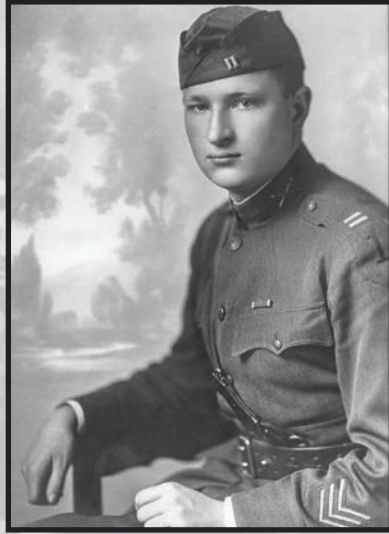


# ***Over There with the AEF***



***The World War I Memoirs of  
Captain Henry C. Evans  
1st Division  
American Expeditionary Forces***



**Combat Studies Institute Press  
US Army Combined Arms Center  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

The cover art is courtesy of the US Army.

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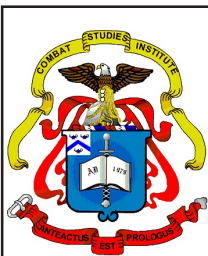
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Editor  
Jennifer B. Fike

*I would give anything to be able to come home and see you now, but I feel that every American should put aside all personal feelings and pleasures until Germany is defeated. I firmly believe that a victory for the Allies means the securing of world peace for all the future. What cause could be more worthy?*

Excerpt of letter from Henry C. Evans  
to his stepmother, Ella, 18 August 1917



## Foreword

When “Grandma Evans” died in 1991, John and Rosalyn Evans fell heir to John’s father’s old Army footlocker, which contained a treasure trove of World War I memorabilia. “We hadn’t realized it before his death, but Pa kept a diary of his war years and had even typed a ninety four-page journal using the notes which he made while ‘over there’ from 1917 to 1919. In addition, Frank and Ella Evans, Pa’s father and stepmother, carefully saved each of the fifty-four letters which their dough-boy son sent to them. They returned the letters to him on his return.” Twenty letters which relate directly to the diary are included for reference.

To read this combined collection is to relive with Henry C. Evans, or just “Pa,” an important era in his life. Each page reflects his integrity, intelligence, courage and delightful sense of humor. We know Pa would want you to read and enjoy his writing. For those who knew and loved Pa, this project should rekindle fond memories. For his progeny who were not so fortunate to know him, including fifty-five and counting great-grandchildren, we hope that this project might acquaint them with this wonderful and heroic man. On 17 September 1995, one hundred years after Henry’s birth, John and Roslyn compiled Pa’s diary and pertinent letters as a gift to their family.

In 2003 the diary was shared with the Reserve Officers Training Corps at The Johns Hopkins University. The diary was such a hit with the cadets and cadre that the single copy became worn and severely dog-eared. In 2004 the Professor of Military Science, Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Roller, Field Artillery, received permission from the family to retype the diary and add footnotes to give the diary historical context. In addition, more photos were added and the original letters were typed to make them easier to read. The goal of this new project was to significantly increase the audience for this wonderful diary and to use the diary to teach ROTC cadets the values of the US Army, which are so evident in this diary. Those values are: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

The Evans Family





## **Acknowledgements**

Presenting Henry Evans' World War I experiences to the public has been a very important and rewarding task. CSI Press would first like to thank the Evans family for this unique opportunity. Mr. Henry C. Evans III, the grandson of the memoirist, provided invaluable advice as well as photographs that enriched this publication. We would also like to acknowledge the work of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Roller (USA) who created an excellent unpublished version of this memoir. Finally, at CSI, Mr. John McGrath deserves special recognition for writing the introductory essay, creating operational maps, and adding other elements to "Over There" that offer the reader a broader understanding of the setting in which Henry Evans' experiences took place.



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## **Introductory Essay** **by John J. McGrath**

### **The First World War**

The First World War began in August 1914 with Germany and Austria-Hungary (and later the Ottoman Empire) facing off against France, Great Britain and Russia as the culmination of decades of military build-up and tensions resulting from contemporary geo-political pressures. Allied, primarily British, propaganda soon turned American public opinion against Germany even though Americans of German descent were the largest ethnic group in the country in 1917. The Germans added to this propaganda by committing atrocities such as the burning of Louvain, Belgium, the execution of noncombatant Belgian civilians held as hostages to prevent guerilla activities, and the adoption of a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare in which American civilians riding cruise or merchant ships were indiscriminately killed. The most prominent example of the latter was the sinking of the *Lusitania*, a British passenger liner, on 7 May 1915 by a German U-boat, resulting in the death of 128 Americans. In response to the uproar in the United States, the Germans ended unrestricted submarine warfare in September 1915, but reinstituted the policy in January 1917. At the same time, British intelligence decoded a German diplomatic cable (the infamous Zimmerman Telegram). In a particularly far-fetched attempt at diplomacy, German Deputy Foreign Minister Alfred Zimmerman proposed a German alliance with Mexico and urged the latter to attack the United States and recover the territories lost in 1848. Although President Woodrow Wilson had won reelection in 1916 with the slogan “he kept us out of the war,” the two new German provocations so enflamed American public opinion that Wilson felt compelled to ask Congress to declare war. It did so on 6 April 1917. Since the United States was not prepared for a land war on the European continent, the nation had to expand its military forces exponentially with the primary source of manpower being a draft. While units cobbled together from reinforced elements of the existing Regular Army were in combat as early as October 1917 (Evans’ unit, the 6th Field Artillery (FA)), the first major action for a division-sized unit occurred only in April 1918 when the 1st Division attacked the Germans at Cantigny. The American Expeditionary Force (AEF), the large army raised to fight in France beside the British and French, was not ready for major operations until the late summer of 1918. The AEF eventually fought three major campaigns: Aisne-Marne

(July-August 1918); St. Mihiel (September 1918); and the Meuse Argonne (October-November 1918). The Meuse-Argonne Campaign was the largest land battle in American military history up to that time with over a quarter of a million men directly involved. On 11 November 1918, the belligerents signed an armistice, ending ground combat operations. American forces occupied a sector in the German Rhineland around the city of Koblenz from December 1918 to May 1919 as part of Allied efforts to guarantee German acceptance of a peace treaty. An American residual force remained until January 1923 when the last units returned home. Despite rigorous campaigning by President Wilson, the Senate rejected the Allied-imposed Treaty of Versailles, which the Germans signed in June 1919 and the United States signed a separate peace treaty with Germany in 1921.

### **The American Field Service<sup>1</sup>**

Americans living in France or who had come to France to volunteer for war service in support of the Allied cause formed the American Field Service (AFS), a force of motorized ambulance drivers, in April 1915. In early 1915 the AFS was organized into sections of about 30 drivers each. The sections were organized similarly to French Army units of the same type, with each section assigned to a particular French Army division. By 1917 the AFS had expanded to 33 ambulance sections (*Section Sanitaire Unité* or SSU), a total strength of about 1,200 volunteers. In 1917, after the American declaration of war, 14 motor transportation units (*Transport Materiel Unité* or TMU), together referred to as the *Réserve Maillet*, were added to the AFS, composed of about 800 volunteers. The TMUs carried ammunition and supplies forward to French Army units. When the TMUs were raised, so many volunteers arrived from specific American colleges that some of the initial units were organized with members all from the same university or prep school.

Volunteers initially enlisted for six-month terms and were mostly recent college or prep school students or graduates. Some volunteers, usually college graduates, were given unique uniforms and ranks commensurate with the French Army ranks of first lieutenant (AFS rank *commandant-adjoint*) and second lieutenant (AFS rank *sous-chef*). These acting officers assisted the French officers who actually commanded the

1 For detailed information on the AFS see *History of the American Field Service in France* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920) and *Gentlemen Volunteers: American Volunteer Ambulance Drivers in WWI*, last modified unknown date, <http://www.militaryphs.org/articles/WWIVolunteer-AmbulanceDrivers.pdf>, accessed 12 September 2014.



sections. Thirteen volunteers were killed in action, all but one in 1917. Two others died in 1917 of other causes. Many volunteers received French military awards for their service. After the AFS was made a component of the AEF, most volunteers transitioned to service in the US Army, although some joined the French armed forces, the US Navy or the Red Cross. Volunteers who had a college background, including collegiate military training, were typically given commissions as second lieutenants, first lieutenants or captains, based on the amount of prior military training they had received. Branch designation was based on a combination of the individual's background, preference and prior military training. Volunteers without college attendance were assigned as enlisted men, usually in junior NCO rank, in the US Army.

The AFS reached its operational height in the spring and summer of 1917, just before it was merged into the US Army in the fall of 1917. The ambulance portion, now referred to as the US Army Ambulance Service, continued to support the French until the AEF became operational, and the *Réserve Mailliet* become part of the Quartermaster Corps.

### **The Organization and Campaigns of the First Division**

Although it had just been mobilized for service on the Mexican border in 1916, the US Army was small in 1917. The infantry, cavalry or artillery regiment was the highest permanent unit. Accordingly, all larger organizations were created new. In the World War I era, the basic tactical and operational unit of modern armies was the infantry division. As it mobilized, the Army formed its regiments and separate smaller units into combat divisions. The divisions fell into three categories: Regular Army, National Guard and National Army. The first group was formed from existing units of the standing Army, reinforced with newly enlisted and commissioned soldiers and officers. The second category resulted from the mobilization of National Guard units into Federal service. The National Guard was, then as now, organized on a state-by-state basis and consisted of part-time soldiers. The third category, the National Army, consisted primarily of draftees, with some volunteers and a sprinkling of Regular Army officers, formed into divisions based on general geographical regions.

As organized for wartime service, an American infantry division consisted of two infantry brigades, each with two infantry regiments containing three subordinate battalions, and a field artillery brigade. The field artillery (FA) brigade contained two 75-mm FA regiments and a 155-mm FA regiment. Each of the 75-mm regiments provided

direct support to one of the two divisional infantry brigades. The direct support field artillery regiment had two subordinate battalions, each of which supported an infantry regiment. Each battalion had three firing batteries, allowing a battery to provide direct support to an infantry battalion. Evans was in one such battery. The 155-mm regiment provided general support to the whole division, which meant that its three battalions and six batteries could be used to reinforce or augment the 75-mm artillery or to mass for a main attack. As constituted in 1917, an American division was approximately twice as large as a typical contemporary division in the British, French, or German armies, though, ironically, similar in organization to French and German divisions in 1914.



Figure 1. Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the 1st Division.

After the American declaration of war in April 1917, the Wilson administration thought it essential to send a token force to France as soon as possible. Accordingly, the vanguard of the newly formed First Expeditionary Division, consisting of Regular Army units filled out to wartime strength with draftees, arrived in France in June 1917. The bulk of the division gradually arrived over the next seven months and the division was redesignated as the 1st Division in July 1917. By the end of 1917, only four divisions of the nascent AEF were in France, the Regular Army 1st and 2d, and the National Guard 26th and 42d. The pace picked up in 1918. By the armistice, signed in November, 29 divisions had joined the AEF, with an additional five used as depot or

replacement units and seven having been broken up to provide replacements. These included two segregated divisions, one of which fought exclusively with the French Army.

Evans' unit was the 1st Division. Although considered a Regular Army organization, the presence of a non-regular officer like Evans shows that the unit consisted of new soldiers and officers as well as professionals. As division elements were organized in the US and sailed to France and Britain in the fall of 1917, the division formed up and trained at two training camps (one specifically for the artillery). On 23 October, only a few days after Evans received his commission, cannoneers from Battery C, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, Evans' regiment, fired the first American combat artillery round of the war. Several days later, the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry, also of the 1st Division, suffered the first American casualties of the war.

Subordinate units of the division continued to man quiet sectors of the front well into 1918. By April of that year, the Germans had pushed to within 40 miles of Paris. In reaction to this thrust, the 1st Division moved into the Picardy sector to bolster the exhausted French First Army. The 28th Infantry attacked the town of Cantigny and within 45 minutes had captured the town along with 250 German soldiers, thus earning the regiment the special designation "Lions of Cantigny." The first American victory of the war was a 1st Division victory.

The division assisted in the recapture of Soissons in July 1918 while participating in the Aisne-Marne counterattack. The Soissons victory was costly, as more than 7,000 men were killed or wounded. The division then helped to clear the St. Mihiel salient by fighting continuously from 11 to 13 September 1918. The last major campaign of World War I was fought in the Argonne Forest in October and November 1918. The division advanced four miles and defeated, in whole or part, eight German divisions. This action cost the unit over 7,600 casualties.

When the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918, the division was located along the Meuse River across from the fortress city of Sedan. This marked the farthest American advance of the war. The division was the first to cross the Rhine into occupied Germany, where it remained until the peace treaty formally ending WW I was signed, refilled with Regular Army soldiers and officers. It deployed back to the United States in August and September 1919.

In total the division suffered 22,668 casualties and boasted five Medal of Honor recipients. Its colors carry campaign streamers for:

Montdidier-Noyon; Aisne-Marne; St. Mihiel; Meuse-Argonne; Lorraine 1917; Lorraine, 1918; and Picardy, 1918.

## **Field Artillery in World War I**

Field Artillery was the most lethal killer in the First World War. At the start of the war, most artillery fire was direct, meaning the gunners could see their target. The ability to fire indirectly from a covered position from which the gunners could not see the target was understood by all armies; however, as combat on the Western Front evolved into trench warfare, employing direct fire became too deadly for cannoneers. In direct fire mode, battery commanders usually set up an observation post in front of the battery position and personally directed the fires of the battery. This practice was initially continued when using indirect fire procedures, meaning the battery commander was frequently away from his command during combat, making the junior officers in the battery responsible for the actual firing. Battery and battalion commanders also generally conducted liaison with supported infantry units. It was not until late in the war and in the interwar period that dedicated artillery liaison officers and forward observers were created.

Indirect fire was conducted by battery officers using maps, mathematics and firing tables to develop firing data for missions based on target information provided by observers. In terms of rolling barrages placed in front of advancing infantry, or fires in front of defensive positions, this data was prepared in advance. In the interwar period, the US Army would develop the fire direction center, first at battalion and later at battery level, to do this computation and to coordinate the fires of multiple batteries.

US Army field artillery (as opposed to siege and coast artillery) in 1917-1918 was divided into light and heavy categories. The basic light cannon was the French 75-mm gun or the British equivalent, the 6-pounder. The French 75 is generally considered the best field gun of the war. Anything larger than 75-mm was considered heavy. Divisional artillery was organized to theoretically provide each infantry battalion with a direct support light field artillery battery. The divisional FA brigade also had a heavy field artillery regiment, usually of 155-mm caliber, organized into three battalions, each with two firing batteries. This artillery served in general support of the whole division, meaning it could be used wherever the division commander felt it was most needed. Such guns were also used in a reinforcing role with direct support

batteries and battalions, to add fire support to critical attacking or defensive sectors. FA batteries consisted of four guns of all calibers.

Despite this preponderance of field artillery, a continuing problem in the war was providing responsive artillery fires to infantry units on the battlefield. The technique usually used was the detachment of one gun from a direct support battery to accompany the infantry and respond to the direction of the infantry unit commander in a direct fire role. This technique had its risks, however, which led eventually to the development of light and medium mortars at the infantry company and battalion levels to assume the close fire support role.

### **The AEF and Henry Evans**

The memoir that follows reveals the relative amateurishness of the AEF at the start of the war. Like many other AFS volunteers, Evans was directly appointed to the US Army as an officer in the National Army component. Although then placed into a theoretically Regular Army unit, Evans had no qualifications as a field artillery officer and was never sent to formal training. Yet within months he was commanding a firing battery. All of Evans' subsequent training was on the job. That he performed so well over the course of his wartime service is more indicative of his natural intelligence and leadership skills than any training he received in the Army and is a clear indicator of why he rose to general officer rank in the National Guard in World War II.

Evans' account provides a good representative example of the experiences of a typical AEF field artillery officer appointed from civilian life. His unit, the 1st Division, participated in both the first American combat actions and was the spearhead of the AEF attack in the Argonne advance when the war ended. Evans served as a battery officer, battery commander, and liaison officer. Although his experience of direct combat was relatively limited, Evans' position in the artillery gave him a broader view of the nature of combat in the First World War. Evans' account provides a welcome and worthy perspective on the experience of a patriotic young American who was determined to help defeat the Kaiser.



## Biography of Henry C. Evans

Henry C. Evans (1895-1976) was a prominent investment banker, civic leader and citizen-soldier in Baltimore, Maryland, for over fifty years. After graduating from the college preparatory high school Baltimore City College in 1914, Evans attended Johns Hopkins University, majoring in business and finance for three years. In 1917 he left the university for service in France with the American Field Service and the US Army. Appointed a second lieutenant in the field artillery in October 1917, he served in various batteries of the 6th Field Artillery Regiment, First Division, during five campaigns and briefly in the occupation of the Rhineland. He rose to the rank of captain before the end of the war in November 1918. Evans returned to Maryland and left the service in 1919.



Figure 2. Brigadier General Henry Evans in World War II.  
Source: US Army.

While overseas he had been awarded his BA from Johns Hopkins with the class of 1918. He began a forty year career in investment banking and joined the Maryland National Guard's 110th Field Artillery Regiment. As a Guardsman he was promoted to major in 1930, lieutenant colonel in 1931 and colonel in 1940, when he commanded the 110th Field Artillery Regiment. The regiment, along with its parent 29th Division, was mobilized in February 1941. When

an Army reorganization of the field artillery eliminated the regimental headquarters, Evans was eventually transferred in November 1942 as a brigadier general to the leadership of the Division Artillery of the 76th Infantry Division.

Evans served throughout World War II with the 76th Division in the European Theater through campaigns in the Rhineland, the Battle of the Bulge and central Germany from January to May 1945. He assumed command of the division after the war ended in August 1945 until it was inactivated at the end of the same month. Evans was one of only nine division members to be awarded the Legion of Merit for his service. He subsequently commanded the 35th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade from September to October 1945 and brought the brigade home from Germany where it was then inactivated.

General Evans resumed his National Guard career in 1947, commanding the Division Artillery of the 29th Infantry Division, then becoming the Assistant Division Commander. He served as the division commander from 1954 to 1957. He retired on 1 October 1957, having served 40 years, during peacetime with the National Guard and in two world wars with the mobilized Army. Evans continued his civilian career in investment banking in senior executive positions until his death at age 80 in 1976. The Maryland Army National Guard armory in Westminster is named after him.

General Evans had six children, three daughters and three sons. They were Rosalie Van Meter, Eleanor Hooper, Lela Chatard, Henry C. Evans, Jr., Charlie O'Donovan Evans, and John G. Evans. His oldest son, Henry C. Evans, Jr., was a 1951 graduate of West Point, following in his father's steps as an artillery officer and serving in the Korean War and Vietnam, retiring as a Colonel. Charlie O'Donovan Evans served in the Maryland National Guard and rose to the rank of Captain. General Evans' youngest son John was a 1958 graduate of West Point and served in the active Army for three years and for five years in the Maryland National Guard. He was an Infantry Captain. General Evans inspired his sons to serve and they did faithfully. He believed in the citizen soldier concept and lived it.



# **Over There with the AEF**

**The World War I Memoirs of  
Captain Henry C. Evans**



## Chapter 1

### My Decision to Serve

Ever since war was declared in 1914, my sympathies always had been with England and France, but I had never taken the matter seriously enough to become wildly enthusiastic. I did feel, however, strongly enough on the subject so that I wanted to see America go into it when the *Lusitania* was sunk and voted for Hughes against Wilson merely because of the Democratic[Party] slogan, "He kept us out of the war." However much I desired this country to get into the war on the side of the Allies I had never taken it as enough of a possibility to consider the matter of going into it myself until very shortly before we actually declared war.

In February, 1917 the National Convention of Alpha Delta Phi was held in Baltimore and there I met a number of my fraternity brothers from Toronto and McGill universities who either had been to France or had relatives in France.<sup>1</sup> Talking with them aroused my enthusiasm terribly and brought the whole matter much closer to home than it had ever appeared before. As a result, when war was declared in April I immediately started to think of getting into some military service. My sole experience in military had been in the ROTC at Hopkins where I had nearly one year as a private in the rear ranks. All of my relatives except my father urged me not to go into the military service but to complete my college courses saying that if I did that I would be in a much better position to help than by going right away. My father never gave me any advice on the subject at all as he felt that I was over twenty-one years old and had a right to make up my own mind on the matter.<sup>2</sup>

When the first Officers Training Camps were announced I decided to try to secure an appointment to a camp at Fort Myer, Virginia.<sup>3</sup> Most of the men in my class at Hopkins and also in the senior class were taking the physical examination for the first training camp and I went in along with the rest of them. I was examined by Dr. Harry Lee Smith and the medical examination paper was signed by Dr. Smith and Dr. Maurice Pencoffs. As I remember it, Dr. Pencoffs did not actually examine me but he evidently concurred, after talking with Dr. Smith, in the findings for he signed the examination paper. Dr. Smith informed me that I could not be accepted to Fort Myer, that there was no use at all in trying to get into the war as my kidneys were no good. He predicted that if I got into the war and was subjected to a hard outdoor life that I

would not live six months. This was hard to believe as I was feeling fine and had never had any indications of sickness.

As I left the building after the examination I ran into Bobby France who was a class ahead of me at Hopkins. He had just been turned down as he was about a half inch too short and had just determined to sign up in the American Ambulance [Service] that was serving with the French Army. Leslie Buckler who was a graduate student at Hopkins was also going over in this and they were sailing in about a week or ten days. I decided to go immediately, went downtown and drew some money out of the savings bank, informing my father of my decision at the same time. He did not oppose my going in any way but said it was entirely up to me. I went to New York the next day and signed up in the American Ambulance, getting passage on the French Liner *L'Espagne*, sailing on May 5. I then returned to Baltimore and informed Dr. [Murray P.] Brush, the dean at Hopkins, that I was leaving college and proceeded to get my things together preparatory to leaving.

I took Eleanor [Evan's future wife] to the movies the afternoon of May 3 and went to her house afterward for tea. I left on the night of May 3, joining France and Buckler in New York at the Hotel Belmont. Father, Ella and Aunt Louise saw me off at Union Station. I spent the 4th of May getting a visa for my passport from the French Consul and getting the necessary papers from the Ambulance Headquarters.

The next day we went to the dock and the only Baltimoreans to see us off were Dr. Warren Buckler and his daughter, Marian, who are cousins of Leslie Buckler. It was a cold raw day and Dr. Buckler had a big flask with him which he passed around to help against the cold and also to cheer up the departing voyagers. Up to that time I had never had a drink in my life and I decided not to participate. Leslie and Bobby, however, participated a trifle too freely and I had the most terrible time getting them on the boat. Bobby insisted on trying to sign his name upside-down on the back of his passport, much to the disgust of the French official on the dock. When we did get on board I found that all three of us had been put in separate staterooms. I immediately started out to find the men who were with Leslie and Bobby to try to make a trade on staterooms. This was finally accomplished and I got them both in the same stateroom and locked them in. However, they rang for the steward, who let them out.

This steward was an elderly Frenchman who did not understand American ways, particularly after an indiscreet use of the flask. Bob-

by and Leslie called him “Flannel Foot” which became his permanent name for the trip over. When I went down to the stateroom to see how they were getting along I found that the “birds had flown.” I caught up with them running up and down the corridors opening all stateroom doors and pulling pillows and sheets into the hallways. I finally got Leslie back into the stateroom. Then I went to get Bobby and found him on deck with his pocketbook and passport in his hand about to throw them overboard. His idea apparently was that he “wouldn’t come back alive, so what was the use of keeping a passport?” I took everything out of his pockets and kept all his belongings for a few days. I finally got them to bed and twenty-four hours later when they came to life again they were much sadder but wiser.

### **On the Sailing Ship *L’Espagne*<sup>4</sup>**

I was put in the stateroom with two other men; one a man named Williams from Harvard and Julian Biddle from Philadelphia. Williams was only in France a comparatively short time when he was taken sick and sent home. Biddle was going over to enter the Lafayette Escadrille. He must have had a sense of impending disaster for he was very solemn and quiet during the whole trip. He entered the aviation and was killed soon after. Most of the men on the boat going over into the ambulance [service] were from Dartmouth. Practically the whole Dartmouth football team was on board and Les and Bobby and I were soon adopted by the Dartmouth crowd. We amused ourselves most of the time playing cards and shooting craps but were no match for Dartmouth and I soon gave it up as a bad job after I had held four queens only to be beaten by four kings. I took some lessons in French conversation from the ship’s printer but am afraid I did not make a tremendous amount of progress.

There was very little excitement on the way over other than lifeboat drill a number of times and once we sighted a ship on the horizon. Our boat turned around and put on full steam, zigzagging away from the other ship as fast as it could go. The other ship was evidently a torpedo boat and it soon overtook us. We discovered when it got closer that it was English. We then turned around again and followed our regular course and found that the English torpedo boat was convoying several British transports to Salonika in Greece.

On the last night out everyone stayed up all night. No lights, of course, were allowed except inside, and doors were not allowed to be opened when any lights were showing. Early on the morning of the 15th we pulled into Bordeaux, France harbor. We just missed a German mine

at the entrance of the harbor by a few feet. I was looking over the rail and saw it close by the ship as we went by.

## Notes

1. Alpha Delta Phi currently has 30 chapters in the United States. It is the fraternity upon which the fraternity in the movie *Animal House* was based, as the main writer of the movie was a member of Alpha Delta Phi.

