

570
.2
A55
1919

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELDS BY FIRST SECTION
GENERAL STAFF, 1919

U. S. Army Military History Institute

Q
/

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELDS

BY

FIRST SECTION

GENERAL STAFF.

(VISITORS BUREAU)

Headquarters American Forces in France

FOR THE USE
OF AMERICAN OFFICERS STUDYING THE BATTLEFIELDS.

PROPERTY OF US ARMY

909102 870

PROPERTY OF U. S.

D

570

.2

955

1019

2000 07257047

D

570

.2

955

1019

Paris, October 1st, 1919.

PREFACE

This pamphlet has been prepared by the Visitors Bureau, G-1, for the purpose of assisting American officers in making a trip over the American Battlefields in France.

The information contained herein has been taken from General Pershing's Report to the Secretary of War; General Fox Conner's Reports on Operations; Divisional Histories; Lectures and Descriptions of actions by Corps, Division, Brigade, Regimental, Battalion and Company Commanders on the battlefield; Operation Orders, 1st Army; Almanach Hachette; Stars and Stripes accounts of engagements; Hartzell's Meuse-Argonne; Lecture by General Passaga and other French Officers at Verdun in March 1919; Conducting Officers of the Visitors Bureau, who took part in the operations.

In publishing the pamphlet in this form, this Office has attempted to give each guest a clear idea of the principal part played by our fighting troops in the Great War. Very little has been said of the gigantic work of the troops that made a success on the Battlefield possible "The Services of Supply".

CONTENTS

	Page.
CHAPTER.— I. — Summary of General Situation prior to July 16, 1916.	1
1914.	1
1915.	1
1916.	1-2
1917 (First Half).	2
General Pershing reaches France	3
Theatre of Operations of A. E. F., etc.	3
1917 (Second Half).	4
Status of A. E. F., December 31, 1917.	5
January 1918 to July 15, 1918.	5-6
Notes	
CHAPTER.— II. — Chateau-Thierry, Soissons, Reims	
First Stage	7
Second Stage	8
Third Stage	8-9
Fourth Stage	9-13
Second Italian Corps.	13
Itinerary First Day.	14-18
CHAPTER.— III. — Reduction of St. Mihiel Salient.	
Preliminary Decisions	19
History of St. Mihiel Salient prior to American Occupation	20
Character and importance of St. Mihiel Salient	20
Preliminary Studies of St. Mihiel Operations.	21
Location of American Forces from August 9, 1918.	21
General Plan of Attack	22
Battle Orders of First Army	22
Hostile Situation, September 11-12, 1918	22
Description of Attack	23
Hostile Situation, September 15-16, 1918	24
Results of Operations.	24
Itinerary for Second Day.	25-28
CHAPTER.— IV. — Meuse-Argonne Operations	
Eastern Section	35-40
General Situation—German	29
Concentration of Troops—American	29
Hostile Situation.	30
Battle Order—First Army	30
First Phase of Battle	30-33
Second Phase of Battle	33-34
Results of Operations.	34
Itinerary for Third Day	35-40
Itinerary for Fourth Day	41-44
(Western Section)	
CHAPTER.— V. — Other Operations	
27th and 30th Divisions	45-47
2d and 26th Divisions in Champagne Area	48
37th and 91st Divisions in Belgium.	49
North Russia Expedition.	50

CHAPTER I

Summary of general situation prior to July 15, 1916

A summary of the general situation as it existed upon our entering into the war is necessary not only in connection with any attempt to appreciate at its true value the American effort, but also in order fully to understand many important decisions reached in the early days of the American Expeditionary Forces.

YEAR 1914.

Although the German onslaught of 1914 failed in its primary purpose of crushing France, yet German arms had before the close of 1914 realized successes which were of decisive importance on the future course of the war. On December 31st, 1914, Germany armies stretched from Switzerland to the English Channel, and with her forces within forty-eight miles of Paris, Germany retained the initiative in the west. With her own resources intact and secure Germany was in full possession of all the resources of Belgium and occupied the richest industrial provinces of France,—provinces which contained 7.4 percent of France's population, 78 percent of her iron, and 65 percent of her coal. In the east the rapidity of Russian mobilization came as a surprise, and Germany was forced before the battle of the Marne to reduce her forces in France in order to meet the Russian menace against East Prussia. By the close of 1914, however, the Russian armies had been driven out of East Prussia, while further south they had been thrown back on Warsaw. Neither France nor Russia was ever able to repair the losses of 1914.

YEAR 1915.

Looking back on 1915 it is easy to see that Germany's plan for that year was a strict defensive in the west, while her main effort was to be directed against Russia in the east and to aid her allies in the southeast. The entry of Italy (May) into the war on the side of the allies, more than counterbalanced the adhesion of Turkey (1914) to the German cause and definitely drew approximately one-half of Austria's strength from the eastern and southeastern theatres of war.

In the west the French and English launched several offensives against the German defense; these offensives were, however, so limited in extent and in objectives that they were foredoomed to failure.

Against Russia German arms achieved a remarkable series of successes: Mazurain Lakes; Mackensen in Galicia; Fall of Warsaw; Fall of Brest-Litovsk; Fall of Vilna. In the southeast the central powers over-ran Serbia and Montenegro; the Allied Dardanelles expedition was wrecked, it being withdrawn in January, 1916, and in Mesopotamia Allied interests went from bad to worse. On the sea the British flete had established its superiority, but on February 18th Germany had established the so-called submarine blockade which constantly developed its menace to the Allies.

YEAR 1916.

The developments of 1916 leave no doubt but that Germany, satisfied that Russia would remain quiet, decided before the close of 1915 upon a decisive offensive in the west as the task of 1916. The great German offensive against Verdun was accordingly begun on February 21st, 1916.

French heroism and the lavish expenditure of British blood on the Somme were not the only causes of the failure of the decisive offensive in the west which Germany had planned for 1918. Russia again astonished the world by her powers of recuperation, and at the beginning of June Brussiloff had commenced the great offensive which was virtually to destroy the Austrian army of Galicia and menaced the very existence of Austria. Austria was powerless to meet this threat, for in Italy her armies were also defeated, the Italians taking Gorizia on August 9th, while Rumania entered the war (August 26th) on the side of the Allies and immediately undertook a promising offensive against Austria. Once again it was essential to Germany that she rescue Austria, and so quickly did the German Great General Staff abandon the offensive and assume the defensive in the west that on September 15th Hindenburg was able to begin the great eastern offensive which was the beginning of the end for Russia, while by October Mackensen and Falkenhayn had been furnished the forces with which they eliminated Rumania before the close of 1916.

FIRST HALF OF 1917.

Germany evidently concluded to remain on the defensive in the west and to keep in the east the forces which she deemed necessary for the final conquest of Russia. So successful were these plans with reference to the eastern front that, aided by the Russian revolution, by midsummer 1917 the end of Russia was in sight.

In the west the Allies had at last decided to undertake an offensive on a scale large enough to obtain results in the event of success. The Allied attacks were launched during April and, although heavy losses were suffered, nothing was accomplished. The French attack at Chemin des Dames was particularly unfortunate in its reaction on the French morale. In this attack the French are said to have lost 25,000 killed and 95,000 wounded without accomplishing anything. Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, and the extent of this peril is shown by the fact that by June 30, 1917, more than three and one-quarter million tons of shipping had been sunk.

RESUME OF THE SITUATION IN JUNE, 1917.

During the nearly three years which had elapsed since the beginning of the war Germany had seen practically all her offensives crowned with great success. Her battle lines were on foreign soil, her own resources untouched, and wherever she had assumed the defensive she had inflicted crushing reverses to every attempted Allied attack. Naturally the German morale was high, while the Allied morale, especially the French after the Chemin des Dames failure, was low. French statesmen and great newspaper owners were suspected of aiding in the campaign of defeatism, even when they were not more or less openly accused of dealing with the enemy. Certainly as early as June, 1917, the German Great General Staff could look forward to the early elimination of Russia, the possibility of crushing Italy before the end of the year and finally to the great campaign of 1918, which was to crush the French and English and make good the cry of "Deutschland uber alles". Moreover, leaving aside for a moment the new factor of America, it can not be said that these German ideas of final victory were extravagant either in June, 1917, or, in the light of history, at the present time. Italy still had men, but her finances and supplies were in the most serious difficulties, and the occurrences of the fall of 1917 were to show that serious shortcomings existed in her armies. France had sacrificed much of her best blood, discouragement ran like wildfire through her civil population as well as among her soldiers, many of her leaders were distrusted and, always thrifty, her people had already begun to complain of the vast sums that France had expended. Although she rang true to her traditions with her back to the wall, England was, except perhaps for morale, scarcely in any better condition than was France. England, too, had spent her

best blood and had endangered her dominant position in the financial world, but worst of all the submarine war had brought about critical conditions of food and other shortages, so that the very existence of England seemed to be threatened. The French and English superiority on the Western front during the last half of 1916 and the first half of 1917 had proven totally insufficient to break down the German defense. Now in June, 1917, it was hopeless to expect that the French and British could increase their armed strength, and it was doubtful if they could maintain that strength. On the other hand, Germany, with the end of Russia in sight and with the possibility of eliminating Italy, could look forward to bringing her whole weight against France and England; black, indeed, were the Allied prospects—except for America!

GENERAL PERSHING REACHES FRANCE.

Such was, in brief, the situation when General Pershing reached France on June 14, 1917. The British and French Missions, which had visited America immediately after our declaration of war, had freely stated the fact that the Allies looked to America for the aid with which it was still hoped to obtain success. Conditions in Europe were, however, imperfectly understood in America, and one of the immediate duties of the Commander-in-Chief upon his arrival in France was to get into touch with the situation and to make the necessary recommendations as to the American effort. This work involved many important questions: organization, the possibility of expanding our woefully small Regular Army and National Guard, possibility of ocean transport, French port capacity, location of our forces in France, French railroad capacity, etc.

Before the expiration of a month the military situation had been examined, all the subsidiary questions studied, and the Commander-in-Chief had recommended: "Plans should contemplate sending over at least one million men by next May." "Plans for the future should be based, especially in reference to the manufacture, etc., of artillery, aviation and other material, on three times this force, i. e., at least three million men. Such a program of construction should be completed within two years." 1918 fully demonstrated the accuracy of the views contained in the above quotations. But our Allies were almost as incredulous as were the Germans as to our ability to realize such a program. Until early summer of 1918 the Germans were frankly scornful of our ability to exercise any real influence in the war. The German idea appeared to be: first, that we could not create a large army; second, that even if we could organize a large force we could not transport such a force to Europe; third, that even if we did succeed in transporting a large force to Europe it would not fight.

As before mentioned, our Allies entertained very similar ideas, even though they realized that their last hope lay in America. In the beginning it is probable that the maximum hope of the Allied leaders was that in so far as concerned manpower America might furnish a few hundred thousand men to be incorporated in French and British battalions. Our experience has accumulated ample evidence to show that, even though America could have consented to allowing her men to be drafted under another flag, such a course would have been fatal to the Allied cause. But this idea of our inability to organize and employ a large American army under our own flag persisted and, coupled with difficulties of transport, arms, equipment, and especially with the crisis created by the British and French reverses under the German offensive of March to June, 1918, served to delay the proper organization of the American forces.

THEATRE OF OPERATIONS FOR THE A. E. F. AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

But while we can not go into detail, it is well to outline the considerations which in June and July of 1917 led to the choice of Lorraine as the theatre of operations for the A. E. F.

The course of the war as fixed by the operations of August and September, 1914, had kept the masses of both sides to the west of the Woevre. The overshadowing importance of Paris and the Channel ports to the cause of the Allies kept the Allied masses to the west of the Woevre as long as the German chose to keep his masses there, or until the Allies could muster such a superiority as would enable them to regain complete initiative. Manifestly the German was well content to keep the war from his own frontiers.

The English naturally desired to keep their forces next the Channel; in this way they immediately covered their ports in France and reduced their lines of communication. French ports are notoriously poor and while a few hundred thousand additional men might be supplied through the Channel ports those ports were already more or less congested with English shipping. Then, too, if we attempted to use the same ports as the British, an inevitable congestion of lines of communication would follow.

Turning for a moment to the question of employing the additional combat troops that America could furnish it is apparent that the Briey Basin to the west of Metz, the coal regions to the east of Metz, the vital railroad communications in the same regions, and the fortress itself bore much the same importance to the German cause as did Paris and the Channel ports to that of the Allies. True this importance of the regions on either side of Metz to the German could only be turned to the advantage of the Allies by a powerful offensive, but such an offensive would not only relieve any enemy pressure in the north of France but if successful might be expected to free the whole of northern France as a minimum result—and it was precisely a successful offensive in which millions of Americans should participate to which the Commander-in-Chief looked forward. Now, while the Channel ports were congested the French ports further south were not being used to capacity and investigation showed that this capacity could be largely increased. If then the railroad communications were suitable it was natural that our eventual theatre of operations should be chosen in Lorraine with our base ports those of southwestern France. The map showed adequate railroad facilities and investigation showed that our lines of communication would not materially interfere with those necessary to the French masses in the north.

Such were the principal points in the studies leading to the choice of Lorraine as the eventual American Sector.

SECOND HALF OF 1917.

Time is not available, even if it were desirable, to relate in detail the work of G. H. Q. from July to December of 1917. That this period was a busy one and that well laid plans for the supply and employment of American forces were formulated is shown by the record of American arms in 1918. As time went on it became increasingly evident that the successful conclusion of the war depended upon the arrival of American troops. The Commander-in-Chief therefore drove all the energies of the G. H. Q. toward effecting increases in the returns from available shipping, to securing an increase in the shipping and to the task of preparing to handle the enormous tonnage which he never doubted would ultimately be secured. All plans were based upon caring for and employing millions of Americans and to secure these millions every possible requisite of supply and equipment was obtained in Europe and those items which must come from America were reduced to an absolute minimum—so that every possible ton of shipping might be devoted to bringing soldiers.

As always when great stakes lie in the balance, this decision sometimes caused us anxious moments. In the case of horses, for example, we had counted on French promises for a certain number but when the time came the French Government found it impracticable to deliver animals as fast as they were required. But in one way or another both ends were made to meet and the increased arrival of the American soldier made victory possible in 1918.

STATUS OF THE A. E. F. ON DECEMBER 31, 1917.

On December 31, 1917, a total of only 176,655 American troops had arrived in France. This total was exceedingly disappointing in view of the military situation which had resulted from the disasters suffered by the Allies in the fall of 1917. These disasters reached their culmination with the final collapse of Russia after the battle of Riga (September) and Caporetto (October 24th) which almost resulted in the collapse of Italy. In the west the Germans, strictly on the defensive, were attacked by the French and especially by the British. These attacks had no decided influence and in many cases they were exceedingly costly. It was not surprising then that the Allied morale, which had been bolstered up by the thought that America was coming, began to fall and that the faint hearted began to point to the fact that at the end of the year only one American division (the 1st) had served even a preliminary tour in the trenches. But these disasters had turned the attention of England as well as of America to the vital necessity of securing more ships and thus hastening the arrival of American soldiers.

JANUARY 1918 TO JULY 15, 1918.

When the great German offensive of March, 1918, began America had four divisions in the line. One of these (the 1st) held its own sector north of Toul while the 26th in the Chemin des Dames, the 42nd in the Luneville, and the 2nd in the Verdun-Saint-Mihiel sectors were brigaded with the French for a first tour of duty in the trenches. Prior to the opening of the German offensive the guiding principles which had been adopted for the employment of arriving divisions were in outline as follows :

In September of 1917 it had been decided that the logical employment of the first American army to be formed was to be found in the reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient. In preparation for this operation it had been arranged that as our divisions as such were ready to enter the line they should be placed on the Saint-Mihiel front, thus gradually creating a purely American sector. The German series of offensives and the necessity of breaking up those offensives at all costs—with corollaries such as the desire, arising from necessity, of our Allies to raise the morale of their soldiers through the appearance of our soldiers on different parts of the front, the willingness of the British to increase our troop shipping provided our troops were sent to the British front for preliminary training—served, however, to upset our plans with regard to Saint-Mihiel for many weary months. In fact, by the end of June, 1918, our troops were literally spread from Switzer and to the English Channel and only the constant and firm determination of the Commander-in-Chief eventually to assemble our forces prevented that task from being abandoned as hopeless.

On April 25th the 1st Division which had been relieved north of Toul entered the battle line on the Amiens front. This was the first appearance of an American division on an active front. The conduct of this division, especially during its attack and capture of Cantigny May 28th, greatly increased the respect for American troops among our Allies as well as among the Germans.

On May 27th the German Aisne-Marne offensive was launched. The German success during the first days of this offensive was more marked than anything that German arms had yet secured. Paris had already been subjected to long range bombardment and violent air raids, and the state of morale of that capital may be judged by the fact that it is estimated that more than one million people left Paris during the months of May and June. On June 1st, just at the moment when the future seemed darkest, the 2nd American Division, which had been brought around from Verdun-Saint-Mihiel, was thrown across the Chateau-Thierry-Paris road—and the Germans advanced no farther toward Paris. At the same time elements of the 3rd Division, which had never before been in the

line, were placed along the Marne together with various bodies of French troops —and wherever the soldiers of the 3rd Division appeared there too the German advance broke on the rocks.

The work of the 2nd Division, and of the elements of the 3rd, gave impetus to the rise, already begun as a result of the work of the 1st Division, of the American soldier in the esteem of enemy and Allies, and by June 30th all concerned fully realized that the arrival of American soldiers might soon turn the tide to the definite favor of the Allies.

