

Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE) Report on the discovery of where Alvin C. York Earned the Medal of Honor 08 October 1918

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“Châtel Chéhéry, France, 8 October 1918. After his platoon suffered heavy casualties, Alvin York assumed command. Fearlessly leading 7 men, he charged with great daring a machinegun nest, which was pouring deadly and incessant fire upon his platoon. In this heroic feat the machinegun nest was taken, together with 4 German officers and 128 men and several guns.”

Subject: Report on the activities of the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE) in the discovery and verification of key locations where Sgt Alvin C. York’s combat actions on 8 October 1918 earned the Medal of Honor.

Executive Summary: This report documents the activities, research, findings, analysis and associated conclusions of the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE). Following years of exhaustive research and nearly 40 days surveying a small ravine in the Argonne Forest behind the village of Châtel Chéhéry, France – the site where Alvin York made history has been located and verified via multiple sources. A fused application of battlefield archeology, historical research, geospatial technology, terrain analysis, exhaustive US and German archival investigation, and the application of US / German 1918 tactics, techniques and procedures, were used to determine a precise location where Alvin C. York’s feats earned him the Medal of Honor.



Five of York’s shell casings and four slugs fired by York (recovered near the German trench)

Problem: Sgt York's legendary fire fight took place on the morning of 8 October 1918 at the height of the Meuse Argonne Offensive. Combat operations associated with that offensive would continue until the armistice at 1100hrs 11 November 1918. Roughly three months later in February 1919 an investigative team led by the Brigade Commander BG Julian R. Lindsey including Alvin York returned to the site of the fire fight to determine if York's actions merited award of the Medal of Honor. Years passed, memories faded and witnesses passed away leaving no definitive location as to where the events associated with Sgt York's feat occurred in the ravine behind the small village of Chatel Chehery, France

Location: West of Châtel Chéhéry, France (Argonne Forest)

Purpose: To exploit information garnered from battlefield archeology, historical research, geospatial technology, and terrain analysis to determine where the specific events in the ravine occurred and to verify the feats meriting award of the Medal of Honor to SGT York. The goals associated with this project are as follows:

- a. Recover & document artifactual evidence of Sgt York's famous fire-fight
- b. Commemorate Sergeant York – one of General Pershing's three outstanding Heroes of the Great War and the most famous American name associated with World War One
- c. Honor the sacrifices of all soldiers who served in the Meuse-Argonne region during 1914-1918
- d. Create a Sergeant York historic interpretive trail near Châtel Chéhéry so that all tourists can retrace the steps of this American hero

Research Team: The team that discovered where York earned the Medal of Honor is called the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE) and is comprised of military officers, veterans, researchers, family members and battlefield archeologists that included the following individuals:

- a. Douglas, Rebecca & Josiah Mastriano
- b. Mr. and Mrs. Kory & Beth O'Keefe
- c. Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Parmer, US Army, historian
- d. Mr. Gary Martin, US Army (Retired), Vietnam Veteran and small arms weapon's expert
- e. Lieutenant Colonel Mick Tingstrom, US Army

- f. Mr. Detlev Hohenstein (Germany)
- g. Sergeant-Major Robert Mastriano (US Marine Corps) and family

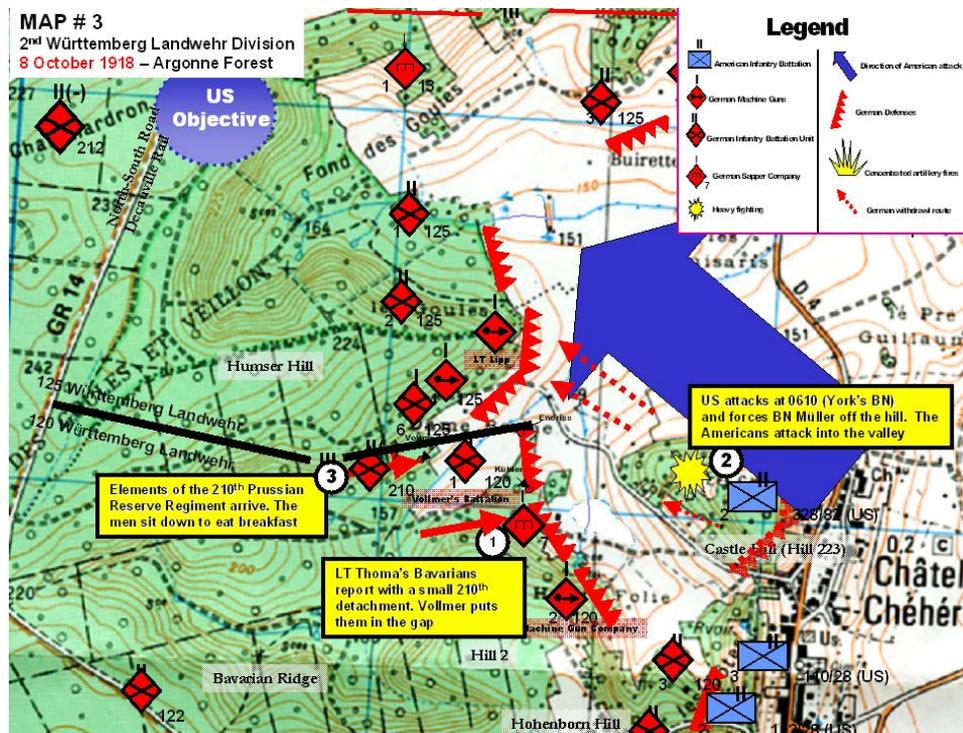
5. Valuable Partners/Friends who made the discovery possible:

- a. Mayor of Châtel Chéhéry, France - Roland Destenay & Mayor of Fléville, France - Damien Georges
- b. Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, ABMC, for their outstanding support and help, specifically:
 - (1) The Director, Mr. Phil Rivers
 - (2) Mr. Jeff Aarnio
 - (3) Mr. Greg Rahanian
- c. Frederic Castier of the First Infantry Division Museum of Cantigny
- d. Brigadier General Scellos and his staff of the French Military Mission (FMM), NATO, Allied Land Component Command Headquarters, NATO
- e. Soldiers and Officers of NATO Allied Land Component Command Headquarters, Heidelberg, Germany, specifically the following:
 - (1) Lieutenant Colonel Stephan Basener, German Bundeswehr (translation assistance, research in Bavaria on 7th Minuer Company, German artillery tactics, techniques & procedures expertise and terrain analysis)
 - (2) Lieutenant Colonel Geert Vanlingthout, Belgium Army (translation assistance, advice and terrain analysis)
 - (3) Lieutenant Colonel Frank Dietze and HfW Bjorn Ehrlenberger, German Bundeswehr (translation assistance, terrain analysis and Geospatial direction)
 - (4) Lieutenant Colonel Paul Walter, US Army for support and counsel
 - (5) Sergeant Brad Gilbert, US Army for support and advice
- f. Major General Zabecki – one of the senior qualified historians (ASI 5X) in the US Army, for his incredible and vital encouragement, advice, mentorship, wisdom and initiative.
- g. The Center of Military History (CMH), Washington, DC
- h. Lieutenant Colonel Taylor Beattie, and Ronald Bowman, US Army, for ground breaking research on Alvin York and the “York Spot” in the Argonne Forest, France between 1999 – 2001 and for continued expert advice during the recent discovery
- i. Conservateur Régional de L'archéologie, Mr. Yves Desfossés

- j. US National Archives (NARA), Washington, DC, lead archivist Mr. Mitch Yockelson for incredible and consistent support
- k. The Steele Family (Montfaucon - St. Crispin Bed & Breakfast)
- l. Mr. & Mrs. Jean-Paul & Brigit DeVries - Romagne 14-18 Museum for expert battlefield archeological advice and field assistance (based upon his 30+ years of field work and battlefield archeology)
- m. Ms. Sonja Gleichmann, German translation help
- n. Baden-Württemberg Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart
- o. Lieutenant Colonel Gross, and Major Peter Popp, German Bundeswehr, and his staff at the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Potsdam and the Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau
- p. Stadt Archive Ulm, Archivist Frau Müller
- q. Stadt Archive Rottweil
- r. Bavarian Hauptstaatsarchiv Munich
- s. Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC), Virginia, Mrs. Loretta Sylvia
- t. US Army War College, Pennsylvania
- u. Colonel Kling, Bundeswehr, German Army liaison officer to US Army EUROPE (USAREUR), for his vital assistance in securing German archival support for this research and for translating several important documents in the endeavor to find where York earned the Medal of Honor.

Research Methodology. Understanding the strength of historical research meshed with battlefield archeology and military analysis we elected to employ a holistic multidiscipline approach to the location and verification of said location where York earned the Medal of Honor. This methodology was facilitated by over 700+ hours of archival research in both the USA and Germany using over 200 references and first hand documents (to our knowledge no other York research effort has had the opportunity to exploit the vast historical resources contained in the German archives), 1,000 man hours in the field, and nearly 40 onsite visits. In this manner, we were able to fuse the information gleaned from battlefield archeology, documented history, and military tactical and terrain analysis to locate and verify the key locations listed within this report.

Our investigation was initiated in the archives researching every detail of the York story from both the German and American perspective. This resulted in the most comprehensive and factual research concerning the York story to date. The German archives proved crucial with the German maps and documents putting SYDE in the vicinity of the area of where York's actions earned the Medal of Honor. ***In fact – there is only one possible area in the entire Argonne Forest where this event could have happened.*** In over four-years of war, there was no other location in the entire Argonne Forest where the 120. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division, 125. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division, 210. Prussian Reserve Regiment, 45th Prussian Reserve Division served together. This is a well-documented fact, which narrowed down the search area.



Battle map with location of German units

Screening criteria used to narrow down the search for the “York Spot”:

How to select the appropriate screening criteria with which to narrow our search and determine the location where York earned the Medal of Honor became clear once both the German and American archives were analyzed. We determined that in order to locate and verify the key sites in York's' fire-fight we would need to establish Named Areas of Interest (NAI). These would then be analyzed using certain criteria to measure the accuracy of the area where York fought. The following list of screening criteria must be used to determine the accuracy of the York site and all points must be answered affirmatively. In other words, you must

have a “yes” to all of the following criteria to be at the correct location of York’s action:

- a. Does it agree with historical facts about German units involved and unit defense locations?
- b. Does the location make sense historically?
- c. Is the location consistent with contemporary German and American tactics techniques & procedures (TTPs)?
- d. Is it along the flank of the German 125 and 120 Regiments?
- e. Does the terrain match the February 1919 photographs taken in 1919 during BG Lindsey’s investigation of SGT York’s combat action on 8 October 1918?
- f. Is it supported by battlefield archeology?
- g. Is it close to the 1/120 regiment battlefront and within the 1/120th sector?
- h. Is it logical from a tactical military perspective?
- i. Does it agree with written German and American testimony?
- j. Is it located where the machine guns are in the fight - engaging Americans in the valley?
- k. Is it on terrain that dramatically impacted the outcome of the battle (decisive terrain)?
- l. Does it agree with the battle progression/sequence as recorded by the 2nd Landwehr Division and the battle sequence as recorded by all of the American and German units involved in the action?
- m. Is the location positioned where the German machine gunners were able to observe both the action of the American 328th Infantry Regiment trapped in the valley and the meadow where York attacked the 120th?
- n. Is it close to a trench (York's and Vollmer's testimony)?
- o. Is it near two roads that head east - out of the Argonne (York’s testimony)?
- p. Is it close to Vollmer's headquarters?

q. Is it on terrain that dramatically impacted the battle (decisive terrain) – in which both the 120th and 125th would suffer sufficient damage that would cause the line of the German 2nd Landwehr Division (Württembergische) to collapse?