2. The Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, was one of the first programs established by Congress in 1916 as a result of the growing need for college-educated Army officers. Henry Evans had completed one year of the four-year program by the time he departed for Europe, so at the time was not qualified to receive a commission as an officer.

3. In 1917 the Army had only 9,000 of the estimated mobilization requirement of 200,000 officers. The concept of sending Regular Army officers to form cadres for the required new units was deemed impractical for two major reasons. First, the Army wanted to send over a division as soon as possible to bolster the morale of the Allies. Second, the small number of Regular Army officers would have been lost in the huge number of conscripts. To build a large number of officers, the Army initially conducted sixteen Officers Training Camps for civilians and reservists. Later these camps were abandoned as the Army instead drew its officers from the ranks of qualified Regular Army enlisted men, from ROTC and the Student Army Training Corps in colleges and universities, and the largest numbers of all from Officers Training Camps conducted at division cantonments and later from eight consolidated Officer Training Schools. See Richard Stewart, *American Military History, Volume II: The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2005* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 2005), 9, 18-21.

4. The *L'Espagne* entered service in October 1910 on the St Nazaire-West Indies-Vera Cruz route. Between 1912 and 1915 she also operated services to New York. In 1920 the ship re-entered service on the Caribbean route. The liner was withdrawn from service in 1932 and scrapped in 1934.





## Chapter 2

### Serving with the French Army

When we arrived in Bordeaux, France, we presented our papers to the local Ambulance Headquarters and received our passage to Paris, third class. We bought some bread, cheese, jam and a bottle of wine to eat on the trip to Paris. Third class compartments hold five or six very comfortably and it so happened that Bobby, Les and I were in the compartment with several French soldiers returning to the front from furlough.

One of the French soldiers talked a little English and both Bob and Les spoke some French. They regaled us with stories of the barbarity of the Germans and in light of later knowledge I believe that most of these stories were pure propaganda although we believed them 100% at that time. They had the wildest tales of Belgian children with hands cut off and all the usual stories that were told during the war.

When lunch time came we divided our wine with the French soldiers and when all of our wine was gone one of them pulled out a bottle. When I held out my cup he poured just a little in the cup and I thought he was very stingy with his wine after our liberality. I drank the stuff right down and for fifteen minutes was afraid to move for instead of wine I discovered it was some *Eau de Vis* that had been made by the man's grandfather and was almost pure alcohol. If he had filled my cup as I expected I probably would have passed out. I believe that this was my first drink of anything stronger than wine or beer. We had been served wine and beer on the boat with our meals and I do not believe I had taken either of these before other than a sip. Another bad habit that I acquired on the boat was smoking as I had not smoked except very occasionally prior to getting on the boat.

We arrived in Paris on the evening of May 15, 1917, just as the sun went down. We were met at the station by ambulances and taken up to Ambulance Headquarters at 21 Rue Reynouard. I thought I had never seen anything quite as beautiful as Paris at this time of the year. The headquarters of the Ambulance [Service] was in an old castle with beautiful grounds leading down to the Seine which had been Benjamin Franklin's headquarters when he was in Paris during the Revolutionary War. It was a wonderful spot. The flowers and shrubbery were in bloom and I suppose looked all the more beautiful because of the fact that the

whole thing was a very exciting adventure and I was looking at everything with rose colored glasses.

The first night we arrived in Paris, Bob, Les and I went to the Chalet Theatre to see the *Ballet Russe*. The place was packed and the only seats we could get were up in the top gallery. Most of it was a perfectly marvelous performance and the whole scene was very colorful. The thing that struck me about the color was that in peacetime the ladies' dresses would make the color and the men would have on dark clothes whereas in wartime most of the ladies had on somber clothes and the many uniforms of the Allied Armies made up the color. There were soldiers there from every one of the Allied Armies and a great many Russian soldiers. There was one futuristic dance that had been designed, I understand, by Picasso. I liked it the least of the lot but the Frenchmen went wild. It was the last scene and the crowd stayed in the Theatre for a half an hour after the final curtain yelling "Picasso" at the top of their lungs. I have never seen such an enthusiastic demonstration in a theatre or anywhere before.

We were told the next day that they did not need any more ambulance drivers, that all of the units were full and until somebody donated some more ambulances they had no need for us in that branch. There were over one hundred college students on the boat who had come to France with the idea of driving ambulances and naturally we were all terribly disappointed. However, a few weeks before, the French Army had organized a Motor Transport Unit with American volunteers as drivers. They had already signed up one group of men from Cornell who had come over about two weeks before with the idea of going into the Ambulance [Service]. Also a group from Andover who had come over on the boat before ours signed up for this work.

We had our choice of waiting for ambulances or signing a six month enlistment in the French Army in their Motor Transport Service. The agreement was that at the end of six months we would be turned back to the Ambulance [Service] and during the six months we would be under the wing of the Ambulance [Service] in that some slight contribution would be made by Ambulance [Service] headquarters to Americans in the Motor Transport Units for extra fare above the regular French Army feed. This extra fare was composed principally of eggs for breakfast as most of the French Units had nothing but coffee and bread for breakfast.

Leslie and Bob and I decided to sign up and on the twenty-third of May we had received our full equipment and were marched out of the

grounds to the station to take a train to the Training Camp. This camp was located near Dommiers not far from Soissons. We left the train at Vierzy and were hauled in trucks to a camp in the woods.<sup>1</sup> From then on we started to get hard work. There was not only water to be hauled, work to be done around camp and potatoes to be peeled, but we had to put in many hours a day on instruction on truck repairs, practicing driving trucks and lectures on truck operations and maintenance. All in all, we had a pretty good time at the camp. We were not far from the front and took several trips in the trucks up among the ruined villages around Soissons.

The only souvenir I picked up on any of these trips was a piece of a tombstone that had been marble but with plaster over the face of the tombstone to hide the French names underneath. In the plaster was carved the name of a German soldier. In a previous attack, apparently, the Germans had used some French tombstones by plastering out some old names, as headstones for their own soldiers.

I was terribly worried all during this time for fear the Germans were going to win the war before America could get ready. When we declared war I had thought that Germany would immediately give in and that it would only be a question of a few months before the Allies would win. On the boat going over we had received wireless [radio] messages each day of the tremendous attack being put on by the French and I thought, at that time, that it might be over before we actually arrived in France. Much to my surprise, I found on arriving in Paris that probably the only thing that had kept the French and English from giving in was the hope that America would be able to save the day.

The French attack around Soissons had failed miserably. General [Robert] Nivelle who had been in command of the French Army during these attacks had sent division after division into the attack only to have them slaughtered. The tremendous number of casualties had disheartened the French to such an extent that some of the divisions had mutinied. The ringleaders, however, were arrested and executed and General Nivelle was relieved of command and General [Philippe] Pétain was put in command to try to bolster the morale. By the time we got on the front, things were better but there was practically no fighting being done. The French were anxious to keep things as quiet as they could until the French soldiers recovered from the shock received in the April attacks.

We were camped near a *Chasseur* [light infantry] regiment and the afternoons we would go over to listen to their Bugle Corps give a concert. The French buglers could make more music with their long bugles than most bands could using all instruments.

About June 6th we were ready to leave the training camp for the actual front. We took all our trucks, picked up a load of ammunition and drove back to Meaux where we turned over the trucks and ammunition to the French and proceeded to Paris for one day's leave before returning to the front. When we arrived back at the front we were taken to a little town called Jouaigne which is about five miles from Soissons. Stationed in that town was a unit of the French Motor Transport Corps. It was part of the *Réserve Mallet* named from Captain Mallet of the French Army who was in command.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 3. American Field Service Truck Column, 1917  
Source: *History of the American Field Service in France*, 1920.

This Motor Transport Reserve consisted of about eighteen hundred Pierce Arrow trucks which, as far as I ever saw, was the only American truck used by the French. Our particular unit was the Group Genin named after French Captain Genin who was our immediate commander. This group was divided up into three companies, known as *peletons*. *Peleton A* consisted of the Cornell unit, B was the Andover Unit, C was the Dartmouth unit [TMU 526] to which we were attached and D was composed entirely of Frenchmen. Captain Genin made a lot of speeches in French to greet us and then brought out a case of champagne and

proceeded to give each of the Americans a cup of champagne to drink with him to the success of the Allied Armies.

We were then assigned to barracks and each American was assigned to a French private. We drove on the truck with the Frenchmen for one day and then all of the French privates in the unit were taken out and we took over their trucks. All of the French officers remained with the Unit. A French cook remained with each unit and a few French mechanics for each group. We were allowed to elect our own non-coms (non-commissioned officers) and also elect two men to serve as officers; it was stipulated that the men elected to act as officers must be able to talk French. We elected Horton Kennedy, manager of the Dartmouth football team as our senior officer, known as a *chef* and Doisset who had been [team] captain and end on the previous year's Dartmouth football team as *sous-chef*. Bob and Leslie were both elected corporals.

Our real work then started.<sup>3</sup> We would take out the trucks, or *camions* as they were called, pick up loads of ammunition, barbed wire, lumber and any other materials needed by the Infantry and Artillery and drive from the railhead up to various artillery and infantry supply dumps. We usually would go as close as we could without being seen and then wait for nightfall to make the balance of the trip, getting back to camp in the early hours of the morning. We would then sleep well into the morning of the next day and do the whole thing over again.

Sometimes we would be at the wheel of the truck as long as twenty-hours at a stretch for three or four days running and then we might go for three or four more days without any work at all. There was very little discipline in the camp. I think the French were a little bit afraid to offend the Americans, and the American officers and noncommissioned officers had had practically no military experience and did not know anything about discipline. The net result was that the men dressed anyway and kept their living quarters in any fashion they saw fit. The only thing the French were strict on was that the motors, axles, springs, etc. all had to be thoroughly oiled/greased every day and they were very strict on their inspections of mechanical parts.

It was against the French Army rules to tamper in any way with the governors on the motors which prevented the trucks from going over fifteen miles an hour. However, one bright young mechanic in our outfit discovered that by driving a nail into the grease cup on the governor and then covered the top of the nail with grease and screwing on the grease cap again, the governor would not work and no evidence of breaking

the seal on the governor could be found. He quietly passed the word around and the next day we went on a convoy with our eighteen trucks with all the governors fixed for speeding.

We started down the *Route Nationale* from Soissons to Reims and, as none of our officers were with us, we soon opened up to about forty miles an hour. The French guards along the road ran out yelling in amazement at the audacity of the Americans by breaking the speed laws and, apparently, the telephones were humming all the way back to French headquarters before we had gone many miles. When we got back to camp the whole outfit was threatened with court martial. For a long time the French could not discover what we had done to the governors as the seals had not been broken. They finally had a French mechanic take one of the governors apart and thus discovered the nail driven down through the bottom of the grease cup. After many threats and warnings the French decided not to court martial everybody and let us off with a promise that we would not do it again.

While we all had Ambulance [Service] uniforms with the insignia changed to that of the French Motor Transport [Service] we did not wear these uniforms except on special parades and furlough. Ordinarily we wore blue denim trousers and coats and French blue helmets with French gas masks over our shoulders so that driving the trucks we were French for all intents and purposes. We were issued guns which I think had been left [over] from the War of 1870. We were never given any ammunition and I do not know whether the guns would actually fire as we were never allowed to try them. Technically, therefore, we were armed but actually they were of no more use than a club. On days when we stayed in camp we were taught to drill in French by the French officers. We had the manual of arms with our guns and the simpler infantry drill movements. We also had to learn most of the parts of the motor truck in French. Outside of that and issuing general orders for hauling ammunition, we saw very little of our French officers.

There were always aeroplanes overhead on clear days. One of the most exciting aeroplane fights I saw was one evening at dusk we were waiting behind a hill with our trucks before going over the top of the hill and down toward the front to deliver a load of ammunition. Five French planes sailed overhead, a lone German plane came into view and one of the French planes left the other four and chased the German out of sight. The remaining four French planes sailed nearly out of sight in the other direction. In a few minutes four German planes came sailing over. It was nearly dark by this time and we could barely see them.

The lone French plane that had chased the German plane soon returned and apparently thinking the four German planes were his four comrades joined their formation. You could hear shouts from the ground all up and down the line for miles but, of course, the aviator could not hear. Soon the German planes turned on him. He was hit and came straight down to the earth with the motor wide open. He was just about to crash when suddenly the motor turned off and the plane was righted and landed in a field nearby. We were not allowed to leave our trucks but the Frenchmen in the neighborhood took the wounded aviator who was unconscious from the plane and sent him to a hospital. He had been unconscious during the fall but had come to just in time to turn off his motor, levelling out the plane.

Apparently the plane landed by itself, as he was unconscious when taken from the plane and did not remember landing. We found out afterwards that he was James Norman Hall, the American, who had been in the British Army and had been badly wounded and discharged, had recovered and entered the French Aviation [Service]. Later he was transferred to the American Army as a captain and was brought down in Germany and taken prisoner. He is the same man who was [later to] co-author *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

On the Fourth of July, the French officers put on a tremendous celebration. We were the only Americans on the Front as a unit under arms. There were, of course, scattered Americans with the French and English Armies and there were the ambulance units, but the ambulance units were considered as non-combatant troops. The French troops from miles around came to the celebration. We had a big parade in the morning when medals were presented to a number of Frenchmen and some of the Algerian, Moroccan and Senegalese troops put on their native dances. They had sword dances, gun dances, whirling dervishes and all kinds of odd and queer performances. Wine flowed freely and there were a great many impassioned speeches by the French officers.<sup>4</sup> Another celebration, not quite as elaborate, was held on July 14.

The French really served us with very good food. For breakfast we usually had some meat, potatoes and either a vegetable or salad with bread, jam and coffee and for supper we had about the same as for lunch. However, we were seldom in camp for both lunch and supper as we usually were out on the trucks driving during one of the two meals. When we were out of camp, we were given a meal to take along consisting principally of bread, some cheese and a piece of chocolate. The food was very well cooked and while there was not much over,



there was always sufficient. The bread was made up in large, flat, round loaves about a foot in diameter and about 4 inches thick. It was the regular dark French Army bread and has a crust over half an inch thick. As the loaves were brought around for delivery in open wagons and dumped on the ground the thick crust was necessary in order to keep the dirt out and we always pared off about half an inch of the crust before eating.

Each man was served a liter of wine a day. At first very few of the men would take this wine and, as a result, our French officers had more wine than they could possibly use. It was the new, poorest grade of red wine and was certainly an acquired taste. Before the summer was over, however, a great many of the men had learned to like it and it was much safer than drinking water as so much of the water was contaminated. Once in a while we persuaded the French Officers to turn in a large supply of our unused wine and get a keg of beer instead. Also, any time we did a particularly good piece of work we would be lined up in formation and a citation read out commending the unit on its good work. This usually carried with it an increase in the allowance of the wine ration to every man in the unit for a day, a week or two weeks depending on the importance of the work done.

On July 17 we hauled a lot of ammunition to an artillery ammunition dump near Soupir. I am told that Soupir was either the country estate of [Joseph] Caillaux who had been French Minister of Finance and had been mixed up in some shooting scandal just before the war, or was owned by the man he shot.<sup>5</sup> It had been a beautiful place but the house was a crumbling mass of stones with trenches running all through the lawns and groves. There was a big ammunition dump in the stable yard. On this particular night we were not at Soupir but were at another ammunition dump about a mile away. The German artillery apparently located the place and just as our trucks were being unloaded they opened up a terrific bombardment.

The Frenchmen who were unloading the trucks scattered for the dugouts but the crazy Americans had no better sense than to stay out and continue to unload the trucks or else, if they were not inclined to work, sit on the trucks and watch the explosions. Why some of us were not killed I do not know but none of our outfit were wounded although many of the trucks were hit by shell fragments. My truck was hit by a piece of shell fairly close to where I was, but did no real damage except that the explosion splattered dirt all over me. Thank goodness the Americans later learned that there was no sense in taking foolish risks,



but at that time we had not learned our lesson. However, the French did not realize that we were just foolish and thought we were quite brave and our outfit received a wonderful citation from the head of the French Automobile Service for coolness in the face of danger.

A few nights later at Soupir I was on the last truck to leave for camp. I had just been made a Corporal, and it was my job to see that all the trucks were safely unloaded and started home. It was about 2 am, pitch black with no stars or moon. The driver of the last truck was Tom Jones, formerly a halfback on the Brown [University] football team and after his truck was unloaded I jumped to the running board to try to guide the truck out on to the road. Just as we started a German shell whistled over and exploded nearby. Tom thought it was time to leave in a hurry and turned on the gas. It was so dark he could not see where he was going and we smashed into a French wagon.<sup>6</sup> The long brake handle on the wagon caught on my knee and after dragging the wagon along for a few feet the wagon turned over, I fell off and Tom and the truck shot out on to the road. I jumped up and ran after the truck feeling sure that he would wait for me. When I got to the road the truck had disappeared in the darkness. Tom afterward tried to explain leaving me by saying that he thought I had climbed in the back.

My leg hurt very badly and I reached down to see how badly it was hurt. My breeches were torn and my whole leg was wet with blood. I started to run down the road and proceeded to pass out in the middle of the road. The next thing I knew someone was bending over me with a flashlight. One of our officers had heard some shelling in the direction of Soupir and had driven over to see if all of the trucks had gotten out safely. Driving down the road he had seen an object in the middle of the road a little darker than the rest and had stopped his car to investigate, otherwise, he would have run over me. He took me back to camp and the only thing done for my leg that night was to take a bottle of iodine, unstop the cork and pour it over my leg, which was worse than the injury. The next day I went to the French Army doctor in the next town who dressed my leg and gave me an anti-tetanus injection in the back. The injury was not serious but I could not do too much walking around for about a week.

In August the Germans made a strong attack on the French Front along the *Chemin-des-Dames* near Craonne and we were hauling ammunition night and day for about ten days. I think we averaged about twenty hours out of each twenty-four in the trucks and had to keep up with our sleep by dozing off at the wheel when we were halted. One

day returning to camp from a trip my truck suddenly burst into flames. Evidently a greasy rag had dropped down on to the exhaust pipe and practically all of the woodwork was on fire in a few minutes. I put on the brake and jumped out and grabbed the fire extinguisher but found that the fire extinguisher would not work. Two more of the trucks drew up behind and their fire extinguishers would not work. There were some French soldiers nearby who ran out with fire extinguishers and finally put the fire out. When the fire was finally extinguished I found that the motor of the engine was still running although practically every piece of wood had been burned off the car. I had to sit on the gasoline tank, which was under the seat that had been burned away, to drive the truck back to camp. Even the steering wheel had been burned though the cross pieces of the wheel were metal and enabled me to guide the car on the balance of the trip. My car, therefore, was in the shop for a couple of weeks being repaired.<sup>7</sup>

About this time we were notified that each man could take ten days leave and I decided to take a trip to the Alps. I did not have enough money to make the trip. I had taken \$300.00 with me when I left home but by the time I had bought my ticket over and bought uniforms, etc. there was very little left. Our pay amounted to five cents a day and I had not even saved this as it became a custom in our outfit when we were paid off every two weeks to take the entire seventy cents and spend it on champagne. You could buy a bottle of champagne for this at the French Cooperative Army Store and, therefore, on pay day we always had a party. In order to raise money to take the trip I set up a barber shop and cut hair for two francs a cut. Every day when we were not on the trucks I would spend cutting hair for the rest of the outfit and I soon became expert enough to drive out of business all competitors. I took in enough money in this way to pay for my vacation.<sup>8</sup>

I went to Paris and secured transportation for Chamonix which is on the French side of the Alps at the foot of Mont Blanc. Three other men from our section were with me, namely, Crathern, Cree and Klee. We spent about a week there climbing around on the glaciers and up a few of the smaller peaks getting in trim for climbing Mont Blanc. However, on the day we were expecting to go up to Mont Blanc there was a bad storm and the whole mountainside was covered with snow. As a result, we decided to call off the attempt and headed back to Paris to spend a couple of days there.

When we got on the train to go back to Paris we found that the train was terribly crowded and many people were standing up. We had seats

but there was a very nice looking English family – mother, father and two girls, who were standing up so our quartet gave them our seats and we stood up or sat on the floor all night. I got to talking to the English family and found that they lived in Paris. The Englishman, Mr. Benjamin Ingle, was the Paris representative for some English manufacturer. I had a letter in my pocket which Uncle Samuel Cook had given to me before I left Baltimore, introducing me to a friend of his in Paris, Sir John Pilter. I asked Mr. Ingle if he knew Sir John and found that they lived next door to each other and with that introduction was immediately invited by the Ingles to spend the weekend with them.

They had a house in the suburbs and I enjoyed staying with them immensely. The only difficulty I had was that the first meal I had in the Ingle house they started out with a tremendous platter of hors d'oeuvres. I was not particularly familiar at that time with the custom and believe I helped myself much too plentifully thinking this was the main part of the meal. However, I do not think they saw much out of the way but merely attributed my appetite to my delight at eating civilian food again. I also called on Sir John Pilter and spent a pleasant evening talking to him and his family.

Before going back to the front I went into AEF Headquarters and inquired about the possibility of getting a commission in the artillery. I was asked to fill out an application blank which I left at the information desk at the entrance to headquarters and departed for camp.<sup>9</sup>

When I returned to camp I found that the French had started a school for officers in the Motor Transport Service and were selecting a number of men from our unit to attend. Leslie Buckler and Bobby France decided to go and although I was given the opportunity of attending the school I decided to take a chance on getting the artillery commission. The first sergeant of our section was sent to the school and I succeeded him as first sergeant and kept that job as long as I was with the outfit.

About this time a representative of the American Motor Transport Service came to visit us and made a very fiery speech stating that they were going to take over the *Reserve Mallet* as a unit of the American Army and wanted all of us to enlist in the American Army in the Motor Transport Service. He painted a marvelous picture of promotion for us in the Motor Transport Service and a lot of the men did enlist. As I was still waiting for the artillery commission I decided not to enlist but to take my chances on getting into the artillery.

## Notes

1. Dommiers is several miles west of Soissons and was close to but behind where the frontline was in July 1918 when Evans' unit participated in the Aisne-Marne offensive. Vierzy is located several miles south of Chaudun where Evans later earned his Silver Star. Long in French hands, the village was captured by the Germans during their July 1918 offensive.

2. See Frank O. Robinson, "The Réserve Mallet," in *History of the American Field Service in France*.

3. See Letter #1, Appendix 1.

4. French colonial troops came from three different sources: French settlers in African colonies, normally referred to simply as Colonial troops; Arab troops furnished by the kingdom of Morocco, a French protectorate, designated Moroccan; and black troops from French West Africa, primarily from Senegal, referred to as Senegalese. Each of these categories were organized into separate units composed solely of members of the specific group. These troops were considered elite because they were composed of volunteers, unlike the bulk of the French Army, which consisted of conscripts. The Colonial troops were originally organized into separate divisions and a corps. Later in the war battalions of Colonial and Senegalese troops were frequently combined into regiments while Moroccans usually fought separately in units up to division size. A small number of Vietnamese troops, referred to as Tonkinese and Annamese, later served in battalion-sized units on the Western Front. For more information see Richard Standish Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

5. Caillaux was actually the French prime minister from 1911 to 1912 and was subsequently the Minister of Finance in 1913. In March 1914, his second wife, Henriette, shot and killed the editor of the *Le Figaro* newspaper which had been publically attacking her husband, a crime for which she was acquitted in July 1914.

6. See Letter #2, Appendix 1.

7. See Letter #3, Appendix 1.

8. See Letter #4, Appendix 1.

9. See Letter #5, Appendix 1.

### Chapter 3

## Commissioned and to the Front

On September 18, 1917, I received a notice from the AEF Headquarters requesting my appearance in Paris for an examination for a commission. I showed the request to Captain Genin and he gave me a forty-eight hour pass to Paris. Whether I got the commission or not, I felt that it was worthwhile just for the two day trip to Paris. I went into Paris on the 22d of September and appeared before the Examining Committee composed of three artillery officers headed by Lt. Col. [Marlborough] Churchill.

There were a great many Americans there to take the examination, mostly men who held commissions in the English and French armies and there were a few from our outfit. The examination consisted of just two or three questions. They asked what education I had had and what military experience and that was all. I went back to the front and it was not until about the third or fourth of October that I heard anything more. I then received a wire telling me that I had been commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery and asking me to report for duty. Captain Genin allowed me to go into Paris where the American Ambulance Headquarters gave me a discharge from the French Service.<sup>1</sup>

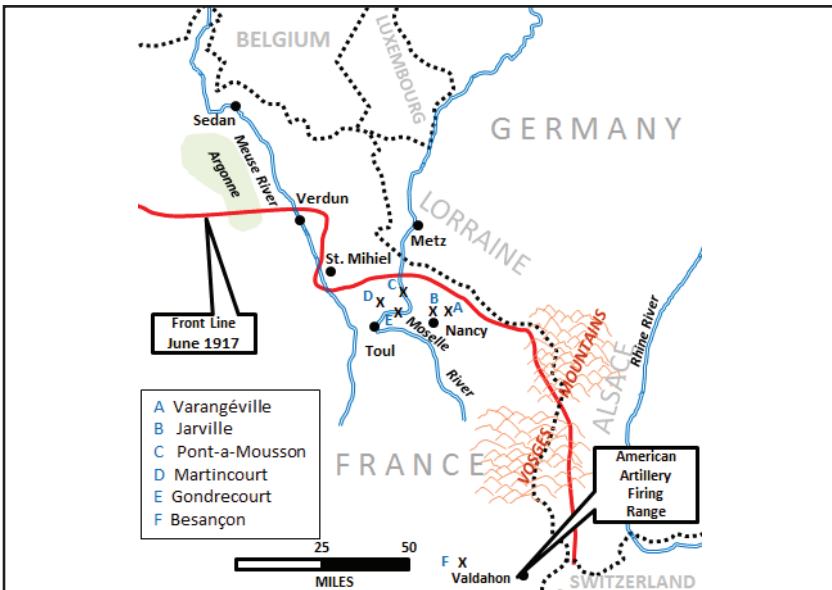


Figure 4. Quiet Lorraine Sector Used for Training and Acclimation.

