

OPERATIONS of 2d Battalion, SIXTH INFANTRY.
From Nov. 1st to Nov. 11th, 1918.



NOVEMBER 1st, 1918.

Found the battalion intrenched along the position Bois de Briouilles - cote 280 - Bois de la Lemmont with one (1) platoon and two (2) machine gun's in advance at trench du Teton and one (1) platoon under an officer occupying BRIEULLES. Three (3) companies occupied the front line and one (1) company was held in support with two (2) platoons on hill 279 and two (2) platoons on Hill 283. The battalion connected up with the 5th Colonial Infantry (French) on the right and the 11th U.S. Infantry on the left.

During the night two (2) patrols under non-commissioned officers and a covering detachment under an officer were sent along the river bank to look for possible crossings and if possible to cross the canal beyond and gain contact with the enemy. (After the second patrol had returned without success the battalion commander with four (4) men moved out through BRIEULLES at 2:00 A.M. and proceeded along the river valley, in order to get a more comprehensive idea of the difficulties encountered by the patrols sent out earlier in the evening and the night before.) Enemy's outpost was found very alert. Flares were thrown up at frequent intervals from points near canal and (on two occasions) enemy machine gun's opened (with short bursts) from points just east of canal. Flares lighted up stream bed so completely that patrols moved with great difficulty.

NOVEMBER 2d, 1918.

Location of battalion unchanged during day. At about 5:00 P.M. order received that patrol must be gotten across river and canal during night. Two (2) patrols with a supporting combat patrol of ~~22~~ twenty (20) men had moved out on ~~this~~ this mission, when an order (see copy attached) was received at about 12 M to force a crossing using one (1) company to force the crossing and one (1) company to cover crossing, detachment of Engineers under Lieut. Beyer to lay a foot bridge across the river and canal. Companies "E" and "G" less detachments in BRIEULLES and vicinity moved out of Bois de Briouilles upon arrival ~~engineers~~ of engineers at 3:00 A.M., there already being two and one half (2½) platoons in BRIEULLES and along the river. The battalion commander at this hour moved his P.C. to BRIEULLES to better supervise the operation. Foot bridge over Meuse was completed just at dawn (about 5:45 A.M.) Co. "E" and a detachment of engineers crossed the bridge. Before the crossing was completed the enemy discovered the movement and opened a most terrific machine gun fire on the troops and the desultory artillery fire on the town of BRIEULLES was increased to a heavy bombardment. Co. "E" and the detachment of Engineers caught in the open river bottom made a dash forward to the cover afforded by the bank of the canal and there dug in.

NOVEMBER 3d, 1918.

Due to lack of cover and perfect observation by the enemy after daylight as noted above there was no movement of troops of consequence until nightfall when Co. "G" was filtered across the Meuse to reinforce Co. "E" under canal bank, Co. "F" was moved to position behind railroad bank just east of BRIEULLES and Co. "H" moved in to position on southern edge of BRIEULLES and Engineer detachment joined Cos. "E" and "G" to bridge the canal ~~in~~ under cover of their fire. Two small pontoon foot bridges were pushed rapidly across, one had been completed and a patrol had started across when terrific machine fire

*add as a report taken
at random from diary
such*

started across when terrific machine gun fire from both flanks and from two (2) machine gun nests very close in front opened covering the bridge and combing the canal bank. Efforts were redoubled, rifle grenades were brought into action, the stokes mortars came into action on the river bank and fired until the ammunition supply was exhausted but further progress was impossible as enemy machine gun emplacements could not be located accurately enough to put them out, more stokes ammunition was immediately sent for but never arrived. All available rifle grenades were then collected from the support companies and with an extra supply of rifle and chauchat ammunition was sent forward. (The battalion commander then moved forward and took personal command of the firing line to make one more effort before daylight.) The canal bank was suddenly manned and a terrific fire brought to bear on the enemy with all weapons including rifle grenades on the closer points thought to be held by machine guns but the enemy by this time was well aware of what was going on and kept the bridge so absolutely covered that crossing it was utterly impossible.

NOVEMBER 4th.

