

545

A63/H3



B 4 080 097

GIFT OF

W. H. Love



EX LIBRIS

CONFIDENTIAL

MEUSE = ARGONNE == BATTLE ==

(Sept. 26 - Nov. 11, 1918)

By

Captain ARTHUR E. HARTZELL

Inf., U.S. A.

**REPRINTED BY VISITORS BUREAU G.-I, A. F. IN F.
FOR THE USE
OF AMERICAN OFFICERS STUDYING THE BATTLE FIELDS.**

CENTRAL PRINTING PLANT. Q.M.C., 98-9-23-19-2 m.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
SECOND SECTION, GENERAL STAFF.

In this monograph the attempt is made to sketch in general lines the story of the Meuse-Argonne Battle, which was America's part in the decisive offensive of the war. It is manifestly impossible to give adequate space to every phase of that battle or the role played by every individual unit. Some of the important official reports on this operation have not yet been completed and, therefore, the information contained in this monograph is not to be considered as a historical document, but is *for the confidential use of press correspondents and magazine writers* as a basis for articles, but not to be reproduced in its entirety.

The statistics quoted are based on official reports and are believed to be as nearly correct as they can be made at this time.

March 24, 1919.

451729

INDEX

- A.—FACTS AND FIGURES.—Stanislas regarding the battle, the number of troops engaged on both sides, casualties, etc.
- B.—THE BATTLE AS AN AMERICAN ARMY ACHIEVEMENT.—The principal major operation of the A. E. F. comparing it with other operations in France beginning at Cantigny, then Belleau Wood and Château-Thierry and later St-Mihiel.
- C.—THE BATTLEFIELD.—Its difficult geographical features ; its previous military history ; the reasons for its importance both to the enemy and to us.
- D.—THE BATTLE FROM THE ENEMY'S SIDE.—Its importance to them and their preparations to meet our attack ; the number of divisions used by them and their quality ; the status of enemy reserves at the beginning and during the battle ; a review of enemy orders and documents.
- E.—THE BATTLE (First Phase, Sept. 26 - Oct. 4).—The initial attack and its development in the face of steadily increasing resistance ; the difficult nature of the fighting.
- F.—THE BATTLE (Second Phase, Oct. 4 - Nov. 1).—The pinching out of the Argonne Forest salient ; the breaking of the Kriemhilde Stellung ; small but important advances as the result of terrific fighting.
- G.—THE BATTLE (Third Phase, Nov. 1 - Nov. 11).—The break-through ; the crumbling of the German defense and the pursuit of the beaten enemy's forces.
- H.—OPERATIONS EAST OF THE MEUSE.—The attack by the 17th French Corps as a corollary to the general attack West of the Meuse ; its development in successive phases.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Duration of the battle	17 days.
Forces engaged.....	(Americans 631,405) (French 138,000) (Germans).
Divisions engaged.....	(Total <u>769,405</u>) (607,212). Americans 22. French 4. Germans 46.
Maximum penetration of the enemy's lines	54 kilometers.
Territory liberated for France.....	1,550 Square kilometers.
Villages and towns liberated.....	150.
Total number of guns which began the attack	2,775.
Artillery ammunition fired.....	89,404 (plus) rounds per day average.
Ammunition fired (Artillery) greatest rate per day.....	313,087 rounds. (Sept. 26th).
Total artillery ammunition fired.....	4,202,006 rounds.
Prisoners captured.....	316 officers, 15,743 men.
Material captured.....	468 guns, 2,864 machine guns, 177 trench mortars.
Total prisoners captured in the A. E. F.	637 officers, 42,650 men.
Total material captured.....	1,421 guns, 6,550 machine guns, 503 trench mortars.
Capture of prisoners and material as reported by some divisions:	
1st Div.... 1,461 Pris. ; 14 guns.	5th Div.... 1,282 Pris. ; 36 guns.
4th Div.... 2,731 Pris. ; 44 guns.	28th Div.... 445 Pris. ; 10 guns.
29th Div.... 2,390 Pris. ; 16 guns.	32nd Div.... 1,095 Pris. ; 3 guns.
80th Div..... 1,713 Pris. ; 86 guns.	
Casualties..... (Americans).	Killed 15,599 Missing 8,805 Wounded 69,832 Gassed 18,664 Shell Shocked 2,629
	<u>Total</u> 115,529
(French) Estimated Total.....	7,000
Total (American side).....	122,529
(German side) Estimated.....	126,500
(including 16,000 prisoners)	
Total casualties in the A. E. F. to November 18, 1918.....	Killed, 53,169 ; Wounded, 179,625 ; Missing, 11,660 ; Prisoners, 2,163. Total: 246,657.

THE AMERICAN COMMANDERS

FIRST ARMY

Commander-in-Chief, Gen. John J. Pershing.

Lt. Gen. Hunter Liggett.

First Corps.

Maj. Gen. Hunter Liggett.
Maj. Gen. Joseph E. Dickman.

Fifth Corps.

Maj. Gen. George H. Cameron.
Maj. Gen. Charles P. Summerall.

Third Corps.

Maj. Gen. Robt. L. Buillard.
Maj. Gen. John L. Hines.

17th French Corps.

General Claudel.

DIVISION COMMANDERS

1st Maj. Gen. Charles P. Summerall.
Brig. Gen. F. E. Bamford.
Brig. Gen. Frank Parker.

2nd Maj. Gen. John A. Le Jeune.

3rd Maj. Gen. Beaumont B. Buck.

4th Maj. Gen. John L. Hines.
Maj. Gen. Mark L. Hersey.

5th Maj. Gen. John E. McMahon.
Maj. Gen. Hanson E. Ely.

26th Maj. Gen. Clarence E. Edwards.
Brig. Gen. F. E. Bamford.

28th Maj. Gen. Charles H. Muir.

29th Maj. Gen. Charles G. Morten.

32nd Maj. Gen. W. G. Haan.

33rd Maj. Gen. George Bell, Jr.

35th Maj. Gen. Peter E. Traub.

37th Maj. Gen. C. S. Farnsworth.

42nd Maj. Gen. Charles T. Menoher.

77th Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander.

78th Maj. Gen. James H. McRae.

79th Maj. Gen. Joseph E. Kuhn.

80th Maj. Gen. A. Cronkhite.

81st Maj. Gen. C. J. Bailey.

82nd Maj. Gen. George B. Duncan.

89th Maj. Gen. William M. Wright.

90th Maj. Gen. Henry T. Allen.

91st Maj. Gen. William H. Johnston.

AMERICAN DIVISIONS ENGAGED

The following American divisions were engaged in the Meuse-Argonne Battle:

REGULAR ARMY

<i>Div.</i>	<i>Infantry.</i>	<i>Artillery.</i>
First	16, 18, 26, 28	5, 6, 7.
Second	9, 23 Inf, 5 & 6 Marines	12, 15, 17.
Third	4, 7, 30, 38	10, 18, 76.
Fourth	39, 47, 58, 59	13, 16, 77.
Fifth	10, 11, 60, 61	19, 20, 21.

NATIONAL GUARD

26th, New England	101, 102, 103, 104	101, 102, 103.
28th, Pennsylvania	109, 110, 111, 112	107, 108, 109.
29th, Maryland & Va.	113, 114, 115, 116	110, 111, 112.
32nd, Wis. and Mich.	125, 126, 127, 128	119, 120, 121 (113-114-115)
33rd, Illinois	129, 130, 131, 132	(104, 105, 106).
35th, Kansas - Mo.	137, 138, 139, 140	128, 129, 130.
37th, Ohio.	145, 146, 147, 148	122, 123, 124.
42nd, Rainbow	165, 166, 167, 168	149, 150, 151.

NATIONAL ARMY

77th, New York City	305, 306, 307, 308	304, 305, 306.
78th, N. Y., N. J., Pa.	309, 310, 311, 312	307, 308, 309.
79th, Va., Maryland	313, 314, 315, 316	(325, 326, 327).
80th, Pa., W. Va. - Va.	317, 318, 319, 320	313, 314, 315.
81st, Tenn-Carolinas	321, 322, 323, 324	(128, 129, 130).
82nd, Georgia-Ala.	325, 326, 327, 328	319, 320, 321.
89th, Kansas - Mo.	353, 354, 355, 356	340, 341, 342.
90th, Texas-Okla.	357, 358, 359, 360	(313, 314, 315).
91st, Pacific Coast	361, 362, 363, 364	(113, 114, 115)

FIRST ARMY

<i>1st Corps.</i>	<i>Fifth Corps.</i>	<i>Third Corps.</i>	<i>17th French Corps.</i>
—	—	—	—
Divs.	Divs.	Divs.	Divs.
77, 28, 35	91, 37, 79	4, 80, 33	29, 18F, 26F
78, 82, 1	42-32, 32, 80	3, 33,	79, 26, 26
77, 80	3, 5	5, 15, F. C.	33, ..
.. 1	2-89,	90, 5, 32	
42			

SPECIAL ARTILLERY USED

The special artillery employed in the Meuse-Argonne Battle, exclusive of artillery employed as divisional artillery, was as follows:

AMERICAN ARTILLERY

134th Field Artillery.....	75.
135th Field Artillery.....	75.

136th Field Artillery.....	155 How.
147th Field Artillery.....	155.
347th Field Artillery.....	4.7.
348th Field Artillery.....	155 G. P. F.
44th Regt. C. A. C.....	8-inch How.
43rd Regt. C. A. C.....	190.
51st Regt. C. A. C.....	240-270.
53rd Regt. C. A. C.....	340-400-81 M.
55th Regt. C. A. C.....	155 G. P. F.
56th Regt. C. A. C.....	155 G. P. F.
57th Regt. C. A. C.....	155 G. P. F.
59th Regt. C. A. C.....	8-inch How.
60th Regt. C. A. C.....	155 G. P. F.
65th Regt. C. A. C.....	9.2 How.
Naval Battalion.....	14-inch.
52nd Regt. C. A. C.....	81 M.

FRENCH ARTILLERY

219th Regiment.....	75.
238th Regiment.....	75.
247th Regiment.....	75.
117th Regiment.....	105.
183rd Regiment.....	105.
451st Regiment.....	105.
454th Regiment.....	105.
456th Regiment.....	105.
6th Foot Artillery.....	90 to 155.
5th R. A. P.....	95-120-155.
1st R. A. P.....	120-155.
151st R. A. P.....	120-L.
86th R. A. D.....	145-155.
81st R. A. L.....	145-155.
87th R. A. D.....	145-155.
113th Regt.....	155 Short.
142nd Regt.....	155 Short.
301st Regt.....	155 Short.
317th Regt.....	155 Short.
330th Regt.....	155 Short.
407th Regt.....	155.
416th Regt.....	155 Long.
413th Regt.....	155.
420th Regt.....	155 Long.
182nd Foot Artillery.....	120-155-220.
308th Regt.....	155-220 T. R.
289th Regt.....	155-200 M.
282nd Regt.....	220 T. R.-270-280.
71st Regt.....	240.
73rd Regt.....	270-293.
74th Regt.....	190.
75th Regt.....	305.
76th Regt.....	305.
77th Regt.....	340.
78th Regt.....	370-84 M.
Naval Batteries: 6th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 17th, 18th.....	16 M.

STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN FORCES

The reports of the Statistical Section, G. H. Q. on the strength of the American Divisions is made up weekly so that the nearest estimate obtainable of the units which took part in the Meuse-Argonne Battle is that for the week September 26 to October 2. These estimates show the following figures for the nine divisions which opened the attack on the morning of September 26th:

77th Division	25,677	
28th Division	23,312	
35th Division	19,849	
91st Division	20,794	
37th Division (Artillery detached).....	18,222	
79th Division (No Art., eng. or tr.).....	14,322	
4th Division	21,511	
80th Division	25,112	
33rd Division	24,530	
TOTAL.....		193,329

Other Divisions (September 26 - October 2).

1st Division	26,524	
2nd Division (As of Oct. 9).....	25,070	
3rd Division	27,532	
5th Division (Artillery detached).....	30,539	
26th Division	25,719	
29th Division (Artillery detached).....	18,931	
32nd Division " "	20,175	
35th Division	19,849	
42nd Division	27,221	
78th Division (Art., Amm. Tr. det.).....	16,756	
82nd Division	25,518	
89th Division	24,798	
90th Division	24,691	
TOTAL.....		313,323

French Divisions.

15th Colonial Division (Estimated).....	9,000	
18th Division "	9,000	
26th Division "	9,000	
10th Colonial Division "	9,000	
TOTAL.....		36,000
GRAND TOTAL.....		<u>542,652</u>

These figures only deal with divisions engaged and take no account of Army or Corps Artillery or any other services. The total of American forces engaged, as reported by the First Army to the Adjutant General, is 631,405 officers and men. The French troops engaged are estimated at 138,000 making a grand total on the American side of 769,405.

CASUALTIES

In endeavoring to arrive at some accurate estimate of the casualties on the American side in the Meuse-Argonne Battle one must consider the length of time each division was engaged in that battle so that casualties which were the results of previous or later engagements shall not be counted in the total. In addition to this only estimates can be made at present for the French units engaged. The following figures, for American divisions only, are approximate only although taken after a careful study of the statistical reports week by week:

Div.	Killed		Wounded and Missing		Totals.
	Officers	Men	Officers	Men	
77th	29	701	116	4,214	5,060
28th	13	325	67	1,833	2,238
35th	21	330	122	5,026	5,499
91st	17	312	63	1,954	2,346
37th	21	366	91	3,025	3,503
79th	24	251	56	2,856	3,187
4th	27	456	131	3,989	4,603
80th	35	586	144	4,280	5,045
33rd	16	369	93	4,157	4,635
1st	24	548	93	6,802	7,467
2nd	6	165	31	1,446	1,648
3rd	39	901	273	6,238	7,451
5th (X)	52	1145	184	4,225	5,606
26th	19	366	61	3,089	3,535
29th	33	535	97	3,899	4,561
32nd	43	981	149	5,739	6,912
42nd	12	390	83	3,134	3,619
78th	14	479	129	4,567	5,189
82th	36	824	151	4,936	5,947
89th	6	222	53	1,257	1,538
90th	16	252	39	1,377	1,684
TOTALS.....	503	10,504	2,226	78,043	91,276

TOTAL KILLED: 11,007 ; TOTAL WOUNDED: 80,269.

(X) The Fifth Division's report only gives total casualties, officers and men, so the principle of 1 to 4 has been applied.

Total casualties among the American forces engaged in the Meuse-Argonne Battle as given by the Chief Surgeon are 115,529. Adding to this the French estimated total of 7,000 we arrive at the figure of 122,529 as total casualties on the American side.

ENEMY CASUALTIES

The intelligence Section reports that in the period from September 26th to November 11th, 46 enemy divisions were engaged against the American Army. The normal strength of a German division September 26th was between 10,000 and 11,000 but a study of company strength leads to the conclusion that the average strength was about 9,000 and during the battle was reduced about 2,750, or if maintained by replacements suffered about 2,750 casualties. Thus in the 46 divisions there were approximately 414,000 men. The total of other troops engaged such as independent field artillery, heavy artillery (both with ammunition trains), machine-gun detachments, pioneer companies, etc., which are not a part of the divisional organization, is estimated at 42 % of the total divisional troops. Estimates based on these conditions, and others made on our present knowledge of the strength and organization of the whole German Army in November, 1918,

all indicate that the strength against the Americans was 607,212. The German divisions engaged and estimated casualties for the whole duration of the battle, including 16,000 prisoners, follow:

1st Guard Div.....	5000
3rd Guard Div.....	500
5th Guard Div.....	1800
13th Division	1500
15th Division	1000
27th Division	500
28th Division	3000
31st Division	1000
32nd Division	5000
33rd Division	500
37th Division	3500
41st Division	4500
52nd Division	4000
88th Division	1500
103rd Division	500
107th Division	3000
115th Division	5000
117th Division	5200
123rd Division	5000
192nd Division	1500
195th Division	500
228th Division	1200
236th Division	5000
240th Division	500
15th Bavarian Division.....	2000
5th Bavarian Reserve Division.....	2500
7th Reserve Division.....	5000
45th Reserve Division.....	2300
53rd Reserve Division.....	1500
76th Reserve Division.....	6000
1st Landwehr Division.....	1000
2nd Landwehr Division.....	5000
1st Austro-Hungarian Division.....	6000
106th Austro-Hungarian Division.....	1000
TOTAL	93500 or an
	average loss of 2750 per division.

Assuming that the divisions concerning the actual casualties of which adequate data is lacking suffered as heavily as those already considered, the following divisions lost 2750 men each:

10th Division	
20th Division	
42nd Division	
202nd Division	
203rd Division	
241st Division	
3rd Bavarian Division.....	
14th Reserve Division.....	
28th Reserve Division.....	
75th Reserve Division.....	
8th Landwehr Division.....	
9th Landwehr Division.....	33000
TOTAL casualties.....	126500

ENEMY DIVISIONS

Of the total number of German and Austro-Hungarian divisions engaged on the Front of the First Army, from La Harazee to Fresnes en Woevre, or 46, 13 were used twice and 2 three times. The complete list follows:

- * 1st Guard Division.
- 3rd Guard Division.
- * 5th Guard Division.
- 10th Division.
- * 13th Division.
- 15th Division.
- 20th Division.
- * 27th Division.
- * 28th Division.
- 31st Division.
- ** 32nd Division.
- 33rd Division.
- * 37th Division.
- * 41st Division.
- 42nd Division.
- * 52nd Division.
- 88th Division.
- 103rd Division.
- 107th Division.
- ** 115th Division.
- * 117th Division.
- 123rd Division.
- 192nd Division.
- * 195th Division.
- 202nd Division.
- 203rd Division.
- * 228th Division.
- * 236th Division.
- 240th Division.
- 241st Division.
- 3rd Bavarian Division.
- 15th Bavarian Division.
- 5th Bavarian Reserve Division.
- * 7th Reserve Division.
- 14th Reserve Division.
- 28th Reserve Division.
- 45th Reserve Division.
- 53rd Reserve Division.
- 75th Reserve Division.
- 76th Reserve Division.
- 1st Landwehr Division.
- 2nd Landwehr Division.
- 8th Landwehr Division.
- 9th Landwehr Division.
- 1st Austro-Hungarian Division.
- 106th Austro-Hungarian Division.

* Denotes divisions in line more than once.

The American divisions used on the front of the First Army numbered 22 and the French divisions 4. Nine divisions were in the line twice and one three times. The list follows:

- * 1st Division.-
- 2nd Division.- (Also engaged in Champagne).
- 3rd Division.-
- 4th Division.-
- * 5th Division.-
- 26th Division.-
- 28th Division.-
- 29th Division.-
- * 32nd Division.- (1).
- 33rd Division.-
- * 35th Division.-
- 37th Division.- (also engaged in Belgium).
- * 42nd Division.-
- * 77th Division.-
- 78th Division.-
- * 79th Division.-
- ** 80th Division.-
- 81st Division.-
- 82nd Division.-
- 89th Division.-
- * 90th Division.-
- 91st Division.- (also engaged in Belgium).
- 36th Division (engaged in Champagne).
- 10th French Colonial Division.-
- * 15th French Colonial Division.-
- 18th French Division.-
- 26th French Division.-

* Denotes divisions engaged more than once.

AIR SERVICE

The Air Service employed in the Meuse-Argonne Battle consisted of the First Pursuit Group, the First Pursuit Wing, the First Day Bombardment Group, the French Night Bombing Group, the First Army Observation Group, the Heavy Artillery Group and the Observation Groups of the First Corps, Third Corps, Fifth Corps and 17th French Corps. There was in addition an Italian Night Bombing Group. On September 26th the aeroplanes available for service were distributed as follows:

First Pursuit Group.....	82
First Pursuit Wing.....	142
French Night Bombers.....	27
First Army Observation Group.....	41
Heavy Artillery Group.....	54
First Corps Observers.....	51
Third Corps Observers.....	49
Fifth Corps Observers.....	48
17th French Corps Observers.....	14
TOTAL	508

On November 11th, the day when the armistice was signed, the aeroplanes available were distributed as follows:

First Pursuit Group.....	80
First Pursuit Wing.....	104
First Day Bombardment Group.....	71
First Army Observation Group.....	56
Heavy Artillery Group.....	45
First Corps Observers.....	43
Third Corps Observers.....	41
Fifth Corps Observers.....	35

TOTAL	475
-------------	-----

The First Day Bombardment Group joined the Army Air Forces on this front on October 16th with an available strength of 85 planes. It took the place of the French Night Bombers.

The records of the Air Service during the battle are best set out as given in the official operations reports. These records follow:

Date	Our Planes Crashed or Missing.	E n e m y Planes Downed.	Enemy Loss Confirmed.	Confirmation of Victory Requested.
Sept. 26	13	19	5	—
— 27	7	26	3	
— 28	7	33	6	
— 29	2	7	-	
— 30	8	8	3	
Oct. 1	3	-	-	
— 2	12	14	11	
— 3	5	8	-	
— 4	30	18	-	
— 5	11	7	1	
— 6	12	8	-	
— 7	5	1	-	
— 8	4	3	-	
— 9	6	9	-	
— 10	10	33	-	
— 11	2	-	-	.
— 12	2	-	-	1
— 13	-	-	-	.
— 14	-	-	-	.
— 15	4	-	-	.
— 16	3	-	-	1
— 17	2	-	-	.
— 18	8	-	-	17
— 19	5	-	-	2
— 20	1	-	-	.
— 21	5	-	-	2
— 22	5	-	-	14
— 23	7	-	-	28
— 24	8	-	-	.
— 25	1	-	-	.
— 26	3	-	-	1
— 27	14	-	-	17
— 28	8	-	-	3
— 29	14	-	-	23
— 30	12	-	-	23
— 31	8	-	-	7
Nov. 1	4	-	-	1

Nov.	2			
-	3	18		7
-	4	11		30
-	5	16		19
-	6	12		7
-	7	2		-
-	8	4		3
-	9	4		1
-	10	1		2
-	11	2		-
TOTALS...	324	194	29	205

Our Bombing Groups during the period from Sept. 26th to Nov. 11th dropped behind the enemy's lines a total of 94,448 kilograms of explosives.

AIR SERVICE CASUALTIES

The casualties in the American Air Service which took part in the Meuse-Argonne Battle are reported in the period from August 20th to November 11th as follows:

UNIT.	KILLED	WOUNDED	MISSING	PRISONERS
1st Pursuit Group.....	28	11	19	
2nd Pursuit	10	1	30	
3rd Pursuit	9	9	24	
1st Corps Observation.....	21	25	17	
3rd Corps Observation.....	9	9	5	
5th Corps Observation.....	7	11	2	1
1st Army Observation.....	7	12	16	
1st Day Bombardment.....	14	26	41	15
TOTALS.....	105	104	154	16

The number of American planes shot down in this period is given in the Air Service reports as 199 ; number of our balloons shot down in the same period, 22.

