

# Rainbow Division Breaks German Defense System on Ourcq and Forces Enemy to Retreat Back Toward the Vesle River

## After Six Days of Constant Fighting Americans Overcome German Mass of Machine Guns, But With Heavy Cost—Over 3,000 Yanks Wounded—Hills and Fields Crimson With Blood of Boches and Americans—Elsie Janis Appears to Cheer Last Horrible Week On Field Before Relief Came.

In this, the sixth installment of the "History of the Rainbow Division," by Raymond S. Tompkins, the winning of the Battle of the Ourcq is described. It was a grueling fight, one in which every ounce of strength every bit of pluck and every art and artifice of the American fighters had to be put forth to win, but they won.

The loss was heavy, but the Rainbow counted not its losses when it saw the Germans scurrying back toward the Vesle river and when they knew that the resistance in the Marne salient was broken forever.

After a week's steady fighting, the Rainbow was sent from this battle to rest, but the rest was brief. The next installment, which will appear in The Bee Friday, takes the division into the great Meuse-Argonne drive.

By **RAYMOND S. TOMPKINS.**  
(Sixth Installment.)

It was growing dusk on July 28 when the Alabamans and Iowans rushed Serqy for the last time that day—and held it. The German artillery shelled it savagely all night and clouds of bombing planes circled around and around it, dropping tons of bombs, but the Rainbows huddled closer and closer behind ruined house walls and stook.

Then early in the morning of the 29th the Prussian guard returned to the battle and in a final desperate charge drove the doughboys out of Serqy for the seventh time; drove them back to the banks of the Ourcq.

**Lost All Gained in Two Days' Battle.**  
Two days' fighting after the German retreat from Croix Rouge Ferme, the Rainbow had made no permanent gains and its casualties had been heavy. Meurcy Farm, Serqy and Hill 230 were still in German hands, commanded by machine guns in other German strongholds farther on. Something had to be done.

The thing that was done was the thing that, more than any one battle move, broke the morale of the German army and bade fair, later on, to turn its splendid rearguard action into a rout.

