The 33rd Division Along the Meuse, October 1918,

by

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This is an accepted draft study on gas warfare in World War I

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Foreword

This is a tentative study of the gas experience of the 33rd Division Along the Meuse during World War I. This study is not presented as a definitive and official history, but is reproduced for current reference use within the Military Establishment pending the publication of an approved history.

The author was assisted in his research by Mr. Guy F. Goodfellow and Mrs. Charlotte M. Bolin.

Note to Readers: Comments and suggestions relative to accuracy and adequacy of treatment are invited, and may be transmitted to the Chief, U.S. Army Chemical Corps Historical Office, Army Chemical Center, Maryland.
THE 33RD DIVISION ALONG THE MEUSE
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Narrative

Gas Discipline ........................................ 2
Plan of Attack ........................................ 7
The Halt on the Corps Objective .................. 12
Harassing Fire with HE and Gas .................. 17
Resumeption of the Advance ......................... 26
Gas Attack on the Bois des Moriaux ............... 32
Across the Meuse .................................... 36
Reenforcements to the East Bank .................. 49
"Situation...untenable...condition of men...desperate". 58
Modest Gains ......................................... 66
End of the Campaign .................................. 68

Analysis

The Battle Casualties of the 33rd Division .... 76
The Gas Casualties .................................. 78
Gas, Gas Masks, Gas Mask Exhaustion .......... 81
Gas and HE Shell .................................... 86
Use of Gas by the 52nd Field Artillery ......... 93
The Yellow Cross Division ......................... 94
Map No. 1: Forges Sector, 26 Sep - 1 Oct

Map No. 2: Area of Operations, 33rd Division, 10 Sep - 20 Oct

Map No. 3: Situation des Forces Ennemies, 26 Sep

Map No. 4: Approximate Disposition of 33rd Division, 30 Sep

Map No. 5: Patrol Map, 135th Infantry, 2 - 3 Oct

Sketch of Brieulles

Map No. 6: Situation Map, 129th Infantry, 2 - 6 Oct

Map No. 7: Situation des Forces Ennemies, 8 Oct

Map No. 8: Fifth German Army Legenkarte, 8 Oct

Map No. 9: Les Cotes de Moise

Map No. 10: Contre-Attaque Allemande, 9 Oct

Map No. 11: Situation Map, 129th Infantry, 9 - 20 Oct

Map No. 12: Map to accompany Field Notes...East of the Moise

Map No. 13: Fifth German Army Legenkarte, 11 Oct

Map No. 14: Situation des Forces Ennemies, 15 Oct

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The division includes the sector known as Elsenhausen, which was passed to 33rd Division during the operations along the Moise River.
On the first day of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, Bullard's III Corps, along the Meuse, was to advance to a position above Briécues-sur-Meuse.

On the second day the corps was to cross the river and outflank the enemy artillery and observation positions on the heights east of the Meuse.

When the left and center of III Corps delayed halfway to the Army Objective on the first day, the enemy recovered from his flight and from superior positions on both sides of the Meuse stopped the advance of III Corps before Briécues with deadly accurate artillery and machine gun fire and with gas.

For almost two weeks, under ceaseless harassing fire with HE and gas, the 33rd Division, on the right flank of III Corps, held its positions along the Meuse. On 3 October it split its forces and crossed the river in an effort to take the heights by frontal assault. Weakened by the gas casualties suffered west of the Meuse, the division was in no condition to undertake such an assault. Both east and west of the Meuse there were to be almost twice as many gas casualties and HE casualties. In the opinion of one of the division medical officers, "every officer and man in the 33rd Division, working with combat battalions and in other organizations operating near the front, was gassed to some degree during the operations along the Meuse river."

[D. W. H. Penn, Medical Officer, 123rd MG Regt, in Med Hist of the 33rd Div, p. 26 (Med Dept Box 3704, fol 1).]
Despite, or, possibly because of, the level of gas discipline that seems to have been maintained in the division, and the deep concern for gas discipline by the higher command, it was gas mask exhaustion as much as battle exhaustion that were out the division. This is the study of a division that was gassed incessantly until it broke down.

Gas Discipline

The 33rd Division, known from its insignia as the Yellow Cross Division, was organized at Camp Logan, Texas, in August 1917 from Illinois National Guard units brought up from duty along the Rio Grande. The division comprised the 129th and 130th Regiments, 65th Brigade, under Brig. Gen. Edward L. King; the 131st and 132nd Regiments, 88th Brigade, under Brig. Gen. Paul A. Wolf; the 88th FA Brigade (which did not join the division in France until after the war) and machine gun, engineer, signal, and sanitary train components. In command of the division was Maj. Gen. George Bell, Jr., "known to the whole Regular Army as perhaps the most exacting inspector general that was ever in it."

By February 1918 the customary administrative and personnel difficulties of organization had been sufficiently resolved to begin intensive training and schooling of the division, during which the infantry was given tours of duty in a system of trenches and was subjected to gas attacks arranged by the British and French instructors to simulate as closely as possible actual conditions. As a result the 33rd Division decided to become a regular gas division. The record of the 33rd Division is outstanding for gas attacks. The enemy's use of gas on the 33rd Division and the methods used to counteract it have interested the British and French observers, and the 33rd Division is the only American division which has been organized and trained in gas warfare specifically for that purpose.

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battle conditions of the Allied western front. In April the division received over 7,000 recruits to bring it up to strength, and a month later sailed for France. Moving to its training area near Abbeville, the 33rd Division began the program of retraining prescribed by G绪 AEF, under the eye of the Fourth British Army, and on 4 July, much against the wishes of Pershing, four companies of the 131st and 132nd Infantry participated with Australian troops in a minor operation against the town of Hanri, east of Amiens. On 9 August, the entire 131st Infantry took part in a British operation in the Somme valley. In a two-day battle for Bresnaire Wood, the 131st lost 388 officers and men, and another 570 casualties were suffered in the week that followed as the 131st held the wood against almost continuous H.E. and gas fire.

On 23 August, the division left the British front for the Tour sector for final brigade and division maneuvers, and was joined there by the artillery that was to serve it in the coming campaign, the 52nd FA Brigade (27th Division), under Brig. Gen. George W. Wingate. Two weeks later the division was placed under the XVII French Corps, Second French Army, and entered

3 Frederic L. Rudekepe, The History of the 33rd Division, A.E.F. (Springfield, 1921), I. 21. The History by the Division Adjutant, comprises four volumes in the series, Illinoists in the World War, the first volume of which is the narrative history. The documentation is complete, but the history is singularly devoid of any opinion or judgment. Nowhere in the history is the Division Gas Officer, 1st Lt. W. B. Vawter, mentioned; nor does any record of his appear among the documents.

4 History, I, 20, 35 - 49; Col J. B. Sandberg, "OF 131st Inf, Bpt on Ops of 8 -10 Aug., 18 Aug (33rd Div Box 17, 2011)." 801st, 131st Inf, 10 - 19 Aug (same file) indicate that phosgene and/or mustard gas was fired on 131st Inf positions on every one of those days.
the line along Hill 304—Mont Homme-Coulares, northwest of Verdun, completing
the relief of the French units on the morning of 10 September (Map No. 1). 

Whether or not it was the Gressaire Wood experience that alerted the
division, the 33rd, on coming into the line, had a highly gas-conscious com-
mand.

We are now in the gas zone area... Every possible precaution will be taken
regarding gas. The Division Commander directs and inspects upon strict com-
pliance with his directive that gas officers and NCO’s be used for no other
purpose except for gas instruction and enforcement of gas regulations.

The 132nd Infantry acted promptly in the case of a trench of gas discipline.

It has been observed that men attached to transport and supply companies are
very careless about their helmets and respirators... Battalion, company and
platoon commanders will begin at once a thorough inspection of their sectors to
see that steel helmets and gas respirators are worn at all times by all
troops.

This concern was also evident in an incident that occurred on the afternoon
of 13 September. During a gas mask inspection of Battery D, 106th FA, a
member of men from the 3rd Battalion, 131st Infantry, the veterans of
Gressaire Wood, stood around and made remarks "to the effect that gas was a
joke and, having been under fire several times, they were wise enough now
day to bother carrying masks. On numerous other occasions they had laughed
and attempted to make fun of the artillerymen wearing masks."

The incident was reported by the battery commander as detrimental to gas
discipline, and ten endorsements on his letter indicated that the matter was
not taken lightly. For one week, all companies of the 3rd Battalion were ...

For 32 and 33, 122nd Inf, 7 and 9 Sep (53rd Div, Box 22, 35-1). Such
carelessness in discipline had been general throughout the division earlier.
See 1st Col E. D. Ardery, GCO II Corps to Aetl CoF 9 – 8, 24 Jul, sub: Gas
Tag in 53rd Div (53rd Div Box 11, 57).
given an extra hour or gas mask drill daily and had read to them at each assembly a letter from the 151st Infantry commander describing the offense and closing with the warning that:

A continuation of this spirit will result sooner or later in a large number of casualties in your organization, when in action or subject to gas attacks, and the fact cannot be impressed too strongly upon every man that his life depends upon strict conformity to orders governing gas defense.

On the third day of the St. Mihiel operation, the 33rd Division and the 79th to its left passed to the command of Bullard's III Corps, and preparations began for the coming Meuse-Argonne offensive. During this period, 'utmost stress was laid upon the absolute necessity for every precaution against hostile aerial observation and gas attacks.' Stress was also laid upon the necessity for quiet and a minimum of movement, to conceal the intensive preparations being made just behind the front lines for the coming assault. A memo from the 88th Brigade commander to division headquarters reported an outbreak nearby:

We have received very strict orders from your office to keep quiet, cut of sight, and do everything possible to prevent the enemy from thinking anybody is here. The 79th on my left is raising hell -- machine guns, rifle fire, grenades, and heaven knows what. My only hope is that they are doing so much that people will realize they are a rookie outfit and not pay any attention to it, but can't you do something to get it stopped?

6. Lie, CC Bty D 106th FA to CC 106th FA, 13 Sep, subj Gas Diso of Inf, and 10, Ind (33rd Div Box 46, 400.78).


8. Memo, Brig Gen King to Corp 33rd Div, 13 Sep (33rd Div Box 15, 321.16).
Fortunately, as the division history said, most of the week "was marked by bad weather... [and] the comparative inactivity of the enemy artillery."

On 19 September, a four-page training circular on gas defense, with particular emphasis on mustard gas, was distributed throughout the division. This circular, which was the first issued by the division to order temporary evacuation of positions contaminated with mustard gas to alternate positions, "superseded all gas training circulars up to that date."9 The division was to have need for all the gas discipline it could muster, for it was to be under gas attack every day it spent along the Meuse.

On the night of 21–22 September, the 4th and 80th Divisions were inserted between the 79th and 33rd, and on 24 September the division received the order for the attack.

**Plan of Attack**

The First Army plan was to attack in the direction of Husayny and Stonne, with III Corps (including the 33rd Division) on the right maintaining liaison with Claudel's XVII French Corps, holding fast east of the Meuse, and with I Corps on the far left keeping in touch with the advance of Mangia's Fourth French Army.

The mission of III Corps was to advance across the Buisseau de Forges (Forges Brook) north to the Bois de Forest, above Bruxelles-sur-Meuse, the

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9 Tag Cir 177 (33rd Div Box 10, 50.0). There is no record that the officer and NCO's per week authorized to attend ARF and I Corps Gas Schools, beginning 6 Oct, did so. By then, circumstances certainly mitigated against it. (Idr, TAG ARF to CG 33rd Div, 21 Sep, subj: Instru in Gas Def, 33rd Div Box 47, 565.2).
33rd division wheeling and organizing the west bank of the Meuse as quickly as possible to protect the Army advance (see Map No. 1).

The initial objective of III Corps was the enemy’s Nagen Stellung, a series of trenches extending west of the Meuse, from north and west of Maimencourt through the Bois de Forges to the river. Beyond lay the Corps Objective, the Volker Stellung complex, which ran from Montblainville, on the edge of the Argonne Forest, across the front to Dannevoux. In the III Corps sector, it skirted south of Montfaucon, thence between the Bois de Sachet and the Bois de Décé, and up the east edge of the Bois Jure to the Meuse. Both enemy positions were to be overrun on the morning of the first day.

Above the first two enemy positions was the Kriemhilde Stellung, a defensive belt on this front from the Bois des Ogones to Brisoules-sur-Meuse, with a second series of positions above that from Andeval to Dinan-sur-Meuse. The Army Objective, through the first line of the Kriemhilde Stellung and including the heights of Romagne, Cunel, and Brisoules, was to be reached during the afternoon of the first day. Penetration of the Kriemhilde Stellung was to be completed by exploitation that night.

The 33rd Division was to attack between the Passarelle du Don (a footbridge across Forges Brook midway between Bethincourt and the Moulin

11 H. O. 30, First Army, 15 hrs, 20 Sep, par 3(9)5 (U. S. Army in the World War, 1917-1919 (1943), IX, 87; First Army Box 32).
de Raffecourt) and the Meuse, and in one bound take Drillemont and the Bois de Forges, advance to D humaneux and organize the river front from Damevieux down to Cote de l'Oie (Map No. 2). The attack was to be made by the 66th Brigade, with two battalions each of the 131st and 132nd Infantry in line, reinforced by Company A, 1st Gas and Flame Regiment, and accompanied by nine tanks. "Proper precautions were to be exercised against gas in passing through woods and low ground." 12

Opposite III Corps from Malan Court to the Meuse were the 117th and 7th Reserve Divisions. All reserves were east of the Meuse, since Fifth Army fully expected the next attack, extending the St. Mihiel operation, to be made in that sector (Map No. 3). The rolling ground before III Corps gave little observational advantage to the enemy forces on the immediate front, but the enemy on the east bank of the Meuse had a clear field of observation well to the south of Forges Brook, and his artillery on the cotes de Meuse commanded both sides of the river.

First Army appears to have been somewhat sanguine about the defensive value of the Meuse in its note that the river provided "easy protection for the right or east flank of the proposed operation," yet it expressed some concern about possible enemy observation and fire from Hill 382, below Bois Pilet-Chene, and from the summits in the Bois de la Grande

12 FO 23, 33rd Div, 900 a.m., 24 Sep, esp par 5(b)8 (33rd Div Box 5, 32.1). "In case of an advance Bois de Forges would undoubtedly be passed. It should be cleaned up quickly and vacated." Addenda to Intel Bul 2, 33rd Div, 20 Sep (33rd Div Box 3, 20.6). But the enemy did not gas the wood during the attack.
SITUATION des FORCES ENNEMIES
DEVANT LE FRONT DU 17ème C.A.
le 25 Septembre 1918

Source: 35th Div Des 35
Montagna. As a result, XVII French Corps was directed to join in the preparatory bombardment, to make deep raids at 9 hour, and to assist Army, III Corps, and divisional artillery in an intense 15-minute neutralisation with paroxysm of known hostile artillery and observation points on the Meuse heights.

The Fail on the Corps Objective

A half hour before midnight on 25 September, corps artillery began its preparation for the attack. At 0230 on the 26th the Army artillery joined in, and the 106th Engineers began construction of nine passages over the marsh through which Forges Brook ran, using 11,000 fascines it had previously prepared. At 0630 the divisional artillery, reinforced by twelve trench batteries, began its bombardment of near enemy positions and put a standing barrage on the Bethincourt-Forges road as the troops came up and began crossing the marsh. There is no evidence that III Corps or 33rd Division assisted in the neutralisation of the Meuse heights.

Advancing with artillery and machine gun barrages and concealed in smoke and morning fog, the attack battalions of the 66th Brigade crossed the stream and moved up the eastern slope of the ridge in the early hours of 26 September. (USA in the WW II, 75 - 74). Some forces moved down to Ill Falls in the hope of taking reserve forces.

To 80, First Army, 15 hrs, 20 Sep, para 3C), 3(2)6, Annex I, Employment of Army Art., 19 Sep (USA in the WW II, 85, 86 - 87, 96).