But America and England, who released her shipping for the transport of our troops until her food stocks had reached the vanishing point, had not waited for the events of June to demonstrate the value of the American soldier. So effectively had our shipping program been increased that on June 30, 1918, some 900,000 Americans were in France, and all preparations had been made to maintain indefinitely the increased rate of arrival.

Having now no illusions on the value of American troops and with the general knowledge which his High Command must have had concerning American arrivals, the German decided to try in one final effort to obtain a decision in his favor before the American soldier should render such a decision hopeless of attainment. The final German attack was accordingly launched in the Champagne on July 15th. On that date the disposition of the American divisions in France was as follows:

The 32nd, 35th, 5th and 77th Divisions were in line between the Swiss border and Luneville. The 82nd was in line north of Toul. The four regiments of the 93rd Division were with the French in line between the Argonne and the Meuse. The 42nd was in reserve to meet the expected German attack in Champagne. The 3rd and 26th were in line in the region of Chateau-Thierry and the 28th had elements with the American and French units in the same region. The 2nd and 4th were in reserve near Meaux and the 1st near Beauvais ready for use in the planned counter-attack. The 27th and 30th were in line with the British near Ypres. The 33rd, 78th and 80th were completing their training with the British, the 91st had just arrived at Le Havre and the 79th was arriving at Brest. The 29th, 90th, 83rd, 92nd, 37th and 89th were in our training areas around Chaumont and every nerve was being exerted to complete their training and equipment.

Fortunately for the Allies the German attack and its location were foreseen and more fortunately still the considerable number of American soldiers who had now arrived were either in the line, in reserve ready for the counter-attack which had been planned during the first few days of July, or, in the case of newly arrived divisions, ready and anxious to get into the fight with or without their complete equipment.

CHAPTER II

CHATEAU-THIERRY, SOISSONS, REIMS.

The third German offensive of 1918 which started on May 27, 1918, in the Chemin des Dames sector had, early in June, established the enemy in the salient of which Chateau-Thierry was the southern point. There was every prospect that the advance would continue when those phases of the operations with which the American forces were so vitally concerned, started.

These phases are logically divided into four stages, as follows :

FIRST STAGE

(June 1-4)

The opening of this stage saw the 2d Division, commanded by Major General Omar Bundy, sent into the line against the advancing Germans. These troops had been training in a reserve area north of Paris after their two months' tour in the quiet Toul-Troyon sector when, on May 30, orders reached them to move with all possible speed to Meaux. It was clear that this unit was to be sent to help stop the Germans who, by that time, had taken Fere-en-Tardenois in their rapid march on Paris. The movement began early the morning of May 31 when the infantry of the division was placed in trucks and started for Meaux. At Meaux instructions were received to proceed immediately to May-en-Multien, but before all the troops had reached this point new orders were received to concentrate immediately at Montreuil-aux-Lions. After a consultation between General Degoutte who commanded the 6th French Army west of Chateau-Thierry and Major General Bundy it was decided that the 2d Division would take up a position across the main Paris-Chateau-Thierry road at le Thiolet. At noon June 1 the division, except for the 23rd Infantry, was in position and held the line Bonneil Farm-Le Thiolet-Lucy-Le-Bocage. The 23rd Infantry, which had been held out as a divisional reserve, was hurriedly sent under command of Colonel Paul B. Malone to close a gap existing in the front of the 7th French Corps in the vicinity of Veully-la-Poterie. One battalion of Marines was attached to the 23rd Infantry for this duty. The Germans then held the line Chateau-Thierry-Vaux-Bouresches-Belleau Woods-Belleau-Torcy-Bussiares (all inclusive). On June 3 the enemy made a strong attack on the French and American positions but was unable to advance. On June 4 the 23rd Infantry and the Marine Battalion rejoined the 2d Division and that night the divisional front was established as follows : Bonneil Farm to Bois de la Marette (incl.) held by the 9th Infantry ; Bois de la Marette (excl.) to a point opposite Bouresches (excl.) held by the 23rd Infantry ; and from the left of the 23rd Infantry to a point opposite Bussiares held by the 4th Brigade.

On May 30, 1918, the 3rd Division, commanded by Major General Joseph T. Dickman, was in training in an area southwest of Chaumont when orders were issued from American G. H. Q., placing it, less the Artillery and Engineer Troops, under the orders of the Commanding General of the Group of French Armies of the North. The French Command immediately directed the 3rd Division to move with all haste to the vicinity of Conde-en-Brie. The division was composed of the 5th Brigade (4th and 7th Regiments of Regular Infantry) commanded by Brig. General F. W. Sladen and the 6th Brigade (30th and 38th Regiments of Regular Infantry) commanded by Brig. General Charles Crawford. It was to be employed in stemming the tide of German advance. For this work it was assigned to the 38th French Corps. The 7th Machine Gun Battalion left the Training Area the afternoon of May 30 and was in position in the city of Chateau-Thierry the afternoon of May 31. The infantry of the 3rd Division

began to arrive in the vicinity of Château-Thierry on June 1. The withdrawal of the French troops across the Marne in Château-Thierry was made under the protection of the fire of the 7th Machine Gun Battalion located on the south bank of the river. The gunners were kept on duty for seventy-two hours without getting any rest. When the French troops had all crossed to the south side the stone bridge near the center of the city was destroyed by them. The other bridge (railroad) was blown up by the French on June 7. During the rest of this stage the regiments of the 3rd Division were put into the lines at different places as they were needed by the French.

SECOND STAGE
(June 5-July 14.)

The beginning of this stage found the Germans holding the same lines that they held during the preceding stage. East of Château-Thierry they occupied the north bank of the Marne. The afternoon of June 6 the 23rd Infantry cleared the enemy out of Triangle Woods and Farm while the 4th Brigade took the town of Bouresches and attempted to drive him out of Belleau Woods. Our men held Bouresches against a hostile counter-attack, but were unable to make any appreciable gain in Belleau Woods that day. After several more attacks that month the Marines finally drove the enemy out of Belleau Woods on June 25, following a very efficient artillery preparation. In a combined operation on July 1, one battalion of the 9th Infantry took Vaux and one battalion of the 23rd Infantry took the Bois de la Roche after an artillery preparation lasting about twelve hours. The following morning the Germans counter-attacked our troops who had taken Vaux. Most of the troops used in the counter-attack were raked in by our artillery barrage and made prisoners. In the combined operation we took practically 500 prisoners and a number of trench mortars. When the Germans lost Vaux they withdrew to a line just east of the Vaux-Bouresches road and railroad. The 26th Division, commanded by Major General Clarence G. Edwards, moved into the Château-Thierry sector on July 4 and took up a position about two miles behind the 2nd Division in anticipation of the German attack which was expected early in July. The 26th Division was composed of National Guard troops from New England. The 51st Brigade, commanded by Brig. General G. H. Shelton, was composed of the 101st and 102rd Regiments of Infantry, and the 52nd Brigade, commanded by Brig. General C. H. Cole, was composed of the 103rd and 104th Regiments of Infantry. On July 10 the 26th changed positions with the 2nd Divisions. While the 2nd Division held this sector it captured 24 officers and 1,654 men and suffered the following casualties :

Killed.....	48	1,212
Severely Wounded.....	55	1,483
Slightly Wounded.....	71	3,468
Gassed.....	41	3,111
Missing.....	2	286

On the south side of the Marne the regiments of the 3rd Division continued to be used by the French until about June 23. The 7th Infantry held a part of Belleau Woods from June 15 to June 20, relieving one regiment of Marines. About June 24 the 3rd Division was brought together and given the line south of the Marne extending from Blesmes to a point one kilometer east of Mezy. Their operations consisted of raids across the river to get prisoners and information.

THIRD STAGE
(July 15-17.)

The German General Staff knew that the daily average arrival of Americans in France was 30,000 and that this would soon give the Allies the numerical

superiority. The Germans had learned that the American was a good fighter and that their best chance to win the war was to defeat the French and English decisively before America could make her efforts felt. This caused them to decide to make their big attack of July 14-15, which extended from Château-Thierry to Ville-sur-Tourbe, except directly in front of Reims. To carry out their plans they placed 170,000 first line troops to the east of Reims and a like number to the west. They had approximately as many men in their second line. General Gouraud, who commanded the 4th French Army with its right flank on Ville-sur-Tourbe, had accurate information that the German attack on his front would start at midnight July 14-15. By a clever plan called the system of elastic defense he was able to inflict very heavy losses on the Germans without losing any appreciable ground. The 42nd American (Rainbow) Division, commanded by Major General Charles T. Menoher, formed part of the Army of General Gouraud. Between Reims and Château-Thierry the Germans were able to advance their lines. Large forces of the troops succeeded in crossing the Marne, and by July 16 had extended their lines to a point near Condé-en-Brie and Montvoisin near Epernay. In the beginning of the attack along the Marne two German companies succeeded in getting across the river in the front of the center of the 3rd Division and reaching Fossoy on the Château-Thierry-Crezancy road. They were counter-attacked shortly afterwards and driven back to the river. Opposite Jaulgonne, very strong forces crossed and drove the French off the hill which is east of the Surrélin River. This retirement of the French exposed the right of the 3rd Division which was held by the 38th Regiment and caused it to swing its line slightly eastward passing thru the town of Crezancy. The casualties of the 3rd Division were 600 officers and 7,500 men and they took 700 German prisoners. The German losses were estimated as considerably greater than our own. The 28th Division which had been in training at Hondévillers near Château-Thierry south of the Marne, was turned over to the 38th French Corps and was placed in support positions behind the 3rd American and the 125th French Divisions on July 14. The 28th Division was composed of National Guard troops from Pennsylvania. It was commanded by Major General Charles H. Muir and under him were Colonel G. H. Kemp, commanding the 55th Brigade (109th and 110th Infantries) and Brig. General William Weigel commanding the 56th Brigade (111th and 112th Infantries). During this stage the 4th Division occupied support positions west of the Ourcq River between Lizy-sur-Ourcq and the Villers-Cotterets Woods.

FOURTH STAGE
(July 18-August 5.)

This stage is best described as the Marne-Aisne offensive. A brief account of the strategy employed by Marshal Foch will aid in an understanding of this operation and of the manner in which the 5th and last German offensive, characterized as the Third Stage, was met and repulsed.

Through his service of information the Allied Commander-in-Chief learned that the Germans were holding the line from the Aisne to Château-Thierry with only eleven divisions. In a desperate effort to concentrate every available man for his offensive between Château-Thierry and Ville-sur-Tourbe, the enemy had massed his maneuver divisions back of this line between these two named places. Marshal Foch had also learned that the German attack would commence at midnight July 14-15. To meet this situation he planned to leave south of the Marne only enough Allied troops to hold the German attack and to concentrate his other available forces between Château-Thierry and Soissons. He planned to make an attack along this line as soon as the Germans had committed their troops to the carrying out of their plans. The Allied plan was to cut the main road and the railroad running from Soissons to Château-Thierry, thus practically cutting off the principal means of supplies of the Germans in the salient.

The attack was to be a surprise. Marshal Foch was able to concentrate twenty French and American divisions for this operation. There was no artillery preparation, but when the infantry went over at 4:45 a. m., July 18, the Allied artillery opened on every known enemy gun position.

Everything went off as planned. The 1st Division which held the left of the line of the famous 20th French Corps south west of Soissons extended from St. Pierre l'Aigle to Cutry. The 2nd Division held the right of the sector of the same corps and extended from a point in Villers-Cotterets Woods near Vertes Feuilles Farm southward to Longpont. Between our 1st and 2nd Division was the noted 1st Moroccan Division (French). These three divisions formed the wedge in the attack and had the important mission of cutting the road and railroad south of Soissons. The success of the whole operation on July 18 depended directly on the success of the carrying out of this mission of the 20th French Corps. Both of our divisions were to attack in a general easterly direction.

The 1st Division under command of Major General Charles P. Summerall arrived in its sector from Cantigny on July 17, and took over its part of the line early that night. The 1st Brigade commanded by Brig. General John L. Hines, and composed of the 16th and 18th Regiments of Regular Infantry, held the right of the Divisional Sector while the 2nd Brigade commanded by Brig. General Beaumont B. Buck, and composed of the 26th and 28th Regiments of Regular Infantry, held the left of the sector. By July 21 it had crossed the main road and railroad south of Soissons and on the following day had reached the town of Buzancy, where it was relieved that night by a Scotch Division. It was greatly hampered in its advance by the German machine gunners located in the ravines of Missy-aux-Bois and Ploisy, which were in the sector of the French Division on its left. The division advanced 11 kilometers, took 3,500 prisoners of whom 125 were officers, 63 field guns and suffered casualties to the extent of 285 officers and 7,585 men. In the 16th and 18th Infantries all field officers except the Colonels, were casualties, while the 26th Infantry, at the end of the operation, was commanded by a captain of less than two years' experience. The German losses were very large.

The 2nd Division now commanded by Major General James G. Harbord which had been in a support position behind the 26th Division since July 10, received orders on July 16 to move immediately to the vicinity of Villers-Cotterets Woods. In this division were the 3rd Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brig. General H. E. Ely, and composed of the 9th and 23rd Regiments of Regular Infantry and the 4th Brigade (Marines) commanded by Brig. General John A. Lejeune, and composed of the 5th and 6th Regiments of Marines. It arrived at its position on the front line along the east edge of these woods just at the moment that the attack commenced the morning of July 18. To do this the men had to travel most of the night through the thick woods in the rain and darkness. They were unable to use the roads which were jammed with traffic. The ground over which it advanced, was level. The division took Vierzy the afternoon of July 18 and Tigny the following afternoon, and was relieved by the French about one kilometer east of Tigny the night of July 19. The casualties during these two days were 154 officers and 3,638 men, and it captured 3,000 prisoners, 75 light and heavy guns, 200 machine guns and an ammunition dump containing 15,000 rounds of 77 m/m ammunition.

Between July 18 and July 20 the 3rd Division held its position on the south side of the Marne. The success of the attack of the 20th French Corps southwest of Soissons caused the Germans to begin evacuating the Château-Thierry salient on July 21. On this latter date units of the 3rd Division began crossing to the north side of the Marne in order to maintain contact with the enemy. The division advanced through Jauignon and le Charmel in a northeasterly direction as far as the village of Roncheres where it was relieved the night of July 29-30 and sent back to the vicinity of Château-Thierry for rest preparatory to being

sent over in the St. Mihiel sector. Between June 1 and July 30 the division took 8 officers and 1,112 men prisoners, and its casualties were :

Killed.....	53	1,043
Wounded.....	141	4,692
Gassed.....	42	1,735
Missing.....	3	228
Prisoners.....	2	32

The 4th Division, under Major General George H. Cameron, reached France about May 15, and was moved late in June into the area between La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and Lizy-sur-Oureq where it went through a short period of instruction early in July. From July 18 to 22 the infantry of the division was brigaded with the French and took part in the offensive between those dates. The 7th Brigade under Brig. Gen. B. A. Poore, operated in the sector of the II French Corps east of Troesnes and reached a point about one kilometre east of Chouy by the night of July 19-20 when it was relieved by a French regiment. The 8th Brigade, under Brig. Gen. Frank D. Webster, was with the 164th French Division in a sector about 8 kilometres south of the 7th Brigade in the attack of July 18. The 7th Brigade was composed of the 39th and 47th Regiments of (Regular) Infantry and the 8th Brigade was composed of the 58th and 59th Regiments of (Regular) Infantry. The 8th remained in the line till July 22-23 by which date it had crossed the main Château-Thierry-Soissons road and entered the Bois du Chatelet where it was relieved by a French Brigade. During the rest of July subsidiary units of the division were used wherever needed, as for instance, in the vicinity of Sergy and Seringes when two battalions of the 47th Infantry during the last days of July operated with the 42nd Division and suffered heavy losses in the attacks of these two towns. On August 1 the 4th Division began relieving the 42nd Division just north of Seringes. On account of the rapid retirement of the Germans at that time our front lines had advanced to the vicinity of Mont St. Martin when the relief was finally completed about August 3. By August 5 the Germans had all been driven to the north side of the Vesle River. Orders were then issued that the division should make a crossing of the river and continue the pursuit of the enemy. This crossing, however, proved a very formidable task as the river banks at that point were extremely marshy, and the town of Bazoches, which lay on the north side about the middle of the sector, was very strongly held by the enemy. When the 77th Division relieved the 4th Division on August 11-12 the latter had established itself along the north bank of the Vesle, but in doing so, it had suffered heavy losses. The casualties of the 4th Division between July 17 and August 12 were 752 killed, 4,812 wounded and 590 missing.

On July 18 the line held by the 26th Division was the same as that held by the 2nd Division, after it had taken Bouresches and Belleau Woods. In accordance with the general plan, the division attacked at 4 : 45 a. m. July 18, and within an hour its troops had taken the small towns of Torcy, Belleau and Givry. No further progress could be made, however, as long as the Germans held the Bois de Givry and Hill 193 just north of these three towns. The hill and the Bois de Givry were both in the sector of advance of the 167th French Division on the left of the 26th. On July 20 the 26th Division made an attack and took Les Brusses and La Gonetrie Farms, but was again stopped by the German machine gun fire coming from Hill 193. A general attack was then ordered for the morning of July 21, at which time our attacking troops found that the Germans had retired. The 26th Division advanced on July 21 from its position in Torcy, Belleau and Givry and La Gonetrie Farm to a line near Epieds which was nine kilometers away. Here it again encountered very heavy machine gun fire, and the advance was stopped for a while. It was at this time that the 56th Brigade of the 28th Division was put into the line with the 26th Division which began to show signs of fatigue after six days of desperate fighting. The Germans held the line through Epieds and Trugny until the morning of July 24 when our patrols reported that

they had again retreated during the preceding night. The 26th Division advanced in a northeasterly direction on July 24 to La Croix Rouge Farm in the Foret de Fere where it was again stopped by German machine gun fire. The following day the division was relieved just south of this farm by the 42nd Division. During the 8 days of continuous fighting they had advanced 18 1/2 kilometers and had captured about 250 prisoners. It suffered casualties to the extent of 5,300 officers and men, of whom 600 were killed.