I went to AEF Headquarters, took my oath of office and told them that I knew nothing about artillery. I was informed that that did not make any difference as I was to be sent to Saumur to the Artillery School.<sup>2</sup> My discharge from the French service was dated October 15 and my oath of office was dated October 19. I did not have enough money to buy a uniform so I cabled home and spent several days anxiously waiting until the money was cabled back to me.

I was all ready and equipped on the twenty-fourth of October but when I got my transportation I found that the instructions read for me to proceed to Valdahon. I inquired as to the reason for the change and was informed that the First Division had just left for the front the day before and were shy of officers and that all available Artillery Officers had been ordered up immediately to the First Field Artillery Brigade. I, therefore, took the train in the evening, had to change once at midnight and changed again early the next morning. The early change the next morning was at Besancon. I found there that the other train was leaving from another station and there was only about ten minutes to get to the other station and catch the train. There were about a dozen enlisted men on the way to Valdahon who were sitting in the station at Besancon and who evidently did not know that the other train left from a different station. I thereupon assumed my first command in the American Army by ordering these men to follow me across town to the other station. We doubled time to the other station and just caught the train.<sup>3</sup>

I arrived at Valdahon in the middle of the day and when I reported to brigade headquarters was assigned to the Sixth Field Artillery and put in Battery F [Second Battalion, Sixth Field Artillery] then under the command of Captain Murray Cushing Donnell. The other officers in the Battery were Lieutenant Pritchard, Lieutenant Emory, Lieutenant Hammersley, Lieutenant Redfield and myself.

Pritchard and Emory had been through the Officers' Training School and knew something about artillery and had been through the French Artillery School at Fontainebleau. Redfield and I were both from the *Reserve Mallet* and knew nothing about artillery. It was all so strange and new that it preyed on Redfield's mind to such an extent that he even talked of deserting and hiking to the Swiss border which was not far away. I persuaded him not to do that, but he was so upset about how little he knew of artillery that he could absorb nothing and never did learn much about it.

Valdahon is high up in the foothills on the edge of the Alps and was very cold. I will never forget the sound of the first call on the bugle in the morning at 4:30 am and getting out of my blankets and shivering on the cold stone floor of the French barracks. I learned very little in the next few days I was at Valdahon. The batteries went to the range and fired but no one made an effort to give me any instruction that amounted to anything.



Figure 5. French 75-mm Gun in American Service, 1917-1918.

LT Evans trained with this gun at Valdahon.

Source: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/wwi/fletcher/fletcher.html>.

## Notes

1. See Letter #6, Appendix 1.
2. The AEF had set up training courses in France for all arriving units since much of the weapons, tactics, and techniques were taken directly from the British and French.
3. As previously mentioned, prior to the war, the Army did not have a division-size unit. The First Division was quickly formed from four infantry regiments from the Mexican border and augmented with recruits and men from other regiments, and reserve officers to fill out the staff. The division embarked for France in mid-June, 1917. To gain experience, the First Division was placed under French control and entered the line in the Sommerville sector, ten kilometers southeast of Nancy, on October 21, and withdrew the night of November 20, 1917. See Arthur W. Page, *Our 110 Days' Fighting* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1920), 144.



## Chapter 4

### Training for War

Only the Second Battalion of the 6th Field Artillery was at Valdahon at this time, the 1st Battalion having gone to the front in Lorraine south of Nancy and there had fired the first shot fired by the Americans on October 23. The 2d Battalion left for the front on November 4. We left Valdahon in the evening of the 4th to march about fifteen miles to the railroad at Besanscon where we started loading on the train before daylight on the 5th.<sup>1</sup> We traveled on the train all that day and unloaded about dusk at the town of Jarville from which place we had about a ten mile march to Varangeville.<sup>2</sup>

We went into position on the night of the 6th in the same place that C Battery had occupied when they fired the first shot. It was on top of a hill and as it had been raining for several days the road to the position was knee deep in mud. The horses that we had were French Army cast-offs and in very poor shape. The result was that we had to put sixteen horses on each gun before we could haul it up the hill to the position. We finally got into position before daylight.

This was a very quiet front which was lucky for us, as we were able to get organized and shaken down without too much interference from the enemy. In fact there was so little firing that one of the French colonels nearby objected strenuously to our firing at all. He said that for the first time in many months, two enemy shells had landed near his command post, and that on this front the Germans never shelled any of the command posts except in retaliation for our fire, and that it must have been the American's firing at the Germans as the French troops in the sector would have had better sense that to fire at the enemy in a quiet sector. However, we did continue to do some firing all during the two weeks and I, for the first time, was able to learn a little bit about firing, figuring data from the map and general artillery work.

One of the first jobs I was given was to supervise the building of some dugouts. As I had seen a good many dugouts while we were with the *Reserve Mallet* I probably knew as much about it as the other officers.

After two weeks there we pulled out of the position and headed for the training area near Gondrecourt. It was about a four-day march and we arrived at our billets in the town of Bure on November 24. About this time I was transferred from F Battery to C Battery. C Battery was

being sent to the Artillery Officers' School at Gondrecourt so that student officers could use the guns and horses for training. As I had had no training camp experience at all I was switched to C Battery so that I could attend the classes at the Gondrecourt School. However, I found that Captain McLendon kept me so busy supervising the grooming of the horses, giving gun drill, etc. that I was unable to attend any of the classes. Our only rest came when the students at the school took over our horses and guns which was only a few days a week for a few hours each time. I had to give the cannoneers gun drill and had to do this without previous instruction so that I was pretty green at it. I borrowed a few books and did some studying and got away with it.

One day, as I was giving gun drill, Lieutenant Colonel Glassford (after the war, Chief of Police in Washington, D.C.) strolled by and watched. In a few minutes he called me aside and gave me perhaps the worst cussing out and calling down that I have ever had. He told me I knew nothing about gun drill, did not know how to give commands and was not fit to hold a commission. He told me that my commands were given in too weak a voice and much too slowly and that if I was ever to make a good officer I would have to learn to yell out commands with some snap. When he asked me how much experience I had had and found that I had not attended any training school he softened up a little. It was a very worthwhile lesson, however, and scared me sufficiently so that never since have I failed, in giving a command to men in the Army, to yell it out with all my might.<sup>3</sup>

Captain McLendon told me that he wanted me to give the battery mounted drill the following morning. I knew nothing about mounted artillery drill so I spent most of the night studying and proceeded to give the drill next morning. I really think I learned it more thoroughly and more rapidly this way than I possibly could have learned it at a training camp. I got one of the sergeants in the battery who had been in the regiment for a long time to take me out several afternoons and give me some private instruction with the various instruments used in figuring firing data. This instruction stood me in good stead and was the only instruction I received on this during the War. The fact that I knew something about surveying was the only thing that saved me and made it possible for me to catch on sufficiently to hold down my job.

We had a terrible cold and snowy December and lived in a barracks that was almost as drafty as living outdoors and which had practically no heat. The only break the whole month was the weekend before

Christmas. I received a three day pass to Paris and spent the weekend with the Ingles.<sup>4</sup>

In January I was transferred back to F Battery and then began two weeks of maneuvers, in the snow, that were terribly hard on both men and horses. We would start out from our billets before daybreak in the morning to travel five to fifteen miles to the scene of the maneuvers, sometime in the snowing and bitter cold and other times thawing and very muddy. Our feet were, therefore, alternately frozen and wet, and then frozen again; so that the net result was that most of the men had chilblains and swollen feet. I found that when I took my boots off my feet would swell up and it would be very hard to get them on again in the morning. As a result, sometimes I did not take them off and my feet were practically numb without circulation. They did not thaw out fully until the following April and the thawing out was worse than the original freezing. Many mornings nearly half the Battery would be unable to get to reveille on time because of inability to put on their shoes and a number of men had to go around without shoes with their feet wrapped in burlap.<sup>5</sup>

One day we started out to go to a maneuver when there was sleet on the roads. We left about six am and by noon the battalion had not progressed more than a mile. At one time there was not a team in the whole battery that did not have at least one horse down at one time. Finally, at noon, we turned around and started back. Why no horses or men were killed that day is still a mystery.<sup>6</sup>

## Notes

1. See Letter #7, Appendix 1. In October 1917 the First Division went into the frontline to gain combat experience. One infantry battalion at a time from each regiment spent ten days with a French division. The first US Army casualties of the war occurred during this period when early in November the Germans conducted a trench raid against the same battalion that had paraded in Paris the previous 4 July. The Germans killed three Americans and captured eleven. See Stewart, 25-26.

2. The 1st Field Artillery Brigade was the only US field artillery unit in action during this period.

3. See Letter #8, Appendix 1.

4. See Letter #9, Appendix 1.

5. See Letter #10, Appendix 1.

6. With the trench training complete, Pershing ordered the First Division to conduct further training to correct the deficiencies observed at the front. In mid-January, 1918, six months after its arrival in France, the division was ready in Pershing's view to move permanently as a unit into a quiet sector of the trenches. For general information on this, see Stewart, 26-27, and George Clark, *The American Expeditionary Force in World War I: A Statistical History* (New York: McFarland, 2013).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Battle at the Front**

Finally, on January 22, 1918, we left for the front and after about a three day march we took up positions northeast of Toul. During this trip the roads were full of ice and numerous times we had horses falling. A number of the horses in the regiment broke bones in falling and, as a result, we not only lost some horses during the trip but the horses, at the end, were in very poor shape.

Captain Donnell went ahead and left me to bring up the battery. We finally pulled into the position that had been selected after dark and found that we were right beside the Beaumon-Flirey Road in an old French position that had not been used for a couple of years. It was very much exposed and our only hope of not being seen by the enemy planes was to try and not change the appearance.

About this time we received some very definite orders from the brigade that Captain Donnell did not think should be obeyed. One was that we must have a man on duty at each gun ready to fire the normal barrage any minute of the day or night. Captain Donnell said that in the British Army they had a man sleep beside each gun and had one man for the battery on duty watching out for the signal rockets from the Infantry. As a result, he adopted this method. We also were ordered to fix up electric aiming lights for the guns but Captain Donnell thought that candles in tin cans out in front of the gun position were sufficient. We also were ordered to put up an anti-aircraft machine gun, but as no anti-aircraft mount was supplied us, Donnell also decided not to comply with this order. On General Summerall's next visit, January 30, he found that his orders had not been carried out and Donnell was relieved from command and sent back to regimental headquarters.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Scott [the regimental commander] put me in command temporarily until a new captain could be assigned.<sup>2</sup> The next twenty-four hours were very busy ones. We rigged up aiming lights for the guns using flashlight bulbs set in champagne bottle corks for sockets, we had a man on duty ready to fire at all times and the battery mechanic who was an excellent carpenter built an anti-aircraft mount out of an old railroad cross-tie. When General Summerall came by the next day he found the things he objected to corrected and he was so pleased that he asked Colonel Scott to leave me in command of the battery, making the

remark to Colonel Scott “If your captains can’t obey orders I am sure there are plenty of second lieutenants who can.”

At this time the officers of the battery consisted of Redfield, Walker, Mackall and Cheston. Mackall and Cheston had been through “Saurmur” and were very up-to-date on the latest French artillery procedure. I borrowed their books and did some studying and believe I learned faster than if I had gone to the school. There was plenty of ammunition and I could spend all of the time I wanted in the observation post learning how to shoot.



Figure 6. HQ of the 6th FA January 18, 1918 South of Toul, France.  
Source: US Army Signal Corps.

Summerall used to visit us nearly every day and we were scared to death of him. The first unit in the regiment that would see him coming on his inspection tour would telephone all the rest of the batteries merely saying on the phone “Sitting Bull on the Warpath” and that was notice to get ready for inspection. These inspections were stiff enough so that shoes had to be shined, men shaved and no cigarette butts or match sticks within a hundred yards of the battery position. Summerall was very strict and fired officers out of the regiment right and left. Colonel [Charles] Pulis had been relieved from duty a few days before I arrived at the regiment. Eventually Colonel Scott was relieved. We also had relieved Lieutenant Colonel Neal, Major Starkey, Captain Haines,

Captain Huston, Captain Donnell and innumerable lieutenants. Captain Larabee who commanded A Battery was so scared of being relieved and so violent in his criticism of Summerall that he transferred to General Headquarters (GHQ). He later got sick of that and came up to the front with another unit.

The story is told of Larabee that when he wanted to leave GHQ, he was unable to secure orders to go to the front again. He then got very tight [drunk] and rented a bicycle. He went to a restaurant in Chaumont where no one less than a general ever went and proceeded to mount the bicycle and ride around between the tables while the generals were at dinner. He finally bumped into some general's table, fell off the bike and passed out on the floor. He left Chaumont the next day so he accomplished his purpose.

In February, George Gillet, who commanded a machine gun company, decided to put one platoon right beside our battery. As there were no dugouts for the men of this platoon, I invited the officer in charge to live in my dugout and the men to double up with my men. Several days later Gillet sent a new officer, Lieutenant Lewis to take command of the platoon. That day the Germans gave us a terrible shelling. Lieutenant Lewis and I were sitting in my dugout and Lewis was so nervous he could not sit still. It developed that this was his first day at the Front. I tried to calm him down but it did no good. Finally a shell landed on top of the dugout and blew the whole roof off so that we could see daylight through the hole above. Lewis went entirely to pieces, fell on the floor and tried to dig in the floor with his hands. He finally went entirely limp and we were unable to rouse him or get him to speak although his eyes were open and he apparently was not hurt. Finally we had to send him back on a stretcher. This was the only real case of shell shock that I saw.

Lieutenant Lewis was replaced by a Lieutenant Thompson. A shell splinter hit Thompson in the leg one day and he thought he was badly wounded. When we came to examine him he found the Germans got back safely to their own lines. Two Sixth Field [Artillery] officers on liaison duty with the infantry came out of it more or less heroes. Lieutenant Green of B Battery was in a dugout on the front line when the German raid came over. A German threw a hand grenade in the dugout and Green was wounded in the leg. In spite of this he limped out of the dugout and shot four or five Germans with his pistol and took a couple prisoners. He was pretty badly wounded and never returned to the regiment from the hospital.



Lieutenant Coleman who, on the day of the raid, was supposed to be transferred to F Battery, crawled out in No Man's Land and shot a couple of Germans and brought back a prisoner. As a result, the artillery officers took more prisoners than the Infantry did on that particular raid.

The whole front pepped up about this time and there was almost continuous firing. We were shelled nearly every day. We were in a very exposed position, quite close to the front line and we were ordered to build two alternate positions further back. The Germans found out about one of these positions and destroyed it before it was half built but no one was hurt. The other one they did not discover and we finally completed it and moved all but one gun to the rear position. I was ordered to cut the enemy wire for a forthcoming raid. I spent about 1400 rounds of ammunition in one day cutting a path in the barbed wire about thirty feet wide. The wire was stretched to a thickness of about fifty feet in front of the German trenches. The raid came off very successfully. We fired a box barrage which protected the Infantry during the raid.

One day General Summerall criticized the dugouts very seriously. He stated that he did not think they had a large enough head cover to withstand the overhead shell. I told him that the position was an old abandoned French position and that since we had not changed the looks of it, the Germans evidently did not realize that it was occupied. I was afraid to build up the roofs of the dugouts any higher for fear it would be noticed. He admitted that what I said might be true, but nevertheless ordered me to put at least another layer of sandbags on top of each dugout. A day or so later General Bullard came through on an inspection with General Summerall.<sup>3</sup> We had been so busy that I had not been able to have any work done on the dugouts. General Bullard made the same criticism that General Summerall had a few days before, saying that the dugouts did not look very safe to him. Much to my surprise General Summerall then used the same reason to General Bullard that I had used to General Summerall a few days before.

One day about this time Lieutenant Colonel Scott decided to test out the Runner System and started messages back by runner from the front lines. Somebody on his staff slipped up and did not notify everyone of this. A breathless runner came up and handed me a message which stated "The enemy have entered the Bois de Remieres and are advancing in force on Siechprey." As both of the locations mentioned were behind our lines I was on the verge of calling for a barrage when I realized that the front was very quiet and the enemy could not have advanced without a lot more firing. I called battalion headquarters and



was told that it was a test message, to sign the message, put on the time received and let the runner go. Evidently brigade headquarters had not been notified of this and when a messenger arrived there General Summerall thought it was authentic and was about to have the heavy Artillery open up on Siechprey when someone who had heard of the test stopped him. Lieutenant Colonel Scott left that night and we never saw him again the rest of the war. Which officer on his staff had failed in his duty on this I do not know. I feel sure it was not Scott's fault but he took the blame nevertheless. Scott was succeeded by LTC [John] Crane from Baltimore.<sup>4</sup>

One day Colonel Crane and Major Redmond Stewart from Baltimore came on a visit to the battery. Both of them had known my father and we had a very pleasant talk about Baltimore. When they left, Sergeant Gottlieb, near whose gun we had been talking, came up to me and said he had been very much interested in our talk about Baltimore as he had been born on Aisquith Street where his father was a tailor.

An additional battery was formed in the regiment to take over and operate some of the 99-mm French guns and I sent a squad of men, under Corporal McCarthey to serve with the extra battery. These guns had no recoil mechanism and were the type used in the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>5</sup> One day Clemenceau [the French prime minister] came on a visit to our front and stopped to see G Battery, as the extra battery was called. He was so pleased to see the Americans using the old French guns that he had known and used in 1870 that he pulled out his watch and presented it to the nearest man to him who happened to be Corporal McCarthey. This spoiled McCarthey immediately, as thereafter he became the laziest man in the battery.

One day I went back to the alternate position we were building and found all the men were supposed to be digging dugouts sitting around loafing. I had only been in command of the battery a short while and I suppose the men thought I was easy and that this was a good opportunity to try me out. I gave them the dickens for not working and when most of them did not hurry to obey the command I lost my temper and very foolishly threatened some of them with very dire punishment. I even went so far as to say that anyone who didn't obey my command was likely to get shot. Some man, which one I could not say, made the remark which I overheard, "He couldn't hit anything with that gun of his." That made me madder still and I proceeded to pull out my pistol and point to the stake that was in the ground about fifty yards away. I merely said "See that stick" and shot at it hardly taking time to aim.

Much to my astonishment I hit the stick and it broke in half. I think I surprised the men so that they said not one word and went to work. That was the last time I shot the pistol off during the war. I thought it time to rest on my laurels.

Most of the casualties that we had on the front were drivers hauling ammunition and food to the Battery. We had to haul up ammunition and food every night after dark and the Germans usually shelled all of the roads all during the night.

Toward the end of March we were notified that we would soon be relieved from duty in the Toul Sector and were told to expect officers from the 26th Division which would relieve us. About midnight one night when there was a great deal of shelling and gas outside I heard a pounding on the door of the dugout and upon opening it an officer with a gasmask on came in. He took the gasmask off and introduced himself as Lieutenant Daniel Willard of the 26th Division. I immediately knew who he was and persuaded him to spend the night with me as he was looking for the 7th Field [Artillery Regiment] and it would have been a difficult thing to find it in the dark. He spent the night and I sent him on with a messenger the following morning.<sup>6</sup>

## Notes

1. Brigadier General Charles P. Summerall was the commander of the 1st Field Artillery Brigade at the time. He was later promoted to major general and commanded the First Division and V Corps. From 1926 to 1930 he was the Army Chief of Staff.

2. See Letter #11, Appendix 1

3. See Letter #12, Appendix 1

4. John Alden Crane graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 1907 and was commissioned as a field artillery second lieutenant in the Regular Army. During World War II he served as an artillery major general in the Mediterranean theater.

5. The demand for arms was so immense and immediate and the time required to retool US industry so long that the Army had to rely on foreign-made equipment for nearly all weapons except for the rifle.

6. The 26th Division, an organization composed of National Guard units from the New England states, was the second American division to arrive in France and the first that had been completely organized before it arrived.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Respite from Battle**

The next day (around the end of March 1918) an officer from the Regiment to relieve us appeared and spent a day or two with us. Finally on April 6 we pulled out of our positions and went back to the little town of Burley near Toul. We had been on the front for about three months and all of the men were set for a celebration. Luckily I kept the men working all the first day and gave no one permission to leave the battery area until everything was in order. Some of the batteries, however, did not clean up their material, figuring that we would be given several weeks rest before moving on. I think that night every man in the battalion got drunk and the lid was blown off the town. This lasted several days.

At midnight on April 10 we received orders to move and such a time as the battalion had trying to get men and equipment together and harnessed up to move. I was very glad then that we had everything in order as some of the batteries had a terrible time getting harnessed up. Finally, we got on the road about 2 a.m. and marched to Toul where we entrained at daybreak.

Rumors were flying thick and fast, the most persistent one being that we were being sent up to the British front where the Germans had broken through the Fifth British Army. This proved to be correct and we were moved past Paris and to the north, detrained at Meru on April 12, and marched to Delancourt. Here we stayed several days practicing open warfare maneuvers and trying to get the horses in condition.<sup>1</sup>

Our horses were in terrible shape. They had not had enough food all winter and most of them were just skin and bones. We were given order to let the horses graze but not to let them go into the fields. We, therefore, had to graze them along the sides of the road. In spite of all orders some of the men would take their horses into the fields where the natives had just planted new crops and we were called down very severely. I, therefore, gave a very strict order and threatened dire punishment for any man allowing his horses in a field.

The next day Sergeant Chester Smith fell asleep and let two horses which he had been holding get away and they wandered through a newly planted field and ate up the young wheat shoots just coming up. I had recently reduced him from sergeant to private because he had disappeared the day we arrived in Delancourt and did not appear for

forty-eight hours. There were several robberies in the neighborhood and while we could never pin them on him I always felt that he might have been responsible as they all happened during the period he was AWOL.

As we had been called down so severely by the colonel about letting horses in the field I had Smith tied to a wagon wheel with his arms spread out for an hour as no other punishment seemed to have any effect on him. When he was released and returned to duty he slipped away and talked to Colonel [Courtland] Parker who had been his battery commander in the states before the war. Colonel Parker sent for me and gave me the dickens for using the "spread eagle" punishment but when I told him the circumstances he agreed that Smith deserved everything he got. However, Colonel Parker ordered me not to use this punishment again.

There were various rumors that we would not be allowed up to the Front because our horses were not in good condition, and when a French general came to inspect the division I heard that one of the horses dropped dead while he was looking at it, but finally we were allowed to go, pulling out on April 16. The day before we left General Pershing [the AEF commander] got all of the officers together and made us a goodbye speech. He told us that we were going into one of the biggest battles of the War, that it was the first American division to go into a fight of that kind since we had been in the War and he knew we would do our part even if none of us every come back. It was not a very cheerful speech but nevertheless we got off in good spirits early the next morning.

Battery E had been having officers' mess in one of the French houses with a very good French cook serving them. They had had a few bottles of wine for dinner the evening before and the French woman who owned the house had not cleared up the table after dinner. Colonel Parker, after the regiment pulled out, proceeded to go around and inspect our area to see that it was properly cleaned up. He happened to walk into the French house where Battery E had been having dinner the night before and saw empty wine glasses and empty bottles on the table. He jumped to the conclusion that Battery E officers had had the wine that morning for breakfast and immediately sent out and put Captain Hall under arrest for being drunk on duty.

Hall was riding along therefore, technically under arrest, trying to make his way to regimental headquarters to explain to Colonel Parker. Just as he got to a cross road in a town, the unit of the Division going

through the town happened to halt so that they blocked the road. General Bullard [the division commander] happened to come up in his machine at the moment and as Hall was the only officer in sight he put him under arrest for blocking the road even though it was not his unit that was there. As a result, Hall had the distinction of being arrested twice in one day, both times for things he did not do. Later that day both charges were withdrawn and everything was cleared up.

We were ordered not to ride horses except on difficult pieces of road so as soon as the teams were started out all drivers dismounted and walked beside their teams. After we had gotten started I went ahead with Lieutenant Cheston and a few men as we were ordered to ride ahead of the regiment so as to pick out battery positions before the batteries arrived. We finally got up to the front and found that a French division had come in a few days before and had stopped the German drive. We finally got in touch with the French artillery officers and stayed with them for a few days gathering information about the front. There were not trenches or dugouts as this was new territory that they had not fought over before and the French troops had only stopped the German advance a few days before.

## Notes

1. After the Germans struck a near-fatal blow against the Italian Army at Caporetto in late 1917, they repositioned forces from the Russian front (as the Bolsheviks had signed a peace treaty in early 1918) and assembled 192 divisions consisting of over 3.5 million men on the Western Front. The plan was to attack before the Americans could build up overwhelming forces. The initial assault consisted of an attack on 21 March 1918 by 62 divisions along the Somme River against the British, designed to push them into the English Channel, with the Germans then turning to confront the French. By the end of March, the offensive had bogged down after advancing forty miles, taking 70,000 prisoners and causing 200,000 Allied casualties. Although a tactical victory, strategically the battle failed because it failed either to destroy the British Army or to separate them from the French. In addition, the Germans suffered as many casualties as the Allies, mostly in units of highly trained shock troops which could not be easily replaced. For background on the German spring offensives, see Stewart, 27-31.