The evidence supporting the designation of the York Spot as determined by the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE) under the supervision of Douglas Mastriano and Kory O’Keefe.

a. Does it agree with historical facts about German units involved and unit defense locations?

York took prisoners from the following four German units:ⁱⁱ

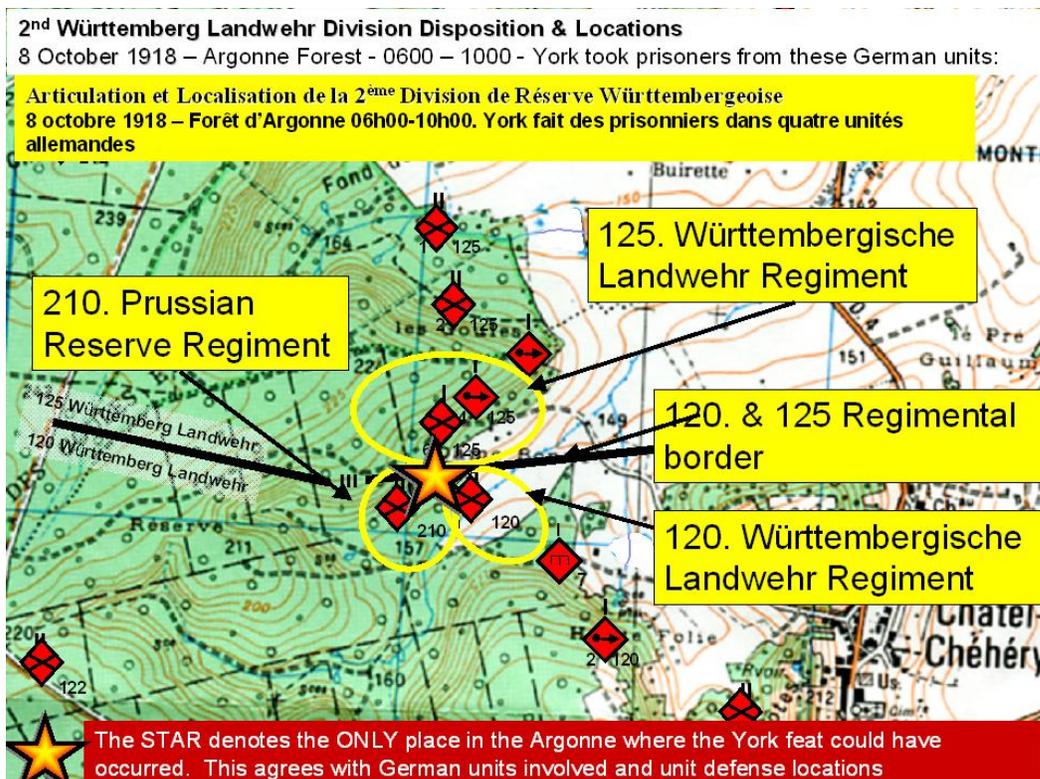
120. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division

125. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division

210. Prussian Reserve Regiment, 45th Prussian Reserve Division

7. Bayern Mineur Kompanie

The location where York earned the Medal of Honor must be in an area that prisoners can be taken from each of the units mentioned above. In particular, the specific location must be along the 120th and 125th regimental borders. It was here that the 120th's Vollmer received the 210th Prussian soldiers and where he and the 210th were captured. It was also here that the 125th flanking machine guns wheeled about to engage the 17 Americans.

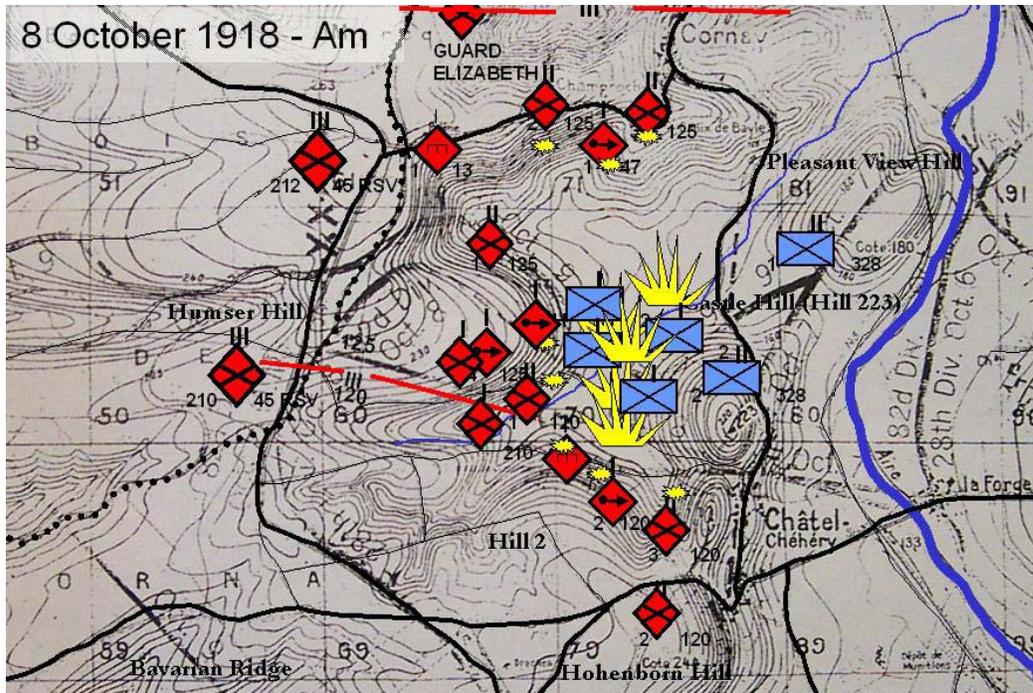


The German archives reveal that, between 1914 and 1918, there is only one location in the entire Argonne where these units served together. This is depicted on the graphic above.

The star on the slide above denotes the only possible location where York could have earned the Medal of Honor. The fact that York secured prisoners from each of the units shown above makes any and every other location impossible to achieve this task.

b. The location must agree with historical facts about German units involved and unit defense locations based upon archival data.

The German unit dispositions for October 1918 are very clear and precise in the various German archives. The following graphic illustrates with 100% accuracy the German lay down for 8 October. Exhaustive research in the battle chronology and chronicles in nearly twenty units (all written by different officers) verified this. See the endnote for where this data was gathered.ⁱⁱⁱ



c. Is the location in synchronization with contemporary German and American tactics techniques & procedures (TTPs)?

The investigated area is in compliance with established German doctrine for the employment on infantry and machine gun units. The machine gun was not held in reserve and was used extensively in support of offensive and defensive operations. In this case, the 2nd Landwehr extensively employed its machine gun assets the night prior to the American attack to engage them from three sides. The key terrain for this was the center hill or Humserberg (as the Germans called it). This is why the 125th Landwehr Regiment was positioned here.

The location is logical from a tactical military perspective and in conformity with period tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs). It is a position where the machine guns were able to engage both the US battalion in the valley and York's element in the meadow below.

d. Is it along the flank of the German 125th and 120th Regiments?^{iv}

The 2nd Landwehr Division Commander, General Adolf Franke, designated the southern edge of "Humserberg" as the regimental border between the 120th and 125th Landwehr Regiments. This is important since York performed his heroic deed along this regimental border. The German and American records describe that in the morning of 8 October, a group of Americans broke through the German flank, captured the 120th Battalion Headquarters (under Vollmer) and then proceeded to get into a fire-fight with the 125th Landwehr on the hill above (Humserberg – the center hill) under the local command of Lieutenant Lipp.

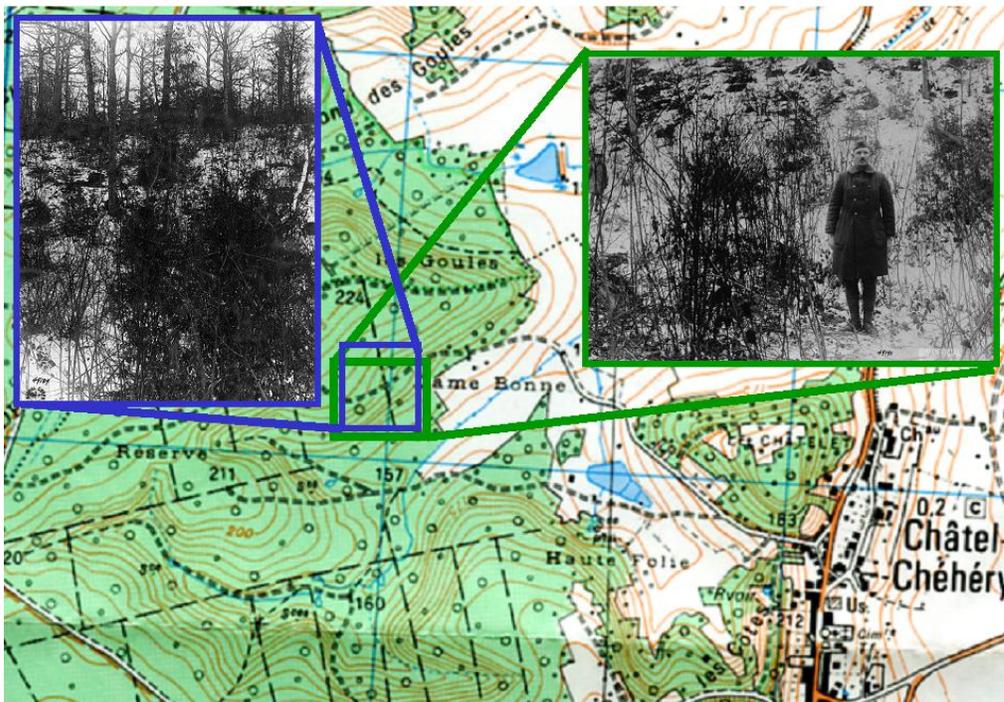
As with the location of the German units – the regimental border between the 120th and 125th is very important to the location where York earned the Medal of Honor. He must have acted within 50 meters of it; otherwise he could not have captured soldiers from the 125th Landwehr. The spot designated due to our research and battlefield archeology is exactly where it should be and it is within 20 meters of the regimental boundaries.

e. Does the terrain match photographs taken in 1919 during the 82nd verification inquiry in reference to York's heroic actions?