Confirmation of the destruction of enemy aircraft was requested in the following cases, this report covering the period from August 10 to November 11:

UNIT.	ENEMY AIRPLANES	ENEMY BALLOONS.
1st Pursuit Group.....	107	51
2nd Pursuit	146	3
3rd Pursuit	87	8
1st Corps Observation.....	16	
3rd Corps Observation.....	7	
5th Corps Observation.....	12	
1st Army Observation.....	33	
1st Day Bombardment.....	48	
TOTALS.....	456	62

TANKS

The following tank organizations were employed in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive:

American Tanks

<i>1st American Brigade (now 304th)</i>	<i>Light.</i>	
344th Battalion....		69
345th Battalion.....		73
TOTAL.....		142

French Tanks

<i>504th Regiment</i>	<i>Light.</i>	
17th Group.....		13
<i>505th Regiment</i>	<i>Light.</i>	
14th Group.....		15
St-Chamond Group	Heavy	25
Schneider Group	Medium	20
TOTAL.....		73

Out of 142 fighting tanks the Americans lost 22 totally destroyed. The French lost about 25. The American tank casualties in men were as follows:

Officers: Killed 3 ; wounded 18.	Total.....	21
Men: Killed 16 ; " 126.	"	142
GRAND TOTAL.....		163

The American tanks were used in the advance up the Aire Valley while the French were employed in the Bois de Montfaucon, at Montfaucon, Cunel, Septsarges, Romagne, in the Bois de Cuisy and in the valley of the Andon River. These tanks fought with the following divisions: 79th, 37th, 4th, 80th, 32nd and 3rd. The French tanks were in action from September 26th to October 14th making their last attack on October 9th. The American tanks were used in several stages of the attack, making their last attack November 2nd. All the tanks had great difficulty in getting across No Man's Land for the launching of the offensive September 26th and the two days following. The French tanks had to cross the famous Hill 304 which was regarded as the worst terrain on the Western Front as it was covered with shell craters from the battle of Verdun in 1916. The tanks which were destroyed were direct hits. Officers of the Tank Corps report that the anti-tank rifle did very little damage.

THE BATTLE AS AN AMERICAN ARMY ACHIEVEMENT

The Meuse-Argonne Battle will always stand out as the supreme achievement of the American Army in France. Other Operations, such as the assistance we lent the French in stopping the Great German drive toward Paris and the suppression of the St-Mihiel Salient, are no doubt more spectacular in the public eye but the part which the American Army played in the last great offensive of the war is that by which it will be judged in future years.

There is a paragraph in the Infantry Drill Regulations to which the attention of all young officers is called. It reads about as follows:

"The ultimate purpose of all military training is the battle. This purpose should always be kept uppermost in mind and all efforts should be directed to this end."

Taking this axiom in its larger sense we may apply it in this way the ultimate purpose of all training in the camps at home and in France, completed by the training in actual warfare which our troops received at Cantigny, at Château-Thierry and later at St-Mihiel was the *battle* lasting from September 26th to November 11th in which we broke through the German lines, forced him to retreat behind the Meuse, and with the aid of our Allies compelled him to demand an armistice. It was only on September 26th, when the First American Army took its place alongside the Armies of its Allies, that we were prepared for the supreme effort, to which every officer and soldier in the Am. E. F. had looked forward. For the first time in our history large units of foreign troops were operating under American command. All operations that preceded the Meuse-Argonne Battle were preparatory and if they stand out by themselves it is only as an earnest of what the American Army as a whole could do.

No such concentration of American troops had ever been seen before in our history while the character of the fighting was as bitter as any engaged in by the troops of our Allies throughout the entire war. Yet the young American Army, functioning normally for the first time in all its different branches, accomplished what six months before had seemed impossible.

To view the Meuse-Argonne Battle in its proper light let us go back to the early days of the Toul sector and glance at the various stages of development from that day in the latter part of October 1917 when American troops first appeared in the line. These troops of the First Division, had been trained with the aid of French troops and when they reached the front line they were eager enough to show their fighting qualities. But each successive experience proved that there was much to be learned about modern warfare that could not be taught in a training camp.

The second stepping-stone in the development of the American Army was Cantigny, where the same troops, the First Division, first took part in an offensive action. The Commander-in-Chief thus describes that affair:

"Although local, this brilliant action had an electrical effect, as it demonstrated our fighting qualities under extreme battle conditions, and also that the enemy's troops were not altogether invincible."

By this successful stroke at Cantigny our Allies saw full proof that the American Army was a mighty force in the making.

This proof was confirmed at Belleau Wood and at Château-Thierry on the Marne. It was confirmed with great emphasis because American troops (2nd and 3rd Divisions) were thrown into the fight to block the German advance on Paris at a moment when the situation was most critical and when the French people looked to us for protection. That these divisions did stop the enemy and when the time came played a prominent part in driving him back to the Vesle gave our troops justified confidence in themselves and prepared them for what was to follow. The American soldier had arrived in the estimation of his French and British comrades but the American Army had yet to be tried out.

Because of the brilliant work of the First Division at Cantigny and the Second at Belleau Wood and at Vaux these two units were given the place of honor together with a French division as the spearhead of the great counteroffensive of July 18th. In the fighting which followed several other American divisions won glory for themselves and their commanders.

Our troops in the Château-Thierry sector operated under the command of the Sixth and Tenth French Armies. The First American Army, (which was to have taken over the sector at Fismes) was then forming at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. The plan then contemplated was to make this army very small, containing about six divisions. However on this front it never functioned as an army because the Staff was transferred to Ligny-en-Barrois for the St-Mihiel operation.

We now come to the St-Mihiel battle, which was the first operation of the American Army as a unit. The pinching off of this salient had long been looked forward to by our Commander-in-Chief as the first independent operation of our troops. Its success would not only mean removal of the German threat against the Meuse line but it would threaten in turn the vast fortified area of Metz and the Briey iron mines which the enemy had taken great measures to defend. Since the French had made in 1915 several unsuccessful efforts to remove this "hernia", as French military critics called it our success here would be doubly valuable. In spite of the fact that the Germans learned of our plans this operation was carried out with the greatest success and despatch so that 27 hours after the attack began the salient had disappeared.

The enemy's line from the North Sea to Switzerland now presented no weak spot as all salients had been reduced, first the Château-Thierry salient, then the Montdidier salient and the protuberance farther North in the direction of the channel ports, and lastly the St-Mihiel salient. With no more salients to reduce the Allied High Command was compelled to stage a frontal attack. And in view of the general situation, the lowered enemy morale, the depletion of his effectives and other things, it was determined to launch a general offensive along the entire line. It was certain that the enemy would put up his strongest defence at the two wings of his line, that is, in the region South of Lille and around Verdun. At these points his defenses were the strongest and the most numerous. It was certain, too, that the troops which attacked these two points would be able to win through only by heavy losses and of all the Allied Armies the young American Army was the only one which could support the necessary losses. It is a source of great pride to the American Army chiefs that our troops who had just completed their final test in the battle of St-Mihiel were chosen for this difficult operation. We knew the difficulties we had before us and we knew also with what desperation the enemy would oppose us but we felt confident in victory. That we won is due to the brilliant leadership of our chiefs and, as one division has put it, to the American soldier who showed what he could do in an emergency "when he must go on to the utmost extent of his power".

THE BATTLEFIELD

Standing on the crest of Montfaucon, on the roof of the concrete observation post from which the German Crown Prince watched his troops attack Verdun in 1916, the visitor has before him a wonderful view of the Meuse-Argonne battlefield. On this ground the American Army wrote large its name in history and there the youth in khaki proved conclusively that he was the peer of any fighting man the world has ever seen.

Looking north there unfolds before the view an unending series of rolling hills, covered here and there with patches of woods, each hill and each patch of woods seemingly a position impregnable. On the west towers the wooded massif of the Argonne Forest, impenetrable except by the few trails that run through it. On the East are the heights of the Meuse, dominated from the further bank of the river. Behind the spectator lies the single bare peak of Vauquois, the outpost of the observation post on which we stand, while to the Southeast appear through the midst the heights made famous in the battle of Verdun, 304 and Dead Man's Hill.

Such is the battlefield as it appears to the eye, hill and valley alternating, each admirably suited for defence with nowhere the open plain necessary for maneuver.

This battlefield stretching between the forest and the Meuse has played a prominent role in the war since its beginning. It has been the pivot of important operations elsewhere rather than a field of maneuver. In 1914 when the German Armies pouring south from Montmedy reached the line on which the battle of the Marne was fought the pivot of that line was the fortress of Verdun. Even though

it was surrounded on three sides, all German efforts to crush this pivot failed. In September 1914 the French Armies, fighting along the heights of Sivry, with their backs to Berlin, had a most important part in throwing back the Germans from the Marne.

The Germans did not make another attempt to reduce this formidable point of resistance until 1916. In 1915, however, there was very heavy fighting in that part of the Argonne Forest known as the Bois de la Grurie and around Vauquois where the French Tenth Division particularly distinguished itself. The names of such places as La Haraze, Le Four de Paris and La Fille Morte, evoke memories of some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. The village of Vauquois, perched on an abrupt peak which the Germans had turned into a powerfully fortified point of support, was attacked again and again by the French during 1915 but they never succeeded in reducing it. Today not a stone of the village remains while as a result of mine warfare the peak has been blown apart. Up to September 26th one side of this immense crater was held by the Germans and the other side by the Americans. The French had made great efforts to drive the enemy from the Forest of the Argonne for the purpose of winning back Montfaucon, a marvelous post of observation from which the valley of the Meuse can be seen as far south as Verdun. The Germans, too, strove to force their way southward in the Argonne in order to reach the heights of St. Mennehold. Their object was to force a salient west of Verdun similar to the salient of St. Mihiel on the east. Had they been successful they undoubtedly would have brought about the fall of the fortress.

In order to judge correctly the historical importance of this battlefield it will be necessary to go back and recount briefly what happened in 1916. The attacks on Verdun were pivoted on two points, Montfaucon, west of the river, and the twin heights of Ornes on the east. Because of the fact that they are splendid observatories these positions are of particularly great value from a military point of view. It will be recalled that the Verdun battle began on February 21, 1916 and continued with almost no let-up until late that year. As the result of heavy fighting and *stupendous losses* the Germans succeeded in getting as far south as the forts of Douaumont and Vaux. After capturing these positions they penetrated to the village of Fleury and even got into the fosse of Fort Souville. This was the extreme point of their advance.

On the left bank of the Meuse the German operations against Verdun did not begin until the month of May 1916. These operations had for their primary purpose to join up the line with the advanced line on the right bank of the river and secondarily to close in on Verdun by capturing the formidable heights of 304 and Dead Man's Hill. The Germans did succeed in taking these heights at the cost of great sacrifices but they were unable to hold them.

The French losses, too, had been very heavy on both sides of the river. During the battle every division in the army passed through the fire at Verdun. Whole regiments were wiped out even before coming in contact with the German infantry, so great was the artillery fire. Yet the French held on, disputing every foot of ground and counter-attacking at every opportunity.

