

George Koenig: US Army, 3rd Division, 5th Infantry Brigade, 7th Infantry Regiment, Company H -- WWI

The 3rd Division was activated at Camp Greene, North Carolina in November of 1917 for service in the First World War. The 3rd Division was composed of the 4th, 7th, 30th, and 38th Infantry Regiments, the 10th, 18th, and 76th Field Artilleries, and the 6th Engineers, with a total of 28,000 men. The Division as a whole entered combat for the first time during WWI on July 14, 1918. During the German's last offensive of the war, the 3rd Division held their positions on the Marne River as units on either side of them withdrew. This action spoiled the German bid for Paris and earned the Division their nickname, the "Rock of the Marne." The Division's motto, "Nous Resterons Là" which is French for "We shall remain there," also comes from that action. During WWI, two members of the 3rd Division were awarded the Medal of Honor.

World War I (1914-1918)

The Third Division was born at Camp Green, North Carolina on November 21, 1917. The U.S. had been at war with Imperial Germany and allies since April 6, 1917. The 3rd Division was composed of the 4th, 7th, 30th, and 38th Infantry Regiments, the 10th, 18th, and 76th Field Artilleries, and the 6th Engineers, with a total of 28,000 men. The Division arrived in France in April 1918 at the beginning of the last series of German offensives designed to end the war. By May of 1918 the French had been pushed back to within 50 miles of Paris. The 7th Machine Gun Battalion of the 3rd Division rushed to Chateau-Thierry amid retreating French troops and held the Germans back at the Marne River. The rest of the division was absorbed by the French Command until brought back together under the Command of Gen. Joseph Dickman and by July 15, 1918 they took the brunt of what was to be the last German offensive of the war. As units on either side of the division were driven back, men of the 30th and 38th Infantry Regiments held their positions at the Marne River, defeating the German bid for Paris. For this the division earned the nickname, "Rock of the Marne."

It all began during World War I when the newly-formed 3rd Division (later re-designated as the 3rd Infantry Division) was in France as part of the American Expeditionary Force. The division's 28,000 Soldiers arrived on Europe's shores prepared to defeat the last wave of German offensives.

At Chateau-Thierry, along the Marne River, as French troops retreated from the German onslaught, men of the 7th Machine Gun Battalion of the 3rd Division were rushed to Chateau-Thierry and set up a defensive position along the Marne River.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Dickman, the division commander, issued his famous order in French, "Nous resterons là" ("We're staying there!"). The rest of the division moved into position along the Marne, and on July 15, took the brunt of what was to be the last German offensive of the war, the famous "Peace Storm."

As units on either side of the division were driven back, men of the 30th and 38th Regiments held their positions, defeating the Germans' bid for victory.

This feat of arms, in which they stood their ground like a rock at the Marne, was called by Gen. John "Blackjack" Pershing "...one of the most brilliant pages in the annals of military history" and earned the 3rd Infantry Division its nickname: "The Marne Division".

The 3rd Division was designated the 3rd Infantry Division in 1941.

This week in MarneHistory: 3rd Infantry Division prepares to fight in WWI

Dr. Judith Brown
Fort Stewart Museum

The last week in May was extremely significant in World War I because on May 30, 1918 the 3rd Infantry Division prepared to take its place for the first time in battle on the Western Front against oncoming Germans. Smaller, early-arriving units, such as the 6th Engineers, had previously fought with either the British or the French, but this was the first time the division would be fighting as a single unit.

Before leaving the U.S., the units of the 3rd ID were scattered around the country. After the arrival of Maj. Gen. Joseph Dickman, 3rd ID commanding general, in France on April 4 1918, the 3rd ID began to take shape as a complete unit. As other divisional units gradually arrived in April and May they went to the Chateauvillain area in eastern France for further training. The events of this week ended that training.



Courtesy Photo

Major General Joseph Dickman, 3rd ID commander, arrived in France, April 4, 1918.

On May 26, the Germans launched an offensive at the Aisne River that caught the French by surprise. In three days the city of Soissons, 75 miles northeast of Paris, fell, and the Germans began pushing south rapidly. It seemed as if they had finally broken through the Allied lines and

might capture Paris. By May 29, the French government was preparing to flee Paris south for Bordeaux. In this emergency, General John Pershing, American commander, released the 3rd ID, less Artillery and Engineers, to the French Army of the North, which turned it over to the 38th French Army Corps operating in Chateau-Thierry, the point of greatest danger.

Chateau-Thierry was a small town on the south bank of the Marne River about 50 miles northeast of Paris and 25 miles south of Soissons. On May 30, the French ordered the 3rd ID to get there as quickly as possible. By forced marches and by every available means of transportation, division units rushed the 75 miles to Chateau-Thierry. The 7th Machine Gun Battalion, a motorized unit, arrived first on May 31 after a 24-hour trip by road. Its two companies took up positions in the town in the afternoon and maintained their positions throughout the night under severe German bombardment.