History I in the WW II, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

Of the 80,000 rounds fired by III corps that day, 33rd Div artillery fired 56,000 75-mm and 6,000 155-mm rounds (S01 16, 33rd Div, 25 - 26 Sep, in 33rd Div, Box 2, 220.1).
the enemy wire and trenches, met little opposition, and between 1,000 and 1,500 had flanked the Bois de Forges and reached the Corps and Army Objectives, from Lealborg de Belhaine, east of Danneveux, down to the eastern edge of the Bois de Forges, opposite Bribant, between five and seven kilometers from the line of departure. During the last few hundred yards advance, reported one battalion, "The entire skyline in front was dotted with fleeing Boches." 16

In the advance that morning, the 131st Infantry lost 1 officer and 19 men killed, 2 officers and 131 men wounded, while the 132nd Infantry lost 1 officer and 15 men killed and 72 men wounded, for a total of 244 battle casualties. Almost 1,400 prisoners had been taken, as well as 42 guns and mortars and 181 machine guns. 17

Similarly overrunning the enemy forces on their fronts, the 80th and 4th Divisions to the left of the 33rd advanced to the Corps Objective on the morning of the 2th and halted there to wait for V Corps, stopped at Montfaucon, to come abreast. When ordered to continue the advance without V Corps, almost six hours later, it was too late. The halt at the Corps Objective, well below Brieulles, had been decisive. The retreating enemy had stopped and manned his defensive positions in the rear, as nearly ready to advance in a line across the line. Without regard to their local reserve forces came down to fill gaps in the line and distant reserve forces here, the Real Port. 18

16 History, 1, 69 ff; Opns Rep't, CO 1st BN 131st Inf, n.d. (33rd Div Box 19, 33.5).

17 History, 1, 76, 80; Brig Gen Wolf, Opns in the Mort Houme Sector, n.d. (33rd Div Box 15, 33.6); rpt, 131st Inf Engagement in Forges Wood, 25 Sep (33rd Div Box 19, 33.6).
Elements of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, coming in to support the 117th and 7th Reserve Divisions, in the event of attack, had arrived at Yellesmes at 0515, 26 September. At 1026 the German command learned that the Americans had broken through the defense line east of Montfaucon, and at 1140 elements of the division were across the Meuse and on the west edge of the Bois du Fayes. At 1900, its 12th Regiment had attacked the 4th and 80th Divisions coming through the Bois de Septsarges.

On the 27th, against mounting resistance, the left of the III Corps line inched forward, coming to a stop along the line Hill 295-western edge of Bois de Septsarges-through the Bois de Brucelles-Hill 280-north edge of Bois de la Cote Lament. After the great stride made the first day, First Army had come to a standstill along Apresmont-Mautilliole-Bois de la Cote Lament. The Army Objective was not to be reached for another fifteen days.

The War Diary of Artillerie Kommando (Arko) 95, 7th Reserve Division, reported the new disposition of troops and weapons made on the afternoon of the 28th. As the Americans stopped their pursuit about 1600, the

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18 Top late, No 27, First Army, 2315 hrs, 26 Sep, was to say that corps were to advance within their zones of action without regard to objectives. See original pattern of objectives, UMA in the WW II, 31. C. Liddell Hart, The Real War, 1914-1918 (Boston 1931), pp. 465 - 466.

19 8th Bav Res Div WP, 26 Sep (8th Bav Res Div WDA, 23 Sep - 10 Nov, German Files Box 145, fol II, pp. 2 - 3).
scattered forces of the division halted, the 5th Bavarian Reserve Division arrived to fill in their gaps, and the 147th Infantry, 37th Division, was brought up as support at Brieulles. Two battalions of field guns saved from capture were put across the river near Vilosmes as a flanking group, and a heavy battalion, two long mortar batteries, and a 15-cm cannon battery were reorganized back of the field guns as the heavy flanking group. At least five other field batteries from reserve were hastily brought down to augment the light flanking group.\(^{21}\)

While these dispositions were being made, the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division (Gők) was directed by Mass Ort "to support with all means the Mass West sector," resecting its artillery groups "for operations against the west bank of the Meuse." To this end, a number of field and heavy batteries from the 15th Division were transferred to swell the artillery groups of the 1st Austro-Hungarian.\(^{22}\) On the 27th, still more artillery was brought down "to support the [German forces on the] west bank of the Meuse with flanking fire." The artillery of the 1st Austro-Hungarian was ordered "to put flanking fire in the area between Dannemouex-Gercourt and

\(^{21}\) Arko 95 WD, 26 Sep (7th Res Div-Sub Units-WDAA, 26 Sep - 11 Oct, German Files Box 156, Fol II, pp. 81). Arko 17 WD, 26 - 30 Sep (8th Bav Res Div-Sub Units-WDAA, German Files Box 149, Fol XIIIa, pp. 210 - 11). Reports that a flanking group remained on the east bank under the 7th Res Div, the rest of its batteries moving to the Bois de Canue and Clery-le-Grand, their principal targets the Bois du Pays, Bois de Brieulles, and Bois Cote Lemoine.

\(^{22}\) Mag, Mass Ort, to 1 Gők, 26 Sep, and Mass Ort Ops O 5605, 26 Sep (Mass Ort [5th Res Corps] Amouroux, 10 Sep - 20 Nov, German Files Box 116, Fol II, pp. 8, 11).
in the Bois de Forges," to prevent enemy crossing of the Meuse in that sector, and to "fire unconditionally with everything they have. Conservation of ammunition is of no importance.21

While the 7th Reserve Division sought to collect its scattered forces and move them into the Vilaine-Srysler sector, the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, spanning the river at Brieulles, temporarily consolidated the 7th Reserve artillery with its own. When the 7th Reserve was in place, it was to resume command of its flanking group on the west bank, receiving missions from Maas West.24

Over the next several days, as Maas Ost assured its divisions on either side of the river that there was "adequate time to get out orders for the regulation of methods of annihilation fire...reciprocal grouping of artillery...communications and liaison with neighboring divisions," the artillery defense was completed. "Large yellow cross shoots...were to be prepared" and submitted for approval by 2 October.25

23 Maas Ost WD, 26 Sep (German Files Box 115, fol I, p. 22); Maas Ost Rpt 1451, 27 Sep (German Files Box 116, fol II, pp. 14 - 15).


Note: 7th Res Div arcy (Arko 98) operated intact but the troops of the division seem to have been intermingled with those of the 1st Inf Div. The German maps, below, make this clear, but no confirming rpt has been found.

25 Maas Ost Order 5917, 30 Sep (German Files Box 48, fol 810/13). A prisoner on the 28th was to report the arrival of 3 or 4 divisions on III Corps front, along with much arty on the east bank, including long naval guns (801 10, 83rd Div, 28 - 29 Sep).
Harassing Fire with RE and Gas.

On 27 September, an enemy artillery began systematic shelling of the Bois de Forges, Comiera, and the back areas, the 68th Brigade of 33rd Divisi-
on, inactive in the assault, advanced to positions west of Dannegoux
naire to relieving the 50th Division in the Bois de la Cote Lemont and
iss de Dannegoux. Driven back repeatedly by enemy machine guns in the Bois
Ways, the 4th Division needed assistance, as did V Corps to the left, and
first a regiment, then the entire 80th Division, was to be swung around to
the left flank of the 4th Division. Owing to delay of orders, a German
counterattack from Brieulles on the morning of the 28th, and extremely
heavy enemy fire with "many gas shells," it was the morning of the 30th be-
fore the 33rd Division relief of the 80th was completed.26

During the enemy shelling on the 27th, twelve 77-mm diphenylamine and
chloropropin shells were reported to have fallen just beyond the village
of Forges. Fo troops were in the immediate area at the time and the gas
was said to have been quickly dispersed by the wind. Nevertheless, the
next day 43 men of Company A, 1st Gas Regiment, and 3 men of the 151st

26 FO 24, 33rd Div., 10439 p.m., 28 Sep; History, I, 85-89. Tele order,
3, 3rd Army to III Corps, 1459 p.m., 28 Sep (USA in the WW, IX, 135)
directed "lengthening out the defensive front of 33rd Div."

"Hostile shelling on front with intense fire...Gas concentrations
used during night [from] right bank of Meuse River" (Mags G - 2 65th Brig
to G - 3, 33rd Div, 715 a.m., 29 Sep., in 33rd Div Boxes 6 and
13, 32,16).

"Army of the Loire, A.E.F. in rear of Meuse River, 28th.
It was probably the 80th Div. that received the "ordered contamination of
the village of Dannegoux and Bois des Moriaux with yellow cross...carried
out by Group Bpt. Edelmann on hill B of Villeneuve Pas" early this morning
[i.e., the 28th]" (ARAD 1st A-E daily rpt, Italian Fliers Box 2, Vol I, p.
130).
Infantry, in the Forges area, were evacuated with severe symptoms of chloropicrin poisoning. Investigation by Lt. W. E. Vawter, Acting Division Gas Officer, indicated that all 46 men had drunk coffee that had probably been made from contaminated shell-hole water, since the KP who had been sent for fresh water, almost a kilometer distant, had returned in a suspiciously short time. 27

All four regiments of the 53rd Division — the 130th and 129th Infantry, in line at the bend of the Meuse, and the 131st and 132nd, between Dannevoux and Forges — were within range of enemy gas groups in the Bois de Chatillon as well as the Bois de Concuvoye (Map No. 4). 28 While the 66th Brigade was being subjected to periodic bursts of gas shell on the 29th the 30th, the 66th Brigade reported "heavy gas shelling" during the night of 29 - 30 September in the Bois de Forges area." The Division Gas Officer was to report only a single episode in the widespread gas shelling that night. Approximately fifty 105-mm mustard gas shells fell in the vicinity of the 2nd Battalion, 132nd Infantry, at 1730 on the 29th. A single gas shell, making a direct hit on the entrance


Notes: There is no 300 file and no DOG correspondence in 53rd Div records. His reports and correspondence have been found in GAF, WD Hist, III Corps, and First Army records.

28 The art of the 1st A-H Div, in position between the Bois de la Grande Montagne and the Bois de Concuvoye, kept the areas around Dannevoux and opposite Concuvoye and Erbaut under gas and HE fire. See 1st A-H Div order 420/6, 28 Sep and rpts 29 Sep (Italian Files Box 2, fol 1, pp. 64, 149 - 50).
to H Company headquarters dugout in the Bois de Forges, reportedly produced all the casualties resulting from the attack — 2 officers and 25 men.

When the shell burst, all in the dugout masked at once, but no effort was made to leave the area. About an hour later the company commander, who had been to the gas school at St. Valery and should have known better, removed his mask and so did the rest of the men. The company gas NCO remarked on the strong odor of gas in the dugout and suggested evacuation of the area, but the company commander thought it only the smell of drugs, since the dugout had recently been a German dressing station.

At 2000, the Battalion Gas Officer and Assistant Division Gas Officer heard of the gas attack from another company that passed near H Company dugout and at once went over and ordered immediate evacuation of the area. Shortly after, all 27 headquarters men, who had been exposed for over an hour to the mustard gas fumes, developed serious eye complications. Two of the men, who had apparently inhaled high concentrations of the gas when it struck the dugout, died two days later.29

Both the 80th and 4th Divisions had been subjected to far more intense gas and NE fire than the 33rd in the first three days of the campaign, and with the failure of their repeated assaults on the line.

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29 Ltr, Actg DGO to CGO III Corps, 7 Oct, Rpt B-2 (GAF-33rd Div). Cf. FM CO 152nd Inf to G - 3 33rd Div, 1220 p.m., 30 Sep: “Last night my left battalion was heavily shelled with gas. One shell broke in front of us at Co. H. Company Cmdr, Capt Nauberfield, Lt Heath, the 1st Sgt, and 16 men passed and evacuated during the night” (33rd Div Box 6, 32-16).

Notes: Despite the date on ltr above, the III CGO received no rpts of gas atk from his DGOs until after 9 Oct. See memos to DGOs 4th, 80th, 33rd Divs, 5 and 9 Oct, re no gas attack rpts 26 Sep to date (III Corps Box 59, 65-3).
Ci乞es-Briselles on 28 and 29 September, the attacking power of III Corps was spent. It was clear that the German batteries in the Bois de Chatillon and on the heights beyond had to be silenced, and that the German defense at Brisselles, forming a tactically favorable point d'appui or strongpoint at the bend of the Meuse, must be dislodged. Unless III Corps could get above Brisselles, an extension of the fighting front across the Meuse would be imperative, and much sooner than planned.

As the 66th Brigade took over the 6th Division sector, III Corps directed the 33rd Division to organize a stout outpost line from the nameless hill south of Brisselles-Cote 214— the bend of the Meuse-Cote de l'Oie; to construct a main line of resistance along the Septsarges-Danneveux road; and to begin patrolling the Meuse east of the Bois de Forges and reconnoiter for fords along the river flats. 30

The 130th Infantry, on the hill below Brisselles, found that "its houses were full of machine guns," with at least fifteen seen in action on one occasion. Immobilized by artillery fire from the Bois de Chatillon and the ridge above Vilosmes, the 130th and 129th Infantry were also swept by frequent bursts of machine gun fire from the edge of the wood and from the village of Vilosmes. 31 Enfilade fire from the vicinity of Stavy began coming into the 66th Brigade sector on the night of 30 September and

30 Brief of Opns, III Corps, 28 Sep (III Corps Box 4, 11.4); G - 3 Memo, First Army, 29 Sep (USA in the Ww II, 149); 33rd Div Plan of Defense, Vilosmes-Consenvoye Sector, 29 Sep (33rd Div Box 8, 32.5); Opns Orders 5, 7, 130th Int, 2 and 6 Oct (33rd Div Box 17, 33.15, 33.1).

31 Sol, 130th Inf, 27 Sep - 6 Oct (33rd Div Box 17, 20.1).
continued through the next day, as the 66th Brigade to the south reported
gas and shrapnel on Forges Wood at the rate of four rounds per minute,
through the midnight hours of 30 September. 32

Observing artillery moving up to support the 66th Brigade on 1
October, 7th Reserve Division ordered its artillery "to destroy with all
means the enemy artillery moving into position. Whenever possible gas is
to be used." A second order, to gas the Bois de Brieulles and Bois des
Noriaux on the night of 1 - 2 October, was carried out in the morning
hours of the 2nd. 33

Confirming these enemy gas missions, the 66th Brigade reported gas
concentrations on Bute1 ravine and the Namovex-Septmes-les-Eaux valley at 1845
and 0230 on the night of 1 - 2 October. The gas attack on the 130th Inf-
fantry sector at 1845 was said to have been ineffective when the wind blew

32 DCH, 66th Brig, 30 Sep - 1 Oct (33rd Div Box 16, 33.1); 201 22,
33rd Div, 1 - 2 Oct.

33 Div Orders, 1 Oct (7th Res Div WSA, 10 Sep - 10 Oct, German Files
Box 186, fol 1, pp. 127, 133).

* Mass Oct Order 3866, 1 Oct, called for "gas shell into Bois des
Noriaux...Bois de Forges...to prevent preparation of material for
barrage bridges," the gassing to be carried out at irregular times between
2030 and 2300 (German Files Box 48, 615/32.15).

* Mass Oct MD, 2 Oct, said that blue cross had been used in the usual
harassing fire that morning on ravines, roads, villages, and woods up to
the line Montillois-Montfaucon-Warancourt (German Files Box 115, fol 14,
p. 19). There was no word of the gas shells in any of the specified
woods.