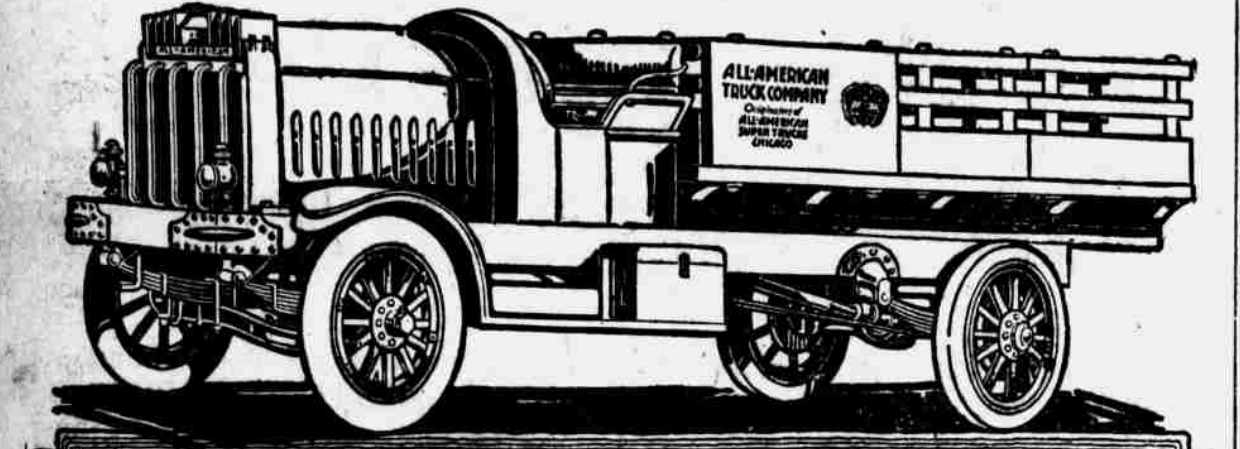
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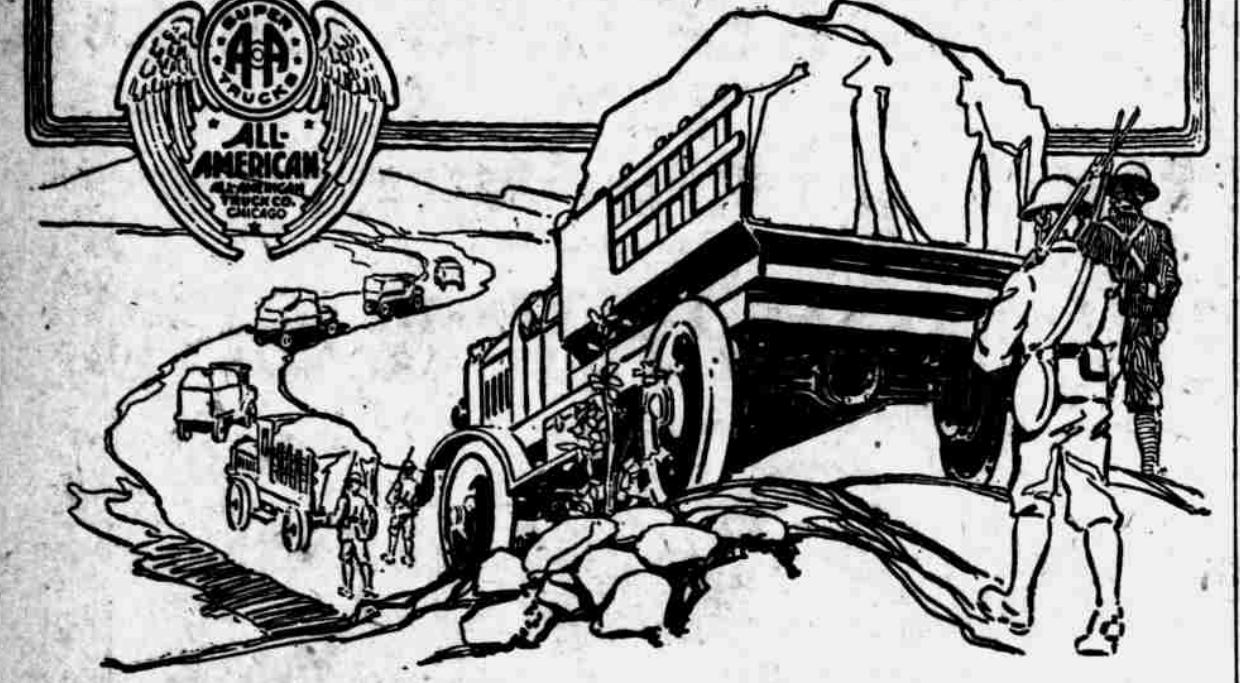


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suddenly shoot ahead for a yard or two and disappear from view while the German guns blazed at it. A moment of quiet, then off to the left another brown streak and a burst of bullets from the wheat. Then in the center another, then another to the right, until a half dozen men were headed toward that single German machine gun, advancing in quick steps, now left, now right, now center; and whenever a man divined a volley of rifles from his comrades answered the sputter of the machine gun.

And soon—though it might be a half hour or an hour, and though a sheaf of bullets might have caught one of those brown streaks in mid-air so that it never divided again—a little ring of men in olive-drab would be around that machine gun nest and "a kill" would be on.

**Iowans Rout Prussians.**  
One by one the German machine-gun nests grew silent. As the day waned the clatter of them, like the clatter of riveting hammers, came from farther and farther to the north. The Iowans took Serqy. They got some machine guns in a near-creek of Hill 220, from which they could fire into the German



Sergt. B. B. Hamilton, left, (infantry); Sergt. Warren Hamilton (cavalry), center; Private Harry Hamilton (field artillery), right. Sergt. B. W. Hamilton of Company M, 168th infantry, who wounded while out ahead of his own line, was attacked by 10 Prussian guardsmen. He shot five and the rest ran away. This photo was taken in July, 1916, at Camp Dodge, Ia., shortly after the Iowa National Guard had been mobilized at the time of the Mexican crisis. The Hamilton brothers, all Iowans, had not seen each other for more than five years and met for the first time on the day the snapshot was taken.

nests in the Arbe les Jomblets and the Bois de Planchette. Here on Hill 220, Sergt. B. W. Hamilton of M Company, 168th infantry, wounded while out ahead of his own line, was attacked by 10 Prussian guardsmen. He shot five and the rest ran away.

