war.

All that region the night before had been blasted by such a concourse of guns as had had no precedent in American history, and by sundown of the second day the Infantry, which swarmed forward through the mist of Thursday morning, had found its way far into the wild forest of Argonne, had carried by storm the forbidding height of Montfaucon, had restored village after village to France, and had sent more than 8,000 prisoners trotting back through the chill September rain to the waiting pens behind.

The attack was made on a 20-mile front. The communiqués of the first two days announced that troops from 12 states--Pennsylvania, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana--were participating in the action.

In all that battle-line there was not a gunner at his lanyard not a cook straining to push his kitchen forward, not a doughboy crouching ominous in the mud who did not know--and who was not immensely heartened by the knowledge--that at his own Army's left the French were fighting victoriously in Champagne; that to the north the British, Belgians and Yankees were forging ahead.

### **News Flashed by Wireless**

He knew that he and his were taking part in the largest combined military movement the Western front had ever known--that they were taking part in a battle which, with intervals of quiet and taut expectancy, stretched from Lorraine to the North Sea.

The impression of a rain of blows upon the enemy's stupefied head was conveyed through the air from the high wireless station on the Eiffel Tower in Paris, which sped to the uttermost reaches of the tingling front not only the news of progress in other sectors of France, but also the tidings of German disaster in far Macedonia and the Holy Land.

The proof of such concerted fighting could be read on every slope and crest on the American front. It could be noted in the feebleness with which the German artillery made answer to our own during the first two days of the battle. It could be noted in the scramble with which reserves came to the rescue on the third and fourth days and in the nature of those reserves.

Here was part of a division of which the other part was mixed up with the French in Champagne. Here was another division that had been caught and thrown into the gap while on its way from Alsace to some part of the German line in Flanders that had been shrieking for help.

### **On Memorable Ground**

And in all that battle-line from Verdun to the other side of the great forest there was not a Yankee who did not know he was fighting on ground halloved far beyond our power to add or detract; that he was starting out from Hill 304 and Le Mort Homme of tragic memories; that he was advancing from blighted fields immortalized by those dead soldiers in horizon blue who stood fast there throughout the bitter months of 1916 and said of the invading horde: "They shall not pass."

Ahead of the doughboys, and beckoning to them, loomed Montfaucon, that village on a hilltop which is the highest point between the Aise and the Meuse, and from whose church steeple, one visible for miles and miles around like a finger pointed to Heaven, the Crown Prince watched in 1916 the vain slaughter of his countrymen.

Now that watch tower is but crumbled stone--crumbled stone of which some has been spread and packed to make a road over which American kitchens are trundling with slum and coffee for American doughboys.

### **Never Knew a French Winter**

But to those Americans whose prayer every morning and every night of their lives is that this young Army should do the home folks proud the factor in this battle of greatest interest is just the fact that the initial attack on the whole 20-mile front was launched by divisions of which not one could tell what a winter in France is like. The attack was launched without taxing a single one of the really veteran divisions of the A.E.F.

What is more, two of the newly arrived divisions had never been in the line before, had never entered even the quietest sector, had never ducked their heads before the banshee wail of a German shell nor heard an American gun fired in anger.

One of these two newcomers--and surely this single fact will thrill a hundred million hearts back home--one of these green divisions, these Freshmen of the A.E.F., was met on the first day by a division of the celebrated Prussian Guard, and on that day chased those famous troops across seven kilometers of devastated France.

### **Guns Begin to Speak**

It was at 2:30 on Thursday morning that from every ridge and hillside from the Meuse to the Argonne, the guns began to speak. From far to the west in Champagne and from over to the east of Verdun there had come the sound of distant firing for three hours past, and now and again one of our own great shells had gone howling overhead.

The day had been one of shifting clouds and occasional autumnal rain-squalls. Now the moon shone clear and the stars were brilliant, but over the land a heavy white mist lay like a wet cloth, a sheltering mist through which the ever thickening traffic crept silently along the roads that led to the battlefield.

Then, quite suddenly, all the guns spoke at once. It was the beginning of a three-hour bombardment which smashed German roads and wires,

muted German batteries, sought out and pulverized German P.C.'s. fell like a rain of death on moving German troops, and drove scuttling under ground all living creatures over there.

### **No Answer Awakened**

There was no answer. If there had been, it could not have been heard. For as many miles as once could see by the myriad, ceaseless flashes in the night, our own guns were cursing from every crest and clump. At first you could hear the whine of our own shells, the echo from hill to hill, the harsh swishing of the water in the swamps, the angry rattle against the hogbacks and even, sometimes, the shrill, sharp commands, heard like foot ball signals from some nearby battery. But as the fury reached its crescendo toward dawn, all these overtones were lost in the instant succession of the shots.

