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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
FOURTH SECTION
COMMITTEE "H"
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

ADVANCED COURSE
1928-1929

THE FIRST DIVISION (U.S.)
in the
SECOND PHASE OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE
OCTOBER 4-31, 1918.

23

MAJOR GEORGE R. F. CORNISH, INFANTRY.

like light

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9th
Salient

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*After perusal,
by whom?*

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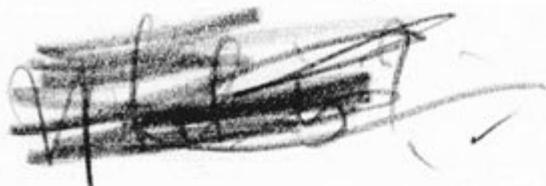
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An original source of information concerning the enemy. Lacking in weather and other reports that might give a better picture.

Who is publisher
and author?

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Russell, George M.

"Report of G-2, 5th Army Corps, U. S., from July 9, 1918".

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A very valuable collection of reports of operations of the units making up the 5th Corps, except the 1st Division, and the Fifth Corps itself.

"The Story of the 28th Infantry in the Great War".

A regimental history written immediately after the war. Sketchy.

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1st Bn. - Major John G. Emery and
Captain ~~Garby~~. OLIVER ALLEN
2d Bn. - Capt. Cook and Capt. Cornwall.
3d Bn. - Major McKenzie.

Statement as to officers in the 16th Infantry:

Major C. W. Ryder, Infantry:
C.o. 16th Inf., Lt-Col. E.R. Coppock, Cav.
1st Bn. - Maj. C. W. Ryder, Inf.
3d Bn. - Lt-Col. W.F. Harrell, Inf.
2d Bn. - Maj. A.S.J. Tucker, Inf.

Statement as to 28th Infantry

Major W. G. Livesay, Inf.
1st Bn. - Capt. C.S. Senay, Inf.
2d Bn. - Maj. C.R. Huebner, Inf.
3d Bn. - Major Hawkinson.

Statement as to officers of the 26th Infantry made by author who was C.O.Hq. Co. during the engagement.

MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

First Division	"History of the First Division During the World War, 1917-1919".
Monuments Commission	"The American Battle Monuments Commission Summary of Operations, 1st Division in the Meuse-Argonne, October 1-11, 1918".
26th Infantry	"The Twenty-Sixth Infantry in France".
28th Infantry	"The Story of the Twenty-Eighth Infantry in the Great War".
Pershing	"Final Report of General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces".
Records	"World War Records, First Division, A.E.F."
Farrell	"Capture and Defense of Hill 269 by the First Engineers".
STATEMENT	Statement of officers concerning the identification of officers serving in the division during the engagement.

INTRODUCTION

History has little to do with speculation, yet it is interesting and possibly instructive to wonder what might have been the results, had lack of success attended the efforts of an army at a critical time in a certain war or even campaign. Had the First and Second American Divisions failed in their efforts at Soissons, had the Second Division failed in its operation against Mont Blanc, the result might have been, in the first proposition, that the allied offensive might have failed, and in the second that the Fourth French Army might have been definitely stopped for the winter, with the result that the advance of the American army in the Meuse-Argonne region might have come to naught. Still more disastrous might have been the effects, had the First Division failed in its allotted task in the second phase of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, October 4-11, 1918. Failure here might have meant another winter in the trenches for the American army. This monograph deals with the accomplishment of this task by this famous division.

Let us now look into the composition, personnel and accomplishments of this division upon its entry upon this, in the opinion of many, its hardest task in the war.

The division was made up of the following units:

This is in
Switzerland;
rather far off!
Blanc Mont.

too many "might"

Mont Blanc

Division Headquarters.
 Headquarters Troop.
 First Infantry Brigade, consisting of the
 16th Infantry, the 18th Infantry and the
 Second Machine Gun Battalion.
 Second Infantry Brigade, consisting of the
 26th Infantry, the 28th Infantry and the
 Third Machine Gun Battalion.
 First Field Artillery Brigade, consisting of
 Fifth Field Artillery (155 mm Howitzers),
 the Sixth Field Artillery (75 mm guns), the
 Seventh Field Artillery (75 mm guns) and
 the First Trench Mortar Battery.
 1st Regiment Engineers.
 1st Machine Gun Battalion.
 2d Field Signal Battalion.
 Trains, consisting of the following units:
 Headquarters Trains, First Division.
 1st Company Military Police.
 2d Company Military Police.
 1st Ammunition Train.
 1st Mobile Ordnance Repair Shop.
 1st Supply Train.
 1st Engineer Train.
 1st Sanitary Train.
 2d, 3d, 12th and 13th Ambulance Companies.
 2d, 3d, 12th and 13th Field Hospitals. (1)

(1) First
Division,
p 1.

Permanently attached to the division were:
 Machine Shop Truck Units Nos. 2 and 301.
 Mobile Surgical Unit No. 2.
 Sales Commissary Unit No. 309.
 Bakery Unit No. 314.
 Clothing and Bathing Unit No. 319.
 Pack Train No. 10. (2)

(2) First Division,
p 2.

The division was organized from regular army
troops in France, all of the infantry regiments having

(3) Thomas, p 451; seen service on the Mexican border. (3) (4) The first
(4) First
Division,
p 2.
(5) First
Division,
p 6.

of the units that were to make up the First Division
 arrived at St. Nazaire, France, on June 26, 1917. (5)
 The division had an intensive course in training in
 the Gondrecourt area where it was greatly assisted in
 this respect by a division of the famous French Chas-
 seurs Alpins. (6) It entered the first sector ever

(6) First
Division,
p 19.

occupied by American troops in France, on October 21,

1917; was in the Ansauville sector from January 18, 1918 to April 3, 1918. It occupied the Cantigny sector, where one of its regiments, the 28th Infantry, covered itself with glory by the capture of the village of Cantigny, the first American victory in France and where the division was engaged in the Noyon-Montdidier defensive, from April 28 to July 8, 1918. In conjunction with the Second Division (U.S.) and the First Moroccan Division, the First Division assaulted positions near Soissons on July 18, 1918, being relieved on July 23d. During this advance, which marked the beginning of the great allied offensive, the division gained 11 kilometers, cut the main road from Soissons to the tip of the Marne salient and captured 125 officers, 3370 men, large quantities of ammunition and stores and ~~had~~ suffered casualties amounting to 234 officers and 7083 men. (7) It then occupied the Saizerais sector from July 30th to August 24, 1918. The division next participated in the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient, in which it was the left division of the Fourth Army Corps. In conjunction with the Twenty-Sixth Division, it closed the salient at Vigneulles and Hatton Chatel on September 13, 1918. During this action, which was really a successful maneuver, and which was splendid preparation for the grim task ahead, the division lost only 13 officers and 531 men. (8)

(7) First Division, pp 46,65, 70,97,112, 138,141.

The 26th Div did this job which the 1st did not

(8) First Division, pp 143,146, 153,167, 168.

From its arrival in France until it was with-

drawn from the lines on October 12, 1918, the following named general officers commanded the First Division; Major General William L. Sibert, June 8, 1917 to December 14, 1917; Lieutenant General Robert Lee Bullard, December 14, 1917 to July 17, 1918; Major General Charles P. Summerall, from July 17, 1918 to October 11, 1918. (9) Among other officers who were originally brigade commanders in the First Division and who later won reputations for themselves as commanders of other divisions were: Major General George B. Duncan, Major General Beaumont B. Buck, Major General Hanson Ely, Major General Frank E. Bamford, Major General Omar Bundy, Major General John L. Hines and Brigadier General Frank Parker, who relieved General Summerall in command of the First Division. It will be seen from the above that the division was peculiarly fortunate in having for its leaders, officers of such caliber. The regimental and company officers were those who had seen service with their regiments on the Mexican border, augmented just before sailing from the States, by recently commissioned officers from the First and Second Leavenworth classes and by especially selected graduates from the First Officers Training Camps. Later on, replacements in officer personnel came through regular channels. The non-commissioned officers and other enlisted men were at the outbreak of war, the regular army soldier of the Mexican border type. Later, vacancies were filled by drafted men and volunteers.

(9) First
Division,
pp 33,37,109.

(10) First
Division,
p 14.

*a scribe - not
a soldier, and
certainly no judge
of the facts stated*

Every state and territory of the Union has its sons
in the casualty lists of the First Division. (10)

Fortunate in the splendid quality of its
leaders, confident in its own ability, an estimate
of this division by Lieutenant Colonel Frederick
Palmer, in Collier's Weekly, correctly describes its
condition upon entering into the second phase of the
Meuse-Argonne offensive:- "I think that possibly
when the 1st Division went into the Argonne battle
it was the most efficient American division that ever
wore shoe leather; if it were not, they perhaps the
2d was - as all men of the 2d will agree". (11)

(11) Thomas,
p 291.

EVENTS FROM THE RELIEF OF THE FIRST DIVISION
AFTER ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE REDUCTION OF THE
ST. MIHIEL SALIENT TO ITS ENTRY IN THE LINES ON
THE NIGHT SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1, 1918.

After the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient,
the general situation was about as follows: - From
July 18, 1918, when the allies took the offensive,
until the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient, the
allies had forced the Germans back to the Hindenburg
line, their original jumping-off line in the spring
of 1918. This had been accomplished by a series of
swift short blows on points of German weakness. Now,
however, the allies were faced with the reduction of
the extremely strong Hindenburg line and three other
important lines. This called for a different sort
of tactics, so Marshal Foch planned to strike at
every considerable body of the enemy, except in Italy,

*Not logically
arranged*

(12) Thomas,
p 227.

*

at practically the same time. These operations all began during the latter part of September 1918. (12) On the French front, the sector assigned to the American army for the offensive was north ^{OK} of Verdun on the Meuse to the middle of the Argonne Forest. On the left was the Fourth French Army which was to attack west of the Argonne Forest and in conjunction with this army, the Americans planned to pinch out the Germans in the forest proper. (13) The American army was to become the pivot of the allied offensive and had the mission of interrupting the important railroad communications of the German armies through Sedan and Mezieres. It was known that the Germans would make most strenuous efforts to protect this line, as it was closer to the front line than any other of their lines of communications. It was also thought that the best divisions of the German army would be sent to protect this area and it was planned to consume them here, thus relieving the pressure on other fronts. (14)

(14) Pershing,
p 15.

The attack of the American army commenced on the early morning of September 26, 1918. From right to left ~~wax~~ the Third Corps with the 33d, 80th and 4th Divisions in assault and the 3d Division in Corps Reserve; the Fifth Corps with the 79th, 37th and 91st Divisions in assault, with the 32d Division in Corps Reserve, and the First Corps with the 35th, 28th and

(15) Pershing, p 16. 77th Divisions in line and with the 92d in Corps Reserve. The 1st, 29th and 82d Divisions constituted the Army Reserve. (15)

From the opening of the battle until September 30, 1918, the First Army had penetrated the German defenses from three to five miles, had forced the battle into the open and had captured 10,000 prisoners.

(16) Pershing, p 16.

(16) Reaction had set in after the second day, resistance becoming stiffer, and great difficulty was found in getting forward ammunition, artillery and supplies over the almost impassable roads across the old "No

(17) Pershing, p 16.

Man's Land". (17) The line held on September 30th was as follows: Beginning at a point on the Meuse River just south of Brioules, thence southwest to include Nantillois, thence a curve in the line to the southwest and then northeast to the vicinity of Tronsol Farm; thence sharply to the south to Eclisfontaine, thence west to Serieux Farm and northwest to a point beyond Apremont, then sharply to the south to Le Chene Tondu, thence west to Binarville. (18)

(18) Thomas, p 257.

The 35th, 79th and 37th Divisions had lost some of the ground captured by them and were more or less disorganized; accordingly, the First Division was ordered to relieve the Thirty-Fifth Division, the Thirty-Second the Thirty-Seventh Division and the Third the Seventy-Ninth Division. (19) After being pinched out in the St. Mihiel salient, the First

(19) Thomas, pp 257,258.

Division after a brief rest was transferred to the Third Corps and placed in Army Reserve on September 19, 1918. The dismounted troops were met by trucks near Raulecourt and transported to the vicinity of Benoit-Vaux. The mounted elements proceeded westward from Vigneulles. While here, some training was had and on September 27, 1918, by night marching, the division moved to the vicinity of Nixeville, with headquarters at Blercourt. The 1st Engineers Regiment was detached and assigned to the task of repairing roads in the Third Corps area. The division had been ordered to this part of the line as it was contemplated that it might be used in operations on the east bank of the Meuse River. Now, however, in that the Thirty-Fifth Division was in difficulties, it was necessary that the First Division be moved across almost the entire front of the American army. Thus on the night of September 29th, the division ^{was} being transferred to the First Corps. (20)

(20) First
Division,
p p 172-176.

RELIEF OF THE 35th DIVISION

The First Division was ordered to relieve the Thirty-Fifth Division, the relief to be complete by 5:00 A. M., on October 1, 1918. The Thirty-Fifth Division was supposed to occupy as its front line, four kilometers, from Baulny to a point near the Apremont-Epinonville Road one kilometer east of

Chaudron Farm, thence to Eclisfontaine. In this sector three ravines almost paralleled the front. The one nearest the enemy ran from Baulny to the Apremont-Epinonville Road and was supposed to contain the front line of the Thirty-Fifth Division. It was decided that all three of the ravines would be utilized, each infantry regiment to have one battalion on the front line, one in regimental reserve and one in brigade or divisional reserve, exterior third line battalions in divisional and interior third line battalions in brigade reserve. (21)

(21) First
Division,
p 177.