* Notes: Orders and reports on ER and gas missions in the German
records are fairly complete from 1 Oct on, but almost nowhere are the
number of rounds given for these missions. Thus it is possible to con-
firm most German gas missions but not their degree.
the gas into the zone of the 4th Division. 54 In the 129th Infantry sector, in the Bois des Morieux, a report of "some gas shells" was made just after midnight on 2 October. At 0634, it was reported that the "gas attack launched against the 129th is still going on. Attack is coming from Vizémes. Our artillery is firing on that town." A message at 0712 said the artillery had "stopped the gas attack." 55

The Division Gas Officer was to report only 60 rounds of 77-mm yellow cross shell fired on the slopes below the Bois des Morieux at 0830 that morning. The 129th Infantry, in the wood, reported no casualties. 56 On the evening of 2 October, the 68th Brigade reported 150 gas shells in a "rather heavy bombardment of large caliber shrapnel and gas on the front of the 129th Infantry, causing 3 killed and 7 wounded. Our artillery... silenced the enemy." 57 No DUG report has been found for this shelling.

54 CENT. 22, 33rd Div., 1-2 Oct. History, I, 90. III Corps Open Rpt., 1-2 Oct. (WLA in the WW, IX, 208) said about 200 assesting and phosgene gas shells were fired into the ravine and valley.

55 Mag. G - 2 65th Brig to G - 3 33rd Div., 8:26 a.m., 2 Oct; Mag. Lt Proser to G - 1 33rd Div., 6:34 a.m.; Mag, 68th Brig to 33rd Div., 7:12 a.m. (33rd Div. Box 5, 32:10).

56 Lt. Actg. DCO to CO III Corps, 7 Oct, Rpt P-2; FN Ochserne NO 129th Inf to 390 33rd Div., 9:30 a.m., 2 Oct (33rd Div. Box 15, 32:10), rptd "two or three casualties."

Unreported by the DCO was the shelling of "the approaches and crossing places over the Moselle with yellow cross" by the 1st A-M arty on the morning of 2 Oct. (Daily rpt. 2 Oct, Italian Files Box 2, Tet. I, p. 171).

57 Mag. G - 2 65th Brig to G - 3 33rd Div., 4:50 p.m., 2 Oct; Mag. CO 65th Brig to CO 33rd Div., 5:00 p.m., 2 Oct (33rd Div. Box 5, 32:10).
As will be shown later, both the German orders and the 33rd Division reports in the first week of the campaign apparently exaggerate the quantity of gas shell being used. Yet some proportion of gas shell was fired in the nightly harassing missions and no part of the 33rd Division sector was exempt from this fire. As a result, the troops were kept alert and in their masks through most of each night. The effectiveness of the fire, by wearing down the troops through keeping them awake and masked, is only partly revealed in the number of gas cases recorded each day. The gas casualties reported by the 100 and those actually admitted to the gas hospital on 1 and 2 October, for example, totaled 16 and 33, respectively.

Although the 33rd Division artillery had large stocks of gas munitions on hand, they were not used, and such retaliation as there was for the nightly gassing by the enemy was inadequate. At 2300 on 2 October, after a day's delay owing to unfavorable winds, a gas projector shot was carried out by Company F, 1st Gas Regiment, to inflict casualties on the enemy forces around Villeins. Although 50 phosgene drums were launched from projectors installed near the center of the Bois des Moriaux, the attack was said to have resulted in only two casualties, according to a later prisoner interrogation report, because of the high wind at the time and the fact that few men were in the vicinity of the target area when the shot occurred.58

Ltr, CCO III Corps to C GWS, 12 Nov, sub: Rpt on Gas Activities for Oct (GAP-III Corps). A repeat of this attack on the morning of 5 Oct was not carried out owing to unfavorable winds, nor on 6 Oct, "owing to difficulties making it impossible to complete operations in one night" (Gaps 0 2, 1st GR, 4 Oct and pencil note, 33rd Div Box 12, 63.5, and Memo, Co F, 1st GR to CO 65th Brig, 5 Oct, sub: Cancellation of proposed Gas Gps, 33rd Div Box 15, 12.6).
Except for a brief HE bombardment, there was no immediate reprisal by the enemy for the gas projector attack. The 7th Reserve Division artillery order for the night of 2 - 3 October was to be substantially repeated through the week that followed as the enemy sought to wear down the American troops on his front and prevent them from crossing the river.

Harassing fire with HE and gas on Bois de Laismont, Bois de Dancenoux, Bois des Moriaux; long-range fire on Dancenoux and Bercourt, and on the Dancenou-Vilaines, Dancenoux-Septangles, Dancenoux-Bercourt, and Bercourt-Dulcy-Montfavet roads [as well as other targets to the left of the 3rd Division]. At 0720 p.m., increase of gas shells in the harassing fire, especially on Bois des Moriaux and Bois de Septangles, and 150 10-cm HE and blue cross on Bois de Briailles. 39

Of this gas shelling, the Division Gas Officer reported only 12 yellow cross shells that fell among 90 men of the 129th Infantry in the Bois Jure at 0440. Six men who were sprinkled with the liquid from the bursting shells were said to have been evacuated. 40

Hospital records, however, show that 21 gas cases were admitted on 3 October and 22 on 4 October, principally from the 129th Infantry and the 123rd MG Battalion, in the 6th Brigade sector.

39 Arko 96 order for 7 p.m. 2 Oct to 7 a.m. 3 Oct (7th Res Div Sub Units WBA, 23 Sep-11 Oct, Arko 96 annexes, German Files Box 135, Fol II, p. 61). Fol I in this file contains divisional morning and noon reports confirming these five missions.

40 Ltr, Actg CO to G20 III Corps, 7 Oct, Rpt 5-2, III Corps G20 Rpt, 2 - 3 Oct (USA in the EN, IX, 210), reported 200 gas shells in Bois Jure and on Hill 298.
On the evening of 3 October, the 33rd Division received the First Army order resuming the attack, in an effort to pierce the Kriemhilde Stellung. In the assault, III Corps was to penetrate the enemy position between Cunel and Brielle, advancing to the heights northeast of Cunel, and then sweep east to the Meuse, cutting off Brielle. The 50th Division, on the left of the 4th Division, was to attack along the Bois des Epans to the North edge of the Bois des Fosses; the 4th Division through the Bois du Fays to the north edge of the Bois de Forest and then east to the river. The 33rd Division was to hold its positions and protect the flank of the attack. 41

For the attack, three field batteries and four machine gun companies of the 33rd Division were moved into the northwest edge of the Bois de la Cote Lemont, to assist the 130th Infantry in breaking up possible enemy counterattacks between the Bois de Brielle, Bois de Forest, and Brielle. As the hour of attack approached, the remaining divisional artillery prepared to bombard Brielle and its defenses to the northwest, and to neutralize with HE the enemy guns in the Bois de Chatillon, Bois de Sarrelle, and the two ravines east of Liny-devant-Dun. 42

The enemy artillery order for the night of 3 – 4 October indicated no particular awareness of the impending attack as it called for

41 FO 35, First Army noon, 1 Oct; FO 22, III Corps, 9.00 a.m., 3 Oct; FO 26, 33rd Div, 10.15 p.m., 3 Oct.

42 History, I, 92 – 93.
harassing fire with surprise bursts of gas and HE at irregular intervals on woods of Damvieux, Moriau and Jun, on Damvieux and Gersourt, and on roads running from Damvieux to Septaarges, Villaines and Gerscourt. The 68th Brigade, along the west bank of the Meuse, reported heavy shell fire and gas along its entire front from 0215 to 0530, the 111th Infantry specifying it as tear [chloropirine] gas. Of the gas shelling in this brigade sector, Lieutenant Vawter was to report only an undetermined number of yellow cross shells that fell in the Bois de Forges some time that night resulting in a highly contaminated area that was discovered by a gas officer the next morning. Guards were at once posted. In the 66th Brigade sector, however, Vawter said 300 gas and HE shells were reported to have fallen into the southeast corner of the Bois de Septaarges between midnight and 0600 on the 4th. There were two casualties.

It is apparent from Lieutenant Vawter's long, belated report on gas attacks up to 7 October that it was not possible to report the numerous areas subjected to bursts of gas, and he could only say that in general the sector of the 66th Brigade north and west of Damvieux had been heavily shelled with HE, yellow cross, and blue cross every night. He

43 Arko 96 order for 7 p.m. 3 Oct to 7 a.m. 4 Oct (7th Res Div, above, p. 62.)

44 Mag. C of 66th Brig to G-3 33rd Div, 610 a.m. 4 Oct; Mag. G-2 111th Inf to G-3 33rd Div, m/h. 4 Oct (33rd Div Box 6, 32.16). See also SOI 25, 26, 33rd Div, 2 - 4 Oct; SOI 31st Inf, 3 - 5 Oct (33rd Div Box 18, 20.11).

might have said the same for the sector of the 66th Brigade, south of
Dannevouz. 46

In the attack launched by First Army at 0625 on 4 October, the 80th
and 4th Divisions almost reached the Canal-Brieulles road, when savage
artillery and machine gun fire and counterattacking forces from Brieulles
hurled them back to their former positions. For the next two days, as
all available guns of Army and corps concentrated on the enemy batteries
in the Bois de Chatillon, 33rd Division guns pounded Brieulles, and its
troops attempted, without success, to take Teton Trench (Map No. 5 and
sketch of Brieulles), in an effort to protect the 4th Division forces,
which had got into the Bois du Pays, from intense flanking machine gun
fire. 47

At 1800 on the night of 6 October, 20 Allied planes carried out a
bombing raid on Brieulles, setting fire to a part of the town. Seven
hours later the III Corps Gas Officer signaled: "Hamilton's 80th Divi-
sion] is going to throw gas into Brieulles at 4 A.M." 48 Beginning at
0400, 80th Division 75's fired 1,000 phosgene shells into Brieulles,
following up with an equal mixture of HE and yperite shells for thirty
minutes, and then yperite shells alone until 1,500 No. 20 shells had been

46 See Analysis, p. 92.

47 See 66th Brigade memo orders, 4 - 6 Oct (33rd Div Box 13, N.12).

48 Mag. OCO Emerson to G - 3 33rd Div, 1400 a.m., 7 Oct.
put into the town. All divisions in the vicinity were notified "to take the necessary precautions when the town is taken." 49

Although the entire front became "very quiet" after the rain of de-
struction on Briereilles, 50 its defenses in front of the town and on the
ridge to the northwest were quickly restored. Teton Trench, said the
45th Brigade commander, had in the past week been "fairly well shot to
pieces," but on the afternoon of the 7th he had to admit that "a con-
siderable amount of machine gun fire was still coming from that loca-
tion." 51 Meanwhile, determined to hold the Bois du Pays, a salient
with enemy troops pressing on both flanks and with strongly entrenched
forces above in the Bois de Malaumont, III Corps called the 33rd Divi-
sion for assistance. On the morning of 7 October, the 3rd Battalion,
132nd Infantry, and its machine gun company were sent in to relieve the
regiment of the 4th Division in the Bois du Pays. 52

49 Memo, Robbe CGO III Corps to C CWs Att Def Div, 6 Oct (GAF-III
Corps); ltr, CGO III Corps to C CWs Att Def Div, 27 Oct, sub: Record
of Gas Atks (First Army Box 940, III CGO); ltr, CGO III Corps to C CWs,
12 Nov, sub: Rep on Gas Activities for Oct. This correspondence
indicates that the 4th and 89th Divs fired considerable gas shells during the
period, the 33rd Div none.

50 Mag, Prosser [1st LT, III Corps] to G 2 33rd Div, 915 a.m., 7 Oct (33rd Div Box 6, 52.16), reported completion of the gas
mission: "Entire front now very quiet."

51 Mag, CG 35th Brig to G 2 33rd Div, 1215 p.m., 7 Oct (33rd Div
Box 6, 52.16.)

On 9 Oct, 4th Div put 400 yperite shells into Briereilles and the next day
captured Teton Trench. Briereilles however was not to be taken until the
end of the month.

52 History, I, 96 - 97, 100.
Gas Attack on the Bois des Mœniaux

The only major gas attack on the 33rd Division during the operation occurred on 5 October. The initial gas bombardment occurred between 0200 and 0330 when approximately 1,500 green, blue, and yellow cross 77 and 105-mm shells were fired into the Bois des Mœniaux, opposite Vilaines, an area of approximately one square kilometer (Map No. 8).

Nothing has been found to suggest that this attack was in reprisal for the gas projector shoot of 2 October. More likely it was the threat of a possible crossing at that point indicated by the continued heavy fire of the trench mortars in the wood, that the enemy sought to neutralize. But the gas shoot got none of the mortarmen, for they regularly withdrew to the Beis Jure when not firing.

The wood was occupied at the time by the 1st Battalion and part of the 2nd Battalion, 129th Infantry, a total of approximately 1,100 men. Evacuation of the area was impossible, as the enemy held the men there with intense HE fire and air-burst shrapnel following the gassing. During the attack, a message from the 131st Infantry on the right said: "HE shells and gas from 1230 to 1430 [sic], two wounded, three gassed. 129th very heavily shelled during same period." 63

Between 1615 and 1645, another 700 gas shells were reportedly put into the wood and again evacuation was blocked by follow-up HE fire. At 1615 that afternoon, 400 more gas shells fell on the slope just south of the wood, as troops attempted to move down to escape the gas-filled wood.

85 Mag, 3rd Bn 131st Inf to G0 131st Inf, 0455 A.M., 5 Oct (33rd Div Box 16, 2216.)
It was estimated that between 5,000 and 7,000 shells had been fired into that square kilometer that day, 2,000 of them gas shells.

As soon as night had fallen, the wood was completely evacuated. Casualties resulting from the prolonged gas attack were reported by Lieutenant Venter as 350, including two men killed by fragments of exploding gas shells. Forty men were evacuated with lung complications, the remainder with eye or body burns. The most serious cases, those with lung complications, were said to have been the result of either close-bursting shells or long exposure. Some of the men had kept their masks on as long as six hours before succumbing to the discomfort of the mask.

A brigade report said that the 1st Battalion, 129th Infantry, lost 9 officers and approximately 376 men in the prolonged gas attack, and the

No arty order has been found for this att in the records of the 7th Bns Div, 5th Div Div, 1st A&I Div, 35th Div, or 35th Div. Arks 95 or 97 for 7 pm. 4 Oct to 7 am. 5 Oct called only for the usual harassing fire with smaller gas concentrations on the woods of Marieux, Septarges, and d'en Bela, on Dannemous, Gercourt, and the roads out of Dannemous, with other targets out of the 33rd Div sector (German Files Box 155, fol 11, p. 66, confirmed in Morning Bpt, p. 66).

Daily Bpt, 7th Bns Div, 5, 6 Oct, confirms the gas attacks: "At 800 a.m., 4:00-5:00 a.m., and 5:00-6:00 p.m., Bois des Moriaux contaminated with yellow cross" (7th Bns Div WD, 13 Sep - 15 Oct, German Files Box 155, fol 3, pp. 160-161, 165; also in Mass Oct WD, 3, 6 Oct, German Files Box 115, fol 7, p. 30).

Bpt on Gas Att, 7 Oct (MD Dist box 300, 33rd Div); Spen- cor, 11, 365 - 66.

Div 5 - 2 seems not to have been aware of this gas attack, but in a rare detailed accounting it did report on 4 - 5 Oct "Heavy intermittent shelling with HE and gas of areas Bois d'Ars, Bois Septarges, Gercourt; 150 gas shells between 1140-1155, 4 Oct, on the Forgeis-Dombelles road; 96 gas shells on the same road at 2315; 24 gas shells on Forgeis at 0300, 5 Oct; and heavy shelling with 200 HE and gas rounds on the front line area from Dannemous to Bois de Forgeis between midnight and 0200, 5 Oct (SOL 26, 33rd Div, 4 - 5 Oct). There is no mention of the att in SOL 26, 5 - 6 Oct, either.
The battalion was withdrawn to the Regimental Reserve (south of Hill 20) on account of long continuous service in the line and having suffered heavy casualties from enemy artillery and the enemy gas attack of October 6th. Orders issued to all units of the Brigade to ensure men protecting themselves by proper wearing of the gas mask in case of gas attacks.