Our artillery had been firing on the ridge to the east of the river and the Bois de Chatillon, at the request of the battalion commander brought its fire as close down to the canal as safety would permit in front of the troops under the canal bank and very close down to the canal further to the north and south of the front line and held it there until requested to lift it further up the slope when the troops advanced at 5:00 P.M. under cover of approaching darkness. Cos "E" and "G" opened a sudden burst of fire with all weapons and made a rush for the bridges. In spite of the fact that one of the bridges was in bad shape, almost all the men of Co. "E" and one (1) platoon Co. "G" crossed, those using the lower bridge wading almost to the waist on account of two of the small pontoons having sunk. Upon reaching the other bank, men quickly took up marching fire to the front and flanks until a bridge head had been formed to cover the crossing. At this moment for some unaccountable reason our own heavy artillery began firing short, several shells falling in this immediate vicinity causing several casualties. Two or three shells struck in the canal and broke both bridges in two. Capt. O'Neal of Co. "E" and Lieut. Casey of Co. "G" immediately set to work and repaired them in spite of very heavy shelling and machine gun fire and the remainder of Cos "E" and "G" followed by Co. "H" crossed and pushed out about 300 meters to either flank and 500 meters to the front and consolidated the ground gained. Immediately after Co. "F" (less two (2) platoons) and two (2) remaining machine guns were brought over. The two (2) remaining platoons of Co. "F" were used as carrying parties bringing over ammunition, tools, food etc.

During the operation the battalion lost (1) one officer killed and one (1) wounded and about nineteen (19) men killed and forty-seven (47) wounded.

Captures: 21 prisoners, 9 machine guns, 2 mine-throwers and many rifles and quantities of ammunition.

Three (3) hours later the 3d battalion, 6th Infantry effected a crossing of the canal about 400 meters further south and proceeded to clean out the Bois de Chatillon. Other troops followed the 2d battalion at about 21 hours.

The highest praise is due the officers and men of the 7th (Engineers for bravery, daring and skill displayed throughout this operation in bridging the river and canal.)



NOVEMBER 5th.

Battalion remained in ~~xxxx~~ position occupied on previous night. Patrol sent to south west of LINY devant DUN at 9 hours, returned with one (1) prisoner.

NOVEMBER 6th

No change in location of battalion. Patrol sent toward ~~XXXXXX~~ VELOSNES at 10:00 A.M., returned at 5:00 P.M. with one (1) prisoner captured in outskirts of VILOSNES.

NOVEMBER 7th.

No change in location.



NOVEMBER 8th.

At 4:00 A.M. the battalion moved from the east bank of the ~~xxx~~ canal north of the woods Bois de Chattillon across the hills across the route Nationale between Liny and Vilosnes to position held by 1st battalion, on Cote 284. This position was held for one hour ~~the~~ when orders came to move to and occupy hills 370 and 388. The battalion moved at 11:30 A.M. across country south of FONTAINES (up a very muddy and rough mountain road) and took position at 15 hours (3:00 P.M.) No casualties. Strength about 660. Night spent in this location.

NOVEMBER 9th.

All day spent in this location. (at 14 hours ^H Colonel Hodges ~~tx~~ ordered to Regimental Headquarters, turned command of battalion over to Capt. Richard Wightman and took up his duties as Lt. Colonel of 6th Infantry. At 16 hours orders came to move on JAMETZ. Battalion with Co. "H" as advance guard proceeded on the BRANDEVILLE - REMOIVILLE road at 17 hours, passing all this distance under heavy shelling with (only) eight (8) casualties, arrived REMOIVILLE at 12 midnight.

NOVEMBER 10th.

Co. "H" assisted by one (1) platoon of machine gun company was immediately sent out to effect an entrance into JAMETZ. Heavy Machine gun fire was encountered on edge of town and entire night was spent in clearing these out. At 7 hours battalion headed by Co. "E" proceeded down sunken road, protected by flank guards furnished by machine gun company, Co. "F" and Co. "E" to JAMETZ and occupied town. This position was immediately organized with Co. "G" holding north end of town Co. "H" holding east and Co. "F" holding south, Co. "E" in support. Casualties seven (7) dead, eight (8) wounded. Strength 560.

NOVEMBER 11th.

Battalion remained at JAMETZ. Armistice declared at 11:00 A.M.