As previously stated one brigade of the 28th Division (56th Brigade) was put into the line to assist the 26th Division in the Foret de Fere. The retirement of the Germans at that time did not give the 56th Brigade an opportunity to attack. On July 28 the 55th Brigade of the 28th Division replaced the tired 39th French Division just north of Courmont and carried the line to near Cierges, where on July 30 it was relieved by one brigade of the 32nd Division, the other brigade of which relieved the 3rd Division at the same time. During these two days the 55th Brigade suffered 800 casualties. The 28th Division was then assembled in a reserve position near Jaulgonne where it rested until August 4, at which time it began moving to Fismes to relieve the 32nd Division which it did the night of August 6-7. During August numerous attempts were made to drive the Germans across the plateau north of the Vesle, but without success. About September 4 the enemy was forced to retire towards the Aisne on account of the Allied attacks north of Soissons. The division was relieved about midway between the Aisne and the Vesle the night of September 8-9.

The 32nd Division, commanded by Major General Wm. G. Haan, previous to our offensive of July 18, had been in a quiet sector not far from the Swiss border. It was composed of National Guard troops from the States of Michigan and Wisconsin. The 63rd Brigade (125th and 126th Infantries) was commanded by Brig. General William D. Connor and the 64th Brigade (127th and 128th Infantries) by Brig. General Edwin B. Winans. As stated in the preceding paragraph, it relieved the 3rd Division and the 56th Brigade of the 28th Division south of Cierges on July 30. By August 3 it had advanced through Chamery, Coulonges, Cohan and Dravegny, and had reached the southern edge of the town of Fismes. That afternoon our troops got into the town, but were driven out shortly afterwards by a German counter-attack. The division attacked again the morning of August 4, drove the Germans out and held the town against severe counter-attacks. Desperate efforts were made by our men to establish themselves on the north side of the river, but they were unable to do so in force. The division captured one officer and 96 men and had the following casualties :

Killed.....	27	569
Wounded.....	140	3,885
Missing.....	2	147

Upon its relief from this sector by the 28th Division on August 7-8 the 32nd Division marched back to Dravegny and Cierges for a period of rest. Late in August it was ordered to move to the area northwest of Soissons where between August 28 and September 3 it drove the Germans out of their strong positions at Juvigny and across the main road running from Soissons north to Coucy-le-Chateau. In this sector the division took 9 officers and 928 men prisoners and suffered the following casualties :

Killed.....	15	323
Wounded.....	72	2,333
Missing.....		76

About July 19 it was seen that the German offensive east of Reims had about spent itself. The 42nd Division was then relieved from further duty with General Gouraud's Army and ordered to move to La Ferte-sous-Jouarre near Chateau-Thierry. Under General Menoher who commanded the 42nd Division, were the 83rd Infantry Brigade commanded by Brig. General Michael J. Lenihan.

and the 84th Infantry Brigade commanded by Brig. General Robert A. Brown, and the 67th Field Artillery Brigade commanded by Brig. General George G. Gatley. In the 83rd Brigade were the 165th Infantry (New York) and the 166th Infantry (Ohio), and in the 84th Brigade were the 167th Infantry (Alabama) and the 168th Infantry (Iowa). The 67th Field Artillery Brigade was composed of the 149th (Illinois), the 150th (Indiana) and the 151st (Minnesota) Regiments. Between July 15-19 the 42nd Division suffered casualties in the sector east of Reims to the extent of 450 killed and 1,350 gassed and wounded. The division arrived at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre on July 22, and after resting there for two days it was sent up to relieve the 26th Division. This relief took place just south of the Croix Rouge Farm on July 25-26. As the front held by the 26th American and the 167th French Divisions had greatly narrowed down since July 18th, it was possible for the 42nd Division to relieve them both at the same. The 42nd advanced through Villers-sur-Fere, Sergy, Nesles, Seringes-et-Nesles, Mareuil-en-Dole and Chery-Chartreuve. The Germans offered very desperate resistance at Sergy and Cierges. Both of these towns changed hands twice before the 42nd was finally able to hold them. This division was relieved by the 4th Division in the vicinity of Chery-Chartreuve on the night of August 3. In the advance to the Vesle River between July 25 and August 4 the division advanced 15 kilometers, captured 69 men and about 155 machine guns and suffered casualties to the extent of 5,500 officers and men.

The 77th Division which, between June 20 and August 4, had held a quiet sector in Lorraine extending from Herbeville to Badonvillers, relieved the tired and decimated 4th Division along the Vesle the night of August 11-12. The 77th (Liberty) Division was commanded by Major General George B. Duncan and was composed of National Army troops from New York City. In it were the 53rd Brigade (305th and 306th Infantries) and the 54th Brigade (307th and 308th Infantries), the latter brigade being commanded by Brig. General Evan M. Johnson. No further progress was made in the sector until September 4, when the Germans, on account of the Allied successes north of Soissons, began to retire from the Vesle. The division advanced its left flank to the Aisne River south of Bourg-et-Comin by September 9, but its right flank was being held up just south of the villages of Revillon and Villers when, on the date mentioned, it was relieved by the 8th Italian Division.

The Italian Division just referred to, along with the 3rd Italian Division, formed the 2nd Italian Corps which arrived in France late in May under the command of Lieut. General Albricci. During the months of May and June that Corps held a sector between Avocourt and the Argonne Forest. Between June 15 and July 20 it was southwest of Reims in the Ville-en-Tardenois region where it rendered most valuable assistance in breaking up the German offensive of July 15. This corps also did very good work later along the Ailette River and around Sissonne. There were also many thousand Italian labor troops working in France.

The 1st American Corps Headquarters began functioning administratively early in June at Toul under command of Major General (later Lieut. General) Hunter E. Liggett. Late that same month they were ordered to the Chateau-Thierry sector where on July 4 they relieved the French Corps Headquarters at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre. In the attack of July 18 the 167th French and the 26th American Divisions were in the 1st American Corps. The 4th, 32nd and 42nd American Divisions later formed parts of this Corps. On August 4 the 3rd American Corps Headquarters under command of Major General (later Lieut. General) Robert L. Bullard relieved the 38th French Corps near Fismes. At this time the 32nd Division was transferred from the 1st to the 3rd Corps. The 1st Corps was relieved from duty in the sector about August 10.

ITINERARY 1ST DAY

CHATEAU-THIERRY

The town of Chateau-Thierry is divided into two parts by the Marne River. The entire city was occupied by the Germans in early September 1914, but they were driven out of it that month in the 1st Battle of the Marne. The north half was again occupied by the Germans on May 31, 1918, but they were unable to get into the south half. This northern half did not suffer much from hostile bombardment as the Germans occupied it in 1918 without much opposition, and while the enemy held it the Allies did not shell it. At the time that the French re-occupied the north half on July 21, 1918, there was very little fighting as the Germans were then evacuating the whole of the Chateau-Thierry salient on account of the French-American successes near Soissons. The original stone bridge near the center of the city was destroyed by the French at about 11 o'clock p. m., June 2, 1918, in anticipation of a German attempt at crossing. When the bridge was blown up there were a few French and American troops on the north bank. They either swam the river or crossed by the railroad bridge to the east of the town. This latter bridge was blown up June 7. The 7th Machine Gun Battalion of the 3rd Division which figured so prominently in stopping the German advance across the Marne on May 31 in the vicinity of Chateau-Thierry had its guns located on the south side of the river. That part of the city was divided into two parts, the western part being assigned for defense to Company "A", 7th Machine Gun Battalion, and the eastern half to Company "B". This division placed the bridge near the center of the city under the protection of Company "A" and the railroad bridge under that of Company "B". On June 5 this Machine Gun Battalion was replaced by a French unit. It then went back to a reserve position. Between June 4 and July 15 this sector was quiet. On the north side of the city is located the Hotel de Ville, in the tower of which is a clock. At the center of the clock can be noticed a hole through which the Germans fired a machine gun on anything moving on the main road running through the south side of the city. Behind the Hotel de Ville on the high hill may be noticed the remnants of the old fortifications surrounding the Chateau of Charlemagne. If the party arrives at Chateau-Thierry the day before starting the trip the members should go up to these fortifications to get a view of the surrounding country.

VAUX

The party stops at Vaux and climbs to the railroad crossing over the main road. From here one sees the roofs of the buildings of le Thiolet, about two and a half kilometers to the west, which marked the extreme advance of the Germans towards Paris in May and June 1918. By June 6, when the line became temporarily stabilized in this part, the Germans held the north side of the main road from Vaux to le Thiolet. They held Vaux and Hill 204. This immediate section of the line remained quiet until the attack of the 2nd Division on July 1 against Vaux and Bois de la Roche which is about 800 meters northwest of Vaux. The Bois de la Roche was to be taken by one battalion of the 23rd Infantry while Vaux was to be taken by a battalion of the 9th Infantry. The artillery preparation lasted from 6 : 00 A. M. to 6 : 00 P. M., and was considered practically perfect. The attacking troops jumped off from a line along the north edge of the Bois de la Marette southwest of Vaux, the battalion of the 23rd being on the west part of the line and that of the 9th on the east part. The battalion of the 9th Infantry met with very little resistance and occupied the town in about ten minutes with very small losses. The other battalion, however, met with stronger resistance and suffered heavier losses. The troops attacking Vaux moved up the little ravine approaching the village from the south. The squads had been furnished accurate plans of all cellars in the town and each squad had been instructed which cellars it was to mop up. The French were supposed to take Hill 204 while we

were taking Vaux, but their attack was unsuccessful. The American part of the program was carried out exactly according to schedule. The following morning the Germans attempted to retake Vaux by a counter-attack. Most of these counter-attacking troops were raked in by our artillery barrage and captured. In the combined operations we took 500 prisoners. Their position on Hill 204 gave the enemy an advantage over our troops in the village. After being driven out of Vaux the Germans took up a position along the east side of the road and railroad from Vaux to Bouresches. The French High Command complimented the 3rd Brigade for the thoroughness of its plans and its very efficient liaison throughout the operation.

BOURESCHES

The village of Bouresches was occupied by the Germans on June 1. At about 6 p. m., June 6, the 4th Brigade drove the enemy out of it and then held it against German counter-attacks. The enemy held the east side of the railroad near the town as well as the station which they had fortified and which was supported by machine gun fire from Hill 193, north of Belleau. They continued to hold the station until July 21.

LUCY-LE-BOCAGE

On the way from Bouresches to Lucy-le-Bocage and just before reaching Lucy the party passes near the south edge of Belleau Woods where the 4th Brigade gained a footing on June 6. The headquarters of the 6th Regiment of Marines were in Lucy.

TORCY

The village of Torcy was occupied by detachments of the 26th Division at about 5 : 30 a. m., July 18.

BELLEAU

This village was occupied by our troops at about 7 : 15 a. m. July 18.

BELLEAU WOODS

The party stops at Belleau Woods and goes up to the high ground in the northwest part of them. Here the nature of the woods may be easily seen. They extend two kilometers south-ward as far as Lucy-le-Bocage and have a width of one kilometer. The Germans considered them very important as a point of departure for their troops in case of a new attack and occupied them with one regiment of infantry and numerous machine guns and trench mortars. The rocky nature of the soil made the place suitable for machine gun resistance and afforded wonderful protection against our artillery fire. These positions were supported by hostile artillery located behind the hills north of Belleau. The system of defense used by the enemy was to cover the approaches with machine guns and to have those machine gun positions covered by other machine guns in rear, so that when the first line of guns was destroyed the second line would come into operation. Our first attack on the woods was made from the south and west on June 6. The attack from the west was a complete failure as the men advancing over the open ground from that direction were mowed down by the machine guns located on the high ground at the northwest corner of the woods. Each one of our attacks from the south, however, was partially successful so that by the afternoon of June 25, following a very efficient artillery preparation, the infantry of the 4th Brigade drove the Germans completely out of the woods, and in doing so, took 300 prisoners. The 7th Infantry of the 3rd Division relieved the 6th Regiment of Marines in these positions between June 15-20 approximately, to give the latter an occasion to rest. Looking to the north the towns of Belleau and Givry may be seen about 800 yards away, and the wooded Hill 193 just beyond them. Off to the northwest about 1,800 yards away may be seen the

little village of Torcy. Due to a misinterpretation of orders the detachments of the 26th Division in Belleau Woods did not move forward to attack until about 6 : 30 a. m., July 18. By 7 : 15 a. m., they had taken Belleau and Givry, but they were unable at that time to make further progress on account of the fact that the Germans were located on Hill 193 which was in the French sector of advance. Due to the fact that the French did not take Hill 193 until the morning of July 21 our troops were unable, to get over the open ground beyond Les Brusses Farm, which latter place they took the afternoon of July 20. This farm may be seen to the east of the village of Belleau.

BELLEAU
EPAUX-BEZU
BEZUET

On arriving at the main road near Bezuet the party turns north towards Soissons. In the Bois du Chatelet which lies east of the road about two kilometers north, of Bezuet was located the emplacement of a very large gun intended to be fired on Paris. The emplacement, however, was not finished in time to be used there. The enemy did fire some railroad guns from this position on the towns of Meaux and Coulommiers, early in June.

OULCHY-LE-CHATEAU
HARTENNES

The road from Hartennes to Tigny turns sharply to the west.

TIGNY

The 2nd Division took Tigny the afternoon of July 19 and was relieved a short distance east of the town that day. At the western exit of Tigny may be seen a German ammunition dump which contained about 15,000 rounds of 77 m/m and 3,000 rounds of 155 m/m German ammunition when captured.

VIERZY

About five hundred yards north east of the railroad station at Vierzy was an immense quarry in which a whole regiment of Marines rested during the night of July 18-19. Vierzy was taken the afternoon of July 18 by the 2nd Division.

VAUXCASTILE
BEAUREPAIRE FARM

Here the party stops for orientation on the ground. In their advance from Villers-Cotterets Woods, which latter may be seen two kilometers over to the west, to Beaurepaire Farm the direction of advance was slightly north of east. At this farm the direction of advance was shifted slightly south of east and the change of direction was made on this farm as a pivot.

VERTES FEUILLES FARM

This farm lay about 300 yards behind the German front line the morning of the attack. To the south of the farm which was the sector of the 2nd Division our front line was along the east edge of the Villers-Cotterets Forest and north of the Farm which was held by the 1st Moroccan Division the front line was about 300 yards west of the road going to Saint-Pierre-l'Aigle. The joining point between the 1st Moroccan Division and the 2nd American Division was opposite this Farm.

SAINT-PIERRE-L'AIGLE

This village was the joining point of the left of the 1st Moroccan Division and the right of the 1st American Division. Our troops held the town and the Germans were about midway between it and Dommiers.

DOMMIERS

A town in the German front lines.

CROIX DE FER

On the open ground around Croix de Fer the German artillery succeeded in getting direct hits on about twelve Allied tanks and wrecked them the morning of the attack. This place was organized as a strong point with machine gun positions protected by barbed wire.

CHAUDUN

This was the right of the sector of the 1st Division.

PLOIZY

Off to the left of the road may be seen the ravines in which were located the German machine gunners who caused considerable delay and losses to the advancing troops of the 1st Division.

SOISSONS

The party stops at Soissons for one hour for lunch. The Hotel du Lion Rouge near the Place de la Republique, and the Hotel de la Croix d'Or near the Cathedral are both recommended. Soissons was first occupied by the Germans early in September 1914, and was evacuated by them about ten days later, following the 1st Battle of the Marne. It was again occupied by them on May 30, 1918, and again evacuated by them about August 1, 1918, following the Allied counter-offensive.

GROUY

In their retreat following the 1st Battle of the Marne the Germans established themselves on the row of hills north of this village. The French held the town of Crouy and had a footing on the high ground north of it until January 1915 when the Germans drove them back to the south side of the Aisne. From that time to early in 1917 the Germans had the north side of the river and the French the south side. This proximity accounts for the destruction of the city. About one kilometer north of Crouy the party begins passing by numerous German dugouts along the roadside. Following the Allied offensive of 1916 along the Somme River, the Germans in March 1917 began retiring to what is called the Hindenburg line which in this sector was about 7 kilometers northeast of Soissons. By May 5, 1917, the Germans had been driven back to a line which lay roughly about two kilometers south of the Chemin des Dames.

FORT DE LA MALMAISON

In October 1917 the French, after an artillery preparation lasting six days and night, drove the Germans to the north of the Ailette in the sector of the Fort de la Malmaison, and took 11,300 prisoners. From that time until May 27, 1918, this sector was quiet. The 26th (New England) Division held this sector during February and March 1918.

VAILLY
BOURG-ET-COMIN
ŒUILLY
VILLERS

This was one of the villages where the 77th Division was being held up by the Germans in September when it was relieved by the 8th Italian Division.