As a result of the gas attack, together with earlier RE and gas casualties, the effective strength of the 1st Battalion was now reduced to 16 officers and 306 men. Apparently refusing to believe so many casualties could be caused by gas, the brigade began an investigation at once "to determine the actual number of serious cases, with a view to having returned to duty those not seriously gassed." No record of the investigation has been found, but a regimental memo issued on 6 October, containing detailed instructions on protection against gas before, during, and after an attack, indicated the line of investigation:

It has been reported...that in the recent attack on our First Battalion, that after the main attack in which men wore their masks from 3 to 6 hours, men removed masks when they could still smell gas strongly and... only mouth-pieces and nose-clips were used thereafter. ...Brigade has directed that any man who does this will be carried off the sick report as 'gassed, not in line of duty'. SHRs can be worn a day and night without injury, and eye casualties due to this improper use will be considered self-inflicted wounds.57

In the week that followed the gassing of the hills of Moriau, the Division's Adjutant was to say that no real gas attacks occurred, although

56 Chron Rec of Events of 65th Brig, 5 - 7 Oct (33rd Div Box 13, 11.4); History, I, 97; II, 967.

57 Memo, PC Pine tree [139th Inf], 6 Oct (33rd Div Box 15, 32.4).
considerable amounts of gas were used each day in harassing fire. On 6 October, he reported that 35,77-mm mustard gas shells caused 27 eye casualties among 165 men of I Company, 3rd Battalion, 129th Infantry, in the Bois Rond. The next day, an estimated 175 rounds of mustard gas, with some phosphene, landed among 426 men in the Bois Jure. Most of the 150 casualties evacuated were in K Company, 129th Infantry, and since the woods were under direct observation of the German lines across the river, evacuation was not possible until nightfall. The gassed area was posted and put under guard, but during the next three days, "25 men...managed to pass through the area" and all were subsequently evacuated to the gas hospital.

The Division Gas Officer did not report the 2 officers and 176 men "wounded and gassed" in this same 3rd Battalion on 8 October when it was shelled near Damneux as it began moving down to the Bois de Forges, preparatory to crossing the Meuse at Consenvoye. In addition to direct

58 Arko 95 orders for nights of 5 - 6 Oct, 6 - 7 Oct, and 7th Res Div order to arrive on 7 Oct all called for "harassing fire and sudden concentrations of gas" on the woods, ravines, villages, and roads in the 33rd Div sector (7th Res Div-Sub Units-Arko 95 Annexes, German File Box 155, fol II, pp. 87, 90; 7th Res Div WDA, 7 Oct, fol I, p. 178).

59 cited in note 58 above.

60 Chron Rec of Events of 129th, 8 Oct; History, II, 648; Morning Rpt, 7th Res Div, 9 Oct. "At 10 p.m. [8 Oct] two installments of contamination fire on Dannemouse" (7th Res Div WDA, German Files Box 155, fol I, p. 182).
shelling, the 129th Infantry also suffered from indirect gassing in the Bois des Moriaux, as the 130th Infantry, to its left, in the Bois de Dannevoux, pointed outs

Gas shells, frequently mixed with HE and shrapnel (air bursts), are almost constantly thrown in great numbers in the wooded areas adjacent to the outpost zone. If a south wind is blowing the enemy may shell the valley, extending from Dannevoux east to the Meuse river, a very concentrated mustard gas being used, the wind carrying it into the Bois des Moriaux where it slings persistently for days.*

With the 129th in the Bois des Moriaux was the 102nd Trench Mortar Battery, most of whose mortars were concentrated in that wood. The history of the battery was to say that only its weapons were maintained in the wood, with all else back in the Bois Jure, "on account of the large amount of gas which the enemy continued to fire into the valley of Dannevoux and the Bois des Moriaux."*2

Between the enemy harassing fire with gas night after night and the gas attack of 5 October, the severe drain on the strength of the 129th Infantry resulted on the 8th in a memo to all battalion commanders:

The rapid depletion of the fighting strength of the regiment, due to the evacuation of large numbers of 'gassed' cases is a matter of vital concern to all officers. While undoubtedly the greater number of cases are bona fide, it is quite probable that some men are evading themselves of this excuse in order to leave the firing line...Company and platoon commanders can assist by seeing all gassed cases (except wounded) before they report to aid stations...Battalion surgeons should use the greatest care in evacuation...Only earnest and painstaking care...will enable this regiment...not to neglect its actual gassed cases on the one hand, or deplete its strength through unnecessary evacuations on the other.

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*1 Stu Bty, 130th Inf, 9 Oct, subs a/s Dannevoux (33rd Div Box 17, 33.1).

*2 Brief History, 102nd TM Bty, n.d. (33rd Div Box 15, 33.2).
And the next days

The regimental commander desires to impress on all officers and men the seriousness of the situation, and to remind all unit commanders that they are responsible for the enforcement of gas discipline.

The second memo went on to say that all gas cases were to be investigated, and if any officer or NCO had failed in his duty, he was to be disciplined.

Meanwhile, company commanders were to see that all companies were given further gas defense instruction by the gas personnel.63

Across the Meuse

With the failure to pierce the Kriemhilde Stellung in the attack on 4 October, Claudel's XVII French Corps, which had remained in place since the start of the offensive, was alerted to prepare a frontal attack on the Meuse heights. On 7 October, the 33rd Division was put under XVII Corps for tactical purposes, with orders to hold its defensive position on the left bank of the river and at the same time ready a part of its forces to cross the river and cooperate in the attack.64

The mission of XVII Corps was to seize and hold the heights of the Meuse northwest of Beaumont between the Meuse and Thiance rivers. Its forces included the 18th and 26th French Divisions, reinforced by six Senegalese battalions. To their left would be the 58th Brigade of the 29th American Division, and astride the Meuse, the 33rd Division. Opposite was

63 Memo, 129th Inf to bn and spec unit commanders, 8 Oct, sub: Evan of Gas Cases; memo, ibid., 9 Oct, n.n. (33rd Div Box 16, 644).

64 PO 39, First Army, 14 hrs, 5 Oct; SO 546-2/3, XVII Corps, 3rd Bn, 6 Oct; PO 24, III Corps, 17:30 oclock, 7 Oct.
the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division, soon to be reinforced by the 32nd Division and elements of the 228th Division (Maps No. 7 and 8).

The first objectives of the 58th Brigade and 18th French Division were the enemy OP's at Malbrouck ridge and the Bois d'Haumont; the second objectives, Nolleville Ferme and the Bois d'Ormont. On the right, the 26th French Division was to capture the Bois des Grantes and Flabas.

When XVII Corps had advanced to the line Consenvoye—top of Bois de Consenvoye, elements of the 33rd Division would cross at Consenvoye and Brabant and join the flank of the 58th Brigade. The whole corps would then advance in an arc to the first line of exploitation, north edges of Bois de Chêne and Plat-Chêne-Bois d'Étretes-Crepion-Flabas, and then the second line, Sirius—top of Bois de la Grande Montagne—Flabas. III Corps was to assist this operation by a simultaneous attack west of the Meuse (Map No. 9).

For its part in the operation, the 33rd Division was directed to put two battalions along the southern edge of the Bois de Forges, ready to cross at Brabant, and a battalion on the northern edge of the wood, to cross at Consenvoye. Six batteries of 75's in the Bois de Forges, three more near Cote de l'Olé, and three batteries of 155's below Cumières were to protect the crossing at Consenvoye.

Hist. 100 — 02, and FGs, above. Also, Plan d'Engagement du 17th CA, 4 Oct. (33rd Div Box 5, 34). See Map 37 in History, IV, for 33rd Div objectives.

PO 27, 33rd Div, 4:00 p.m., 7 Oct.

- 39 -
On 7 October, two of the machine gun companies and the three batteries of 75's in the Bois de la Cote Lemont moved down to the Forges area, arriving there well after dark. At the same time, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 132nd Infantry, in reserve at Malmaison, and the 2nd Battalion of the 131st Infantry with its machine gun company, near Dannevoux, as well as two companies of the 108th Engineers, came into the Bois de Forges opposite Brabant and Consenvoyes. Observing the movements, enemy artillery shelled "the neighborhood of Forges with gas from 2200 until shortly before midnight." 

At 0500 on 8 October, without artillery preparation, the American and French forces between Sanogneux and Beaumont began their attack. Before 0600 they had advanced above Brabant, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 132nd Infantry, under a dense barrage, were ordered across to that town. Construction of passages over the river and canal had begun at dawn "under heavy [enemy] artillery fire averaging ninety shells an hour -- many of them gas shells, so that masks had to be worn during part of the time." 

With their machine gun companies on their flanks, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 132nd Infantry, under Col. Abel Davis, formed abreast of 1040 with a 250-yard front. The 1st Battalion, in the Bois de Malbrouck and the southern edge of the Bois de Brabant, they advanced toward their objective, the road running northeast out of Consenvoyes.

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67 History, vol. II, 98-99. 33rd Div, 7-8 Oct (33rd Div Box 8, 33.1) reported 180 gas shells in the Forges area between 2200-2345, with 180 HE shells in the Bois de Forges. Two casualties were reported.

Despite flanking fire from the Bois de Consenvoye, the objective was reached shortly after noon. At that time the 2nd Battalion, 131st Infantry, was ordered across at Consenvoye, to support the 132nd Infantry in its next advance to the top of the Bois de Chaume. Under a two-hour standing and rolling barrage, the line advanced towards the wood, only to be halted by intense enemy shell fire. At nightfall the troops dug in along the south edge of the Bois de Chaume, overtaken by "darkness and storm".69

The line of XVII Corps, advanced that day with the fire support of 600 guns, extended from the southern edge of Bois de Chaume—through the Bois de Consenvoye—Ormont Farm—north edge of Bois d'Haumont—northwest corner of Bois des Caures.70

Because of the danger of counterattack against its troops east of the Meuse, as well as the toll-taking machine gun and artillery fire from the heights north and east of Sirvy-sur-Meuse, the 33rd Division on the afternoon of the 8th ordered the two remaining battalions of the 131st Infantry to the Bois de Forges as an emergency reserve.71

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69 DOR 33rd Div., 6 – 9 Oct. Cf Mag, Co 132nd Inf, 8:20 p.m., 8 Oct; "At 6:40, left battalion advance element about 700 yards north of Consenvoye...Stopped by standing barrage till dark and dug in for night. No word from right battalion. Capt Kendall, surgeon, just came in, reports about 75 casualties; some gas, some bullets, and some artillery, apparently pretty well mixed" (33rd Div Box 20, 32:11).

70 FO 28, 33rd Div, 11:45 p.m., 8 Oct; History, I, 107 – 08. The 12 batteries of the 82nd Brig fired 15,000 rounds in support that day and during the next two days were to fire as many more (DOR 33rd Div, 8 – 10 Oct).

In stubborn retreat before the advance of the Franco-American forces along its front that day, Mass Out ordered its artillery to make "the widest possible use of gas ammunition...[by the 17's and field howitzers]", with slight use of HE through the night of 8 – 9 October. The harassing fire of the 7th Reserve Division artillery was to cover Consenove and the terrain to its north, that of the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division from Consenove to Sanogues, the 32nd Division from Sanogues to Anglemont Farm, and the 15th Division from Anglemont Farm to Beaumont. The 1st Austro-Hungarian artillery was also to keep Forgès and Brebant under heavy fire during the night, to prevent further reinforcements coming over from the west bank, while from CS00 on its artillery and that of the 52nd Division were to maintain annihilation fire on the portion of the Hegen and Brebant Stellung on their fronts. The forces under Colonel Davis were later to report that they were "flooded with gas" on 8 – 9 October.

Resuming the attack at 0640 on the 9 October under a 6,000-round barrage, the two battalions of the 123rd Infantry, with the 2nd Battalion, 131st Infantry, in support of the right flank, advanced from below the Bois de Chaume and reached their objective about noon. A line above the Tranchée de la Lance and along the north edge of the Bois de Chaume and Bois Petit-Chape. That same morning, as the enemy launched a concerted counterattack against VII Corps forces, the 177th and 102nd Infantry of 4th Corps took the Bois de Chaume and the Bois de Petit-Chape.

* * *

Mass Out Order 4165, 9 Oct (Mass Out Opns Orders to Oct 18, German Files Box 18; fol 310/32, 113). Mass Out No. 9 Oct, said in confirmation that "our art took the house crossings as well as assembly points and approach roads under heavy fire mixed with gas" (German Files Box 118, fol 16, p. 34).
the 32nd Division, which had come in beside the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division during the night, assaulted the 58th Brigade forces at the top of the Bois de Conseuyeux, driving them back through the woods and exposing the flank of the 33rd Division troops (Map No. 10). Nevertheless, the three battalions continued to advance above the Bois de Chame and at 1400 were in the vicinity of the road from Sivy to Villeneuve Farm. 

At that point, the 102nd Infantry wheeled and hit the 131st Infantry on the right flank, as the 132nd Reserve Infantry and 106th Storm Battalion of the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division struck the battalions of the 132nd Infantry below Sivy. All three battalions were driven back approximately two kilometers as the German forces recaptured the Bois de Chaume and Bois Plate-Chese. The troops that had fallen back to the trenches below the Bois de Chaume were described that night as "in very 

73 Mag, Maj Chipenfield [242, 33rd Div] with 18th Fr Div, 8:50 a.m., 9 Oct; Mag, Huidekoper, 9:15 a.m., 9 Oct; Mag, Adj 50th Brig, 10:10 a.m., 9 Oct (33rd Div Box 6, 32:16).

74 Particular Order 868/3, XVI Corps, 1350 hrs, 9 Oct, reporting Mag, Huidekoper at 2:30 p.m. (with Maps in Box 6, 32:16).

76/ These erroneous identifications of the 1st A-H units involved appear in a number of 33rd Div records. The 1st A-H Div had a 106th St. Bn, but not a 105th, and the 232nd Res Inf was in the 107th Div and not on this front. See Map No. 10 for the more probable units. There are also discrepancies between this map and the records concerning the 33rd Div unit involved.
poor shape."

The three battalions under Col. Abel Davis were in no condition to continue the attack. In two days they had advanced five kilometers through the Hagen and Volker Stellungen and were at the Giselher Stellung when they were stopped. "They...had been heavily pounded with shells and machine-gun fire, and flooded with gas," and had lost 1 officer and 37 men killed, 11 officers and 315 men wounded.77

The Division Gas Officer was to say there were no special gas attacks on 8 and 9 October, but that large numbers of gas shells mixed with HE fell over the entire division area, on both sides of the Meuse. "The large losses reported this date [i.e., 257 gas cases in the 129th Infantry, 101 gas cases among the forces east of the Meuse] were misleading." The

76 Mag (Conversation), Capt Rader [LO Fr Mission] at 66th Brig Eq to G - 3 33rd Div, n.d., 9 Oct (33rd Div Box 6, 32.10); DGR, 33rd Div, 9 - 10 Oct; History, I. 112 - 15; ltr, CO 132nd Inf to CO 33rd Div, 15 Nov, sub: Conf Memo 35 (33rd Div Box 30, 33.6).

Mass Oct WD, 9 Oct, implied that the principal object of the counter-attack that day was Kronprinzehe [hell 316 in the bois de Chameuf], but the arty omdr of the 32nd Div said its 102nd and 177th Inf were ordered to retake the ENL [i.e., WD] or Volker Stellung (33rd Div-Sub Units WD), 8 - 20 Oct, German Files Box 164, fol 111, p. 113.

A prisoner that day described the fortified mg nests, 10 meter-deep dugouts, and trench network in the bois de Chameuf and bois de Consenvoye and said these woods would be held and that 3 to 4 divisions were in reserve back of the woods for that purpose (Mag, Capt Leuer Asst G - 2 33rd Div, tr 9 - 2 33rd Div, 1225 p.m., 9 Oct).

77 History, I, 115. Ltr, CO 132nd Inf, 15 Nov, above, said the casualties as of the 9th were 2 officers and 54 men killed, 7 officers, and 191 men wounded.