From woods in the vicinity of Vauquois, which it had reached earlier in the day, the infantry was ordered to move out in the afternoon of the 30th, so that its leading ^{battalions} could reach the line Cheppy-Varenes at dusk. Accordingly the approach began. At about dusk, after a march over almost impassable roads, a country desolate beyond description, the heads of the leading battalions approached the Cheppy-Varenes line. For sixteen kilometers the machine-gunners were forced to carry their guns by hand. In order from right to left, and with a machine gun company attached to each battalion and in column of battalions, the infantry was formed, 26th Infantry, 28th Infantry, 18th Infantry and 16th Infantry, each occupying a front of about 600 meters.

The First Artillery Brigade was to be disposed during the night as follows: The Sixth Field Artillery

where it could serve the First Brigade in position east of Charpentry, the Seventh Field Artillery in position so as to support the Second Brigade, southwest of Eclisfontaine, and the Fifth Field Artillery with its 1st and 3d Battalions near Very and its 2d Battalion near Charpentry, so disposed that it could cover the entire front. (22)

(22) First
Division,
p 181.

The posts of command were as follows: First Division in Cheppy; First Brigade, Charpentry, Second Brigade in Very. (23)

(23) First
Division,
p 426.

There was no formal taking over of the front, in fact, when the leading battalions approached the line which the Thirty-Fifth Division had been reported as holding, they found only two companies of that organization along the entire line. Upon reaching the vicinity of this line, they came under heavy machine gun fire and dug in for the night. (24) The line established by the First Division was as follows: From west to east: - Along the ridge from Baulny to Serieux Farm, thence to Hill 231. Contact on the right was made with the 91st Division, whose line extended from Tronsol Farm to Serieux Farm, thus masking the 26th Infantry, which was the right regiment of the First Division. (25)

(24) First
Division,
p 180.

(25) Monuments
Commission,
p 1.

HOLDING THE LINE

It was expected that the division would attack on the morning of the first, and the same field order that directed the relief of the elements of the Thirty-

Fifth Division, also planned for an attack the following morning. This was not to be however, and for the next three days the division had to sit and take a deluge of machine gun bullets and shell fire that caused an average of 500 casualties a day. (26)

(26) First
Division,
p 182.

On October 2d, there were no material changes in the line except that the 2d Battalion of the 363d Infantry of the 91st Division was withdrawn, thus unmasking the line held by the 26th Infantry from Serieux Farm to Hill 231. (27)

(27) Monuments
Commission,
p 2.

Based on a report from the French that the enemy was retiring on the front of the American army, the First Corps ordered that strong patrols be sent out to ascertain the truth of the statement. Accordingly, the division ordered the patrols sent, with the result that all of them were badly shot up. They obtained valuable information as to the location and strength of the enemy. One patrol, sent out by the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, crossed the Rau de Mayache, where it was practically annihilated by heavy fire from the southeast of the slope on which Tronsol Farm is located. Its leader, Lieutenant Amory was killed but the survivors kept the battalion commander informed of the situation by means of a telephone which had been ordered taken, and remained in contact with the enemy until the advance of October 4th. (NOTE. Amory Creek on the Fort Benning Reservation was named after this officer) (28)

(28) Monuments
Commission,
p 2.

(29) First
Division,
p 185.

Nothing of importance occurred on the 3d, except the ever-increasing casualties. The weather was cold and foggy. Food and water could only be gotten up with great difficulties and then only at night. (29) Thus on the night before the attack, we find the division dug in with excellent communications and in contact with the divisions on its right and left. It was fresh, only ⁱⁿ the sense that it had not yet attacked. It had been ⁱⁿ the go or holding the line since the night of September 29, 1918. The engineers had joined the division on the 2d and were in reserve one kilometer east of very. (30)

spell
(30) Thomas,
p 290.

THE ATTACK OF OCTOBER 4, 1918

THE TERRAIN

Inasmuch as the terrain was a most decisive factor, it will be well to discuss briefly the terrain in front of the American army, between the Meuse and the Argonne Forest and endeavor to show the importance of the particular zone assigned to the First Division. The line held by the American army as stated before, extended from Briculles to Apremont on the Aire and in front of it lay territory protecting the last of the organized German defense position, the Kriemhilde Stellung. The distance was fifteen miles. (30) The entire region was ideal for the defense. There were innumerable hills and patches of woods, heavy bogs and the roads in the rear areas were in the worst possible condition. The key to the

whole system of defense lay in front of the First Division. If it could crack this arch the whole structure would fall. The valley of the Aire paralleled the Argonne Forest proper and was close to it. West of the Aire running east and west and perpendicular to it is the deep Exermont Ravine. North of this ravine, which extended across the front of the entire division, were a series of high hills, valleys and woods which were ideal for the siting of machine guns and artillery. The area over which the First Division was to operate was about three miles wide and three miles deep or about nine square miles in area. (31) Among the most prominent terrain features are the Exermont Ravine, previously mentioned, Montrebeau, Hill 240, Hill 269, Hill 212, Hill 272 and Hill 263. Any advance in the western portion of the zone of action of the division meant exposure to fire from the Argonne Forest, while an advance in the eastern part of the zone meant fire from the direction of the Bois de la Morine. A more ideal defensive position than the Germans possessed in front of the First Division could hardly be imagined. (32)

(31) Thomas,
p 290.

(32) First
Division,
p 184.

OPPOSING FORCES

The German defensive position immediately in front of the First Division on October 4th was about as follows: In the outpost area, his main line of resistance extended along the south and southeastern

edges of the woods between the Mayache stream and Montrebeau Woods and along the southern and southeastern edges of Montrebeau Woods itself. His main line of resistance extended across the sector just south of Exermont, while the German support line ran along the northern slope of Exermont Ravine. The location of several machine guns and batteries of artillery appear to have been known by the division. Enemy light artillery was thought to be in the forward positions. (33)

(33) Records
Sum. of intelligence,
Oct 2-3,
Vol. 17.

Elements of the 1st Guards, 5th Guards, the 37th, 41st, 52d, 28th and 115th German divisions were identified as being opposed to the First Division during the period October 4-11, 1918. (34) It was

(34) First
Division,
p 213.

found that during the attack of October 4th, elements of the 1st Guards, 5th Guards and the 37th and 52d German divisions were holding the line. The 5th Guards and the 52d German Division were considered first class troops. (35) Information as to the actual strength of these units is very meager, some companies were reported as having a strength as low as ten men, while some organizations in the 52d German Division were estimated as having from 120 to 150 men in their rifle companies and from 90 to 120 men in their machine gun companies. Battalions were organized into three rifle companies and one machine gun company.

(35) First
Division,
p 448.

(36) Summaries,
Oct 4-5th,
1918.

(36)

In actual machine gun strength, the Germans in this sector were undoubtedly superior. No figures have been found that give the exact number of machine guns captured from the Germans in this offensive, however, 52 were taken when Hill 272 was taken on October 9, 1918, according to the statement of Captain L. R. Boyd, Infantry who participated in the attack. It is safe to assume that the Germans possessed a far greater number of machine guns in this sector than did the First Division. No figures have been found as to the strength of the enemy artillery, but it is known that it was well placed and tellingly used.

The Germans had utilized the period from the last American attack, which was on September 29th, in consolidating and preparing their positions. Morale was undoubtedly higher in this sector than in some other parts of the line as it was here that the Germans had successfully met the last attack of the Thirty-Fifth Division and had ^{re} gained some of the ground lost by them in previous attacks.

Considering the forces that the commander of the First Division had at his disposal, we find that the division was some 1500 understrength due to the casualties which had occurred since entering the line.

(37) First
Division,
p 183.

(37) Attached to the division for the operations were the following organizations:-

(38) First
Division,
p 184.

219th Field Artillery (French)
3 companies, 1st Brigade of Tanks
3 troops of cavalry (American)
Aerial Observation Squadron No. 1
(American)
Balloon Company No. 2 (American)
Company C, 1st Gas Regiment (American) (38)

In all there were eighty-four 75 mm guns,
and twenty-four 155 mm howitzers. Infantry regiments
numbered about 3700 men less recent casualties.
Each regiment had three battalions of four rifle com-
panies each, each company having a paper strength of
about 250 men. To each battalion was attached a
machine gun company.

Names of commanders to include battalion com-
manders may prove of interest, as one of the great
contributing factors in the success of this operation
was the remarkable leadership displayed by these
officers. It is regretted that a complete list was
found impracticable to obtain.

Division Commander, Major Gen. C. P. Summerall.
1st Infantry Brigade, Brig. Gen. Frank Parker,
2d Infantry Brigade, Brig. Gen. F. E. Bamford.
1st Artillery Brigade, Brig. H. W. Butner.
16th Infantry, Lieut-Col. E. R. Coppock, Cav.
18th Infantry, Col. Charles A. Hunt, Inf.
26th Infantry, Col. Hjalmar Erickson, Inf.
28th Infantry, Col. George C. Barnhardt, Inf.
7th Field Art., Col. F. A. Ruggles.
1st Bn., 16th Inf., Major C. W. Ryder, Inf.
2d Bn., 16th Inf., Major A.S.J. Tucker, Inf.
3d Bn., 16th Inf., Lt-Col. Wm. F. Harrell, Inf.
1st Bn., 18th Inf., Maj. John G. Emery and
Capt. Ganby, ^{OLIVER ALLEN}
2d Bn., 18th Inf., Capt. Cook and Capt. Cornwall.
3d Bn., 18th Inf., Major McKenzie, Inf.
1st Bn., 26th Inf., Major B. R. Legge, Inf.
2d Bn., 26th Inf., Major R. McN. Youell, Inf.
3d Bn., 26th Inf., Major Lyman S. Frazier, Inf.
1st Bn., 28th Inf., Capt. C. S. Senay, Inf.
3d Bn., 28th Inf., Major Hawkinson, Inf. (39)

(39) STATEMENT

Sufficient ammunition for the artillery for three days' firing was on hand as well as food and forage for the men and animals. Excellent communications had been established throughout the command. Local patrols had driven the enemy north of the Eclisfontaine-L'Esperance Road. (40)

(40) First
Division,
p 185.

THE ORDER

In accordance with the order that the First American Army renew the attack at 5:30 A. M. October 4, 1918, thus commencing the second phase of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the First Division issued its Field Order Number 47, which is quoted in full, except for the annexes, as it may prove interesting to note the characteristics of a field order of a highly successful division governing one of its hardest fights:-

"G-3 Secret &
1045 Personal

Headquarters First Division,
American Expeditionary Forces,
France, October 2, 1918.

COPY NO _____

Field Orders
No. 47.

Maps: 1/20,000 issued to most interested parties only.

1. INTENTION OF THE HIGH COMMAND

(A) The enemy has been driven back by the British French, Belgian and American Armies.

The 1st Army has captured more than 9000 prisoners and 100 guns, and had destroyed more than 40 enemy planes since the battle started.

The 4th French Army continues its advance.

The 1st Army will continue the attack on D day at H hour (to be announced later).

(B) The 1st Army Corps will continue the attack on D day at H hour. The corps objective is:

- Hill 1 km. southeast Sommerance-Fleville (excl)
- Hill 180 (inclusive)

2. MISSION OF THE DIVISION, ZONES OF ACTION AND OBJECTIVES.

(A) This division as the right division of the 1st Corps will advance and take the Corps objective without reference to the advance of the divisions on right (91st Div., 5th Corps) and on the left (28th Div.) The division will be prepared to advance from the Corps objective at H plus 5 hours, assist the 91st Div. of the 5th Corps in reducing the Bois de Moncy and Le Petit Bois.

(B) The 1st Infantry Brigade will attack on the left: the 2d Brigade on the right. Regiments from left to right will be 16th Inf., 18th Inf., 28th Inf., 26th Inf. For interior limits between brigade and regiments, see attached sketch.

(C) For objectives, see attached sketch.

3. USE OF TROOPS

(A) Normal formations will be used. Exterior third line battalions in Division Reserve - interior third line battalions in Brigade Reserve.

One company from the first and second line battalions of the left regiment (16th Inf.) will be designated by the C.O. 16th Inf. for combat patrol duty up the valley of the Aire River. The companies of the 16th Inf. designated for patrol duty will insure liaison with the 28th Division and will clear the woods at Fme. des Granges of all hostile machine guns. The 16th Inf., in advancing along the broad plateau west of Exermont, will advance with wide intervals and distances between all elements in order to avoid enemy artillery fire from the heights to the north and northwest.

The 26th Infantry will assist the 91st Division in taking the Bois de Mancy and le Petit Bois by having strong combat patrols on its right flanks, advancing straight ahead in the zone of the 26th Infantry to insure the flanking out of the enemy in these positions.

The jumping-off line in the attached sketch is a line 200 meters in front of which the barrage starts at H-5 mins. The leading battalions will not form up on this jumping-off line but will throw out a screen to cover and mark the jumping-off line. The screen must be sufficient to amply mark the jumping-off line. This screen will be in place by midnight D-1/d. The leading elements will cross the jumping-off line at H

hour. As soon as the artillery barrage lifts from the front of the Corps objective, strong combat patrols will be pushed to the front to maintain contact with the enemy.

(B) ARTILLERY

The artillery will put down a deep barrage 200 meters in front of the jumping-off line at H-5 minutes. At H-hour this barrage will lift, advancing at the rate of 100 meters in four minutes. The barrage will halt 30 minutes 200 meters in front of the first and second objectives. A standing barrage will be put down in front of the Corps objective and then will cease.

No 5 shells (lethal gas) will be used freely on favorable targets and under favorable weather conditions.

Fire with these shells will cease the following periods of time before the area is to be occupied by our troops:

Wooded areas and deep ravines---3 hours
Open areas - - - - - - - - - - -1 hour

The artillery will move forward by echelons to protect the attack as it progresses.

Two pieces of 75s will be placed under the command of each leading Infantry Battalion commander for use as forward guns.