Photographic evidence: In February 1919, the 82nd Infantry Division conducted an inquiry into the action of York on 8 October 1918 to ensure that it warranted a Medal of Honor. During this event, the division's photographer took photographs of the terrain where York performed his heroic deed. The terrain where SYDE uncovered the York .45 shell casings corresponds to period photographs taken in 1919. The images taken of where York earned the Medal of Honor are superimposed on the attached map (below).

In the photo on the right (York), note in the left background is an American officer. He is approximately 30 meters behind York. The meadow where York is standing is relatively flat until after the US Officer. Immediately behind the officer, the hill rises sharply, corresponding to the photo depicted on the left.

1919 Official US Army Period Photos



f. Is supported by battlefield archeology?

The Battlefield Archeology describes the whole York story. As in the craft of military intelligence, it is easy to be seduced into a hasty conclusion based on the discovery of a surprise indicator or artifact that appears to support your estimate of the enemy situation or in this case the location of York's fire fight. The fact of the matter is that a large battle occurred in the entire ravine as part of a flanking operation to relieve the nearby "Lost Battalion." Subsequently there are thousands of military artifacts scattered throughout the area. To that end the location and type of military artifacts uncovered in the ravine must be consistent with the screening criteria for the correct location, otherwise these artifacts are little more than military relics. The SYDE team conducted nearly forty days of intensive battlefield archeology to locate and verify York's actions of 8 October 1918. With each passing day additional relevant battlefield artifacts were uncovered that told the York story.

In the meadow, we found evidence of a German battalion headquarters, large quantities of live German ammunition and emblems of both the (German) Prussian and Württemberg armies. These were from soldiers of the 120th Württemberg and Prussian 210th Regiments, whom the 17 Americans surprised and captured without a fight.

On the hill above the meadow, hundreds of shell casings and cartridges from a German machine gun and rifle positions were recovered, in addition to pieces of German equipment and belt clasps. These were from the soldiers of the 125th Württemberg Regiment who attempted to fight off the 17 Americans, but were eventually forced to surrender (after York eliminated the German soldiers in this machine gun position).^v

American 30.06 shell casings and cartridges were also recovered in the midst of meadow (among the artifacts of the surrendered Germans) and also near the German machine gun position above. But the exact location of the "York Spot" eluded us. A big breakthrough occurred in October 2006 after we found four shot (spent) US .45 caliber bullets. The four slugs were in a line over a 20-meter area, near the mouth of the only trench in the vicinity. The trench was the position from which German Lieutenant Endriss led the doomed bayonet attack against York and is the single most important enduring man-made terrain feature in the area. German uniform buttons were also uncovered in the area, indicating that some of these slugs may have hit their mark. Just twenty meters below this locale, the biggest single find in the search for the "York Spot" was uncovered. Twenty-one of the Colt .45 Automatic Colt Pistol (ACP) shell casings fired by York were found. The 1919 **History of the 82nd Division A.E.F.** states that York fired three complete clips (magazines) from his sidearm – for a total of twenty-one shell casings; compelling evidence that the SYDE had located the site of SGT York's heroic deeds.

Although the recovery of the .45 cal. shell casings alone could be considered conclusive evidence, investigators must uncover more proof to verify military activity consistent with the York story. Additional artifacts include all those pieces of equipment, cartridges and shell casings, buttons, belt loops, etc. that help to piece the complete story together. Accordingly we are confident that we have located and verified the location of the York site with an accuracy that has not been achieved to date.

The battlefield archeology recovered by SYDE describes the York story in total. The artifacts in the meadow show that the Germans there surrendered without resistance. In the midst of the various German discoveries, there were several American 30.06 cartridges and shell casings found, showing that among the German prisoners, there were American soldiers. Further up the hill, and near the trench where we recovered the Colt ACP shell casings (from York), there were a considerable number of buttons and miscellaneous pieces of German equipment that are likely to have come off those York shot during the German bayonet attack. Finally, on the hill, the German machine gun and rifle positions contained numerous shell casings, some cartridges and buttons/equipment pieces. The Germans here fought and then surrendered.^{vi}

The photographs and graphics on the following pages show some of the significant artifacts found at the York site and maps showing roughly the location where they were found.

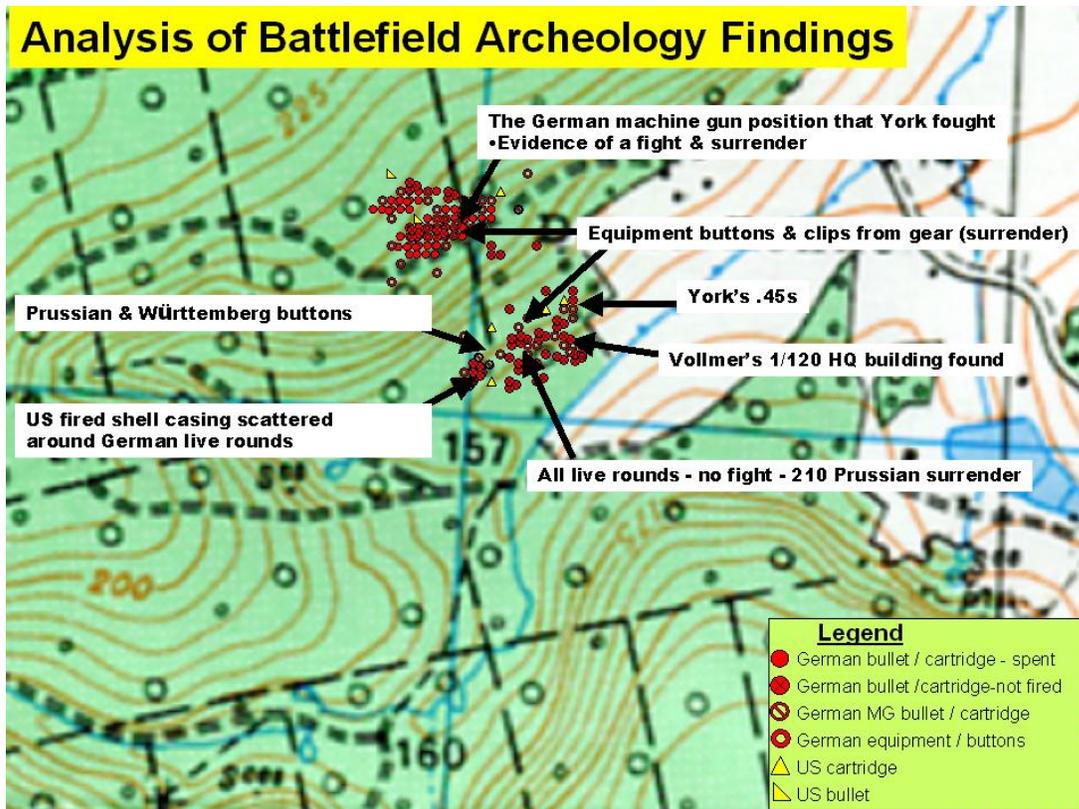
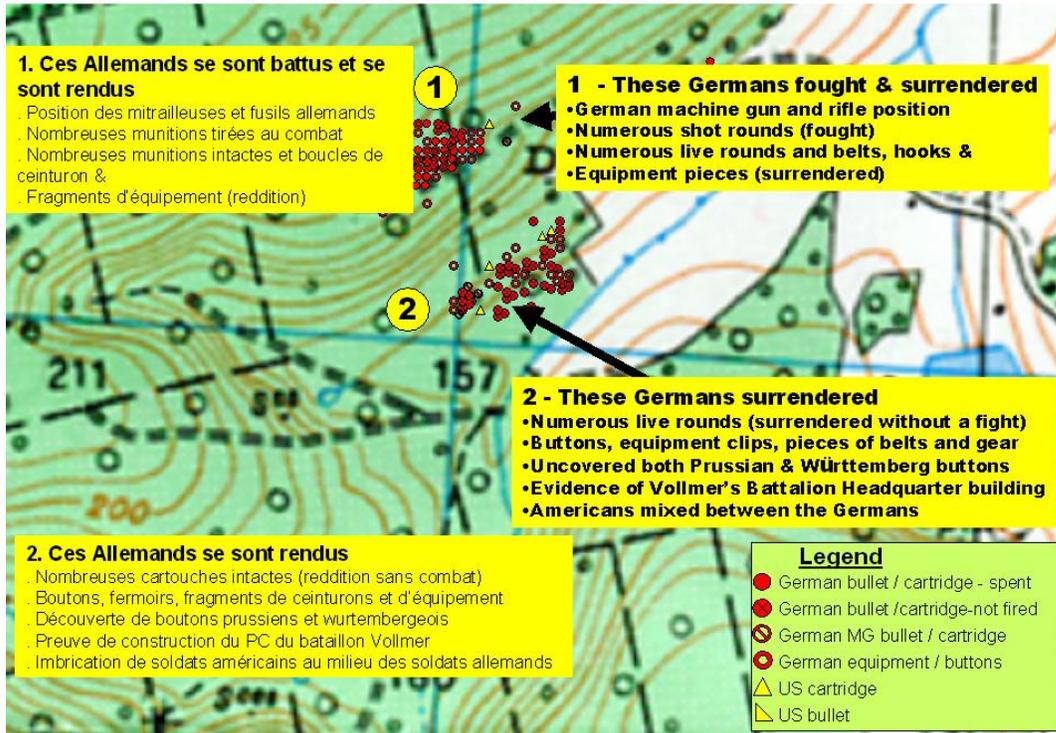


Some of the thousands of artifacts recovered from the York battlefield



Artifacts from the 125th Landwehr machine gun and rifle position

Supported by battlefield archeology





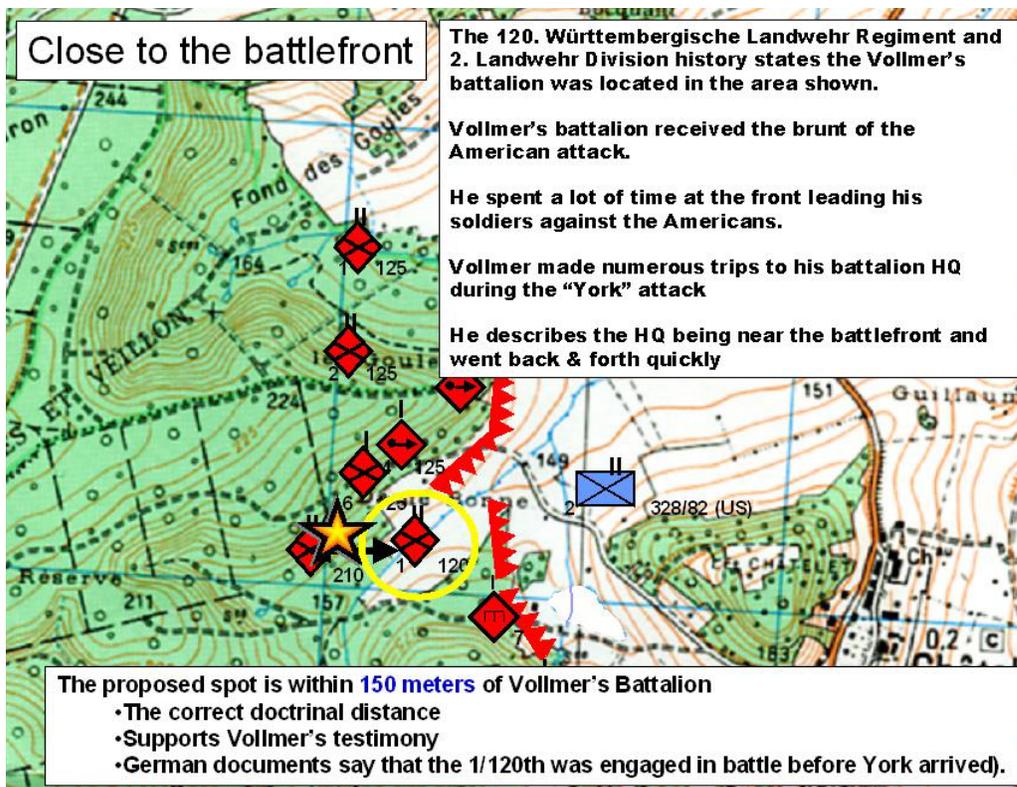
York's .45 ACPs buried 2-4 inches in the Argonne soil



The flags mark the location of York's .45 ACPs

g. Is it close to the 1/120 regiment battlefront and within the 1/120th sector?