Notes: The History (I, 115, 382) reports the same casualty totals for the 9th of the 132nd Inf on the west bank as for the two days on the east bank. See p. 57 below. Ltr, 15 Nov, is probably correct.
operation under Colonel Davis had slowed down, said Lieutenant Vawter; and
on the 9th all those men who were thought to have been gassed were sent to
the aid station for examination. The Medical Department kept no record of
the number of those who were evacuated but estimated that it was at least
50 percent of those examined.\textsuperscript{78}

**Reenforcements to the East Bank**

Brigadier General Wolf, commander of the 66th Brigade, was now
placed in charge of troops across the river, and on the night of 9 October
reinforcements began pouring over the bridges. All three battalions of
the much-gassed 129th Infantry, the 3rd Battalion of the 130th, and the
two remaining battalions of the 131st, with four machine gun companies,
were moved across during the night.\textsuperscript{79} Except for the battalion of the
132nd Infantry with the 4th Division in the Bois du Fays, two battalions
of the 130th Infantry in front of Brieulles, and a single machine gun
company in the Bois de Forges, all combat units of the 33rd Division were
now on the east bank of the Meuse.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{78} Ltr, DGO to C CWS, 22 Feb, subs Gas Atks (GAF-33rd Div). Hospital
admission lists show 251 gas casualties and 115 wounded evacuated on 9
Oct (see Analysis).

\textsuperscript{79} Six gas casualties were reported in one of the MG companies when it
traversed a contaminated area in the Bois Jure that night (Ltr, DGO to

\textsuperscript{80} History, I, 116 - 17. Actually, the 3rd Bn, 129th Inf, crossed on
the night of the 9th, the other two the next day (Chron Rec of Events
of 65th Brig, 10 Oct, 33rd Div Box 13, 11.5).
The movement across the river had been carried out under continual harassing fire from the enemy guns to the north. The War Diary of the 7th Reserve Division artillery commander reported that "abundant gas" was fired on the night of 9-10 October, both on the reinforcements moving down the west bank and the forces clinging to their positions on the east bank.

During the night the batteries fired heavy harassing fire on troop areas, woods, roads, approaches, probable assembly places, and bridgeheads south of Vilanne, west of Sirvy to south of Velhain-Mühle on the west bank of the Meuse, with long range fire in front of our lines south of Sirvy. Kromprinz draw-[Below Hill 315]-Schaumberg Ravine [to the west of Hills 375 and 362]-south of Panteleon Kapelle. The nightly harassing shot was carried out with abundant gas content.

The order for attack issued by XVII Corps on the evening of the 9th directed the 33rd Division to retake the Bois de Chaume and Bois Plat-Chene with the two "fresh" battalions of the 131st Infantry in the lead, exploiting to the line south of Sirvy-Villemeuse Ferme-Grid line 24 (see Map No. 2). The 58th Brigade of the 29th Division and the 10th French Division would continue their advance to the Bois de la Grande Montagne, Bois de la Reine, and Bois d'Ormont.

When General Wolf arrived on the east bank, he reported to General Bells:

\[\text{(Text continues)}\]
Unless the 58th Brigade helps us on the right, we will be only throwing away men to attack the German forces in the woods. Hader (2nd BN, French Mission) thinks unless they will help us we should withdraw to the normal objective, i.e., Consenvoye-top of Bois de Consenvoye.

General Bell replied:

That attack has got to be made tomorrow morning at 6 o'clock. Has Ridgway been relieved in accordance with my orders? Believe him at once. He is panicky. The regiment at the right is going to make the attack. Were the troops of the 131st engaged in this fight? What is to prevent the five battalions that did not take part, making the attack tomorrow? You have five fresh battalions. I will see that they get there.

The attack was made without the help of the 58th Brigade on the right.

The barrage came down at 0630 on the morning of the 10th and the troops moved out through Colonel Davis' exhausted and disorganized forces in the Tranchée du Cablé. Against heavy artillery and machine gun fire, the 3rd Battalion, 131st Infantry, fought its way through the Bois de Chaume to the road from Sixy to Villersau Fentro. At 1050 its commander reported:

Our troops gained objective but could not hold it on account of intense shelling and machine gun fire. Shelling is of BB and gas. Am trying to gather troops who are in the underbrush and will establish a new line in Le Vanne trench west of Bois de Chaume. Can you send re-inforcements to join on my right?

83

Mag (Corp), n. 42, 9 Oct (33rd Div Box 6, 33-16) record series of conversations between Hader, Wolf, and Bell that night. One entry indicates it was 0040 when Gen Bell ordered the two Bns of the 129th and one of the 130th to rgt to Gen Wolf on the west bank, and that they were to lead the attack at daylight. But the 131st Inf units, preceding them across the River, made the attack.

The reference to Maj Samuel C. Ridgway (2nd BN, 131st Inf) seems explained in Bpt, 131st Inf Engagement at Bois de Chaume (33rd Div Box 15, 33-6), "One recently assigned Major who had never been in action before was inclined to be panicky, and more or less disorganization existed in some of the three Regimental Detachments and Machine Gun Companies scattered as they were through the woods." Major Ridgway, however, was with the division when it arrived in France. The "recently assigned Major" has not otherwise been identified.

- 81 -
An hour later he signalled

We are in a hole. So is 1st Battalion. Company A of 1st Battalion is with-
drawing. Enemy artillery fire is ruining us.

And ten minutes later:

1st Battalion is now 1000 yards to my right with no troops in between. I
have no field of fire and in case of attack will have to fall back in the
woods. The woods are being shelled very heavily and it would be almost
impossible to keep troops in there with gas as strong as it is...It is im-
possible to stay in the front edge of the woods without having a gas mask
on all the time. We sure need more men.

At 1240, the 3rd Battalion fell back through the woods.

On the right, the 1st Battalion, 131st Infantry, initially disorgan-
ised by intense machine gun fire, had almost come up to the 3rd Battalion
when its position along the north edge of the woods was made untenable by
hostile fire and "vegetation...reeling with gas." Tenable or not, the
1st Battalion hung on, for at 1400 the commander of the 131st Infantry re-
ported his line spread thinly along the north edges of Chaume and Plat-
Chaux woods, without any sign of the 58th Brigade on his flank. Ten min-
utes later, the 1st Battalion signalled:

Enemy is forming for counterattack. Without further strength for front
line will have to withdraw. Heavy casualties have been suffered and no
touch or right.

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84 Mag, 50 3rd En 131st Inf [Maj Francis M. Allen] to CO 131st Inf,
1000, 10 Oct; Mag, ibid., 1000; Mag, Capt Wagner with 3rd En, ibid., 1215;
Mag, 3rd En, ibid., 1240 (33rd Div Box 18, 32.16.)

85 "History, I, 118 - 21.

86 Mag, CO 131st Inf [Col Jos E. Banchorn] to CO 118th Inf [58th Brig],
1400, 10 Oct; Mag, CO 1st En, 131st Inf [Maj Coody] to CO 131st Inf,
1410, (33rd Div Box 6, 32.16.)

Although Mag, CO 131st Inf to CO 1st En, 131st Inf, 1245, 10 Oct (33rd Div
Box 18, 32.16) ordered Capt Walter H. Wagner of 2nd En, 131st Inf to replace
Coody as 1st En condr, this does not seem to have taken place until 15 Oct.
See below, p 61.

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- 52 -
Advance elements of both the 3rd and 1st Battalions, 131st Infantry, seem to have got on the road west of Sivry and above the Bois Plat-Chêne almost to Villeneuve Farm, for the first were seen from the air and, though questionable, the others were so reported at 1600 by the 1st Battalion.

Have suffered heavy casualties. Troops dug in on 84 Meridian. 1st Battalion, 129th Infantry in rear my right flank. 87

With troop elements dug in to the east of Sivry and the remainder of the 3rd and 1st Battalions, 131st Infantry, disorganized and scattered above and in the Bois de Chaume and Bois Plat-Chêne, the 3rd Battalions of the 130th and 129th Infantry were sent up as support on the afternoon of the 10th, and were themselves thrown into disorder by the "terrible artillery fire consisting of high explosive, shrapnel and gas, as well as flanking machine gun fire resulting in many casualties." "The terrain which they occupied was flooded with gas," and "enemy planes sprayed the line with machine gun fire...without opposition." 88

That night the left side of the line remained near Sivry, while the battered right of the line, held only by disorganized detachments, dug in along Dous lees Vaux valley and through the woods east to Meridian 84. Under heavy machine gun, shell, and gas fire, it was not possible to connect any...

87 Mag and map dropped by Lt Borden, 90th Air Squad, 1520, 10 Oct; FM, CO 1st Bn 131st Inf to CO 131st Inf, 1600 (33rd Div Box 6, 52.14).

up the line, "but individual units dug in the best they could." At 2015 that night, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 131st Infantry, sent the first of a series of messages describing his plight:

Counterattack imminent as enemy has been massing troops all day. Front thinly held. Support is absolutely necessary if we hold.

Need support. Valley is shelled and gassed. Casualties estimated at 50%.

My right flank entirely open. Have lost touch with my C and D companies and the other two badly shot up. Need support.

At midnight, the regimental surgeon reported:

The extreme point of endurance has almost been reached and I have grave fears for the result if the regiment is not withdrawn from the line.

Indicating the probable disposition of 33rd Division troops on the night of 10 October is a map prepared by the 129th Infantry, tracing the movements of its battalions between 9 - 20 October (Map No. 11). Another map showing the disposition of 131st Infantry troops on the 10th is represented by the Overlay to Map No. 11. Neither map indicates any advance forces or patrols on a line with Suiry, although messages and records of events put them that far forward.

Still another map, made by an officer of the Historical Section, Army War College, and based on unidentified division records and an actual survey of the terrain east of the Meuse, appears as Map No. 12. It is unlikely that any of the battalions represented, except perhaps those in the Tranohee

89 History, I, 124.
90 Msg, Chedy CO 1st Bn to CO 131st Inf, 2015, 2845, 2400, 10 Oct (33rd Div Box 6, 32.16).
91 Msg, MO to CO 131st Inf, 2400, 10 Oct (33rd Div Box 18, 32.16).
du Cable and above Consenvoye, possessed anything like the cohesion indicated on these maps.

On the west bank of the Meuse on the 10th, under relatively light enemy fire, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 130th Infantry were spread in a thin line from the western edge of the Bois de la Cote Lemont, through the Bois de Dansevoux, around the bend of the Meuse, down to Laiterie de Bellaine, with two platoons sent that day to occupy the sector between Dansevoux and Consenvoye. 92

The only other element of the 53rd Division on that side of the river was the 3rd Battalion, 132nd Infantry, and its machine gun company, with the 4th Division in the Bois du Pays. On the 10th it participated in the attack against the Bois de Forêt, advancing to the northern edge of the wood, and holding its position until relieved by the 3rd Division on the 13th. In its week with the 4th Division, the battalion lost 1 officer and 37 men killed, 11 officers and 315 men wounded and gassed. The machine gun company commander was to say that "due to the enemy alternating high velocity shells with gas," 10% of his 130 combat men had become casualties during that week. 93

92 History, I, 125.
93 History, I, 126, 130, 362. Lt., CO MG Co 132nd Inf to CO 132nd Inf, 30 Jan 19, sub: Rpt on Action...in Bois du Pays, 6 - 12 Oct (33rd Div Box 20, 35.56).

Of Maj. Maj. Bullington 20 3rd Bn 132nd Inf to G - 3 53rd Div, 5:10 p.m., 10 Oct (33rd Div Box 4, 32.16): "I have had 9 officers and about 145 men casualties. Located in Bois de Pays. My doctor and first aid people were all gassed and have gone to the hospitals."
"Situation...untenable...condition of men...desperate"

The order of XVII French Corps on the evening of 10 October announced that the line reached that day ran across the top of the Bois de Chaume and Bois Plat-Chene-Hill 371 (west of Richene, i.e., Hill 382)—the northern edge of the Bois de Molleville—southern edge of the Bois d'Ormont. There was no change in the mission of the 33rd Division, as the 58th Brigade was directed to continue its advance to the Grande Montagne the next morning, supported by the French divisions on its right.94

But the Bois de Chaume was as yet tenaciously held, and most of the Bois Plat-Chene remained firmly in the enemy's hands. Fearing another counterattack against its tired forces, the 33rd Division directed that an emergency defense line be prepared along the top of the Bois de Chaume running southeast to Hill 371, with a liaison detachment between Hills 371 and 382 (Richene), connecting with the 58th Brigade. "The line of resistance will be held to the last...Prompt means will be taken to bring up all stragglers, and to complete any necessary reorganization of units."95

94 History, I, 126.

95. FO 29, 33rd Div, 9p.m., 10 Oct; FM, C5 66th Brig to Ops C 131st Inf, 2025, 10 Oct (33rd Div Box 18, 32.16). Troops "drifting to the rear in large numbers upon small excuse"—a problem in the St. Mihiel operation—became a real threat on the whole Army front in October. See III Corps orders on straggling, cited in Conf Memo 7, 33rd Div, 7 Sep, and Conf Memo 24, 33rd Div, 21 Oct (33rd Div Box 5, 32.15).

The events east of the Meuse that week were anticipated by III Corps before the operation began. Opsn instructions, 131st Inf, 25 Sep (33rd Div

- 51 -
Throughout the night of 10 – 11 October and the following day incessant high explosive, machine gun, and gas fire hampered the division as it sought to round up its stragglers, reorganise its units, and set up the defensive line on the edge of the Bois de Chaume. The commander of the 1st Battalion, 131st Infantry, in the valley above Chaume, reported that mornings “am being flanked on right by heavy machine guns. Can’t hold on much longer. Advise.” So far as he could tell, he had 8 officers and 243 men left in his battalion, including headquarters men. One company had only 30 men and was without officers. 95

Some idea of the confusion at the time may be seen in Brigadier General Wolf’s order, and its sequelae, to Colonel Samborn of the 131st Infantry on the morning of the 11th, to take command of the 3rd Battalions of the 129th and 130th Infantry, with their machine gun units, as well as his own regiment and machine gun companies. When these scattered and casualty-ridden elements had been regrouped, he was to organize a defensive line with a battalion each of the 131st, 130th, and 129th Infantry abreast along Grid 82, a support line in the trenches below Bois de Chaume and Bois Fliet-Chene with the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 131st Infantry, and

95 (continued)

Box 18, 32.11 quoted a ltr from Gen Bullards, “In the fight expect from even good officers reports of their losses greater than ever occurred in any battle....Expect therefore hysterical outcries for reinforcements long before they are necessary....Make big provisions for military police to push men back into the firing line. Search rear echelons and kitchens especially....”

96 Msgs, 1st Bn 131st Inf to CO 131st Inf, 1000, 1100, 11 Oct (33rd Div Box 18, 32.16; Box 6, 32.16).
reserve forces in the trenches northeast of Condenroye comprising the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 129th Infantry and 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry.

Almost continuous heavy enemy fire made movement all but impossible and little reorganisation of units or preparation of defensive positions was achieved over the next three days. As Colonel Sandborn said:

The troops from 6 A.M., October 10th to the night of October 14th-15th were subjected to small arms, machine gun fire, gas, aeroplane attacks and fire from snipers incessantly in some parts of the line. Very few were able to obtain any needed rest or sleep. To add to their discomfort it rained nearly every day, frequently food could not be transported to parts of the line, sometimes it was spoiled by mustard gas, [and] low areas in the woods compelled men to wear gas masks nearly all the time.

And he added:

Commencing the night of the 10th until the relief, battalion and company commanders [sent] messages [constantly] portraying the situation as untenable and the condition of the men as desperate.

Of the messages extant in the records of the division, those of the 1st Battalion, 131st Infantry, are most complete. In a final exchange with Colonel Sandborn on the 12th, Major Cosdy reported:

The condition of the Battalion is awfully bad. The men are completely exhausted. They are constantly exposed to artillery and machine gun fire....

97 History, I, 128. - 35; Mag. Co 131st Inf to Maj Bittle [50 3rd Bn, 130th Inf] 1100, 11 Oct (33rd Div Box 18, 32.1b). The remains of the 1st and 3rd Bns, 129th Inf were ordered consolidated in the early morning of the 12th (Mag, FC 135th Inf to 3rd Bn, 131st Inf [sic], 12 Oct, 33rd Div Box 18, 32.1d).