The French Command saw the absolute necessity of disengaging the village of Fleury and by a local counter-attack it was wrested from German hands. Then as the line had become stabilized the French Command believed that the time had come to launch a larger counter-attack for the purpose of retaking the forts of Douaumont and Vaux, these positions being necessary for a successful defence of Verdun. This operation, carried out in October 1916 under the leadership of General Mangin, then a Corps Commander, was entirely successful. Immediately plans were made for a larger operation to push back the Germans to their starting point. In December 1916 this attack, was made; it was as successful as the first and resulted in forcing the Germans back to approximately the line from which they had begun their great offensive in February.

Hill 304 and Dead Man's Hill were not finally cleared of the enemy until

August 20, 1917 when the Germans on the left bank of the Meuse were driven back to the exact positions from which they had started, that is, the line running from Avocourt to the river in the neighborhood of Forges. It is from this line that the Americans advanced to the attack on the 26th of September.

The old battle line from the Argonne to the Meuse may then be divided into two distinct parts. The western part ran from the western edge of the Argonne to Avecourt and had been stationary for four years until the Americans broke through it on September 26th. The eastern part ran from Avocourt to the Meuse. This section of the line had constantly fluctuated as a result of Germany's vain attempts to reduce the fortress of Verdun.

It may be said without fear of contradiction that nowhere on the Western Front were the German defences builded on such solid foundations as between the Argonne and the Meuse. To understand the reasons for this one must study the entire German defensive system in France. Picture the various lines of defence as huge steel cables strung between two pillars, the northern pillar being the fortified area of Lille and the southern, the Metz-Thionville area. These various cables, the outer one being the famous Hindenburg line sagged in the center around Laon so that between each cable at this point there was a stretch of about 20 kilometers. But on the Meuse-Argonne front close to the Metz-Thionville pillar all five cables were so grouped that they together covered not more than 20 kilometers of territory. It was against this mass of defensive lines, the Hindenburg line, the Hagen Stellung, the Volker Stellung, the Kriemhilde Stellung and the Freya Stellung, that the American Army launched its attack.

All these lines of defence followed the heights, depending on the natural strength of the positions on which they were built. The Hindenburg, Hagen and Kriemhilde Stellungen were the principal lines of defence: the others were local lines destined to defend particular positions. The principal lines above-named were solidly concreted and wired—the latest word in defensive warfare as experience since 1914 had taught it.

One may ask why the German defensive system was constructed in this way. The answer is very simple. To win the war Germany must have undisturbed access to the inexhaustible coal fields of northern France and Belgium as well as to the iron mines of Lorraine and therefore she had to build her defences so as to cover these territories. In addition she had to protect the great double track (in places four track) railroad line running from Lille to Metz along the Franco-Belgian frontier. This line was as important to her as either the coal or iron fields for the reason that by it she could move rapidly large numbers of troops from one front to another. This ability to shift troops and supplies by interior railway lines was responsible more than anything else for Germany's early successes, both in offense and defense. In other words from a military point of view Germany's strategic success depended on the Lille-Metz railway line and her economic success on the coal fields of Belgium and France and the iron fields of Lorraine. Without either one or the other she was doomed to defeat.

This main transversal line of communication, or as the French call it the "voie de rocade," was fed in the north by the immense railroad system running through Liege and in the south by the lines running through Luxembourg. Owing to the topography these are the main arteries running into France from the north and northeast and it was through these two main arteries that all troops and all supplies came into France.

When the lack of man-power compelled the German High Command to envisage the approaching necessity of a shortening of the line—and this lack of man-power became evident in May, 1918—the question of carrying out successfully this shortening of the line became all important. Owing to the fact that the territory of Holland juts southward into Belgium close to Liege the great percentage of German troops in France must retreat by the southern artery above described. Therefore

the German front in the region of Verdun or opposite the front held by the American Army must necessarily hold to the last in order to guarantee the successful withdrawal of troops further west and north. In fact, the Meuse-Argonne front was the hinge on which the entire German retreat swung and being the hinge it was solidly fortified to resist all attacks.

It is a source of great pride to the American Army and its chiefs that we were given the honor of attacking this point in the German line, which, we knew, would be more solidly held and more desperately defended than any other. Marshal Foch paid us the compliment of giving us the most difficult and perhaps the most ungrateful task in the great Offensive that continued almost without interruption from July 18th to the signing of the armistice. By continually pounding on the system of fortifications lying between the Argonne and the Meuse the American Army was first able to lessen the enemy's resistance on the French and British fronts and secondly, our perseverance was crowned with the greatest success hoped for. When we succeeded in bringing the great voie de rocade under fire of our light guns the enemy had to withdraw beyond the Meuse. Only then did he see disaster staring him in the face. To stave off this disaster he signed the terms of the armistice.

THE BATTLE FROM THE ENEMY'S SIDE.

It is very evident from all information obtained that the German High Command knew of our preparations for an attack on a large scale. The Germans' Air Service and Information Service had warned them that we were making preparations for a big attack but because of the fact that we had only two weeks before reduced the St-Mihiel Salient they believed that our principal effort would be directed against Metz. Orders captured shortly after Sept. 26th showed that the enemy was preparing to meet an American attack east of the Meuse and he therefore had massed large forces to protect the Briey iron basin and the Metz-Thionville area.

The importance to the Germans of holding the line from the Argonne to the Meuse is no better shown than in the following secret order of General von der Marwitz, Commanding the Fifth Army, which was captured early in October:

SECRET ORDER OF GENERAL VON DER MARWITZ, COMMANDING THE GERMAN FIFTH ARMY, DATED SEPTEMBER 15TH.

According to information in our hands the enemy intends to attack the Fifth Army east of the Meuse in order reach Longuyon. The objective of this attack is the cutting of the railroad line Longuyon-Sedan which is the main line of communication of the Western Army.

Furthermore the enemy hopes to compel us to discontinue the exploitation of the iron mines of Briey, the possession of which is a great factor in our steel production.

The Fifth Army once again may have to bear the brunt of the fighting of the coming weeks on which the security of the Fatherland may depend. The fate of a large portion of the Western Front, perhaps of our nation, depends on the firm holding of the Verdun front. The Fatherland believes that every commander and every soldier realizes the greatness of his task and that everyone will fulfill his duty to the utmost. If this is done the enemy's attack will be shattered.

It will be seen from this order that the enemy judged correctly our intentions, first, to cut the Longuyon-Sedan railroad line, and secondly, to harass and if possible discontinue the exploitation of the Briey iron mines. Concerning the first,

General von der Marwitz says that the railroad line is *the main line of communication of the western army*. He further says that the possession of the Briey iron mines is *a great factor in the steel production of Germany*. These two were of prime importance to Germany's success in the war. Her entire defensive system in northern France was based on this great voie de rocade since by this means she had always been able to shift troops quickly from one front to another. In modern warfare the success of any defence depends to a great extent upon this ability for rapid movement.

The Briey iron basin contains four fifths of all the iron ore in Continental Europe. In the remaining fifth there must be included the ore in Sweden, Russia and other regions. It follows, therefore, that Germany to be successful must hold on to and be able to use this iron basin. The loss of it would have meant a speedy end to the war.

It is readily seen, therefore, that of all sectors of the Western front that which the Americans were to attack was to the enemy the most important and the most vital. The strategists on the side of the Allies knew that the war would be won when the Longuyon-Sedan railroad had been cut and that the cutting of this line would soon force the enemy to give up his hold on the Briey iron basin. That is to say, if the enemy had not signed the armistice he would have been forced in the new attack planned for November 14th to surrender unconditionally. On November 11th, the date the armistice was signed, this railroad line was already cut and American and French troops were massed for the new attack which would have isolated Metz. Our intelligence reported that the enemy had only one fresh division on the entire western front with which to block our attack.

From September 26th to November 11th the enemy used 46 different divisions in the line against us. Of these, 13 were engaged a second time and 2 a third time. Of these 46 divisions 15 were first class shock divisions, so that the enemy threw in against us one third of his total forces in France. On the front west of the Meuse 15 German divisions were engaged from the local reserve. Twenty-three divisions came from other fronts, 17 from the French front, five from the American line and one from the British front. East of the Meuse as far as Fresnes, or to the eastern limit of the First Army sector, sixteen enemy divisions were engaged from the local reserve and three from the French front.

Looking at these statistics in another way, we see that only four enemy divisions were withdrawn to the French front, one division was withdrawn because of the Austrian armistice and four went to the other American front. Twenty-seven divisions went back to the local reserve. These figures show conclusively the value of our attack to our Allies' offensive in Champagne and in the north.

Another reason why the American attack was of vital importance to the Germans was that it threatened one of the two main arteries of supply leading from Germany into France. In order to safeguard the troops opposing the French and British armies it was imperative for General von der Marwitz to hold his positions, doubly so because reduced man-power was compelling the German High Command to shorten its front and the only way to shorten the front was to swing the entire line in a northeasterly direction on von der Marwitz's army as a pivot. If this pivot should crumble before the line had been swung back the German Armies faced disaster.

Allied experts have figured that on the German side a division was not entirely withdrawn from the line until it had total losses of 3,000. This rule had heretofore been followed closely but in the last few weeks of the Meuse-Argonne Battle there was no attempt to keep the German troops in sufficient reserve and everything was thrown in without regard to former standards. There were evidences as early as last May that the Germans were beginning to suffer from lack of man-power. A specialist in the French Army predicted three months before the time when the Germans put in their class of 1920 that such a move would be made. This class

began to appear in the front lines in October but strict orders had been issued by Ludendorff to withdraw these young men and keep them at the recruit depots as they were to have been used, being the only material available, for offensive action. In order to keep their divisions up to some semblance of fighting strength the Germans took the other alternative, that of dissolving a great number of divisions. This began last May and continued steadily so that by November 1, thirty-one divisions had thus been broken up. In addition to this reinforcements were sent into the line during the course of the Meuse-Argonne Battle from all sorts of auxiliary services, telephonists, heavy artillerymen, etc., in an endeavor to fill up the gaps in their line. Every service of the rear was thus combed to make further defence possible.

In the last few weeks of the Meuse-Argonne Battle our chiefs observed the phenomenon of the Germans sending their reinforcements directly into the line instead of following what had been formerly the invariable rule of withdrawing a shattered division for replacements and training behind the lines. In several cases the units of a division appeared at different places in the line. This was due to the urgent necessity of stopping the gaps with whatever troops were available at the moment. A glance at the map showing the daily advances of the American troops will prove more conclusively than anything else that our attack never slackened. Each day brought an advance in one part or another of the battle line and each day brought a threat from a new quarter for the Germans. Consequently it was necessary for the German Command to move quickly whatever troops were available to the threatened point. This continued shifting of troops within the battle area caused great confusion. One notable instance of this was when the 45th Reserve Division which had been resting in Alsace was entrained for Flanders on September 27th. The seriousness of our attack west of the Meuse could then be judged by the enemy and he was able to stop three trains carrying troops of this division and divert them to the Argonne Front. The troops of this division, therefore, appeared simultaneously at several places opposite us, making the problem of control and supply of these units increasingly difficult.

In various other instances the reserve regiment of a division was shifted out of its sector to aid a division on its flank. All these things showed the great need of man-power behind the enemy's line. On November 11th, the day the armistice was signed, the enemy had 41 divisions in reserve. Of these 41 divisions only one had been out of the line for the necessary period of rest, that is, one month. The others had either been just taken out or had been rested from a few days to a week or two and according to the generally accepted standards were unfit for offensive action.