A central and critical German figure in the York story is First Lieutenant Vollmer, the commander of 1st Battalion, 120th Württemberg Landwehr Regiment. His testimony states that he made numerous trips between the front and where the 210th Prussians settled down to eat breakfast. As Vollmer was in the midst of a fierce battle against the American attack, the location of the York spot had to be near the front where Vollmer traversed. Anything beyond 300 meters would be too far for Vollmer to freely move back and forth – while staying engaged in the battle. Any further than 300 meters and he would have used his adjutant, while he himself would have remained forward. The York spot where we uncovered the evidence is within the range of the battlefront to allow Vollmer this freedom of movement.



h. Is it logical from a tactical military perspective?

During the battle for the Argonne, the German Imperial Army used the natural lay of the terrain to minimize vulnerability to enemy fire, canalize enemy (American) movements and enable them to site their weapons to maximum effective range. The location of the York spot must make sense from a tactical point of view and be within the tactics, techniques and procedures used by Germany in 1918. Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) is a good method with which to

evaluate. The elements of IPB include; Observation, Fields of Fire, Cover & Concealment, Mobility Corridors and Key Terrain.

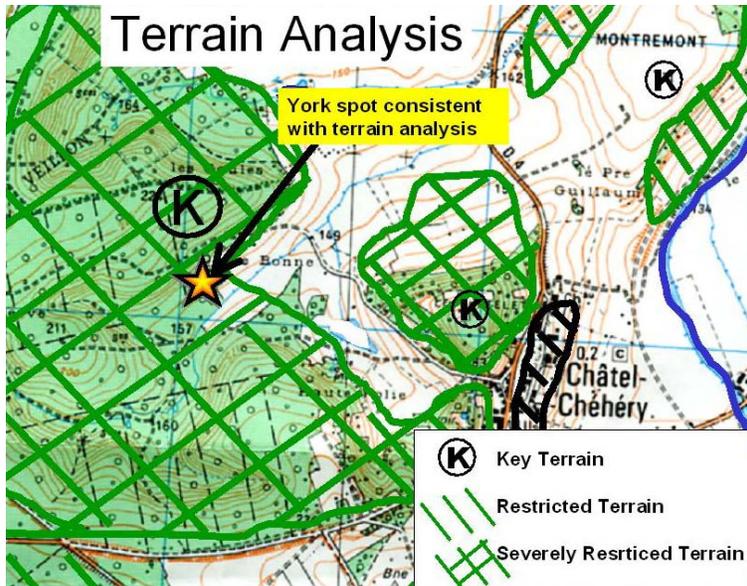
Observation - Ability to see from one point to another to acquire & engage targets. The York spot is harmonious with this. The position of the German units around the York spot give them clear observation to Castle Hill (Hill 223), which means that the Germans could engage the Americans as soon as they departed Chatel Chehery.

Fields of Fire - The area that a weapon can cover with fire; the shoot vs. see of both direct and indirect fires. The German positions surrounding the York spot provide excellent Fields of Fire. The American battalion could be seen and fired upon using the maximum effective range of the German weapons.

Cover & Concealment - Cover is the ability of gaining protection from direct and indirect fires. Concealment is the ability to secure protection from ground and aerial observation. The area surrounding the York spot provides ample cover and concealment due to the nature of the forest that the Germans occupied to fight the American attack.

Obstacles - natural & man-made terrain features that: stop, delay, impede, divert, restrict or canalize movement. The German utilization of the forest and surrounding hills at the York spot was an excellent use of obstacles to limit the American advance.

Key Terrain is an area or feature whose seizure/control affords a marked advantage. Decisive terrain is that which the accomplishment a mission depends. In the 08 October 1918 battle of the Argonne west of Chatel Chehery the key terrain was the center hill that the Germans called Humserberg (Humser Hill). Whoever held this hill at the end of the battle would prevail. The York spot is located at the base of Humserberg and confirms that the location is correct.

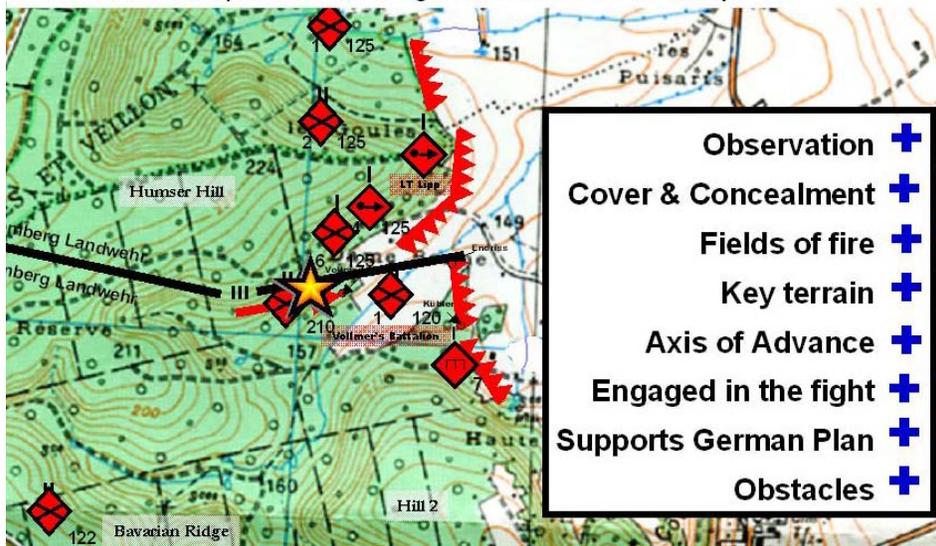


Axis of Advance requires good communications, some cover and concealment, reasonable mobility and little canalization. The area of operations surrounding the German positions, on and around German-occupied Humserberg, provides two good axis of advance to counterattack. The York spot supports this principle.

Analysis – the York spot where SYDE performed battlefield archeology is logical from a military perspective. It provides excellent observation, exploits the advantages offered by the dense Argonne Forest and rugged hills, has good fields of fire, makes use of key terrain to the advantage of the Germans (and defends it from the Americans), employs natural obstacles to defeat the American attack and has two axis of advance to support the planned German counterattack.

#6 - Logical from a tactical military perspective

Using IPB (Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield) to measure military logic
 The SYDE York spot is in 100% agreement with terrain analysis



i. Does it agree with written German and American testimony?

The German and American eyewitnesses identified specific terrain features corresponding to where SGT York engaged the 120th and 125th Württembergische Landwehr Regiments. The correct location must have these identifiable terrain features in order to be accurate.

Two roads. York and Vollmer's testimony confirm that there were two roads available for York to march the German prisoners back to the American lines in the vicinity of Hill 223 / Chatel Chehery. The SYDE designated location is adjacent to these two roads.

In a meadow.^{vii}

"The first battalion, 120th Landwehr, under Lieutenant Vollmer, deployed below Humser Hill in the meadow valley west of Chatel Chehery... The men of the 210 regiment arrived west of Chatel Chehery and stopped in the meadow."

Das Württembergische Landwehr Infanterie Regiment nr. 120 im Weltkrieg 1914-1918,

"Vollmer, the former supply officer of the 125th, deployed along the southern edge of Humser Hill, in the meadow... the Reserve Infantry Regiment 210 arrived in the meadow."

Das Württembergische Landwehr Infanterie Regiment nr. 125 im Weltkrieg 1914-1918

Near the "York Spot" and adjacent to the trench used back German LT Endriss
Left-Right Gary Martin, Phil Rivers (Meuse-Argonne Cemetery Director), Mayor
of Chatel Chehery Roland Destenay and Douglas Mastriano



The battalion commander of 1/120, First Lieutenant Vollmer states that his position was in the forward area of a meadow at the base of Humser Hill. The SYDE York spot is located on this meadow at the precise location where Vollmer and both the divisional and regimental records state.

Dominant hill. The 2nd Landwehr Division, 120th and 125th disposition reports state that the dominant hill where the battle with York occurred was the southern edge of Humser hill. This is in agreement with the SYDE find.

Cross a stream. "We then jumped across a little stream..." Alvin York's diary. York reports that before the American detachment captured the Germans in the initial engagement, they crossed a stream. This stream passes through the meadow where Vollmer's 1/120th was deployed. Again, the SYDE discovered York spot is exactly where it should be.

At the front. This element was discussed previously in that Vollmer's and Lieutenant Glass' testimony state that the 1/120th headquarters was near the battle line in the meadow. SYDE found evidence of this building approximately 20 meters below the York spot and is consistent with the eyewitness accounts.