(C) MACHINE GUNS

Machine gun companies attached to first and second line infantry battalions will accompany

their battalions by bounds, keeping in close liaison with the Infantry Battalion Commanders.

Machine gun companies of the third line battalions, including the Division Reserve Battalions, will be placed under orders of the Brigade Commanders and used to fill in gaps and protect the flanks of the Brigades.

(D) DIVISION RESERVES

The battalion of the 16th Infantry in Division Reserve will advance at H plus 1 hour 30 minutes to the Charpentry-Eclisfontaine Road where it will halt and await orders.

The battalion of the 26th Infantry in Division Reserve will conform to the movements of the 26th Infantry and follow in normal formation in regimental zone.

Liaison officer will report to G-3 by H - 1 hour.

1st Machine Gun Battalion will remain in place ready to move at a moment's notice. Liaison officer will report to G-3 by H - 1 hour.

(E) TANKS

Two companies of Tanks (6 platoons - 30 tanks) are at the disposal of this Division. They will be deployed across the Division front with one platoon generally in front of one regiment of Infantry and two supporting platoons generally deployed at the right and left of

their respective Brigade axis. In addition one company - two platoons or three if the tanks are available, will accompany the third echelon of Infantry and assist in mopping up.

The particular mission of tanks is to attack strong points and machine-gun nests, to assist the advance of the Infantry. The tanks in reserve ^{will assist} the Infantry in mopping up.

When the tanks attached to the 16th Infantry on the left reach the northern edge of the Bois de Montrebeau, they will move by the right flank in the zone of the 18th Infantry and will assist the 18th Infantry from that time on.

(F) AIR SERVICE

Observation Squadron No 1 is attached to the Division and will have the Infantry command plane in the air at all times which will call for the staking out of the line on various objectives, and two Artillery planes in the air at all times to designate targets for the Artillery.

Balloon Company No 2 is attached to this Division and will maintain liaison with the Artillery and G-3 at all times.

(G) GAS TROOPS

Company C, 1st Gas Regiment, will assist the advance of the Infantry by placing smoke screens along the southern edge of the Bois de Montrebeau from H-5 to H plus 30 minutes.

(H) CAVALRY

Provisional Squadron, 2d Cavalry, attached to this Division will remain in place ready to move on 30 minutes' notice.

Liaison officer will report to G-3 by H - 1 hour.

(I) ENGINEERS

1st Regiment of Engineers will be in Division Reserve 1 km southeast of Very ready to move at H - 1 hour. Liaison officer will be at G-3 from H - 1 hour.

4. LIAISON (See Appendix 1)

Axis of Liaison - Cheppy+Charpentry-Chaudron Fme - Exermont - Sommerance - Allipont.

5. SUPPLY, COMMUNICATION and EVACUATION
(See appendix 2)

Orders will issue from G-1.

6. POSTS OF COMMAND

1st Division - Cheppy
Divisional Artillery - Cheppy
1st Brigade - Charpentry
2d Brigade - Very
1st Corps - Southern edge of woods on
Les Cotes de Forimont,
28th Division - La Forge
91st Division - Epinonville.

7. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Infantry is again cautioned to stake out the front line when called for by airplane. Commanding officers will impress upon their troops that this staking is vital for their own safety.

Attention is called to the employment by the enemy of 77s in his advance line.

The Infantry will be deployed in depth and this depth employed, not to thicken the advance line, but to pass through the advance line or maneuver to the flank.

Infantry Brigade, Regimental and Battalion Commanders will particularly guard against mixing of units by constant reinforcement of the front line.

When serious resistance is encountered by the leading battalions, flanking methods will be employed and full use made of the 75s, 37 mm guns, Stokes mortars and machine guns.

Artillery information officers will accompany advance battalion commanders to insure close liaison between the Infantry lines and the supporting Artillery.

By command of Major General Summerall:

J. N. Greely,
Chief of Staff: " (41)

(41) Records,
Vol. III.

Distribution:
(Omitted; there
were 56 copies)

On October 3d, a memorandum was issued by Division Headquarters, which announced D day and H hour as 5:25 A. M., October 4, 1918 and among other things, had the artillery barrage come down at H hour instead of H minus 5 minutes, as originally ordered and the smoke screen commence at H hour and continue

for five minutes. It also changed the mission of the 1st Machine Gun Battalion by having it fire successfully on Montrebeau Woods and Fme des Granges, from the ridge that lies about one kilometer southwest of Chaudron Farm. (42)

(42) Records,
Vol. III.

The eastern boundary of the division was a line running northwest from a point about 100 yards west of Tronsol Farm to Hill 272 and the western boundary was the road running north to Fleville. The boundary between brigades was shown on the map as follows: Western edge of Very - Exermont - Hill 240 - Sommerance. The boundary between the 26th Infantry and the 28th Infantry was as follows: Point in Rau de Carovaux north of road junction about 500 yards northeast of Very - Serieux Farm - western slope of Hill 212 - opening in the Le Petit Rois Woods - Hill 240 and the Fme d'Arietal - bend in Sommerance - Landres et St. Georges Road 900 yards northeast of Sommerance. The boundary between the 16th Infantry and the 18th Infantry was ordered as follows: Point in the ravine de Very about 900 yards southwest of Very - point on L'Esperance - Serieux Fme. Road 400 yards west of Chaudron Fme. - Point 1000 yards west of Hill 240 (Montrefagne) - point in Rau de Rance about 900 yards west of Sommerance. (43)

(43) First
Division &
Monuments
Commission
maps.

The line of departure extended from the Bois Cummunal de Baulny to Chaudron Farm and L'Esperance.

(44) First
Division,
p 186.

(44)

The first objective for the attack was a line passing along the northern edge of Montrebeau, the second, a line running along the base of the northern slope of Hill 240 (Montrefagne) and the third, was the Corps objective which was a line passing north of Fleville. (45)

(45) First
Division,
p 184.

It was thought that the left brigade would have trouble in advancing due to enfilade fire from the Argonne Forest. (46)

(46) First
Division,
p 184.

Subsequent to the issuance of Field Order No. 47, Headquarters, First Division, the 91st Division on the left of the First Division was relieved by the 64th Brigade of the 32d Division. (47) The battalions of the four infantry regiments were disposed from front to rear as follows:

(47) Thomas,
p 261.

26th Infantry:

- 1st Battalion, in assault.
- 2d Battalion, in regimental reserve.
- 3d Battalion, in division reserve.

28th Infantry:

- 3d Battalion, in assault.
- 1st Battalion, in regimental reserve.
- 2d Battalion, in brigade reserve.

18th Infantry:

- 3d Battalion, in assault.
- 2d Battalion, in regimental reserve.
- 1st Battalion, in brigade reserve.

16th Infantry:

- 3d Battalion in assault.
- 2d Battalion, in regimental reserve.
- 1st Battalion, in division reserve. (48)

(48) First
Division,
p 180.

THE FIGHT

As per schedule, the barrage came down 200 meters in front of the line of departure at 5:25 A. M. on the morning of October 4th, remained standing for

80?
2
five minutes and then moved at a rate of 100 meters in four minutes. There were only eighty-four 75s and eight of these had been allotted to the four leading battalions, and the front was some 5000 yards in extent, so that the barrage was thin, but otherwise superbly executed.

No sooner had the American barrage begun than the enemy barrage came down and along with it withering fire from machine guns from nests in front of the positions and extending as far back as the crest of the north side of the Exermont Ravine. (49)

(49) First
Division,
pp 186,187.

When the leading battalions crossed the line of departure it was fairly dark and foggy. This was an advantage that was made the most of in getting the lines forward, but it was a condition that lasted only a comparatively short time, and soon casualties began to mount in great numbers.

On the right, the right regiment of the 2d Brigade, the 26th Infantry, with its 1st Battalion in assault, received fire from the right flank as well as from the front and the going was hard from the start. Hand to hand fighting ensued and it was with the greatest difficulty that the assault battalion reached the first objective about a half an hour after the scheduled time. (50) The second and third line battalions had been caught in the enemy barrage, and had suffered heavy casualties. The regimental post of command had moved ^{from} the vicinity of Very to immediately

(50) First
Division,
p 189.

(51) Twenty-Sixth in the rear of the line of departure. (51)
Infantry,
p 65.

The left regiment of the 2d Brigade with its 3d Battalion in assault, met considerable difficulty in reaching the first objective, as it was subjected to very heavy machine gun fire from the vicinity of Exermont Ravine as well in addition to direct and indirect artillery fire from German batteries on the northern slope of that same ravine. It was also late in reaching the first objective. (52)

Sign

(52) First
Division,
pp 187-189.

The 1st Brigade on the left met heavy machine gun fire and artillery fire from the start. The 18th Infantry suffered particularly from machine gun fire from the Montrebeau Woods, while the 16th Infantry was met by decimating fire from the Argonne Forest on its left flank and from the front. The formation used was the same as in the 2d Brigade, regiments abreast the 18th on the right, each regiment in column of battalions. The fighting in Montrebeau Woods was extremely severe as the enemy had organized the woods in depth and made a very stubborn resistance. Due to the fog the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry closed on the 3d Battalion, which was the assault battalion and assaulted in line with it. (53)

(53) First
Division,
p 190.

After reaching the first objective, which meant that it had pushed through the entire German outpost system, the division had the formidable Exermont Ravine to cross. South and north of this ravine were the enemy's main line of resistance and his support line, respectively. He was fighting savagely

and had made the First Division pay heavily for its advance. In his support line were numerous machine gun nests and batteries of light artillery which were using direct fire against the Americans. La Neuville de Compte and Beuaregard Farms which were highly organized areas were on this line and were in the zone of action of the 28th Infantry. Beyond the support line were many terrain features that were utilized by the Germans to the utmost, among them being Hill 212 and the Fme D'Arietal in the path of the 26th Infantry and Hill 240 (Montrefagne) in the zones of action of the 28th Infantry and the 18th Infantry. Cutting into the Exermont Ravine at Exermont and extending northeast in the direction of Fme D'Arietal lay a deep bare valley. To the west of it was the formidable Montrefagne, and on the east Hill 212, while on its western slope at a distance of about 400 yards from Exermont and directly north of the village was an organized trench area. This, too, lay in the zone of action of the 28th Infantry. In addition to the features mentioned there were woods such as the Bois de Boyon on the southern slopes on Montrefagne and the Petit Bois not to mention many small patches of woods that were organized by the enemy. (54)

(54) First
Division,
map.

In advancing to the first objective, the 1st Battalion of the 26th Infantry had been badly shot up and somewhat disorganized, so the 2d Battalion was

S 11

passed through it. The division on the right had made ^{no} progress thus causing all of the battalions of the 26th Infantry to come under flanking fire as the advance progressed. This situation was met by extending the front and refusing it, so that when after most vicious hand to hand fighting the advance crossed the Exermont Ravine and secured its northern slope in the regimental zone, the 2d and 1st Battalions had become intermingled. Great difficulty was encountered in clearing out a small patch of woods that lay on the northern slope of the Exermont Ravine at the extreme right of the division boundary. The advance had been greatly aided when La Neuville le Compte and Beauregard Farms also on the northern slope of the Exermont Ravine were reduced by the 28th Infantry. When night fell, the 26th Infantry had not reached the second objective but had crossed the Exermont Ravine and held a line that ran approximately as follows from right to left: A point on the division boundary about 200 yards northwest of Tronsol Farm, where it was in contact with the 32d Division, thence northwest along the division boundary to a point about 200 yards southeast of Hill 200 then west along the northern slope of the Exermont Ravine to La Neuville le Compte Farm where it was in contact with the 28th Infantry. (55)

(55) First
Division
p 192, and
Monuments
Commission
p 3.

The 28th Infantry in moving forward from the first objective came under intense machine gun fire from the Le Neuville Le Compte and Beauregard Farms as well as from an enemy battery located on the northern

(57) First
Division,
pp 193-194.

the Exermont Ravine, were used in firing barrage missions and at various targets. (57)

In leaving the first objective, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 18th Infantry which were assaulting in line, came under intense artillery and machine gun fire as they pushed their way down the open slopes of the Exermont Ravine. At this place they became a target for the artillery in the Argonne Forest and were deluged with shell and machine gun fire from the bald spur of Hill 240 (Montfagne) that jutted into the Exermont Ravine. Casualties were frightful and a much depleted line reached the southern slope of Montrefagne. Some elements pushed on to the top of the hill, but they were submitted to such terrific fire converging on them that they fell back to the southern slope of the hill. At nightfall the regiment was disposed as follows: the 2d and 3d Battalions in the front line, the 3d Battalion being in front of Montrefagne, and the 1st Battalion which was in brigade ^(Remont?) was on the northern slope of Montrebeau with two companies north of the Exermont Ravine. These were placed there to protect the left of the regiment.

(58) First
Division,
pp 190-191.

(58) It was in contact with the 28th Infantry on its right and the 16th Infantry on its left.

On the extreme left of the division, the 16th Infantry attacking with its 3d Battalion in assault, pushed on after the first objective had been reached,

slope of Exermont Ravine. Suffering heavy casualties and after a desperate advance across the open and down the ravine, the 28th captured ~~the battery and the~~ battery of artillery and the fortified positions of La Neuville le Compte and Beauregard Farms. After passing the first objective, when it was seen that the barrage could not be followed, the regiment used the 7th Field Artillery which was in liaison with it as did the 26th Infantry on the right. By nightfall, although it did not reach the second objective, it was across the Exermont Ravine, and was connected up with the 26th Infantry on the right and the 18th Infantry on its left. The 3d Battalion held the front line; the 1st Battalion, which was in regimental reserve dug in along the line of the first objective and 2d Battalion halted for the night near the line of departure.

(56) First
Division,
p 191.