At dawn, with French Colonial troops, they repulsed a fierce German attempt to cross the Marne. The 4th and 7th Infantry Regiments of the 5th Infantry Brigade, and the 30th and 38th Infantry Regiments of the 6th Infantry Brigade arrived between May 31 and June 3. As they arrived, they reinforced the French 10th and 20th Divisions along the south bank of the river as far east as Courthiézy, eight miles away. The Germans did not break through and soon turned their attention to other sectors of the front. The 3rd ID remained in place along the river for the next two months.

Chateau-Thierry put to rest some of the doubts the French and English had about the quality of American



Courtesy image

The map above shows the Chateau-Thierry region and the Aisne offensive end, where the 3rd ID stopped a German advance toward Paris in late May and early June 1918.

Soldiers. It also gave the 3rd ID both experience in battle as a unit and useful knowledge of the terrain they would fight over again in the great Battle of the Marne in July. It would receive the nickname "Rock of the Marne" for its actions then, but it began to earn that nickname at Chateau-Thierry in late May and early June.

THE U.S. THIRD DIVISION

U. S. THIRD DIVISION CASUALTIES

In its four battle campaigns during World War I (Aisne; Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne), the U. S. Third Division suffered 3,401 soldiers killed in action, 12,000 soldiers wounded in action, for a total of 15,401 battle casualties.

3rd DIVISION, A.E.F.

May 30-June 5, 1918

DIVISION HEADQUARTERS

Division Commander - Maj. Gen. Joseph T. Dickman

Chief of Staff - Lt. Col. Raymond Shelton, Jr.

5th INFANTRY BRIGADE

Brig. Gen. Fred W. Sladen

4th Infantry

Col. Halstead Dorey

7th Infantry

Col. Thomas M. Anderson, Jr.

8th Machine Gun Battalion

Maj. L. W. T. Waller, U.S.M.C.

6th INFANTRY BRIGADE

Brig. Gen. Charles Crawford

30th Infantry

Col. Edmund L. Butts

38th Infantry

Col. Ulysses G. McAlexander

9th Machine Gun Battalion

Maj. David H. Scott

ORGANIZATIONS

5th Infantry Brigade-4th and 7th Regiments

6th Infantry Brigade-30th and 38th Regiments

7th, 8th and 9th Machine-Gun Battalions

3rd Field Artillery Brigade-10th, 76th, 18th Artillery Regiments.

3rd Trench Mortar Battery.

6th Engineer Regiment and Train.

5th Field Signal Battalion.

3rd Train Headquarters and Military Police

3rd Ammunition Train.

3rd Supply Train

3rd Sanitary Train-5th, 7th, 26th and 27th Ambulance Companies and Field Hospitals.

COMBAT AWARDS

Units	Battle Credits (Casualties)	Individual Awards
4 th Inf	Aisne, Champagne (16,450)	Medal of Honor-2
7 th Inf	Champagne-Marne	Distinguished Service Medal-3
30 th Inf	Aisne-Marne,	Distinguished Service Cross-266
38 th Inf	St. Mihiel,	French Croix de Guerre-143
10 th FA	Meuse-Argonne	
18 th FA		
76 th FA		
8 th MG Bn		
9 th MG Bn		
7 th MG Bn		
6 th Eng		

The 3rd Division participated in the Champagne-Marne defensive and the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne offensives. After the armistice on November 11, 1918, the Division undertook occupation duty in the vicinity of Coblenz, along the Rhine River, where it remained until August 1919.

Roster Of Officers

May 1918-November 1918

7th Machine Gun Battalion, 3rd Division, AEF AISNE-MARNE DEFENSIVE

31st May to 4th June, 1918

Major Edward G. Taylor	1 st Lt. Erskine J. Hoover
Captain John O. Mendenhall	1 st Lt. Ray W. Vail
Captain Lloyd H. Cook	1 st Lt. Arthur B. McCormack
Captain Charles F. Houghton	2 nd Lt. Frank Cagle
Captain James E. Arthur	2 nd Lt. Herbert D. Bowman
1 st Lt. Francis E. Patton	2 nd Lt. Elias Lyman, Jr.
1 st Lt. John T. Bissell	2 nd Lt. Paul T. Funkhouser
1 st Lt. DeWitt S. Hose	2 nd Lt. Luther W. Cobby
1 st Lt. John H. Ransdell	2 nd Lt. Selden K. Griffin
1 st Lt. Chas. Montgomery, Jr.	2 nd Lt. Joseph G. Hanus
***1 st Lt. Thomas W. Goddard	2 nd Lt. Oliver H. Dickerhoof