## Chapter 7

### Returning to Battle

We left Delancourt on April 16 [1918] and the Battery pulled into its position on the outskirts of Coulmelle on April 23. The battery position was in the back yard of one of the houses on the edge of the town and each gun was located under an apple tree. We used the cellars of nearby houses as dugouts and strengthened the ceilings so as to make them shellproof. There was heavy firing from the beginning and all in all it was considered a pretty hot sector. I went on several trips down to the Infantry and crawled along the front line over nearly our whole sector so as to become familiar with both our front line and the enemy front line. There were long stretches where there were no trenches at all but merely groups of men in shell holes which they had enlarged.<sup>1</sup>

As we were on the west edge of the town of Coulmelle, we were firing directly over the town and were told to be careful not to hit the tower on the town hall. There was a beautiful square tower right to our front that had a big clock facing us, although the clock, of course, was no longer running. Our gunners were given careful instructions not to fire if the gun was aimed at the tower and this, of course, left a dead space on our front which we arranged with other batteries to cover for us. All of the men, however, were very anxious to take a shot at the clock and one morning, after firing all night, we discovered that the face of the clock was gone as someone had put a shell square through it. I never discovered who did it but from the sheepish looks on many of the men's faces, I feel sure that somebody in the battery had done it on purpose.

The Germans fired almost continuously on the town and as we were right behind the town we got a great many of the shots and had a number of men killed and wounded. One day the Germans put over a big gas attack. The place was drenched with mustard gas for several days. We took all but a few men back a mile leaving only a minimum number of men on the guns. After four or five hours in gas masks we would send the men back out of the gas area and have a new crew come in.

Wearing a gas mask continuously made my nose bleed which was very disconcerting and I had to take off my mask a number of times to clear up the blood. Why I was not gassed while doing this I do not know as I was in the gas almost continuously several days. The only thing I got was a small gas burn on my hand. One gas shell landed right beside

our guns while we were firing. The men all ducked but were splashed all over their backs with the mustard gas which is in liquid form when it first comes out of the exploded shell. Within a half an hour the acid had eaten through their coats and had taken all the skin off their backs and we had to send the whole gun crew back to the hospital. Some of them never returned to the battery.

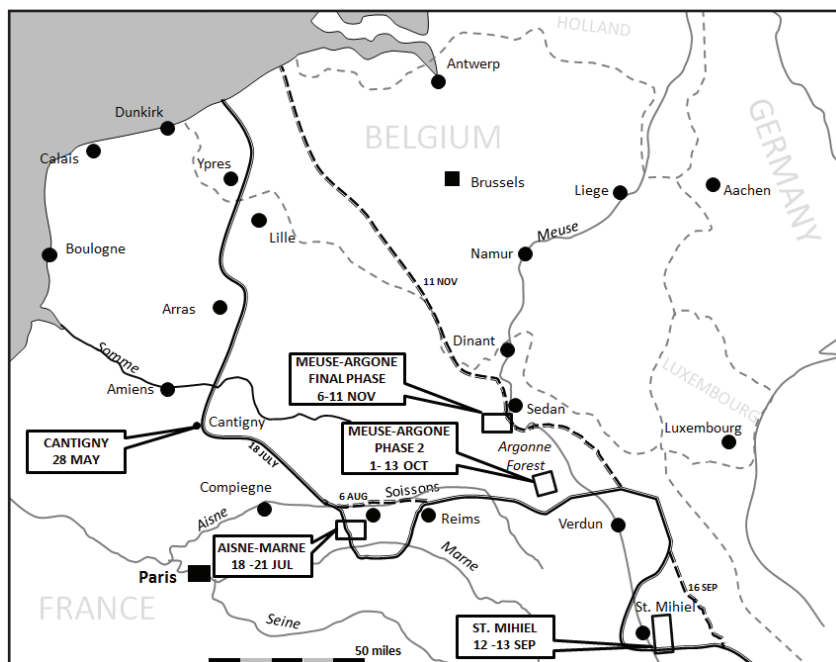


Figure 7. Henry Evans' Campaigns in 1918. Boxes tied to later maps.

About this time there was an epidemic of some kind of fever which we called “trench fever” that put about half of the men in the hospital. I felt badly one day but held off going to the hospital and was better the next day so was able to stick it out.

Some of the Germans' heavy guns fired at us one day and five huge shells of at least 320-mm size landed right close in the battery position but only one exploded. The one that exploded was right in front of the battery and made a hole about fifteen feet deep and about twenty-five feet across but did not hurt anyone. The rest of the shells did not explode. They made holes in the ground so deep that we could not reach the bottom with a rammer staff. One fairly large shell exploded right

opposite me. I dropped flat on the ground and was almost buried by the dirt that flew up from the explosion. I thought surely I had been hit as I had a sharp pain in my back but was much relieved to find that it was only a bruise. A rock had been thrown high in the air from the explosion and had landed on my back.

During this stay on the front the regiment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Courtlandt Parker, and Lieutenant Colonel John Crane was commanding our battalion. The other commanders were A.W. Waldron, Captain of D Battery, and Barton Hall, Captain of E Battery. The officers in my battery were Lieutenants Mackall, Cheston, Osborn, Siegel, and Redfield. We had a request to send some officers back as instructors and Redfield was sent back to the states. Osborne was sent as instructor to one of the schools in France and Siegel was transferred to regimental headquarters.

These officers were replaced by Lieutenants Zenke and Murtha. We also had Lieutenant Anderson for a while. Anderson was at the horses' line and was found one day, by General Summerall, reading the *Saturday Evening Post* when he should have been taking charge of grooming of the horses. The net result was that Anderson was transferred to the ammunition train for several months before we could get him back in the regiment.

One day we were accused of shooting into our own lines. The infantry reported a number of shots landing right in our own trenches and on investigating it was found that my battery was the only one in the whole sector that was firing at that time. I checked my data carefully and knew that I had given the correct commands. I was very much afraid, however, that I would be court martialed. One of the captains in the Fifth Field [Artillery Regiment] had one shot fall short a week before and had been immediately relieved of command by General Summerall. I had visions of being sent home in chains to prison at Leavenworth but was saved by John Crane.

He spent an entire day with the infantry and had them show him exactly where the shells had landed. He collected all of the shell fragments that he could find in the shell holes and then very carefully measured and it was found that all of the rotating bands were 14-mm in width. The rotating band of the French 75 has a 12-mm width. The Austrian 88 is the only gun that we had any record of that had a 14-mm rotating band.

What had evidently happened was that the infantry had heard my guns go off, heard our shells whistle through the air overhead and at the

same time an Austrian [German unit equipped with Austrian guns] 88 Battery was firing at our Infantry. They would hear our guns, then see the explosion of the Austrian 88 and thought the explosions were from shells coming from the rear. The Austrian 88 has such a high velocity that the shell travels faster than sound so that the explosion takes place before you hear the shell whistle through the air toward you and any sound of the shell going through the air is usually lost because of the sound of the explosion of shell itself. Colonel Crane took his evidence up to General Summerall and convinced him that I had not fired short.



Figure 8. US Army Field Artillery French 75mm Gun Crew, 1918

Source: US Army Fires Center, Fort Sill, Oklahoma

On May 27 the attack on Cantigny took place.<sup>2</sup> We fired a rolling barrage for some hours as the Infantry went forward. Prior to the attack early in the morning of the 27th, each battery adjusted its barrage. This adjustment was done with a time schedule, each battery having about five minutes to fire four shots on its initial barrage line. We would watch the battery on our left and when they completed we would fire ourselves to see if it connected properly with the Battery on the left.<sup>3</sup>

For the next three days we caught the devil as the Germans counter-attacked many times and drenched the whole countryside with gas and high explosive shells.<sup>4</sup>

About this time we were ordered to build a reserve position in the rear and started digging gun emplacements and dugouts about a mile back. Practically every day General Summerall would make an inspection of each battery and was strict all of the time about the looks of the men and the cleanliness of the gun position. He also questioned all men on duty and we had to keep the men thoroughly posted all of the time on their duties and try to have the most intelligent men on duty when the general came around.

One day General Summerall and Colonel Crane were at the battery position. As they completed their inspection the following conversation took place between General Summerall and Colonel Crane:

Summerall: "Crane, now that the Trench Mortar Battery is under your command I expect them to obey my orders in every detail."

Crane: "Yes, sir."

Summerall: "As you know, I have ordered them to do all of their work at night time and keep hidden in the day as they are in a defensive position and I do not want their position known to the enemy."

Crane: "Yes, sir."

Summerall: "Crane, I would like to inspect the Trench Mortar Battery. Let's go over there."

I could see from Colonel Crane's face that he did not know anything about the Trench Mortar Battery or where it was. I had seen it go into position the night before and was about to suggest that I lead them to the place when Crane said: "General Summerall, you have given them orders to keep hidden in the day time. I think it would be bad discipline for us to inspect the position during the day." General Summerall said: "Quite right, Crane, quite right. I will be back at dusk."

As soon as Summerall was out of earshot Crane turned to me and said "Where in the devil is that Trench Mortar Battery. I never heard of it before." The order concerning the Trench Mortar Battery had come to Crane's headquarters and Charlie Baird, Crane's adjutant, had probably forgotten to show it to him.

One day a German shell set fire to a pile of ammunition that we had about a hundred yards behind the battery. The ammunition was in boxes and the wooden boxes caught on fire although none of our shells exploded. I ran over to the pile and together with Chester Smith, Sergeant Blalock and two or three others we were able to pull the boxes that were on fire away from the balance of the ammunition. A few buckets of water brought up by some of the others soon put the fire out which probably saved us from a terrible explosion.

One day a barn right near the battery position caught on fire. We had some ammunition stored in the barn and the men worked heroically to put the fire out. One of the highlights was Private Zanti climbing up the roof with a hatchet to cut away some of the burning shingles.

I spent one day with the infantry and when I returned to the battery late in the afternoon Bill Mackall came running out with a face a mile long and greeted me by saying "Hurry up – the whole battery is drunk." We had been digging a dugout in the backyard of one of the houses right up against the house and evidently it had caved in to an old wine cellar in the house. Mackall had been down in his dugout figuring up some firing data for the night fire. When he came up to the surface again he found almost every man in the battery lying on the ground drunk. Sergeant Blalock and Sergeant Gottlieb and one or two others had not been in on it so the sober men carried all of the drunken ones down into a dugout to get them out of the way before the colonel or the general could come around. We got everybody taken care of except Private Fleming who was not drunk enough to pass out but merely drunk enough to fight.

This was the only actual fighting that I did during the war and the only physical encounter I had. I had quite a tussle with Fleming as he was heavier and taller than I was and I was having a considerable amount of difficulty getting him under control when I remembered that he had been shot some months before and grabbed his leg where he had been hurt and to my relief found that the old wound still hurt enough so that by squeezing his wounded leg he came under control.

Several months before, Fleming had gotten drunk and had tried to get into the kitchen about midnight to get something to eat. That day we had gotten some replacements and one of the new men had been put on guard at the kitchen. When Fleming tried to break into the kitchen the guard had told him to keep out. Fleming had told the guard in no uncertain terms that he wanted something to eat, that he had been in the battery before the recruit had been born and when he wanted something to eat he got it. The guard then proceeded to shoot him in the leg which put Fleming in the hospital for several months and he had only returned to the battery a few days before this episode.

I reduced all of the non-coms who had gotten drunk to privates and sent back to the horse line for drivers to come up to the battery. Cheston, Mackall, and I acted as gunners for the next twenty-four hours and with drivers to load the guns we managed to complete all of the firing that was required.

On the Fourth of July we had a grand time. In the morning there was a contest in the whole brigade to see which battery had the best looking gun positions. I was sent over to the Fifth Field [Artillery Regiment] to

act as one of the judges so spent half of the day with that regiment. We had been delivered a large supply of mustard gas which was the first of this gas that we had fired. We had been on the receiving end of so much gas that we were all delighted to get a chance to reciprocate.

The whole brigade fired mustard gas all the afternoon and observers reported that stretchers and ambulances were traveling back behind the German lines for several days thereafter so that we much have done a tremendous amount of damage. However, it was not an unmixed pleasure as the German came back with a tremendous amount of fire and there were a number of casualties. Lieutenant Jones of D Battery was killed and Lieutenant Mitchell of D had his upper lip blown off. Mitchell, however, had a new lip built using skin from the top of his head. He came back to us in a couple of months with hardly a scar showing, everything being hidden by a very thick mustache.

## Notes

1. See Letter #13, Appendix 1.
2. The troops had been confronting the Germans in that vicinity for several weeks. The operation was planned long in advance. Good maps were available. The troops, while they had had experience in holding a defensive sector, had not attacked before. It was considered extremely important for purposes of morale for the first American attack to be successful. See *Infantry in Battle*, (Washington, D.C.: The Infantry Journal, 1939), 125.
3. For a map of the rolling barrage showing the Crane Subgroup and the plan of operation see Arthur Page, *Our 110 Days' Fighting* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company), 22-23. The 28th Infantry, supported by French tanks and the artillery rolling barrage, took the town in forty minutes and captured two hundred and fifty prisoners.
4. In what became known as the Aisne Offensive, the Germans attacked early on May 27 behind a barrage of close to 5,000 guns with 17 divisions initially and 13 in reserve. The attack was initially successful as the German infantry plunged quickly over and beyond the *Chemin des Dames* ridge crossing the Aisne and Vesle rivers, and gaining up to 20 miles in the first 24 hours. Reinforcing the success, the Germans poured in more troops and were only stopped at the Marne River at Chateau Thierry when the US 2d and 3d Divisions reinforced the French position and fought in the Second Battle of the Marne. See Stewart, 31 and *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1992), 29-33.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Break in Battle Cut Short by German Attack**

On July 6 (1918) we were relieved and dropped back to camp at Troussencourt near Beauvais.<sup>1</sup> The first night there Colonel Parker held a dance in a big chateau nearby and invited a band of nurses from a nearby hospital. The only one I remember was a Mrs. Schenck from Baltimore who had been a Miss White and I remembered her as she had lived in Sudbrook one summer when we spent the summer there. The real joke of this party was on Bill Mackall. He had had a touch of trench fever the month before and had spent two weeks in the hospital near Beauvais where he had become very much interested in one of the nurses, a Miss Vivian Scott from New Orleans. When invited to Colonel Parker's for the evening nothing was said about a dance and Bill Mackall decided to stay in camp. He was very much disappointed to find out later that there had been a dance and his friend, Miss Scott, had been present.

We expected to stay in this place several days but late that night got orders to move early the next morning. We pulled out on July 12 and the next five days were the worst march that I had during the war. We would march from about five in the afternoon until nine or ten the next morning and on rainy or misty days would continue to march up until twelve or one o'clock in the day. By the time we had groomed the horses and fed the men we did not have more than two to four hours to sleep. It was a terribly hard march on both men and horses and we got so sleepy and it would be necessary to wake up every man before we could move again. Some of the men crawled off in the bushes and we did not find them in the dark to wake them up so that we lost six or eight men who caught up to us weeks later.<sup>2</sup>

The last few days were very disturbing. For two or three days we started out and marched for some hours and were then turned around and marched back to the same place from which we started. Evidently the high command changed its mind any number of times as to where to go into the line.

On the 15th of July the Germans attacked east of Reims and at the same time we were preparing an attack south of Soissons. As a result, we kind of hovered part way in between the two places. At one time we were close enough to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower. Finally, on the night of the 16th our horses were left behind and the guns were loaded into

trucks. The truck drivers were all Annamites [Vietnamese], or Chinese from French Indochina. We traveled all night and unloaded early next morning near the front, south of Soissons.<sup>3</sup>

The guns were hidden and the battery commander went forward to locate positions. Meanwhile, the horses and limbers without the weight of the guns were able to make good time and caught up to us late on the 17th. That evening about dusk while walking down the road with Captain Waldron, we found Captain Durant of A Battery asleep in a ditch opposite the road, just as drunk as he could be. He had selected his battery position but apparently none of the officers in his battery knew where it was so they had a time getting straightened out in A Battery. Waldron and I later put in charges against Durant but withdrew them at Colonel Dodd's request when Durant signed a pledge not to drink for eighteen months. That night we pulled up into position.

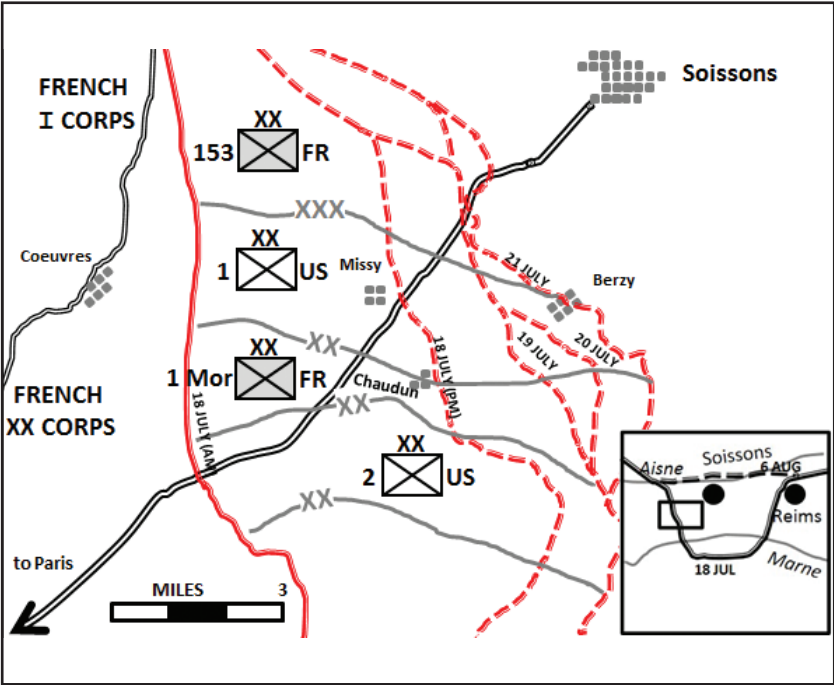


Figure 9. The First Infantry Division in the Aisne-Marne Campaign, July 1918.

Colonel Parker was afraid that all of the guns would not be in position in time and as he wanted a few guns in every position, he sent the first gun that came along to A and the next to B, etc. regardless of which battery they might belong to. As a result, I ended up with one of my own

guns and three guns from the other batteries. However, we untangled when we moved forward the next morning.<sup>4</sup>

It started to rain about midnight and continued until nearly daylight. No one had any sleep that night although everyone seemed to keep going in spite of the fact that we had had four or five very hard days marching before coming into the line. We were in position near the town of Coeuvres which is not far south of Soissons and north of the Villers-Cotteret Woods.

The attack started about 4:30 a.m. without prior artillery fire so that all of our firing was from map data.<sup>5</sup> We fired a heavy rolling barrage for some hours. The Germans came back with a considerable amount of artillery fire and for the first time since I had been at the front the noise affected my hearing. The noise had never bothered me before in the slightest up to this time but suddenly about 6:30 in the morning I discovered that I was quite deaf and stayed deaf almost the entire rest of the war, although I would have spells between attacks when my hearing would get a little better. Each new attack from that time on, however, would make me deaf again.

About 6:30 Colonel Crane took the three battery commanders forward on a reconnaissance. We rode across fields littered with dead and wounded and up on the high plateau west of the Paris-Soissons road. We went forward for some kilometers and then left our horses and proceeded on foot. We had not gone a thousand yards more when suddenly a German machine gun opened up on us. We noticed then that there were no dead and wounded lying around so came to the conclusion that there had been a gap in the line and we had walked into the gap until we came to the Germans. We dropped flat on the ground and started back, jumping from shell hole to shell hole.

Finally, we saw deploying across the field seven or eight hundred yards to our rear a Moroccan Regiment from the 42d Moroccan Division on our right.<sup>6</sup> As a result, we were caught between the lines with firing coming from both directions. Crane then announced that he was going to get up and walk back for if we tried to crawl back we would probably be shot by the Moroccans. Waldron and I were the only ones with him as Hall, who had started with us, stayed back with the horses. His foot had been burned badly with mustard gas and he could hardly walk. Waldron and I decided to follow Crane so we spread out and started back. The German machine gun bullets skipped all around us but luckily none of us were hit. We soon made our way through the Moroccan lines and

they looked at us as though we were crazy – marching in direct from the German lines toward them. We got back to the batteries and brought them up into new positions in the middle of a large wheat field west of Missy-au-Bois.

That afternoon John Crane went forward on another reconnaissance with Lieutenant Ransome and was very badly wounded. Crane had always, apparently, had the idea that he was not going to be hit and seldom bothered to duck when under fire. Ransome said that the expression on his face when he was wounded was one entirely of surprise as he had no expectation of being wounded at all. After great difficulty he was gotten back to a hospital and was not well enough to leave the hospital for nearly nine months.

The positions that we had taken up were in an old German trench and that afternoon as we had very little firing to do, we tried to get some sleep. After getting the position in order we let the men take turns catching a few hours nap. We slept down in the old German trenches which was a big mistake as we all were covered with cooties [British slang for lice] when we woke up. We found that the German cooties were much larger and much heartier than French, American, British, Moroccan or Algerian cooties. They showed their nationality as each one had a distinct iron cross on its back.

That afternoon a regiment of French cavalry came up with the idea of breaking through the line and cutting the Germans' lines of communication. However, there was so much barbed wire all over the fields that it was hard to see how they could do very much. They dismounted and waited in a field not far from us and pretty soon some German airplanes came over and the German artillery opened up on them, adjusted by the German plane. The slaughter was terrific until they pulled the French cavalry out again and sent it back.

The next morning we moved forward to new positions at Missy-au-Bois. On the way I ran into some of the 26th Infantry who were moving back into reserve and found Jim Manning in command. I stopped and talked to him for a few minutes as we went by. That afternoon he went back into the lines and was wounded.

When we got into our new position we were told that the advance of the Infantry had been held up by German machine guns and to endeavor to fire on the Germans. We were unable to get any information as to the location of our own front line or the location of the enemy. I sent Lieutenant Cheston forward to try to find out something. He came

back in a little while reporting that it was impossible to see the German front lines without going on the crest of a hill which was in plain view and was being swept by enemy fire so thoroughly that it was impossible to go there. He had tried climbing a tree from the top of which he could see over the hill but found the machine gun fire on the tree so heavy that he felt it was suicide to climb up.

I had had a terrible headache all morning, principally from lack of sleep, but decided to make a try at locating the enemy anyway. A tank had run over most of our telephone wire and we did not have enough to run a line to an observation post. I finally climbed into one of the trees along the Soissons-Paris road and found that I could see the enemy positions clearly from high up in the tree. I had Corporal Scully with me with a pair of semaphore flags and I called down data to him. He semaphored it back to Sergeant Blalock who had climbed up on top of a rudder of a German airplane that had fallen nose down in a field nearby. He relayed the messages to Sergeant Karns who was on a small hill near the battery.<sup>7</sup>

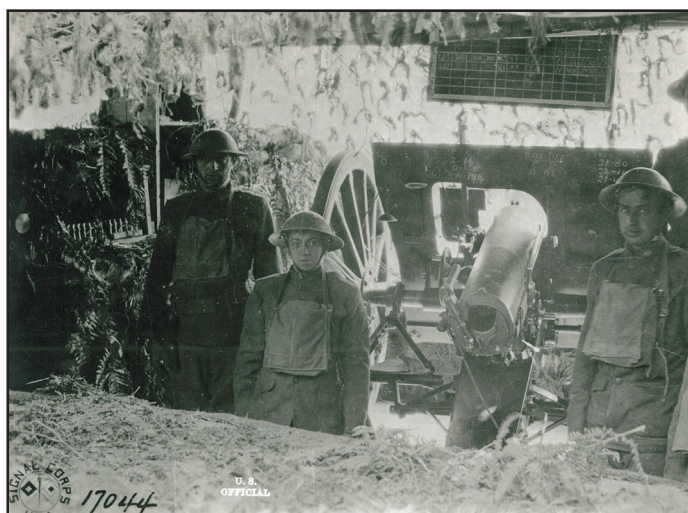


Figure 10. Three US artillerymen standing by their gun.  
Source: US Army Signal Corps.

We got a few shots off that landed close to the German machine guns and apparently they saw me and the semaphore man in the tree. They turned the works on the tree and it was lucky that the trunk of the tree was large enough so that I could get completely behind it except for one arm that I had to expose in order to hold on. Once when I was

peering out around the tree in order observe the shots a machine gun bullet clipped off a leaf that was attached to a branch touching the side of my head and a number of shots hit the trunk of the tree within a few inches of my hand. Whether the firing arrived from the Infantry to the tree had anything to do with it or whether the Artillery fire on the machine guns had anything to do with it, I do not know, but, in any event, at about that time the Infantry dashed forward and rushed over the machine guns. I got out of the tree as quickly as I could and went back to the battery.

That afternoon in firing one of the sergeants called my attention to the fact that his shells were going very close to the limbs of a tree to our front. I looked through the barrel and thought the shots would miss the tree and told him to keep on firing. However, one of the shells exploded a few hundred yards in front of us. An infantryman walking in the road near the tree was wounded in the arm, I am glad to say, not seriously. The same day a horse galloped by the battery toward the front. One of his legs had been tangled in barbed wire and nearly severed. He was running along on three legs, and disappeared in front of us running down toward the German front lines.