98 131st Inf Engagement at Bois de Chaume, 10 - 14 Oct (33rd Div Box 19, 32.6); History, I, 359.
They can't possibly stand it any longer. Only 2 captains and 3 lieutenants are left, the other officers being killed or wounded. I have approximately 250 men left. Most of them when they get out of here will be physical wrecks. Can't something be done to relieve this situation?

Colonel Sanborn replied:

Stay where you are and hold the line until you hear further from me. You are no worse off than the rest of the troops who are holding on and making no complaints. 69

The next day, Major Condy of the 1st Battalion was replaced by Captain Magnier, Major Ridgway of the 2nd Battalion who had fallen back on the morning of the 9th, was replaced by Captain Marr, and the messages from the 1st Battalion ceased. 100

Neither Army, corps, nor divisional artillery, confined since 2 October to the firing of HE alone, appears to have been effective against the heavy enemy fire. Although the 52nd FA Brigade, on the west bank advanced its 75's from the Bois de Forges to the Bois Junex, with several batteries put across the river below Consenvoye, and from the Cote d'Oie to the vicinity of Gercourt, to give closer support to the operations on the east bank, it could get no directions for its fire and the enemy guns poured in shell unmolested. 101

The batteries of the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division joined in that Mass Oct fire, but by 10 October the troops of the German division were

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69 Mag. 1st En 131st Inf to CO 131st Inf, 1215, 12 Oct; Mag to CO 1st En, 131st Inf, 1220 (33rd Div Box 18, 32.16).

100 Mag. CO 131st Inf, 1500, 13 Oct (33rd Div Box 18, 32.16).

101 History, I, 128, 132, 134.
reduced to defensive clusters of exhausted men. A ten-page operations report of the division describes in some detail the action of the 1st Austro-Hungarian and 39th Division on 9 - 10 October. It asserts that each German regiment in the line was opposed by an entire American or French division, and that regrouping of the available artillery, together with determined counterattacks by the last reserve forces on that front, were the decisive factors in the successful holding operation. 102

On the afternoon of 12 October, the remnants of the 1st Austro-Hungarian Division were relieved by the 228th Division and marched to Jacotz (Map No. 13), "to reorganize new combat units from it and be ready for re-employment as soon as possible." 103

Overwhelming as the enemy fire seemed to the 33rd Division, General von Solen of Mass Out was to express dissatisfaction on 12 October with the fire performance of the divisional artillery under his command. An order that Jay said:

In spite of many directions [given in corps orders on 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, October] that gas ammunition in significantly large amounts be fired... the ammunition consumption survey of 10-11 October showed that nothing approaching this order was achieved. According to the survey only 2,262 rounds of gas against 23,643 rounds of HE were fired in the entire group area. I ask all headquarters with all their means to carry out the given


103 Opns Rpt 2966, p. 10. On 18 Oct, the "worn-out" 1st A-H Div was back in the line, in the Villeneuv-Divry sector, replacing the 117th Div, and adjacent to the 8th Bav Reg Div of Mass West.
orders regarding the expenditure of gas ammunition.\textsuperscript{104}

There is evidence that Maass Ost artillery sought to comply with this directive, for 7th Reserve Division orders to its artillery for the nights of 12 - 13 October and 13 - 14 October called for "heavy gas content" and "abundant use of gas" in the harassing fire missions in the Damvouex area, in the woods of Gote Lemont, Moriaux, Damvouex, and Jure, the length of the Vilennes-Drillancourt road, the east edge of the Bois de Forges across to Consenvoye, the Sivry-Consenvoye road, and each of the principal villages on the west bank of the Meuse.\textsuperscript{105} The 33rd Division is said to have reported a total of 2,000 gas shells, principally yellow cross and green cross (phosgene), in its sector through the week of 14 - 21 October, and gas cases increased proportionately.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{104} Ops 0 4268, Maass Ost, 12 Oct (German Files Box 48, fol 810-32, 13). Of these five orders, only that of 8 Oct has been found in the German files. Maass West Order 759, 12 Oct, similarly ordered more "generous use of gas" and "more gas than shrapnel," but gave no ammo summary. (Maass West WDAA, 24 Sep - 11 Nov, German Files Box 60, fol 111, p. 61).

Note: This is the only German document giving precise figures on gas ammo expended. Presumably the period of time over which the 2,282 gas shells were fired by the arty of the 7th Res Div, 1st A-H Div, 32nd Div, and 328th Div -- all of Maass Ost -- was that of the corps orders referred to, 2 - 12 Oct.

If this was the weight of gas shell fired by Maass Ost arty on both banks of the Meuse, the amount falling in the 33rd Div sectors on either side of the river cannot have been great, but put on tired troops it produced results out of all proportion to its weight.

\textsuperscript{105} Div Orders 127/10 and 135/10 (7th Res Div WDAA, 13 Sep - 19 Oct, German Files Box 182, fol 1, pp. 265, 297).

\textsuperscript{106} Ltr, GSO III Corps to GSO First Army, 27 Oct, sub: Weekly Rpt, 21 Oct (1st Army Box 340, III GSO).
It was the night of 13 - 15 October before partially regrouped units on the east bank moved into the defense, support, and reserve positions that had been prepared during intervals in the enemy shelling. Only two, instead of the planned three, battalions were put into the front line positions, with one in support and four in reserve. The other two battalions on that side of the river, the 1st and 2nd of the 138th Infantry, hardest hit in the counterattack on the 9th, remained in the trenches near the reserves at Consenvoye.

The 2nd Battalion, 129th Infantry, was one of the two units that moved forward to Grid 82 in the Bois de Chaume that night (see Map No. 11).

They were engaged in improving their positions until the 15th of October. In this wood the weather continued damp and cold, a continual fog hanging in the woods, and rain falling often. The enemy used all calibers in strafing the woods, and swept from one end to the other with his batteries night and day. Gas was used extensively in his bombardments and the troops had to be constantly on the alert.

The two remaining battalions of the 129th, in reserve above the Consenvoye road, reported six "heavy gas and HE bombardments" between 13 - 15 October.

The occupation of the nasty defense lines on the night of 13 - 14 October terminated the active operations of the 33rd Division east of the Meuse.

107 History, I, 116 - 37. See Opns 0 10, 130th Inf, 19 Oct (33rd Div Box 17, 02.12), for the final defensive organization.


109 SOI, 129th Inf, 13 - 15 Oct (33rd Div Box 16, 32.16).
Modest Gains

Marshal Foch in his Memoirs said that between 8 – 10 October the
XVIII French Corps got possession of the line Sivry-Beaumont, but after
10 October it

met with constantly increasing resistance from the enemy and the means
at its disposal were insufficient to overcome the obstacles which its
advance encountered. Its gains became more and more modest. The enemy
seemed firmly resolved to hold the right bank of the Meuse at all costs
—an assumption which was all the more plausible since this was his
sole chance of covering and assuring the retreat of his beaten armies
on his right wing and centre.

In extenuation of the failure of the 33rd Division to put its
forces on Haraumont ridge, Colonel Sansorn, commanding the attacking
troops, said that three times his men had been on the final objective
the Sivry-Villeneuve Ferve road over-looking the ridge and each time had
had to fall back when the troops on the right had been unable to advance
their lines. Each time that the 33rd had moved out in front, enemy
machine guns had worked their way back through the woods to the open
flank and the line had to be withdrawn to keep from being cut to pieces.

"It was not deemed advisable," he said, "to shell and gas the woods on
the right [i.e., la Grande Montagne] except as a last resort for fear of

pp. 411, 442 – 443. Not quite at all costs. Then, about 20 Oct,
the 1st A-H Div learned that Meus West had orders to withdraw to the
Santa Stelling (below Amoreville-Douillon) if a full scale attack was
made on the hills north of Brivilles, the division urgently requested
directions for its own withdrawal in that event (Ops Sec Weekly Rpt
No43, Preparations for Withdrawal and Mords of Troops, 20 Oct, Italian
Files Sox 2, A-H Army Bg).
Interfering with troops...attempting to come forward..."111 This report is the only evidence that Haramont ridge was the 33rd Division objective, or that there was ever any thought of gassing the Bois de la Grande Montagne.112

More truly, the tired and often-gassed troops that crossed the Meuse on the night of 9 October were so cut up and disorganized from the 10th on that they were in no condition to make that advance against withering fire across open country to the ridge. Losses in the seven days between 8-14 October were reported as 2 officers and 53 men killed, 7 officers and 597 men wounded, and 643 officers and men evacuated as gas and exhaustion cases, a total of 1,302 battle casualties.113

111 131st Inf Engagement at Bois de Chaume, 10 - 14 Oct (33rd Div Box 29, 33.6). Word that the 131st Inf had reached the objective three times was reported in a single clip, Opns Off 131st Inf to Opns Off 60th Brig, 1350, 10 Oct (33rd Div Box 10, 32.12).

112 In 33rd Div Box 5, 32.12 Opns 0, is an overlay without data, identification, or explanation, showing six circled targets in la Grande Montagne, including Hills 377 and 376, and a seventh circle around all Sivy-sur-Meuse. Gas or smoke on these areas might well have aided the advance on the 33rd Div.

113 History, I, 146. Brig.Gen Wolf, Opns on East Bank of the Meuse, 20 Nov (33rd Div Box 16, 33.6), the source of these figures, said of the 643 gassed and exhaustion cases that 152 were evacuated on 16 Oct, 429 on 17 Oct, and 62 on 18 Oct.

Rpt, 131st Inf Engagement at Bois de Chaume, 10 - 14 Oct (33rd Div Box 19, 33.6), claimed that 131st Inf casualties alone were 14 killed and an incomplete total of 141 wounded. It also claimed all the 643 gas and exhaustion cases. Elsewhere in the same report, in a contradictory set of figures, the 131st Inf claimed its strength on 6 Oct was 57 officers and 2,164 men, and that it lost 19 officers and 406 men in the Bois de Chaume operation.
Apparently it was solely in an effort to straighten out the tangle in which the two brigades were now involved, prior to the anticipated relief of the division, that an order was issued on the evening of 13 October for "mutual transfer of the 6th and 66th Brigades...to the east and west banks of the Meuse respectively." That night, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 132nd Infantry began crossing to the west bank, to replace the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 130th Infantry, in the line below Brieulles. And beginning that same night, the machine-gun companies were sorted out to their battalions and the alignment began of the remaining infantry battalions on their proper side of the Meuse.

The End of the Campaign

On the evening of 14 October, the operations order of the XVII Corps announced that there had been a slight advance in the Bois d' Ormont, and that the next morning the 68th Brigade, supported by the 33rd and 18th French Divisions would take by surprise the fortified clearing before Molleville Farme, as part of the continuing operation.

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114 Add 1 to RG 21, 33rd Div, 6:00 PM, 13 Oct; History, I, 139. No reason whatever is offered in the History for the transfer.

115 Under daily shell fire and bursts of gas from the north, northeast, and east bank of the Meuse, the 130th Inf reported total casualties at the time of its relief as 27 men killed, 9 officers and 135 men wounded (Ltr, Co 130th Inf to Co 33rd Div, 16 Nov, subj: Rpt of Opns, 33rd Div Box 17, 114).

116 History, I, 138 - 42.
against the Grande Montagne. 117

With corps and divisional fire, and supported by a battalion of the 129th Infantry, the 56th Brigade resumed the attack at 0800, 15 October. Though it reached the southern edge of the Bois de la Grande Montagne, it could not advance to its first objective. The supporting 129th Infantry element, with 39 men killed and wounded, fell back to its original position on the southern edge of the Bois Plat-Chene. 118 All that afternoon and night the enemy put heavy fire on the vicinity of Consenvoye, the Bois de Chausse, and the Consenvoye-Kraye road, and at 1930 put a heavy gas concentration just east of the Bois de Chausse. 119

The attack was renewed on the 16th, when the 56th Brigade carried the enemy positions at Molleville Farm, and the next day reportedly reached the summit (Cote 3731) in la Grande Montagne. Except for the necessary adjustment of its lines on the right flank, the 33rd Division held fast along Grid 82. 120

119 History, I, 149. DOR, 16 - 16 Oct 40 GD 50 gas & HE rds at that hour on the road east of Consenvoye, with "shelling" in the Bois de Chausse.
120 History, I, 152 - 54. See G - 2 Plan of Defense, Sector East of Meuse to Grid Line 24, 17 Oct (52nd Div Box 8, 32-4), which noted that the enemy still held all terrain above Grid 82 east of the Meuse. Between Villexois and Silvry, said 3 - 2, were elements of the 106th Landsturm Div and 1st A-S, and from Silvry east, elements of the 16th Div, 7th Res Div, and 104th Div.
With American troops comprising almost two-thirds of his corps forces, General Claudel had for some time been concerned with the serious losses they were sustaining from gas shell bombardments. The enemy, he said in a Note de Service on 11 October, "has made, during several counterattacks, intensive use of Yperite" and it was necessary to caution the Americans to avoid delay in masking during any bombardment, to prepare changes of station in case of yperite shelling, to disinfect yperite areas quickly, and to instruct troops in gas defense.

Less than a week later, on the 17th, speaking of the 42 gas casualties reported that day in the 33rd Division and the 97 in the 29th Division, Claudel said: "These high figures can only indicate either inexperience or carelessness on the part of the men." Intensive instructions were to be given at once by the two divisions in proper masking and proper respect for yperite. No replies or comments on these notes have been found. Of interest, as they support General Claudel's concern, are comparative gas casualty figures for his French divisions, in the Analysis, below.

The 33rd Div casualties on the 17th may have resulted from the 45 gas and HE rounds on the 129th Inf in the Bois de Chaume at 1525 on the 16th, further gas and HE on the road above the Bois de Consenvoye at 1615, and three "heavy gas" fires at 2150, 2400, and 0130, 17 Oct, on the road west of Consenvoye wood.

The 129th Inf reported "heavy gas" thirteen times in the five-day period, 13 - 18 Oct. See SOIs, 129th Inf (33rd Div Box 15, 32.16). Chron Rec of Events of 129th Inf, 19 Oct (33rd Div Box 15, 11.4) says total casualties of the regt, 29 Sep - 19 Oct, were 37 killed, 1041 wounded or gassed.
Through each of these days of waiting, from 14 to 19 October, the apparently unassailable enemy artillery continued to pound the 33rd Division astride the Meuse with gas and HE, hitting its artillery positions in the Bois Sasset, Bois Jure, and in the vicinity of Dillsancourt and Gercourt, its troops in transit over the Meuse, and the troop areas east of the river from Consenvoye to the Bois de Chaume. 122

The increased use of gas after 12 October, as demanded by Mass Oct., is seen in the ammunition consumption reports that are available for the 33rd Division, which came in between the 1st Austro-Hungarian and 18th Divisions on 9 October. (Its subsequent position is represented in Map No. 14.) Though sketchy between 9 - 11 October, thereafter the artillery records of the 33rd Division are fairly complete. While its principal targets were in the sector of the 29th Division and 18th French Division, some proportion of its fire each day fell on the worn-out 33rd Division beside them. The dates below are those of the reports and represent the previous day’s fires:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Artillery</th>
<th>Gas</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 October</td>
<td>15,599 HE</td>
<td>1,117 gas</td>
<td>(green cross and blue cross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 October</td>
<td>5,989 HE</td>
<td>1,981 gas</td>
<td>including 1,084 yellow cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 October</td>
<td>5,516 shrapnel</td>
<td>6,690 gas</td>
<td>including 1,022 yellow cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 October</td>
<td>5,626 shrapnel</td>
<td>1,997 gas</td>
<td>including 30 yellow cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 October</td>
<td>1,707 shrapnel</td>
<td>2,972 gas</td>
<td>including 780 yellow cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 October</td>
<td>1,445 shrapnel</td>
<td>930 gas</td>
<td>including 150 yellow cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 October</td>
<td>308 shrapnel</td>
<td>1,461 gas</td>
<td>including 551 yellow cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20,583</td>
<td>16,759</td>
<td>3,623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The targets of the 33rd Division artillery were "revines and draws and enemy assembly positions, approaches, and infantry strong points." 123

121 SOI 35 - 40, 33rd Div, 14 - 20 Oct.

- 71 -
SITUATION des FORCES ENNEMIES
Devant le Front du 17e C.A.
Vers le 15 octobre 1918

MAP NO. 14
On 16 October, Kleiner Stern [below Melleville Ferme] and Schaumbergmulde [the ravine between the Bois de Chaume and Bois de Consenvoye] were reported to have been contaminated with yellow cross, with other yellow cross fire on targets to the right of the 33rd Division sector. That same day, the 18th, the artillery order said that "the supply of ammunition makes greater economy necessary...In annihilation fire blue cross will be used only in slight amounts."

