

## Elvin Elstad

Elvin Elstad was born on December 22, 1891 in Eureka, Minnesota to Olaf Gregoreussen Elstad (1861-1934) and Margaret Aartveit Alexen Elstad (1864-1950). Olaf immigrated from Norway and was a farmer and Margaret was born in Minnesota. Elvin registered for the draft on June 5, 1917. He enlisted on May 28, 1918 and was assigned to Company K, 357<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 90<sup>th</sup> Division in the Regular Army. He trained at Camp Travis, Texas. His unit sailed for France in less than 30 days. They arrived on June 20, 1918 first at Liverpool, then to Southampton and then to where their base would be near Aigney-le-Duc, France. They trained here, full time and saw their first action on August 24, 1918 in their new location near Foug, France.

### ST MIHIEL ENGAGEMENT

At 0500 on September 12<sup>th</sup>, despite the presence of two and half kilometers of solid wire entanglements and trenches filled with various obstacles, the 357<sup>th</sup> advanced and reached their objectives in record time. Heavy resistance was encountered, particularly for enemy machine guns, and it was from these weapons that the heaviest losses were suffered. Nearly 200 machine guns were taken or destroyed as the assaulting 357<sup>th</sup> infantryment brought the enemy defenders under deadly accurate rifle fire and overran them. During the night, the enemy launched a series of savage counterattacks, but despite the ensuing hand to hand fighting, not a foot of ground was yielded by the sturdy Americans. By the 16<sup>th</sup> the 357<sup>th</sup> had battered its way through everything the enemy had to offer.

### MEUSE-ARGONNE ENGAGEMENT

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, the 357<sup>th</sup> relieved the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry in the vicinity of Farm de Madeline. They were ordered to better their position in preparation for further advances. In compliance with these orders, the Regiment moved into the attack on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and succeeded in capturing its objectives, the Towns of Bourrut and Bentherville. Machine guns seemed to be located everywhere in the towns, and artillery fire was particularly heavy, causing many casualties. The fighting continued for several days with the next objective to secure the river crossings of the Meuse River at Sassey and Montigny. The first river crossing of the Meuse was made by a small patrol from the 357<sup>th</sup>. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, information was received that the enemy was withdrawing and orders were received to have the Infantry cross the river at once. The first crossing of the Meuse by the Division was made by a small patrol from the 2nd Battalion of the 357<sup>th</sup>.

Later, the 1st Battalion, in attempting to put a ladder across the gap in the bridge at Sassey, had to abandon the effort because of machine gun fire, and when the 3rd Battalion attempted to bring lumber to the river, they were stopped by the fire of machine guns and 77's. On 9 November, information was obtained that the enemy was withdrawing and orders were received to have the Infantry cross the river at once. Even though they were almost exhausted from the constant fighting and the resulting casualties, the 357<sup>th</sup> served as the advance guard for the 90<sup>th</sup> Division, crossing the bridge at 1700 hours.

The war was over and the 90th Division was designated as the army of occupation. They would remain in Europe for the time being. They marched into Germany on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. The route took them through parts of reclaimed France, Luxembourg, and Grevenmacher, Germany. During this time the Division engaged in training, interior guard, and the protection of key points in the transportation system. The 90th was the fifth division of the Army of Occupation to be withdrawn from Germany. Elvin left from St Nazarie, France on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1919 on the USS Huron. He was discharged from Camp Stuart, Newport News, Virginia on June 16<sup>th</sup>. He returned home and farmed his entire life near his boyhood home of Lakeville, Minnesota. He married Alice Eleanor Gibson (1899-1963) and they had 2 daughters. He died on April 10, 1973 and is buried at the Highview Christiania Cemetery in Lakeville.