MERVAL
FISMES

Here the party makes a stop for orientation. Fismes was taken by the 32nd American Division on August 4, 1918 after very desperate fighting. It will be recalled that our troops got into the city the afternoon of August 3, but they were soon driven out. However they attacked again the morning of August 4, and were successful. The 28th Division relieved the 32nd Division in Fismes on August 6.

REIMS

The party makes a stop here to visit the Cathedral. The German lines passed about two miles from the Cathedral of Reims until October 1918. The city was continually bombarded by the Germans. Reims was occupied by the Germans for several days at the beginning of the war, but was evacuated following the 1st Battle of the Marne.

VILLE-EN-TARDENOIS

The Germans held this town between June 1 and July 18, 1918. The lines followed the road from Reims to Dormans from June 1 to July 15, 1918.

DORMANS
COURTHIEZY
MOULINS

The party stops here to look over the ground held by the 3rd Division. Off to the west may be seen the town of Mezy and closer by is the Surmelin River. The Germans got into Mezy in their attack of July 15. The hill east of Mezy was taken from the French at that time also.

FOSSOY

On July 15 a small force of German troops reached Fossoy held by the 7th Regiment. They were quickly driven out.

BLESMES
CHATEAU-THIERRY

Here party takes dinner and catches a train for Chalons.

CHAPTER III

Second Day of Officers Battlefield Trip

REDUCTION OF THE ST. MIHIEL SALIENT

PRELIMINARY DECISIONS

The offensive of March 21st, 1918, and the succeeding German offensives, with the consequent necessity for employing American troops wherever they might be of the most immediate use, had postponed the formation of an American army from day to day. Thus while on May 19th the Commander-in-Chief had reached an agreement with General Petain looking to the early organization of an American sector in the Wœvre, the German May 27th offensive delayed the execution of this project and involved our most experienced troops in saving Paris and in reducing the Marne salient.

On July 14th the Commander-in-Chief had an interview with Marshal Foch, during the course of which it was agreed that an American army should be organized. No definite action was obtained however, and on July 21st, after the successful beginning of the July 18th counter-attack, the Commander-in-Chief again met Marshal Foch and General Petain as well. At this interview it was agreed, the final success of the July 18th attack not yet being secured, that the 1st Army should be formed for the time being in the Chateau-Thierry region. The Commander-in-Chief insisted however, that the Chateau-Thierry region was not the region best suited for the employment of our forces, and pointed out the necessity for a final and definite agreement on a sector which should be permanently American; the use of our troops in the Chateau-Thierry region to be considered as temporary. This view prevailed, and it was agreed that a definite American sector should be eventually constituted in the region of Nancy-Toul.

On July 24th a most important conference between the American, British and French Commanders-in-Chief and Marshal Foch (all of whom were accompanied by officers of their respective staffs) was held at Bombon.

Briefly the Conference agreed that all the allied forces should pass to an offensive attitude.

- (a) Continuation of the reduction of the Marne salient to secure as a minimum result the release of the Paris-Chalons railroad.
- (b) Reduction of the Amiens salient, thus securing the release of the Paris-Amiens railroad.
- (c) Reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient.
- (d) Release of the mining regions in the north (region of Bethune) and driving the enemy away from the ports of Dunkerque and Calais.

The reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient was confided to the American Army, but no approximate date for this effort was fixed.

On the other hand, it was agreed on July 24th to begin immediately movements which would finally result in the formation in the Chateau-Thierry region of an American army of two army corps of three divisions each.

By August 3rd the operations in the Chateau-Thierry region had not only completely succeeded in their original purpose, but the line showed tendencies of stabilizing. A study made at American G. H. Q. at this time showed the

WAR DEPARTMENT

LIBRARY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

advisability of changing the plan of forming the First American Army in the region of Chateau-Thierry and instead of commencing the plans for the reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient. In August the line on the Vesle did become stabilized and on August 9th the Commander-in-Chief conferred with Marshal Foch at Sarcus and with General Petain at Provins. In brief, the decision reached was to leave an American corps of three divisions on the Vesle and to begin the movement of troops which were to undertake the reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient.

Before taking up the problem of assembling the troops to be employed and the actual operation, it may be of interest to summarize the previous history of the salient and its importance.

HISTORY OF THE SAINT-MIHIEL SALIENT PRIOR TO AMERICAN OPERATIONS

The Saint-Mihiel salient was occupied by German troops in the early days of the war. The necessity of meeting German attacks farther north had so weakened the French forces south of Verdun that the Germans were able to occupy the heights of the Meuse in that region. On September 20th 1914, General von Strantz, commanding two army corps, advanced from the plain of the Wœvre on to the plateau of Hattonchattel practically unopposed. From his foothold on the plateau, von Strantz advanced against and took the forts of the Meuse and Saint-Mihiel September 22nd and 23rd. To meet this enemy thrust General Sarrail, commanding the French army around Verdun, drew back and extended his right while General Dubail, commanding the French army further south pushed forces north from Toul and Liouville. The joint action of these two French commanders had by September 26th contained the German advance practically to the lines which for the next four years marked the Saint-Mihiel salient. The names of the places—Bouconville, Beaumont and Flirey—where these French forces came in contact with the Germans are familiar to American forces as front line positions on our occupation of this sector in 1918.

The French did not immediately make a determined effort to reduce the salient, although there was hard fighting at Apremont in October 1914. In February and April of 1915 however, there were serious attempts to force the enemy from his threatening position. General Sarrail's army around Verdun took the offensive and pushed east across the heights of the Meuse. During the course of these offensives the village of Les Eparges was taken and the neighbouring heights. In April, at the same time as the attack near Les Eparges, the army at Toul attacked down the Moselle taking most of the Bois-le-Pretre and threatening the whole German line just north of the Pont-a-Mousson-Commercy road. But the final result of these operations was local success only, and the Germans retained the salient practically intact.

CHARACTER AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SAINT-MIHIEL SALIENT

The primary strength of the Saint-Mihiel salient lay in the character of the ground on its western face, which ran along the eastern heights of the Meuse north of Saint-Mihiel and constituted an exceedingly strong position. Security from attack on the southern face was found in the difficult ground comprising Loupmont Ridge and Montsec, which are off-shoots from the main heights of the Meuse, and the wooded and hilly ground which lies between Montsec and the Moselle river at Pont-a-Mousson. But in spite of these natural defences the salient had the weakness of all salients in that it might be attacked on both flanks and pinched out. Consequently the Germans had during the years of its occupation by them strengthened the salient by a great mass and variety of artificial works, the main feature of which was an elaborate system of wiring.

The offensive value of the salient to the Germans lay chiefly in the fact that it interrupted French communications from west to east on the main railroad Paris-Nancy while constantly threatening the entire region between Nancy and

Bar-le-Duc, as well as that between Bar-le-Duc and Verdun. The principal defensive value of the salient from the German point of view was that it covered the strategic center of Metz and the Briey iron basin. It must be reduced before any general offensive against these two vital points or even further east could be contemplated.

PRELIMINARY STUDIES FOR THE SAINT-MIHIEL OPERATION

The French command naturally had studied the question of the reduction of the salient, but the one attempt made in 1915 had failed and the general situation had forbidden another French attempt. Various considerations dictated the occupation of this part of the line by the American army when it should arrive in force. Consequently the reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient was, as has been indicated, studied by the American command as the first large scale operation by an American army. The original plan for the attack contemplated establishing a line which would threaten both Metz and Briey. The general line to be attained was : Bouxieres-sous-Froidmont, just north-east of Pont-a-Mousson, Mars-la-Tour-Bezouvaux, which is just north-east of Verdun. However, the allied success in August caused the Allied High Command to decide on a combined offensive late in September in which the American army should attack west of the Meuse. Several conferences (August 30th, September 2nd) were held between the Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Foch and General Petain which resulted in limiting the Saint-Mihiel operation with the line Regnieville-en-Haye-Thiaucourt-Vigneulles as the objective.

LOCATION OF AMERICAN FORCES FROM AUG. 9th AND ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND

The definite decision taken on August 9th to unite at least a part of our forces found our divisions dispersed from Switzerland to the English Channel. It can not be too often repeated that, unfortunate as this dispersion was, it had been rendered necessary by the duty which had fallen upon the American Command of saving an Allied defeat. The extent of this dispersion of our divisions on August 9th is shown on the accompanying map; a study of which indicates the staff problems involved in the concentration of our forces. But in addition to divisions large numbers of troops such as army artillery, aviation, tank corps and services of all kinds had to be found and concentrated for the operation. The total of troops of all classes to engage in the operation amounted to approximately 600,000. The necessity for concentrating these troops in so secret a manner as to secure at least a tactical surprise added to the difficulties and required long night marches. Still another difficulty lay in the fact that, due to necessities arising from the successes obtained by the enemy in March and April, America had sent over infantry in advance of auxiliary arms, leaving us woefully short in artillery, etc. (This action had been largely due to representations made by our Allies). Consequently arrangements with the French Command were necessary to secure the army and corps artillery, aviation and other services required by so important an operation. The French High Command responded generously to our requests and we were able to enter the fight with a dominating force of artillery and aviation.

The 2nd French Colonial Corps (39th and 26th and 2nd Dismounted Cavalry Divisions) was in sector on either side of the town of Saint-Mihiel. Although the part to be played in the general plan by this corps was in a certain sense secondary yet it was essential and its command was accordingly to be given to the Commander-in-Chief, who, with the First American Army Staff, was to assume immediate command of the attack. The organization of the First Army Staff had begun in July, and at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre the Staff had begun to function administratively in anticipation of the organization of an American Army. The American Army Corps Headquarters to participate in the attack were the 1st, which

on August 9th commanded a sector on the Vesle, the 4th which was at Neufchateau, and the 5th which was at Remiremont exercising administrative control over our troops in the 7th French Army. On August 30th General Pershing with the 1st Army Headquarters at Ligny-en-Barrois took over command of the sector extending from Port-sur-Seille east of Pont-a-Mousson to a point southeast of Verdun.

GENERAL PLAN OF ATTACK

The general plan of attack to carry out the operation, as limited by the conferences August 30th to September 2nd, was as follows :

- (a) An attack from the south through the wooded country southeast of Vigneulles.
- (b) A follow-up attack on the left flank of the southern attack.
- (c) An attack from the west over the eastern heights of the Meuse between Les Eparges and Seuzey toward Hannonville and Hattonville.
- (d) An exploitation and follow-up attack on the right flank of the western attack.
- (e) Eventual exploitation.

The southern attack was to be made by the 1st and 4th Corps from right to left. The follow-up attack on its left was to be made by the 2nd French Colonial Corps two hours after the southern attack had started. This French Corps also was to make the attack given in (d) above, advancing two hours after the attack given in (c) above. The 5th Corps was designated for the western attack.

BATTLE ORDER OF THE 1st ARMY

On the night of September 11-12 the 1st Army was ready to attack. Its battle order was as follows :

- 1st Corps—Port-sur-Seille to Limey.
82nd, 90th, 5th, 2nd Divisions in line (82nd Division merely to follow up the attack east of the Moselle). 78th Division in reserve.
- 4th Corps—Limey to Richecourt.
89th, 42nd and 1st Divisions in line.
3rd Division in reserve.
- 2nd French Colonial Corps—Richecourt to Mouilly.
39th Division, 26th Division and 2nd Dismounted Cavalry Division (all French).
No division in reserve as this corps made only follow-up attacks.
- 5th Corps—Mouilly to Watronville.
26th Division, 15th French Colonial Division and part of 4th Division in line.
Part of 4th Division in reserve.
(The attack to be made by the 26th and 15th Divisions).

The Army reserves were the 35th Division at Liverdun and the 91st Division at Sorcy-sur-Meuse. The 80th Division at Tronville and the 33rd Division west of Verdun had not been designated as army reserve but were available in emergency.

HOSTILE SITUATION NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 11-12th

The enemy occupied the general line in front of Rouves, Cheminot, Regnicville-en-Haye, Saint-Baussant, Apremont, Fort du Camp des Romains, Chauvencourt (including city of Saint-Mihiel), Spada, Seuzey, Combres, Tresauvaux and Ville-en-Wœvre. The line was strongly fortified and the enemy's forces were distributed in great depth as the most successful formation in which to meet a great attack.

The enemy's strength amounted to eight divisions and one separate brigade.

Documents captured in June 1918, had shown that the enemy had a plan for evacuating the salient in case this became necessary. Prisoners and deserters as well as abnormal activity noted by observers now gave evidence that the enemy had now begun to move his artillery and material out of the salient in anticipation of an attack.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ATTACK

The operation was initiated at 1:00 a. m. September 12th by a heavy artillery fire of destruction. Through reinforcements of French artillery the 1st Army had at its disposal 2,971 guns for the artillery preparation. Much of this artillery was of heavy calibre and the destruction and disorganization which it caused within the salient was very great. While, as has been mentioned, the Germans were in process of gradually evacuating the salient the attack was a tactical surprise and this orderly evacuation was thrown into the utmost disorder by the artillery long range fire on the enemy's roads. Fire directed against the defenses proper was also very effective in tearing up trenches and driving personnel to cover. On the southern face of the salient artillery fire was continued from 1:00 a. m. to 5:00 a. m. On the western face the preparation was continued until 8:00 a. m. Due to the fact that the enemy was withdrawing his artillery as well as to the overpowering superiority of American guns the enemy artillery reaction, especially toward the center of the salient, was light.

At 5:00 a. m. the six American divisions in the front line on the southern face of the salient and west of the Moselle advanced. The advance was preceded by a rolling barrage and assisted by French tanks manned partly by American and partly by French. Tanks and Engineer detachments equipped with wire cutters and Bangalore torpedoes went forward to cut the wire. To American infantry the wire did not prove as great an obstacle as our previous information had led us to expect. In many places the wire was old and badly kept up, some gaps had been cut by artillery fire, other gaps were made by the tanks; above, all, the enemy, demoralized by the volume of artillery fire and the suddenness of the attack, did not, except in certain sectors, make a stubborn defense. In an irresistible dash the American soldier went over, under and through the wire which had held up the Allied advance for four years. All the initial objectives were taken on scheduled time. The attack was now so evidently successful that the schedule of attack was advanced and the salient was pinched out by a junction of the 4th and 5th Corps in the vicinity of Vigneulles and Hattonville, effected early in the morning of September 13th.

In spite of heavy rains, which had made the ground soggy and difficult, many of the tanks accompanied the infantry through the trench systems, and did valuable work in wiping out machine-gun nests that constituted the main reliance of the German in his effort to cover his withdrawal.

To insure the success gained against the enemy reaction, it was essential to push the artillery up, and passage of the Rupt-de-Madt and smaller streams had to be assured. In addition, ammunition, food and other supplies had to go forward. The supply of the advance over a country poor in roads and in which the existing roads were cut by trench systems, torn by shell fire, and heavy from late rains, was met only by making of communications and circulation tactical considerations of the first importance. The engineer organizations had a most difficult problem in assuring the passage of artillery and trains.

Command of the air was assured by 1,481 airplanes, perhaps the most important air concentration the Western front ever saw.

The advance was halted on the army objective; the defense of this objective was organized and strong reconnaissance forces pushed ahead.

HOSTILE SITUATION ON NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 15-16th

The enemy occupied generally the position known as the Hindenburg line, from Pagny-sur-Moselle, through Chambley. Immediately on our front his 31st and 123rd Divisions, formerly in reserve, had been put in line, and other hastily collected units had been put in line, and other hastily collected units had been rushed into the defense. Movements in the rear indicated that reserves were being brought up on the front between the Meuse and Elain, and the German was evidently using every means in his attempt to limit an expected further American effort.

BATTLE ORDER OF THE 1st ARMY NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 15-16

- 1st Corps :
 - 82nd, 90th, 5th, 2nd Divisions in line.
 - 78th Division relieving 2nd Division.
- 4th Corps :
 - 89th and 42nd Divisions in line.
 - 3rd and 1st Divisions in reserve.
- 2nd French Colonial Corps :
 - 39th Division and 2nd French Dismounted Cavalry Divisions in line.
 - 26th French Division in reserve.
- 5th Corps :
 - 26th Division (U. S.) and 15th Colonial Division (French) in line.
 - 4th Division in reserve.
- Army reserves :
 - 35th Division at Liverdun.
 - 91st Division enroute to Verdun sector at Vaincourt.
 - 80th Division enroute to Verdun sector at Souilly.

RESULTS OF THE OPERATIONS

The great result of the operation was development of the 1st Army as an effective weapon for more vital fighting. The moral gain was also great. A large operation had been carried out with exact precision. All objectives had been reached on scheduled time, even though the schedule had been shortened as the progress of the attack permitted. Such a complete success with light losses had naturally raised the spirits of the command. Some of the old units which had been formerly engaged in bitter fighting looked on the operation merely as a successful maneuver. Earlier Allied offensives of 1918 had been successful only over ground captured by the Germans in the same year, and consequently not completely organized into a trench system. This operation had proved to the Allied Command that in the present state of the German defense American troops could successfully attack defenses on which four years of labor had been spent.

In a material way the gain was also important. The Paris-Avrincourt railroad was free. More than 200 square miles of territory had been restored to France. The captures included 13,251 prisoners, 466 guns, 752 machine guns, many trench mortars and small arms, ordnance material, engineer material, quantities of ammunition, clothing and equipment, telegraph material, railroad material, and rolling stock.

The casualties for the 1st Army were about 11,000. Considering the numbers engaged and the results obtained the losses were remarkably light.