The Alabamans got well on toward the top of the plateau, and the 165th, unsuccessful at Meurcy Farm with the new "Indian method" of attack on machine guns, called for a long concentration of artillery fire on the place, and finally their Irish tempers got the best of them and they went at it with their bayonets as they had gone over the top in Champagne. They killed the German machine gunners in hand-to-hand fighting.

In the afternoon, Colonel Hough's men of the 166th regiment, stormed Serqings on its high, bare hill. It was a gallant charge across 1,200 meters of ground entirely without cover, while machine-gun nests flanked it and heavy fire came from the village. Instead of taking it by direct attack the Ohioans worked around it and took Hill 184 to the northwest. From there they silenced the machine guns in Serqings and then went down and bayoneted the gunners who were left.

**Huns Chained to Guns.**  
It was shortly after this, you will remember, that stories became current about Germans being found chained to their machine guns in the woods. There also began coming from German soldiers inhuman cruelties of American soldiers. There had been many other stories heretofore, bearing on the inhuman treatment of German soldiers by their officers, and there had been much German propaganda intended to counteract stories of German fiendishness and cruelty.

But behind those stories in those days of late July and early August, 1918, was something more than propaganda. There was looming up in the German army a feeling of terror of these quick, forward-moving men in olive drab, who were not afraid even of the wonderful German machine guns, but who dived and wriggled toward them and were suddenly all around them in desperate little rings. German gunners were being chained to their guns; it was becoming necessary. And since men at bay will always fight for their lives, the fights around the machine gun nests in the battle of the Ourcq were nearly always fights to the death. The Rainbow division took few prisoners in that battle; its record of prisoners captured throughout the war falls short of the records of one or two other divisions; it usually fought to kill. That was the cruelty of which the Germans spoke.

**Germans Send Reserves.**  
With this advance of the Rainbow through the first of the Ourcq's great defenses, the German high command, too, became alarmed for the dignity of its retirement from the Chateau Thierry salient. It began putting in reserves. Opposite the Rainbow there was now, from left to right the 10th Landwehr division, the Sixth Bavarian division, the Fourth Prussian guard and the 201st. Nowhere else along the whole fighting front were German troops massed so densely as opposite the Rainbow, the 28th and the Third American divisions at this stage of the Ourcq battle.

By 8 o'clock on the night of July 30, Colonel Fairchild, the Rainbow division surgeon, had reported the losses in wounded alone as 3,276 men from the beginning of the fighting at La Croix Rouge Ferme. Of the killed, no report could be made at the time. The brave men who had died were out there in the

waiting wheat fields and the bodies of some of them had floated down the Ourcq. But neither losses nor German reinforcements could stop the Rainbow division, now that it had started. The Forêt de Nesles lay before it, full of German defenses, and from the woods on Hill 220 machine guns still raked the positions of the 165th. At 9 a. m. on the 30th, Colonel Screws and his 167th Alabamans started through the wheat toward the Chateau de Nesles, and with the aid of the sniping guns of the 26th division's artillery, blasted out machine-gun nests, crossed the plateau and dug in close to the chateau. The 168th had to dig in after pressing about 500 yards.

In Meurcy Farm, Colonel McCoy's New Yorkers could only dig and seek shelter from the withering fire down the valley of the Ru du Pont Brule. Light field batteries and machine guns played constantly on the ruins and unceasing duel went on between them and the 161st artillery from Minnesota. The most the 166th could have done was hold, and they did that with heroic tenacity. That night, the Ohioans of the 166th finding Serqings a rather hot

by German artillery. Shells fell in the whole Ourcq valley that day like rain. Hill 212 commanded the Forêt de Nesles, which was now the only strong position the boche had left in his whole Ourcq system. French and American artillery, concentrating upon it, silenced the German batteries and they began to withdraw. And on the night of August 1 the German infantry pulled itself together quietly, and silently stole away toward the River Vesle.

The Rainbow had outwitted, out-gamed and outthought the best soldiers in the German army. They were now in full retreat from the Ourcq. The pursuit started next morning. The 168th exhausted after six days and nights of constant fighting of the hardest kind, was revealed by the 117th engineers from California and South Carolina, commanded by Colonel Kelly. This regiment, ready now to attack as infantry, as they had been ready to defend in the Champagne, carried on the chase with the Ohio, Alabama and New York infantry regiments.