The cargo of many a ship, the strain and sweat of many a stevedore, the sale of untold thousands of Liberty bonds, the toil of many millions of devoted hands came into their own in that bombardment.

Its intensity can be estimated from the fact that the count of the rounds fired on one-third of the American front amounted to 10,000 from the larger guns and 70,000 from the 75's.

Its sound can be guessed by the fact that when, after dawn, the firing subsided somewhat and the batteries were content to shoot only one gun a minute, it seemed to the toilers underneath as though a strange restful hush had settled over the world. One of these toilers, a driver on the high seat of an ammunition truck, shivered inside his leather jacket and confided to his steering wheel:

“Oh, Lord, thanks be I'm not on the other end of that noise.”

### **Just Before Zero**

That noise reached its most deafening climax in the last few minutes before the zero hour. That is the period of most painful expectancy, when anxious eyes follow the creeping mount hands on thousands upon thousands of synchronized watches. At 5:30 the first faint sign of dawn would be showing in the east, the long waiting would be done, the Infantry would be up and over the top. And every one behind them, from the generals to the cooks, knew in his proud and confident heart that for a time there would be only one problem. For all the rest, there would be only the problem of keeping up with the doughboys.

Then 5:30 came and an observer, crouched in such a vantage point, say, as any one of those look-outs which indent the parapet on the crest of Hill

304, must needs strain his eyes through the mist that blanketed the valley below. The trenches and those within them were completely hidden from view. Then, a few moments later--and it was a sight to carry with him to his grave--out from under the edge of the mist, swarming like a multitude of tawny bees from some giant hive, out and on and up the hill the dough-boys went.

In an instant, the wires hummed with the news. Signals flew from the hill tops, pigeons sprang into the air with the tidings and overhead the hovering aircraft paused, wheeled and started back. Soon from each of them would drop to some open field a gleaming cylinder, tracable in its passage through the air by its fluttering stream of white, messages from the air to the waiting commanders in the rear.

### **“Over on the Minute”**

The burden of all these messages was pretty much the same along the whole 20 mile front. Take one flashed back by a corporal, squatting, telephone in hand, at his look-out station. He may have tried to keep his voice level and military. His report, as it was caught on the typewriter in some message center far behind, will some day gather dust in the archives of the War Department at Washington. It read:

“Troops over the top with a yell on the minute.”

It meant that the line--which had held at least that much ground for four long years and which had not moved an inch either way for more than a year--the line was moving at last, and toward Germany.

Then, as the Infantry rushed forward, smothering or passing by the rear guard machine gun nests and rounding up the disorganized German troops whose retreat had been cut off by the barrage, every other arm of the service took up the strain of moving forward. At the end of the second day, the counter attack began, came thicker and faster in the days succeeding as the resistance stiffened, brought with them fierce, close hand-grenade fighting as the battle line swayed back and forth. But for the first two days it was a matter of pursuit, and for all the Army, the sleepless task of keeping up with the Infantry.

### **Moving Up Starts Early**

That movement had begun at midnight the night before. At midnight some battalions of 75's had fired a few rounds and then packed up to start forward through the mud and darkness, starting so early that before sun-down they were pitched on new hillsides and, without waiting for camou-

flage or good emplacements, were firing steadily into the receding German lines.

The pace set for them can be gauged by the fact that one regimental aid station, after patching up the first wounded at its old stand until 9 on Thursday morning, jumped forward eight kilometers and was at work in Cuisy by noon of the first day. By sundown of that first day the Infantry lines in some places had gone forward more than five miles, and through the maze of traffic which clogged the crazy roads, the urgent message ran back: "Guns, before all else, and then food for the guns. Rations second, ammunition first."

To get the guns up, meat and coffee must wait. Everything--except ambulances--must wait. If horses dragging the 75's through the mud should be killed or, having done their level best, should drop from exhaustion, then human muscles must push the guns on their way. If a big gun should capsize in some shell hole and despair of moving on to its assigned position, then it must make that shell hole its position and open fire from there. More than once these things happened.

The problem of moving up the guns and the other supplies was made both supremely important and supremely difficult through the first three days by the nature of the terrain over which the Americans were fighting--one of the most difficult battlefields in Europe--and by the condition in which four years of battle had left that terrain.