The weather was very warm and the odors were almost unbearable. We had to send out men with picks and shovels to bury all of the dead horses and men lying within a few hundred yards of us in order to cut down the smell as much as possible. I have never smelled anything like it and hope never to again. That night I was sitting in a hole dug in the ground with blankets over the top to keep the light from showing, figuring firing data on a map. I had a candle stuck on my helmet beside me. I fell asleep during the process and woke up with my coat on fire and the hole filled with smoke. The net result was one perfectly good coat ruined.

About midnight of the 19th we were told to move position. Captain Austin commanding the First Battalion had picked out a forward position and E and F of the Second Battalion and one battery from the First Battalion were moved forward. We got into the position sometime after four am just as it was light enough to see and were given a rolling barrage to fire for an attack. The attack was to start five minutes later. We were unable to get the fire started on time as we had to unlimber, locate the battery position and figure the data. This took about ten minutes so that we joined in on the rolling barrage five minutes later.

This position was near Chaudon and was in the middle of a field in a very exposed place. We were in plain view of the German balloons and for the three days we spent there we caught the dickens most of the time. Once a pile of ammunition near the battery caught on fire from a German shell. It was covered with a burlap camouflage net which burned very rapidly. I rushed out to try to put the fire out. The only man who rushed out to help me was Sergeant Chester Smith who tried to make me go back into the trench stating that he would take care of the fire. I appreciated very much his attitude in this even though I stayed until the fire was out, but my appreciation of Sergeant Smith's attitude cost me many a dollar later on.

A number of men were wounded and Sergeant Gottlieb had two sights blown off his gun while he was looking through them but was not hurt. We soon dug trenches deep enough to protect us from everything but direct hits.

One time during an intense bombardment I felt my nerve giving away. Before I knew it I was in the bottom of the trench trying to dig deeper with my fingers and I realized that if anyone saw me it would be a very bad example and that it was up to me to control my fright. I then decided that it didn't make much difference if I were killed or not and then proceeded to get out of the trench and sit exposed to the fire for awhile. I found this did my nerves a world of good and when two or three shots did not hit me I regained my composure.



## Notes

1. Troussencourt and Beauvais were located about 60 miles west of Soissons in the department of Picardy.

2. At this time there were seven combat-ready American divisions to oppose the German offensive. Five additional divisions were being acclimatized to front-line conditions in the quiet Alsace-Lorraine sector, five more divisions were serving with the British forces, and four divisions were being assembled in the American training areas.

3. The Germans attacked with 52 divisions. The offensive was two-pronged. One army on the right (Allied left) drove southeast from the Marne salient and another army on the left (Allied right) attacked south from positions east of Reims.

4. The French commander whose unit would receive the brunt of the German attack elected to pull the bulk of his forces from the forward trenches, leaving only outposts in what was known as a sacrifice line. While the vacant positions absorbed the German artillery bombardment, the French laid down a counter-barrage. As the German troops, battered by shellfire, neared the sacrifice line, the French and American troops fell back to an intermediate position. After repeating the delaying tactics, French and Americans again withdrew, this time to a main line of resistance. At this third line they held and later attempted to counterattack. This was the last major German offensive of the war. See *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, 29-37.

5. A few moments before the scheduled hour of attack, the Germans opened a violent bombardment on elements of the 16th Infantry Regiment. The infantry were tired after their difficult and fatiguing march to the front. Their morale was low until the American artillery barrage began. A commander reported that "This American barrage was the most inspiring incident of five days' fighting. We who have been depressed . . . under the German barrage now jumped up and hurried to our places. It was a great relief." See *Infantry in Battle*, 188-189.

6. The 42d Moroccan Division, including some of the best assault and shock troops in the French Army, was reserved always for occasions that required the utmost dash and desperate bravery. See Major General James G. Harbord, *The American Army in France 1917-1919*. (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1936), 328.

7. Evans may very well be the artillery liaison officer mentioned as an example of good command and communications in the classic 1939



work *Infantry in Battle*. In the example, “the liaison officer was known to be observing artillery fire from a tree.” See *Infantry in Battle*, 180. Also see Letter #16, Appendix 1.



## **Chapter 9**

### **Supporting the Scottish Black Watch Regiment<sup>1</sup>**

On July 23 [1918] the First Division was relieved by the Fifteenth Scottish Division which included the Scottish Black Watch Regiment. It was found that they did not have enough artillery in with them and therefore, some of the batteries in our brigade were ordered to stay in the line with them and assist their artillery. My battery was one of those picked and I stayed in the line until early morning of the 26th of July.<sup>2</sup>

The Scottish infantry all wore kilts and a great many jokes were made by our men as they marched by. The artillery, however, did not wear kilts and one of the Scottish batteries took a position right alongside my battery. They had English eighteen pound guns with six guns to a battery and a major in command of a battery. I thought they were very inexact in their figuring of firing data. The Scottish major came over to me after he had pulled his guns in, looked at my map, had me show him my location on the map and merely estimated his location from it.

That afternoon a barrage signal appeared on our front. One red rocket from the infantry was supposed to call for a normal barrage. As soon as our lookout reported it we fired immediately but the Scottish battery did not. I went over to find out what the trouble was and the Scottish major said: "It is foolish to waste ammunition by firing a barrage on one red rocket. If the infantry really need a barrage you can count on them sending up half a dozen." I never found out whether it was a false alarm or not but, at any event, the Scottish battery did not fire. All the major did was call out one of his sergeants and say "Oh I say, sergeant, have the men stand to, we might get an SOS."

The next day we fired a rolling barrage for an attack. Our orders called for starting the barrage at a range of about three thousand meters and the range was lengthened every five minutes until we reached a maximum of eight thousand meters. As the guns will not fire beyond fifty-five hundred meters without lowering the trails, as soon as we reached a range of four thousand meters I started dropping one gun at a time out of the firing to give the cannoneers an opportunity to dig a hole so that they could drop the trail and elevate the muzzle. By the time we reached fifty-five hundred meters all of the gun crews had dug holes for the trails of their guns and we, therefore, continued firing up to the eight thousand called for.

When the Scottish battery got to fifty-five hundred meters they stopped firing and when I asked for information from the Scottish major he replied "We would have to dig in in order to fire at a longer range and there's no use going to all of that trouble for, no doubt, the infantry will be stopped by the German long before they get that far." It turned out that he was right, but nevertheless he had no right to stop firing on a rolling barrage without specific orders.

Our kitchen was located a couple of miles to our rear in the woods and they would send up, after dark every night, little two-wheeled wagons with enough food for the next day. When it was put on the wagon it was as hot as they could get it so that sometime during the night we received a hot meal and had to depend on cold food the rest of the time.

One night they did not show up and as we were running low on food at the battery position I sent back and found that the driver had been killed on his trip the night before but that someone else would bring up food the following night.

The man picked to drive the ration cart the following night was Private Kinni. Kinni was one the worst soldiers in the battery. He was very young, hardly eighteen, and was a little skinny fellow who did not have sense enough to do anything. He was very sleepy looking, always losing his equipment and was a resolute "crybaby." Dozens of times he had come crying to the officers because someone had played a joke on him and, just because they knew he would cry, he was the butt of a great many jokes. The first sergeant had tried him at several things and found he could do nothing well and so finally put him on permanent KP.

Due to the ration car driver being a casualty, Private Kinni, however, was promoted from KP to that job and started off the first night driving the cart. He had not gone far when a shell exploded near him and killed the horse. He got the horse out of the harness, went back and got another horse, hitched in and started off again. A short distance farther on another shell killed the second horse, and smashed one of the wheels of the wagon. He then went back and got our *fourgon* wagon with two horses hitched in to it. The *fourgon* wagon was not driven by reins from the seat but one horse was ridden the same as an artillery team. He transferred the food to the new wagon and started off to the battery. This had delayed him so much, however, that day was breaking as he neared the battery.

I was standing out behind the battery position thinking that another night had gone by without food when I saw the wagon coming over the

hill toward us. The sun was just about up at this time and the German balloons could see every move we made. Kinni was about a quarter of a mile away driving across the fields to the battery at a brisk trot. I ran toward him waving for him to go back as I knew the German balloons would see him. Before he understood my signals, however, the German artillery opened up and a shell landed right beside the wagon and both horses went down. Kinni, however, jumped up and as I ran over to him he saluted more briskly than he ever had before in his army career. "Sir," he said, "The Germans killed four horses but they couldn't kill me and I brought the food up to the battery. They can't stop me." He was tremendously proud of his feat and at last felt that he was a part of the army. As a matter of fact, it was the only thing that he had been able to do except peel potatoes with any degree of success. However, this changed his entire outlook on everything and from that time on he was a pretty good soldier.

## **Notes**

1. The original text had the archaic expression “Scotch” which has been universally replaced with the modern term Scottish.

2. The First Division had lost more than 7,200 men, mostly from the infantry, which was a 43 percent casualty rate among infantrymen. In addition, a large number of officers were lost. For example, the 26th Infantry Regiment came out of battle commanded by a captain who had less than two years military experience.

## **Chapter 10**

### **The St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives<sup>1</sup>**

On the 25th of July the Scottish ammunition arrived and we pulled out about midnight, marching back to the railhead, arriving there July 28 and joined the rest of the regiment. We then went by train to Toul and went into camp in some fields near Chaudeney, arriving there July 30.<sup>2</sup>

Colonel Parker informed me that he was recommending my promotion to a captaincy. However, he was transferred out of the regiment the next day and the next ranking officer in the regiment, Captain Austin, took command. Due to Colonel Parker's leaving, my captaincy was delayed to such an extent that I did not hear about it until after the Armistice although it was dated, finally, November 6.

While resting here all the officers in the battery discussed very seriously the setting up of a battery officers' mess so that we would have better food on the front. Lieutenant Cheston was put in charge and he discovered that one of the privates in the battery had been a hotel cook. We bought an old French stove which would fit very nicely in the fourgon wagon and from then on during the rest of the war we ate marvelously.

On August 5 we started on a march to the front at Martincourt near Pont-a-Mousson.<sup>3</sup> One night we marched all night and just before daybreak were instructed by Captain Austin to go into camp in a field. When day came it was discovered we were in an open field with no shelter and at that time we were very close to the front. Austin caught the dickens from the general but luckily it was raining that day so no German airplanes saw us. That night we pulled up into positions on the front.<sup>4</sup>

I had an old French position that was very well fortified and camouflaged and was instructed not to fire the guns at all except in case of a German attack. There was a battery of French 90-mm guns right near my battery position and I was instructed to take over this battery and operate it, using most of my cannoneers and leaving only a skeleton gun crew on the 75-mm guns. For the three weeks we were on this front all of our firing was with the 90-mm guns. They had no recoil mechanism and had tracks on which the guns rolled back after firing. They were very accurate but were slow, and about one round a minute was as fast as we could fire at first, although after considerable practice the gun crews could sometimes get off two rounds a minute.

This was a very quiet front and neither we nor the Germans did very much firing. It was quite hot all the time we were on this front and the cooties bred very rapidly. It was necessary for both officers and men to spend at least a half an hour a day catching cooties. There were two favored methods of killing them. One was to stick a pin through them and the other was to drop them in the grease of a candle while the candle was burning. The latter method was much preferred.

Finally, on August 28 we were relieved by the artillery of the 78th Division and started on a march to the St. Mihiel area.<sup>5</sup> After two days march, we pulled into a wood known as the Bois-de-la-Reine which was a few miles back of the area we had occupied in this sector in January, February and March, earlier in the year. The woods were low and the fall rains came on and made the whole place a sea of mud. Nevertheless, we were quite happy to be sitting in the woods with nothing much to do. I had had command of the battery since January and had made a number of changes in noncommissioned officers and had everything running very smoothly with the net result that I had very little to do except to keep an eye on things as all of the men were most loyal and willing.

On September 4 Captain Ralph T. Heard, who had been in the regiment the year before but who had been away at schools ever since, reported for duty with the regiment. Colonel [William] Dodds, who had recently taken command succeeding Colonel Parker, looked over his list of officers and realized that F Battery was the only battery at this time not commanded by a captain. He, therefore, proceeded to send Heard to take command of F Battery which nearly broke my heart. Major Waldron went up to see Colonel Dodds but could get nowhere with him on it, and he, himself, the next day, was transferred out of the regiment to the Fifth Field Artillery. Major Austin succeeded him [as battalion commander].

A few days later I was called to regiment headquarters and shown an order from brigade calling on the regiment to send one gun in the command of an officer forward, on the day of the next attack, with the Infantry, as an accompanying gun.<sup>6</sup> I was told that I would have command of one of F Battery's guns and was given coordinates showing the location of my initial position to be taken up fifteen minutes before the attack was to start. The order was finally amended to give me command of two guns with another officer, Lieutenant Young, as my assistant.



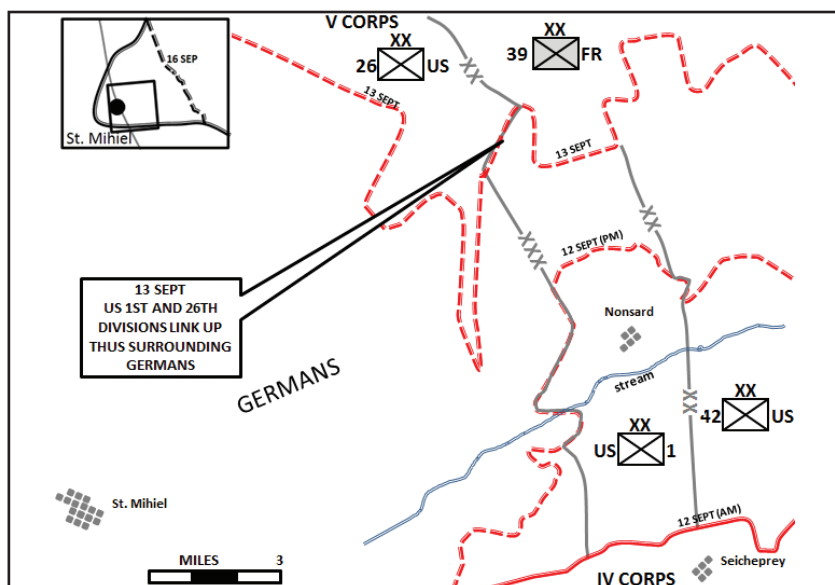


Figure 11. The First Infantry Division in the St. Mihiel Offensive.

I went on a reconnaissance and found that the location given me for the initial position was ahead of our front line and was near the town of Seicheprey, the ruins of which were in no man's land. I got the gun sections from E Battery and with the help of Sergeant McCabe of E Battery, proceeded to get all the necessary equipment together and give the men some preliminary training. Nearly every man in F Battery came up to me at one time or another in the next few days and asked me to use my influence, if any, to have them transferred to the accompanying guns so that they could go along on the expedition. However, I was not allowed to take any of F Battery's men at all.

The day before the attack Lieutenant Young was taken sick and instead of giving me another officer they took one gun away from me and I was instructed to take only one accompanying gun. In the meantime, the batteries had been preparing gun positions, working at night and sleeping in the daytime, and on the night of the 11th of September we were informed that the attack would start the next morning.<sup>7</sup>

The batteries all started for their previously prepared positions after dark so as to be in position by 1 am and ready to fire at that time. I was instructed to go to E Battery's position and arrived there at about midnight and pick up the gun to go with me from E Battery's position. I hooked a ride in one of F Battery's wagons. It was raining hard and pitch black so that the wagon had to crawl along at a snail's pace. The

infantry were streaming along the road going forward to their positions. The men were a cheerful lot and joked and sang as they sloshed along in the mud. The newcomers joked and sang because of their excitement and to keep their nerves up and the old-timers who had been in attacks before joked and sang so that no one would know how scared they really were.



Figure 12. A mule team, hauling a US ammunition wagon, is holding up the advance of the whole column. East of St. Mihiel, France, September 13, 1918.

Source: US Army Transportation School.

Due to the traffic jam and the mud and the darkness it was long after midnight before I arrived at E Battery's position and it was starting to get light by the time I pulled the gun down the Beaumont-Siechprey Road toward my first position. About fifteen minutes before the zero hour I pulled through the front line and took a position in the open behind Siechprey. At the zero hour I opened up at about three to five hundred yards range on the German front line and fired around fifty rounds. I then ordered the horses up and started forward following the Infantry. It was tough going as no man's land was a sea of mud. The front had been fairly stable here for a number of years and the constant shelling had churned up the land until it was merely a series of shell holes. We had great difficulty getting by the old trench systems and several times had to wait for the engineers to fill in a portion of the trench.

In my hurry to get forward I pulled ahead with the gun, as the horses on the gun were a little better than those on the caisson. Finally I got across into what had been the German lines and had great difficulty in crossing a stream there. An accompanying gun from the Seventh FA

tried to cross on an old narrow gauge railroad bridge and when they were half over the gun slipped off the bridge into the stream probably fifteen feet below and pulled all of the horses and men off the bridge into the water. I understand that the men were not hurt as most of them jumped clear before the entangled mass of horses and harness and gun hit the bottom. However, I did not try to cross on that bridge as it was so narrow that the wheels of the gun would just fit on the bridge without leaving any allowance for a few inches movement right or left.

I finally found an old stone bridge that had been blown up and some of the Engineers came along and took some of the stones from the old bridge to make a base for a ford. I then got across and caught up with the infantry brigade headquarters on a piece of high ground that gave a good view of the town on Nonsard. The front wave of the infantry was closing in on the town. I was very anxious to shoot at the town but General [Frank] Parker who commanded the [1st] Infantry Brigade headquarters sent Lieutenant Anderson, our liaison officer, to me with the request that I keep away from his brigade headquarters as I might attract German fire. The infantry were going along without much opposition and he did not need any help. About that time the caisson caught up with me. They had gotten stuck in no man's land, had unhitched the horses and hooked on behind a friendly tank and the tank had pulled them across no man's land until they had gotten to a good road.

Finally General Parker told me to take a position in front of the woods about half a mile to the left to protect his left flank which at the time was practically undefended. As General Parker's left flank was the left flank of all of the troops on the south side of the salient, I had no infantry at all between my position and the Germans occupying the salient. However, none of the Germans tried to attack and the only thing I saw was a wagon in the distance. I think it was a German wagon but it disappeared in the woods before I could fire.

We stayed in this position until about midnight when Captain Randolph from regimental headquarters came by and together we went to General Parker's headquarters. General Parker said he had no further need of the gun and, therefore, I was ordered to rejoin the regiment. At about daybreak the regiment moved forward and I turned the gun back to E Battery and rejoined F Battery.

We went into position near Nonsard and stayed there a day without firing a shot. Our infantry had joined the troops attacking south from the

other side of the salient and the entire St. Mihiel salient was cut off and many thousands of Germans were captured.

A German hospital had been right in our path of advance and my orderly, with several other men, went through the hospital and brought us back a case of canned meat, a case of unfermented fruit juices, a number of German officer's saddles and a little two-wheeled wagon that we decided to use to carry the officer's baggage. He also found a bottle of brandy which helped a lot as it was very cold and wet and, of course, no fires were allowed. A couple of days later we moved into some German barracks in woods nearby supposedly for a few days rest. We had no sooner gotten there than we were ordered to turn in all captured German equipment and had to turn in our Officer's saddles and the two-wheeled cart.

The canned goods and the brandy, however, were gone by that time. Some of the Infantry units, I understand, found a number of kegs of beer but were made to break open the kegs and dump the beer on the ground and were not allowed to use it. We found out after one day in the barracks that the Germans had left the place full of fleas, and we were almost eaten up. Fleas were found to be much worse than cooties as cooties cannot jump and it is possible to catch them whereas the fleas were a very agile lot and were almost impossible to catch.

After a few days in the woods we started on a march toward the Argonne. On September 23 we went into camp in the Bois-d'Ahaye. Captain Heard was taken sick here and I again assumed command of the battery. The Argonne attack started on the morning of September 26. At 11:00 pm of the 25th we started to march toward the lines and we were only given a short notice before pulling out. I had let a number of men go into town with the understanding that they would be back in camp by 9 o'clock. However, half a dozen of them did not arrive back before we left and we did not see them again until after the Armistice.<sup>8</sup>

We marched all night and pulled into a wood near Nixeville early the next morning. General Summerall [now the division commander] came by the next morning and as his car stopped made the remark to another general in the car with him "I see this is part of my old brigade so we do not have to inspect them as I know they are all right." While he was our brigade commander we were scared to death of him and he was very hard-boiled but as soon as he was promoted to a larger command he got very hard-boiled with everyone else except his old brigade and nothing was too good for us after that.

When we unloaded our wagons at Nixeville I found that my bedding roll was missing. I sent a man back on a horse to follow along the road we had come over the night before. He went all the way back to our previous camp but found no sign of it. I had a brand new uniform in it, a new pair of riding boots, all my personal belongings, including a log book in which I had made daily entries of everything that had happened since I had been in command of F Battery.



Figure 13. American Field Artillery on the move, France 1918.

Source: *The Field Artillery Journal*, July/August 1925.

On the 29th we pulled out toward the front and marched intermittently until the night of September 30th when we went into the lines. This was really a terrible march. While we did not cover much ground it rained the whole time. The mud and the traffic made the going very slow. We did not make any further camps but merely stopped in our path in the road when traffic was held up, unhitched the horses and fed them, hitched in and moved on again when we could. Finally, we were stopped by the traffic in the woods and did not turn a wheel for nearly twenty-four hours.<sup>9</sup>

Another time one of our guns slipped off into a ditch together with a number of the horses. It was about midnight and pitch black and it took us several hours to get the gun out of the ditch, to get the horses out and the harness patched up sufficiently so that the gun could be pulled. However, traffic jams had kept the unit ahead of us from moving more



than a few yards during the interval so that we did not lose our place in line.

Every time we stopped the men would flop off their horses and go sound asleep. When men got tired enough they could sleep no matter where they are and we would often find men sleeping right in mud and water and on rocks. In fact I took a snooze one night and when I awoke I realized I had been laying on a pile of crushed rocks that had been dumped on the side of the road for repairs, with my head on a rock a little larger than the rest.

All the time we were pulling up toward the front there was a steady stream of wounded and stragglers marching back. We discovered from these men that we were behind the 35th Division and evidently the 35th must have been pretty badly [off] as these men had no idea of what was happening or where their outfits were.<sup>10</sup>

On the night of the 30th we pulled up into the front and took positions near the town of Charpentry. We could not find any of the 35th Division Artillery around although we did see several of their abandoned guns, and in the valley near Charpentry there was a picket line with about eighty horses on it and with a group of men taking care of them. These belonged to one of the artillery units in the 35th. They did not know where their regiment was and were waiting for orders which never came, since what was left of the regiment had apparently pulled out forgetting this particular group.

The next day I went by this position, and all eighty horses were lying dead still tied to the picket line, and a number of the men were also dead. The valley had been gassed heavily during the night and apparently most of them had been gassed and those who had not been gassed had been killed by shell fire. They did leave, however, a considerable amount of almost brand new harness which came in very handy as our harness was pretty well worn out.

We had a little difficulty getting into the gun positions near Charpentry. It was very dark and the roads were being shelled heavily. One crossroad, particularly, had a shell dropped in on it every two or three minutes. We stayed out of range and waited until the shell exploded and then sent one carriage at a time by the crossroads at a gallop. The net result was that the whole battery got by without a casualty. Ralph Heard, who had gone to the hospital about September 23 returned to the battery just before we pulled into the position so again I was only second in command.

There was not a great deal doing for the next few days, most of the time being spent in organizing the position. The German artillery, however, was very active and all of our positions and our kitchens, particularly, were shelled heavily a large part of the time. The German guns doing the shelling could not be located and on the 3d of October I was called into regimental headquarters and instructed to go over to the 28th Division sector on our left, climb the hills near the Argonne Forest and try to locate the German batteries.<sup>11</sup>

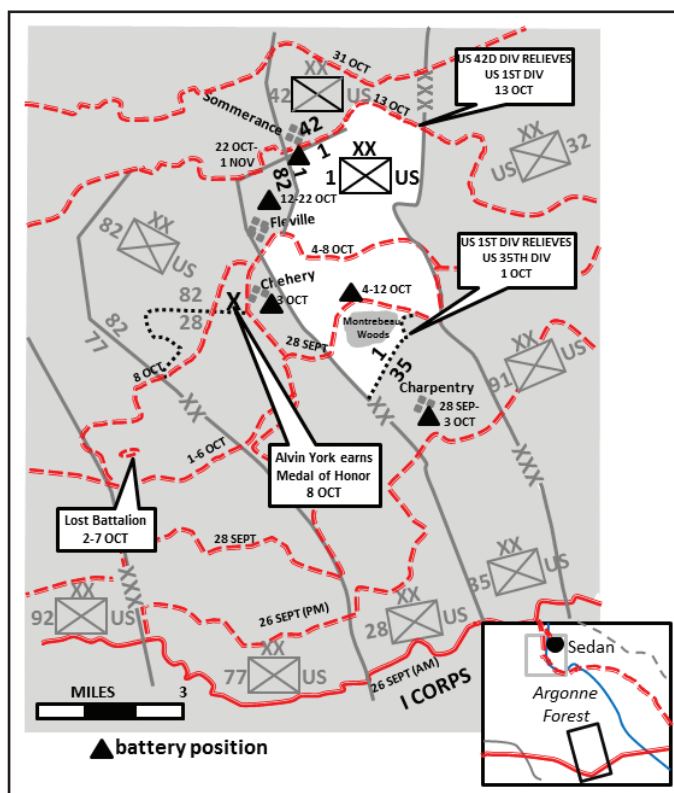


Figure 14. The First Infantry Division in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Phase I. This map includes the locations of Evans' battery.