(56)

When it became evident that the 2d Brigade was having difficult going, the 1st Machine Gun Battalion was placed at the disposal of the Commanding General, 2d Brigade. The 3d Machine Gun Battalion, less Companies "B" and "D", which were attached to battalions in the 26th and 28th Infantries, respectively, was employed as a tactical unit. At one stage of the fight it delivered direct fire on what appeared to be an enemy battalion of infantry, causing it to retreat. The 1st Machine Gun Battalion operated with the 3d Machine Gun Battalion and together after reaching

followed the barrage, crossed the Exermont Ravine and stormed the trenches north of that place. A detachment had cleaned out the Granges Farm. All of this in the face of galling fire from the heights of the Argonne Forest. Continuing the assault, the leading elements entered Fleville, which was the day's objective. The town was cleared but in accordance with instructions from the division it was not held, a line some 600 yards south of the town on the reverse slope of a ridge was selected and the 3d Battalion dug in at 1:00 P. M. The 16th Infantry was the only element in the American army that reached its objective that day. The battalion was far in advance of the troops on its right and left and was subjected to terrific shelling. The casualties had been extremely heavy; two officers and two hundred men were left of the twenty officers and eight hundred men that had jumped off that morning. By nightfall the regiment was disposed as follows: the 3d Battalion held a line 600 yards south of Fleville, and was connected with the 18th Infantry on its right and in direct contact with the 28th Division on its left. The 2d Battalion in regimental reserve, dug in on the northern slope of the Exermont Ravine while the 1st Battalion, in division reserve, was in position east of Charpentry. The 1st Engineers sent forward working parties and entrenching tools to make the position of the 3d Battalion secure. (59)

(59) First
Division,
pp 189-190.

The work of the artillery was at all times splendid throughout the day, and as soon as the first objective was crossed it moved forward by echelons so as to closely support its infantry. Great teamwork was displayed by the infantry and artillery, each having the greatest of respect for the other's prowess. Communication was excellent throughout the day. (60)

(60) First Division, p 193.

Company C, 1st Gas Regiment, had rendered effective aid in placing a smoke screen on Montrebeau Woods, but soon lost heavily and was badly handicapped for subsequent operations. (61)

(61) First Division, p 194.

The Tanks suffered 84% casualties in personnel and there were only three tanks remaining at the end of the day. The five that had gallantly plunged into the Exermont Ravine were all destroyed by shell fire. Companies B and C of the 345th Tank Battalion with sixteen tanks preceded the 2d Brigade while Company C of the 344th Tank Battalion with a like number of tanks were in front of the 1st Brigade. Company A, 344th Tank Battalion was in reserve. They had been very effective in helping the infantry reduce machine gun nests, but were knocked out by artillery fire early in the day. (62)

(62) First Division, p 194.

The enemy air service was very active throughout the day. (63)

(63) Records, Sum. of Int. 5-6, October 1918.

In summing up the day's gains, it will be seen that the right brigade had advanced about two kilometers while the left regiment of the left brigade had advanced four kilometers and had reached the Corps

objective. The division had penetrated the enemy outpost and main line of resistance and although it had suffered severe casualties, it was in excellent shape to advance. (64)

(64) First
Division,
p 195.

THE ATTACK OF OCTOBER 5th

THE TERRAIN

The terrain in front of the division has already been discussed, however, there were one or two features that may need amplification. In front of the 26th Infantry lay Hill 212 with woods covering its reverse slope and extending in a southeasterly direction towards Hill 200, which was on the extreme right of the division boundary. There was a little patch of woods directly south of Hill 212, but apart from this cover the advance would have to be made in the open. North of Hill 212 there was an open ravine, on the northern slopes of which were heavy woods, and at the head of which was the strongly fortified Fme d'Arietal. Beyond this farm and slightly to the northwest of Hill 212 lay the awe-inspiring Hill 272, which was heavily wooded. (65)

(65) First
Division
map.

In the zone of the 28th Infantry lay an open valley extending in a northeasterly direction into the zone of the 26th Infantry. Located on the northern slope of this valley about 500 yards ^{from} Exermont was a heavily constructed trench system, with open approaches. On the left was Hill 240 (Montrefagne),

with the Bois de Boyon extending down to these trenches. Beyond Montrefagne was Le Petit Bois terminating in an abrupt shoulder of Hill 272.

In front of the 18th Infantry lay the major portion of Montrefagne, with the Bois de Boyon on its southern slope. Between the front line of the 18th Infantry and this woods lay an open clearing and beyond Montrefagne and the woods on its northern slope was an open space some 1000 yards in depth, broken by patches of woods. On the extreme right of the zone was a system of trenches. (66)

(66) First
Division
map.

OPPOSING FORCES

The Germans were in contact all along the division front and were showing stubborn resistance. The enemy artillery had been splendidly handled and his machine guns cleverly sited. He had lost heavily during the day, but was receiving reinforcements.

The First Division had suffered heavily in advancing. At least half of its infantry battalions had been in assault and all of the reserve battalions except the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, in division reserve, had sustained heavy losses. There were only three tanks left of the forty-seven originally assigned, while all of the accompanying guns had been put out of action. The troops, however, were well in hand, morale was high and there was a grim determination throughout the division to win at all costs. (67)

(67) First
Division,
pp 187-184.

THE ORDER

Field Order No 48, Headquarters, First Division, October 5, 1918, prescribed among other things the objectives. The first two objectives were placed with a view of getting the 2d Brigade and the 18th Infantry on line with the 16th Infantry. The third objective was to be made by the entire division for the purpose of advancing the line to the Corps objective. (68) The first objective was a line from the crest of Montrefagne to the northern slope of Hill 212; the second, a line from the line held by the 16th Infantry to the base of the northern slope of Hill 272, (69) and the third extended from a point just north of Elevation to the edge of the woods north of the Cote de Maldah and then generally along the road running east from Summerance through the Bois de Romagne. (70) The right front for the division was extended after the first objective to include the western edge of the Bois de Moncy, which had been organized by the enemy. (71)

(68) Records,
Vol. III,
F.O. 48,
1st Div.

(69) First
Division,
p 196.

Spill

(70) First
Division
map.

(71) First
Division
p 196.

The order further planned that the infantry halt for two hours on each of the first two objectives, and that the third line battalions of the 2d Brigade would pass through the front line battalions and take the second objective, when the first objective had been reached. The Commanding Officer, 26th Infantry, was directed to detail two companies to seize and hold the western edge of the Bois de Moncy,

(72) First
Division,
p 196.

when advancing from the second objective, in order to protect the right flank of the division. (72)

The artillery was ordered to put down a heavy concentration for 15 minutes previous to H hour, and a rolling barrage advancing at the rate of 100 meters every four minutes was to be placed 200 meters in front of the infantry up to the first objective. There it was to place heavy concentrations between the first and second objectives during the two hour halt of the infantry. Similar fires were planned for the advance to the second objective. (73)

The 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry and the 1st Machine Gun Battalion were ordered to remain in place while the 3d Battalion, 26th Infantry was released from divisional reserve to its regimental commander. H hour was announced as 6:30 A. M., October 5, 1918.

(74) Records,
Vol. III,
F.O. 48.

(74)

THE FIGHT

On the right, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, moved off on scheduled time and suffering heavy casualties from both artillery and machine gun fire cleared the crest of Hill 212 and the woods beyond. It was reorganized and passed through by the 3d Battalion which had been in division reserve. This battalion came under heavy fire from the Bois de Moncy on the right, from the woods on the left and from the organized positions at Fme d'Arietal. By infiltration

and by the masterly use of the supporting artillery but principally because the Bois de Moncy had been secured by two companies of the 1st Battalion, the Fme d'Arietal was taken. The battalion was unable to advance much beyond this point, as it came under decimating fire from Hill 272, which lay some 500 yards to its front. Here it dug in for the night, connected on the right with the two companies of the 1st Battalion that had captured the western edge of the Bois de Moncy and on the left with the 28th Infantry. Thus the 26th Infantry was compelled to again refuse its right flank. (75)

(75) First
Division,
p 196-197.

When the two companies of the 26th Infantry attacked due east and captured the organized positions in the western edge of the Bois de Moncy, a patrol was sent to Hill 269 about 1 kilometer east of the right boundary of the division in the Bois de Moncy. Its western slope was reported as not being held, with the result that the brigade commander sent a detachment to occupy it. The German lines facing the 32d Division lay several hundred yards south of the hill. Quite a number of prisoners were captured when passing the hill in attempting to reach their lines. Its prompt seizure saved a costly assault later on. (76)

(76) First
Division,
pp 195 & 200.

The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry led the assault on the morning of the 5th. It came under difficulties almost immediately from the trenches that

were located on the western slope of a deep valley and lay directly in front of them, as well as fire from the direction of Montrefagne and Hill 212, on the right. With dogged determination it forged ahead and took the trenches and in conjunction with the 18th Infantry on its left, assaulted and took Montrefagne. Here it was passed through by the 2d Battalion, which had been in brigade reserve. This battalion advanced the line about 300 yards north of Montrefagne where it was stopped by withering fire from Hill 272 and was subjected to terrific artillery fire and fire from minenwerfers. (77)

(77) 28th Inf.
p 30.

The depleted 3d Battalion of the 16th Infantry which had fought so gallantly the day before was selected to make the assault to the first objective. In conjunction with the 28th Infantry on the right it fought its way to the top of the Montrefagne, in spite of converging artillery fire that ripped and tore holes through the lines and ferocious machine gun fire from the hill itself, manned by a bitter enemy who elected to fight to the bitter end. The advance was continued beyond the crest but when the low ground at the base of Montrefagne was reached it was held up by artillery and machine gun fire. The battalion then dug in on the left of the 28th Infantry. (78)

(78) First
Division,
p 201.

During the entire day, the 16th Infantry on the extreme right was exposed to well-directed artillery fire and suffered many casualties. (79)

(79) First
Division,
p 203.

SV

The artillery assisted the infantry at every turn and received heavy casualties. Gun crews, caissons and ammunition dumps were blown up by the enemy, but as usual in this division the artillery lived up to its record as one of the principal players on this great team that was the First Division. (80)

(80) First
Division,
p 202.

THE RESULTS

As a result of the day's fighting the Argonne Forest was flanked and the arch cracked. All the infantry was now on line with the 16th Infantry. (81) Contact with the 26th Division was maintained during the night by the 16th Infantry but contact with the 32d Division on the right was not maintained. In flanking the Argonne Forest the way was paved for the 82d Division to strike the northeastern end of the forest which they did in a most brilliant manner. (82) The 32d Division on the right which had been unable to advance on the previous day, gallantly advanced their line from the vicinity of Tronsol Farm to Bois de la Morine. Its advance was due to the advance of the First Division. Another result of the advance of the First Division was the consolidation of its position by the 28th Division on the left, which had advanced with the First Division on the previous day. (83)

(81) First
Division,
p 201 & 213

(83) Thomas,
p 296, 297,
300 & 301.

THREE DAYS OF WAITING (OCTOBER 6th, 7th and 8th)

For the next three days, in compliance with orders from the 1st Corps no advance was to be made

by the division, but any ground vacated by the enemy was to be occupied. There was a constant rain of shell and infantry fire on the front lines, while the rear areas and the artillery were subjected to heavy concentrations of gas and high explosive. (84)

(84) First
Division,
p 202.

On October 6th, an attempt was made by the 26th Infantry to infiltrate in the direction of Hill 272 from the vicinity of the Fme d'Arietal but without success. When an attempt was made to advance around the eastern end of the hill by the 3d Battalion, 26th Infantry, it was met by an enemy force estimated as regiment in the act of launching a counterattack. This was successfully met and the enemy routed. (85)

(85) First
Division,
p 202.

The 1st Engineers on the night of the 6-7th began to construct a defensive line from Serieux Farm to Chaudron Farm and the 7th Field Artillery moved to Le Neuville le Compte Farm.

A detachment from the 32d Division on the right, passing through the zone of the 26th Infantry, were conducted to the western slope of Hill 269 where it relieved the detachment of the 26th Infantry on the night of October 6-7th. During the same night a brigade of the 82d Division entered the zone of the First Division with a view of making a flanking movement on the Argonne Forest the next morning from the left boundary of the First Division. (86)

(86) First
Division,
p 202-203.

Contact with the 32d Division was maintained during the same night by a mixed post about one mile

What is this?

northeast of Hill 212. The line held by the 32d Division was about 400 yards east of this post. Direct contact was had with the 28th Division just south of Fleville. (87)

(87) Monuments
Commission
p 5.

Early on the morning of the 7th, the brigade of the 82d Division assaulted from the line Fleville - La Forge due west with the mission of capturing the two hills that dominated the eastern edge of the Argonne Forest, Hills 180 and 223. Their success in capturing these during the day relieved the terrific artillery concentrations that had been so galling to the First Division and was instrumental in causing the relief of the so-called "Lost Battalion" in the Argonne Forest. (88) The 6th Field Artillery supported the attack of the brigade of the 82d Division. (89)

(88) Thomas,
pp 305-307.
(89) First
Division.

In accordance with Field Order No. 46, Headquarters, 1st American Army, the First Division was relieved at 5:00 P. M. on October 7, 1918, from the 1st Corps and attached to the Fifth Corps. Field Order No. 64, Headquarters, Fifth Corps, dated October 7th, attached the 362d Infantry of the 91st Division to the First Division and ordered the right boundary of the First Division to include Hill 269 and Tuillerie Farm. It did not change the left boundary. (90) The 362d Infantry was placed in division reserve in the Les Bouleaux Bois. The purpose of this extension to the eastward was to assist the 32d Division on the right in cleaning up the Bois de Romagne, the Le Petit Bois and Hill 263. (91)

(90) Monuments
Commission
p 4.

(91) First
Division
p 203.