Here was a stretch of French countryside all little hills and valleys. In the summer of 1914 it was beautifully carpeted with green, field after field of well husbanded farms, with here and there a golden wheat crop embroidered with scarlet poppies and here and there a village of stone homes with red-tiled roofs.

Now it looks as though the hand of some grotesquely gigantic leper had reached out of the East and touched it. IT is a dead country. There are no homes, no life, no verdure. Here and there is some crumbled stone where a house once stood, here and there the blackened stump of a blasted tree. For the rest there is only a scorched, bleak countryside, pitted with shell holes and mine craters like the face of the moon.

From these shell holes German rear-guards turned their machine guns on the backs of the advancing Yankees. From them, as the mists of the first morning cleared away, Germans emerged in batches large and small, to be

taken into custody by the mopping-up parties and sent to the rear to swell to thousands the number of prisoners captured on the first day.

### **Still the Prisoners Come**

Not only that first morning, but off and on through Thursday, Friday and Saturday, little groups of them would trickle out of the underground hiding places wither they had taken refuge when the shelling began and whence they had been afraid to come out, so deep-rooted was their conviction that Americans were accustomed to boil their prisoners in oil. There they would be found by Yanks on a still hunt for souvenirs.

Two famished Boches emerged as late as Saturday from a deep dugout that was not more than a good rifle shot from the dugout of a general commanding an American reserve battalion.

Aside from these shell holes and remnants of abandoned trenches, the waterless, godless land for several kilometers in depth offered not a vestige of shelter, not a hedge or even a clump of green behind which a gun might hide, or in the scant protection of which a line of trucks might move unobserved.

### **One Wall for a Village**

As for the villages which the first few days recaptured, some are so completely obliterated that runners passed through them in broad daylight, never once dreaming that a village had ever stood there.

One messenger, knowing that a general's P.C. had been set up in a certain town which looked imposing enough on the map, found when he came to the place that only a part of one wall of one house remained to identify it. Against this wall, a telephone was placed.

"Where is the divisional P.C.?" the runner asked of the officer at the telephone.

"You're in it now," replied the officer with a grin.

Of other towns, such as Cuisy and Montfaucon or Bethincourt, more is left, but not enough on which to build anew, and sometimes you can recognize the church, where weeds grow rank through the stones of the floor, only by the remnants of painted angels lettering a heap of stones which was once an altar.

But it was neither in terms of battle nor in terms of restoration that this terrain presented its most serious problem during the first few days of the battled. It was in terms of traffic.

Roads over which no vehicle had passed since the summer of 1914, roads recognizable after four years only as serpentine paths weaving disconsolately among the shell holes, roads in which mine craters yawned past all hasty bridging, these had to receive and bear during the first three days a volume of heavy, ceaseless traffic that would have worried a dozen Lincoln Highways.

### **In Terms of Traffic**

That is why the pioneers both Engineer and Infantry went for days and nights without stopping to sleep or eat. That is why the clink of pick and shovel working ahead of the trucks, will ever be music to the ears of the American Army. Theirs was the task of getting the guns up, and get them up they did, faster in some places than in others, but still the guns moved on through the rain, and the ammunition followed.

Even had the roads been perfect from the start, the traffic problem would have been enormous, and those who went through it will never forget the paralyzing congestion. Every one helped. Everyone had to help. The sight no one could stand was the spectacle of a long train of ambulances stalled in the rain, the drivers raging, the onlookers cursing, only the wounded within silent and uncomplaining save when one of them might reach out and ask for a smoke or a pull on a passing canteen.

Perhaps, when it meant just a short but impassable blockade, an officer would leap down from a truck and call for volunteers. "These men have paid the price," he would call out in the darkness, "and we've got to see them through to the hospitals. Maybe we can cut a road through this wire and mud that will skirt these foundered trucks blocking the way. Pitch in, everybody."

### **Road Built in Twinkling**

Then down from the trucks, out from under tarpaulins, emerging here from a hastily made bed beside the road or there from a roadside kitchen, the volunteers would come. The improvised road would be made in a twinkling, the litters would be carried across its torturing bumpy surface, the ambulances would trundle after and a little later the train of wounded would be creeping on its way to beds and warm food and expert, compassionate hands.

In such traffic jams, when an occasional ill-advised cart full of officers' baggage would be chucked ruthlessly to the side and when stubborn drivers

must be coerced to breed in them then and there the right commonly spirit, the strong-armed M.P. was the king of the road and the hero of the hour.

Every cross roads clamored for him over the wires. Things went best where the M.P. at the corner was a square-jawed, hard boiled Yankee who, when a truck seemed disinclined to do his bidding on the instant, would waste no words but draw his gun suggestively and say:

“You do what I tell you or I’ll blow what little brains you’ve got to the other end of Hell.”