It is seen from the above that on the day of the opening of our great battle, which was launched in conjunction with attacks by our Allies along the entire front, the Germans had at their disposal only a limited supply of reserves, a supply which was fast dwindling. In addition to this there must be considered the fact that the German morale since early in August had appreciably lowered so that the German fighting man of September 26th was by no means the same man who advanced against the British and French on March 21. He had lost faith in his cause and he knew that the great peace offensive had failed. War-weary and disheartened as he was, he faced the disagreeable task of endeavoring to stave off complete defeat at the hands of an enemy numerically superior and supported by the faith in victory that only a long series of successes can give.

It is certain that up to November 1 the Germans expected to break down our offensive by the stubbornest machine-gun and artillery defence that has been known since the beginning of the war. The enemy delivered only local counter-attacks but he took full advantage of every position which could be organised for defence. When our new attack of November 1 began the enemy still hoped to hold us off. To do this he threw in three new divisions on November 1, three

more on Nov. 2, six on November 3, 2 on November 4 and three on November 5. Then he saw that a withdrawal behind the Meuse was inevitable and he attempted in the next few days to extricate his badly tangled troops from the very dangerous position in which they found themselves. In this connection, it is a point of interest to note that the German communique on November 1 admitted for the first time in four and a half years of war that their line had been broken-through. The British at Cambrai broke through the first two German lines but the third held long enough for the necessary reinforcements to arrive.

The following table shows how the Germans made their last attempt to protect the Metz-Longuyon railroad:

Date	<i>West of the Meuse.</i>	
	Divs. in Line.	
Nov. 1	Germans 10 ; Americans 8.	
Oct. 31	Germans 13 ; Americans 8.	
Nov. 2	Germans 16 ; Americans 8.	
Nov. 3	Germans 21 ; Americans 8.	
Nov. 4	Germans 22 ; Americans 8.	
Nov. 5	Germans 20 ; Americans 8.	
Nov. 6	Germans 19 ; Americans 6.	

The German line from the Argonne to the Meuse on September 26th was held by five divisions. From east to west they were the 7th Reserve Division, the 117th Reserve, the First Guard, the Second Landwehr and the 9th Landwehr. Only one of these divisions was a first-class unit, the Guard Division, which having suffered severely at other points on the front had been sent to the Meuse-Argonne region for what was expected to be a rest. This division was commanded by Prince Eitel Friederich, the Kaiser's second son, who had the rank of major-general. This division came from the Russian front in the latter part of 1917 and early this year went through a course of training in open warfare for the great March offensive. Later it took part in the advance to the Marne where it had hard fighting. It crossed the Marne on July 15th in the attack against Epernay and Chalons but suffered severely in the heavy fighting that preceded the breaking up of that offensive. Because of the brilliant part that this division had taken in the Chemin-des-Dames offensive of May 27th Prince Eitel was raised to the rank of Major-General.

The Seventh Reserve Division took part in the Somme offensive near Lassigny and also in the Aisne Battle. Since March 21 it had lost large numbers in killed and wounded while over 2,000 prisoners from this unit alone had fallen into the hands of the Allies. Its losses up to September 26th totalled more than 150 %. It came to the Meuse-Argonne front from a sector north of Soissons where it had been engaged against General Mangin's Army.

The 117th Reserve Division, made up of many men of Polish and Alsatian birth, was regarded more as a holding than as an attacking division. It had been in Italy and early this year had been considerably used up by hard fighting in Flanders and in the region of Peronne.

But of the five German Divisions holding the line west of the Meuse September 26th perhaps the most interesting is the Second Landwehr which had spent more than a year in the Argonne Forest where there had been no fighting since the unsuccessful French offensive in 1915. This division, made up entirely of men over 35 years of age who came mostly from Wurtemberg, had had practically no losses during all this time. This division was never relieved as a unit, it was merely sacrificed and finally vanished. In the desperate fighting in the forest of the Argonne against the 28th and 77th American divisions the Second Landwehr lost heavily as the fighting went on day and night without rest. By October 28th, or a month and two days after the battle started, this unit of old men had been so

torn to shreds that it simply disappeared, its place being filled by units on its flanks which had gradually taken over its sector to fill up gaps in its ranks.

Two other Guard Divisions were engaged against the Americans, the Fifth which had already met the Americans in the Château Thierry region and the Third which had suffered very heavy losses, particularly among its officers, in the fighting in the early part of the year. Of the other first-class divisions, engaged on the Meuse-Argonne front especial mention should be made of the 28th, the Kaiser's favorite, and the 13th. The former had always lost heavily wherever engaged but it had always distinguished itself. The 13th had seen hard service from the beginning of August 1914 up to the time it entered the battle line against us. It had often been reconstituted but had always been filled up with Prussians. It was engaged in Belgium at the fall of Liege, in Champagne, in Artois, at Verdun, on the Somme and on the Chemin des Dames.

The 52nd Division, another first-class unit engaged against us, had a notable record in the Aisne offensive this year. It was particularly distinguished in the German Army because of the fact that it had only one deserter on record. The 37th Division, which was also used, was regarded as one of the best German fighting units. It contained Hindenburg's old regiment, the 147th, and had always been kept up to the highest standard.

It is with such units as these just named that General Von der Marwitz built up the backbone of his defense, hoping by making our advance as costly as possible and by defending every hill and every wood to the last man that the American offensive — the first great major operation in which the young army from across the sea was engaged — would come to an end as had so many other offensives in this war. That he failed is due to the remarkable fighting qualities, the spirit and the determination of the American fighting men.

THE BATTLE

(First Phase, Sept. 26 - Oct. 4).

The preparations of the First American Army for an offensive on a large scale between the Argonne and the Meuse in conjunction with the French Fourth Army on our left were made with great secrecy. Because of the fact that the St-Mihiel operation had just terminated and that the general opinion in France as well as in Germany was that we were to continue our attack in this direction the troops necessary for the Meuse-Argonne offensive were moved with speed to the new front.

The sector taken over a few days prior to September 26th extended from La Harazee in the Argonne Forest to the Meuse in the region of Forges. A thin screen of French troops was left in line so that the enemy at the last moment would not be able to make identifications of our units. The First Corps, comprising the 77th, 28th and 35th Divisions in line, had the sector between La Harazee and Vauquois. The Fifth Corps, comprising the 91st, 37th and 79th Divisions, held the sector from Vauquois to a point about two kilometers S. E. of Malancourt. The Third Corps on the right had the sector from Malancourt to the Meuse with the 4th, 80th and 33rd Divisions in line.

The 17th French Corps on the right bank of the Meuse, although a part of the First American Army, was not to take part in the attack until later. The problem of supply for this front, particularly in view of the offensive action planned, was one of great difficulty as there was only one main road, that running from Clermont north in the valley of the Aire and only one main lateral road behind the front running from Clermont to Verdun.

The general plan for the attack must be studied in connection with the attack of the French Fourth Army on our left. Both armies were to deliver powerful hammer blows against the most vital as well as the strongest part of the German

line and thus facilitate the penetrating attacks of the French and British Armies on the northern front. The original objectives for the First American Army and the Fourth French Army constituted two deep salients to be thrust into the enemy's line on both sides of the Argonne Forest, this forest being considered impregnable by direct assault. To the west the line of the salient ran from the eastern edge of the Bois de Forges through the heights south of Monthois to the Liry-Orfeuil-Medeah Farm Road. This was the French Army objective. The American Army objective was a line running from east of the forest to Apremont, Exermont, Romagne, Cunel, Brioules and the Meuse. The combined objective of the two armies ran by Monthois, Vaux les Mouron, the Aisne to its junction with the Aire, the Aire to Chevieres, St-Juvin and the ridges north of that village, Landres et St-Georges, the Bantheville Road and from here south-eastward to Brioules. It will be seen that this combined objective did not call for an advance in the salient west of the Argonne but if reached it would mean the clearing up of the Argonne Forest.

With these two first objectives attained it was the plan to make two similar thrusts on either side of the Bois de Bourgogne and other wooded areas north of the Aire. The objective for the Fourth French Army ran from Mouron along the Aisne as far as Vouziers and here turned west. The American Army objective was determined approximately by the villages of Talma, Briquenay and Autruche. From here there was a gradual curve to the east and south reaching the Meuse at Dun-sur-Meuse. These two salients were approximately ten kilometers in depth while the first salients were 15 kilometers in depth. The ultimate combined second objective was to continue the thrust east of the Forest in the American sector to an approximate depth of seven kilometers. The French salient to the west was not to be materially deepened.

Now as regards the American front it will be seen that our center driving down the valley of the Aire and over the wooded hills to the east had a most difficult task to perform. Our extreme left was not to move forward except as the situation further east demanded it. On our right the Third Corps, particularly on its right, was to serve as a pivot for the entire attack, that is, two divisions were to swing over to the Meuse and thus guarantee the flank of the troops further West. The Fourth Division, the left division of this corps, was to reach the Meuse north of Brioules, the 80th south of that village and the 33rd to swing around to the east after having crossed the little Forges, the stream which lay immediately in front of the corps sector. This stream in itself was not a difficult obstacle but owing to the fact that it had marshy ground on both sides of it the problem of getting artillery and supplies across was one of the most difficult with which our engineers had yet to deal. This corps had another difficulty to face in view of the fact that it had no road at all in the sector of the Fourth Division and its starting-off positions were completely dominated by Montfaucon on the west and the heights on the east bank of the Meuse directly ahead.

The Fifth Corps in the center had in front of it unusually difficult terrain. On the left and center there was a considerable wooded area with many hills and ravines. On the right was the Bois de Cuisy with the towering heights of Montfaucon beyond, the reduction of which was the principal objective on this front. The right of the First Corps had to advance down the deep corridor of the Aire with dominating heights on the western bank.

The general attack began at 5.30 on the morning of September 26th after six hours artillery preparation. This intense and prolonged artillery fire was necessary so as to do as much damage as possible to the heavily fortified lines in front of us which the Germans had held in most cases since the end of the battle of the Marne in 1914. Their first line of defense, the Hindenburg lines, was not only solidly reinforced with concrete but vast areas of wire, particularly in the Argonne Forest, had been stretched in front of it. Behind the Hindenburg line was a support line known as the Hagen Stellung while further to the rear was a powerfully organized system of trenches defending the approaches to Montfaucon. This was

known as the Volker Stellung. The roar of hundreds of guns along our twenty-mile front made the night of September 25-26 an inferno. Our smaller pieces played on the German front positions, destroying their trenches and wire while the guns of larger calibre sought out the roads leading up to the front.

The effect of this storm of fire is seen in the initial advance of our troops who penetrated the enemy's line to an average depth of seven miles. On the left we took the height of Vauquois and Varennes almost without opposition. The 77th Division succeeded in making some progress north of La Harazee in spite of the great natural difficulties of the terrain. The 91st Division of the Fifth Corps pushed through a heavy fog and overcoming machine-gun and light artillery resistance reached at nightfall the line on the ridge running from Very to the neighborhood of Montfaucon. Its patrols got as far as the village of Epinonville. The other two divisions of the corps, the 37th and 79th, got through the woods immediately in front of them and by 6 P. M. the slopes leading up to Montfaucon were in the hands of troops of the 79th. The 313th Inf. on orders kept on in the dusk to attack Montfaucon itself with the aid of two tanks. The other tanks used in the initial attack had either been knocked out or had been mired. The advancing infantry of the 313th was deluged with machine-gun fire, high explosives and grenades. Because of the lack of artillery support the attempt to take Montfaucon was given up after heavy casualties, the regiment's line being established along the northern edge of the Montfaucon Wood.