The defenses to which the enemy had been driven back were not complete, and neither his defense nor his forces were well organized. A further advance could undoubtedly have been made on Metz and the Briey region. However,

the 1st Army was committed to the Meuse-Argonne operation within two weeks. Many of the troops to be used in that operation had been engaged in the Saint-Mihiel drive, and it was necessary to free them immediately. Reserve divisions were started in motion toward the Meuse-Argonne front as soon as the success of the Saint-Mihiel operation was assured and before it was completely terminated. Front-line divisions were subsequently withdrawn for the same purpose, and the Saint-Mihiel front was reluctantly permitted to stabilize.

SAINT-MIHIEL SALIENT

Itineraire 2nd Day

SAINTE-MENEHOULS
(Leave at 8 : 00 hours.)

CLERMONT-EN-ARGONNE

AUTRE COURT

BEAUZEE-SUR-AIRE

CHAUMONT-SUR-AIRE

PIERREFITTE

RUPT-DEVANT-SAINT-MIHIEL

CHAUVONCOURT

The village of Chauvencourt was held by the Germans as a bridge-head covering bridge at Saint-Mihiel over the Meuse until the American offensive in the salient.

SAINT-MIHIEL

Saint-Mihiel was the only point on the Meuse south of Verdun reached by the Germans in their first drive of 1914. This was the extreme point of their salient and in addition to the town they obtained a bridgehead across the Meuse including the village of Chauvencourt. The fort to the south of the town, Fort du Camp des Romains, was the only fort in the permanent line of the Meuse defenses which was captured by the Germans and held for four years, thus assuring their hold on Saint-Mihiel. Owing to the fact that the Germans held from two to three thousand French civilians in the town throughout the war, the French never bombarded it seriously, though most of the houses along the River were demolished. During the offensive of September 12, 1918, Saint-Mihiel itself was not attacked, but was pinched out by the action of the two American attacks further to the east and north. It was occupied on the 13th of September by the 39th French Division, and on that day it was entered by General Pershing and President Poincare.

VERBANDPLATZ

Verbandplatz was a German Post of Command for the sector in front. It is a good example of some of the wonderful concrete work done by the Germans in this sector. By walking from here south 500 meters, one gets a good idea of the trench warfare in this vicinity. There are numerous concrete machine gun positions, trenches and dugouts. A stop of 20 minutes should be made here.

APREMONT

At Apremont the German lines descended from the heights of the Meuse into the plains of the Woevre. As this point was the pivot of the German foothold on the heights. It was attacked repeatedly in 1914 and 1915 by the French in an effort to force the evacuation of the salient. The French defenses in the neighborhood of Apremont have many concrete reinforcements and pill boxes with heavy bands of wire and form one of the best examples of a system of trench

positions. Looking south from Apremont the French Fort of Liouville, one of the Toul Forts, can be seen about one and one-half kilometres in the distance. This fort was held by the French throughout the war. On leaving Apremont party passes through No Man's Land into the old French lines. The isolated ridge one kilometre to the left is Loupmont.

BOUCONVILLE

French and American front line town. The tanks that accompanied the 1st Division in their attack on September 12, 1918, were assembled in the woods southeast of Bouconville and had to use the Bouconville-Xivray-Richecourt road to get into position for the attack, crossing the creek Rupt-de-Mad at Richecourt. The left limit of the 1st Division sector was a north and south line halfway between Bouconville and Xivray.

XIVRAY

French and American front line town. Scene of several successful raids launched from here by the 1st Division in March, 1918.

RICHECOURT

German front line town. No Man's Land is crossed between Xivray and Richecourt. From here one can see Loupmont Ridge to the southwest and Montsec to the west, both of which were in the German lines. These were used as observation posts, Montsec especially. The Germans practically honeycombed Montsec with dugouts and galleries due to its importance as an observation post over the Woevre. During the attack of September 12th the left of the 1st Division passed 1,000 yards east of Montsec with no troops on its flank. Montsec was neutralized by heavy concentration of high explosives and smoke which screened the advancing Infantry from observation.

SEICHEPREY

This sector is a part of what was known as the Toul sector and as it had been quiet since 1915 it was used as a training sector for new divisions. Our first division had its initial appearance in the line here from October 21 to November 20, 1917. When the 26th Division occupied this sector the Germans put on a large scale daylight raid on April 20, 1918, using about a thousand special assault troops for the purpose. Placing a heavy box barrage around Xivray, Seicheprey and the Bois de Remieres, the enemy attacked at dawn aided by a heavy fog. The front line positions were overrun and Seicheprey taken. The Germans stopped at the Sibille trench and the corner of the woods just to the west of Seicheprey. The box barrage had cut off the troops within it from outside help and also hindered their retirement. Battalion Headquarters for the battalion occupying this sector was in Seicheprey. The Germans cleaned up most of the town, destroyed the dugouts, kitchen and first-aid station, captured the Battalion Headquarters and all its papers and on an appointed signal withdrew to the cemetery which they held as an advance post in front of the Sibille trench, and which they now organized for defense. The Germans came over in three parties; from the north northeast and northwest; all arriving at the town about the same time and all having overcome the resistance of the Americans in the trenches. The Germans held the Sibille trench all day while the Americans were making preparations for a counter attack. The day passed quietly except for the artillery fire, but just a little before the counter-attack was ordered, American patrols discovered that the Germans had abandoned the Sibille trench and returned to their own lines. Our casualties were 657, including 187 prisoners. The German losses were probably heavy as they left a number of dead on the field, though they were able to evacuate most of their wounded. Shortly after this affair the

Boche published a picture in the *Gazette des Ardennes* showing the prisoners they had captured. This paper was a propaganda sheet widely distributed on the front by balloons and aircraft. It was gotten out presumably for the benefit of prisoners of war and civilians in occupied areas.

The right flank of the 1st Division rested on Seicheprey for the attack of September 12, 1918.

A stop of 20 minutes should be made on the hill half-way between Seicheprey and Beaumont where this terrain can easily be seen.

BEAUMONT

FLIREY

All along the road to the north may be seen the French and American front line system. At Flirey the small ridge to the north was No Man's Land. It is in the 89th Division's sector limit running north and south, about two kilometres east of Flirey.

LIMEY

The 2nd Division was on the right of the 89th Division. Limey was in the 2nd Division's sector of September 12, 1918. This Division jumped off from trenches 500 metres north of the town on September 12th.

SAINT-PIERRE-AUBERRE

Here a sharp turn is made to the northwest in the direction of Thiaucourt. At this corner was a Battalion Headquarters during our occupation of the line prior to September 12. The large woods to the northeast is the Forêt du Bois le Pretre, which was in the sector of the 90th Division in the attack of September 12, 1918.

REGNIEVILLE-EN-HAYE

French and American front line town. Regnieville was the right limit of the 2nd Division and the left limit of the 5th Division on Sept. 12, 1918. The road from there to about two kilometres southeast of Thiaucourt was the sector line between the 2nd and 5th Divisions. Road passes through No Man's Land.

THIAUCOURT

This town was an important German railhead for the supplying of the troops on the south face of the Saint-Mihiel Salient and afterwards the railhead of the 92nd Division of the 2nd Army. It was one of the vital spots in the salient. This town was captured by the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Division in the morning of September 12. The troops then pushed forward and consolidated their lines on the high ground north of the town. Here the 2nd and 5th Divisions met and repulsed German counter-attacks. On the left of the road leaving Thiaucourt there is a large American cemetery of those killed in the Saint-Mihiel fight.

BENEY

SAINT-BENOIT (Turn to Left).

VIGNEULLES

Vigneulles was in the center of the Salient and was the most important German railhead in the area. It was a road center and stored here were large quantities of supplies of all kinds. It was in this town that the patrols of the 26th Division met those of the 1st Division at about 2 : 00 A. M., September 13, thus completing the cutting-off of the Salient. The 26th Division had come down the Grande Tranches de Calonne through Hattonchatel while the 1st Division had advanced north through the Bois de Nonsard.

HATTONCHATEL

Stop should be made here for 45 minutes and lunch had at this place. From the point of this hill a wonderful view can be had of the entire southern part of the Saint-Mihiel Salient. From here one can see Lake le Chaussee through which the lines passed after the attack, the vast plain of the Woeyre and as far north as Fresnes-en-Woeyre. This point is the most suitable in the salient from which one can make a study of the operations from maps and information furnished. Treaty between French and Germans in 1814 stated that this place could not be fortified for a period of 100 years.

SAINT-MAURICE-SOUS-LES-COTES

FRESNES-EN-WOEYRE

The town of Fresnes had been held as a strong point by the Germans since 1915, when most of the destruction seen here was done. In the attack of September 12, the 4th Division took the town by assault and the line was stabilized one kilometre to the east of it, where it stayed till November 10, when the 33rd Division made an attack and pushed the line forward as far as Marcheville, about 3 kilometres beyond. Concrete construction here is well worth noting.

VILLE-EN-WOEYRE

BRAQUIS

WARCQ

ETAIN

This town was held by French until the beginning of the attack of Verdun in 1916 when the French evacuated it for stronger positions near the hills east of the Meuse. Our lines were just in front of this town when the Armistice was signed. There are quite a number of good examples of fortified houses and German concrete work in this town well worth seeing, especially the house on the left of the road about the center of the town which, it is claimed, was visited by about the center of the town which, it is claimed, was visited by General Von Hindenburg. Refreshments may be had in this old house.

EIX

This town was in No Man's Land after the battle of Verdun in 1916. From the road here one gets a good view of the hills surrounding the town of Verdun. Fort Vaux and several of the smaller forts can be seen.

VERDUN

This finishes the trip through the Saint-Mihiel Salient. In returning from here to Romagne the story of the ground over which the party passes will be covered in the next day's trip.

BRAS

VACHERAUVILLE

SAMOGNEUX

CONSENOYVE

SIVRY-SUR-MEUSE

VILOSNES-SUR-MEUSE

DUN-SUR-MEUSE

ROMAGNE (Night will be spent at Romagne).

CHAPTER IV

THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OPERATIONS

Practically all of the supplies and evacuations of the German armies in France were dependent on two great railway systems : one passing through Liege, and the other through Luxembourg and Metz forming the four track line through Sedan and Mezieres. Neither system alone could supply the German masses in France, and no other important lines were available because the mountainous region of the Ardennes had forbidden the construction of an east-west line through that region. In addition, this latter line afforded the enemy the greatest facility for quick transportation of his troops from one sector to another, as it was not more than about 50 kilometers from the front in certain places. Early in 1918 the German Staff concluded that eventually their decreasing man-power would cause them to retire to the east side of the Meuse. They planned to use the Verdun region as a pivot and this railroad was needed to carry out their project. The Meuse-Argonne front on September 26 was 50 kilometers from the railroad through Sedan. Off to the east of the American sector lay the famous Briey iron deposits of Europe, and from which fields the Germans took the iron and steel necessary for their ammunition. Their losses would be fatal to their armies. An advance in the American sector would make these fields subject to a flank attack. Along this front were the Hindenburg, Volker, Freya and Kriemhilde Stellungen, all within a distance of 20 kilometers, while on the other fronts they were much more widely separated. A short quotation from an order of Gen. Von der Marwitz, who commanded the German 5th Army just west of the Meuse, issued in September 1918 will show the importance of this sector :

“ The 5th 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 holding of the Verdun front. ”

East of the Meuse the dominating heights not only secured the enemy's left but gave him positions in which powerful artillery could be installed to bring an oblique fire on the western bank. Batteries located in the elaborately fortified Argonne Forest secured the right flank and could even cross their fire with those guns on the east bank of the Meuse. Midway between the Meuse and the Argonne the heights of Montfaucon afforded the enemy perfect observation and formed a strong natural position which he had fortified. But while these were the most prominent features the east and west ridges, abutting on the Meuse and the Aire valleys, affording as they did, perfect machine gun positions, were perhaps the natural features which most favored the desperate defense which the enemy would have to make. Behind Montfaucon, wooded heights such as those west of Romagne and north of Barricourt constituted natural defences which were most favorable to the defence and most unfavorable to the offense. Finally, not the least of the difficulties faced by our troops were those resulting from the breadth of No Man's Land and the absolute destruction of roads across that area.

Even though the attack would have to be made against so strong a natural position it was nevertheless a sector in which the fighting could be forced. Thus, by compelling the enemy to draw in re-inforcements, the advance of our Allies farther west could be assisted. Above all, if the American Army could break this line in this sector, the end of the war would be in sight.

CONCENTRATION OF TROOPS

When on Sept. 2, the decision to attack on the Meuse-Argonne front was reached, the 1st Army was engaged in the preparation of the St. Mihiel drive.

A portion of the staff was withdrawn from the St. Mihiel operation, and plans were at once begun for initiating the new operation.

ARGONNE-MEUSE

The original concentration for the Meuse-Argonne operation included 15 divisions. Of these the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 35th, 80th, 82nd and 91st were involved in the pending St. Mihiel drive; the 29th, 37th and 92nd were in sectors in the Vosges; the 28th, 32nd and 77th were in the neighborhood of Soissons; the 79th Division was in one of our training areas, and the 33rd was near Bar-le-Duc. Practically all of the artillery, air service and other auxiliaries which could be found for the new operation, were committed to the St. Mihiel drive and could only be moved after it was completed.

Arrangements to move all units not to be employed in the St. Mihiel fight were begun at once, and on the second day (Sept. 13) of that fight reserve divisions and Army artillery units began moving towards the Meuse-Argonne front. Other artillery, Corps and Army artillery and tanks followed and finally some of the divisions which had been in first line in the St. Mihiel attack were withdrawn and joined in the masses moving to the new scene of action. To insure secrecy all movements had to be made at night and as only three routes were available, the roads were jammed to utmost capacity. The movement of masses involved was one of the most delicate and difficult problems of the war and its successful accomplishment is a tribute to the Staff work of the 1st Army.

On September 22, the command of the front from east of the Meuse to the western edge of the Argonne passed to the 1st Army, with headquarters at Souilly; the 17th French Corps with three divisions passed to the command of the 1st Army and the Army front now extended from east of the Moselle to the western edge of the Argonne. The Meuse-Argonne front had been taken over from the 2nd French Army which had rendered much assistance in routing troops, filling dumps, etc. Finally, after successfully adjusting a thousand and one difficulties and after having foreseen the other thousand and one necessities which confront staffs, the 1st Army stood on the night of September 25-26, ready for the attack.

HOSTILE SITUATION

On the night of Sept. 25-26 the enemy had ten divisions in line and ten in reserve on the front Fresnes-en-Woevre-Argonne Forest. After St. Mihiel the Germans had naturally expected a further American effort but successful ruses east of the line of the Meuse, extending as far south as Luneville, had deceived the enemy and as a consequence, the actual attack came as a tactical surprise. The surprise feature had also been assisted by arrangements under which a screen of French troops covered our first line until the last possible moment before launching the attack.

1st ARMY BATTLE ORDER

FIRST PHASE—MEUSE-ARGONNE

On the night of Sept. 25-26 the battle order of the 1st Army from right to left on the sector of attack, was as follows: the 3rd Corps with the 33rd, 80th and 4th Divisions in line and the 3rd Division in reserve; the 5th Corps with the 79th, 37th and 91st Divisions in line and the 32nd Division in reserve; the 1st Corps with the 35th, 28th and 77th Divisions in line and the 92nd Division in reserve; in Army Reserve were the 1st, 29th and 82nd Division in rear respectively of the 3rd, 5th and 1st Corps; the 5th French Cavalry Division was also in Army Reserve. Due to the fact that artillery organizations had not yet arrived for much of the infantry shipped over in the great troop movements of May, June

and July, many of the divisions were not served by their own artillery brigades. The 33rd, 37th, 79th and 91st Divisions were supported by brigades not belonging to these organizations, while the 3rd, 32nd, 92nd, and 29th Divisions in reserve, had no artillery brigades. The shortage in artillery material was largely made up by the assistance given by the French Command who made ample French artillery units available for the use in this operation, so that a total of 2,775 guns supported the attack.

In addition, the appropriate Corps and Army troops were available. These included 189 small tanks, of which 142 were manned by Americans, and the remainder by French, and 821 airplanes, 604 manned by Americans and the remainder by French.

Artillery interdiction fire on communications in the rear was begun six hours before the initial infantry attack. Three hours before the attack, fire was increased and intense artillery preparation all along the front commenced. At 5 : 30 a. m., Sept. 26, the artillery preparation changed to a rolling barrage, and the infantry advanced. The early over-running of the enemy's first positions led to the hope that the 5th French Cavalry Division in Army Reserve might be pushed through the lines to exploit the success in the direction of Grand Pre. However, blocked roads and other causes prevented the cavalry from getting through before the enemy reorganized his defense. The cavalry did not reach Varennes and the 5th French Cavalry Division took no further part in the fight.

The success of the initial assault having been assured the critical problem became the movement of artillery and munitions across the trackless No-Man's Land to support the continued progression of the troops. The strong point of Montfaucon, which had not fallen on the 26th, also interfered with moving guns forward; but at 11 a. m., September 27, the 79th Division captured Montfaucon, and the center of the line, which had fallen behind both flanks, went forward. At that hour, the right had made a splendid advance into the woods south of Brioules-sur-Meuse, but the extreme left was meeting strong resistance in the Argonne. The attack continued without interruption and the enemy, recognizing his danger, threw six new divisions into line before Sept. 29, developed a powerful machine-gun defense, supported by heavy artillery fire, and made frequent counter-attacks with fresh troops, particularly on the front of the 28th and 35th Divisions.