### **At the End of the Sixth Day**

With roads laid under and in front of the moving traffic, with such M.P.’s to straighten out the tangles, slowly through the mud and rain the guns moved up.

By the end of the sixth day the Yankees in the Argonne had pushed on in some places to a depth of 12 kilometers, and everywhere held fast their new won territory, despite an ever stiffening resistance, which took the form of repeated small-scale counter-attacks and the turning loose on the Americans of all the German tricks in machine guns, shrapnel, hand grenades, minnenwerfers and gas.

On the extreme right the troops working up along that curve in the meandering Meuse, which fairly pocketed the enemy, had pushed through the troublesome woods above Septsarges and reached almost as far as Brielle. Toward the center the lofty height of Montfaucon was serving American observers as a watchtower, and the battle line had passed Cierges.

Most difficult of all had proved the Forest of Argonne itself, but into this treacherous woods the New York troops had found their way foot by foot for a distance of over five miles. Found their way? Hewed their way, rather, for the Forest of Argonne is such a wild tangle of ancient trees, rank underbrush and barbed wire as no American doughboys have had to face since the first troops went into the trenches.

### **Chopping a Way Through**

The path would baffle a rabbit, and the machine guns are strewn through the woods like snakes in the grass, but somehow the Infantry have pushed and fought and cut and chopped their way through.

Ahead of our line on the sixth day, the Germans had retreated to that third retirement position which they left half constructed in the late autumn of 1917, a position strong in its natural defenses but reinforced to no such extent as the Hindenburg line, with which it cannot be tactically compared.

It is rather a continuation of that retirement position to which the Germans were driven when the Americans sliced off the St. Mihiel salient. This retirement line in the Argonne they have named the Kriemhilde line, in honor of a bouncing lady who figured large in the Niebelungen Lied.

*Gallipolis Newspaper and year not established*

### **FRIENDS OF 37TH TO FIGHT TO LAST DITCH**

Washington, Feb. 5.--Friends of the 37th Div. are preparing to fight to the last ditch the claims of the 79th Div. for congressional recognition as the division that captured Montfaucon. Captain Fred Kochli of Alliance, O., called at Representative John C. Speaks office today and prepared a statement in writing to the effect that he himself led a patrol of the 37th Div. men that put the Montfaucon machine gun nests out of business on the day before the 79th Div. came up.

According to Captain Kochli's statement the 79th Div. walked into Montfaucon without encountering anything but nominal resistance. Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Cole, historian of the 37th Div., is here trying to effect an adjustment of the controversy. Representative James T. Begg, who introduced a resolution authorizing the 37th Div. to erect a monument to the valor of its troops at Montfaucon, said today that the controversy is creating a deadlock which probably will result in no legislation being enacted.

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Lieut. Alfred Barlow of this city led two squads beyond Montfaucon and assisted in the capture of the city.

*The Stars and Stripes, France, October 4, 1918*

### **ECHOES FROM THE ARGONNE FIGHT**

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An American private spied a rooster prowling around a farm house in No Man's Land just after the Americans had captured Very. Being angry, and having an appetite for roast chicken, this American private decided to crawl up on the rooster and trap him in the building.

The American was about to lay his hands on the astonished rooster when a German entered the rear door of the building bent on the same mission. Both were so surprised that they stood for a moment and glared at

each other, then the American motioned for the German to do a right flank on the prey they were after and both closed in on him. The rooster was captured by the American, who later returned to the American lines with both rooster and German in tow.

Later, at the regimental P.C., the German roasted the chicken for his captor, who shared it with him.

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The following letter was written by an American soldier to his mother in California a few hours before the beginning of the Argonne drive:

“Dear Mother: We are going in to battle the Boche tonight. It is our first time in, as you know, so of course I am thinking of you more or less. But don’t forget, Mother, my thoughts are of you.

“I am taking advantage of a few hours’ rest and writing to you, as I know you are always wanting to hear from me. But don’t worry one bit, Mother Dear. If the Boches get me I will get ten of them will they are about it.

“This will be all until next time.

“Lovingly,  
“Bennie.”

The “next time” never came for Bennie. When the burial squad found this letter in his shirt pocket he was lying with his face toward Germany, his right front finger pressing the trigger of his rifle. A few yards in front of him was a German machine gun nest. There were nine dead Germans in the pit.

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One Artillery unit worked hard during the afternoon of the second day of the attack to get its pieces into position. It had moved up for the second time, and had not fired a shot.

