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THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION  
Washington, D. C.

File 722-A (DO)

March 29, 1926.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS IN FRONT LINE

11TH ENGINEERS, WITH BRITISH,

August, 1917--June, 1918.

The 11th Engineers arrived in France on August 6th, 1917, and the regiment was assigned to the Third British Army for standard gauge railway construction and maintenance. The regiment was engaged in this work and the construction of trenches with the Third and First British Armies until June, 1918.

SEPTEMBER 5TH, 1917: Sergeant Matthew R. Calderwood and Private William F. Branigan, both of Company F, were wounded by shell fire in front of the remains of the Gouzeaucourt railway station (Point "A"), while the company was engaged in working on the railway line at that point preparatory to the British Cambrai Offensive which started on November 20th, 1917. On September 5th, the British front line was as shown on attached map for September 5th. These two men were the first American soldiers wounded by shell fire.

NOVEMBER 30TH, 1917: On this date the British front line was as shown, having been advanced to this position on November 20th. At 7:00 a.m. the Germans launched their counter offensive, broke through the British line, and rapidly advanced six kilometers to the west.

At this time Companies B and F and part of E, 11th U.S. Engineers, were working on an advanced depot and sidings at Gouzeaucourt in the shaded area shown on the map. When the German barrage reached the railway, these troops, who were unarmed, were ordered to evacuate the area. Before this could be done the Germans appeared over the ridge to the east. The detachments fell back to their camp at Fins under machine gun and shell fire. By 9:00 a.m. the Germans had reached the line shown.

Detachments of the 5th British Division made a stand east and north of Epehy as far west as Revelon Farm. Here the line was extended along Revelon ridge by stragglers from various units. A detachment of the 29th British Division and a company of North Midland Royal Engineers held out in isolated trenches north of Route Nationale No. 17. About noon, the Guards Division (British), which had been in rest at Metz-en-Couture, counter-attacked and drove the Germans from Gouzeaucourt. The following day the line was established as shown for December 1st.

Several men of the 11th Engineers secured arms and joined British detachments, assisting in stopping the Germans, but no section of the line was held by a unit of the 11th Engineers. During the afternoon, support trenches in the vicinity of Sorel-le-Grand (Point "B") were occupied. Ammunition was carried to the two railway howitzers at Peiziere, and during the night detachments from the 11th Engineers assisted in getting these guns out.

MAY, 1918: While working with the First British Army near Arras constructing trenches, the officers of the 11th Engineers, and some men, were detailed to the 56th British Division for instruction and observation in the front line.

JUNE 13TH, 1918: The 11th Engineers entrained for the zone of the American Armies.

CDB/clm

# THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS, MARCH 1923

JOHN J. PERSHING, Chairman  
ROBERT G. WOODSIDE, Vice Chairman      DAVID A. REED  
JOHN PHILIP HILL      THOMAS W. MILLER  
D. JOHN MARKEY      Mrs. FREDERIC W. BENTLEY  
X. H. PRICE, Secretary

STATE, WAR, AND NAVY BUILDING  
WASHINGTON

Please refer to A- 722-A/DO

June 21, 1926.

Major Arthur S. Dwight,  
29 Broadway, New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

The American Battle Monuments Commission is endeavoring to locate with accuracy the front lines of all American divisions during the World War. This information is for historical purposes as well as for use in connection with monuments which the Commission intends to erect in Europe to commemorate the services of the American Expeditionary Forces.

There is enclosed a map showing the front lines of your division as determined after most careful research. In addition to organization histories, all records and maps of the division which are available in Washington have been consulted. In plotting these lines, considerable reliance has been placed upon reports and messages of commanders of small units.

Inasmuch, however, as there is a scarcity of material in some instances upon which to plot lines with accuracy, and in order to provide a further check, it is desired to secure the comments of officers and men who were physically in contact with front line elements. It would be appreciated, therefore, if you would comment on the accuracy of the lines as traced upon the enclosed map, distinguishing between information which is the result of your personal observation and that of hearsay or data prepared by others. Do not consider any change too minor to suggest. Suggested changes should be indicated by pencil lines drawn upon the map.

If, in your opinion, the lines as shown are correct, please so state in your reply, indicating on the map that portion of the line concerning which you have accurate, first hand, knowledge.

Definitions of front lines decided upon by the Commission are as follows:

(a) In a stabilized warfare situation, the front line will be considered as a line which encloses the most advanced strong points in the defensive organiza-

tion. These lines have in all cases been determined from trench maps of about the date in question.

(b) In mobile warfare situations, the definition of a front line used by G. H. Q. in France has been retained: "the most advanced line held by a division with an organized force will be considered as the front line. It is, in general, the line which would be protected, in case of an attack, by the divisional artillery barrage. A line joining points reached by patrols will not be given as the front line."

It is desired to invite your attention to the fact, indicated on the legend of the map, that the front lines shown are only those as they existed at MIDNIGHT of each day, except where the line of relief was different from any midnight line. For this reason, in your comments particular attention should be given to the exact hour events happened, especially in cases where the line moved just prior to or following midnight.

Your comments are also requested on the historical accuracy of the enclosed summary. This summary is for the purpose of supplementing the information given on the map, and the map and summary together will constitute our record of the operation.

In addition to pointing out any statements in the summary which you believe to be in error, please indicate by underlining or otherwise those parts concerning which you know from personal observation to be correct.

A narrative of your experiences (specific as to dates and map co-ordinates), which will give information concerning these operations, together with any original documents which you may have on the question, would be appreciated. If original documents are forwarded, please state whether you wish them returned or not. If you do not desire them returned they will be incorporated in the official records of the Commission. If their return is desired, photostatic copies will be made here and the originals returned promptly to you.


An early return of the enclosed map and summary, together with your comments, will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

3 Enclosures.

Address reply to:

American Battle Monuments Commission,  
State, War & Navy Bldg., Washington, D. C.

  
CHARLES D. BARRETT,  
Major, U.S. Marine Corps,  
For the Secretary

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X. H. PRICE, Secretary

STATE, WAR, AND NAVY BUILDING  
WASHINGTON

Refer to 722-A/DO

July 7, 1926.


Major Arthur S. Dwight,  
29 Broadway,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

Before making a final decision concerning the location of the front lines of the 11th Engineers with British, August 1917-June 1918, the Commission would like to have the benefit of your comments on the map and summary submitted to you in its letter dated June 21, 1926. If you are now in a position to furnish the information requested it will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and assistance in this, I am

Very truly yours,

  
CHARLES D. BARRETT,  
Major, U.S. Marine Corps,  
For the Secretary.



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STATE, WAR, AND NAVY BUILDING  
WASHINGTON

Refer to 722-A/DO

July 13, 1926.

Colonel Arthur Dwight,  
29 Broadway, New York, N.Y.


Dear Sir:

It is desired to acknowledge receipt of your letter of  
July 9th, regarding the front lines of the 11th Engineers.

Your comments are greatly appreciated by the commission  
and will be of material assistance in making a final decision upon  
the correct location of the lines.

Thanking you again for your assistance, I am

Very truly yours,

  
CHARLES D. BARRETT,  
Major, U.S. Marine Corps,  
For the Secretary.