During the night of October 7-8th, the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers, with Company B, 1st Machine Gun Battalion, was placed under the command of the Commanding General, 2d Brigade. Under orders of the brigade commander, it moved from Tronsol Farm where it had been assembled to the relief of two companies of the 32d Division which were holding two knobs on the western slope of Hill 269. It received some casualties from shell fire in advancing up the hill but the relief was completed by 5:30 A. M. of

(92) First Division, pp 203, 204; Monuments Commission p 4.

the 8th. (92) The enemy held the top of the eastern slope.

During the same night liaison between the 26th Infantry and the two companies of the 32d Division occupying the western slope of Hill 269 was maintained although a gap of about 400 yards separated them. (93)

(93) Monuments Commission p 4.

On October 8th, at about 3:00 P. M. just as the 3d Battalion, 26th Infantry was about to advance against the top of Hill 272 and the 2d Battalion of the same regiment was getting reach to advance to the east of it, observers on Hill 212, reported a body of troops coming from the edge of the woods south of Hill 263 and another group advancing north of Hill 272. The two battalions of the 26th Infantry assisted by the 7th Field Artillery and the 1st and 3d Machine Gun Battalions from the vicinity of Hill 212, who ~~who~~ ^{which} directed their fire against the troops coming from the direction of Hill 263 and the 5th Field Artillery

gram

German *which*

who reached the troops coming from Hill 272, broke up the attack but were themselves unable to advance.

During the day orders for the attack for the following day were received. (94)

(94) First
Division.

THE ATTACK OF OCTOBER 9th

THE TERRAIN

The division, though much diminished in strength, was possessed of one great advantage that it did not have at the beginning of the battle, namely, good observation. The possession of Hills 212 and 240 (Montrefagne) were of incalculable value. It still had hard going ahead of it. Hill 272 was the dominating feature with Hill 263 a close second. For the victory to be complete it must smash its way through the dense woods that lay to right of its zone of advance as well as these formidable hills. In front of the right brigade lay the Le Petit Bois culminating in the high Hill 263 and Hill 272 that had so far defied all efforts to capture it. In front of the left brigade in addition to the organized trench system northeast of Fleville, was Hill 176 and many patches of woods. (95)

(95) First
Division
map.

OPPOSING FORCES

While the First Division had met some of his best troops and dislodged them, there was no let-up in the determination of the Germans to give up an inch of

Map
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(not?)

(96) First
Division,
p 206.

ground. His orders were to hold to the last. If he could keep the Americans from breaking the famous Kriemhilde Stellung, there might be a chance for the Vaterland. (96) The enemy was in contact all along the front of the First Division.

Considering the tools that the First Division had to work with on the eve of this attack, it is seen that there is only one battalion that has not suffered severe casualties, the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry. The tanks had been expended. The other elements of the division had lost heavily while the 181st Brigade of the 91st Division which was attached to the division, had only had two days' rest and had suffered many casualties. Morale of the highest order was present. The men had been fed under great difficulties, but had been fed. Communication and observation were in excellent shape but above all the division possessed the fine attribute of perfect coordination and mutual respect in all its arms and branches that made for team play. (97)

(97) First
Division
p 202.

THE ORDER

The mission of the First Division as given in its Field Order No. 47, was as follows: "This division with the 181st Brigade attached, as the left division of the 5th Army Corps, while strongly covering its front north of Hill 240, will attack in the direction of Hill 263 in the Petit Bois and will assist the 32d

Division by cleaning up the Le Petit Bois and the Bois de Romagne, north of Hill 263". Thus it will be seen that there was to be a decided shift to the right, while the left of the division boundary was now the line Fleville - Sommerance. (98)

(98) First
Division
p 204.

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Syn*

The line from right to left was to be constituted as follows: The 361st Infantry of the 91st Division, attached to the First Division, was on the extreme right and was ordered to hold ~~on~~ the right flank of the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers, who were occupying Hill 269. ~~were on its left.~~ The 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers was to be the pivot of the attack and was given the mission of clearing the Bois de Moncy in front of them. The 2d Brigade, with the 26th Infantry on its right, and the 28th on its left, was to change direction to the northeast and attack with its right ~~on~~ the new division boundary Hill 269 - Tuilerie Farm and its left on Hill 272. The 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry attached to the 18th Infantry for the purpose of taking Hill 272, was next in line, and on its left the rest of the 1st Brigade, from right to left, 18th Infantry, 16th Infantry. In division reserve there was to be the 263d Infantry, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, the 1st Machine Gun Battalion, and 2d Battalion 1st Engineers. (99)

(99) First
Division,
pp 204, 205.

The first objective was a line passing north of Hill 272; the second a line passing north of the Bois de Romagne and the Cote de Maldah. For the ad-

vance to the first objective, the assault battalions of the 2d Brigade were to pass through the front line battalions, and the 1st Battalion of the 16th Infantry through the 28th Infantry. After being passed through, the first line battalions of the 2d Brigade were to form at the Fme D'Arietal and Fme de St. Germain. Brigade commanders were enjoined to organize positions in depth along the line: Ridge west of Hill 240 - northern edge of woods north of Hill 212. (100)

(100) First
Division,
p 204-205,

The advance to the first objective was to be behind a barrage placed 200 meters in front of the entire front line. From the first objective to the second, the barrage was to be concentrated in order to secure sufficient density in front of the 2d Brigade, the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry and the 1st Brigade when they advanced successively.

8:30 A. M., October 9th, was the hour set for the attack of the ~~while~~ 1st Army. (101) The 1st Brigade was ordered to advance at H hour at the rate of 100 meters every three minutes, until H plus 15 minutes and then at the rate of 100 meters in 6 minutes. The 2d Brigade and the left element of the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers were to advance at H plus 22 minutes at the rate of 100 meters every 6 minutes. After reaching the first objective, the 1st Brigade was to halt, reorganize and maintain liaison with the 2d Brigade, which was to halt for two hours at H plus 3 hours or 11:30 A. M. ^{at} advance to the second objective.

Opell
(101) First
Division
p 205.

(102) Records,
Vol. III,
F.O. 49.

Next at H plus 4 hours and 50 minutes the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, was to advance to the second objective, behind a rolling barrage. At H plus 6 hours and 20 minutes, the 1st Brigade less the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, was to advance to the second objective and there organize for defense. (102) One of the reasons for this method of using the artillery was the great length of the front, which was four kilometers long.

THE FIGHT

The morning of the 9th was extremely foggy, and while this made it difficult to maintain direction, it was an ideal protection against machine gun fire. Under cover of this fog, the 2d Brigade on the right jumped off at 8:52 A. M. and took Hill 263 on scheduled time. The defense of the hill consisted of dispersed machine gun nests which were taken by small groups working around them. The hill was very steep and the men had to pull themselves up by the bushes. Aided by the fog and with the 155 Howitzers pounding the crests of Hill 272, the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, moved out at 8:30 A. M. toward their objective, the hill that had withstood every previous assault. With great dash and gallantry, after severe losses, it carried the hill and was on the objective on time.

(103) First
Division,
pp. 208-210.

(103)

The 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry on the left of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry came under terrific

machine gun fire from patches of woods north of Hill 240. Finally one company in advancing around the Hill 176 outflanked the enemy and the battalion resumed its advance and reached the objective. Some of the hardest fighting of the battle took place in this assault. (104)

(104) First
Division,
p 208.

The 16th Infantry on the left of the First Brigade arrived on the first objective as per schedule and as usual with that gallant regiment. (105)

(105) First
Division,
p 209.

While the rest of the troops were advancing to first objectives, the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers on Hill 269, just as it was forming to commence the attack, was attacked by the Germans from the south and east. The enemy succeeded in capturing two machine guns and some wounded men. In a smashing counterattack the engineers recaptured their guns and wounded men and fought their way to the first objective on time.

(106) First
Division,
p 209.

(106)

With all units on the first objective, the attack commenced on scheduled time towards the second objective. The 2d Brigade moved down the northern slope of Hill 263 and cleared the enemy out of its zone of advance. The 2d Battalion of the 26th Infantry, which was in assault broke up an enemy counter-attack that was threatening its advance. Next followed the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry which promptly reached its objective, organizing a line south of the Cote de Maldah. When the barrage shifted again and the 1st Brigade reached its objective, which extended

(107) First
Division
p 210.

to the field works of the enemy northeast of Fleville, and curved in a northeasterly direction to the line held by the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry. (107)

The 361st Infantry completely cleared Hill 269 and organized a line along its northern slope.

The gains

With all the high hills behind it, the division had now nearly completed the cracking of the arch that supported the German line. It had advanced its line during the day about two kilometers, had captured the last of the dominant terrain features in its path. It was enabled to advance its 75s to the line Fle-

(108) First
Division
p 210.

ville - Hill 272. (108) At the end of the day's fighting the front line of the division was about as follows: Hill 269 - northeast slope of Hill 263 - northern edge of Le Petit Bois - woods northern fringe of Hill 272 - German trenches about one kilometer north of Fleville. Contact with the 361st Infantry on the right was maintained but not with the 82d

(109) Monuments
Commission
p 6.

Division on the left. (109)

THE EXPLOITATION (OCTOBER 10-11th)

For the next two days in conformity with orders from the 5th Corps, further advance was to be made by exploitation. Bearing this in mind, patrols were ordered forward to seize key point, followed by ~~the~~ battalions and in this manner the front line was advanced for about two kilometers without encountering

serious resistance. In attempting to advance further, patrols came under heavy fire from the prepared enemy positions south of Landres et St. Georges and St. Georges. Here it was seen that a prepared assault would be necessary for further advance and as the First Division was much reduced in strength and needed a rest, the corps ordered it to hold the ground it had gained pending a relief. (110)

(110) First
Division
p 211.

The long expected relief came on the night of October 11-12, 1918, for all elements of the First Division except the 1st Artillery Brigade and the 1st Ammunition Train. The division assembled near Cheppy and then moved by marching to the Vavincourt Area some 75 kilometers distant. There were no trucks available to move the division out of the line, but trucks were always available when the division had to enter the line in a hurry. (111)

(111) First
Division,
p 212.

THE FIRST FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE IN SUPPORT OF
THE FORTYSECOND DIVISION. (OCTOBER 12-31, 1918)

Although worn out with constant service it was deemed necessary by the higher command to have the 1st Artillery Brigade and the 1st Ammunition Train remain in support of the Forty-Second Division. It helped prepare and cover the assault of that division on the Kriemhilde Stellung in the vicinity of Landres et St. Georges and participated in the preparation for the great advance of November 1, 1918, which

Spelt

initiated the ~~third~~ phase of the Msue-Argonne battle. During this period the men had but three days' rest, when skeleton crews were left at the guns and the remainder of the personnel withdrawn to Cheppy. (112)

(112) First
Division
p 219.

SUMMARY OF THE OPERATION

The First Division met and defeated elements of eight German divisions, namely, the 1st and 5th Guard Divisions and the 28th, 37th, 41st, 45th, 52d, and the 115th Divisions. The approximate strength of these units could not be determined. It is certain that all of them were greatly reduced in personnel from the paper strength 7000 man German division. At no time during the attack did the enemy show any but most stubborn resistance. As an example of this, the following quotation from a German regimental commander who was captured on Hill 272 reads as follows: "I received orders to hold my ground at all costs". (113)

(113) First
Division
pp 211-213.

The division advanced seven kilometers and during the advance had both of its flanks exposed. Its advance outflanked the Argonne Forest, making it possible for the 82d Division to clear a portion of it, thus causing the enemy to give up the position. This action of the First Division was the indirect cause of the relief of the so-called "Lost Battalion" of the 77th Division in the Forest. The advance also cleared the positions to the east with the result that

the German hold on the defenses immediately in front of the Kriemhilde Stellung, his last organized defensive position was forced, thus securing observation and cover for future operations against that line. (114)

(114) First
Division,
p 213.

The division captured 28 officers, 455 non-commissioned officers and 924 enlisted men during the operation. The German losses in killed were very great due to their stubborn defense. 13 field pieces, 10 trench mortars and large numbers of machine guns, rifles and ammunition were captured. (115)

(115) First
Division
p 213.

The First Division lost in killed and wounded, 196 officers and 7324 men, the greatest number of casualties it had received in any of its battles. (116)

(116) First
Division
p 213.

The action of the division in this operation won for it the proud distinction of having a General Order from the Commander-in-Chief devoted exclusively to its accomplishments. No other single division received a separate general order during the war. This order sums up the mission, accomplishments, and in my opinion, the principal cause for its success which is to be found in the fourth paragraph of the order which is quoted in full:

G. H. Q.

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

General Orders
No. 201

France, Nov. 19, 1918.

1. The Commander-in-Chief desires to make of record in the General Orders of the American Expeditionary Forces his extreme satisfaction with the conduct

of the officers and men of the First Division in its advance west of the Meuse between October 4th and 11th, 1918. During this period the division gained a distance of seven kilometers over a country which represented not only remarkable facilities for defense, but also **great** difficulties of terrain for the operation of our troops.

2. The division met with resistance from elements of eight hostile divisions, most of which were first-class troops and some of which were completely rested. The enemy chose to defend his position to the death, and the fighting was always of the most desperate kind. Throughout the operations the officers and men of the division displayed the highest type of courage, fortitude and self-sacrificing devotion to duty. In addition to many enemy killed, the division captured 1407 of the enemy, thirteen 77-mm field guns, 10 trench mortars and numerous machine guns and stores.

3. The success of the division in driving a deep advance into the enemy's territory enabled an assault to be made on the left by the neighboring division against the northeastern portion of the Forest of Argonne and enabled the First Division on the right to **outflank** the enemy's position in front of the enemy's position on that flank.