That day the Rainbow advanced through the Forêt de Nesles nearly five kilometers beyond the point from which it had started in the morning. The Germans in their hurry to get away blew up great ammunition dumps, but the Rainbow came so closely upon their heels that they deserted nearly 30,000 shells which the division captured intact.

**Lived in Posthole.**  
A line running between Mont St. Martin and Chery Charteau was the limit of the Rainbow's advance; and La Croix Rouge Ferme the distance was 17 kilometers—the longest advance by any division attacking between Soissons and Rheims. There a relief of the Rainbow by the Fourth division, which had been progressing during the pursuit, was completed, but the artillery stayed in position for several days assisting the Fourth to maintain a footing beyond the Vesle river.

The weather was hot, and the country full of ruined villages, dead unburied bodies—boche and American—and thousands of dead horses. The men were dirty; baths were next to impossible. But instead of being withdrawn from the salient, which seemed on the verge of becoming a pest hole, the Rainbow division was held in reserve for nearly a week. Sickness broke out.

**Elsie Janis Appears.**  
And into the middle of this filthy backyard of war, with its sickening smells and sights and its unkept, lousy men, there bounded on a fine afternoon one Elsie Janis—fluffy, beautiful, piquant—not at all unlike a goddess just stepping out of the clouds for a bit to see what all this rough-house was about down here below. That's what it seemed like to the Rainbow division.

They hauled a wagoned into an open field and made a stage on it, and there Elsie Janis danced and sang before a vast concourse of unwashed doughboys, who suddenly remembered that there was such a thing in the world as a pretty American girl—and were somewhat awed and saddened at the remembrance. An aeroplane came whirring overhead while Elsie Janis sang "Oh You Dirty Germans!" It came so low that you could see the black Maltese cross on the lower planes. But nobody minded. (To be continued in The Bee Friday).

### Stuht Reports Many Recent Sales in Omaha

Recent sales of homes and vacant property of C. B. Stuht Co. aggregate \$92,100, and are as follows: Dundee home at 4845 Farnam street to John F. Hecox, vice president of the Pioneer State bank, for \$11,000. Dundee home at 4650 Dodge street to Peter M. Conklin for \$5,000. Dundee home at 4650 Dodge street to Hannah Morskovitz for \$10,000. Home in Montclair addition at 3223 Hamilton street to John P. Cummins for \$6,000. Dundee home at 1300 No. 52 avenue to Anna B. Van Knuth for \$6,250. Dundee home at 1310 No. 51st street

to Neal Jones, managing editor of Omaha Daily News, for \$5,650. Home in Lockwood addition to Raymond E. Davis, vice president, O'Brien-Davis-Coak company, for \$13,000. Dundee lot to George E. Grimes, who is building a home, for \$1350. Dundee lot to Otto Nilson for \$1,200. Dundee lot to Herman Hult for \$1,650. Dundee home to Walter S. Johnson, president of Mid-City Motor and Supply company, at 4858 Harney street, for \$6,500. Dundee home to J. H. Simms, organist, All Saints Cathedral, at 4856 Harney street for \$6,500. Home in Glen park addition, near Benson, to C. V. Murry for \$3,900. Home in Montclair addition to Louis Herrmann for \$6,750. Notre Dame, the largest boarding school in the world, is situated at Soule Bend, Ind. The estate covers 15,000 acres and costs \$1,200 daily for maintenance. It was founded in 1843 by Father Sorin of Paris, France, who came at the request of Bishop de la Hollandiere of Vincennes. The Italian master, Luigi Gregori, was sent from the Vatican to decorate the walls and domes of the buildings. He worked 20 years before completing his task. The best known frescoes, those on the walls of the vestibule, were reproduced on a series of Columbian postage stamps in 1893.