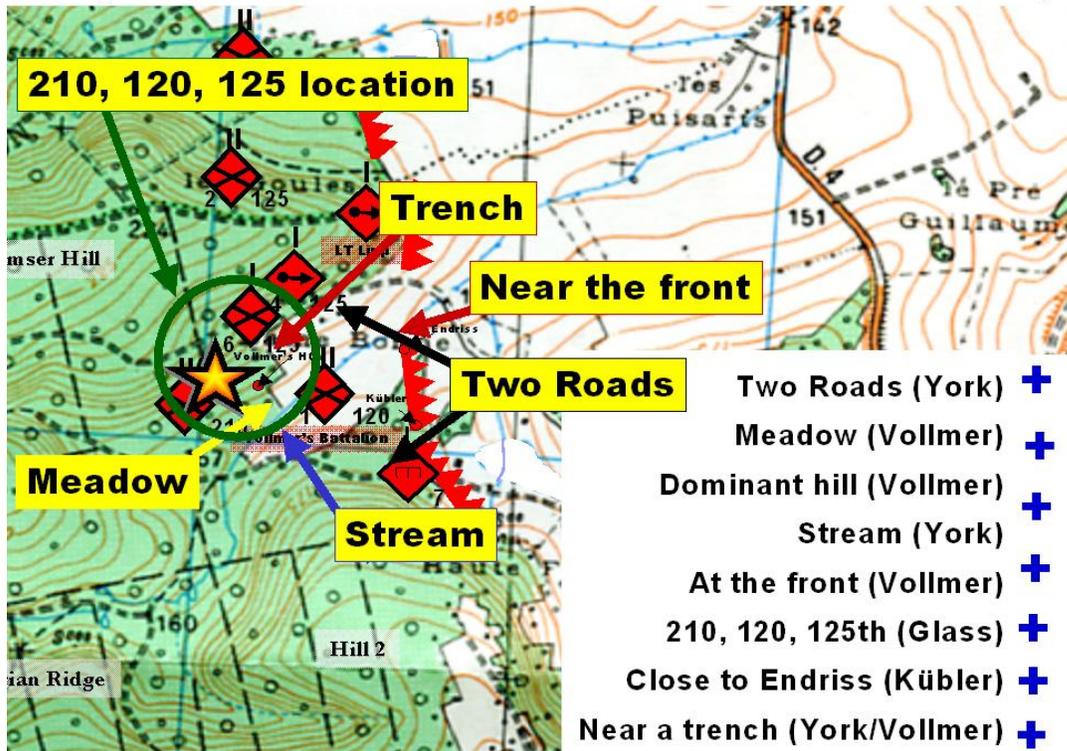
At the intersection point where 210th, 120th and 125th were deployed. This point was also addressed previously. There was only one point in the entire Argonne

Forest where these three units served together. There is no other point possible except the spot uncovered by SYDE.

Close to the deployed location of Lieutenant Endriss. The York spot must be near the company location of Lieutenant Endriss as he led the bayonet charge against York. The SYDE discovered location is within twenty meters of this.

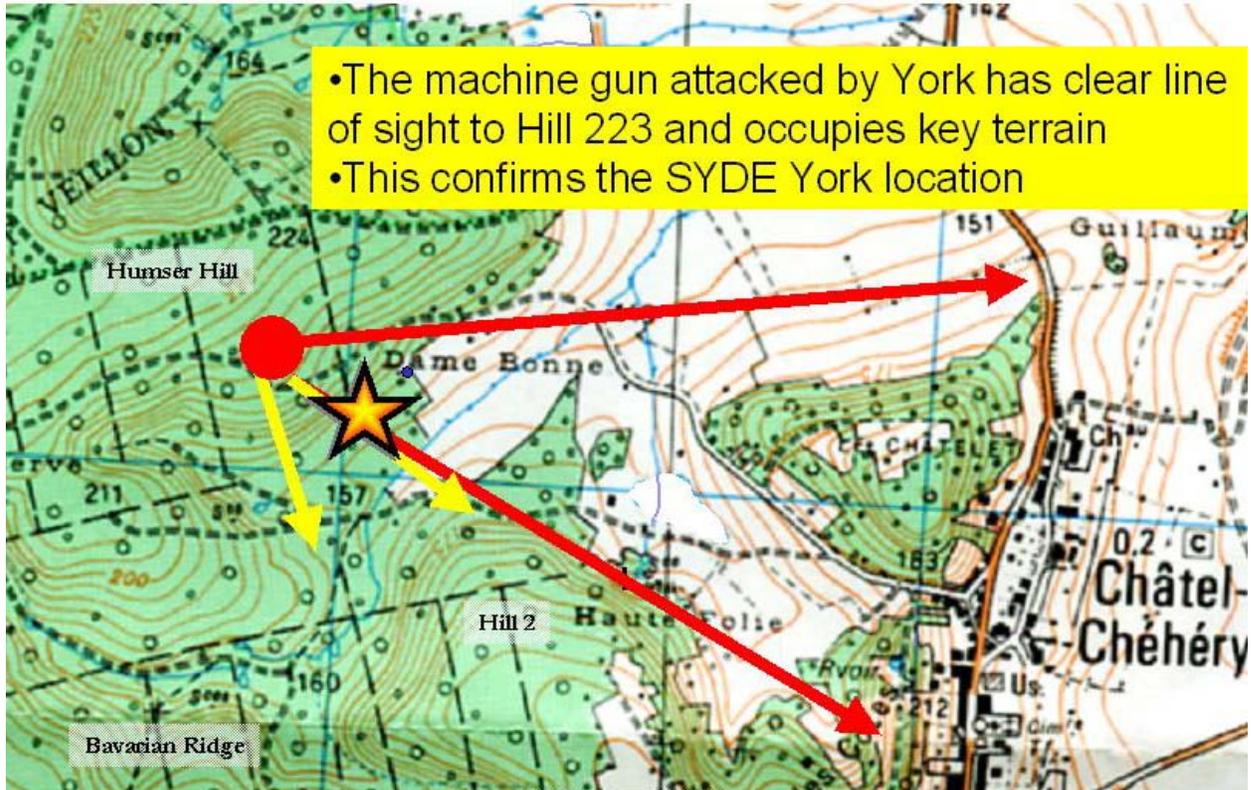
Near a trench. This is one of the most important aspects of the written testimony provided by the American and German belligerents and is addressed below in detail.

Agrees with written German and American testimony



j. Is it located where the machine guns are in the fight - engaging Americans in the valley?

German Machine Gun Line of Sight (machine gun eliminated by York)



The SYDE location for York's heroic deed includes the machine gun position that York eliminated using his expert rifle skills. The position is consistent with German doctrine for the period and places it in a position to engage the Americans at nearly maximum range, influence the on-going battle in the forward valley and be used against York in the meadow.

k. Is it on terrain that dramatically impacted the outcome of the battle (decisive terrain)?

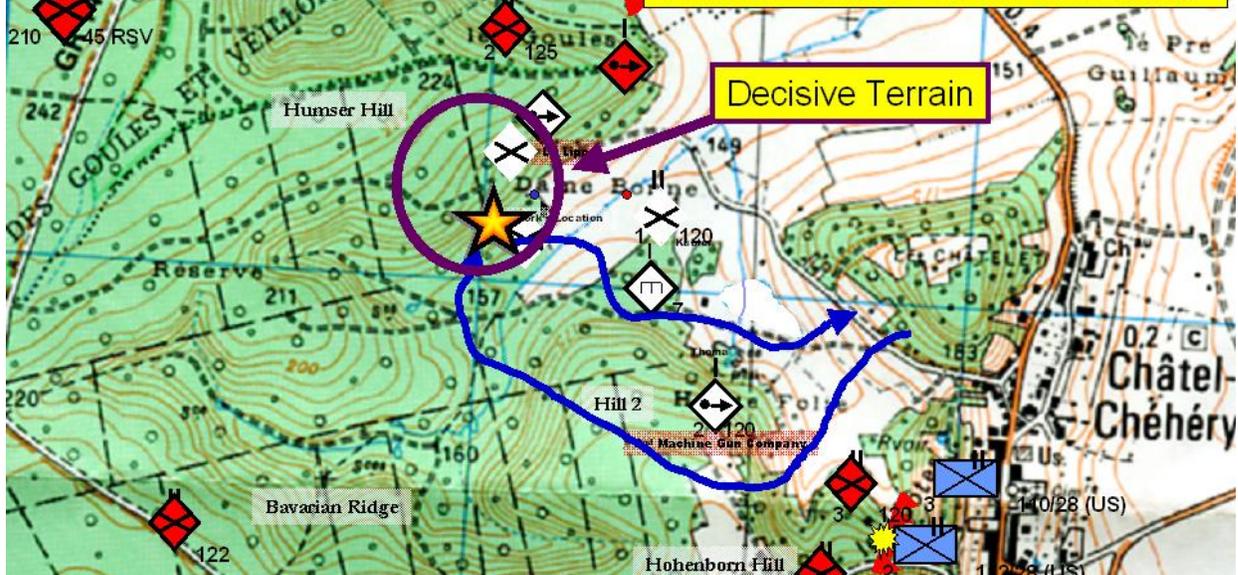
The decisive terrain west of Chatel Chehery is Humser Hill. He, who holds this hill, controls the surrounding valleys. The engagement between York and the 125th Landwehr machine guns occurred on the southern portion of Humser Hill. This fact is clearly stated in the German records and corresponds to the deployed location of Vollmer's 1st Battalion, 120th Landwehr Regiment. The position of the SYDE discovery agrees with this vital element. The fight had to occur here in order to take the pressure off of York's battalion, which was trapped in the valley east of where he performed his heroic deed. Please see notes on the following graphic

Decisive terrain for victory

Terrain clé pour la victoire

- Action is decisive
- Clears the German center and right
- Takes pressure off of the American center and left flank
- Enables the Americans to resume the attack
- Eliminates the German counterattack force
- Sets the conditions for American victory

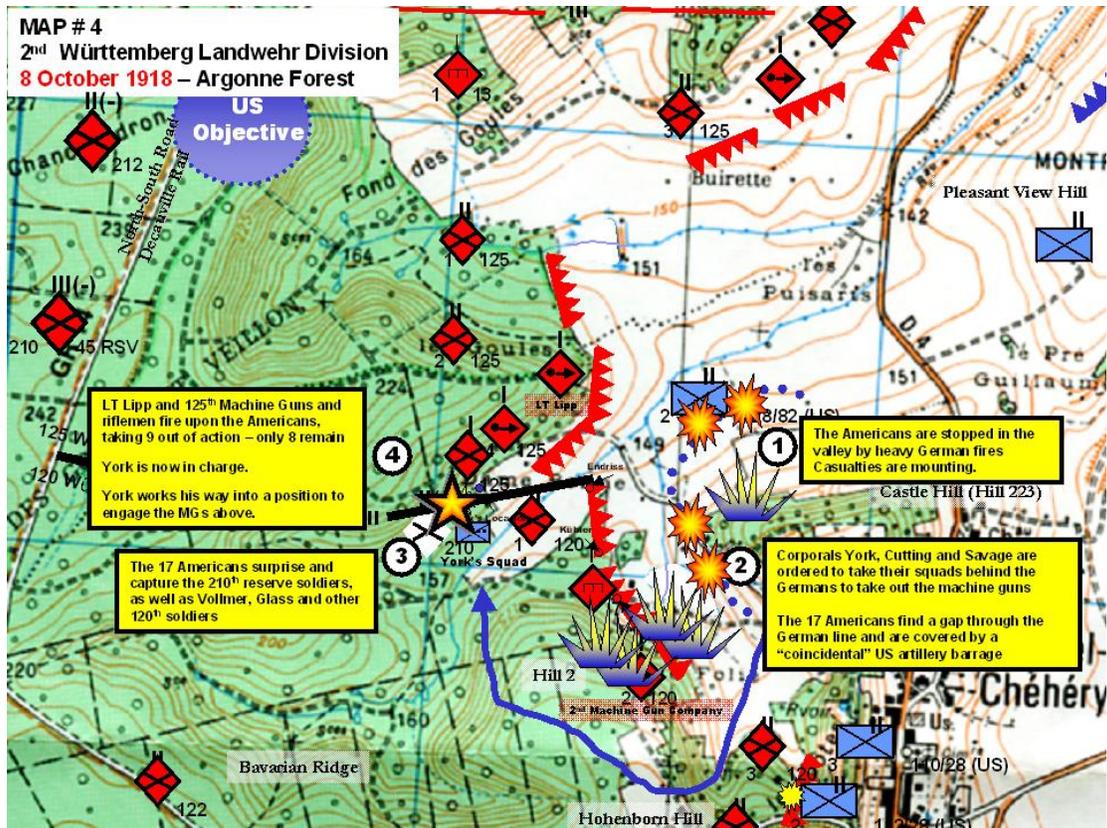
- Action décisive
- Élimine les allemands au centre et à droite
- Ôte la pression sur le flanc centre et gauche des Américains
- Permet aux Américains de relancer l'attaque
- Élimine les forces allemandes en contre-attaque
- Établit les conditions de la victoire américaine



I. Does it agree with the battle progression/sequence as recorded by the 2nd Landwehr Division and the battle sequence as recorded by all of the American and German units involved in the action?