While these batteries could not be seen from our own observation posts, there was a possibility that they could be located from the high hills on our left. I took a few men, some telephones and some wire and worked my way through the 28th Division up to a machine gun company that had a position on a high hill that overlooked a lot of the German positions in front of the First Division.<sup>12</sup>

I ran the telephone wire down to one of the 28th Division units and was able to get a connection through the First Division headquarters to our own regiment. I was able to see the flashes of a number of German guns and plotted the positions as nearly as I could and sent them back. It was near midnight when I put through my final report and was ordered to stay in my position the rest of the night. Early the next morning, October 4, there was a general attack down the whole front so I immediately took my squad of men to return to the regiment. The shelling was very heavy and I had a [tough] time getting back.<sup>13</sup>

On the afternoon of October 3 I had gone through the town of Charpentry and passed an ammunition dump near the town. When I went back the next morning I found that the ammunition dump had been hit and apparently the whole place had exploded, for everything for yards around had been laid flat. A 155 GPF [*Grande Puissance Filloux*] gun with its tractor had been turned over completely by the blowing up of the ammunition dump.

I got back to the battery position just as the battery was moving forward. They had had a tough time and Sergeant Gottlieb and a half a dozen of his section had been killed. The detail that we had sent on liaison that morning, I heard, had been wiped out with the exception of three men.<sup>14</sup>

Private Sager had come up to me the day before and offered to go on liaison in place of Private Arnold. Arnold had been on liaison several times before while Sager had never been. I found out afterwards that Arnold had paid Sager 1000 francs to do this, but I did not know it at the time but merely thought Sager wanted the experience. I, therefore, sent Sager on liaison and he was killed the next morning. Arnold who paid 1000 francs to get out of the job was then sent by the First Sergeant to replace Sager who had been killed and Arnold had never been seen since. No doubt, he was killed and remained unidentified but he is one of the few men that the regiment carries as missing.

Lieutenant Rose of E Battery was also killed the morning of October 4. Before we went into the line he had had an opportunity to be transferred back to GHQ and secure a promotion. I always understood that this was through the influence of a relative who was on Pershing's staff. However, Rose had been selected to head the liaison detail, and he was afraid that someone would think he was yellow if he left soon before the attack. He, therefore, declined the transfer and went forward with the liaison detail being killed early in the morning on the edge of



Montrebeau Woods. His body was secured by some of the men in the regiment and put in a wagon and brought back to regimental headquarters. However, on the way back a shell hit the wagon and blew it to pieces and practically destroyed his body entirely. A funeral was held and a grave marked but there was not much found to put in it.

The regiment had sent forward two accompanying guns that morning under the command of Lieutenant Smith of A Battery. They went up over the crest of the hill and German artillery and machine gun fire wiped them out before they could fire a shot. All of the horses were killed and all of the men (about twenty-four) were killed or wounded except three.

When I joined the battery that morning I had the mess sergeant throw a few cases of canned goods onto the caissons. A case of tomatoes, a case of beans and a case of dried prunes were taken along with the firing battery. As we lost our kitchen for several days after this it was lucky that we had our food along, as it was all the battery had to eat until the kitchen was again located. We went forward and took position on top of the hill near Chehery.<sup>15</sup> Major Austin went forward with the infantry, [who] had pointed out to him a large nest of German machine guns that was holding up the advance of the infantry.

Battalion headquarters ran a telephone back to the battery and after I had located the battery Austin gave me the approximate coordinates of the machine guns and I fired one gun. Austin adjusted this gun on the enemy machine guns and I then laid the entire battalion parallel to the adjusted gun. Initial range was about nine hundred yards. We fired for about ten minutes and then the telephone line to Austin was shot out of commission. I raised the range for about ten more minutes and then ceased firing.

Meantime, the German artillery had located us as we were in plain view and put down pretty heavy fire on our position. Some Signal Corps men with a moving picture camera had followed us all morning and took pictures of everything we did. These pictures are now part of the Signal Corps film known as *Flashes in Action* and most of those of the artillery in this film were the pictures taken of us that day and the next.

While we were going into position, a tank came over the hill, went down the hill in front of the battery and attempted to cross the ditch at the bottom of the hill. The ditch was too deep for the tank and it turned over and the door was jammed up against the side of the ditch. I sent some men down with picks and shovels to dig away the side of the

ditch so that the door of the tank could be opened and to my surprise Leslie Buckler crawled out of the tank. I had not seen him for a year and thought he was still in the Motor Transport Service. He was pretty well shaken up and went on back to the hospital.

Major Austin decided that we should stay in the same position although it was very much exposed. He felt, however, that the infantry would continue to go forward rapidly and that it was not worthwhile to change position. We were bombarded pretty much all night by enemy fire and the next morning when we fired a rolling barrage the German artillery opened up on us again and we had a great many casualties. Practically every gun in the battalion had been hit by shell splinters and there was hardly a wheel left that did not have one or two spokes out.

We finally were ordered to abandon the position and all of the men were pulled down the hill in front of the battery. We then sent up a squad of men to roll one gun down. As soon as they appeared on the hill the German artillery opened up. They were firing direct fire on us from the Argonne Forest and we could see the flashes of their guns over on the hill to our left, in front of the 28th Division. We finally got all of the guns down but not without losing several men.

An infantry officer came along with a report that the heavy artillery was firing short and wanted a telephone message sent back. Our telephone was on top of the hill and under very heavy fire. Corporal Shoebridge volunteered to try to get the telephone call through and went up on top of the hill to the telephone. However, he was unable to send the message through as the telephone line was out of order. He himself was hit in the leg by a piece of shell and was sent back to the hospital, dying the next day. If ever a man deserved a decoration Shoebridge certainly was the one. However, he did not receive the Distinguished Service Cross but only got the Silver Star Medal.<sup>16</sup>

When we had run all of the guns down to the foot of the hill we got the horses up and hitched them in and pulled out to the right. There was a stretch of about 100 yards where the horses had to pass in full view of the enemy and this stretch was being pounded by the German artillery. We sent one team out at a time and they would go past the open space at a gallop. All of the guns went through but several more men were wounded and some of the horses attached to caissons were killed and a number of men killed.

We took a position on the edge of Montrebeau Woods and stayed in this position until October 12. It was while we were in this position

that Major Austin was killed. He spent most of his time up with the infantry and was a daredevil if there ever was one. He always seemed to be looking for trouble and if there were two ways of doing a thing, one more dangerous than the other, he would usually pick the more dangerous way. He borrowed one of F Battery's men, Corporal Bergmarck, one day and took him with him up to the front line. This was, I think, on October 7. Neither one ever got back as they were both killed by high explosive shells.

Captain Pollin of D Battery succeeded him in command of the battalion. A day or two before this Pollin had gone back a few hundred yards from the battery in order to get some quiet to work on his map, figuring up some firing data. One of the men on the guns thought that Captain Pollin was merely going back from the battery because he was scared to stay and pulled out his pistol and was about to shoot him in the back. However, one of the sergeants tackled the man and got him down and I don't believe Pollin ever knew how close he was to being shot by one of his own men. Nothing was done to the man who attempted to do this. Everybody's nerves were on edge and of those who knew it nothing was said until long afterwards.

Very few men, however, showed any signs of being afraid or bothered. One man was wounded and ran the length of the battalion screaming at the top of his lungs until one of the Medical Detachment men got him and bandaged him up. That was one of the few times I saw anybody actually give way. Most of the men took everything very cheerfully and would sit in a shell hole and shoot craps for cigarettes even if shells were dropping all around.

Captain Heard of F Battery had returned and took command of the battery about September 30. I had been in command for a long time when he came back to the battery and it so happened that he let me continue to run the battery as far as most of the details were concerned and merely tagged along. When we would pull into position he would usually get all the officers' orderlies and have them dig him a nice little dugout so that by the time Mackall and Cheston and I had the battery firing, Heard would be very well fixed and quite comfortable. We got into the habit of paying no attention to him whatsoever but going ahead with what we knew had to be done.

On October 4 or 5 Heard decided that he had been gassed and went back to battalion headquarters to the doctor.<sup>17</sup> He had not been any place that I had not been and if I wasn't gassed I am quite sure he was

not either. We had had a little gas around but not enough to seriously hurt him. He finally was kicked out of battalion headquarters by the surgeon and told to get back to duty, that he wasn't gassed. However, after the Armistice up in Germany he worked on the doctor until the doctor decided that he had treated him for gas and Heard immediately started to wear a wound stripe.<sup>18</sup>

October 12 we moved forward to a position near Fleville.<sup>19</sup> We found an old German 77-mm gun that had been abandoned and was in good condition. We got a book on German guns and proceeded to lay the gun along with our battery and, for three or four days we were in this position, fired the German gun every day until all of the German ammunition that we could find had been used up.

On October 14 we were informed that we would be relieved by the 42d Division and about midnight pulled out of positions and started to march to the rear. After marching for about two hours the column was halted and turned around and we were ordered to go back to the same positions again, arriving back in position before daylight. This was terribly discouraging as everyone the night before had been tremendously cheered up by the thought of a rest. The net result of the maneuver was four hours marching and we were right back where we started.



Figure 15. The 6th Field Artillery Regiment on the march.  
Source: US Army Signal Corps.

The 42d Division attack the next day did not make much headway. On October 22 we moved our positions to the woods near Sommerance. On the 23rd of October we were given permission to send part of our men back to the horse lines leaving only skeleton gun crews at the battery. This enabled the men to clean up, take baths and was a very pleasant interlude. We had been about a month since that last opportunity to take a bath and most of them had not had their clothes off in the interval.<sup>20</sup>

## Notes

1. The Meuse-Argonne campaign was the largest battle fought in American history up to that time. Pershing's forces consisted of 1,034,300 troops, including 138,300 French. The battle was vital to the defeat of the German forces and was America's main contribution to the war's decision. Despite its title, this chapter relates Evans' experiences in the St. Mihiel campaign and only the beginning of the Meuse-Argonne campaign.

2. The French attack succeeded and the Germans repositioned in an orderly fashion from the Marne salient all the way back to the Vesle River.

3. See Figure 5, page 21.

4. See Frank J. Mackey and Marcus Wilson Jernegan. *Forward-March! Section One – The Photographic Record of America in the World War and the Post War Social Upheaval* (Chicago: Department of Rehabilitation, The Disabled American Veterans of the World War, 1939), 20-22.

5. A separate American Army of 19 divisions, under command of General John Pershing, was established on 10 August 1918. The army's first operation was the elimination of a German salient southeast of Verdun around the town of St. Mihiel that had existed since 1914.

6. The First Division attacked in the St. Mihiel offensive on 12 September in the Beaumont sector, twenty kilometers northeast of Toul. In nineteen hours, the division advanced approximately nine miles. The division was then placed in reserve of the IV Corps. The division advanced to the north and linked up with the 26th Division advancing to the south from the opposite side of the German salient, thus surrounding the German forces near St. Mihiel. The accompanying gun concept was an attempt to provide immediate fire support to the advancing infantry by attaching one or two field artillery guns directly to a rifle company. The guns would typically be employed in direct fire mode rather than the routine indirect fire procedure used by artillery at the time. The concept was not very effective as the guns were bulky and hard to move at the pace of an infantry advance and left the gunners particularly vulnerable to enemy fire. In the interwar period lighter mortars were developed and in World War II eventually mortars at the infantry company and battalion levels replaced the guns. See John McGrath, *Fire for Effect: Field Artillery and Close Air Support in the US Army* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 27, 35, 59.

7. Just after midnight on 12 September 1918, the first battle fought by an all American force began when three thousand American guns opened up on the German lines opposite the St. Mihiel salient. Four hours later,

deafened yet exhilarated by the thunder of their guns, the infantry advanced. Twenty-four hours later the attack had succeeded.

8. On 25 September the intelligence officer of the German High Military Command assessed the American attack thusly: “The artillery preparation prior to the attack was well carried out. Their objectives were bombarded with good effect and they were able to switch from one target to another in the minimum time and with remarkable accuracy. The coordination between the infantry and the artillery was faultless. If the infantry ran up against a machine gun nest they would immediately fall back, and very soon new artillery preparations would be directed on that point. A great many tanks were in readiness for the attack, but they were only used in very small numbers, as the masses of infantry accomplished the victory.”

9. This huge traffic jam resulted from the rapid transfer of some 800,000 men, 200,000 French moving out of the new American sector west of Verdun, and 600,000 Americans moving in.

10. The 1st Division was in reserve from 26 September to 1 October at the start of the Meuse-Argonne offensive. The division took over for the 35th Division on 1 October. During this initial period the 1st Division’s artillery reinforced that of the 35th Division. See *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, 177. For the experience of the 35th Division, a unit composed of elements from the Kansas and Missouri National Guard, during this period see Robert H. Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne: The Failure of the Missouri-Kansas Division* (Columbia, MO; University of Missouri Press, 2004).

11. By this time, the 1st Division was a veteran organization and had learned much about infantry-artillery liaison. It became common for artillery officers to call for and adjust artillery fire from the front infantry positions or in positions overlooking the battlefield. See *Infantry in Battle*, 355. In late September, the French Commander Ferdinand Foch ordered a massive offensive. The plan called for a series of convergent and practically simultaneous attacks across a wide front. On 26 September the Americans attacked towards the Meuse River through the Argonne Forest, and the French attacked west of the Argonne, both in the direction of Mezieres. On 27 September the British attacked along the St. Quentin-Cambrai front in the direction of Maubeuge and on 28 September the Belgian and Allied forces in the north attacked in the direction of Ghent. Although the Germans defended resolutely, the Allies had breached the Hindenburg Line by 29 September. This was the same day that the German commander Erich Ludendorff had a nervous breakdown. On 3 October a German appeal for an immediate armistice was sent to President Woodrow Wilson.



12. The 28th Division had the adjacent sector just west of the 35th Division and remained in the line until 7 October when it was replaced by the 82d Division. Evans went into the neighboring division's sector to observe and direct the fires of his battery from high terrain.

13. The 1st Division, in a fine display of power, drove a deep wedge into the enemy's line which was of great value in affording space for the attack toward the Argonne which was to be launched later. The fighting here was characterized by the stubborn nature of the German resistance and the offensive spirit of the division.

14. The 1st Division was determined to solve the problem of artillery-infantry coordination. At the start of an attack, the concept of an artillery rolling barrage was sound. As the attack continued, the rolling barrage, which lifted and shifted forward on a time schedule, may become either too slow or too fast. In the first case it holds up the attack, in the latter it outruns the attack. Having artillery brigade, battalion and battery commanders serve as liaison officers, a role that is now filled by designated forward observers and fire support officers, provided for much more accurate and timely artillery fire. See *Infantry in Battle*, 341-342, 353-355.

15. Just west of Chehery on 8 October, Corporal Alvin York of the 82d Division virtually singlehandedly captured a whole German battalion, earning the Medal of Honor.

16. The Distinguished Service Cross is the second highest award for valor (after the Medal of Honor) in the US Army. The Silver Star is the next lower decoration. See Appendix 4.

17. This coincided with the First Division taking over the 35th Division's sector in the Argonne and continuing the attack. By the end of the first day of the renewed attack the Germans, threatened with being cut off, began to retreat.

18. On the Meuse-Argonne front, the US First Army renewed its offensive on 4 October after inserting experienced divisions into the line, but during the brief pause in operations the Germans also brought in reinforcements. As a result the Americans progressed no more swiftly than before. During this timeframe a "lost battalion" of the 77th Division, to the 1st Division's left beyond the 28th Division's sector, was surrounded for five days before other troops could break through to free 194 survivors out of the original 600. As previously mentioned, Corporal Alvin York of the 82d Division, on the 1st Division's immediate left, while on a patrol singlehandedly killed 15 Germans and captured 132, a feat which won him



the Medal of Honor. See *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, 227-230, 362-365.

19. The 1st Division was relieved in the frontline by the 42d Division on 13 October. However, the 1st Division's artillery, including Evans' unit, supported the 42d until 22 October.

20. The American attack opened well, adding surprise to its numerical superiority of eight to one, but soon lost impetus because of supply and terrain problems. On October 14, after bitter fighting and severe losses, the US forces were still far from their objectives.



## **Chapter 11**

### **Command of Battery B**

On the 25th (October 1918) however, we were back into position. On the last day of October the Second Division relieved the 42d and a big attack was planned. I made a deal with Heard that I would stay up all night, figure up all the firing data and take care of the night firing for him if he would get up in the morning and direct the fire of the battery until it was time to move forward if the attack was successful and that I would, therefore, sleep from about 4:30 am on. About 3:30 am after I had completed figuring up the firing data for the rolling barrages for the attack and had directed the night firing, I received a message from regimental headquarters to take command of B Battery immediately as all of their officers had been wounded. In one way this was unwelcome news as I had been up all night that night and had not had much sleep for several days. On the other hand, I was glad to get command of a battery of my own again.

I got over to B Battery about a half an hour before the attack was to start and found one second lieutenant there, Lieutenant Dries, who had recently reported to the regiment. He was very green and knew practically nothing about firing data. I found that all the rest of the officers had been wounded at the same time and that their maps had all been destroyed. They had been working on the maps when a shell landed in their midst and the maps not actually destroyed were so covered with blood that they could not be used. I got some new maps and started to figure the data for the rolling barrage. At the time the attack was to start I had completed figuring the first ten minutes of firing which I gave to the gun crews and while they were firing that ten minutes I figured the data for the next ten minutes and was just able to keep ahead of them all morning.

After firing for four or five hours we were ordered to move forward. When the horses came up to the gun position I noticed two white horses. The Sixth Field had never had any white horses before and I was very much surprised. I asked the stable sergeant about it and he reported that he had found them wandering loose. Far be it from me to inquire further, although I suspected that they were not wandering loose of their own accord. We needed the horses too badly to argue about it. That morning when we passed Colonel Dodds on the road he asked me where the white horses had come from and I repeated the sergeant's answer that they had been found wandering loose. Colonel Dodds knew

we needed horses very badly too and did not inquire any further into the matter. Both Colonel Dodds and I were quite deaf by this time, although I did not know he was deaf until much later.

A few days before I had taken him on an expedition trip up to the top of the Cote-de-Malda where there was an excellent view of the enemy lines and where our observation post was located. I explained in detail the enemy line, did a lot of talking and it was not until some years afterwards that I learned the he had heard not more than half I had said. At the same time he had spoken a number of times during the day but I have yet to hear one word that he said. I tried to keep talking so that he would not have a chance to speak as I did not want him to know that I was deaf for fear of being sent back and evidently he was embarrassed about his own deafness so the two of us spent several hours talking to each other without hearing very much and without letting on that we did not hear.

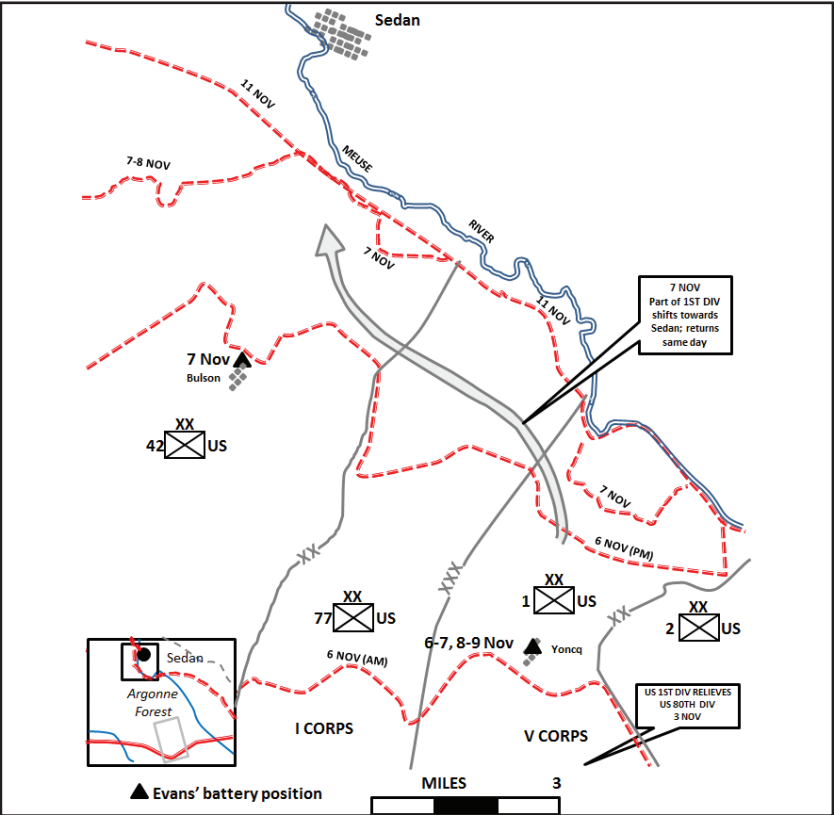


Figure 16. The First Infantry Division in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Phase II.

Since the first time I became deaf on July 18, 1918 I had been more or less deaf all of the time. Between attacks my ears would get a little better but as soon as there was any volume of firing I would immediately go deaf again. My guess is that 50 percent of the men in the battery were deaf by this time. For the next three or four days we were continuously on the move, trying to keep up with the Second Division who had gone forward very rapidly in the attack.

On the night of November 1 we were at Landreville where we stayed until November 3.<sup>1</sup> We had had so many casualties in horses and men and the rest of the horses were in such poor condition that at Landreville on November 3 we abandoned one of our guns. Practically every battery in the Regiment had to do this and these were left under a guard when the regiment went forward again. On November 3 the First Infantry Division took over the line again. We received rumors during the day that an Armistice had been signed and there was much cheering all up and down the front. Except for a minimum guard everyone then turned in for a good sleep. I had not been asleep an hour when the telephone rang and I was informed that the Armistice rumor was a fake and that it was necessary for us to change position that night as the Infantry was to attack the next morning. We pulled out of the position about midnight and were on the go continuously thereafter until Armistice Day.

The next day we took up a position at Nouart but did not do any firing and the officers of the First Battalion played poker the entire day.<sup>2</sup> On the 5th we moved forward and took positions at Yoncq. While moving forward we were shelled along the road and had quite a few casualties of horses and one man killed and a number wounded. Corporal Roberts came to me about a half an hour after the shelling and showed me a big hole in his side and said he had not noticed it until that minute. In the excitement of the shelling and others being wounded apparently his nerves had been sufficiently deadened so that he did not realize that he was hit. Just then an ambulance came by and we put him in.

After we got into position and were ready to fire we held a battery funeral for Private May who had been killed along the road earlier in the day. On the 6th we received word that the division was to march through enemy territory and attempt to capture Sedan the following morning. After dark we started on a march that lasted all night. Through a mix up in orders at battalion headquarters the horses of B Battery were not instructed to come up to the battery positions with the rest of the battalion. I did not discover this until the rest of the battalion was ready to leave. I sent back a messenger and got the horses up as soon

as possible but this delay put me at the tail of the regiment when I was supposed to be up near the head. It took me all night to get the battery into its proper place.

The next morning when it became light we realized that we were marching through the territory that had been held by the Germans the evening before and, therefore, were very cautious. The Germans were pulling out as fast as they could but even so there were a few stray German soldiers in every town captured. About 8 am we pulled into the town of Bulson which was near enough to Sedan so that we could have fired on the town. However the French had come up on our left during the night and claimed the honor of capturing the town so we were ordered to sit tight and do nothing. This was welcome news. I had been about three days and two nights without sleeping.



Figure 17. Evans' Battery Refreshing Their Horses. Evans is third from left.

We first had to feed the horses and the men, clean the guns, groom, etc. but by noon we could all turn in and I slept for about fourteen hours. On the 8th we pulled back near Yoncq. I met Stewart Smith on the road that day. He had been sent with a message by his company commander in the Marine Corps and having delivered it was on the way to his regiment.<sup>3</sup>

The French people in this territory had been behind the German lines for four years and they certainly welcomed us with open arms. They flocked around us in the little towns, brought out bread and in

some cases jam and offered slices of bread with jam on it to the soldiers as they went by.

On November 9 we received word to march south to a division concentration area where the Division was to be assembled preparatory to an attack toward Metz. We marched from Yoncq through Beaumont and parallel to the front to the Dieulet Forest where we made camp on the night of the 9th.<sup>4</sup> We stayed there awaiting orders until the 12th. We heard on the 11th that an Armistice had been signed but it took us all day before we really believed it. Finally, when we did believe it we built fires to warm the men. We had been going for weeks in the cold fall weather without lighting fires. It was very welcome to be warmed up again and also to dry out our clothes and blankets which had been wet and damp for many weeks.<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

1. Landreville was located off the southern edge of the map in Figure 15 in the 1st Division sector.

2. Noart was located off the southern edge of the map in Figure 15 in the 1st Division sector.

3. Under pressure of continuing Allied attacks and of public agitation at home, the Germans early on 8 November sent delegates to a railroad siding in the Compiègne Forest west of Soisson to discuss armistice terms with the Allies. The next day, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated, fleeing in exile to the Netherlands, and the Germans proclaimed a republic. The fighting ended at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, 11 November 1918.