4. The Commander-in-Chief has noted in this division a special pride of service and a high state

of morale, never broken by hardship or battle.

5. This order will be read to all organizations at the first assembly formation after its receipt.

By command of General Pershing:

OFFICIAL:

ROBERT C. DAVIS,
Adjutant General.

JAMES W. McANDREW,
Chief of Staff. " (117)

(117) First
Division,
pp 366,367.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

To attempt to analyze the underlying principles involved in such an operation as this one was is a difficult task, but it is even more difficult to criticize, as is the case with most successful operations.

First, was there a correct estimate of the situation made by the division commander during the initial and throughout all stages of the operation? The answer I believe, is decidedly yes. The immediate mission of the division was the relief of the 35th Division. Upon learning of the lack of organization in this division, the division commander ordered a formation that met the situation, facilitated and protected the departure of the 35th Division from the lines and at the same time, disposed his own command for the advance that was expected the next day. (118)

(118) First
Division
p 428.

The mission of the division for the attack of October 4th was the capture of the enemy positions between the front line of the First Division and a line

running north of Fleville. The effect of the capture of this particular position, which meant that the Germans in the Argonne Forest would be forced to withdraw, and its importance with relationship to the organized positions in the vicinity of Landres et St. Georges was undoubtedly clear to the division commander, as was the necessity for flank protection for the right flank. As the right division of the First Corps, it was natural that that corps would use the First division to help it carry out its mission of clearing out the Argonne Forest. (119)

(119) First
Division
p.428.

V H 9

The mission of the First Division when it was attached to the First Corps was now different. It had outflanked the Argonne Forest and now was called upon to break the hold the enemy had to the east. (120)

(120) First
Division,
p 439.

After the attack of October 4, 1918, the immediate mission of the division was to get the right of its line abreast of its left. This was accomplished by the advances of October 5th.

In estimating the strength of the enemy and of his dispositions, more resistance was expected on the left of than on the right. The importance of the Montrebeau Woods and the Exermont Ravine and of Hill 272 was clearly foreseen and special preparations made for their reduction. (121) That the advance on the right would meet more resistance than on the left was hardly deducible from the uniform contact along the entire front.

With reference to the plan used there is no question as to its effectiveness, in view of the successful outcome of the operation. Whether or not it was the best possible plan will remain a debatable question. Among other questions, there is the question as to limited objectives which was a marked characteristic of this plan. An excellent illustration occurred on October 4th when the left regiment reached its day's objective, while the regiments on its right were over a kilometer behind it and while the division on its left was still farther behind. On the one hand, the regiment was subjected to very heavy losses, but on the other hand its advance without reference to the units on its right and left enabled them to advance. Had the regiment not had to stop on a definite line, the chances are that it would have advanced further and in that case it might have been completely cut off from the rest of the division.

As to the formation used, brigades abreast, regiments in column of battalions, no criticism can be brought. This formation gave great depth to the division^{and}/with the four rifle companies to the battalion, gave a succession of Waves that were capable of using the leap-frog method thus supplying a constant fresh impulse to the assault. A discussion as to the three rifle company battalions is out of place as the organization did not exist at that time. The formation used by the First Division was the habitual

one used in all previous attacks and had the great advantage of being thoroughly understood, which made for simplicity of execution.

The plan of having third line battalions in divisional and brigade reserve was a good one, in view of the limited zone of action of the division. These battalions were so placed that they could give fresh impulses to the front or protect an exposed flank. The plan to have them follow the second line battalions, as was the case of the battalion of the 26th Infantry was not, in my opinion, as sound as the plan used with the other battalion in division reserve which was kept out of fire under cover. In the former case, the casualties were a result of faulty execution rather than of the plan.

Considering the use of reserves no criticism can be found. One complete battalion, a twelfth of the infantry strength was kept out of the fight until the decisive moment came to expend it against the last great obstacle that stood in way of the progress of the division - Hill 272. Other elements of the division reserve were used in protecting the flanks of the division. (122)

(122) First
Division
p 207.

The plan adopted for the attack of October 9, appears at first to have contemplated a piecemeal attack. In analyzing this plan it will be found that although the advance from the first objective was to be made by fractions of the command successively from

the right, that due to the comparatively short intervals at which these successive attacks were launched that the movement by the enemy of his reserves could not be made with sufficient rapidity to meet the attacks. The plan also made admirable use of the artillery by concentrating it successively in front of the advancing element. (123)

(123) First
Division,
p 439.

I believe that Montrebeau Woods and Hill 240 Montrefagne could have been taken more easily had they been assigned as a single mission to one regiment. Their great extent and the narrowness of the division zone no doubt account for the fact that such was not ordered.

The plan for the use of the artillery throughout the entire operations, in my opinion, is beyond criticism. The 6th Field Artillery in general supported the 1st Brigade while the 7th Field Artillery supported the 2d Brigade. The 5th Field Artillery (155mm howitzers) supported the entire division. (124)

(124) First
Division
p 124.

The plan for the use of the tanks, I consider faulty. I believe that the tanks should not have preceded the infantry, as it was definitely suspected that the Germans had 77s on the northern slopes of the Exermont Ravine. Had they been used after these guns had been captured, I think that more benefit would have accrued to the division.

The form of the field orders issued by the division is subject to some criticism. I think that

the five paragraph order would have been simpler.

Due to the narrowness of the zones, little opportunity existed for maneuver of any sort, where such space did exist it was used by the subordinate commanders to advantage. Infiltration, however, was one of the principal means of advancing the attack, especially in the latter phases. (125)

(125) First
Division
p 209.

Communications had been previously developed to a high degree in the division and was very evident in this operation. Higher commanders were in touch with the execution of the operation during all its phases.

Machine guns, 37 millimeters and trench mortars were used with very good success throughout the operation. (126)

(126) 26th^{Inf.}
p 66.

In summing up the reasons for the success of the operation, I think the following causes were largely responsible for it: the highest type of leadership in all grades, excellent communication, splendid teamwork, a high state of morale and the will to win.

LESSONS

In terms of the Principles of War, the First Division in the second phase of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, teaches many valuable lessons as follows:

(1) In overcoming every difficulty, in taking every objective assigned to it, in spite of terrific hardships and extremely heavy losses, the First

Division magnificently illustrated the Principle of the Offensive.

*My next
with the result* (2) In concentrating its efforts on points offering the greatest resistance, as was the case, for example in the reduction of Hill 272, it displayed a wonderful example of the Principle of the Objective.

(3) In having the 16th Infantry on the night October 4-5th, with the aid of the 1st Engineers, dig in, thus protecting the right flank of the division, and in seizing the western edge of the Bois de Moncy, and Hill 269, there was displayed the proper conception of the Principle of Security.

(4) In launching the attack in great depth and forcing the maximum effort against the enemy, as was the case in all of the attacks, but especially in the attack of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry against Hill 272, which was the principal obstacle to the success of the division, there was displayed the correct application of the Principle of Mass.

Sign (5) The holding out of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, with a view of using the gain a decision was the correct application of the Principle of the Economy of Force.

(6) The movement of the division forward under cover of artillery barrages and concentrations and the seizing of Hill 269 are examples of the proper applications of the Principle of Movement.

(7) In initiating the attack of October 4th without artillery preparation is an example of the correct application of the Principle of Surprise.

(8) The formations used by the division in its attacks are proper examples of the Principle of Simplicity.

(9) The Principle of Cooperation was evidenced by the superb team-work throughout the division in this operation.

(10) The use of the tanks on October 4th in having them precede the infantry exposed them to almost certain destruction, while they could have been held out for a later phase of the operation was a violation of the Principle of the Economy of Force.

(11) Having the right or reserve battalion of the division follow the assaulting battalions too closely was a violation of the Principle of the Economy of Force.

(12) The Germans in launching counterattacks exhibited the proper application of the Principle of the Offensive.

(13) In holding out until the death, the German army in front of the First Division illustrated the Principle of the Objective.

(14) In siting their defenses so as to bear with most telling effect against the First Division, the Germans correctly displayed the Principles of Economy of Force and of Mass.

(15) The German ground forces working in conjunction with its air force illustrated the correct application of the Principle of Cooperation.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What was the mission of the First Division in the second phase of the Meuse-Argonne offensive?

A. The capture of a key position, roughly seven kilometers deep and four kilometers wide east of the Aire River between Charpentry and Fleville, that protected the Kriemhilde Stellung position of the German army, the northeastern end of the Argonne Forest and the German positions to the east of the position.

2. What division did the First Division relieve in the Meuse-Argonne offensive?

A. The 35th Division.

3. What infantry brigade was attached to the First Division on October 8, 1918?

A. 181st Brigade of the 91st Division.

4. On what date was the first attack launched by the First Division?

A. October 4, 1918.

5. What formation did the infantry use in this attack?

A. Brigades abreast, regiments abreast, regiments in column of battalions. Third line exterior battalions in division and third line interior battalions in brigade reserve.

6. What was the only regiment in the American army that reached its final objective on October 4th?

A. The 16th Infantry.

7. Due to the advance made by the First Division by October 6, 1918, what division was enabled to attack the northeastern edge of the Argonne Forest?

A. The 82d Division.

8. When was the First Division attached to the Fifth Army Corps, and for what purpose?

A. On October 7, 1918, for the purpose of loosening the enemy's hold on the enemy line specifically by capturing Hill 263 and the Bois de Romagne.

9. For what purpose and when did the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, which had been in division reserve, take up the assault?

A. On October 9, 1918, for the purpose of taking Hill 272 and exploiting to the north.

10. What were some of the principal terrain features in the zone of the First Division?

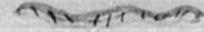
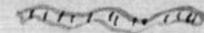
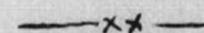
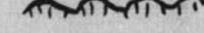
A. Montrebeau Hill, Exermont Ravine, Hill 240 and Hill 272.

SPECIAL MAP No 2
 TO ACCOMPANY MONOGRAPH ON THE

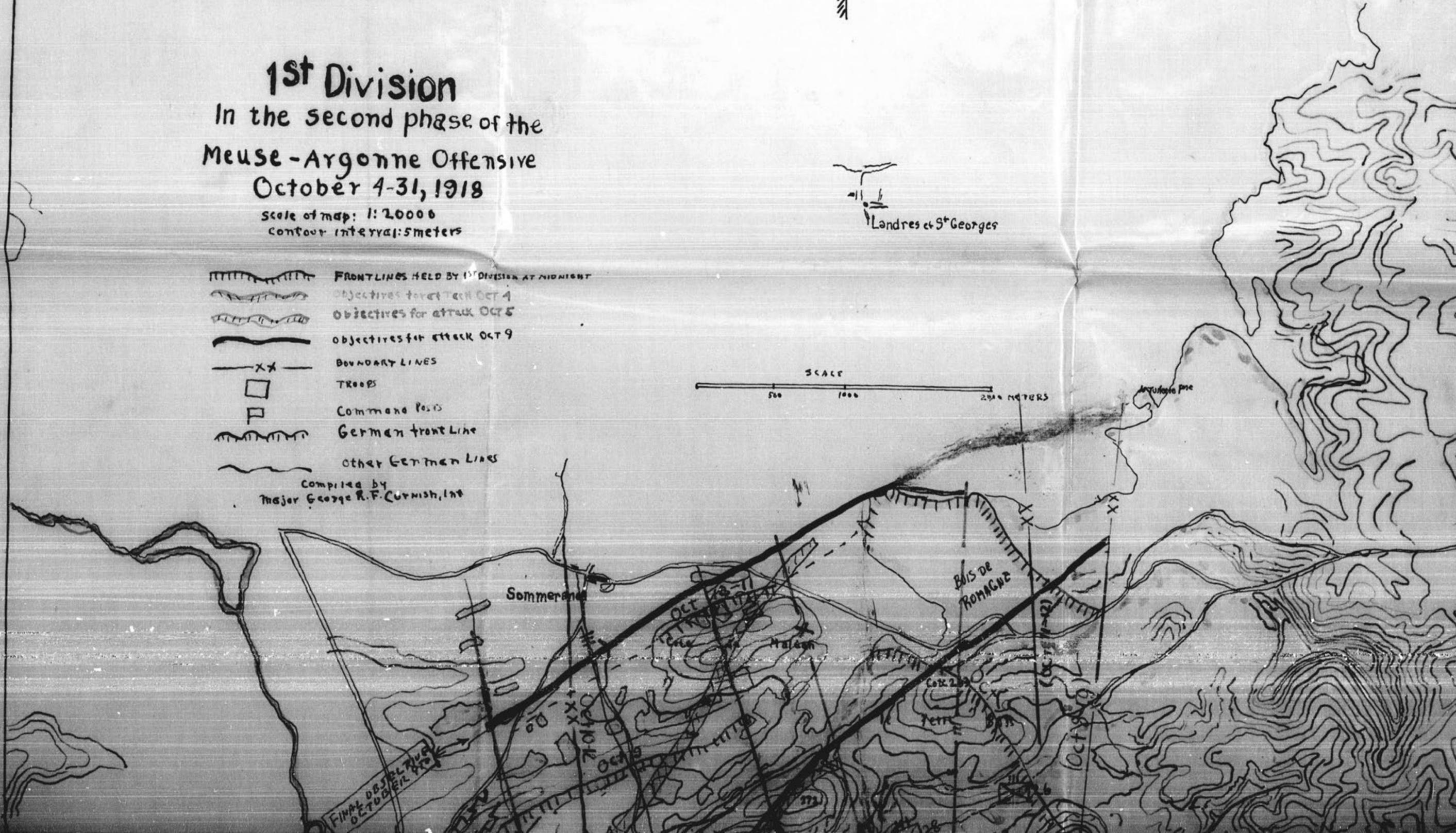
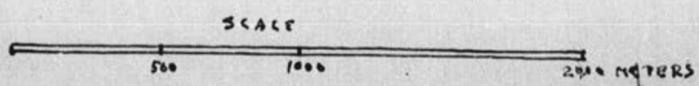
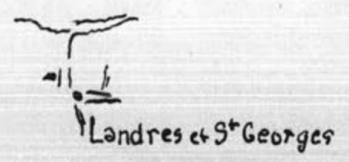
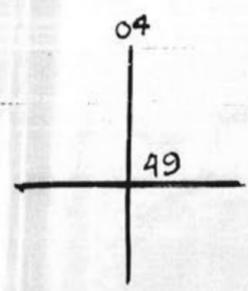
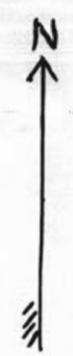
1st Division

In the second phase of the
 Meuse-Argonne Offensive
 October 4-31, 1918

Scale of map: 1:20000
 contour interval: 5 meters

-  FRONT LINES HELD BY 1ST DIVISION AT MIDNIGHT
-  Objectives for attack Oct 4
-  Objectives for attack Oct 5
-  Objectives for attack Oct 9
-  BOUNDARY LINES
-  TROOPS
-  Command Post
-  German front line
-  other German lines

Compiled by
 Major George R. F. Curnish, Inf



3-8

THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
FOURTH SECTION
COMMITTEE H
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

COMPANY OFFICERS' COURSE
1924-1925

THE OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST DIVISION (U.S.)
IN THE THIRD PHASE OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE.