It was four o’clock when the lieutenant in command gave orders for everyone to stand by. The gunners were to fire their first volley into the German lines.

Everyone stood waiting for the final word when the telephone rang and word came that the Infantry had advanced so far that it would be necessary to move up again before going into action.

“Oh, hell!” said a gunner; “those Infantry guys ain’t got no respect for us at all!”

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A German Artillery unit was in the act of being relieved the first night the Americans swept forward. The advance was so swift that both the old unit and the relieving unit were captured at the gun positions.

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A truck train was lined up on a dark road running parallel with the front and only a few kilometers back while a company of Pioneers mended a broken culvert.

A colonel who was unfortunate enough to be at the rear of the jam and who was quite anxious to be on the move, turned on the electric lights of his limousine in hopes that the light would enable the men toiling on the roads to work faster.

A Pioneer private paused, pick above his head, when he saw the sudden flare of light.

“Hey, you rube!” he shouted. “What are you trying to pull off down there? Do you want all the German artillery in the country turned on us? Can that stuff or I’ll come down and kick a lung out just to pass the time.”

There was no reply. But the light went out.

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A Yankee truck driver’s right forward wheel had just sunk with an air of finality into a half-filled shell-hole on the road near Avocourt, and he was throwing over a terrific barrage of profanity when he suddenly stopped short and his jaw dropped.

Then it closed in a grin as broad as the Sacramento, from whose distant shore he had gone forth to war. He was contemplating the approach along the roadside of four stalwart and imposing officers of the famous Prussian Guard. On their shoulders, as they marched along in the drizzling rain, was a stretcher, and on the stretcher lay a wounded doughboy smoking a cigarette.

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When the mud is knee deep and German shells are falling all around, the officers in the line have been known to reflect audibly and sarcastically on the luxurious life led by the staff officers far behind, and sometimes even to call those more secluded directors of the war by the disrespectful name of “Old Waffle-tails.”

But one colonel from an American Army corps emerged from the fight near the Argonne with the glove torn from the back of his hand by a piece

of shrapnel and a shattered riding crop as further evidence of a narrow escape.

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A lieutenant of Engineers was scouting a few days ago along the road which forks on a hill-crest, one branch mounting toward Montfaucon, on branch dipping into the valley that cradles Cuisy. As to this latter road, he would have to do some prospecting to see how much stone and how many men would be needed to make it bear all the big trucks and ponderous tractors that would have to pass along it in the wake of the Infantry.

Along came a doughboy, rifle on shoulder, a doughboy taking very seriously his new responsibility, which was the escort to the rear of three German prisoners. However, though thus engrossed, he might possibly have noticed the condition of the road.

“Hey, Buddie, are you from Cuisy?”

The doughboy halted and saluted.

“No, sir,” he said, “from Philadelphia.”

He and his prisoners were both many meters on their way before the lieutenant recovered sufficiently to go on with his inquiry.

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One of the hardest jobs any one had in the first drive west of Verdun was the job of a grizzled old mess sergeant in charge of a roadside kitchen set up to nourish, at proper intervals, a company of Engineers at work on the roads. He had just enough rations to feed them for one day, and except for the occasional casuals any kitchen can handle, he knew he must refuse all stragglers.

Yet his kitchen was in full sight of the road, along which all day long there straggled those slightly wounded youngsters from the line who were quite able to foot it to the nearest ambulance camp. Some of them had had nothing to eat for three days. Every one of them, at the smell of the hot coffee, would stop wistfully and ask for a bit of bread or something. Always the old sergeant had to shake his head. By noon he had aged ten years.

“It’ll kill me yet,” he said at last. “I know they have only to cross the next crest to find food and drink a-plenty, but I remember how my mother never turned any one from her door who asked for something to eat. They might be burglars, but she wouldn’t take a chance!”

A young sergeant from Baltimore limped on his way. The mess sergeant could hear him explaining to the other wounded boy with him.

“We can’t blame him. If he fed us, he’d have to feed them all, and then where’d he be? I guess he’s a good old scout, at that.”

**From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for October 7, 1918**

Relieved 353rd Infantry 89th Division in S/S Benoit, command passed at 23 o’clock: all combat positions occupied.

**From 148th Infantry Regiment War Diary for October 9, 1918**

Headquarters Company and 3rd Battalion moved via truck occupying positions in S/S. 3rd Bn. to be Brigade Reserve.

**From 3rd Battalion War Diary for October 9, 1918**

En route to reserve position 74th Brigade at S-S St. Benoit.