4. Beaumont was 17 miles south of Sedan in the Argonne Forest.

5. The 6th Field Artillery Regiment received campaign participation credit for: Montdidier-Noyon; Aisne-Marne; St. Mihiel; Meuse-Argonne; Lorraine 1917; Lorraine 1918; and Picardy 1918. See *US Army Center of Military History*, "Lineage and Honors, 6th Field Artillery Regiment," last modified 8 April 2011, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/fa/0006fa.htm> (accessed on 3 February 2015).



## **Chapter 12**

### **Armistice**

On the morning of November 12 Captain Rumbaugh arrived at the battery to take command. I had been promoted meanwhile to a captaincy but had not heard about it so when Captain Rumbaugh reported to the regiment for duty Colonel Dodds put him in command of the battery as B Battery was the only one without a captain. I then reported back to F Battery.

On the 12th we marched back to near Bantheville where we went into camp. The regiment stayed there over the night of the 12th to the 14th. There was a lot of German ammunition all around and the men collected this and broke open the shells to get out the powder. We also found a large supply of German star shells and flares, and on the night of the 12th there was the greatest display of fireworks I have ever seen. Bonfires were made of the powders which sent flames fifty feet in the air and all of the German star shells were shot off and for miles up and down the front you could see the lights and different colored shells which looked like skyrockets.

On the afternoon of the 12th Captain Randolph of regimental headquarters made an inspection to see which ones needed new uniforms. My uniform was perhaps the worst in the regiment. I had been wearing it for over a year and it was so far gone that it was necessary to wear a coat over it all the time. I had bought a new uniform during the summer and had ordered it by mail from Lloyds in Paris but it had been stolen along with my bedding roll while I was in the Argonne so I was reduced to only my original uniform that I had started out with. About a half a dozen of the officers who were wearing the worst uniforms were given a two day pass to Paris.

The nearest train to Paris was at Bar-le-Duc which was about fifty miles away. I hitchhiked all the way in between 7 and 11 pm riding in a couple of trucks and a station wagon. I arrived just in time to get the train. That afternoon I had been told by Randolph that a Belgian Order of Leopold had been awarded to the regiment, and that the colonel had selected me to receive it, principally because I was the only officer in the regiment with them on Armistice Day who had been with them since the previous October without a break. There were a number of officers in the regiment who had been in the regiment for the same length of

time but they had had spells of some weeks away from the regiment in every case, either going to schools or to a hospital.

I was also told by Randolph that my captaincy was coming through in a few days and the colonel had given me the authority to put on the captain's insignia. The captaincy actually came through on the 19th of November but was dated back to the 6th of November.

The Belgian decoration, however, had never been heard of from that day to this. Colonel [George] Marshall, who was one of Pershing's aides, told me some years later that all records on the Belgian medals for the First Division had been lost or taken out of the files, and the only reference he could find was a copy of a telegram in army headquarters from the First Division giving my father's name and address and stating that this was needed in connection with the Belgian decoration. The inference is that some officer in army headquarters extracted all records from the file and destroyed them and kept the medal for himself. None of the regiments in the First Division ever received these medals.<sup>1</sup>

The train to Paris was terribly crowded and I had to sit on the floor of the aisle all night. We got to Paris early the next morning and I proceeded to buy a ready-made uniform, a new pair of boots and a trench coat and then set out to get tickets to see the Grand Opera.

I called on the Ingles, who had moved in from the country and were living in an apartment. The previous spring one of the Big Bertha shells had landed in the street outside their apartment and they showed me the shell fragments on the walls that had come through the windows. None of them had been hurt.

The next day I started back for Bar-le-Duc and arrived there in the afternoon. I had no idea how to get back to the regiment until I ran into Captain Marshall of the infantry who had a government car in Bar-Le-Duc. He agreed to take me with him and let me off anywhere I wanted. He said the whole division had moved and that he did not know where the First Division was. About 11 pm. I noticed some heavy artillery on the road and found out it was the Fifth Field. I, therefore, got out of Marshall's car and talked to one of the Fifth Field officers and he told me that he thought the Sixth Field was in a town a mile away. I walked to the town and found that the Sixth had just pulled in.

The next day the regiment continued to march to near Nixeville where we stayed for about two days and left on November 17 to march into Germany. I was made battalion adjutant and remained in this position for the rest of my time in the regiment. On the 17th

of November we marched through Verdun and camped that night at Fromezey. On the 18th we marched into Luxembourg and stopped at the Town of Esch-Sur-Alzette. On the 23d we continued to march and stopped at Medingen. On the 24th we moved to Beyren where we stayed until December 1.

## **Notes**

1. Marshall had served as the G3 of the 1st Division before moving up to the AEF staff. In World War II he was the Army Chief of Staff and after that war Secretary of State.

## Chapter 13

### Occupation of Germany

On December 1 we marched into Germany proper, stopping for the night at Zewen. On the 2nd we stopped at Ehrang; on the 3rd at Schleun; on the 4th at Monzel and the 5th at Uhzig. This town was on the Moselle River and was the center of the Moselle wine district. The high slopes up from the river into the nearby hills were all terraced and covered with grape vines. It was beautiful country and an interesting sight after the portions of France that we had been in for many months. All the villages in France that we had seen for a long time were practically destroyed. All the trees were killed and broken down whereas in this country there were no physical scars from the war.<sup>1</sup>

Major Pollin and I were billeted in the largest house in town owned by the richest wine grower in the valley. He was an old man who had been to school in England and talked English very well. He invited us to supper. It was strictly against the rules to fraternize in any way with the enemy but Major Pollin and I decided to take a chance on having dinner with them. There were four of us at the table that night. The old gentleman, his son-in-law who had dropped out of the German Army a day before as they marched through, Major Pollin and myself. The



Figure 18. Allied Occupation Zones in Germany, 1918-1919.

old man's daughter waited on the table as the Germans were so shy of people due to the war that there were no servants available.

We received a very interesting lecture on Moselle wines. The old man told us all about the wines and he brought out bottles of wine to illustrate the differences between different types and different years. He started with a bottle of about 1850 wine. He had a bottle for perhaps every ten year period up until 1917. And 1917 had been the best year for wine that the district had ever had. When we had sampled every bottle the illustrated lecture ended and we were just able to crawl up to bed. We had a beautiful suite of rooms as the house was pretty close to being a castle.

The next day we moved on and stayed overnight until we got up into Germany at the following places:

December 6th – Scheidweiler

December 7th - Bullay

December 8th - Blakenrath

December 9th – Middle-Strimmer

December 10th - Alken

December 11th - Dieblich

December 12th - Coblenz

December 13th - Hohr

December 14th – Ransbach

At one of the towns, I think Bullay, I had a billet in a real medieval castle perched on top of a mountain, and from my window I could see for many miles up and down the river. Outside of my window there was a sheer drop of about three hundred feet straight down. On the other side of the castle where there was not a straight drop down the cliff, there was a moat and we had to go in over a drawbridge. It was owned by some baron who was not at home as he was with the Army but the caretaker let us in and gave us breakfast the next morning. The caretaker was a wounded German soldier who had a number of decorations. At Coblenz we stayed in a German Infantry Barracks and on the 13th left Coblenz and crossed the Rhine on the pontoon bridge. We were the first American Artillery to cross the Rhine.

We marched to Ransbach and arrived there on the 14th. The little town of Ransbach was a typical German village. The main industry of

the town consisted of a couple of pottery works, one of which we took over to use as stables for the horses. Battalion headquarters was established at a house on the edge of town and the German woman residing in the house was engaged to cook for the battalion officers' mess. We supplied Army food which was supplemented with some vegetables, principally potatoes, turnips, and sauerkraut. All in all we had a very excellent mess. Mess consisted of Major Pollin commanding the battalion, Captain Francis, the medical officer, later superseded by Captain Manton, Lieutenant Mackall in command of the battalion Headquarters Detachment and Lieutenant Ennis, the dentist.

On the march up into Germany, at one of the small towns, one of the enlisted men accidentally shot himself in the leg while cleaning a pistol. No medical officers were present at the time. The bullet had gone in near the hip and Doctor Ennis felt that something should be done immediately. He probed for the bullet and extracted it and the man got well which is pretty good work for a dentist. Major Pollin was so afraid of the colonel that a number of times when he answered the telephone and heard the colonel's voice on the other end of the wire he would invariably come to attention.

We had very little duty to perform. The batteries would groom and exercise the horses and have a minimum amount of military training and the headquarters officers merely inspected the various batteries and played poker. I had a sergeant major (Sergeant Parker) who was so good at handling all of the details that I had practically no duties other than "Mounting the Guard" every afternoon.

Every evening the battalion officers would get together and play bridge, poker or Red Dog.<sup>2</sup> German money had started to depreciate and the pieces of paper which represented the money seemed more like cigarette coupons than actual money. As a result, we were very careless of the way we bid and many marks would change hands in the course of an evening. Lieutenant Ennis made a bet one night consisting of a pile of German marks and I told him he was playing for high stakes. He insisted that it wasn't of any value and when we counted up the marks it actually amounted to one month's pay for him.

The only other entertainment was from a troupe of YMCA workers who came to the town and gave a performance.

We had one or two maneuvers during the three or four months I was there and that was all.

I was billeted in a German house, the family of which consisted of a man and his wife and ten year old son. The man had been in the German Army and was still in uniform. They were very nice people and on Christmas invited me down to see their tree and drink a toast of Schnapps. None of the beds had any covers on them but merely the big feather pillows, one below and one above. As there was only one cover over you, unless the weather was extremely cold there was no halfway point between all the covers and one, so that you were either burning up or freezing.

Stewart Smith showed up one day. He was [an enlisted man] with the Sixth Marines and was stationed in a town about twenty miles away on the Rhine. He spent the day in our regiment and took the train back that same afternoon. I wanted to have him to the officers' mess but Major Pollin was such a stickler for form that I did not even attempt it, but let him eat with the Headquarters Battery. Major Pollin had been an enlisted man and when he was made an officer he apparently got a lot of ideas and would not think of having enlisted men at our mess.

One Sunday Randolph and I rode over to visit Waldron [the former D Battery commander] who commanded one of the battalions in the Fifth. It was an all day trip on horseback. Late in January I went on leave.

I went into Paris and then on to the Riviera, stopping at Cannes. I went to the Grand Hotel which was certainly a beautiful place. It looked out over the Mediterranean and in the garden there were many orange trees laden with fruit. I stayed in Cannes a few days and together with some other officers went on a tour of the nearby islands. We went to St. Marguerite Island where there was a castle in which "the man in the iron mask" was supposed to have been imprisoned.

We also went to St. Henerat where there was a monastery and the monks showed us the place where the Moors had come over in about 1300 and killed all the monks. The principal occupation of the monks seemed to be the growing of tangerines out of which they manufactured one of the most delightful drinks I have ever tasted, called Grande Mar-nier.

Francis Randolph and I also hired a sailing boat and had a picnic on one of the islands, taking along for company and amusement an English girl whom we met and a French one. The mothers of the girls were much disturbed at their going without a chaperone but finally decided that we looked sufficiently honest that they let their daughters go. Also,



there was a very staid, old Frenchman who sailed the boat for us and he was probably bribed by the mamas to keep a weather-eye out for the daughters.

Every evening there was dancing at the Yacht Club. The men were principally officers on leave from the various armies and the girls were YMCA and Red Cross workers – English, Canadian and American. After a few days at Cannes I went to Nice for one day and to Mentone, where I visited the Ingles. They had come down from Paris for a visit.

I arrived back in Germany shortly after the first of February and on the 13th of February received two orders in writing. One order transferred me to the Third Corps Headquarters, Artillery Park, in Coblenz and the other transferred me to the Artillery Brigade that I found out was at Brest ready to sail for home. Regimental headquarters told me that the orders to the brigade at Brest came in later than the other so that is the one I finally obeyed.

I spent a few days in Paris on the way and arrived in Brest on the 17th of February where I was assigned to command Battery F of the 347th FA, a National Army regiment consisting principally of San Francisco troops. There were about sixteen officers from the 6th FA at Brest at this time. All of the officers who did not wish to stay in the Regular Army were transferred out of the First Division about this time.

We lived at Camp Pontenazon which was the worst mud hole I have ever stepped into. Every day the battery I commanded was given work to do around the camp, building roads, etc. so that I was fairly busy during the day. In the evenings we either collected at the officer's Red Cross hut or went into Brest. The Sixth Field officers found a restaurant known as the Café de la Marine, where we sometimes gathered in the evening for dinner.

## Notes

1. Each of the Allied national contingents was given a specific sector along the Rhine River with bridgeheads on the east bank. The American sector was centered on the city of Coblenz. A new army headquarters, the Third Army, was organized to command the occupation. The purpose of the occupation was to encourage the Germans to sign a peace treaty. While technically the armistice was a temporary cessation of hostilities, the chaotic condition of Germany at the time ensured it was permanent.

2. See Letter #14, Appendix 1.

## Chapter 14

### Sailing Home

I did not finally sail until the 26th of March on the *Leviathan*.<sup>1</sup> I was given charge of one of the rooms in the bottom of the ship where there were 487 men. The room was filled with bunks in tiers of four, one above the other and such a solid mass of bunks that there was barely room for the men to stand up in the aisles all at once. There were three officers in charge and we divided the time up – eight hours each.

The men ate twice a day and had to be marched exactly at the right moment by a given route through the ship to the men's dining room where they were served with food. They could not go over the twenty minutes as exactly on the dot another group of men would be marching in. There were 12,000 soldiers on the boat and 2,000 crew so the kitchens were running practically continuously in order to feed all of this number twice a day. Only about 500 could eat at once so that feeding at twenty minute periods it took eight hours to feed all of the soldiers one meal.

The officers, however, had a very nice dining room. Once a day our men were taken up on deck for about an hour. If it happened to be raining for our hour we had to wait until the next day as every hour of the day every foot of deck space was taken up. I spent eight hours out of the twenty-four with the men and the other sixteen hours I could use as I saw fit. I had a very nice stateroom and there also was a card room and recreation room for the use of officers.

I landed in New York on April 2, 1919 and went to Camp Merritt, New Jersey.<sup>2</sup> Father and Ella came up to New York and I was able to get into New York the first night and met them for dinner.

After a few days at Camp Merritt I was transferred to Camp Meade, Maryland, where I spent about a week coming up to Baltimore a number of times during the week. I finally received my discharge on the 8th of April, 1919.

## Notes

1. See Letter # 15, Appendix 1. Launched in 1913, the German-built *Vaterland* was the largest ocean liner afloat in 1914. She was just about to leave Hoboken, New Jersey, in August 1914, for her eighth Atlantic crossing when Great Britain declared war on Germany and the ship remained unofficially interned in Hoboken to prevent its capture by the British Royal Navy. When the US declared war on Germany in April 1917, the ship was officially seized by the US government, handed over to the Navy for use as a troopship and renamed the SS *Leviathan* in an almost comical military operation. From November 1917 to the end of the war the ship carried over 100,000 American soldiers while making 19 round trips until the end of the war. On one crossing she had 14,416 troops on board - more human beings than had ever before sailed on a single ship.

2. Camp Merritt was situated ten miles northwest of New York City, on a ridge midway between the towns of Cresskill and Dumont, Bergen County, New Jersey. It occupied an area of 770 acres, 580 acres of which were occupied by the camp proper.

# Appendices



## Appendix 1

### Letters Home

Letter #1

June 26, 1917

Dear Father:

I received your letter of June 2 with the clippings and the letter from Mr. Gutman. It is funny that you had only received one of my letters, for I wrote again from Paris at the same time that I sent a number of picture postcards. I can't send any picture postcards from here as it is against the law to send any pictures of any kind from the war zone.

We have been fairly busy lately. About every other night we have to stay out all night. In fact most of our real work is at night. If we drive too near the lines in daytime, the German observation balloons can [direct enemy fire towards us from their] lines from the location of the balloons. Both the French and Germans have lines of observation balloons about 2 to 4 miles back from the trenches. We seldom go closer to the trenches than the artillery but it gets quite hot there at times. Twice the other night we had to stop and wait because the Germans were dropping shells at the bridges and towns ahead of us. As soon as they slowed up we went on. We are getting so used to hearing the big guns and hearing Boche [German] shells whistle overhead that we scarcely notice them much anymore. It doesn't seem very dangerous although no one knows when he will happen to be where the shell lands.

Driving a car at night with no lights is pretty hard, although no serious accidents have occurred. Several of the cars have been in slight collisions (I have been in two, but no harm done) and some have run off the road into ditches, but we can always tow them out again. On a rainy night it is terrible, we can hardly see anything two feet ahead, and with autos, troops, horses and artillery continually passing it makes driving rather difficult.

Please remember me to Mrs. Whiting, Mr. Robinson and any of my friends you see.

Love to Frank, Tip and Ella,

Henry

Letter #2  
July 19, 1917

Dear Father:

We have been fairly busy lately, although everyone grumbles about the lack of excitement. We get a German shell once in a while; one landed about 50 feet from me the other night, but that is nothing compared to the dangers of the real fighting. We all feel that this is a slackers' work. The US papers seem to regard the Ambulance and the Transport divisions as slackers' jobs. They are, but none of us came into this with the idea of getting out of danger and hard work; we came to get into it all the quicker. Most of the fellows realize that this is too easy a job for able bodied men and are going to something better. After seeing all the aeroplanes over here, we all have gone crazy about aviation. I would like to come back and go into the U.S. aviation, if I thought I could get into it. Aviation will win the war yet.

We had a great time on the 4th of July. There was a parade in the morning and three Frenchmen were presented with "Croix de Guerre" [French award for valor] medals. Then we had all kinds of games, both French and American, that lasted most all day. Two Algerian bands were here and they gave a concert of their African and Arab music. Then they did the crazy Arab and Moroccan dances with swords and rifles. It was hard to realize that the scene was in France, to see all the dark Africans, some in turbans and others in red Fezzes. The day ended with fencing matches between the French officers, and then a banquet, at which most of the fellows, being American youths of high standing, proceeded to uphold the honor of America by getting drunk.

I have had almost every kind of injection that they give now. I had typhoid and paratyphoid before I left and the other day they gave me anti-tetanus serum to prevent lockjaw. I was in a collision several nights ago in the dark and got a small cut on my knee, so they shot me full of anti-tetanus serum. They do that over here if you get cut at all because there is great danger of blood poison, etc.

I have just received your letters of the 29th of June and the 26th of June. I also got one from Aunt Helen and Mr. Whiting.

Lots of love for Frank and Tip.

Henry



Letter #3

September 7, 1917

Dear Frank:

I have received a couple of postals and a letter from you. I was tickled to death to hear that you had gone out west again this summer, especially with Mr. Emery. He is a fine man to work for. I think you will like him very much. I do. Remember me to him, and ask him if he has heard what Massy, Bennie and Mr. Hares are doing now. I suppose you are back in the old routine of cooking again. It isn't always pleasant while you are doing it, but great to look back on. Write a note to me some day when you get a chance and tell me about your work this summer. Or else tell Father to send me your letters to him.

I have enjoyed driving a truck so far, but I want to get into some more active service. I am a corporal now, so I don't run a machine any more. I just act as guide for two or three trucks. I put in an application for a commission in the US Artillery. If everything goes well I shall be a lieutenant in that before long. If I don't get into the artillery I have been thinking of joining the aviation.

I have just come back to camp from a 10 days leave. I spent most of the time in the Alps, at a little town at the foot of Mt. Blanc. We climbed mountains and glaciers all day long. It was great. I was going to try to ascend Mt. Blanc, but the weather was too bad in the day I had planned to go up, and it didn't clear off while my leave lasted. I hope to go back and climb it someday. The mountains were wonderful. I was wondering if you are in the plains or the mountains this summer.

We have not been in much danger so far. One night we were splashed with shell fragments for a couple of hours but no shells exploded nearer than 15 yards and none of our trucks were hurt. A hunk as big as your fist glanced off the back of my machine, and another car nearly got a hole in the \_\_\_\_\_. Otherwise we have been in very little danger, except from collisions. We have had a couple of head on bumps. I had one truck burn up with me, and I was in a collision with a wagon on a dark night and cut my knee a little. Wasn't very bad though. We can never use lights in the machines and must drive mostly at night in order not to be seen by the German observation balloons. Collisions are numerous in dark nights. I shall write soon again and tell you whether I get into the artillery. Much Love.

Henry

Letter #4

August 18, 1917

Dear Ella:

I received your letter of July 25th and also the books and some news-papers from father. Thanks immensely for everything. You can't imagine how I enjoyed them.

By the way, get the *Saturday Evening Post* for July 28th if you can. It has an article in it about us. The article isn't much good but I would like to have you save the pictures. In the Aug. 4th *Saturday Evening Post* there are some more pictures of our camp.

The German aeroplanes have been raising the dickens the last few days. Three of their machines have been over camp today. About 200 shells were fired at each but without effect. Yesterday I saw a French machine chasing a German. The German was getting out of the way as quickly as he could. The battles in mid-air are perhaps the most exciting scenes we have witnessed.

I go to Paris in a few days for a week's leave. I expect to do a lot of sightseeing and also get a good rest.

If you see Aunt Helen, tell her I received her letter. I expect to answer it soon. Also ask father if Mr. Whiting has received any letters from me. I wrote him, but I never know whether the mail is going to arrive safely or not.

I would give anything to be able to come home and see you now, but I feel that every American should put aside all personal feelings and pleasures until Germany is defeated. I firmly believe that a victory for the Allies means the securing of world peace for all the future. What cause could be more worthy?

There is the possibility that our army will start a school for officers over here. If they do I am going to try to get in it and study for the artillery. I would rather be in the artillery than anything else.

Give Tip my love and a great big kiss.

Devotedly,

Henry

Letter #5

September 18, 1917

Dear Mother:

I received the box and yours and father's letters. They were all thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, I had quite a birth day party out of them. The chewing gum and candy and caramels were wonderful. It seems funny to be 22 years old. I don't feel any older than I have ever been.

We have been working hard lately. The French are getting ready for the winter, and we have been carrying lumber and logs for their dugouts. We have seen no excitement at all. Of course we see the preparations behind the lines, the supply trains, artillery, and troops being moved. But as for seeing anything of the real war, we don't know what it is. Once in a while we get in on the very edge of things, but only very seldom. There seems to be no more danger in this work than in living at home.

This service is to be taken over by the US Army in about a week. I am not going to sign up, but am going to try to get in to Paris to take the exam for the artillery. If that fails I shall try aviation. If that fails I shall stay in this. It will be better when the US takes over, I think.

Thank you again for the box of birthday things. It helps a lot to get things from home and to read your letters. I do so want to come home and see you. I get homesick at times. But my conscience would not be clear if I seriously considered leaving France before the war is over. The war is, in my opinion, the most important thing for the whole world, and until our side has won, I shall not think of stopping.

We worked twelve hours today and start again at 4 tomorrow morning, so I had better stop and turn in.

Affectionately,

Henry

Letter #6

October 16, 1917

Dear Father and Ella:

I cabled yesterday that I had gotten a Second Lieutenant's Commission in the Artillery. I am tickled to death, because I really didn't expect to get it. The hundred I asked for is to buy a US uniform and the regulation equipment. I already have a hundred dollars but pay in the Army is so irregular that I think it safer to ask for more. My salary will be \$160 a month so as soon as I get into actual work I shall have plenty.

I am sending this to America by a fellow who is returning so don't be surprised at the New York postmark.

Bob France did not go into the Foreign Legion and as I said in my last letter, but is still in the auto transport work. He will probably get a commission in that branch of the US Army.

Love,

Henry

Letter #7

November 26, 1917

Dear Father:

I haven't had a chance to write for about a month, for the simple reason that I have been at the front. Instead of being sent to an Officers' Training School as I expected, I was assigned to Battery F of the 6th Field Artillery, which is supposed to be the crack regiment of the regulars. Almost as soon as I was assigned to that Battery it was ordered to the front. I am not allowed to tell you about the things that happened there, but I can say that I gained about 10 lbs. and learned a lot about artillery.

There is a great bunch of officers in this regiment and I have made some very good friends among them. Several of them are members of Alpha Delta Phi. By the way, let me know what is happening at the Fraternity and at Hopkins this year.

If you have any small pictures of Ella and Tip and also of Frank and yourself send them to me. I don't want to forget what you all look like.

I have acquired only one bad habit since I have been in the Artillery. I have started smoking a pipe. As it is almost impossible to get American tobacco over here I would appreciate it if you would send over a little once in a while.

As this letter will probably reach you about Christmas time I will say Merry Christmas to you all now. Don't forget to draw the money from my account and get Christmas presents for everybody from me.

The picture I am enclosing was taken before I left the Transport Service.

Address me as: Second Lieutenant H.C. Evans, Battery F, 6th FA, American Expeditionary Forces, France.

Lots of love and a Merry Christmas to all.

Henry

P.S. I shall write again when I have more time and tell you more about my duties as Lieutenant.

Letter #8

Written during this period

Dear Warfield:

This is just a little note from “Tallie” to thank you for the wash cloth. It is a dandy and I really do not see how you made it. It is better than one bought down town at Hutzten’s. I can never thank you enough.

I wish I could show you the horse I have to ride. He is black all over and is just as pretty as a picture. And go – he just goes like the wind. I call him “Tip” after you. I wish I could send him home after the war to ride. On cold mornings when he is feeling full of pep he just dances and \_\_\_\_\_ cuts up in fine style. Like you when you were being “rushed.”