The fire order for the night of 18 - 19 October called for 200 10-cm yellow cross rounds on the Consenvoye crossroad between 3000-0400, and to the east, 150 rounds of blue and green cross on Kleiner Stern and 500 rounds of yellow cross on the Ormont Ferme area. The fire order for the night of 19 - 20 October called for 200 rounds of yellow cross along the Consenvoye-Kleiner Stern road, 100 10-cm yellow cross rounds in the ravine south of Consenvoye, 150 10-cm yellow cross rounds northeast of Consenvoye, as well as similar quantities of yellow, blue, and green cross shell in the sectors of the 29th Division and 18th French Divisions.

The artillery ammunition report of 20 October confirmed the carrying out of these missions but failed to distinguish between gas and HE in its total of 6,091 rounds consumed the previous day.123

The Division Gas Officer was to report a total of 1,886 yellow, blue, and green cross shells in eight separate attacks on troops in the Bois de Chaume, bois Flet-Chene, and in and around Consenvoye between 17 - 19 October. He reported few or no casualties resulting from seven of the

123 32nd Div-sub Units-WD&A, 8 - 20 Oct (German Files Box 184, f11 III, pp. 144 - 20).
attacks, but the eighth, against the 1st Battalion, 129th Infantry, on the
afternoon of the 18th, he said, caused "few casualties then, but many
later." These may be the 86 men of the 129th Infantry reported by
G - 3 as having been "wounded" in the trenches south of Consenvoye that
day.124

They are better identified in the DGO monthly gas report for October,
which shows 97 gas casualties in the 129th Infantry on 18 October and 83
on 19 October. A special report on the gas attack of 18 October, however,
said only 49 men, including the gas WOs, were evacuated. There had been
no casualties up to the time the battalion was moved out of the area where
approximately 500 green 1, green 2, blue, and yellow cross shells had fal-
len over a period of several hours. But after their arrival in the sup-
port trenches, they sat around a fire to dry out and keep warm, and the
casualties resulted when their wet, contaminated clothing released mustard
fumes.126 In the same monthly gas report for October, Lieutenant Yawtec
was to show a total of 807 gas casualties evacuated during the period 17 -
21 October.

124 Ltr, DGO to CDO III Corps, 20 Oct, sub: Weekly Rpt, 13 - 20 Oct (MD
Hist Box 300, 33-6).

125 DOR, 33rd Div, 18 - 19 Oct.

126 Ltr, DGO 33rd Div to C OWS, 20 Oct, sub: Special Rpt, [grid lines]
24-40 Bois de Consenvoye (MD Hist Box 300, 33-6, Rpts on Gas Atks).
Beginning the night of 19 - 20 October, as the two brigades completed their last exchanges of units, the 33rd Division was relieved by the 19th Colonial Division. Three days of rest, to be followed by a short training period, were prescribed as the last of the troops came into the Blies area, ten kilometers south of Verdun, on the 21st. 127

Less than a week later, on 26 October, the division was transferred to the II Colonial Corps, Second American Army, and put into the line near Troyon-sur-Meuse, southeast of Verdun, in relief of the 79th Division. 128

Although operationally inactive until the eve of the Armistice, and occupied principally with strengthening the defense system in its sector, the 33rd Division was under gas attack every one of the remaining days of the war, including a major attack over a fairly wide area with approximately 2,400 yellow and blue cross shells on the night of 29 - 30 October that cost a reported 142 gas casualties. 129 In all, between 26 October

FO 30, 33rd Div., 6:15 p.m., 19 Oct (33rd Div Box 5, 12-1)); History, I, 157, 151. FO 76, First Army, 15 hr, 19 Oct (USA in the WW, IX, 301) said the 33rd Div was relieved "for the purpose of relieving the 79th Div."

FO 31, 33rd Div., 8:00 p.m., 23 Oct.

Ept on Gas Atk (33rd Div Box 12, 65.33); 1tr, DGO 33rd Div to G CMRS, 3 Nov, subs Weekly Ept (GAF-33rd Div); Note de Service, 31 Oct (33rd Div Box 7, 32.7); Opns Ept, 130th Inf, quoted in History, I, 390 - 91. Spencer's account (History of Gas Attacks upon the A.E.F., II, 307) covers only part of the attack.

Following this atk the division issued Tag Cir 188, n.d., on "New Gas Discipline," Tag Cir 189, 4 Nov, on the handling of mustard gas casualties, and directed attention again to Tag Cir 177, 19 Sep, on mustard gas defense. Cf. History, I, 184, 186.
and 11 November, the 33rd Division sustained 329 gas casualties.\footnote{130}

The 33rd was one of the few divisions still counting delayed gas casualties when the Armistice ended the war. Having advanced and occupied a part of the Bois d'Harville, east of Fresnes-en-Ouche, on the morning of 10 November, the enemy in a final gesture that evening filled the wood with gas "so dense that further occupancy either by our own or enemy troops became impossible."\footnote{131}

**ANALYSIS**

The Battle Casualties of the 33rd Division

The History of the 33rd Division was to say that "Ordinarily speaking, 'butcher bills' are a criterion of the \([\text{skill or]}\) lack of skill in the handling of troops in action," and pointed proudly to the fact that in troops killed the division ranked 20th in the AEF, and in wounded it ranked 12th. The History might have added that with only 27 days in active sectors, the 33rd Division ranked 13th among the 29 divisions in the AEF.\footnote{132}

Total battle casualties between 7 September and 11 November, according to Ayres, were 1,002 killed and 8,251 wounded. These figures

\footnote{130} 23rd Div 300 Monthly Rpt of Gas Casualties, November 1918 (GIP-33rd Div). This rpt included 155 gas cases for the latter part of Oct, not rptd on the Oct summary, and 174 between 1 - 13 Nov.

\footnote{131} History, I, 296 - 171 III, 127.

seem excessive (though unchallengeable at the moment) in the light of divisional data. For the 44 days (10 September - 23 October) in the sector north of Verdun, the divisional History reported total battle casualties of 5,213, including 352 officers and men killed and 4,761 wounded. In his final report, General Bell showed a total of 5,187 battle casualties between 18 September - 25 October, including 344 killed and 4,700 wounded. The American Battle Monuments Commission's study, 33rd Division Summary of Operations (1944), pp. 43 - 44, reveals still fewer total casualties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7-15 Sep</th>
<th>26 Sep</th>
<th>27 Sep-7 Oct</th>
<th>8-23 Oct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died of wounds</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>2,192</td>
<td>3,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>2,616</td>
<td>4,068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What none of these sources reveals is that the 33rd Division had considerably more gas casualties than wounded during the period 26 September - 20 October. What is more, no other division in the AEF suffered greater numbers of gas casualties than did the 33rd, either during that period or at any time in the entire Meuse-Argonne campaign.

133 History, I, 1st - 67; III, 369.

134 Epit, Bell to G - 3 First Army, 26 Dec, sub: Epit of Ops of 33rd Div (33rd Div Box 45, 514.7).

Notes: No corroboration is possible through the Dorns of the division, which for the period 26 Sep - 20 Oct indicate total casualties of only 589, including just 6 gas casualties in those 25 days.

135 Chart in First Army Box 342-C20 Wise Corresponds, shows 1,807 gas casualties in the 33rd Div for 27 Sep - 10 Oct and 2,016 for 27 Sep - 17 Nov. See also p. 90, below.
The Gas Casualties

A comparison of Division Gas Officer and Corps Gas Officer daily gas figures for the 33rd Division with those found in the field hospital admission lists is as follows: 136

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>DGO</th>
<th>CGO</th>
<th>FM Admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Sep</td>
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<td>29 Sep</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Oct</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Oct</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Oct</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Oct</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Oct</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Oct</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Oct</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Oct</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Oct</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Oct</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Oct</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>13 Oct</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<td>14 Oct</td>
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<td>15 Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Oct</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>169</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Oct</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>506</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Oct</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>142</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Oct</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Oct</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Oct</td>
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<th></th>
<th>DGO</th>
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<th>FM Admissions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,357</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>1,978</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>692</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

136 DGO data from Rpt of Gas Casualties, 33rd Div, Oct 1918 (QAF-33rd Div).

CGO data from Rpt of Gas Casualties, III Corps, Oct 1918, (First Army Box 40-I). The rpt also shows that the Corps' 4th Div had 837 gas casualties in Oct, the 80th had 1,328, the 90th 995, the 3rd Div 602, and the 8th Div 507, for a corps total of 5,323 in Oct, exclusive of 3 gas deaths in the 33rd Div (in figures above) and 6 in the 90th Div.

Both gas and BE casualty data in the last two columns are from the admission lists of FMs 119 and 132 (33rd Div, Med Dept Boxes 311, 3714), FM 318 (80th Div, Med Dept Box 3693), and FM 114 (29th Div, Med Dept Box 3650).
A breakdown by units of the daily gas casualties recorded by the DOG and as found in the field hospital lists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>129th Inf</th>
<th>129th Inf</th>
<th>129th MD</th>
<th>129th Inf</th>
<th>129th Inf</th>
<th>129th MD</th>
<th>129th MD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOG</td>
<td>FH</td>
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<td>1 Oct</td>
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1,014 996 85 51 10 7 549 548 540 240 90 66 23 9 5 4
The figure of 1,978 gas casualties compiled from hospital admission lists is based on incomplete records. Between 26 - 30 September, FH 131 operated a gas and RE triage at Glorieux, northwest of Verdun, until relieved on the 30th by the regular gas hospital of the 33rd Division, FH 132. There are no records available for FH 131, although it is said to have cared for several thousand patients between 26 - 30 September. 137 Many of these patients doubtless came from other divisions as well as the 33rd, since the narrative indicates less than 350 casualties in the 33rd Division during that period, which presumably includes the 65 gas cases reported by the DGO for 26 - 30 September. 138

Hospital figures for the period 26 September - 4 October are based on the admission lists of FH 132 at Glorieux and FH 318 (80th Division) at Fromerville. Hospitalized gas cases for the period 5 - 15 October are based on the lists of FH 318 and FH 129, located at Bethincourt, which took care of 33rd Division gas casualties on the west bank, and FH 132, to which those on the east bank were sent. Finally, gas casualties for 15 - 20 October are found in the admission lists of FH 129 and FH 114 (29th Division), which relieved FH 132 at Glorieux.

The hospital picture is further complicated by the fact that the 33rd Division's FH 130, whose records show no gas casualties, was


138 Rpt of Gas Casualties, 33rd Div, Sep 1918 (QAR - 33rd Div). DOR, 33rd Div, 28 - 29 Sep (33rd Div Box 8, 55.1) reports total casualties of 4 officers and 329 men between 26 - 29 Sep.
nevertheless apparently operated as a gas hospital for a short time, since an order ended its function as such on 4 October. That same date, FH 132 was directed to restrict itself to emergency gas cases only, since III Corps planned to set up an 80th Division field hospital at Bethincourt as the Corps Gas Hospital. But gas casualties in the corps became so numerous — there were more than 5,000 in October — that a consolidated gas hospital was not practicable, and FH 132 continued as the principal 33rd Division gas hospital.

The 1,061 gas casualties in the 33rd Division reported by corps in its October summary was increased to 1,719 in a postwar corps report that covered the entire period that the 33rd Division was under III Corps, i.e., 15 September — 26 October (see below, p. 90). An Army summary of divisional gas casualties over the period 27 September — 17 November showed 2,016 gas casualties in the 33rd Division. The Division Gas Officer’s report of 2,357 gas casualties in October was, under the circumstances, perhaps excessive.

**Gas Mask Exhaustion**

The Chemical Warfare Service appears to have been greatly concerned over the large number of gas casualties reported by the division.

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139 FOs 11, 12, 106th San Tr, 33rd Div, 3, 6 Oct (MS. Medical History of the 33rd Div, Med Dept Box 3704, fol 1).

140 Memo for Div Surgeons fr OCS III Corps, 7 Oct (Medical History, above).

141 First Army Box 342, G30 Misc Corresp.
for October. Lieutenant Vawter explained that the figures had been obtained from the divisional statistical officer, but did not represent the true picture of gas casualties. For instance, he said,

On October 17th one regiment evacuated over 500 men as gassed. This regiment had been out of the active area 48 hours. Practically every man who was examined was found not to be gassed but suffering from exhaustion and cold. The records of casualties are based on how a man is tagged as he goes back and not as the case is actually found. All of these men were back for duty in a few days.

On the 18th and 19th the 131st Infantry had some 400 men evacuated as gassed, and it was found later that the men were suffering from colds and exhaustion. The Division Medical Gas Officer stated that possibly 50 to 60 of the others were evacuated the same way. If gas was not used these would not be evacuated but due to the benefit of doubt that the men must have, it is necessary to call them gas cases.

While these statements of the DSO do not agree at all with the breakdown of his figures or those of the gas hospitals (analysis, p.76), there is some corroboration for his remarks in the final report of the 131st Infantry medical officer who said that "a great percentage of those tagged as gassed were more properly due to exhaustion and gas."

He added, "Gas solely and directly responsible for but few cases," and the "majority [of true gas cases in the regiment were] due to yellow cross shells." Elsewhere, the medical officer of the 130th Infantry, which had the fewest gas casualties of the four regiments, said of his battle casualties that "in general the most serious cases were those that

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142 LtR, DSO to C CWs, 2 Nov, sub: Casualty Bpt; LtR, DSO to C CWs, 22 Feb 19, sub: Gas Attts (GAP-33rd Div). No correspondence of the DSO has been found.

143 Bpt, Garb, 131st Inf, Med Hist of 33rd Div, p. 25.
had been gassed," and that there were "more vesicating than asphyxiating
gas cases." 144

No reports have been found by the medical officers of the 129th
Infantry, the worst gassed in the division, or of the 132nd Infantry.
There was some agreement of experience between the commanding officers
of FH 129 and FH 131, the first asserting that "Sixty percent of men
tagged "Gassed" turned out to be suffering from causes other than gas,"
and the latter that "Nearly all gas cases were vesicant (mustard) gas,"
implying that the abundant use of non-vesicant agents by the enemy did
not produce true gas cases. 145

These reports of the Division Gas Officer and division medical of-

cers raise the question about the kinds of gas fired by the enemy.

With limited enemy data this cannot be entirely resolved. The German
artillery orders seem to indicate that blue cross (diphenylchlorarsine)
rather than mustard gas was principally used in harassing fire, with
only occasional mention of contamination or yellow cross fire. The
Division Gas Officer in his gas attack reports seems to agree that di-
phenylchlorarsine was the principal agent used, with mustard gas the
next largest quantity used, and phosgene only in small amounts.

A survey of the 1,978 gas casualties in the hospital admission
lists indicates that 544 were admitted as mustard gas cases, 21 phos-
gene, 119 diphenylchlorarsine, 809 simply as "gassed," 457 not yet

144 Rpt, MO, 130th Inf, Med Hist of the 33rd Div, pp. 21 - 22.

145 Med Hist of the 33rd Div, pp. 15, 16.

- 83 -
determined," and 28 "mixed gas." This distribution appears to agree with the findings of the DOO and medical officers, and with what we know of the proportion of gases used by the 32nd Division (narrative, p. 71).