Elements of two American regiments and four German regiments fought in this area. As there were thousands of soldiers here fighting 7-9 October, it is imperative to have a scientific approach to finding the York spot. A key aspect to this is to ensure that the “York spot” is consistent with the synchronization of both the German and American units that fought there. Scrutinizing an area without synchronizing the German and American unit activities will result in the recovery of artifacts from different units or different engagements. The SYDE York spot is consistent and in complete agreement with the activities of both the German and American units fighting in the area in October 1918.

The complete sequence is included in Annex B

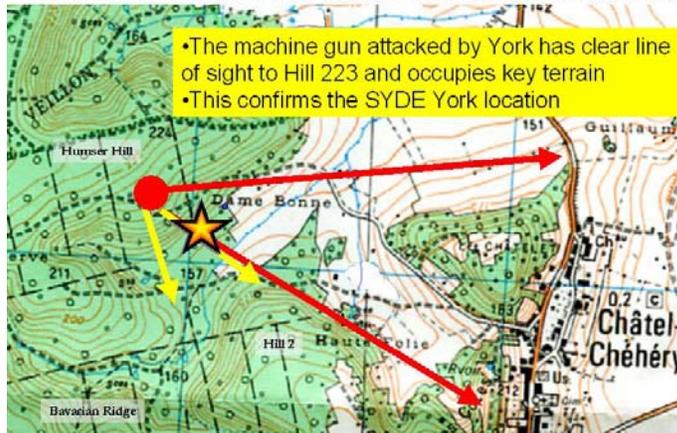


m. Is the location positioned where the German machine gunners were able to observe both the actions of the American 328th Infantry Regiment trapped in the valley and the meadow where York attacked the 120th?^{viii}

“While we were capturing the headquarters, the German machine gunners on the hill done seed us and let us have it.” Alvin York’s diary^{ix}

An analysis of the map below illustrates that the Germans occupying this machine gun position have observation of both York and the main battle in the valley east of the action.

German Machine Gun Line of Sight (machine gun eliminated by York)



n. Is it close to a trench (York's and Vollmer's testimony)?^x

"In the middle of the fight, a German officer and five men done jumped out of a trench and charged me with fixed bayonets." Alvin York's diary

This is one of the most important aspects of the written testimony provided by the American and German belligerents. Both sides discuss a trench from which the bayonet charge was led against York. As this battle was largely open warfare – there were no prepared German trenches in the area. The only trenches that existed in this battle were border trenches dug during the reign of King Louis the XIV in the 1600s. These were dug as border trenches and are in straight lines (not tactical positions). There is ONLY one trench in the entire valley and meadow. The York position discovered by SYDE is only 20 meters away from this trench. This surviving man-made feature and its proximity to the York .45 cal shell casing SYDE recovered together with German and American testimony bring an unprecedented level of evidence and accuracy to the SYDE location.

The trench was the position from which German Lieutenant Endriss led the doomed bayonet attack against York and is the single most important enduring man-made terrain feature in the area. German uniform buttons were also uncovered in the area, indicating that some of these slugs may have hit their mark. Again, just twenty meters below this local, the twenty-one Colt .45 Automatic Colt Pistol (ACP) shell casings fired by York were found. The 1919 **History of the 82nd Division A.E.F.** states that York fired three complete clips from his sidearm – for a total of twenty-one shell casings. This is the "York Spot."^{xi}

o. Is it near two roads that head east - out of the Argonne (York's testimony)?

The SYDE York location is one of the few in the area that affords the participants access to two roads. York crossed the lower road moving against Vollmer's 1/120th headquarters and saw the upper road on Humser Hill when he attacked the German machine gun. As both of these roads still exist, this is an important element that again affirms the SYDE York spot.

p. Is it close to Vollmer's headquarters?

Yes – see sub-bullet "i" above

q. Is the location is on terrain that dramatically impacted the battle (decisive terrain) – in which both the 120th and 125th would suffer sufficient damage that would cause the line of the German 2nd Landwehr Division (Württembergische) to collapse?

Yes – see sub bullet “k” above.

Conclusion:

The archeological evidence and documentation compiled by the SDYE constitute convincing evidence that the location of SGT York’s fire fight has been located and verified.

Most importantly the discovery of the York spot is consistent with both the American and German unit locations (120th, 125th Württemberg Regiments, 7th Bavarian Mineur Company and the 212th Prussian Regiment and the American 82nd and 28th Divisions). There is only one location in the entire Argonne forest where these disparate US and German units met on 8 October 1918 .

Finding the York Spot – Battlefield Archeology and Historical Analysis are Congruent: The breakthrough for the search occurred in the German Württembergische, Potsdam and Freiburg Archives, where detailed descriptions of the events of 8 October 1918 were uncovered. This was the missing piece of the puzzle that no other American group searching for the “York Spot” had researched. Due to this vital information, the search area was narrowed down to a 100-meter area. Within this 100-meter area, York was the only American to use a Colt .45 ACP making their discovery a centerpiece of the search. Although this find was decisive, the other artifacts verify the complete story that York earned the Medal of Honor here.

The location agrees with written German and American testimony in every detail and is located along the flanks of the 120th and 125th Württemberg regiments (only one possible location in the entire Argonne Forest). The location is in conformity with the battle progression / sequence of events as recorded in the German and American battle logs. The location where SYDE uncovered the York spot is accurate and agrees with the above.

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Annexes:

Annex A – The four-phases of the search and proposal for further field research
Annex B – The 08 October 1918 battle reconstruction

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Alvin York's Medal of Honor citation

ⁱⁱ Gruppe Argonne unit deployment locations, 7 October 1918 (Nr. 47) (Generalkommando z.b.v. 58, Fifth German Army, German Imperial Army),

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ⁱⁱⁱ General der Artillerie. *Die 2. Württemberger im Weltkrieg 1914-1918*, (Berlag Berger's Literarisches, Stuttgart, 1921).

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^{vii} **Die Württembergishchen Regimenten im Weltkrieg 1914-1918, Band 25, Das Württembergische Landwehr Infanterie Regiment nr. 120** (Belser Verlagsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart; 1922), translated by Sonja Gleichmann and Doug Mastriano.

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^{viii} **Die Württembergishchen Regimenten im Weltkrieg 1914-1918, Band 25, Das Württembergische Landwehr Infanterie Regiment nr. 120** (Belser Verlagsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart; 1922), translated by Sonja Gleichmann and Doug Mastriano.

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Annex A

SYDE Report on the Discovery of where Alvin C. York Earned the Medal of Honor – Requirement to conduct further research around the location where Alvin C. York earned the Medal of Honor

Executive Summary: Although the York spot has been identified, the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE) requests The Center of Military History's (CMH) sponsorship or oversight to continue to search the area where Alvin C. York earned the Medal of Honor. This will bring necessary clarity to the York story and allow the memorialization of this American soldier to be told with unprecedented accuracy. The end state is to create a precise historic trail to honor American's most famous World War One soldier, and by inference, honor all Americans who served in the Great War.

Discussion: With the support of the Mayor of Chatel Chehery, the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition will lead an effort to create a Sergeant York Historic Trail. This trail will follow the footsteps of York and recount what transpired on the morning of 08 October 1918, the day that York earned the Medal of Honor. The trail must be historically accurate and beyond any reasonable doubt. It must complement the German and American records and be verifiable by battlefield archeology.

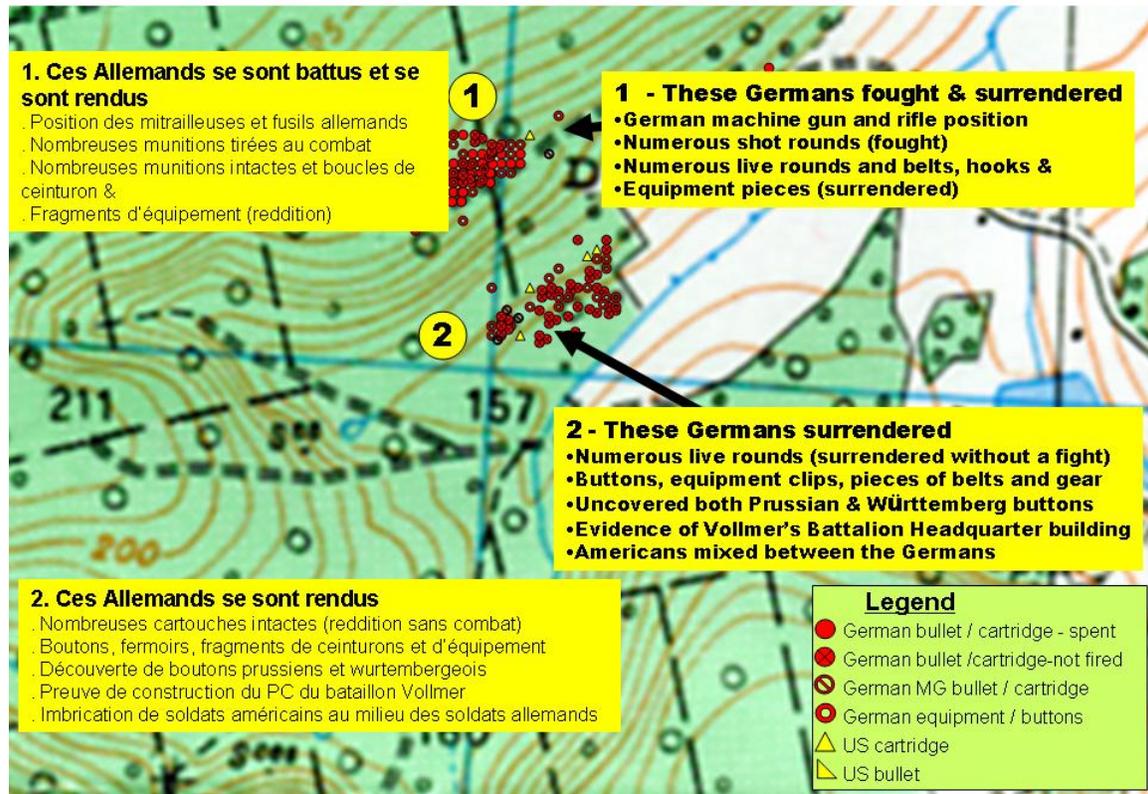
The Phases of the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition: The SYDE investigation into the deeds of Alvin C. York was conducted in four phases. Three of the phases are complete and the fourth will be accomplished in 2007. Each phase is detailed below:

Phase I: Historical, archival research – Phase I began in 2000 and continued through 2006. This included research in the German and American archives to ascertain where the events of 8 October 1918 transpired. This was the most complete research done on the York story. The German archives proved crucial with the German maps and documents putting SYDE close to the area of where York earned the Medal of Honor. Using the German archives was a breakthrough in comparison to all previous attempts to locate where York earned the Medal of Honor and SYDE was the first research group to do this. The archives were astoundingly precise and detailed. These vital documents illustrate that ***there is only one possible area in the entire Argonne Forest where this event could have happened.*** In over four-years of war, there was no other location in the entire Argonne Forest where the 120. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division, 125. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division, 210. Prussian Reserve Regiment, 45th Prussian Reserve Division served together. This well-documented fact narrowed the search area significantly.