CAPTAIN GEORGE R.F. CORNISH, INFANTRY.

1

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST AMERICAN DIVISION
IN THE THIRD PHASE OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE.

INTRODUCTION.

The operations of the First Division in the Third Phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, from November 1-11, 1918, resolve themselves into three, more or less distinct phases or operations. Chronologically, the first, from November 1-5, when the Division (less the First Artillery Brigade and the First Ammunition Train) was in corps reserve for the Fifth (U.S.) Army Corps; (1) the second, November 6, when the Division assaulted the line on the Meuse River, from Villedunoy to Mouzon, passing through the 80th (U.S.) Division; (2) and the third, its march and assault on Sedan, November 6-7. (3)

(1)History
1st Div.
p.212.

(2)History
1st Div.
p.227.

(3)History
1st Div.
p.231.

Before discussing these operations of the Division, it will be well for us to consider the period from its relief in the Second Phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive from the line by the 42nd (U.S.) Division, on the night of October 11-12, 1918, until its appearance as corps reserve of the Fifth Army Corps in the vicinity of Epinonville on the night of October 31 to November 1. (4)

(4)History
1st Div.
p.212.

Its stubborn and brilliant fighting in the Second Phase had added fresh laurels to its already magnificent record, but at the terrible cost of 196 officers and 7324 men. (5) Naturally, most of the losses were in the Infantry components, so that when on October 13, the Division (less its Artillery and Ammunition Train, which had been left in line to support the 42 Division) left the vicinity of Cheppy,

(5)History
1st Div.
p.213.

Regiments looked like small battalions and companies that just two weeks before were powerful units two hundred and fifty men strong were now mere skeletons of themselves. To make matters worse, there were no trucks available, so these tired men, many of them sick with dysentery, started on a long hike of 75 kilometers to the Vavincourt area. (6) A part of the march was through the battle-torn wreckage of the Argonne Forest itself, but as the miles went by the countryside began to look less dreary, in spite of the constant rain. Finally the area was reached and a few busy days were spent in cleaning up, delousing and receiving replacements.

(6) History
1st Div.
p.212.

On October 20, a five-day schedule of intensive training was ordered and subsequently, faithfully carried out. (7) The replacements were excellent in every respect save one, they were almost totally lacking in training. (7) ⁽⁸⁾ Practically all of the privates who had survived the battle had to be made non-commissioned officers, whether especially fitted or not. However, all ranks were imbued with the division spirit, as epitomized by General Pershing; "The Commander-in-Chief has noted in this Division a special pride of service and a high state of morale, never broken by hardship nor battle.", (8) and this made the task easier. In general, the forenoons were devoted to Rifle Marksmanship and Bayonet Training. The instruction in the former was of a most elementary sort. No formal targets were available, so tin cans, rocks, small pieces of paper, anything was used; the idea being to accustom the men, many of whom had never fired a rifle, to align their sights and to the kick of the rifle.

(7) Personal
observation.

(7a) History
1st Div.
p.217.

(8) Par.4
G.O.201
GHQ, AEF,
L 918.

~~The afternoons were given over to terrain exercises, chiefly~~

combat formations. Battalions were deployed in their normal formations for the attack so that the replacements could see for themselves how it was done. It was a case of , "Here Green, you follow Smith, and keep abreast of Jones over there."

To further stimulate interest, the Division Commander issued a memorandum to be read to all platoons, calling attention to the fact that the Division would probably enter the line again at an early date and that every effort must be made to put the Division in shape to meet the demands of the High Command. (9)

(9)Memo.168
Hq.1st
Div.
1918.

Several important changes had occurred in the higher units of the Division. Brigadier ^{General} Frank Parker who had commanded the 18th Infantry and later the First Brigade, succeeded to the command of the Division, when Major General C.P. Summerall was placed in command of the Fifth Army Corps.

(10)History
1st Div.
p.212.

on October 12.(10)Col. ~~H.H.J.~~ Erickson who commanded the 26th Infantry in the Second Phase, was placed in the command of the First Brigade, and Brigadier Francis C.Marshall relieved Brigadier General Barnhardt of command of the Second Brigade.

Lieutenant-Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, who had been seriously wounded at Soissons, and who had by no means recovered from his wounds, returned to the Division, and was assigned to the command of the 26th Infantry, in which he had commanded a battalion so successfully. Although, not a matter of record, so far as the author could discover, it was stated that this officer went AWOL from the SOS, where he had been assigned due to his physical condition, to join his old outfit. Whether true or not, it had an inspiring effect on the

(11)Personal men of the 26th Infantry (11)
observa-
tion.

Between October 25 and 29th the foot elements of the

(12)History
1st Div.
p.218.

Division were transported by French camions to the area north of Vaubecourt, (12) the First Brigade arriving first, billeted in the Recicourt Woods and the Second Brigade later in the Bois de Parois. Here intensive training was resumed and final dispositions preparatory to taking up the combat.

On October 31st, Major General Summerall now commanding the Fifth Army Corps, addressed the various regiments, praising them on their past performances and exhorting them to still greater efforts. In speaking to one of the regiments, which was formed in a hollow square, his closing remarks were in substance as follows: "Men, you belong to a fighting division. You have pushed the enemy back on three fronts. You have gone far. You will go further. You have suffered much. You will suffer more. You have gone long without food. You will go longer. You have faced death. You will face it again. Your record will go down in history as a splendid example of courage and fortitude. Your name and fame will be immortal". Needless to say this talk made a great impression on the men, as they knew it came straight from his heart.

(13)Personal
observa-
tion.

anyway." (13) (13a)
The Division moved by marching to the area about Cierges and Gesnes, as reserve of the Fifth Army Corps. (14)

(13a)The 26th
Infantry
in France.
p.79.

While the rest of the Division had been recovering its strength in a training area, the First Artillery Brigade

(14)History
1st Div.
p.219.

and the First Ammunition Train, had been constantly in the line except for a brief period from October 23rd to 25th, when most of the personnel was sent back to Cheppy for a

short rest, the guns being left in place with skeletonized crews. It had remained to support the 42nd (U.S.) in its attack on October 14 and 16 on St. Geroges-Landres et St. Georges section of the Kriemhilde Stellung. A relief of the Brigade was begun on October 16, but the elements were called back in line again, no sooner than they had started, and remained there either in support of the 42nd Division or in preparation for its part in supporting the 2nd Division on

(15)History
1st.Div.
p.222.

November 1. (15)

The strain on the artillery during this period had been terrific. They had been constantly in the line since the night of September 30-October 1, 1918, except for a brief two days rest, yet they always executed their missions in true First Division style. The First Artillery Brigade never failed to support the Infantry to the limits of its power, and both were intensely proud of the other's achievements. As splendid as the Infantry was, the Artillery always had more veterans in its ranks, due to the fact that its casualties, although heavy for artillery, were naturally less than those of the Infantry, with the result that there was probably no finer Artillery in the world than the First Artillery Brigade. (15)a.

(15)a
History
1st Div.
p.219.

RESERVE OF THE AMERICAN FIFTH ARMY CORPS.

As stated before, the night of October 31 - November 1, found the First Division, less its Artillery and Ammunition Train, bivouaced in the vicinity of Gesnes and Cierges as reserve of the Fifth Army Corps. The 2nd (U.S.) Division was the left assault division and occupied the line, 1 kilometer

south of St. Georges to the northern edge of the Cote de Chatillon, and the 89th (U.S.) Division held the line from the northern Bois de Bantheville to a point 1 kilometer west of the Le Carre Farm. (15) The initial mission of the First Division called for its being held in readiness with a view to its passing a front line division during the operations, its action dependent on the outcome of the attack towards

(16) F.O. 88
1st Army
AEF Oct.
27, 1918.
5th Corps
Monograph

Barricourt Buzancy. (16)

The First Artillery Brigade and the First Ammunition Train were grouped with the Second Division Artillery for the attack and it participated in the tremendous barrage and artillery preparation that was put on on November 1st by

(17) History
1st Div.
p. 227.

the Fifth Army Corps. (17)

There was a total of 608 guns of all calibers in the corps attack. A two hour fire for destruction was laid down. Two heavy guns or howitzers fired on every known enemy battery. All enemy machine guns, trenches, and routes of communication were deluged with shells and shrapnel from the light guns augmented by thick cones of machine-gun fire. This commenced at 3:30 A.M. November 1st, and continued until 5:30 A.M., when the barrage fell. This barrage was most effective and a description of it may be of interest. It was approximately 6 kilometers or 3½ miles in width, and of an average depth of 1000 meters. At 150 meters in front of the Infantry moved a line of high explosives and smoke shells, in proportion three to one, fired from 75 mm guns. 200 meters beyond this line, one battery out of every three fired

(18) Barrage
Chart.
History
1st Div.
p. 225
234.

75 mm shrapnel. 300 meters beyond this were concentrations of 8" howitzer and 155 mm bursts, with an additional danger zone of 400 meters. (18) As the Infantry moved forward, the

guns were pushed up to the front thus continuing their effectiveness. The result of this barrage was so deadly that nothing could stand in its path. Enemy guns were found smashed by direct hits, caissons blown up, horses and gunners

(19) Personal in mangled and confused masses. (19)

observa-
tion near
Bayon-
ville et
Chennery.

The Fifth Army Corps reached all of its first day's objectives on record time. (20) Due to the brilliant work of the Fifth and Third Army Corps on November 1st, the enemy was forced to either deliver a strong counter-attack or withdraw from all territory south of Buzancy-Boult-aux-Bois, and

(20) History
1st.Div.
p.224.

(21) Report
of
1st.Army
p.84,

he was so demoralized that he chose the latter. (21) There being no immediate use for the services of the First Division, the Division was moved at 5 P.M. on November 1st to the Bois

(22) Personal de Romagne. (22) (22a).
observa-
tion.

On November 2nd the Fifth Army Corps made a comparative-

(22a) 5th Corps
Monograph
Opera-
tions
Order #16
A, 2nd
Inf.Brig.
Nov.2,
1918.

ly small gain, neither the 2nd Division on the left nor the 89th Division on the right having quite reached the corps objective for the day. The front of the 2nd Division was approximately as follows. Its left rested in the northern edge of the Bois de Folie about $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers south of Fosse and its right rested on the Barricourt-Nouart road about 1 kilometer south of Nouart. The left of the 89th Division had made only a few hundred yards progress and the line ran from a point on the Barricourt-Bayonville et Chennery road about $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers southwest of Barricourt, thence sloping gradually upward to the vicinity of Tally, which was on the ob-
jective. (23)

(23) Plate
XIII,
Report
of
First
Army.

On the early morning of the 2nd, the Second Brigade moved from the Bois de Romagne, which it had reached but a few hours before, to the vicinity of Bayonville et Chennery,

(24) F.O. 110 · the rest of the Division in the Bois de Romagne. (24)

5th Army
Corps
Nov. 2,
1918.
Par. 2
Fifth
Corps
Mono-
graph.

On November 3rd, the Fifth Army Corps reached the third day's objective and during the night of the 3rd-4th, on the extreme left penetrated several kilometers beyond, due to the brilliant work of the 9th and 23rd Infantries of the Second Division. The front of the Second Division on November 3rd was approximately as follows. Its left from a point about $3\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers north of Fosse near the Fosse-Beaumont road, then generally north to a point about 4 kilometers south of Beaumont, then south again to the vicinity of Le Champy Bois. The 89th Division reached the third day's objective, its right near Beauclair. (25)

(25) Plate
XIII.
Report
of
1st Army

On the night of November 3rd the First Division moved through Bayonville et Chenmery to the Bois de Folie. This march was a difficult one as the roads were muddy in the extreme and a constant rain was falling. The First Brigade occupied the western part of the Bois de Folie and the Second Brigade the eastern portion. The First Field Artillery Brigade was ordered to rejoin the Division and take position during the night south of the Nouart-Buzancy road in the vicinity of the Bois de Folie. (26)

(26) F.O. 59
1st Div.
Nov. 3,
1918.
Fifth
Corps
Monograph
Report
of
Operations in
Mouzon,
1st Div.

Personal
observa-
tion.