The crossing of the Forges stream by the 33rd Division of the Third Corps will always remain a remarkable feat. These troops advanced down steep slopes and pivoting around the Bois de Forges, which the enemy had considered impregnable, swung toward the Meuse. Duckboards were thrown over the enemy wire in some places and elsewhere the troops waded through the swampy ground under a galling fire. By noon, however, all troops of this division had reached their objectives along the Meuse, having covered a distance of seven kilometers. The other two divisions of this corps met strong resistance after the first breaking of the line and suffered particularly from the artillery fire that rained on them from the east bank of the Meuse. The Engineers of the Fourth Division should be mentioned for gallant work. Starting at 3.30 P. M. September 25 to build up the trail that led from Esnes to Malancourt, a distance of about five kilometers, they had completed by 1.35 P. M. September 26th a full sized road including two artillery bridges. Forty thousand sand bags were used in this work. This division pushed forward as far as Cuisy. The total number of prisoners taken by our army September 26th exceeded 5,000.

From the first day the difficulty of getting up supplies and artillery because of the bad roads began to make itself felt and particularly on the right of the Army sector the infantry was compelled to hold on to the positions they had gained without any protection from their own artillery. The enemy soon recovered from his surprise and on September 27th and the following days his resistance grew continually stronger. Counter-attacks were made at some points but he resisted mostly with machine-guns and an ever increasing artillery fire.

This artillery fire was unusually harassing from the east bank of the Meuse.

On the left the enemy threw in three new divisions in an attempt to stay our advance down the Aire Valley. The 37th Division entered Ivoiry and took Hill 258 southwest of the town but was later withdrawn because of the enemy's heavy fire. The right of the 37th Division and the left regiment of the 79th made a concerted attack on Montfaucon with the aid of tanks and a machine-gun barrage. They met with extremely strong resistance but nevertheless the 313th Inf. reached the town at 11 A. M. The right of the 37th Division occupied the town at 1.30 P. M., and mopped it up, so that at dark their line ran along the Ivoiry-Montfaucon Road. These two divisions began to show great exhaustion as they had met with resistance at practically every foot of their advance since daylight the

day before and owing to the condition of the roads liaison with units on their flanks was almost impossible.

On the right of the army sector the 33rd Division held its ground as planned along the Meuse. The Fourth pushed forward to the Northern edge of the Bois de Brieuilles and in the southern portion of the Bois du Faye, just beyond, ran into strong resistance. The 80th Division reached the army objective except on its left where it was held up by the 4th Division's unsuccessful advance.

The total number of prisoners for the first two days was over 8,000 with 109 guns of all calibres. Of these the 80th Division by its rapid advance to the river captured over 22 guns in and around Dannevoux. On the extreme left the right elements of the 77th Division had reached the army objective while further east the 91st as well as the other two divisions of the Fifth Corps were pushing forward in the face of stubborn resistance. In the Bois de Cierges, Bois de Baulny and the Bois d'Emont they found numerous machine-gun nests which held up their advance while low flying enemy airplanes made frequent attacks on their front lines. The advance made by the 91st Division was particularly noteworthy. It went ahead of the divisions on both its flanks, the 35th on the left and the 37th on the right, but because of the impossibility of these divisions to keep up with it had to give up ground won at great cost. The 91st finding little opposition on the first day soon ran into an ever increasing machine-gun and artillery fire. On September 29th, after having cleared the Bois de Baulny and Les Epinettes Bois the day before, renewed its attack. Although held up at the town of Cierges these troops cleared the wood of that name and on the left pushed forward as far as the woods North of Tronsol Farm. Another attack was ordered in the afternoon and on the front of the 91st Division it was successful. The town of Gesnes was taken while on the left the line went beyond the Bois de la Morine and the Bois de Chene Sector.

At 4 P. M. the commander of the 91st learned that the leading elements of the 35th Division on his left had fallen back from the vicinity of Exermont towards Baulny while on the right the Bois Emont had been evacuated by the leading units of the 37th Division. This left the flanks of the 91st very badly exposed and the division was in great danger of being cut off. The 91st sent word to the 37th asking that it move forward far enough to cover the right flank. The reply was that such a movement was impossible. The 35th Division on the left of the 91st was in no better plight ; it was retiring to Baulny and sending out an appeal for help on both flanks. The 91st Division therefore had no other course to follow but to fall back under cover of nightfall and it was compelled to use some of its own troops to protect its left flank while this movement was being carried out.

It established a line running east and west through the center of the Bois de Cierges, Exmorieux Farm and Hill 231, with outposts along the northern edge of the Bois de Cierges and the Bois de Baulny.

The 79th Division succeeded finally in reaching the Bois de Beuge and the village of Nantillois but several attacks for the Bois des Ogons failed, the assisting tanks being knocked out. Overcoming unusual difficulties supplies were got through to these troops as far as Montfaucon. The height of Montfaucon, once in our hands, was made the particular target of the enemy's artillery and he continued to fire on it daily until November 1 when he was driven out of range.

On the extreme right the 4th and 80th Divisions attempted to exploit their gains but failed under heavy flank fire from the east bank of the Meuse. The latter division was relieved on this date by a brigade of its neighbor on the right, the 33rd. In three days fighting it had covered nine kilometers.

The fighting of the next few days was extremely bitter although local in character as it was soon seen that we could make no further general advance until the artillery had been brought up, roads repaired and the men themselves

given some rest as in many cases they were approaching complete exhaustion. On September 30 the 37th Division after having made an advance of ten kilometers was relieved by the 32nd. The 79th which had covered seven and one half kilometers from its starting point was relieved by the Third Division. The 91st held desperately to its line until October 4 in the face of heavy fire and the great exposure of the troops. On that day it was relieved by the 32nd Division which four days previously had taken over the 37th Division's sector. The Germans continued to reinforce their front, rushing up new divisions from the Metz area. The 77th Division in the tree to tree fighting which the Argonne Forest made necessary advanced slowly while the 28th Division on its right reached the ridges west of Apremont.

Our line on October 1 in the forest was about two kilometers ahead of the first objective. East of Apremont and as far as the Meuse it was from three to five kilometers south of that objective.

In summing up this first phase of the battle it may be seen that on the first and second days of the offensive our troops broke through the first two lines of the enemy's defences and penetrated the third line, the Volker Stellung, at one point. From then on until October 4 there was bitter close quarter fighting all along the front with the exception of on the extreme right which was protected by the Meuse. The most bitter fighting was on the right of the First Corps as the Germans were making every effort to hold the salient which in conjunction with the French we had formed in their line in the Argonne Forest.

THE BATTLE

(Second Phase. Oct. 4 - Nov. 1.)

Along the greater part of the front the enemy was now established in his positions known as the Kriemhilde Stellung, his fourth line of defence. This line ran along the heights north of Beffu, Landres et St. Georges and Bantheville. Patrols from the 32nd Division had discovered that the village of Cierges had been evacuated and at this point our line had been pushed forward to directly in front of the Kriemhilde Stellung.

On October 4 the general attack was resumed without artillery preparation but accompanied by a heavy barrage. The attack met with strong resistance from the first but our troops succeeded in capturing positions of considerable importance such as the Bois du Fays, the Bois des Ogons and the villages of Exermont, Chehery and La Forge. In the center the resistance of the enemy was very stubborn so that the total advance of the day was a bare kilometer. Here the 32nd Division was heavily engaged both on October 4th and 5th. This unit took the village of Gesnes but it was forced out again by an encircling fire. Twice on October 5, troops of the 80th Division attacked the Bois des Ogons with the assistance of tanks. This second attack at 6 P. M. was apparently a surprise and our troops finally succeeded in reaching the northern edge of the wood. These positions, won at the cost of great efforts, were thoroughly consolidated during the following days.

On October 6th a new movement developed which had not been included in the original plans for the battle. The German positions in the Argonne forest were seriously threatened but in order to force them to retire north of the Aire where that river turns west to join the Aisne it was necessary to capture the heights on the eastern edge of the forest. These heights, formidable natural positions and well organised by the enemy for defense, dominated the river valley by 300 feet. A brigade of the 82nd Division took over part of the 28th Division's sector along the river and with the 55th Brigade of the 28th Division supported by one regiment of the 56th Brigade, made the attack in a westerly direction from Chehery. The 82nd Division, which was to extend the front of the attack as far north as Eville, was

unable to get its left regiment, the 327th Infantry, up in time so that there was a gap in the line.

The attacking infantry got across the river by fording and by hastily constructing a footbridge. The 55th Brigade soon had possession of Chatel Chehery but was held up on the slopes of Hill 244. On the right Hill 223 had not been taken as the 327th Infantry of the 82nd Division did not get up until noon and the right of the 55th Brigade was suffering severely from machine gun fire coming from this flank. A battalion, therefore, was sent forward to take Hill 223. This position, being in the sector of the 82nd Division, was later turned over to that unit. Hill 244 was only captured after terrific fighting. The 82nd on the right took Cornay and captured Hill 180.

This bold operation, which came as a complete surprise to the enemy, soon bore fruit. Outflanked, he found his salient in the Argonne untenable and he beat a hasty retreat. By October 10th the 77th Division had advanced as far as Chevieres, pushing through the woods a distance of 8 kilometers and clearing the forest. The 82nd Division took over the entire sector of the 28th.

This sudden attack to the west was made possible by the brilliant work of the First Division which after relieving the 35th on October 1 had forced its way northward to the Kriemhilde Stellung and thus was able to protect the right flank of the attack against the Argonne ridges.

On October 2 the First Battalion of the 308th Inf. with about a company of the 307th and elements of the 306th Machine Gun Company (about seven companies in all) became cut off on the La Viergette road about 500 meters east of the Moulin de Charlevaux, in the heart of the forest. The 77th Division in its advance had left its left flank in the air and was unable to protect it because a regiment of the 92nd Division (colored) acting as a liaison unit had failed to keep contact. The enemy therefore filtered in behind these seven companies under Major Charles S. Whittlesey and cut them off. For five days this detachment held out under galling fire from all sides. It was finally rescued on October 7th by the 307th Infantry although it had lost about half its strength in killed and wounded.

The center of our line was still one kilometer south of the Kriemhilde Stellung. It was planned to break through the line of hills on the left of the Bois de Valoup and to get through to the Tranchee de la Mamelle, thus encircling the village of Romagne. This attack, if successful, would pierce the Kriemhilde line at its strongest point. With the aid of the 42nd Division which had come in on the left of the 32nd our troops advanced under a heavy barrage on the morning of October 9th while a constant fire was concentrated on the village of Romagne. On the left of this attack the 32nd Division had great success, penetrating the enemy's system at one point on the Cote Dame Marie. The right of the division got into hand to hand fighting in the Mamelle trench and was stopped. Further to the right the 86th Division made a considerable gain so that at dark its troops were on the Cunel-Briouilles Road. Two companies filtered into Cunel itself, surprising the garrison and capturing them. The following day the 80th Division planned to continue its attack but the enemy's fire broke it up before it got started. It was relieved by the Fifth Division. The Fourth Division on the right of the 80th was to have followed up the successes of that unit but owing to the unusual resistance met with these troops were recalled at darkness. On October 12, however, the Fourth Division was able to get through the Bois de Foret and from there it pushed out its patrols to Hill 299.

With the clearing of the Argonne Forest a new objective was set for the First Corps, a line running north of Briquenay and Thenorgues and south of Sivry les Buzancy. It involved an average advance of nine kilometers and was intended to flank the Bois de Bourgogne and compel the enemy's withdrawal. On this front there was no advance on October 11 and 12, only a slight rectification of the line. Elements of the 82nd Division crossed the Aire on improvised bridges and the 77th was able to get patrols across after passing through the Bois de Negromont.