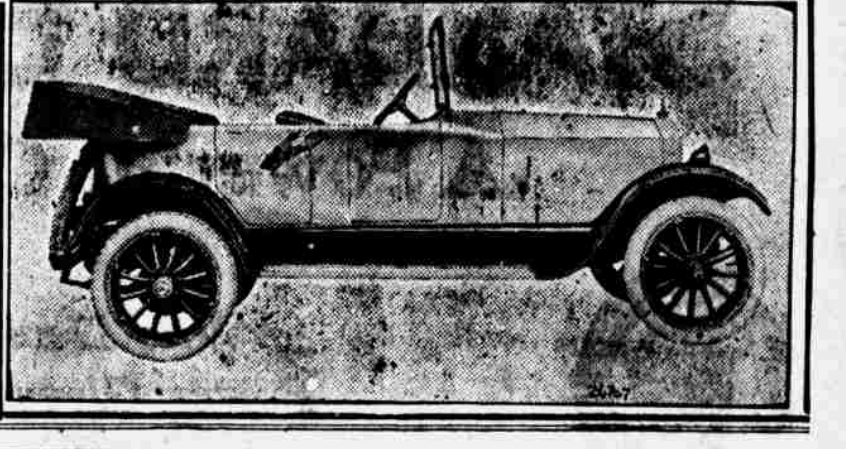


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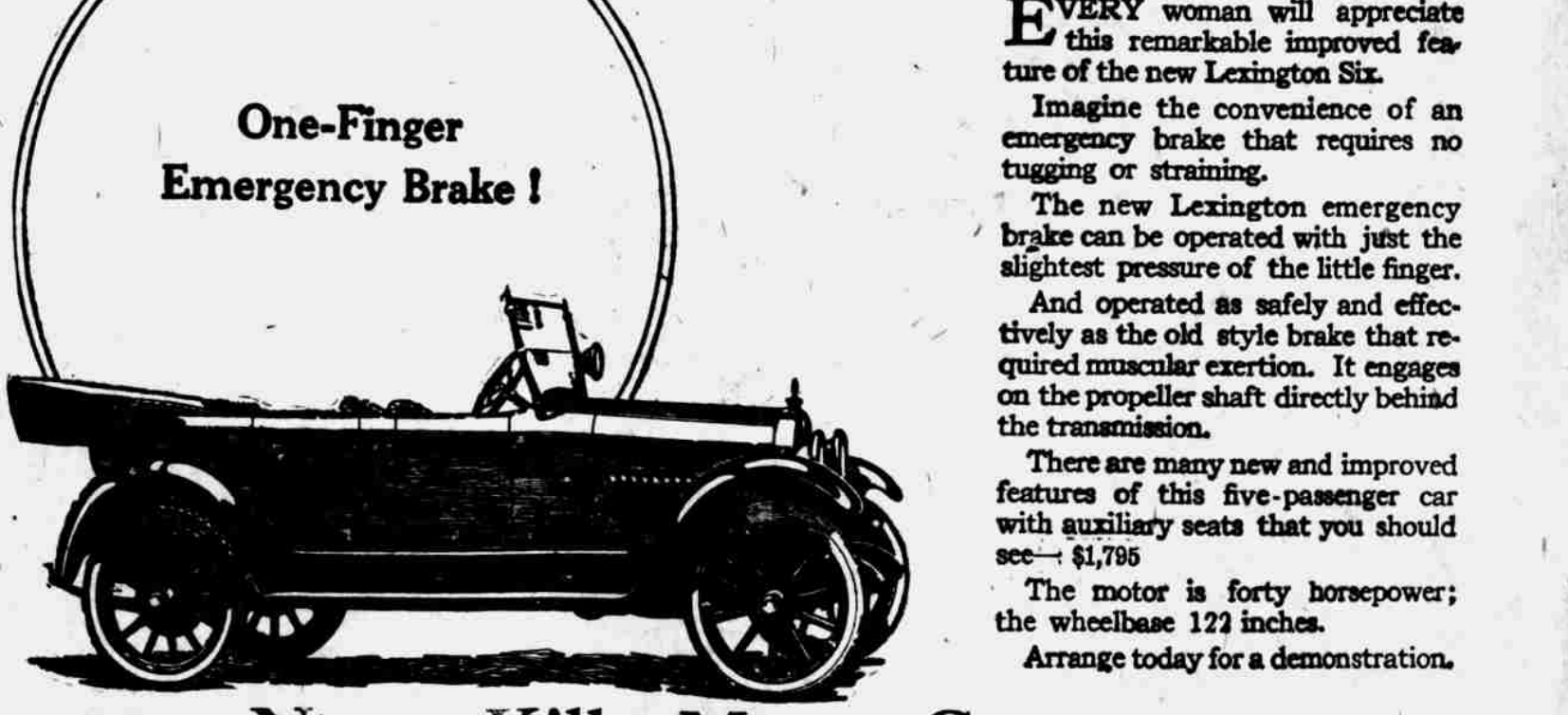
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