Phase II: Initial terrain analysis in the Argonne – Phase II commenced in 2002 and continued through 2006 with the purpose being to match the terrain with the German and American history.

Phase III: Searching for the primary locations in the battle – Phase III occurred in 2006 with the intent to identify the primary locations important to identifying where Alvin C. York earned the Medal of Honor. The field research resulted in the following:

Supported by battlefield archeology?



1. Where Alvin C. York used his .45 ACP against the 125th and 120th Württemberg Landwehr Regiments

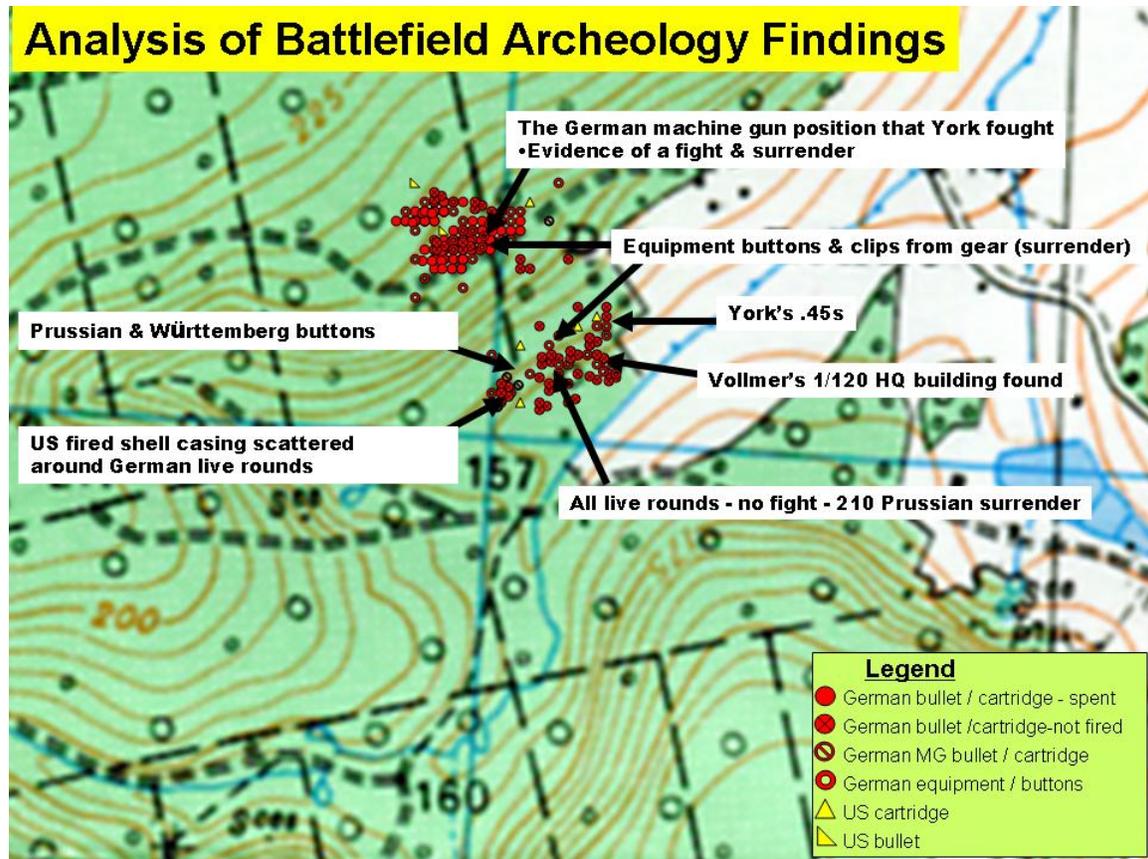
2. Location of the German machine gun that Alvin York charged with great daring

3. Location of the 1st Battalion, 120th Württemberg Landwehr Regiment headquarters

4. The trench where German Lieutenant Fritz Endriss led a bayonet attack against Alvin York

5. The area where the 210th Prussian Reserve Regiment's element surrendered to York

6. The location where two Doughboys (members of "York's" squad) fought



Phase IV: Finding other important locations connected to the "York Spot" - 2007 expedition in the Argonne: Although a number of important finds were uncovered in the 2006 expedition, further research is required to bring York story alive and to forever end the debate surrounding the York story. The specific goal of the 2007 expedition is to:

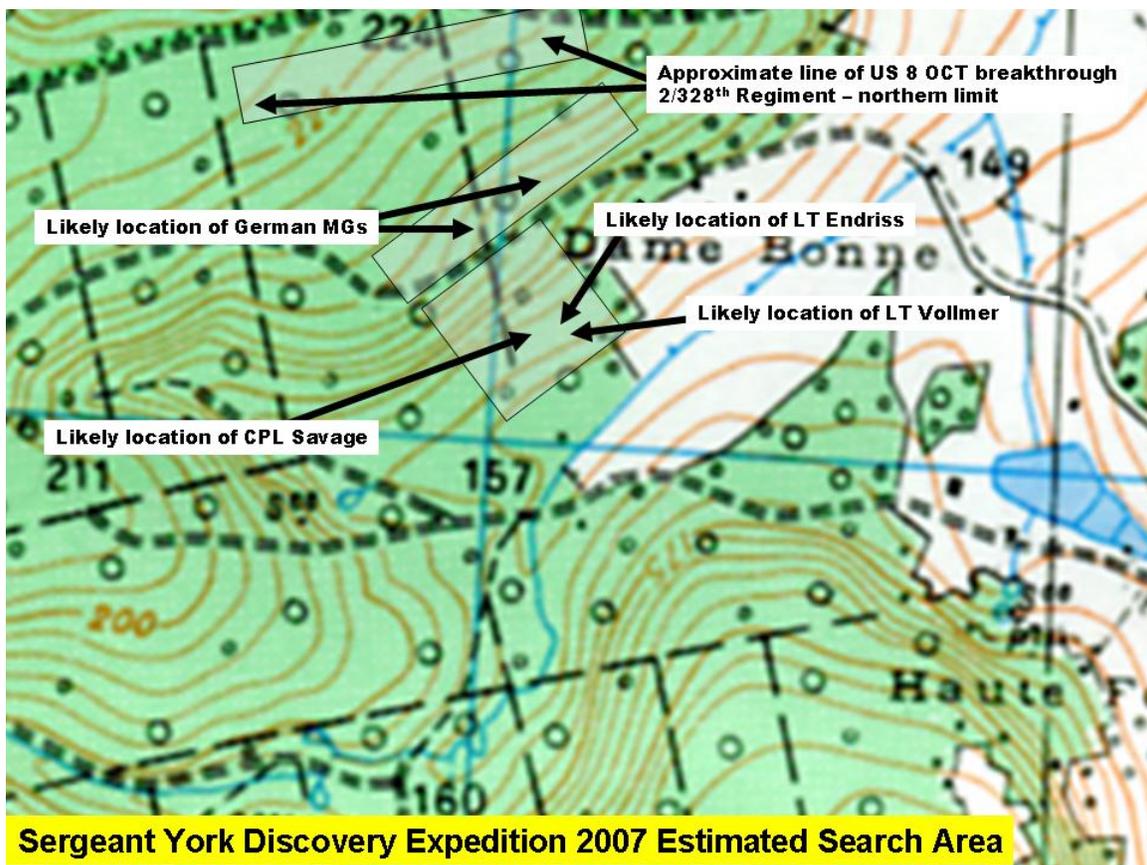
1. Identify the locations of the important German officers involved in the battle of 8 October 1918.

a. German Lieutenant Fritz Endriss, the 120th Landwehr Regiment company commander, who led the bayonet charge against York.

b. German Lieutenant Paul Lipp, the commander of the German company on the right flank of the 125th Landwehr Regiment, who led the soldiers who fought against York.

c. German Lieutenant Paul Vollmer, 120th Landwehr, 1st Battalion Commander physically surrendered to York

2. Identify the location of key Americans; including the location where Corporal Savage fell – easily identifiable as he was the only American with York who was buried where he fell (disinterred in 1919)
3. Identify the location of a possible 2nd German machine gun position and complete recovery of artifacts from the primary machine gun that York fought against.
4. Confirm the location of the German forward edge of the battlefield (FEBA) near the York spot.
5. Identify the American break-through location facilitated by York's action.



Requirements for further analysis and research in the Argonne: To conduct battlefield research in the Argonne, approval of the following is required:

1. The Champagne-Ardenne Conservateur Régional de L'archéologie, Mr. Yves Desfossés
2. Mayor of Châtel Chéhéry, France - Roland Destenay

Upon securing concurrence from CMH, SYDE will submit formal requests to the Champagne-Ardennes Conservateur Régional de L'archéologie, and the Mayor of Châtel Chéhéry, France to conduct the battlefield research.

Timeline of field research: Upon approval from the French officials, specific dates between April – September 2007 will be coordinated to conduct the field research.

Coordinating instructions:

No other team has conducted approved field research in the SYDE site and the artifacts will not be “mixed” with other field investigations.

The artifacts will be divided between the French authorities, York estate and the US Army

SYDE has good working relationships with the following local officials:

Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery (ABMC)

Mayor Roland Destenay

The Historic Trail: The purpose of the historic trail is to honor the heroism of Alvin C. York, perhaps America’s most famous soldier in World War One.

What is next? Recommended Walking Tour

Following the footsteps of Sergeant York



The actual route of the trail must be approved by the mayor so that it remains on communal property. The flanking movement by York and the sixteen other Americans goes through a modern day pasture, where we cannot cut a trail. Despite this, the trail will enable visitors to the Argonne to walk where York walked and to see the actual terrain where he and sixteen other Americans fought on 08 October 1918. Along the trail there will be about a dozen historic markers that will describe what occurred during each part of the battle. The results of the field research are an important part of this historic trail and will be used to mark the route itself. It is imperative that the trail is correct and free from detractors as not to diminish the purpose of the trail.