The French troops on our left during these two days had advanced about 12 kilometers west of the Aisne. Until November 1 this army was always over ten kilometers in advance of our line. This indicates the great value which the enemy placed on the flanking buttress of the Bois de Bourgogne and the ridges between this wood and the Meuse.

In the center of the line our troops were having great difficulty as they were still held up by the formidable positions of the Kriemhilde Stellung. On October 12 one brigade of the 5th Division relieved the 80th just south of Cunel and part of the Fourth Division so that the lineup on this date from left to right was as follows: 32nd, 3rd, 5th, 4th. The 32nd was just south of the Kriemhilde Stellung south of Romagne. The Third along the Kriemhilde line from south of Romagne to south of Cunel; the Fifth along the Cunel-Brieulles Road and the Fourth north of the road in the Bois de Foret. Only two battalions of the Fifth had been put into line when at 4 P. M. the division received orders to be relieved by the Third. The Third Division also relieved a few days later what was left of the Fourth. The 33rd Division, which had made no move since October 4 when by an extension to its left it had taken over the 80th Division's sector, was turned over to the 17th French Corps occupying the line East of the Meuse.

On October 14 the advance was resumed all along the line and the troops met with heavy opposition. Despite our artillery preparation which lasted two hours the enemy put down a heavy counter-barrage as soon as the attack started, causing serious losses to the troops of the Fifth Division which passed through the Third to make the attack. The advance continued, however, up the slopes of Hills 260 and 271, meeting a raking fire from the woods on the east, from Romagne on the west and Bantheville. The infantry was halted at 10 a. m. after having advanced 1500 meters. The 32nd Division had been held up by the wire in front of Cote Dame Marie but its right finally took Romagne at 2 p. m. The 42nd Division on the left of the 32nd got over Hill 288 by noon. Later in the day the right of the Fifth Division made a new attack and captured the Bois Pultiere. The Kriemhilde Stellung as a result of these efforts had been pierced at its strong-point, our troops having made an advance of two kilometers.

In spite of the fact that the Fifth Division was much depleted as the result of this heavy fighting, one regiment being down to 259 men and six officers, a new attack was started on the morning of October 15th. These troops attempted to get into the Bois de Rappes but they were unsuccessful and fell back to their original line. The following day an American patrol discovered that part of a battalion of the Fifth Division had reached the northern edge of the Bois de Rappes and had there been cut off. The patrol naturally passed on the command to withdraw and the detachment before it could be stopped fell back, thus giving up the Bois de Rappes. The division was now down to 175 officers and 3336 men.

These positions were consolidated. Two days later a new attack was attempted, the 32nd Division trying to get to Bantheville and the Fifth making another attempt to take the Bois de Rappes. Every effort to advance was checked by the enemy although the 32nd was able to get through the Bois de Bantheville where it was relieved by the 89th Division. Part of the Fifth Division was ordered to attack again on October 20th, its right regiment to take the Bois de Rappes in connection with an attack by elements of the Third Division on the Bois Clairs Chenes. This attack again failed although our troops succeeded in moving forward their line about 200 meters. The fourth and final attack on this position was made on October 21 and that evening the Fifth sent back the laconic word the Bois de Rappes had finally been taken and "riveted". The following day the division was relieved by the 90th.

On the left of our battle line the 77th Division which had got some of its troops across the Aire was making slow progress in working around Grandpre, which was impossible to take by direct assault. The 78th Division relieved the 77th on

October 15th in these positions but this new unit was not more successful in getting forward. In the center troops of the 42nd which had reached the slopes of the hill known as the Cote de Châtillon on October 14th were stopped there by the Third Prussian Guard which held out to the last man in its advanced positions just below the crest. Finally on October 16 the 42nd Division in a whirlwind attack took the crest of Châtillon Hill as well as Musard Farm. The 78th Division on this date captured Grandpre. Its infantry had got into the town several times but each time had been driven out. The right of the 78th then pushed forward into the Bois des Loges. The enemy evacuated the wood and as soon as our troops filtered through it drenched it with gas so that we had to withdraw. He then reoccupied the wood and it took three days hard fighting to retake these positions.

On October 20th our line was everywhere north of the Aire from Grandpre to the ridges south of Landres et St. Georges and with the exception of the salient which included the Bois de Bantheville it continued in a generally straight line to the Meuse north of Brioules. The French on our left had stormed the heights opposite Vouziers and had advanced about three kilometers east of the Aisne.

From this date till November 1 our troops occupied themselves with consolidating the line they had reached and straightening it out by small local actions. On October 23rd the 78th Division captured Talma Farm in the face of strong resistance. The enemy got back into Grandpre again but was driven out. The village of Champigneulle, northeast of Grandpre, was taken but lost. The following day on the right of the army sector we succeeded by various small operations in forcing the enemy back over the Andon River. Our line was thus secure all along the front and we held positions from which a new general attack could be launched.

THE BATTLE

(Third Phase - Nov. 1 - Nov. 11.)

The Third Phase of the Meuse-Argonne Battle was the natural result of previous operations, for the piercing of the enemy's line and second, the terrific fighting on every hill and in every wood which wore down the enemy's strength and compelled him in the face of the new attack to begin a general retreat. The enemy was evidently very nervous and according to captured documents he had expected our new attack but was uncertain as to when it would come. On the first day of this Third Phase prisoners were taken from more than ten divisions. They said that they had been ordered to hold at all cost as a piercing of the line at this point would be fatal. They also said that the intention of the German Command had been to withdraw behind the Meuse but at the last moment plans had been changed as the German Commander-in-Chief believed that the Americans might hold up their offensive in view of the approaching armistice negotiations.

On the morning of November 1 our troops occupied the heights northeast of Grandpre, the Bois de Bantheville and Hill 288 as well as the heights south of the Andon. We had been held up in the center by the remaining portions of the Kriemhilde Stellung, south of the villages of St. Georges and Landres et St. Georges. A captured enemy map showed us that the Germans had still another line of defence more or less organized known as the Freya Stellung. The divisions in line on this date from left to right were the 78th, the 77th, the 80th, the 2nd, the 89th, and the 5th. On October 30th a patrol of the Fifth Division had entered and cleaned up Brioules thus straightening the line to the Meuse. This part of the line had not changed since September 27th as these positions were under direct artillery fire from across the Meuse.

The objective consisted of a salient approximately eight kilometers deep, the

Fifth Corps forming the point of the salient. On the left our troops were to avoid entering the Bois de Bourgogne which had been thoroughly soaked with yperite gas.

The attack was launched at 5:30 on the morning of November 1 preceded by two hours intense artillery preparation. The reply of the enemy artillery was feeble. Our advance was so rapid that we overran the positions where he had expected to hold us while withdrawing the main part of his forces. In the center we progressed deep into the Freya Stellung and these important gains of the first day made possible the development of the attack to the right and left. In the center we advanced between five and six kilometers, capturing the villages of St. Georges, Landres et St. Georges, Imecourt, Landreville, Chenmery, Bayonville, Remonville, Andevanne and Clery le Grand. The total number of prisoners for the first day was 3,602.

For the attack the 5th Division on the right was to act as a pivot until the unit on its left, the 90th, reached the Meuse (which was not until November 3). In case of a general withdrawal the Fifth was to cross the Meuse and advance up the heights on the other side.

The remarkable fact about the second day's operations was that greater gains were made than on the first day, something which had not happened before in an attack on the Western Front. We drove the enemy from the town of Buzancy (80th Division), the chief German railhead for this region. To the right we advanced as far as Fosse, eleven kilometers from the starting point and four kilometers beyond the Freya Stellung which had been pierced at Bayonville.

The attack by the 89th Division north of Bantheville Wood on November 1 began well, the infantry following the barrage closely but on the following days it slowed up considerably. This was due partly to the disorganization within the division and partly to the severe artillery and machine-gun resistance by the enemy. The town of Barricourt was captured on November 3 although it had been surrounded the day before. The First Division was ordered to pass through the 89th Division but the commander of the latter, General Wright, asked permission to keep his troops in line. From the heights north of Taily large convoys of Germans could be seen leaving Stenay and many vehicles crossing the river behind Lanueville. These troops were subjected to a heavy fire but the German rear guards succeeded in holding off our main forces at this point until their troops had crossed the river. Beaufort was captured on November 4th and in the following days units of the division succeeded in crossing the Meuse over the partially destroyed bridges.

The Second Division on the left of the 89th accomplished one of the most remarkable feats of the war. On the night of November 3rd after the Marine Brigade had broken through the enemy's positions the 9th and 23rd Infantry Regts. were formed in column on the road leading north to Beaumont. The 9th Infantry led the column with the usual advance guard and flank patrols. Beyond this protection there was nothing to prevent the entire brigade from being cut off. It marched all night long straight through the enemy lines for a distance of about eight kilometers, through the Bois de Belval, the Bois du Four and the Bois du Fort Gerache. The enemy was taken completely by surprise. A few machine-guns opened up on the column but they were soon silenced by details sent out for this purpose. Other machine-gunnners were found asleep at their guns and captured. Many details of enemy troops passing up and down the road were captured and sent to the rear while at La Tuilerie Farm the advance guards found the place occupied by German officers sitting around tables with lights burning. They were thrown into dismay by the appearance of American troops whom they thought were many kilometers to the south. The German artillery in the meantime on both sides of the road continued firing to the rear but the advancing infantry paid no attention to it.

This rapid advance of the 9th and 23rd Inf. succeeded so well that the troops on

both flanks which had been held up were able to move forward. The line was completely broken through and the enemy soon was everywhere in rapid retreat.

On the left the enemy's resistance which had held us up on the first day gave way before the repeated attacks of the 78th and 77th Divisions and the enemy began to fall back so rapidly that his retreat bordered on a rout. Our troops in this sector in order to keep up with the enemy were loaded onto motor trucks and rushed forward. Only by so doing were they able to keep contact. The enemy was compelled to abandon completely the Bois de Bourgogne. Outflanked by the French on the west the Germans withdrew hastily to the outskirts of Le Chesne, 17 kilometers to the north. French and American troops joined hands at Châtillon sur Bar and thus the last important bulwark which guarded the great German voie de rocade was cleared.

On the right we pushed rapidly down the left bank of the Meuse harassing the enemy's retreat at every step. Some idea of the enemy's confusion can be gained from the fact that a runner was captured who had been sent up from a point twenty kilometers behind the line to learn why the line was breaking. Our advance in three days had reached a depth of 18 kilometers. The number of prisoners had risen to over 5,000 with 100 guns.

On November 4th troops of the 80th Division had reached the heights two kilometers south of Beaumont where they began to encounter the first organized opposition. This stand appeared to be only temporary, a desperate attempt to hold us back while the main German forces should get across the Meuse. The towns and roads behind the enemy's lines were crowded with retreating troops and transports. The enemy's confusion was great and there were all indications that he was throwing in his last reserves in an attempt to straighten out the great tangle behind his lines. Prisoners were taken south of Beaumont while moving up to support their leading regiment which our troops had in the meantime overrun.

The Fifth Division, fulfilling its role as pivot of the entire operation, learned on November 2nd from its patrols east of the Meuse and from the developments further west that the enemy was withdrawing. Preparations were at once made for crossing the river and this proved to be one of the most difficult tasks any troops in this battle had had to face. After working around the edge of the horse-shoe bluff north of Brioules and taking Doulecon so that the division front extended for 13 kilometers along the river an attempt was made to cross the Meuse on the night of November 3-4. In the face of a heavy fire two companies got across at Brioules but the others could not follow. These two companies dug in and held to their precarious position.