Of the 1,976 total gas casualties, the 1,234 admitted as a result of unidentified gas, "mixed gas," or "gas not yet determined" support the field hospital statement that 60 percent of the men tagged "gassed" were suffering from causes other than gas. The principal "other cause" was unquestionably gas mask exhaustion.

Although "battle exhaustion" was well known and recognized as much in World War I, the phenomenon of "gas mask exhaustion" has not been encountered in any record. Yet in any organization that encountered prolonged gassing, especially in repeated small quantities, and where good gas discipline was maintained, as it appears to have been in the 33rd Division, gas mask exhaustion certainly took as great a toll as conventional battle exhaustion. The suffocating effect of the nose-clip and mouthpiece of the small box respirator became intolerable in a short time, and the necessity of wearing the respirator night after night, resulting in both loss of sleep and progressive fatigue, guaranteed eventual exhaustion.

In the growing state of exhaustion in which the 33rd Division found itself on the east bank of the Meuse, it would have been remarkable if the incessant enemy HE and gas fire, unhalted by divisional efforts to still it, had not produced evidence of gas panic among the troops. That periodic waves of gas panic, among both officers and men, swept the division from 9 October until the division was relieved on the 18th, seems
clear from the narrative (pp. 50 - 54, 50 - 61). Furthermore, the Division Gas Officer's postwar explanation for the large numbers of gas casualties evacuated on 17, 18, and 19 October may be viewed in another light when we read his summary report on the gas casualties evacuated in the period 9 - 13 October.

He was to report that on the night of the 9th, and again on the 10th and 11th, the enemy repeatedly fired small quantities of blue cross shell (diphenylchlorarsine) into the valley from the Bois de Consenvoye to the Meuse, between Consenvoye and Brabant, occupied during this period by elements of the 119th, 131st, and 132nd Infantry. Almost all of the troops were exposed to the gas, said Lieutenant Vawter, and apparently reported themselves gassed, but only 75 were evacuated as hospital cases by the regimental medical officers.

Such small concentrations of diphenylchlorarsine, said Lieutenant Vawter, caused only temporary inconvenience to men in good condition, but these men had been in the line for almost five weeks, without rest and under constant harassing fire, and were "dirty, tired, and with a weakened will power." The enemy, he asserted, deliberately used blue cross on tired troops, since even small concentrations were sufficient to put them out of action. 146

Another element in the large number of gas casualties suffered while east of the Meuse should be mentioned, even though it has proved negative. It was anticipated, in the course of this study, that some expression of

146 Ltr, DOO to CGO III Corps, 13 Oct, sub: Gas Rpts (G3F-33rd Div).
concern would be found in the records when 33rd and 29th Division troops advanced east of the Meuse area over terrain that had been ypered by Army and XVII Corps artillery between 26 September - 2 October, in the neutralization of the Cotons de Meuse. Since less than a week elapsed between the last ypering and the advance over that ground on 8 October, many of the target areas must still have retained some degree of contamination. It is not likely that the warning to take precautions in those gassed areas was scrupulously heeded, and yet there is no record that any mustard gas casualties were incurred in this fashion.

Gas and HE Shell

33rd Division Summaries of Intelligence and Daily Operations Reports have proved useless as sources of statistics for this study. While the SOIs between 26 September - 20 October regularly report "heavy gas shelling during the night," "gas concentrations throughout the night," etc., the enemy gas shell count for that period totals only 710, exclusive of 600 mixed gas and HE. The actual count of enemy HE shell comes to 5,481, with most days marked only by "heavy intermittent shelling," "deadly flanking fire," etc.

DIR figures, compiled for the same period, reveal that the 33rd Division artillery fired a total of 90,004 HE rounds into the enemy lines.

147 Letter, G-0, First Army to G-3, III Corps, 5 Oct, subj: Mustard gassed areas north of Verdun (GAF-1st A). See Col. T. H. W. Schults, 1st Army OC, lecture Execution of Gas Plans for the...A-W Opn, 17 Jan 1919, p. 19 (GAF AFR 0 - 3 Rpt U 3152, Vol 1002-4). "Our 33rd and 29th Divisions, without any resulting ill effects, operated across the Meuse over ground that had been mustard gassed up to six days beforehand."
while a mere 4,201 rounds were fired into the sector in that period by enemy artillery, all of it apparently HE. Such enemy gas shell data as appear in this study are from other sources than divisional G - 2 and G - 3.

The available German records are little more satisfactory. While the German artillery orders for the nightly harassing missions with gas and HE are fairly complete, none of them, with the exception of the 32nd Division orders in the latter part of October, indicates the number of gas or HE shells allotted for or fired in these missions. Exceptional too is the report of Mass Out on 12 October that for the period 2 - 12 October, the divisional artillery in that corps fired a total of 29,843 HE shells and 2,262 gas shells (narrative, pp. 61 - 62).

It is necessary to accept the figure of 2,600 gas shells reported by the Division Gas Officer as falling in the Bois des Moraux on the morning of 8 October (narrative, pp. 32 - 34) The 7th Reserve Division merely confirmed the contamination fire, although no order or shell count has been found in its records. In addition to the 2,600 gas shells, the DGO estimated between 2,400 and 4,000 HE shells in the target area in the course of the gas attack. He reported total gas casualties of 350; the brigade reported 380 casualties in the 1st Battalion alone. Neither reported any HE casualties. The hospital lists, however, show 156 gas casualties in the 129th Infantry admitted on 5 October and 362 on 6 October, a total of 520. (The DGO total for those two days is 391.) The wounded, for all regiments in the division on 5 October, were 17, according to hospital records. Only two men are
known to have been killed that day, by exploding gas shell fragments dur-
ing the gas attack.

Accepting these conflicting figures, between 5 and 7 gas shells were
required for each gas casualty in the attack. The results of the HE
shelling, even assuming that all 17 casualties that day occurred in the
129th Infantry, would indicate that between 140 and 235 shells were re-
quired for each wound casualty.

For further comparative statistics, it is necessary to rely on the
unique ammunition expenditure report of Mass Get (narrative, pp. 62 -
63). While a principal target of Mass Get divisional artillery was un-
doubtedly the 33rd Division sector, that artillery also fired into the
sector of the 4th Division, to the left of the 33rd, and into the sec-
tors of the 29th Division and 18th French Division, to the right of the
33rd. Mass West artillery, for which we have no data, also fired on the
33rd Division sector west of the river. Under the circumstances, the
figures of 29,643 HE and 2,562 gas rounds have been arbitrarily accepted
to represent the approximate weight of shell fired into the 33rd Division
sector alone during the ten days between 2 - 11 October.

Between 2 - 12 October, the Division Gas Officer reported a total
of 838 gas casualties (not counting the 377 resulting from the gas at-
tack of 5 October). Field hospital lists show 768 gas casualties (ex-
clusive of 361 for the 8th) and 696 HE casualties for the same period,
of which 558 gas and 600 HE casualties occurred between 9 - 12 October,
during the advance on the east bank and the disastrous counterattacks
there.

- 88 -
On the basis of 935 gas casualties, the 2,262 gas rounds produced a casualty for each 2.4 shells. On the basis of 748 gas casualties, the proportion was 3 shells for each casualty. Even assuming every one of the 696 HR casualties was caused by high explosive shell and not machine gun and rifle fire (as most of them were), the proportion is 44 shells for each wound casualty.

The Division Gas Officer’s estimate of 1,885 gas shells falling in the troop areas east of the Meuse between 17 - 19 October (narrative, pp. 73 - 74) resulted in between 610 and 796 gas casualties, according to hospital and DSO data, or no more than 1 to 3 shells for each casualty.

The unusually low ratio between gas shells and gas casualties may be explained in the statements of the DSO and medical officers that the combination of gas and exhaustion produced casualties out of all proportion to the amount of gas shell fired by the enemy.

It was this combination of continual gassing and progressive exhaustion, and the absence of large-scale gas attacks, that made reporting the gas experience of the 33rd and the other divisions in III Corps so difficult for the gas officers. The line officers were inclined to suspect malingering, while the medical officers were confused by the numbers of men reporting themselves gassed, whose symptoms were not sufficiently pronounced for certain diagnosis.

As the Corps Gas Officer said: “On active fronts it is found that where there is daily shelling, certain areas are kept saturated with gas [without any] specific gas attack made, although daily casualties
from gas occur." Gas casualties could not therefore be ascribed to specific gas attacks, and however large their numbers, could only be summed up each week and so reported. 148

A summary of these weekly figures received from III Corps divisions during the period 9 September to 11 November appears in a postwar report of III Corps:

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<th>Division</th>
<th>Gassed</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Division</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>1,708</td>
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<td>4th Division</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>1,809</td>
<td>2,897</td>
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<td>5th Division</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>3,510</td>
<td>4,075</td>
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<td>32nd Division</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>131</td>
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<tr>
<td>33rd Division</td>
<td>1,716 + 3 deaths</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>2,612</td>
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<tr>
<td>80th Division</td>
<td>1,462</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>4,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90th Division</td>
<td>449 + 9 deaths</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>2,099</td>
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5,727 + 12 deaths 11,937 17,664 149

The figures corroborate the distinction achieved by the 33rd Division in reporting almost twice as many gas casualties as other casualties. Of

148 Ltr, CGO III Corps to C W S Att Ref Div, 27 Oct, sub: Record of Gas Atks (First Army Box 340, III CGO).

149 Ltr, CGO III C to CGO First Army, 19 Nov, sub: Rpt on Gas Activities from Sep 20th to Nov 11th (First Army Box 340). The estimate of III Corps that 35,000 gas shells were fired into the area during this period would indicate a gas casualty for every six shells.

A similar chart in ltr, CGO III Corps to CG W S, 12 Nov, sub: Rpt on Gas Activities for October (Box 340 and GAF-III Corps) shows totals of 5,323 gas casualties (including 12 deaths) and 9,214 other casualties.

Still a third chart, in III Corps Rpt on Prisoners, Casualties...from 26 Sep to 11 Nov, 18 Nov (6th Div Box 4, 16.1) shows totals of 5,041 gas casualties and 16,187 wounded. In this chart, 35 officers and 1,962 men in the 33rd Div were gassed and 8 officers and 1,169 men were wounded.
special interest is the close agreement between corps' "other" figure of 896 and the hospital wounded total of 892 through 21 October. (No explanation can be given for the wide discrepancy between the casualty total in this corps chart of 2,612 and the casualty totals of 5,213, 5,187 and 4,088, on pp. 67 - 68 above.)

The corps' figures also tend to explain why the 33rd Division was put back in the line less than a week after being relieved along the Meuse, without apparently receiving any replacements. With less than 900 wound casualties, the division may have seemed to higher headquarters to have required neither replacements nor an extended rest.

Unfair, perhaps, to the 33rd Division, in view of their dates, are four Compte-Rendus (9 - 1 reports) of the XVII French Corps which have been found, offering comparative data on the gas and wound casualties in that Corps. As was shown in Study No. 4, "The 28th Division in the Aisne-Marne Campaign" (pp. 63 - 64), the French, under similar or even heavier gas fire than that experienced by American troops at their side, took far fewer casualties. After four years of war, the French had learned to conserve their forces and the French soldier had learned to respect gas. Thus General Claudel was right to suggest that the high gas casualties in his American divisions indicated "either inexperience or carelessness" (narrative, pp. 69 - 70).

150 No mention of replacements has been found in the History or the records of the division, although Spencer (II, 383a) quotes the unlikely figure of 20,140 replacements, found in Shipley Thomas, The History of The A.E.F., p. 468.
There is no reason to think that the weight of HE or gas shell fired by the enemy varied much between the divisions. Even considering the fact that a French division had approximately half the rifle strength of an American division, the disproportionate casualty figures below indicate that American divisions were indeed either inexperienced or careless:

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<td>Wound Gas</td>
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<td>15th Col.</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<td>10th Col.</td>
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A final word remains to be said concerning the Division Gas Officer, Lt. W. F. V. W. No reports or correspondence of his has been found in the records of the division, he is not mentioned in the official History and, curiously, in almost every report of his found in corps, army, or GAF records, the manner of the reports indicates that he obtained his information at second hand, presumably from the regimental and battalion medical officers and gas officers.

Yet few organisations appear to have issued more training circulars on gas defense or been more diligent in their efforts to establish good gas discipline than the 33rd Division, presumably -- although no evidence has been found -- through the efforts of the Division Gas Officer. Moreover, an inspection tour made by the office of the Chief Gas Officer, First Army, late in October resulted in high marks for both him and his

151

33rd Div Box 2, 20.23.
organization, despite the fact that the division was to prove unique in reporting more gas casualties than wound casualties in the Meuse-Argonne campaign. The inspector reported that 33rd Division gas defense equipment was found ample in every particular, and that Colonel Vandervater of the office of the Chief of Staff "talked of Lt. Fawtler in the most complimentary terms, and seemed to be satisfied in every way with the gas defense of the Division." 152

Use of Gas by the 52nd Field Artillery - World War I

The 52nd FA Brigade apparently had an abundance of gas ammunition throughout the campaign but would not use it. Available ammunition reports for the period 11 - 14 October reveal almost 10,000 75-mm special shells and 300 155-mm special shells on hand. The division was apparently without smoke shells, for none are listed.

The only artillery orders showing use of gas indicate that the 106th FA fired 20 phosgene rounds on the night of 30 September at targets across the river, above Consenvoye and in the Bois de Chaume, and 15 phosgene rounds on the morning of 1 October, "east of the Meuse." The artillery regimental histories report firing large quantities of HE but no smoke or gas shells. 153

152 Lt. Capt. T. W. Balf, CG 50 First Army to CG 1st Army, 27 Oct, sub: Trip to 33rd Div for ACoF (5 - 4) (First Army Box 339, 470). Neither Col Vandervater nor his headquarters has been identified.

153 Reports and histories in 33rd Div Box 11, 44.6; Box 13, 44.6; Box 12, 32.15.
The Division Gas Officer explained this record of the 52nd FA Brigade in a letter to the III Corps Gas Officer on 15 October:

Our Artillery Brigade has not put over any gas...Concerning the use of Gas by our Artillery, they do not seem to be keen on the use of it. You are probably familiar with the difficulties in convincing people that modern warfare does not require noise and destruction to get the best results in the way of putting men out of action. There is quite a bit of gas ammunition laying about the area, some of which has no markings on it at all, but during the present clean up arrangements have been made to assemble it all in the vicinity of Gercourt. It is hoped that when all the shells are assembled in one place more interest will be worked up and a show of our own will be started.

But the time had passed when it might have been effectively used, and presumably the gas ammunition was left at Gercourt when the division pulled out.

The Yellow Cross Division

The advice of III Corps to its divisions on 24 October, that they "must learn to avoid serious losses, and carry on a fight for three or four weeks before relief," came too late to help the 33rd Division.

It was a tired and casualty-ridden division when it crossed the Meuse on the night of 9 - 10 October. (Why the 129th Infantry, after its successive gasings, was sent across is a mystery.) On the east bank the troops rapidly passed from weariness to exhaustion, as the division met enemy forces in a state of readiness far greater than that found on 26 September, and was exposed to daily gas fire more pervasive, because

Memo, 15 Oct, n.s. (WD Hist Box 300, 35.6, Use of Gas by Arty).
Memo, III Corps to all divisions, Sub: Tactical Defects (90th Div Box 6, 35.10).

- 94 -
concentrated in a smaller area, than had been met with on the west bank. There is no reason to doubt that every combat officer and man in the division was gassed to some degree in the operation.

On the west bank, without protection against the German artillery on the Cote de Meuse, the 33rd Division could do nothing about its plight but hold on. On the east bank it advanced until it was overtaken by gas and gas mask exhaustion. The comparative casualty figures, as well as the distances covered by the American and French forces east of the Meuse, might be construed to indicate that the Americans were written off as expendable even as they crossed the Meuse.