By nightfall of the 29th the 1st Army line was approximately Bois de la Cote-Lemont-Nautillois-Apremont southwest across the Argonne. Some of the divisions had suffered severely. Units had become intermingled on account of the difficult nature of the ground over which they had attacked and the fog or darkness which had covered them. Relief of these divisions had therefore to be made before another coordinated general attack could be launched. Consequently, on the night of Sept. 29 the 37th and 79th Divisions were relieved by the 32nd and 3rd Divisions respectively, and on the following night the 1st Division relieved the 35th Division.

At 5 : 30 a. m., on October 4 the general attack was renewed. The order of battle of first line divisions and Corps from right to left was as follows : 3rd Corps, with the 33rd, 4th and 80th Divisions in front line; 5th Corps with the 3rd and 32nd Divisions in front line; 1st Corps with the 1st, 28th and 77th Divisions in front line. The number of enemy divisions on the front from Fresnes-en-Woevre to the Argonne had increased from 20 to 23 divisions in line and in reserve and comprised his best divisions. The resistance was desperate and only small advances were realized except on the right of the 1st Corps. By evening of Oct. 5 the line was approximately Bois de la Cote-Lemont-Bois du Fays-Gesnes-Hill 240-Fleeville-Chehery-southwest through the Argonne.

On Oct. 6 the battle was extended to the east of the Meuse, in pursuance of instructions received to increase the extent of the battle-front and thus involving more German divisions. On Oct. 8 the 17th French Corps made a general attack

on the front east of the Meuse with the following divisions in line from right to left; 28th French Division, 18th French Division, 29th and 33rd American Divisions. This attack fell on the exact pivot of the enemy's salient formed by the whole of the enemy's armies in Northern France and our troops encountered elaborate fortifications and desperate resistance. Although the attack progressed until Oct. 10, the advance realized was not sufficient to relieve completely the troops west of the Meuse from enfilade artillery fire from the east bank.

In the meantime on Oct. 7, the 1st Corps launched the 82nd Division in an attack northwest towards Cornay to outflank the Germans in the Argonne, and to free the 28th and 1st Divisions from the enfilading fire coming from the eastern edge of the forest. The success of the 82nd Division in this attack was marked and did much to break down resistance in the Argonne. The 28th Division was relieved on the night of Oct. 8-9 by the extension of the front of the 82nd Division.

On October 9 the 5th Corps attacked, with the 1st Division reinforced by one brigade of the 91st Division and the 32nd Division. The stubbornest defense was encountered and the fighting was desperate but an advance was made. On Oct. 10 the Argonne was cleared and on the night of Oct. 11 the line was approximately Bois d'Ormont (north of Verdun) Molleville-Farm-Sivry-sur-Meuse-Bois de la cote-Lemont-Bois de Foret-Cunel-Romagne-Sommerance-Aire River-west to Grand Pre.

On the night of Oct. 11-12 the 1st Division was relieved by the 42nd Division and the 80th Division by the 5th Division, both relieving divisions coming from the Saint-Mihiel front. Local attacks continued on Oct. 12-13 preparatory to a general attack and on Oct. 14 this attack was delivered on a front from north of Verdun to Saint-Juvin. The order of battle in line on the front of attack from right to left was : 17th French Corps with the 26th French Division, 18th French Division, 29th and 33rd Americans Divisions; 3rd Corps with the 4th, 3rd and 5th Divisions; 5th Corps with the 32nd and 42nd Divisions; and the 1st Corps with the 82nd and 77th Divisions. Stubborn resistance was encountered everywhere and on most of the front only small advances were realized. Nevertheless, the La Cote-Dame-Marie fell and the Kriemhilde Line of defense was broken.

On Oct. 18 there was heavy fighting east of the Meuse and the dogged offensive continued everywhere by local operations. On Oct. 23, the 3rd and 5th Corps pushed northward as far as Bantheville. It was now necessary to relieve certain troops, consolidate positions and generally to get forces and supplies in hand before attempting another general attack. The remaining days of October were therefore devoted to preparing for the great attack to be launched on Nov. 1.

The material results which had been obtained by the 1st Army up to the end of October may be summarized as follows : the enemy's most elaborately prepared positions had been broken through; the southern half of the Argonne was in our hand; 18,600 prisoners, 370 cannons, 1,000 machine guns and countless materiel of all sorts captured; an increasing number of German divisions rising from 20 in line and reserve on Sept. 26 to 31 on Oct. 31, had been drawn into the fight; the great railroad artery through Carignan and Sedan was seriously threatened.

In preparation for the Meuse-Argonne attack the 1st Army had merely extended its front, retaining command of the troops on the old St. Mihiel front. But by early October the ration strength of the 1st Army, including the French troops, had risen to over 1,000,000 men, and for this and other reasons the organization of another Army was necessary. On Oct. 10, therefore, the 2nd American Army was created and on Oct. 12 Major General Robert L. Bullard was assigned to command it; the St. Mihiel front extending from Port-sur-Seille to Fresnes-en-Woevre was taken from the 1st Army and assigned to the 2nd Army. On Oct. 12 the Commander-in-Chief assigned Major General Hunter Liggett to command of the 1st Army and, establishing his advanced headquarters at Ligny-en-

Barrois, assumed command of the group of armies formed by the 1st and 2nd American Armies.

The prospect which became more and more a certainty of forcing an early conclusion of the war made it essential to keep all troops in line to the utmost of their power and endurance, and therefore forbade the rest to which the tired divisions were richly entitled. Divisions which could no longer remain on the battle front were therefore often sent to the calmer sectors of the 2nd Army. Notwithstanding the fact that it was constantly composed of tired divisions, the 2nd Army managed by energetic attitude to keep the enemy in its front in constant dread. The 2nd Army was also prepared, as will be noticed later, to launch a powerful offensive when all plans were interrupted on November 11 by the armistice.

SECOND AND FINAL PHASE OF MEUSE-ARGONNE

The French 4th Army, as well as our 1st Army, had felt the need of a period of comparative inactivity, so that the troops might be reorganized and supplies accumulated for another concerted attack. It was, of course, desirable that the attack of the 1st Army and that of the French 4th Army should be simultaneous. As a result of conferences with French G. H. Q. and Marshal Foch's Headquarters, November 1 was finally selected as the day of the attack.

The general objective of the attack was still the region Sedan-Mezieres, and its primary purpose was, of course, to cut the great railroad.

The 1st and immediate object of the 1st Army was the capture of Buzancy and the heights of Barricourt, the outflanking of the northern part of the Argonne, and establishing contact with the 4th French Army near Boult-aux-Bois.

The line on the night of Oct. 31-Nov. 1 ran approximately as follows: Meuse River-Clery Le Grand-north of Bantheville-south of Saint-Georges-north of Saint-Juvin-north of Chevieres. The order of battle from right to left was as follows: 3rd Corps with the 5th and 90th Divisions in line and the 3rd Division reserve; 5th Corps with the 89th and 2nd Divisions in line and the 1st and 42nd Division in reserve; 1st Corps with the 80th, 77th and 78th Divisions in line and the 82nd Division in reserve. The 32nd Division was in Army reserve. The attack was preceded by two hours' violent artillery preparation. By continuous effort all available artillery had been moved forward to suitable positions to cover the infantry advance, and was well co-ordinated in a tremendous preparation. The enemy was overwhelmed and broke before the determined infantry. The 3rd Corps took Andevanne, and the 5th Corps pushed forward most rapidly and drove the enemy from the heights of the Bois de Barricourt, a formidable obstacle which had blocked the way to Sedan.

On Nov. 2 the 1st Corps joined more actively in the movement which had now become an onslaught that the enemy could not contain. On the 3rd, troops were rushed forward in motor trucks in pursuit of the demoralized enemy. By the night of Nov. 3 the 1st Corps had reached St. Pierremont, the 5th Corps had taken Fosse and the 3rd Corps Beauclair. The enemy's line had been pierced to a distance of nearly 20 kilometers and selected heavy batteries were rushed forward to fire on the important railroad lines at Montmedy-Longuyon and Conflans. The ultimate object of the whole operation was now within reach.

On the 4th of November the pursuit was continued and operations were extended to the east bank of the Meuse. By night our troops were established on the west bank opposite Stonay, and on Nov. 5 our line was beyond Stonne on the west of the Meuse, while on the east bank the 5th Division of the 3rd Corps had crossed the river and progressed over two kilometers east of Briulles and Dunsur-Meuse. Just west of the Meuse the enemy resistance had been completely disorganized. All his reserves had been used up and his first line divisions were

in flight. To the east of the Meuse, however, the enemy still held, and progress was slow. On Nov. 6 the 1st Corps pushed seven kilometers beyond Raucourt. The great railway artery was within easy artillery range and a continuation of our efforts and those of our Allies farther north meant the end of all the German armies in northern France.

Since October 7 on which date it became certain that the German could not wrest from the 1st Army its initial success in breaking the Meuse-Argonne line, the German Government had sought through the President of the United States to secure an armistice, which needless to say, would, in the German mind, be acceptable to Germany.

Several exchanges of notes between the German Government and the President took place, until finally on November 5 the President informed Germany that the question of an armistice must be taken up with Marshal Foch, the Allied Commander-in-Chief. On Nov. 6, when the 1st Army had driven the German until his retreat became a rout, the German High Command asked Marshal Foch for a conference. Two such coincidences are not the result of chance and are sufficient proof that the American soldier had borne his share in securing victory. The German representatives met Marshal Foch on the night of Nov. 7-8. The Germans asked for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Marshal Foch refused and gave the Germans 72 hours in which to accept armistice terms which had already been prepared. All the Allies were ordered to continue their attacks.

On Nov. 7 the river line of the Meuse to a point not far from Sedan was in the hands of the 1st and 5th Corps. On Nov. 7, 8 and 9 the German forces on the heights southeast of Stenay were pushed into the plain of the Woevre. The 1st Corps was withdrawn and its sector taken over by the 4th French Army. East of the Meuse the pursuit was continued. On Nov. 10 the 5th Corps forced a crossing over the Meuse south of Mouzon, and on Nov. 11 this Corps crossed at Stenay and occupied that town in liaison with our 3rd Corps on its right.

Early the morning of Nov. 11 the German Commissioners accepted the terms of the armistice. American G. H. Q. was at once notified by Marshal Foch's Headquarters that the armistice would go into effect at 11 : 00 a. m. The Armies were at once notified, and they in turn transmitted the order through the Corps Headquarters to the troops. The advance of our troops had been so rapid, however that communication beyond Corps Headquarters was uncertain, and in at least one case one of our small detachments took prisoners after 11 : 00 a. m.

RESULTS OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OPERATIONS

From Sept. 26 to Nov. 11 the Germans employed 46 divisions in attempting to defend the Meuse-Argonne sector. This was 25 percent of the enemy's entire divisional strength on the western front. But since these divisions included the finest Prussian shock troops the actual percentage of the enemy's fighting strength represented by the 46 Divisions was probably more than 25 percent. It should be recalled that American divisions were confronting the enemy at other points of the front at this time also. Notwithstanding the forces thrown in by the enemy the 1st Army had been completely successful. The enemy's vital supply line had been cut. Nearly 20,000 prisoners, over 400 guns, more than 300 trench mortars, 3,000 old machine guns and a large quantity of other material, including 3 locomotives and 100 cars had been taken.

The American casualties were just under 119,000. This number was large, but viewed in the light of results achieved, the casualties were light.

Third Day of Officers Battlefield Trip

EASTERN SECTION OF MEUSE-ARGONNE AREA AND VERDUN

ROMAGNE

The town of Romagne is a fitting location for the largest of our national cemeteries as around it occurred during the second and third weeks of October, 1918, some of the hottest fighting our troops encountered. The breaking of the Kriemhilde Stellung at this point was vital to the success of the American offensive. This formidable system of defenses extended from Grand Pre east along the hills of the Cote Dame Marie above Romagne and across Hill 299 to the Meuse where it joined the main line of the Hindenburg system. Our troops were stopped in front of the Kriemhilde Stellung here on October 8 after working their way up from the south for two weeks of continuous fighting. On the 9th of October the 32nd Division made an attack that was to sweep through the Bois de Valoup, southwest of Romagne, break the line and envelop the town. On the left of this attack the crest of the Cote Dame Marie was reached at one point and held for a time, but the right was halted by the Mamelle Trench. The 3rd Division attacking from the south could not make much progress either. Farther east the 80th reached the Cunel-Briuelles road, but could go no further. To the right of the 80th the 4th took the Bois de Foret on the 12th of October, but the 5th which had relieved the 80th was punished severely and was withdrawn. The 3rd Division then side-slipped and relieved the 5th and the latter attacked through the 3rd in the general offensive of the 14th of October.

This offensive was launched after a two-hour artillery preparation but met the toughest kind of resistance. The 32nd was finally able to take Romagne at 2:00 P. M. and the 5th on its right drove ahead and cleaned out the Bois de Pultiere north of Cunel. Taking the road eastward from Romagne to Cunel we pass at right angles to the attack of the 5th Division. Turning south from Cunel the road passes into the Bois de Cunel which is filled with German rest camps. This woods was finally cleared of the enemy on October 12th by the 3rd and 80th Divisions. The sector of the 3rd Division was to the west of this road and the 80th was to the east.

MADELINE FARM

In a clearing east of the road can be seen the group of buildings called Madeline Farm. A patrol of the 79th Division reached this point on September 28th but was wiped out. Not until October 9 was the Farm finally captured by the 3rd Division. The shattered tree trunks and the many marks of machine gun bullets on the buildings and trees speak eloquently of the fierce nature of the fighting for the possession of the Farm. This was the furthest point reached by the tanks that were attached to the 3rd Corps.

NANTILLOIS

Continuing south the road leads to Nantillois which was captured by the 79th Division on September 27. Just west of the town can be seen the Bois de Beuge. The front line of this division was on the northern edge of this wood when they were relieved by the 3rd Division on the afternoon of September 29. Sweeping down the slopes of Montfaucon in extended order in plain sight of the enemy, the 4th and 7th Infantry of the 3rd Division suffered heavily in making this relief as did the 79th Division who withdrew through them.

MONTFAUCON

Following the road up the northern slope of Montfaucon the first building reached is the only one in the village that is nearly intact. Built up inside of

this house is a very solid concrete tower forming an observation post. A periscope 30 feet long which is now at the Military Academy at West Point was used in this observation post and permitted the observer to take shelter well under ground. It is said that the German Crown Prince watched his offensive of 1916 on Verdun from this point. From the top of this tower an excellent view may be had of the terrain to the north. Three kilometres to the northwest the oval-shaped Bois de Beuge can be seen. Beyond it to the north lie the Bois de Cumel and the Bois de Fays. On the horizon are the Cote Dame Marie to the northwest and Hill 299 to the north, marking the general position of the Kriemhilde Stellung. Looking due west the dark line of the Argonne Forest appears on the sky line and the break in it to the north of west is the point at which the Aire River cuts through the Forest at Grand Pre. The best view to the south from Montfaucon is from the solid German O. P. in the ruins of the church on the southern edge of the Hill. From this point can be seen the sectors of the 3rd and 5th Corps at the jump-off on September 26. Looking eastward the Heights of the Meuse on the eastern side of that River are seen on the horizon. The range of low shell-scarred hills running east and west are (1) the Cote de l'Oie from which jumped off the 33rd Division on the extreme right of the 3rd Corps. (2) The famous Mort Homme, noted for the bloody fighting in 1916; the 80th Division sector was on this hill. Partly on the Mort Homme and partly on (3) Hill 304 was the sector of the 4th Division which held the left of the 3rd Corps. The white road that can be seen winding up the slope of Hill 304 directly to the south, marked approximately the Corps sectors. West of this road came the 79th Division of the 5th Corps. In the broad expanse of woods to the west of this again were the sectors of the 37th and 91st Divisions. The western limit of the 5th Corps sector in the Bois de Cheppy was the bald hill east of Vauquois which was in the sector of the 35th Division. Beyond this was the 28th in the Aire Valley and the 77th in the Argonne.

On the morning of September 26 Montfaucon was in the sector of the 79th Division. Owing to the dense fog which slowed the advance and the resistance of the enemy in the line of trenches two kilometres to the south of the hill, the 79th Division had not been able to advance beyond the woods which we see below us by four o'clock in the afternoon. The Divisions on both flanks had pushed forward on either side several kilometres so the 79th was ordered to make a frontal attack on the hill. The assaulting wave had gotten only a few hundred yards from the edge of the woods when they were thrown back by a terrific blast of machine-gun and shell fire. Not until the following day at about noon was Montfaucon completely in the possession of the Americans.

MALANCOURT

Taking the road to the south the German line of resistance is crossed at the point where the ground begins to slope down to the valley of the Forges Brook. Along this dip ran the old No Man's Land during the greater part of the war. The heap of ruins indicates where the town of Malancourt stood. Held by the French till 1916, this village marked from that time on the German outpost line and their concrete pill boxes can be seen commanding the roads. From Malancourt we cross the Forges Brook and it can readily be seen what an obstacle this was when swollen by the heavy September rains. The road we traverse across the valley and up Hill 304 was built by the 4th Engineers immediately after the jump-off. 40,000 sand bags were used in its construction. Passing through the almost unrecognizable ruins of the village of Haucourt we ascend the slopes of Hill 304 which was the scene of so much carnage during the German offensive of 1916.

