"ONE OF THE FIRST FIFTY THOUSAND"

By SGT. H. BEN SCOTT

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have that we were to attack at daybreak, the official order that was not given until the wood came for all officers to send their watches to the Post of Command to have them synchronized. I was one of the three watches came, the official order that we were to attack at 4:05 in the morning and that we were to leave our present positions and take up our shelter situations in the field of error ahead, just outside the wood on the edge of the open. Our time to leave to start was to be made at two o'clock We were ordered to pack our blanket rolls and all extra and unnecessary equipment and leave them behind. We were to carry our rifles, emergency rations and light packs over extra bandoleers of ammunition. We were issued and every man was asked to report if his rifle, side arms, etc., were in perfect condition. At two o'clock we began to move forward and upon reaching the edge of the wood we formed what is known as a "thousand yard front." This formation is simply dividing a company into two divisions, one behind the other at a distance of a thousand yards. The attacking front consisted of the companies in the front line, the rank of prime the "Waves" of attack—the first wave starts followed by the second wave, and the first by the attack about to start, we organized, the 9th, formed the first and second platoons, and behind us were other regiments forming the 2nd and 4th wave and so on for the attack. I believe there were six waves used all along the line. Each wave was to keep connection with the rank in order to prevent a solid front to the enemy at all times. Connection before is explained as follows: For example, when a man in the first wave of the company on the corresponding man in the second wave goes forward and fills the gap made in our rank by his replacement continues as long as there are enough men in the company. Behind we were other regiments forming the "Infiltration Method." Well, the battalion commanders, the officers of my regiment looked up their stations in the wheat field as they were to be during the day. My station was with Company C, the company composed the support line that was attacking supporting the first line in order to fill the first gaps made in the front line. Well, we had our positions planned. By the way, I forgot to tell you the gaps made in our rank before the attack was for about 50 yards.

We took up our positions somewhere in our sector, and the artillery fire was to be increased to a terrific pitch at the exact minute to commence the attack. Hundreds of thousands of shells were thundered within 100 yards of us. Our artillery had been registered and taken up our positions that morning. Thousands of machine guns had been conveyed under the guard and given the surprise of their military existence. I personally do not realize that thousands of others were behind the guns and shells that were thundering forward to their destination. To the left at us were many thousands of Marines and to our right were French colonial troops and to their right were more Americans. Everything was ready, and we were breathing and waiting, just as we were to be for many more minutes to come which extended from my positions on the northernmost of the world. Reports to a point south of the south—we were at the north face, and to the south face of the second infantry under the wedge, an offensive which the world knows as the "second battle of the Marne" had ceased a half.

It was early May in the wheatfields followed on our arms and watches ticking away, and we were always going forward to the fateful zero hour. It would be clever when the hour for me to move arrived to express our feelings and emotions during those minutes, but I am not clever enough to relate to you what I thought. I don't believe there is a writer in the world who could do it justice. As close as I can come to it I would say that I was in a trance. I would be compared to those of a drowning man, to those of a man on the hope, or those of a man who knows his approaching fate without a chance. Those minutes were the longest minutes in my past life since babyhood. Ordinarily I am a man who can sleep at any time and keep up each subject, but I am frightened by laughing when I say that I have no sense about me, I can only whisper.

I shall here I come to the point with a description of the attack in order to "get it off my mind" and "over with" so it comes to giving a detailed account of the attack. In the first place, let me be understood that a man in battle acts, no matter how brave about it, the same as ever than anybody. To be frank, and honest, though it may seem peculiar to me, I was also not gone through the experience, a man can't tell accurately immediately after a battle what he experienced during the time of the actual action of a man's mind is shocked and knocked until it comes to him and and loosely he may do and can't do exactly the proper thing as a matter of confusion and danger arises, it is a primitive instinct which guides him to do the proper thing as a matter of mind. It all after itself comes to a horrible dream, a nightmare of fire, of screams, of falling men, of shrieking shells, of terrible concussions, of hellish noises, of smoke, of gases, automatically doing those things which works and months of training have taught him to do without the necessity of thinking. When the moment arrives for thinking, memory is hazy and it is hard to distinguish between reality and fancy. Certainly did and fancy be imagined he did.

At 4:00 in the cool gray dawn all the morning of July 18th, 190 per cent guns, machine guns, and rifles of the thousands of allied guns, which had been concentrated behind the lines to cover the advance of our unseasily, opened simultaneously and it seemed to me that the earth trembled. It seemed to shake in one gigantic contraction, then relaxed only to contract in waves and lapped and rolled. The French 75s just behind us, had been silent for hours and were ready for opening fire wave and at the same time the artillery behind the enemy lines were turned into one continuous fountain of spouting fire as the barrage was laid down on them. The barrage was laid down on them. The command, "Forward" was given and the first wave began their advance and the second wave followed. Then the third. Lone and wide were placed at five-pace intervals, we followed. The Hun had been completely surprised and those in the front lines were making little rate in a number of their dugouts to offer resistance. Those who did were overwhelmed by the first and to remain alive they would mount a very feasible exhibition of their deathlessness and they preferred to take their chances with the prisoners of war camps.

Before I go on I will say that some of the Germans had been a counter barrage which we encountered as we began to reach their trenches. The front wave of the attack had been instructed not to stop but to get "bumped off" the floor. The second wave was instructed to do the same and so would drop 5 men and more, we in the second wave began to encounter the dead and dying. By this time we had passed through the front line and those of the second wave were ordered to the front and the third wave to go through the first and to remain and to