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Croix De Guerre for Gallant Men of Old 8th Illinois

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On the morning of November 10th, when the Second Army launched its attack on the famous Hindenberg line before Metz, the 92nd Division, with which I was with during this big attack, was holding the line of Vandieres-St. Michel-Non-Norry. During the entire engagement, which lasted from 7 o'clock the morning of the 10th. to 11 A.M. of the 11th., the entire Signal Corps functioned splendidly, and as one man, keeping up communications, installing new lines, repairing those shelled out.

In writing the "finis" to this brief mention of this important army unit made up of young Colored men it is fitting that I tell of the particular work done by the boys of the 1st. Platoon on the first day of the Metz battle. Shortly after the barrage was lifted, the big guns of the enemy began shelling Pont-a-Mousson. The first shells, as I vividly recall, hit on the edge of the city, and then gradually they began peppering the Signal Battalion's station. Sergeant Rufus B. Atwood, of the 1st. Platoon, was seated in the cellar near the switchboard; Private Edgar White was operating the switchboard, and Private Clark the buzzerphone. Several officers and men were standing in the "dugout" cellar. Suddenly a German shell struck the top, passed through the ceiling and wall, and exploded, making havoc of the cellar. Lieut. Walker, Colored, who arrived just at this time, displayed admirable courage. He took immediate charge, and directed things. Sergeant Atwood tried out the switchboard, and found all lines broken. He found, on trying it, the buzzerphone out. Private White then received orders to stay on the switchboard, and Corporal Adolphus Johnson on the buzzerphone. The 12 drop monocord board was nailed up by White, and then began the connecting up of the lines from the outside to the monocord board. All this time the shelling, around this point, by the Germans was fierce and deadly—shells hitting all around the boys; struck a nearby ammunition dump causing the explosion of thousands of rounds of ammunition, which caused a terrific shock and all lights to be extinguished. But still these men worked on, and would not leave this dangerous post, a veritable target for the enemy's big guns, until the Lieutenant of the Military Police arrived and ordered them out.

What these boys of the 325th Signal Battalion have not learned respecting radio, telephonic and telegraphic work is of little advantage to any one. What they have learned about it will be of great advantage to them when they return in making a living. The 325th Field Signal Battalion, whose rank and file is made up of young Colored men, has been a marvelous success.

CROIX DE GUERRE FOR GALLANT MEN OF OLD 8TH ILLINOIS.

Colonel Roberts has requested that the following officers and enlisted men of the old 8th. Illinois Regiment, which has been brigaded with the French since being in France, be decorated with the Croix de Guerre for distinguished service. The request was made to the Commanding General of the 59th. Division, French Army. Lieut. Colonel Otis B. Duncan, Major James R. White, Captains John H. Patton, John T. Prout, Samuel R. Gwynne, Devere J. Warner, George M. Allen, James H. Hall, Stuart Alexander, Mathew Jackson, First Lieutenants Park Tancil, Osceola A. Browning, George Lacey, Frank Robinson, Claudis Ballard, Charles C. Jackson, William Warfield, Samuel S. Gordon, Robert L. Hurd, Harry W. Shelton, Second Lieutenants Henry P. Cheatham, Stanley B. Norvell, Roy Tisdell, Thomas A. Painter, Lawson Price, Lincoln D. Reid, Elmer J. Meyers; Sergeants Norman Henry and Clarence B. Gibson, Corporals James R. Brown, Lewis Warner, Joseph Henderson, Maceo A. Tervalon, William Stevenson and Elmer Laurent; Privates Nathaniel White, Robert Pride, George B. White, Howard Sheffield, Ulysis Sayles, Cornelius Robinson, William Cuff, Hugh Givens, Arthur Johnson, Charles T. Monroe, Rufus Pitts, Deery Brown, Albert Dorsey, William Hurdle, Bee McKissie, Jonas Paxton, Harry Pearson, Paul Turlington, Reed J. Brown, Paul Johnson, Reedy Jones, Alonza Keller, Leroy Lindsay, Lavern Massey, Josiah Nevees, Ira Taylor and Jesse Ferguson.