HILL 304

Standing on the forward crest of Hill 304, a hundred meters west of the road, we can see to the north how the German lines looked on September 26.

From this point the right of the 79th Division began its attack. A little to the west of north Montfaucon can be seen on the sky line. From here it is obvious what an important observation point Montfaucon was and how its height of 342 meters made it the dominating feature of this region. Looking eastward and across the valley the round patch of woods known as the Bois de Forges can be seen on the slope opposite our lines. It was the mission of the 33rd Division to capture these woods and swing their front around until it faced due east, thus covering the right flank of the 3rd Corps. This operation was carried out with great precision, 900 prisoners being taken at a cost of only 200 casualties. Later this Division suffered heavily in holding their lines on the river from the heavy enemy shell fire coming from the Heights of the Meuse opposite them. As our offensive progressed this fire became so damaging that it was necessary to put on an auxiliary offensive east of the river on October 8 to clear these Heights.

The other two Divisions of the 3rd Corps also made excellent progress on the 26th of September, driving across the rolling country which we see to the northeast to a depth of 7 kilometres at some points.

The preparatory bombardment for the attack began at 11:00 P. M. on the night of the 25th of September with the heavy artillery firing on known strong points and executing counter-battery missions and long-distance harrassing fire. At 2:00 A. M. the rate of fire was increased to the maximum and the 75's opened up on the forward areas. At 5:30 A. M. the 75's started their rolling barrage at the rate of 100 yards in three minutes. The barrage included a great many smoke shells and special Gas and Flame Troops added their smoke to the barrage. The dense fog completely screened our advancing troops and reduced the number of casualties, but also slowed down our progress so that the 79th Division lost the barrage before it had worked its way through the morass and heavy wire in the bed of the Forges Brook. However, our counter-battery work had been so effective that there was little reaction from the enemy artillery and their counter-barrage was very light, causing very few casualties.

The 79th Division jumped off in column of brigade, the regiments being in column of battalions. Other divisions used different formations according to the terrain that they had to cross. For instance, in the case of the 33rd Division, the formation was line of brigades and the right brigade did not move forward until the left brigade had crossed the Forges Brook and swung around, taking the Bois de Forges in flank and the village of Forges itself directly in rear.

ESNES

Following the road south across Hill 304 the village of Esnes is reached in the valley. This town marks the American gun line for the offensive of September 26. In a small area around Esnes were massed two regiments of 75's. The destruction of this village was done mostly in 1916 during the German offensive.

MONTZEVILLE

Continuing south around the base of Hill 310 Montzeville is reached. Behind this Hill were most of the heavy howitzers and 155 G. P. F's. A number of camouflaged emplacements can be seen close to the road.

BETHELAINVILLE

FROMEREVILLE

FORT DES SARTELLLES

This Fort was one of the inner defenses of Verdun. It was never reached by the Germans owing to the stubborn defensive by the French on their outer line at the Mort Homme and Hill 304. From a point in the woods just south

of this fort the French 420 mortars bombarded Forts Douaumont and Vaux when they were in the hands of the Germans.

VERDUN

The city of Verdun, although never under direct terrestrial observation of the Germans, suffered heavily from long-range shell fire. Especially noticeable is the destruction of the buildings along the streets used by the French as a circuit road of supply through the city. One of the greatest problems of the defense of Verdun was that of supply. As the railroad communication south through Saint-Mihiel and west to Sainte-Menehould were cut, all supplies for the troops in the Verdun area had to be brought in by motor truck from Souilly and Bar-le-Duc. The road over which these came was called "Sacree" and it was widened and kept in repair by a large force of Engineers and was organized on the block system to keep in constant motion the 1,500 trucks per day that were necessary to bring up sufficient food and ammunition. The four bridges across the Meuse in the city were continually fired at by the Germans to break up the supply circuit, but by good luck they were never hit, though all of the substitute bridges that were built beside them were destroyed by the German fire.

On the west side of Verdun is the citadel, of small military value as a fort, but an excellent place in which to keep reserves in comfort and security. Its underground galleries whose total length is 7 kilometres contain quarters for 9,000 men and can give shelter in an emergency to 25,000. Deep underground can be seen complete kitchens, amusement halls, officers' quarters and an excellent officers' mess. The galleries can be visited with a guide. The tip for a party of four is two (2) francs.

FORT VAUX

Taking the Etain road to the east, the Heights of the Meuse are reached. On the crest about 300 metres north of the road can be seen the ruined Fort de Tavannes. Turning to the left off the main road just before this fort is reached and then after passing Tavannes turning to the right the Fort de Vaux is reached, three kilometres beyond, on the eastern edge of the Heights.

The underground galleries in which the French and Germans fought for six days are a repetition of the citadel at Verdun on a small scale. They may be visited with a guide.

Mounting on top of the Fort an excellent view of the entire area can be had. Looking to the northwest the battered ruins of Fort Douaumont are seen. Looking further to the west the next high point is the Cote de Froideterre. To the southwest is the Fort de Souville. In the quadrilateral formed by these three points and Fort Vaux, the French say that there is a dead man for every square meter of ground. The terrible nature of the fighting that took place in this area is attested by the nature of the ground which is one sea of overlapping shell holes.

To the east lie the plains of the Woevre. It would seem that the logical direction of attack would be from the east until it is considered that these plains are little better than a swamp during the winter and there is only one road across them approaching Verdun from the east, that from Etain. Also the plains do not afford sufficient cover for the mass of artillery necessary in a major offensive. The Germans, therefore, attacked from the north down the Heights of the Meuse. The French line on February 21, 1916, ran across the heights about six kilometres north of Fort Douaumont and thence south-eastward across the plains nearly to Etain, where it turned and curved back to the heights.

After an eight-hour bombardment from 2,000 guns the Germans launched their attack on a nine kilometre front at 3:30 P. M., February 21. Fighting for every inch of ground the French line was gradually forced back. On the

26th Fort Douaumont fell. As the French troops in the plains were now in danger of being cut off, the French lines were withdrawn to the Heights of the Meuse. The French artillery west of the Meuse was holding up the advance of the German right flank so the attack took a southwesterly direction on a narrower front, but was halted by the desperate resistance of the French.

In order to eliminate the troublesome artillery fire which was coming from west of the river the Germans then turned their attention to the French positions on the Mort Homme and Hill 304. The whole month of March was devoted to terrific attempts to capture these hills, but without success. The attack was then reorganized and sent against the French line on both sides of the river. Finally on the 22nd of May the Germans succeeded in capturing all of Hill 304 and the Mort Homme but the southern spurs, which forced the French gun line back to a point where the French fire could not flank the German attack east of the river. Redoubling their efforts the Germans on June 2 carried the crest of Fort Vaux. The garrison of 679 men under Major Raynal continued the fight underground and fought off the Germans with grenades and bayonets for six days without food or water. Early in the morning of June 7 about a hundred of the defenders fought their way out and escaped; the survivors, about 300 in number, surrendered.

On June 3 the Germans carried the attack as far as Fort Souville and a platoon got into the Fort itself, only to be driven out. This was the high water mark of the German attack. Driving down the valley between Souville and the Cote de Froideterre the Germans got within three kilometres of Verdun, but could go no further. They continued their attacks until July 11 when they finally gave up the task as hopeless. The British offensive on the Somme had started and was making too great a drain on the German reserves to permit further attempts on Verdun.

Active fighting then ceased, though the sector was never quiet, until October 24 when the French put on a carefully prepared counter-offensive with three divisions and retook Fort Douaumont in three hours, thus regaining at one stroke ground that it had taken the Germans six months to win. Fort Vaux proved harder to take and was not reduced until November 1 after it had been surrounded by minor attacks. Encouraged by this success the French put on another offensive on December 15 which went equally well and pushed the German lines back practically to where they were before they started.

FLEURY

Returning on the road from Fort Vaux taking the first turn to the right we pass under the Fort de Souville and passing the cross-roads continue north across the valley. Extending westward down into the valley is a tongue of land which was occupied by the Germans in their furthest advance toward Verdun. At the base of this tongue was the village of Fleury of which now not a trace remains. The fighting around this village during June and July of 1916 was the fiercest kind of hand to hand struggle. After passing Fleury the first turn to the left is taken which leads to the west around the shoulder of the Cote de Froideterre and comes out on the main river road. Turning to the right here we follow the river to the north.

CONSENVOYE

The road passes through the ruined towns of Bras and Vacherauville under the shadow of the Cote de Poivre on which were the French front lines during the most of 1916. The road climbs over the Cote de Talou and comes down into the valley again at Samogneux which marks the jumpoff line of the 29th Division in the offensive of October 8, 1918. After passing through Brabant the town of Consenvoye is reached. This village was captured by the 33rd Division when

they crossed the river at this point on October 8 and swung around to the north over the heights.

LINY-DEVANT-DUN

Continuing north through Sivry-sur-Meuse the next town reached is Liny-devant-Dun. East of the road here is Hill 260 from which an excellent view of the Meuse valley and the field of operations in this area can be had. Standing on the top of Hill 260 and looking north the town of Dun-sur-Meuse is visible on the hill above the river. Looking west we see the town of Clery-le-Petit across the Meuse. To the southwest in a bend of the river lies Brioulles. On November 1 the opposite bank of the river was held by the 5th Division with the 90th on its left. Early on the morning of the 4th of November an attempt was made to cross the river in the face of heavy resistance. Two companies of the 6th Infantry managed to get across near Brioulles and got as far as the canal bank to which they clung without support. Early the following morning two foot bridges were thrown across the river and the 10th Brigade got over, though the river was swept by intense machine-gun and shell fire. The 11th Infantry pushed ahead and captured the town of Liny while the 6th cleared the Bois-de-Chatillon and took Vilosnes. This advance permitted the 9th Brigade to get across the river at Clery-le-Petit and with the assistance of a battalion of the 11th Infantry to capture Dun-sur-Meuse. Although they had outdistanced their artillery support the 11th Infantry took Hill 260, which was strongly held by machine-guns and Infantry, by direct assault. From this point eastward the 5th Division drove forward well ahead of the Divisions on its flanks, making substantial gains for next five days until it was halted by the signing of the Armistice.

DUN-SUR-MEUSE

Continuing north the town of Dun-sur-Meuse is reached. Its capture on the 5th of November by the 5th Division enabled the 90th Division to get across the river at this point, and further north. Turning west here over the bridge we pass through the town of Doulecon.

AINCREVILLE

The next town reached is Aincreville which was captured by the 90th Division on October 30 in a local push which they made to secure jump-off positions for the offensive of November 1.

BANTHEVILLE

The next town, Bantheville, was also captured by the 90th Division on October 23 attacking from the edge of the Bois-de-Rappes.

ROMAGNE

Fourth Day of Officers Battlefield Trip

WESTERN SECTION OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE

ROMAGNE
BANTHEVILLE
LANDRES

Taking the road to the left at Bantheville the party passes along the northern edge of the Bois de Bantheville. After relieving the worn-out 32nd Division in the middle of this wood the 89th Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. William M. Wright, finally cleaned it out on October 22nd. At the first cross-roads we turn again to the left towards Landres. This cross-roads marks the point where the 90th Division sector joined the 89th Sector for the offensive of November 1st. The next point passed is la Dhuy Farm captured by the 89th at the jump-off in that attack and then Landres-et-St. George is reached. This town was captured by the 2nd Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. John A. Le Jeune, on the same morning as was the next village of St. George. Just south of these towns lies the heavy wire and trench system of the Kriemhilde Stellung which was held by ten German divisions in line between the Meuse and the Argonne on November 1st. Stopping on the first rise of ground beyond St. George the party reaches a hundred metres north of the road a German concrete machine gun nest just beyond a trench in which are a number of German graves. From here can be seen the area over which the 2nd Division made their remarkable advance of eight kilometres on the 1st. They had relieved the 42nd Division which had been held up with the rest of the army for ten days in front of the Kriemhilde Stellung.

For this offensive enough artillery and ammunition had been accumulated to put on an artillery preparation even greater than that of September 26th. The barrage on this occasion was 800 metres in depth and was so dense and searching that the German machine gun and artillery fire was almost completely smothered. Prisoners taken said that they had never seen such a hail of shells. Passing along the road westward the party comes into the sector of the 80th Division whose right was carried forward on the shoulder of the 2nd Division's whirlwind attack but whose left made no progress owing to the 77th Division being held up in front of Champagneulle. On the 2nd of November these troops made a good advance and nearly caught up with the 2nd Division. This unit kept up its remarkable work when, on the 3rd of November, the 9th and 23rd Infantry marched through the German lines during the night in column of squads to a depth of nine kilometres and broke the back of the German resistance in this sector.



ST. JUVIN

Passing along the road over which the 82nd Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. George B. Duncan, attacked on October 20 and established a line north of the road until relieved by the 80th Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. A. Cronkhite, the town of St. Juvin is reached. It was captured by the 77th Division on October 12 after a very bitter fight. Five hundred prisoners were taken in the attack including three majors and before the line halted most of Hill 182 north of the town was also taken. Continuing westward from St. Juvin along the Aire River the road goes over a rise and coming down on the other side there can be seen to the north the wooded heights of the Bois de Loges. To approach it the attacking troops had to cross the wide sweep of fields in its front and here the 78th Division suffered heavy casualties when it attempted unsuccessfully to take the woods on

October 17th. These positions were a part of the Kriemhilde Stellung and were not captured till November 2nd.

GRAND PRE

Following the road along the river the town of Grand Pre is reached. The 77th Division arrived opposite it on October 11th but no attempt to take it was made until the 15th. On that morning the 307th Infantry forced the crossing of the Aire and got into the town. After a house to house struggle the town was taken but the enemy still clung to the chateau and park on the north edge of the town. That night the 78th Division relieved the 77th but the Germans had infiltrated back into the town so that the 78th had to take most of it again. This proved very difficult and repeated attacks failed to dislodge the enemy from the northern edge and the heights above so it was not until the 25th the whole town and Bellejoyeuse Farm north of it were finally captured and held, thus giving the 78th Division a jump-off position for the offensive of November 1st.

CHEVIERES

Crossing the Aire River at Grand Pre we turn eastward along the south bank and pass through Chevieres. This town was occupied by the 77th Division on October 11th when they emerged from the Argonne and reached the river. The next town passed is Mareq which was taken by patrols of the 82nd Division on October 10 when they swung around northeastward to cross the Aire.

CORNAY

Skirting the edge of the Forest to the southeast the next town reached is Cornay. From here can be seen the ground of the operations that resulted in the clearing of the Argonne Forest. Across the river to the east appears the round top of Hill 240 which was carried by the 1st Division on October 5th after the bloodiest kind of fighting. In the ten days it was driving down the east bank of the river this division sustained over 9,000 casualties. This push of the 1st Division enabled the 1st Corps to make a maneuver that had not been foreseen. The 82nd Division was brought up and put into line facing due west towards Cornay on the left of the 1st Division and attacked the German positions on the edge of the Argonne directly in flank. The assault was made on the morning of the 7th of October in conjunction with the 28th Division in front of Chatel Chehery further south. Hill 180 just to the southeast of Cornay was carried at once after a sharp fight while the 28th took Chatel Chehery. The Germans in Cornay repulsed every attack and the town was not taken till the 10th. Meanwhile the 82nd was pushing into the edge of the forest against determined resistance and on the 8th cut the German supply road which forced the withdrawal of the troops that were holding up the 77th Division to the southwest. The 82nd then relieved the 28th and swung its line to the north pivoting on Cornay with the 77th coming up on its left and the German resistance being broken both divisions pushed north and reached the river in front of Grand Pre and St. Juvin by the 11th.

FLEVILLE

Crossing the Aire the town of Fleville is reached. Patrols from the 1st Division got into it on October 4th but not until the 9th was its possession secure. Taking the road to the south the party proceeds up the Aire valley. To the west across the river can be seen the town of Chatel Chehery and then three kilometres farther up the town of Apremont, captured by the 28th Division on September 28th. Just southwest of Apremont appears the ridge called le Chene Tondu which held up the 28th for a week.

BAULNY

The road passes close to the little town of Baulny which was reached by the 35th Division on September 27th when the 28th got to Montblainville just across the river.

CHEPPY

Five kilometres above Baulny the party takes the road to the left and dipping down into a ravine reaches the town of Cheppy. It was taken by the 35th Division on the first day of the attack after determined resistance by the Germans. The many dugouts along the banks of the ravine are very large and elaborate, being the reserve line of the German forward defensive elements.

VAUQUOIS

Leaving Cheppy to the south and keeping to the left the party approaches the bald hill of Vauquois. The cars are left at the base of the hill and the party climbs to the summit. From this hill can be had an excellent view of the whole western part of the Meuse-Argonne area. The front lines crossed this hill for four years and the deep mine craters along its top show the ferocity of the fighting that occurred here in 1915 when the French tried unsuccessfully to take it. To the west is the line of the Argonne Forest running north and south with the Aire valley following at its edge. The nearest town to the northwest is Varennes on the river. Just east of it and partly hidden in the ravine is Cheppy. Ten kilometres to the north the small round summit of Hill 240 can be recognised which was taken by the 1st Division after they relieved the 35th. To the northeast the height of Montfaucon is visible with its ruins on the top. The woods to the east is the Bois de Cheppy with the Bois de Montfaucon adjoining it and beyond. In these woods lay the sectors of the 91st and 37 Divisions.