Although the trail will honor the deeds of Alvin C. York, it is our desire to honor all soldiers who served in the Argonne by extension. York will serve as a personification of the American Doughboy.

Along this trail will be a memorial to designate where York fought off the German bayonet attack.

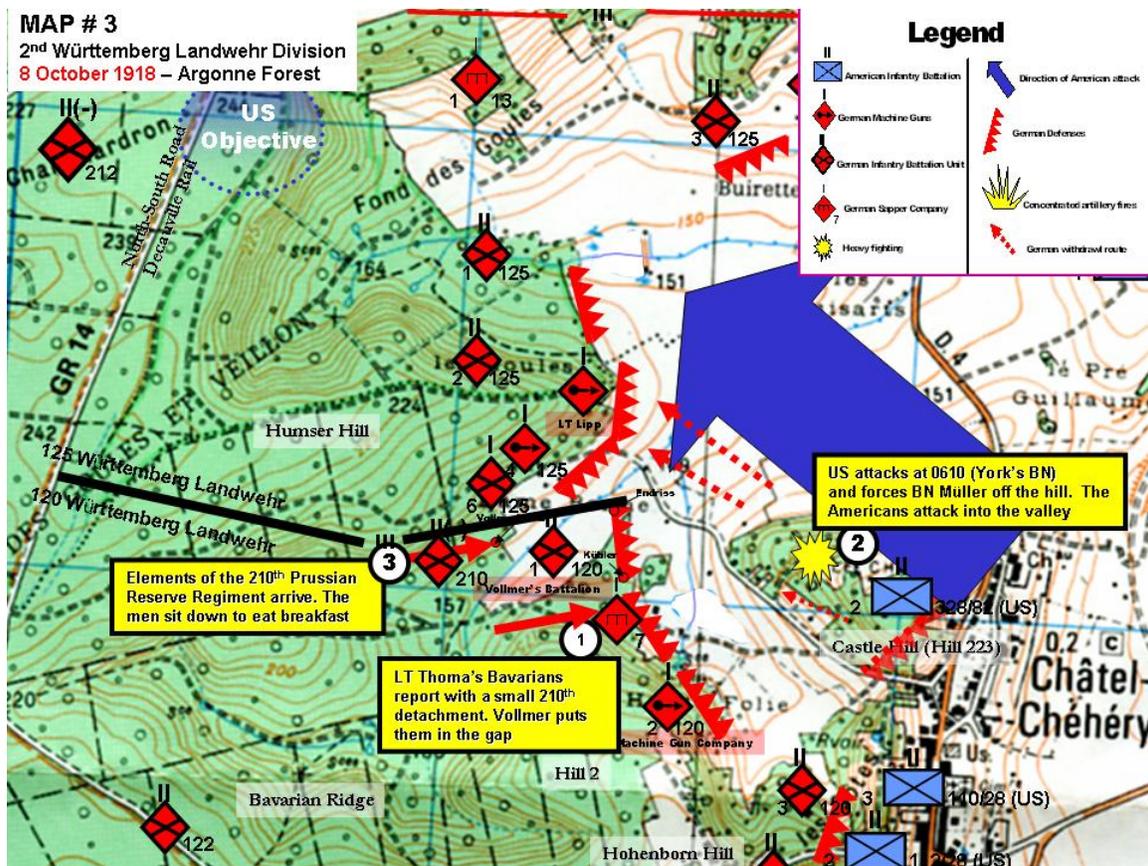
Point of Contact

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Annex B

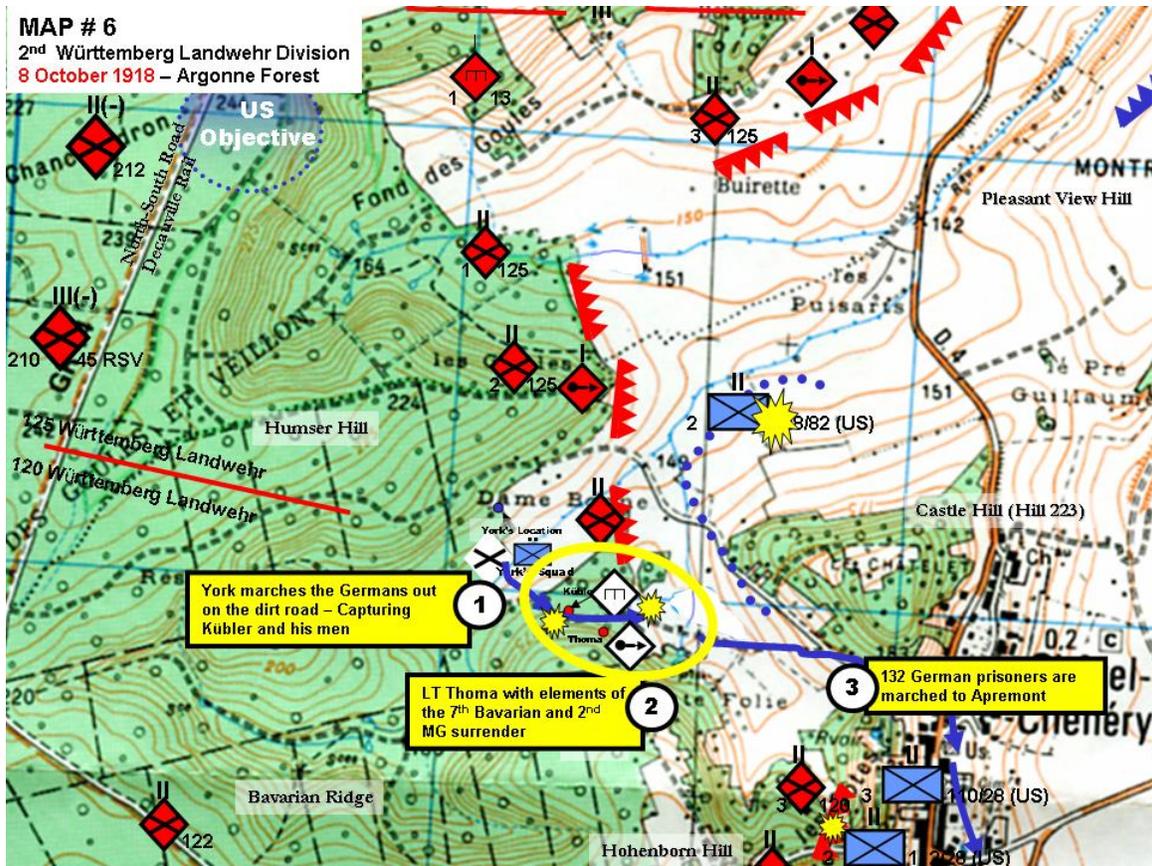
Unit locations and activity 8 October 1918

The sequence of events of the battle that transpired on 8 October 1918 is an important facet of the York story. As several thousand American and German soldiers fought here between on 8 October, it is imperative that the claim of the York spot be consistent with the well-documented battle timeline. The following slides illustrate the sequence of events.

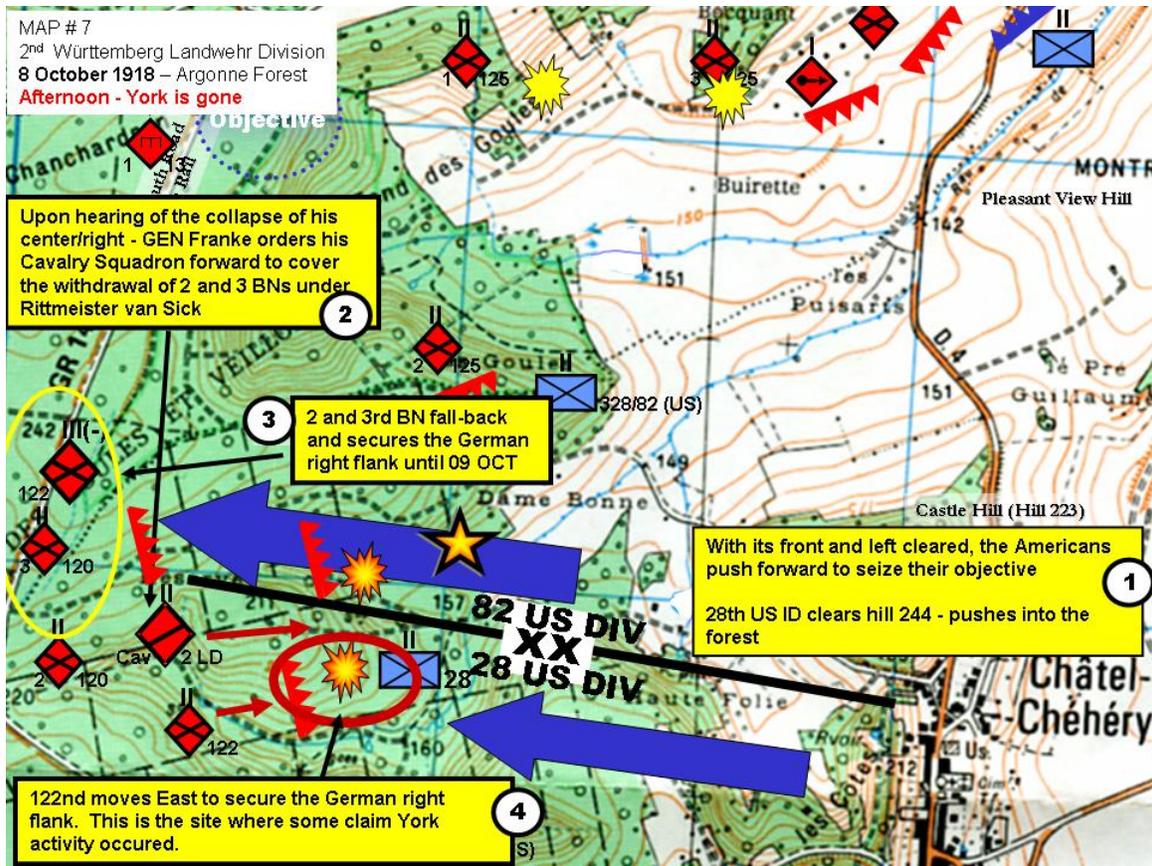


This map illustrates the initial American attack into the valley, with the objective to cut the German North/South road and the Decauville Benzolbahn rail link. These are parallel with each other and were Germany's primary supply line into the Argonne. Loss of this would force the Germans to abandon the Argonne.

The American attack had multiple objectives, foremost of which was to relieve pressure from the Lost Battalion (although relieved late on 7 October – word did



While York marches the approximately 100 German prisoners back to the American lines at Hill 223, he encounters the 7th Bavarian Mining Company and elements of the 2nd Machine Gun Company, which surrender. York now has 132 prisoners. With the collapse of the German center and right broken, the Americans begin pushing forward from the valley. York marches his prisoners to Chatel Chehery and then to Varennes.



The Germans begin a graduated withdrawal and refuse their right flank. The 2nd Landwehr orders his Cavalry Squadron forward with elements of the 122nd Landwehr Regiment to cover the retrograde of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 120th. Both the 82nd and 28th Divisions Achieve their designated objectives.