How is school this year? Guess you can read and write quite well now. I am anxious to know whether you are going to “Calvert” [private elementary school in Baltimore] this year and how you like the studies and the roof garden. Write to me some day and tell me about it.

Best of love to you, Tip, and to Mother, Father and Frankie. Remember me to Leon.

Skinny

Letter #9

December 24, 1917

Dear Father:

I received the boxes of Hershey's chocolate today. I love chocolate and shall enjoy it very much. I am going to drop about a dozen cakes of it in a sock and make believe Santa Claus left it. Otherwise I expect Christmas will be about like any other day. The war keeps on no matter what the day or the occasion. At home tonight I guess you are trimming up a tree for Tip and spreading out the presents. Does Tip still believe in Santa Claus? I hope he does; it makes the day much livelier to have someone in the house who believes that myth to be true.

Last Friday I had a 48 hour leave, and I went to Paris. I only had Saturday and Sunday morning there, but I had time to do a little shopping, etc. Bought riding boots, overcoat, hat and the like. Everything is frightfully high in price, but you have to have clothes. I am not able to save as much as I had hoped. An officer must pay all his expenses; food, lodging and clothing and by that time there is not much left. I have a very nice room now, which I rent from some French people in the town where we are stationed. That is what all the officers do. Of course, when we are actually at the front we sleep in dug outs. We have been moved back of the line for more training. I hope we go to the front again soon. The two books you sent me came several days ago. Thanks very much. I have very little time any more for reading anything but books on Artillery, but I hope to get around to other things someday. Only one more thing I want and that is a copy of "Ashton's Analytical Geometry," or some other Analytic Geometry if you cannot get that one.

I went to church in Paris on Sunday morning; the first time I have been, except sightseeing in French churches, since last April. It was the British Embassy Church.

I am sorry that Frank is in that motorcycle battery. I don't see how they could be used over here. The roads near the front line are so bad in most places that they could not get close enough to use their machine guns. It sounds rather absurd to me. Riding around on a motorcycle may be lots of fun in America, but I don't think that a Motorcycle Machinegun Battery could do much in trench warfare. Of course I think that the Field Artillery is the only branch to be in. I hope Frank stays at school until he is of draft age and then picks out the Artillery.

The draft army is going to be the big thing, the little militia regiments won't be much beside them.

Love to all,

Henry



Letter #10

January 11, 1918

Dear Father:

I have been so busy lately that I haven't had a minute to write. The Captain has been sick and I have been in command of the Battery. We have been having maneuvers of various kinds and have been on the go about twelve hours a day. It is frightfully cold and In addition there is about two feet of snow and more coming down. It is very hard on both horses and men. My feet have had no feeling in them for over a month now.

I feel sorry for some of the French people around here. All but the old women, a few children and the children have gone into the army. You see an old woman of sixty or seventy scantily clad, driving her cows to water, with the snow falling and the thermometer below zero. As she comes hobbling by in her big wooden shoes, I feel ashamed to be wearing leather boots and gloves and a warm coat. How I hate the Germans for causing so much hardship!

We gave the French children around near us a wonderful Christmas. Everyone in the Brigade chipped in and we had a pair of shoes, a suit and toys for every child. They had the time of their lives.

I am hoping to be sent to the front very soon. There is even less time and opportunity to write letters there than here, so do not be surprised or alarmed if three or four weeks go by without any mail from me.

The Christmas box has not yet arrived, but I haven't given up hope, yet. I did receive the Hershey's, but from your last letter I understood there was another box. Maybe it will come along one of these days. I shall enjoy it all the more for having waited so long. You asked me to send you word of how much pay I received in the Army up to December 31. I received 182 francs in October, 888 in November, and 888 in December, which makes in dollars about \$345.

I hope you took some money from my account and bought Christmas presents for everyone. If there is any money left in my account use it as you see fit. I don't think I shall need any of it over here. I am not able to save very much of my pay as I must feed, board and cloth myself, and everything is high. I just had to buy a pair of boots and a

new uniform. The riding boots cost 195 francs, almost 40 dollars, and the uniform 330 francs, about 60 dollars. Very high in price, but they are very good material and very good looking.

Best of love to all.

Henry

Letter #11

February 12, 1918

Dearest Ella:

I have received four letters from you since I last wrote but really I haven't had a minute to myself. For three weeks now I have been in command of the battery and that is no small job, especially for one with as little experience as I have had. It would be easier if we were back at the front "en repos" [in rest]...<sup>1</sup> I have the responsibility of the lives of the men of my battery, the lives of the infantry depending on us for support and also the responsibility of having to kill as many Germans as possible. It is very seldom that a 2d lieutenant has such a job thrust upon him, but it so happened that the Captain left and I was next in line and naturally fell into the job. They will probably give us another captain soon, but in the meantime I have my hands full. I haven't been entirely unsuccessful, for the major told me yesterday that he intended to recommend that I be made a first lieutenant. There is so much red tape to it that I shall probably hear no more of it for six months or a year.

It is a shame that Tip had the chicken pox. I hope he is well again by now. Tell him that H. C. Evans would like to "kill the Kaiser in one shot" but not having that opportunity he intends to do his bit as best he can in other ways.

I am living in a warm, snug dugout with all the convenience of home. It takes a lot of work to build a good dugout. If anyone says that soldiers fight when they go to the front, you can just put him down as ignorant of the true state of affairs. Soldiers no longer fight, they dig. Don't let anyone ever tell you about our brave and glorious soldier boys, fighting for liberty, humanity and freedom on the blood-soaked battle grounds of France. They dig and swear and sweat for thirty days for every one of actual fighting.

Please get Tip a birthday present from me. I have no way of sending anything from here or I should do it. Tell Tip I received his letter and shall take his advice.

I owe dozens of people letters of thanks for packages, but I have been so busy, day and night, that I really just couldn't find a moment. I received a book from Mr. Robinson, one from Mrs. Townsend, and several other packages, but the wrappers had been torn off *en voyage* so that I only received the contents. I do not know who they were from. I received a couple of books, which I haven't had time to open,

some candy, some chocolate “buds,” which, however I have had time to eat, and a sweater which I think is from Aunt Bessie. Father enclosed a letter from Martha Robinson in which she said she sent me some socks, etc. I appreciate everything very much and if things quiet down along the front long enough to let me write a few letters I shall answer all the letters I have received and thank everyone for their packages (half of which have not arrived yet). I received a letter from Aunt May, but I cannot answer until I get heaps of time, for she will expect a very thrilling and clever epistle, something which I cannot write off hand in a short space of time.

If you only knew how I look forward to your letters and enjoy them! Letters from home are the only things that can keep the spirits up when things go wrong and the whole world seems nothing but worry and sorrow. I enjoy them so much that I would walk out in No Man’s Land in broad daylight for one.

“No Man’s Land.” It really is a quiet, peaceful looking place, as long as you stay out of it. I was down in the front line yesterday and No Man’s Land was the quietest place I have seen in a long time.

Henry

Letter #12 (excerpt of letter to Ella Evans)

March 12, 1918

I was very much surprised to hear of Katherine Hardy's marriage. Every letter I get tells of somebody else who has just married a young Lieutenant so and so. They all seem to be doing it. I am relying on you to save me one. I do not seem able to book one up for myself. I can't even get them to write to me. I have received a couple of letters from Katherine Brinton and a few from Eleanor O'Danovan but that is about the limit. They just write out of kindness I believe. Katherine Brinton is engaged, I heard somewhere, and I suppose Eleanor will be doing the same thing soon. I hope he is pretty good. She is too nice to waste on a bum. So it is up to you to have a nice one picked out for me when I return. She must be pretty, have lots of sense, and be sufficiently good natured to put up with my peculiarities. Also she must not like to tickle me in the ribs; you know what that would mean; a pain of sore wrists. . .

Letter #13 (on YMCA letterhead)

May 12, 1918

Dear Ella:

I received two letters from you day before yesterday and was overjoyed to get them as I hadn't received any mail for ages. I also got another can of tobacco. You must have published my request for a little tobacco in all the papers in the country for everyone I know has sent me some. I've been swamped with it. Have more than I could possibly use in six months. Thanks very much, all the same. There are a great many people over here who can get no tobacco at all and I can always give it to them.

Strange to say I am still in command of the Battery. The promotion that was promised me did not go through, so I am still a second lieutenant, and probably shall be the rest of the war. Promotion is very hard to get over here, because they have sent over so many officers in proportion to the number of men. In the states it seems that promotions are given out wholesale. I have been holding down a captain's job ever since the 31st of January. I don't know how much longer it will last. They either ought to fine me or promote me. It doesn't bother me. As long as I am doing my best to lick the Kaiser, a small petty thing like rank or grade worries me not the least.

There is one expression that I have learned to despise, "Doing my bit." Whenever I hear an American say that, I feel like knocking him down. The word "bit" means a part, not all; a little, not much; it means that so long as one does something, anything at all, however little, he has a right to sit back and calmly feel very patriotic. No Frenchman ever thought of doing their bit, no Englishman does any longer. They know that they must do their best, give their all, and they do it as a matter of course. There is no "bit" for them; it is their best at all times. The Americans are too willing to do a little and then call it off, saying they have "done their bit." They are too willing to shout at the parades and brass bands and think of the glories of victory, and not willing enough to sacrifice for the sake of that victory. If we expect to win this war, we must all sacrifice many times what we have already. Although France and England finally stopped the German offensive of March and April, the very fact that Germany could make such an offensive and hold the ground gained must show you that she is far from beaten.

I didn't want to talk as much about the war, but my thoughts and life are now so wrapped up in it that I can't help it. Nowadays my

thoughts are divided between two things; the war and home. I had to come over here to appreciate what home and you really mean to me. It is something to dream about and long for. Just now it is my conception of Heaven. It will be a long time perhaps before I see it again, maybe never. If anything should happen and I don't come back, do not feel sad. Be glad that I was able to give all I had. I would not feel anything but pleasure if such a ...

Letter #14  
January 14, 1919

Dear Father:

Thanks ever so much for the Christmas package. It was the only thing to mark Christmas from any other time of the year and I was immensely pleased to get a present. We were not able to get any from the slips, that had to be sent home before a package could be sent, in time. So naturally I did not expect to get anything.

In spite of the fact that the war is over, we have, in a certain sense, as hard a time now as ever. Staff Officers and Inspectors who had soft, easy jobs in the rear during the war, are now greatly in evidence, and they delight, I believe, in finding fault with everything. They let us alone pretty much during the fighting, but now that the danger is over they buzz around to show how important they are. The Peace was harder than the real war. Everything must be done just so, according to regulation, and anyone who deviates an inch gets his. Lieutenant Hamilton Cheston, of Philadelphia, whom I have seen a lot of over here, was arrested the other day for wearing his putties in the wrong way. They will probably try to try him. He was the best, bravest and most energetic officer in the Battalion during all the fighting. They seem to give little credit for what was done during the fighting.

The Army has gone back to sham battle and maneuvers now that there is no real fighting to be done. We go out and make believe every few days. It is not as exciting as the real thing, but much safer.

The prospects for this division getting back before summer are very slim. Being a division of Regulars they will probably be kept over here until among the last. I am hoping that the Reserve officers will be replaced by Regular Officers and be allowed to go back to America. I am not betting on the prospect, though. There are not enough Regular officers for one thing, and few fighting troops will be sent back until peace is signed, I believe. Still, funnier things have happened, and I may be home soon. I sincerely hope so. The sooner the better.

Best love to all.

Henry

P.S. Have not fully decided what I want to do when I get back to America, except get out of the Army. It was fine in war time, but I would feel like I was wasting time to stay in during peace time. I have been thinking of going to the Medical School if I can enter when I get back. H.C.E.



Letter #15 (on YMCA letterhead)

March 21, 1918

Dear Father:

Our regiment sails today on the *Aquitania*, but there was not enough room for all the officers to go, so most of us are still here; we expect to sail very soon though and probably join the regiment in New York.

The regiment is made up of Western men so I may have to go out West with them before being mustered out. I am going to try and get dismissed at New York.

Hope to see you soon.

Henry

Letter #16

(Written by John P. Scully in response to an invitation to a 10th Reunion of the First Division)

May 12, 1929

Erie, Pennsylvania

My Dear Captain:

I was very glad to have a return letter come from one I liked so well. I did not know that you were the Capt Evans that was my battery commander and I am sure all the rest of the fellows liked you as much as I did for we sure had a dandy when we had Heard (the fellow who got the wound stripe for being shaky, you know what I mean). You asked me about our day together when we climbed the tree on the Paris – Soissons Highway. Well it is hard to forget because I lost the heel of my shoe on that job but it was your brain that saved us both for when you told me to drop the flags and use the flashlight.

I still have the helmet with the machine gun bullet nicks in it but I think you should have been rewarded the same as I was. I just received the other day a large certificate to go with the Croix de Guerre. Tell all the fellows I would like to hear from them for I cannot come to the reunion for a lack of funds.

If you haven't forgot we were only 20 yards behind the front lines when we climbed that tree.

Well I am not a very good letter writer so I will bring my letter to a close hoping to hear from you again.

I remain as always, as Rains used to say, Old Man Scully.

Mr. John P. Scully  
824 East 11th Street  
Erie, Penn

P.S. If you would like to write a letter I would have it read at the American Legion Post meeting urging all the 1st Division fellows to go to the reunion. I am a member of Post #11—1376 members –largest in Pennsylvania.

## Notes

1. The rest of the sentence is illegible. *En repos* was the period of time when ambulances were at the front but inactive, awaiting taskings. For a detailed discussion of *en repos*, see Arlen J. Hansen, *Gentlemen Volunteers: The Story of the American Ambulance Drivers in the Great War* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996). In this instance, Evans is applying the term to his artillery battery.



## Appendix 2

### Major General Henry C. Evans Expanded Biography

From Citation, Johns Hopkins University

Distinguished Military Alumni Program - April 2004

Henry Evans was born in Baltimore in 1895 and attended the Johns Hopkins University until May 1917 when he paid his own way to France with the American Field Service with the intent of driving an ambulance for the French Army. With enough ambulance drivers on hand, he decided to enlist for six months with the French Army and was assigned to drive ammunition trucks to the front lines.

Late in August 1917 he went to the headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces and obtained a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery. He was then assigned to the 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Division, until the end of the war. He served in nearly every major engagement in which American troops fought, including the battles of Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. He was promoted to First Lieutenant in October 1918 and to Captain a month later. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for braving enemy artillery fire while directing his battery's fire in the battle near Chaudun, and later won the Silver Star for heroic action in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. From the French he was awarded the *Médaille Commemorative du "Field Service" de Ambulance Americaine* and the Forragere.

Between the wars, while serving in the Maryland National Guard, he reorganized the Maryland National Guard artillery forces and commanded the 110th Field Artillery Battalion. After the Maryland National Guard was federalized in early 1941, he was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned as 76th Infantry Division Artillery Commander. He served in that capacity during WWII under General Patton's Third Army against German forces in Western Europe. Some of his WWII awards include the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster for Valor. He also received several foreign awards including the *Legion d'Honneur Chevalier France*, and the *Croix de Guerre* from France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

After the war, General Evans became Commanding General of the 35th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Brigade until released from active duty in January 1946.

Once again home with the Maryland National Guard, in early 1947, General Evans was assigned as Commanding General of the 29th Division Artillery and also as Deputy Division Commander. In June 1954, he assumed command of the 29th Infantry Division, and served in this capacity for the next three years, during which he was promoted to Major General. He retired from military service on October 1, 1957 after more than forty years of distinguished service.

In his civilian occupation he was in investment banking services as a registered representative of Robert Garrett & Sons. His positions included Chairman of the Board of Stein Brothers & Boyce, Inc., President of the Baltimore Stock Exchange, Bond Club of Baltimore, and the Baltimore Association of Commerce. In civic affairs, General Evans was named to city and state commissions, was Chairman of the Board of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and Chairman of the Maryland USO Committee.

General Evans was active with the Catholic Scouting Committee and the Baltimore area Boy Scouts of America. He was State Department Commander from 1946 to 1947 of the Catholic War Veterans, a leader in Catholic charity fund-raising, and served as President of the 76th Infantry Division Association.

He was Chairman of the Board of Stein Brothers & Boyce Corporation from 1963 to 1967, and "Honorary Chairman" until the firm's merger with Bache & Company in 1970. He remained with the later firm until his death on February 17, 1976.

In 1949 General Evans was the President of the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association and is a recipient of the Johns Hopkins University Distinguished Alumni Award.

A Maryland [Army] National Guard Armory in Westminster was named for Major General Evans. He married the former Eleanor M. O'Donovan in 1921 and had six children.

**Appendix 3**  
**Henry C. Evans**  
**World War I Awards and Citations**

**[G.O. 201]**  
**G.H.Q**

**AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES**

|                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| General Orders} | France, Nov. 10, 1918. |
| No. 201 }       |                        |

1. The Commander in Chief desires to make a record in the General Orders of the American Expeditionary Forces his extreme satisfaction with the conduct of the officers and soldiers of the First Division in its advance west of the Meuse between October 4th and 11th, 1918. During this period the division gained a distance of seven kilometers over a country which presented not only remarkable facilities for enemy defense but also great difficulties of terrain for the operation of our troops.

2. The division met with resistance from elements of eight hostile divisions, most of which were first class troops and some of which were completely rested. The enemy chose to defend its position to the death, and the fighting was always of the most desperate kind. Throughout the operations the officers and men of the division displayed the highest type of courage, fortitude and self-sacrificing devotion to duty. In addition to many enemy killed, the division captured one thousand four hundred and seven of the enemy, thirteen 77 m.m. field guns, ten trench mortars and numerous machine guns and stores.

3. The success of the division in driving a deep advance into the enemy's territory enabled an assault to be made on the left by the neighboring division against the northeastern portion of the Forest of Argonne, and enabled the First Division to advance to the right and out-flank the enemy's position in front of the division on that flank.

4. The Commander in Chief has noted in this division a special pride of service and a high state of morale, never broken by hardship nor battle.

5. This order will be read to all organizations at the first assembly formation after its receipt. (14790-A-306)

By Command of General Pershing:

JAMES W. McANDREW,  
*Chief of Staff.*

Official:

Robert C. Davis  
*Adjutant General*



## Silver Star Citation<sup>1</sup>

Citations:

American Expeditionary Forces

France, June 3, 1919

Citation of Orders No. 2

1. The following officers and enlisted men of the American Expeditionary Forces, are cited for gallantry in action and are entitled to wear a silver star on the Victory medal ribbon, as prescribed I.G.O.75.c.s. these headquarters:

2. 2nd Lieutenant Henry C. Evans, Btr. F. 6th F.A. for gallantry in action near Chaudon, France, 18-19 July, 1918, in fearlessly exposing himself to shell and machine gun fire in order to observe the fire of his battery.

by command of General Pershing:

James C. Harbord  
Chief of Staff

Official:

Robert C. Davis,  
Adjutant General



Figure 19. World War I Victory Medal with Evans' Campaign clasps.

Distinguished Service Cross Citation<sup>2</sup>  
American Expeditionary Forces

Headquarters First Division  
American Expeditionary Forces  
Germany, December 4, 1918

General Orders No. 89

The Division Commander cites the following Officers and men of this command for conspicuous gallantry and heroism in the recent operations between the ARGONNE and the MEUSE, October 1st – 11th, 1918.

1st Lt. Henry C. Evans, 6th Field Artillery “during an intense enemy bombardment of a battery position, went from piece to piece, giving the crews the data for continuing the rolling barrage in support of the Infantry and inspiring his men by his coolness and disregard of personal danger.”

By command of Major General McGlachlin  
Stephen C. Fuqua  
Chief of Staff

Official:  
W.R. Wheeler, Lt. Col. Inf. U.S.A., Division Adjutant

Was in continuous active service from the first battle to the Armistice. Holds Victory Medal with five bronze clasps, representing major engagements, and two silver stars, representing citations.

## **Notes**

1. The Silver Star is the third highest military award designated solely for heroism in combat. Established in 1918 as the Citation Star, in 1932 it was redesignated as a medal with a retroactive provision that allowed servicemen as far back as the Spanish-American War (1898) to receive it for gallant actions.

2. The Distinguished Service Cross is the Army's second highest award for military valor. The DSC was established in 1918 to honor heroism of the highest degree that did not merit the award of the Medal of Honor. The medal is awarded for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force.



**Appendix 4**  
***Baltimore Sun* Articles on**  
**Henry C. Evans Service in World War I**

WORD RECEIVED FROM  
BALTIMOREAN AT FRONT

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Henry C. Evans Started for France  
As Soon As America  
Entered War

To a young Baltimorean – Henry C. Evans, son of Frank G. Evans, treasurer of the Eutaw Savings Bank – is given the honor of being the first Americans to answer the call to France for men from the United States after this country had entered the great war.

President Wilson's memorable address to Congress, in which he declared that "a state of war existed between America and Germany, was hardly sent throughout the country before young Evans, who has just reached his twenty-first birthday, made arrangements to go abroad, and last month he sailed from New York for France on the steamer *Espagna*. By this time, he is already at the front, for in a postal mailed in Paris early in May just received; he says that he expected to be on the firing line before his message reached his home city.

Young Evans had been keeping in close touch with the European situation and when America joined the Allies he wanted to go. He told his parents of his intention to go to France and join the American Ambulance Corps. He then made hurried arrangements to catch the next steamer to Europe.

## COMMISSION ABROAD

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Henry C. Evans, Baltimorean, Wins  
Lieutenant In U.S. Field Artillery

Word was received last night by Frank G. Evans, treasurer of the Eutaw Savings Bank, that his son, Henry C. Evans, who has been serving for several months with the American Field Service in France, had been commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the United States Field Artillery. The information was contained in a cablegram from the son, "somewhere in France." No circumstances of his change from the Field Service to the Artillery are given by young Evans in the cable, other than his desire "to experience more thrills."

Evans was a member of the Third Year Class, Johns Hopkins University, when he volunteered for service last May. He was made a corporal in the Ambulance Corps and sailed for the front a month later. With him went Leslie Buckler and Robert France, 219 West Lavale Street, both students of Johns Hopkins.

After arriving in France Evans was changed from the ambulance service to transporting ammunition from Paris to the French front. The work did not afford enough thrills for Evans according to the letters which have been received from him periodically. Obsessed with the dullness of it he made application for an assignment to the infantry but was unable to secure enrollment.

However as soon as the country became enmeshed in the war, Evans expressed his intention of fighting under the flag of his country and when to Paris last week to take the examination for the commission.

## CAPT. H.C. EVANS CITED

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### Son Of Frank G. Evans Wins Praise For His Bravery

According to word received by Frank G. Evans, vice president of the Eutaw Savings Bank, his son, Capt Henry C. Evans, has been cited for conspicuous gallantry and heroism in the operations between the Argonne and the Meuse, October 1 to 11.

The communication came in a personal letter to Mr. Evans from Major Redmond C. Stewart, judge advocate of the First Division who enclosed the official citation, signed by Stephen O. Fuqua, chief of staff for Major General McGlachlin. This is as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Henry C. Evans, Sixth Field Artillery “during an intense enemy bombard-ment of a battery position, went from piece to piece, giving the crews the data for continuing the rolling barrage in support of the Infantry and inspiring his men by his coolness and disregard of personal danger.”

## H.C. EVANS TO GET D.S.C FOR HEROISM

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Baltimorean Cited for Extraordinary Episode in  
France During War

Under Fire While in Tree

Also Declared to have Inspired His Men By His  
Coolness When in Danger

Henry C. Evans, son of Frank G. Evans, vice-president of the Eutaw Savings Bank, and an officer of the Field Artillery Officers' Reserve Corps, yesterday was cited by the War Department for the Distinguished Service Cross.

He is to be decorated, the War Department announced, for "extraordinary heroism at Chaudon, France, while serving as first lieutenant in the Sixth Field Artillery, First Division."

The particular episode for which Mr. Evans was cited occurred July 9, 1918. The citation reads as follows:

"Henry C. Evans, captain, Field Artillery Officers' Reserve Corps, then first lieutenant, Sixth Field Artillery, First Division, for extraordinary heroism in action near Chaudon, France, July 9, 1918. Learning that the advance of the infantry which his battery was supporting was meeting with stubborn resistance, Lieutenant Evans voluntarily went forward through artillery and machine gun fire to the crest of a hill and climbed a tree overlooking the enemy position for the purpose of adjusting fire upon the enemy. Though subjected to severe fire from hostile artillery and machine guns, he remained courageously in this exposed position and this was able to direct the fire of his battery materially, so as to assist in the advance of the infantry."



Toward the end of the war, he was cited again, this time by his division commander, Major General McGlachlin. He was commanding his battery in the Argonne-Meuse battle, and among General McGlachlin's citations of his men "for conspicuous gallantry and heroism" was this paragraph:

"First Lieutenant. Henry C. Evans, Sixth Field Artillery, during an intense enemy bombardment of a battery position, went from piece to piece, giving the crews the data for continuing the rolling barrage in support of the Infantry and inspiring his men by his coolness and disregard of personal danger."

Mr. Evans got into the war before the American armies started across. He went to France in May, 1917; served in the French Motor Transport Service; was commissioned second lieutenant of United States Field Artillery in October, 1917, and was assigned to the First Division.

He saw service in every major engagement in which American troops fought in France. Besides being a reserve officer, he is captain of Battery F, One Hundred and Tenth Field Artillery, Maryland National Guard. He lives in Calvert Court Apartments.



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