Vauquois was in the centre of the sector of the 35th Division. For the attack the formation was line of brigades, one passing on each side of the hill with one battalion detailed to mop up the garrison which was normally about a thousand men. The brigades were in column of regiments and the regiments in column of battalions. The attacking troops were protected by the heavy fog at the jump-off but as they passed the hill they suffered heavily from enfilade fire from its sides before it was mopped up. By noon our troops were in Varennes and Cheppy but only after severe fighting and heavy losses. The line passed beyond and halted for the night on the sloping hillside just north of Cheppy. The division had started the attack with a depth of five kilometres but during the advance the rear elements had pressed forward so when they were halted the next night on the open hill beyond Baulny and Charpentry the units were jammed together and suffered heavily from shell fire.

On the left of the 35th Division was the 28th with one brigade in the open valley west of the Aire and one brigade in the Argonne Forest. This brigade and the 77th Division on its left naturally made slow progress through the dense thickets so that by nightfall of the 26th it had advanced only two kilometres while the right brigade had pushed down the valley as far as Montblainville, the town beyond Varennes, and its front was facing westward toward the forest. The next day Montblainville was secured and on the 28th the Division had reached Apremont with its left facing the Chene Tondue Ridge. Meanwhile the 35th Division had taken Montrebeau Woods to the east across the river from Apremont but owing to its heavy losses and disorganized condition it could not hold the woods and fell back to Baulny and Charpentry where it was relieved by the 1st Division on September 29th.

VARENNES

Descending the hill and returning toward Cheppy the first turn to the left is taken and the next town reached is Varennes which straddles the Aire River.

The part on the west bank was captured by the 28th Division about noon of the 26th. Crossing the river here and proceeding out of the town to the west the first turn to the right is taken on the road that leads into the forest.

CAMP MAHAUT

It was along the road that the party follows through the woods that the left brigade of the 28th Division was halted the first day of the attack. About a kilometre from the edge of the forest a fork of the road is reached near a small German graveyard. Leaving the cars here and walking 200 metres up the right hand fork several paths are seen leading off to the right. Following the third of these the party reaches a series of elaborate and well-constructed dug-outs the finest of which is said to have been occupied at times by the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. Along the south side of the ravine are several tiers of dug-outs in long rows for enlisted men. Many of these are elaborately constructed and decorated. A German division could be housed in this camp called the Camp Mahaut. A small theatre at one of the ravine and a swimming pool at the other added to the comfort in which the Germans lived.

LA FILLE MORTE

Going back to the main road and proceeding several hundred metres further westward the first turn to the left is taken toward the south. After a kilometre and a half through the woods a space shot clear by shell fire is reached in the center of which is a low ridge called the Fille Morte. The crest is torn up by mine craters made during the French attack of 1915 and the front lines which are very close are separated by masses of wire and iron chevaux de frises. This was the front line during most of the war and here the Americans jumped off. Where the road crosses the old NO-Man's Land is the sector limit between the 28th and 77th Divisions, the latter being to the west of the road.

LA CHALADE

Continuing south through the forest the party passes the American support and reserve lines and the permanent French defenses and reached the Croix de Pierre at which there is a cross roads. Here the road to the right is taken to La Chalade. At this village the party turns to the left on the main road which was the axial road of the 77th Division. Turning to the right at the next town to the south, Le Claon, the party passes through Florent to.

ST. MENEHOULD CHALONS

CHAPTER V

Other Operations

NOTES ON THE 27th & 30th DIVISIONS WITH THE BRITISH IN NORTHERN FRANCE

Following the British defeat at St. Quentin on March 21st when the German offensive in Picardy began, General Pershing, on March 28th, placed at the disposal of Marshal Foch, who had been agreed upon as Commander in Chief of all the Allied Armies, the entire military force of America, to dispose of as he wished. There were at this time only four American Divisions with experience in the trenches which were considered equal to any demands of offensive or defensive action.—At the request of Marshal Foch the 1st Division was transferred from the Toul Sector to a reserve position at Chaumont-en-Vexen. The German offensive began again in April and was proceeding with great rapidity, both British and French Armies fighting stubbornly but suffering heavy losses. The Hun had a numerical superiority on the Western front and was driving hard to gain a decision before American troops could arrive in sufficient numbers to take the initiative from him. At Abbeville on May 2nd, a meeting of the Allied Commanders and Premiers and General Pershing was held. It was apparent that America only could furnish the men necessary to replace the losses sustained in the German attacks of March and April and Mr. Lloyd George cabled President Wilson for aid, urging him to send 250,000 men per month to Europe. President Wilson replied that troops at that rate would be sent if the British Government provided the means of transport. An agreement was reached by which the British Government would transport ten American Divisions to the British Army area where they were to be trained and equipped with guns, horses and transport. Additional ships were to be provided by the British Government for as many Divisions as possible for use elsewhere. Our Allies in France assured us that they could fit out thirty American divisions with guns, horses and transport. Immediately the British Government placed a large number of transports at our disposal and the great troop movement began. American infantry was rapidly dispatched and by the middle of June no less than ten American Divisions were ready to render any assistance necessary to the British Armies in the North. Of course, all of these divisions had not completed their course of overseas training but they were assigned to second positions and could have rendered great service to their British comrades in the event of an emergency. Among these divisions were the Seventy Seventh (National Army from New York), Thirty Fifth (National Guard from Kansas and Missouri), Twenty Seventh (National Guard from New York) Thirtieth (National Guard from N. C., S. C. and Tennessee), Fourth (Regular with 47th, 39th, 58th and 59th Inf.), Thirty Third (National Guard of Illinois), Seventy Eight (National Army from New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania), Eightieth (National Army from Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania). Of these divisions five were withdrawn and sent to Lorraine and the Vosges and to the group of armies in the vicinity of Paris. Later three more were withdrawn and went south to render aid to the French as the strain upon them grew greater and the arrival of British reinforcements lessened the necessity for keeping divisions with the British Armies. |

The Second American Corps, under the command of Major General George W. Read, had been organized for the troops with the British Armies and only two divisions remained, the 27th and 30th Divisions. These divisions were, however, destined to serve in the British Second Army in Belgium, the British

Third Army and to take a very active part in the great battles of the British Fourth Army in the latter part of September and October and win added laurels for American arms.

With the large influx of American troops into the British Army area, it was necessary to devise a plan for training quickly all these divisions. It is interesting to know that the plan called for an American division to be attached to a British Division for instruction and training by carefully selected experienced officers and noncoms for one month. Upon completion satisfactorily of this training the Divisions entered another phase of their preparation for active combat by going into the line with one battalion of each infantry regiment attached to a British Brigade for a period of eight days. During the first 48 hours, troops were sent in as individuals, the second 48 hours as platoons, the third 48 hours as companies and the fourth 48 hours as battalions. After each battalion had gone thru this training, the Division was considered sufficiently trained to take over the line in a quiet sector.

The 27th and 30th Divisions arrived in France the last of May and first of June and were stationed during their first month between Calais and St. Omer in what was known as the Eperlecques Training Area. They had been completely equipped with British rifles, bayonets, machine guns and transport. The Divisions were greatly assisted in their training by the 39th British Division which was under command of Major General Blacklock. A small number of officers and N. C. O's were sent to the front every four days to be attached to British units for observation and instruction. During the month, the Divisions were visited by the Commander-in-Chief, by General Plumer, Commanding the British Second Army to which the Divisions were attached and Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. All the British officers expressed great delight at the physical appearance of the men and the progress they had made in their training. During the first week in July, the March into Belgium was made and the Phase „ B ” training began upon arrival in the Roosendaal Area about five miles from Poperinghe. Here the battalions went into line in front of and to the south of Ypres. Finishing the Phase „ B ” training about the 10th of August the Divisions were given a few days rest and preparations made for them to take over a portion of the line. On the 16-17 August the Second Corps took over a sector all its own just south of the City of Ypres, with the 27th Division on the right and the 30th Division on the left. The line at this point had been stationary for some months and the sector was not very active, although there was much artillery activity on both sides. This battle scarred sector was not a pleasant home. Terrific battles had taken place here several times and the line had not moved very much during four years. The country presented a desolate appearance, stripped of everything that was living and churned over time and time again by shells. The trenches were frequented by numbers of large rats and the constant companion of the soldier in the line, the "cootie". White crosses sprinkled the whole area and on the warm days the never ceasing shell fire stirred up a rather disagreeable odor, unearthing the remains of those who had fallen in Flander's fields. But on this historic ground, the youth of America learned his lessons, he scouted and patrolled, he found out how to take care of himself in the line, how to get up rations and water, how to lay barbed wire, dig trenches, build parapets and dugouts, he learned how systematically and methodically the Hun used his artillery, and above all he gained confidence in himself and his weapons and eagerly sought an active participation in a big offensive. Little did he know what an important part he was to play later on.

Marshal Foch began his great counter-offensive in the Marne salient on July 18th. A short time later the French and British were attacking further North. The great cloud of smoke moving slowly toward the North and across our front on the afternoon of August 30th appeared very much like a gas cloud, but inquiry of the corps on the right revealed the fact that the Hun was retiring and burning

the villages and military stores which he could not take with him. The British were reported to have occupied Mont Kemmel, that famous hill which dominated the whole country in that vicinity and out of whose sight no one was able to get. It always looked down upon you and every man longed for the day when Kemmel would be within American lines and he could move about without this menace. On the night of August 30-31, the patrols discovered nothing new, the Hun was still on our front, he had not retired there at any rate. At 8:45 on the morning of 31st of August, the division commander directed that patrols be sent out to ascertain if the enemy had retired. This was done and the enemy encountered not more than 50 yards from our lines. There was to be a real fight with him and additional men were sent out to reinforce the patrols and prevent them being cut off. They pushed on and occupied what was left of Voormezele and established a line just in front of that city. This was the first advance made in this sector in many days and the first prisoner captured in ten weeks. An advance of about 1,500 yards, had been made, the first city ever captured by American troops in Belgium had been taken and the Hun had been beaten in the first encounter with him. The success of this engagement increased the confidence of the men in themselves and they felt that they were the equal of the Hun in every respect and his superior in many.

On the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of September, the Corps was withdrawn from Belgium and moved by rail to the St. Pal area where for a short time it formed a part of British G. H. Q. reserve. In the general attacks all along the front, the Hun was gradually being forced back and the Allies were approaching the well known Hindenburg line, the line from which the enemy launched his attack of March 21st. About one week was spent here when the Corps was moved by rail to the vicinity of Herissart, just Northeast of Amiens and near Albert. It was shortly after arrival here that rumors spread of a big attack in which the Corps was to participate. On the night of the 23-24 and 24-25 of September the Corps was moved by bus to the Tincourt area. It was an all night ride beginning at 9:30 P. M. and arriving at the debussing point a short while after daybreak. This happened to be in a shell torn, desolate spot and just at the time when heavy artillery fire could be heard in the distance and numerous gun flashes seen along the horizon. The Hun must have had some idea of an attack in this region and was laying down counter-preparation fire to harass our troops. Our own artillery was replying vigorously. A march of several miles took us to Buire Wood and Tincourt just east of Peronne. Here we remained for that day, one regiment from each division having gone into the line the night before to take over a sector from the British and Australians. Late in the evening a march of several miles was made that night and succeeding days spent just east of Roisee. On these days plans were made for a big attack on Sept. 29th along a front of some forty miles between St. Quentin and Cambrai in which the Second Corps was to participate. The Corps was now a part of the Fourth British Army which was commanded by General Henry Rawlinson. The general plan was to break the Hindenburg Line, the last line prepared for resistance, force the Hun to fight in the open and drive him so fast that a break through of the German Army at this point would be effected.

2D AND 36th DIVISIONS IN THE CHAMPAGNE AREA

After its relief from the line in the St. Mihiel area, about September 20th, the 2d Division under Major-General J.-A. Lejeune, was sent to the area south of Chalons-sur-Marne, for a short period of rest. On September 28th, it was placed at the disposition of General Gouraud, as was also the 36th Division, which was commanded by Major-General W.-R. Smith, and composed of National Guard Troops of Oklahoma and Texas.

The French 4th Army made a general advance of about 12 kilometers between September 26th and October 1st. However, the Germans had strongly organized Orfeuil, Medeah Farm, St. Etienne-a-Ames, and were holding up the French in front of these positions. Gen. Gouraud ordered the 2d Division into the line just north of Sommepey to help gain these strong positions. The right of the sector of advance was the main north-south road by Medeah Farm, and its left passed through Sommepey Woods, and included St. Etienne-a-Ames. The relief was made by the 2d Division the night of October 1-2, along the Essen trench. By the night of October 6-7, after bitter fighting, the 2d Division had been able to advance its lines to the South edge of St. Etienne-a-Ames, when it was relieved by the 36th Division, which had been following it as a support. While in the line, the 2d Division advanced nine kilometers, captured 62 officers and 2,234 men, and suffered casualties to the extent of 4,975 officers and men.

As the 36th Division did not have its own artillery, the artillery of the 2d Division was attached to it for Operations. The relief of the 2d by the 32nd Division extended over three nights, and it was thought better to have them work temporarily with elements of the 2d Division. The Division advanced to the Aisne River in the vicinity of Attigny by October 27th, when it was relieved by a French Division. It had advanced 21 kilometers, had captured 813 officers and men, and suffered casualties to the extent of 2,651 officers and men. It marched back to Triaucourt area for rest, where it remained until after November 11th.

AMERICAN DIVISIONS IN BELGIUM

37th and 91st Divisions

The 37th and 91st Divisions, after withdrawing from the lines in the Meuse-Argonne area, were sent into Belgium, and about October 18 were placed at the disposal of the King of the Belgians. He, in turn, placed them at the disposal of the Commanding General of the French Armies in Belgium.

The 37th Division, starting out with its center at Olsene, advanced in a southeasterly direction passing through Cruyshautem, Wannegem, Eyne and Heurne, reached the Scheldt by 6 p. m., Nov. 1. During the 2d and 3d of November the division secured the passages over the Scheldt in its sector. It was relieved Nov. 3-4, after having advanced 14 kilometers. It had 1,600 casualties and took 378 prisoners. It then retired to the Thielt area for rest for five days. On November 9 the division was ordered back into the line along the Scheldt between Nederwalm and Asper. Its direction of advance was due eastward. When the armistice took effect it had advanced to Dickele, a distance of 7 kilometers.

On October 31, the 91st Division relieved a French division between Waereghem and Steenbrugge. By November 2 it had reached the Scheldt River, the center of the division being at Audenarde. The 91st was relieved by a French Division on November 3-4 and moved to the area east of Vive St. Éloi on the Lys River where it rested for four days, after which it was again put into the line (A). No advance had been made while the 91st had been out of the line, and it consequently took over exactly where it had left off four days previously. The Germans began retreating very rapidly on November 9, and when the armistice called all operations to a halt the 91st Division had advanced to Boucle-St.-Blaise, a distance of 10 kilometers. During this latter advance the division took no prisoners and suffered no casualties.

(A). When it was relieved on November 4 this division had advanced 12 kilometers and had taken 1 officer and 40 men prisoners and suffered 969 casualties.

NORTH RUSSIA EXPEDITION

The Expedition to North Russia consisted of the 339th Infantry, 1st Battalion 310th Engineers, 337th Field Hospital and 337th Ambulance Company, with Colonel George E. Stewart, 339th Infantry, as Commanding Officer.

This Expedition was sent to North Russia chiefly for the purpose of guarding military supplies in Archangel and to prevent their falling into the hands of the Germans through the Bolsheviks. (Forces were sent under an agreement of the Allied Powers).

The Expedition embarked from England on August 27 and arrived at Archangel on September 4, 1918. This force was supplemented in March and April, 1919, by the addition of two (2) Railway Transportation Companies from France, especially selected, and all volunteers, for work on the Murmansk Railway. Brigadier General W. P. Richardson was sent to Archangel about the same time to take command of all American Forces in Russia. He left England with his Staff on April 1.

The American troops constituted one unit of an Allied force in North Russia, composed of troops of seven (7) different nationalities, as follows: Russian, British, American, French, Italian, Serbs and Poles. The total Allied strength return on May 3, 1919 was: (Archangel District only).

	Officers	Men
Slavo-British Legion.....	119	3,132
Russian National Army....	713	16,390
British.....	663	7,282
French.....	39	1,449
American.....	189	4,718
Poles.....	16	293
Italian.....	1	29
Japonese.....	1	0
TOTAL.....	<u>1,741</u>	<u>33,293</u>

Serbs—No accurate figures available.

The American Unit in North Russia sustained in the highest degree the good name achieved by the American fighting forces in Europe. It was the most cohesive, best organized, single unit of all the Allied forces there.

The troops were widely scattered in this service, frequently in small detachments, extending over a front more than 200 miles inland from Archangel and a width of country over 450 miles. The wide distribution of the troops in small units, the lack of communication, the hardship of the winter, together with, at times, an insufficiency of food made this service one of the most arduous performed by American troops.

The total deaths were:

Killed in Action.....	82
Accidently Killed.....	7
Suicide.....	1
Died of Wounds.....	30
Died of Disease.....	72
TOTAL.....	<u>192</u>

The first losses sustained were on the 6th of September, 1918, and thereafter the fighting was practically continuous, although the operations were mostly on a minor scale.

By an agreement of the Inter-Allied War Council, the operations were placed under the direction of the British War Office, with a Major General of the British Army in command.

NOTE: — All American troops, with the exception of a few Staff Officers, were withdrawn from Russia by July 30, 1919.

WAR DEPARTMENT

LIBRARY

WASHINGTON, D. C.