On November 4th beginning at 4 p. m. another crossing was attempted at Cléry le Petit. The first bridge was destroyed by the German artillery and the attempt failed. Meanwhile after dark the two companies of the 6th Infantry already across at Brioules succeeded by a surprise attack in getting over the canal and organizing the bridgehead. Just below this point the third battalion of the 6th and 3d By 11 Infantry crossed the river on rafts, duckboards, with poles and ropes and by swimming and established itself in the Bois de Châtillon and Hill 260. The effect of this was immediately seen as on the following morning, November 5, the Bois de Châtillon was cleared of the enemy and the left of the Fifth Division was able to cross the river. By 8 o'clock artillery bridges had been put down at Brioules and the division had a secure hold on the east bank. The villages of Dun sur Meuse and Milly were captured so that the net result of the day was the crossing of the river and the capture of the whole line of heights from Milly to Vilosnes.

On the extreme left of the Army sector the First Division on November 6th relieved the 80th while the 42nd relieved the 78th. These two divisions, making up the corps, reached on this date the banks overlooking the Meuse from the West of Remilly through Aillicourt to Mouzon. About 2 P. M. November 6th the Command-

ing General of the Fifth Army Corps came in person to the Headquarters of the First Division and gave a verbal order for the First Division to march at once on Sedan with a mission of attacking and seizing the city. The First Division in its advance met part of the 42nd Division in Bulson. On November 7th it encountered the enemy on the front Bulson - Chehery - Omicourt. He was immediately attacked and driven northward, our troops making an advance of from two and one half to four kilometers. Meanwhile patrols of the 42nd penetrated to the edge of the village of Wadelincourt across the river from Sedan and one kilometer distant. In the afternoon of November 7th the First Division was withdrawn to the line La Besace - Autrecourt. It had marched all of two nights and part of a third, covering an average distance of 53 kilometers in the mud, darkness and congestion of traffic. In addition it had fought all of two days.

On the right the Fifth Division continued its attack on November 6th. Driving back the enemy's rear guards this unit pushed forward with wonderful speed and captured Murvaux while its left unit reached the Cote St. Germain which it was able to hold. The enemy was thus driven from the Northern peak of the heights of the Meuse. The advance continued on the following day, the Fifth Division being far ahead of the units on its flank. The 90th had not yet got across the river and the 17th French Corps on the right which was trying to converge on Breheville did not succeed in getting forward until this day.

The Fifth Division patrols on November 9th reported that the enemy was in general retreat and an advance in force was ordered. The villages of Louppy and Removille were captured and the one Battalion of 11th Infantry regiment swam the Loison and captured Jametz. The French on the right took Damvillers while two companies on the left of the Fifth Division pushing North captured Mouzay, this movement enabling the 90th Division to cross the river. On November 10th the Forêt de Woëvre, a "jungle of trees and heavy undergrowth with roads knee-deep with mud" was mopped up and here the division stood at the signing of the armistice. These troops had stormed the heights east of the Meuse, had pushed a wide salient to a depth of 15 kilometers into the enemy's line and had contributed materially to the advance of the 90th Division on its left and that unit's capture of Stenay. The Fifth was five kilometers in advance of the troops on its left and two kilometers beyond the troops on its right. This division's report says "its operations form a brilliant example of what the American soldier can do in an emergency when he must go on to the utmost extent of his power".

The 32nd Division moved up to the right of the Fifth Division on November 10th, taking over the sector of the 15th French Colonial Division. It advanced several kilometers west of Brandeville in a fog that day and a new attack having been ordered on November 11th when the armistice was signed.

OPERATIONS EAST OF THE MEUSE

The 17th French Corps, commanded by General Claudel, which was part of the French Second Army holding the Hills north of Verdun, was left in place when the First American Army took over the Meuse-Argonne sector. One American division, the 29th, was assigned to it for use when the situation should so develop that the Corps would come into action.

It was the general plan to make the main attack West of the Meuse while the 17th French Corps on the east bank held and protected the flank. However as pointed out in the preceding recital of the battle out troops as they advanced on the west bank of the Meuse suffered severely from machine-gun and artillery fire coming from across the river and it soon became necessary to push forward the line east of the Meuse so as to obviate this menace. This operation was a difficult one, boldly conceived and boldly carried out. The Germans had massed their forces east and northeast of Verdun to protect Metz as they had believed that our main attack was coming in that direction. Just north of Verdun from the Meuse eastward they had placed Austrian troops in line and it was against this weaker part of the line that General Claudel struck. He thus violated the principle of attack, that is, instead of attacking perpendicularly to the axis of the enemy's line, he attacked across the enemy's main front. In order to do this the 29th American division was brought in behind the 18th French division and then spread along the dry canal bed near Samogneux with the Meuse at its back. Surprise was the principal element depended upon.

On the morning of the attack, October 8th, the Corps front held as follows: 33rd division (on the west bank of the Meuse); 29th, 18th French, 26th French. The 29th division was to seize the high ground up to the Etrayes Ridge and the series of intervening hills and woods, then swing northeast and east in order to push the enemy entirely from the heights of the Meuse into the Woevre plain, at the same time advancing to the strong position of Herbebois and to Flabas.

The attack was made without artillery preparation and was unusually successful. On that first day the 29th division advanced from five to six kilometers. The 116th Inf. took the formidable height of Malbrouck Hill and pushed on through the thick woods of Consenvoye in the face of strong machine-gun fire. This regiment reached the northern edge of the woods by noon but the division on its right was held up in the Bois d'Haumont. The enemy's artillery fire on the Bois de Consenvoye was so heavy that the woods was cleaned out of underbrush and at the end of the division's stay in the sector so denuded that it was possible to see from one end to the other. This artillery fire came principally from the ridges north of La Grande Montagne and from the Bois d'Etrayes.

The 33rd division was required to cross over the Meuse at Brabant and Consenvoye. This crossing was dependent upon the success further east. Bridges were built at these two places in broad daylight under unceasing artillery fire. In building the Consenvoye bridge (156 feet long in 16 feet depth of water) the men worked five and one-half hours under a shell fire which fell at the rate of ninety shells per minute. They also had to wear their gas masks. All material for the bridge had to be carried up in broad daylight in plain view of the enemy. Both bridges were up on time and by 9 A. M. the 33rd began crossing the river, its artillery protecting it. The troops which got across dug in for the night on the southern edge of the Bois de Chaumes.

By the evening of October 9 five battalions of the 33rd had got across the river. The infantry reached the further edge of the Bois de Chaumes by noon and patrols pushed as far as Sivry. Late in the day the Germans counter-attacked with considerable force against the right of the 33rd and particularly against the 29th. There was great difficulty in maintaining contact between the two divisions. This lack of contact became more noticeable on the following day

when one regiment of the 33rd, having advanced to the edge east of Sivry, was forced to dig in in order to protect its flank. The troops of the 29th on that day were under a terrific concentration of enemy fire. They made a new attack in order to get beyond the Molleville clearing but on the right no advance could be made. The left of the division succeeded in joining up with the line of the 33rd in the Bois Plat-Chene. This wood then became the target of the enemy's guns.

The 33rd Division held its positions without further advance until October 22nd when it was relieved. The 29th, however, struggled valiantly to get forward under an ever increasing concentration of fire from guns of all caliber. On October 11th a new attack made no progress. The following day the 114th Inf., acting under the orders of the 18th French division on its immediate right, attacked the Bois d'Ormont from the south. Later the 113th Inf. attacked from the northwest and reached the edge of the wood. In the face of raking artillery and machine-gun fire these troops were unable to hold their positions. The Ormont Wood stood on a commanding height from which the enemy had direct observation as far as the Meuse. He realized the importance of this position and the threat that lay in our attempted encircling movement to the Northwest. On October 13th the enemy delivered two violent counter-attacks on the 113th but our troops held to their position.

This regiment now returned to the command of the 29th division and at 9.30 A. M. October 15 began an attack against Molleville Farm and up to the ridge of La Grande Montagne. It reached its objective on the left but was held up on the right. On the following day the right regiment was relieved at the edge of La Grande Montagne by the 26th division.

There was no further attack in this region until October 23 when the 29th Division assisted by one regiment of the 26th successfully carried the Etrayes Ridge, finally occupying the Pylone, the observatory on its crest. The following day the 29th Division repulsed a counter-attack while the 26th in local fighting attempted to get through the Bois de Belleu. On its left it advanced 500 meters into the wood and there repulsed three German counter-attacks, the fourth, however, driving our troops out. Not to be dismayed elements of the 26th moved forward again during the night and succeeded in reaching the Northern edge of the wood. Further to the right two battalions made two attacks against Hill 360 the crest of the Bois d'Ormont. They took the hill but were unable to hold it because of the heavy fire. The enemy had filtered back into the Bois de Belleu and on October 27th the 26th Division assisted by the right of the 29th launched a general assault which finally cleared the wood by 4 P. M. that day. Advance troops got into the Bois d'Ormont but had to fall back, the enemy bombardment according to this division's report "surpassing in intensity any before experienced".

The 29th Division between October 28 and 30 was relieved by the 79th which had just been shifted over to the right by the 33rd Division, this latter unit coming up on the main line of the Meuse heights from Fresnes to a point one kilometer from Woel. The 79th on November 1 also took over part of the 26th Division's sector, the latter moving to the front Bois d'Ormont to Beaumont.

The 26th Division patrols on the morning of November 9 reported that the enemy was retreating and the line began a general advance. On the following day both the 26th and 33rd Divisions attacked, the former making only slight progress because of strong resistance from Herbebois and La Chaume. The latter unit captured the village of Marcheville and the Bois des Harville. Early in the morning of November 11th the 33rd Division attacked again, capturing Riaville, Pintheville, Maizeray and Harville. It was in these positions when the armistice was signed. On the front of the 26th an attack had been ordered for 9.30 o'clock but the signing of the armistice prevented it.

In conclusion to the account of the Meuse-Argonne Battle it seems fitting to quote the following General Order from the Commander-in-Chief, dated November 12th:

GENERAL ORDERS

No. 203.

FRANCE, Nov. 12, 1918.

"The enemy has capitulated. It is fitting that I address myself in thanks directly to the officers and soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces who by their heroic efforts have made possible this glorious result. Our armies, hurriedly raised and hastily trained, met a veteran enemy, and by courage, discipline and skill always defeated him. Without complaint you have endured incessant toil, privation and danger. You have seen many of your comrades make the supreme sacrifice that freedom may live. I thank you for the patience and courage with which you have endured. I congratulate you upon the splendid fruits of victory which your heroism and the blood of our gallant dead are now presenting to our nation. Your deeds will live forever on the most glorious pages of America's history".

+

RETURN

TO →

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

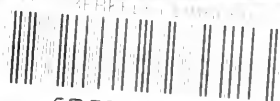
202 Main Library

LOAN PERIOD 1	2	3
HOME USE		
4	5	6

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
Renewals and Recharges may be made 4 days prior to the due date.
Books may be Renewed by calling 642-3405.

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW		
	SENT ON ILL	
	SEP 12 2000	
	U. C. BERKELEY	
REC.CIRC. FEB 16 1995		
SENT ON ILL		
MAY - 8 1995		
U. C. BERKELEY		

Gaylord Bros.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN. 21 1868



C052233749

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