On November 4th, the Fifth Army Corps continued its drive with great success. On the left, the 2nd Division exploited the gains made on the night of November 3-4th by the Third Brigade and the 89th Division made substantial gains. (27) The Fifth Army Corps contemplated using the First Division in the assault on November 4th, but the rapid progress of the two front line Divisions evidently caused it not to do so. The plan was to have the Division march on Laneuville in one column, composed of the 16th Infantry and

- (27) Report of Operations of 3rd Inf. Brig. Nov. 2-11, 1918. 5th Corps Monograph. some attached elements, and to have another column composed of the 26th Infantry march on Beaumont. The remaining regiments were to constitute the main body and were to be held in readiness in the Bois de Folie. After the First Division had passed through their lines, the 2nd and 89th Divisions were to assemble behind the front. (28)
- (28) F.O. 60 Fifth Army Corps. Nov. 3, 1918. Fifth Corps Monograph. The rapid advance of the 2nd Division on the night of November 3-4th uncovered the left flank of the Fifth Army Corps, so the 26th Infantry of the Second Brigade was ordered on the afternoon of the 4th to move to the Foret de Dieu-let and take up a position on the Fosse-Beaumont road. (29)
- (29) Memo. C.G. 2nd Brig. to C.O. 26th Inf. Nov. 4, 1918. Fifth Corps Monograph. The leading elements of the 26th Infantry reached their position about midnight of the 4th. (29) (29a)
- (29a) Personal observation. As one of the battalions of this regiment (First Battalion) wound its way through Nouart, several gaily painted German planes fired at the column with machine guns without inflicting any damage. A few moments before the planes appeared, the sky seemed full of Allied planes, but when the attack on the column was made, all of our planes evidently found business elsewhere. (30)
- (30) Personal observation. The remainder of the Division continued to bivouac in the Bois de Folie during the rest of the 4th and a part of the 5th. (31)
- (31) Monograph 1923 p. 613. for 28th Inf. testimony. Capt. L.R. Boyd for 16th Inf. Division. On the night of November 4-5th, the 2nd Division took Beaumont and the 89th Division reached all of its objectives west of the Meuse River on the 5th. It was decided that the First Division would enter the line on the left of the 2nd Division. (32)
- (32) History 1st Div. p. 227. The rapid advance of the Fifth Army Corps, especially of the 2nd Division had kept the First Division on the move, marching chiefly at night over soggy roads, jammed with traf-

(33) Personal
observa-
tion.

fic of all sorts. The rain had been almost continuous since leaving the billeting area near Vavincourt. A few casualties had occurred chiefly during the period when the Second Brigade was near Bayonville et Chenery. (33) The Division was considered "fresh troops", but it was fresh only in the sense that it had not yet gained contact with the enemy. Yet morale was high. Everyone realized the importance of the job at hand. The replacements were anxious to show their mettle and the veterans of Cantigny, Soissons, St. Mihiel, and the Second Phase, were more than eager to make good their prodigious boasts with which they had been regaling the replacements. (34)

(34) Personal
observa-
tion.

MOUZON.

(35) History
1st Div.
p.227.

Early in the afternoon of November 5th, telephonic orders were received from the Fifth Army Corps for the First Division to relieve the 80th Division (U.S.) along the Stonne-Beaumont road, and to attack towards the Meuse River in the direction of Mouzon at 5:30 A.M., November 6th. (35)

The terrain from the Stonne-Beaumont road to the objective over which the attack was to be made, was very favorable to the enemy as it consists in high hills and patches of thick woods and culminates in a series of very high hills overlooking the Meuse, at a distance generally of about two kilometers from the river. The day's objective was this line of hills, with patrols sent into the villages of Mouzon and Villemontry. Between the hills and the river was open ground. On the other side of the river (east) were mountainous heights which afforded the enemy excellent observation, and

(36) Personal
observa-
tion.

commanded the valley. (36)

(37)F.O.61
Hq.1st.
Div.
Nov.5,
1918.
History
1st Div.

The purpose of the attack was to seize a crossing at Mouzon. (37) The Second Brigade was given the sector: Eastern boundary; Beaumont(exclusive)-Bois de l'hospice (inclusive)-Villemonty. Western boundary; Crossroads of the Yoncq-Mouzon with the La Bagnolle-Beaumont road-the Yoncq-Mouzen road-and Mouzon exclusive.

The Second Brigade was to attack on a front of two battalions, with one battalion in support and one regiment in reserve, in the vicinity of La Thibaudine Farm.

The 26th Infantry, then in the Bois de Dieulet was given the mission of the assault regiment, and the 28th Infantry, then in the Bois de Falie, was to constitute the reserve.

The First Infantry Brigade was given the sector: Eastern boundary; west of the Second Brigade. Western boundary; La Bagnolle-western edge of Bois de Yoncq-Hill 297-Hill between Bois Gerfaux and Bois de Pourron-Hill 275 (1 km N.W. of Pourron-Le Poncay Farm)

This Brigade was ordered to attack in the usual First Division method: regiments abreast, with one battalion in assault. The right of the sector was given to the 18th Infantry and the left to the 16th Infantry.

The Artillery which had rejoined the Division after serving with the 2nd Division, was ordered to support the attack when requested to do so by Brigade commanders.

The battle Command Post of the Division was to open on November 6th at 5 A.M.at Le Gros Faux cross roads.(37)

On the right of the First Division was the 2nd Division which was holding the river line and on the left was the 6th (U.S.) Division of the First Army Corps (U.S.), but this di-

vision was so far to the rear that extra precautions had

(38)History
1st Div.
p.229.

to be taken to protect the left flank. (38)

(39)History
1st Div.
p.227.

Upon receipt of their orders the various elements of the division began to move. (39) All of the Infantry except the 26th Infantry, had to march from the Bois de Folie and this meant an all night hike through black forests, over muddy unknown roads. The 26th Infantry was more fortunate as it was already in the Bois de Dieulet. All elements were in place by 4 A.M. on November 6th. (39)

No reconnaissance was possible due to the short notice on which the Division moved. To make matters worse the maps issued to elements of the Second Brigade, and to probably the whole Division, did not show the presence of a new road leading into Beaumont, which practically paralleled the Stonne-Beaumont road and which at night was very difficult to distinguish from the correct road. Its presence was discovered, however, before the troops reached the road, so that it made no difference. (40)

(40)Personal
observa-
tion.

The route of the 26th Infantry to the jump-off line as contemplated, was to pass through Beaumont, but the town was being very heavily shelled, so it was avoided by marching across country. To insure that the right direction be taken, the members of the Intelligence Section were stationed along the route to be travelled. The regiment avoided many losses in this manner and saved considerable time in reaching the

(41)Personal
observa-
tion.

line of departure. (41)

The jump-off line was subjected to unaimed and intermittent shelling. Occasional bursts of machine-gun fire occurred during the night and at intervals very light and rocket flares were sent up by the enemy. There was every evi-

(42) Personal observation. dence that he was holding the line and in some force. (42)

From right to left the assault battalions were the 2nd Battalion, 26th Infantry, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry on the extreme left. The 7th Field Artillery was near Beaumont to support the attack of the Second Brigade and the 6th Field Artillery was in position behind the First Brigade, while the 5th Field Artillery was prepared to cover the advance of the whole division. (43)

(43) History 1st Div. p.228.

Promptly at 5:30 A.M. on the morning of November 6th, the battalions jumped off. A rather heavy fog made visibility poor. Practically no resistance was met. The 18th Infantry captured Yoncq by 7 A.M. and a few prisoners, and by noon all elements were on their objectives. A sharp fight took place before a platoon of the 26th Infantry occupied Villemontry. Upon reaching the line of hills set forth as the day's objective, the 18th Infantry and patrols from the 26th Infantry occupied that part of Mouzon west of the Meuse River, after some fighting. The bridge over the river was blown up just before the patrols reached the town, and several mines were set off which caused several buildings to burn. The Germans then bombarded the town with artillery and machine guns. Several casualties occurred among our troops and among the civilian population. (44)

(44) Personal observation.

The fog lifted about noon and enemy artillery and air-

(44) History 1st Div. p.228.

planes became active. In one of the battalions, the Scout Officer, a recent graduate of a British school was ordered by his Battalion commander to select a suitable place for the battalion P.C. The lieutenant found an abandoned quarry, conveniently located with reference to the companies, hid

in a patch of woods, and apparently from every standpoint very desirable. Unfortunately, the Germans thought that it might prove too tempting to pass up and shortly afterwards shelled it very heavily, inflicting a number of casualties. It received, by far, more attention than any other place in the vicinity. (45)

(45) Personal
observa-
tion.

Shortly before the patrols reached Mouzon, a most spectacular feat was accomplished by an artillery piece, evidently the accompanying gun of one of the regiments of the First Brigade, although the author was unable to find out positively where the gun belonged. It advanced at a slow trot up the Yoncq-Mouzon road to a distance of about 1500 yards from Mouzon, all in plain view of the enemy on the other side of the river. It went into action as if on a parade ground, apparently expended all its ammunition, then leisurely trotted back to cover. The gun position looked as though hail was dropping around it, so thick were the enemy shells. The daring of this gun crew was typical of the entire First Artillery Brigade. This feat must have been witnessed by at least a thousand Infantrymen and must have strengthened their conviction that the First Artillery Brigade was their truest Ally. (46)

(46) Personal
observa-
tion.

While slight losses occurred and there were but few prisoners taken (loss 7 officers and 347 men, and 1 officer and 10 men of the enemy captured), the work of the Division proved that it was as ever a thoroughly coordinated machine. To march 10½ miles over unknown and slippery roads, on a dark rainy night, to a jump-off line that had not been reconnoitered, pass through another Division and assault 5 miles called for the highest possible coordination. (47)

(47) Report
Mouzon
area.
Nov. 5-6
1918.
H.Q. of
1st Div.
5th Corps
Monograph.

SEDAN.

In discussing the operations of the First Division towards Sedan, one or two points must be clearly borne in mind. The German army was in retreat and for the first time in the history of the war, its official communiques admitted that the line in front of the First American Army was broken. The iron discipline of the German army had deteriorated, although it was still fighting a magnificent rear-guard action. To make matters still worse, Austria-Hungary had quit and there were political and economic troubles of the gravest sort at home. (48)

(48) History
1st Div.
p.230.

The method of warfare too, had changed rapidly since the Fifth Army Corps had smashed the lines at Barricourt on the 1st of November. Up to that time the closest support between the artillery and the infantry had existed and large gains had generally been made only under cover of heavy artillery fire, but by November 6th all of this had changed. The attack on Mouzon had been made with practically no artillery support. (49) Open warfare of the sort that General Pershing had predicted had come true at last, and the First Division which had never neglected its training for this very thing, reaped rich results from its heart-breaking hikes when it chased "Sitting Bull" all over the Gondrecourt area in 1917 and at later periods.

(49) Personal
observ-
ation.
History
1st Div.
p.229.

Liaison within the Division had become very difficult, but had been well maintained during the Mouzon operation. A few telephones had been installed but runners were the chief means of communication. There was no liaison with the 2nd Division on the right or with the First Army Corps on the

(50)History
1st Div.
p.231.

left until late on November 6th. (50)

Major General C.P.Summerall, the Commanding General of the Fifth Corps, arrived at Division Headquarters which was located at La Gros Faux Farm, a little after noon on November 6th and ordered the Division Commander to march on Sedan and assist in its capture, on the following morning. (51)

(51)History
1st Div.
p.230.

General Summerall's action was based on a memorandum from the Headquarters, First American Army, which was as follows:

" Memorandum for Commanding Generals, 1st Corps, 5th Corps.

Subject: Message from the Commander-in-Chief.

1. General Pershing desires that the honor of entering Sedan should fall to the First American Army. He has every confidence that the troops of the 1st Corps, assisted on their right by the Fifth Corps, will enable him to realize this desire.

2. In transmitting the foregoing message, your attention is invited to the favorable opportunity now existing, for pressing our advantage throughout the night. Boundaries will not be considered binding.

(52)History
1st Div.
P.230.

By Command of Lieutenant General Liggett." (52)

The contemplated move was a daring one. It had to be made during the night, over unknown terrain, across the front of entire corps, the location of whose divisions were not known. (53) Several factors favored it, however. The enemy

(53)History
1st Div.
p.230.

was badly demoralized and the Division itself was not pinned down in a fire fight, although it was holding a line. Above all, there was the entrancing possibility of seizing Sedan, the possession of which was of utmost importance, as it would greatly hurry or even induce the victory which had been so long sought and at such terrific cost. The seizure of Sedan would cut off the enemy line of communications and a staggering blow to his already faltering morale. Neither the Corps Commander nor the Division Commander were men calculated to adopt a hesitating or conservative attitude on such an occasion.

~~Any plan adopted would have two main considerations;~~

(54) History 1st Div. p.230-231 the approach formation and the formation for the attack. (54) Sedan as the crow flies, is approximately 10½ miles from Mouzon, and of course much farther by road, and it was utterly impossible to reach it other than by roads at night. Two plans were open to the Division Commander. The Division could move by the left flank along the Meuse valley, and force its way over a very restricted front to the heights southwest of Sedan. This would limit its ability to deploy and had the further disadvantage of leaving both flanks exposed. The other plan open was to have the Division move by columns on a wide front to the heights southwest of Sedan, ready to deploy for the attack. This plan seemed to promise more chance of success, although liaison would be difficult in the extreme, and was adopted.

The Brigade Commanders were assembled and the preliminary orders given, which they in turn passed on to their regimental commanders. Later, as soon as possible, formal orders were issued. It may be of interest to note that the maps used in this operation, were the French 1-80,000. This was true, at least for the regimental commander of the 26th Infantry, and is believed to be true of the maps issued to all

(55) Personal observation. commanders. (55)

The order as finally issued was as follows:

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Field Orders
No. 62.

Headquarters First Division,
American Expeditionary
Forces.
France, November 6, 1918

Map: Mezieres -1-80,000.

1. No further information of the enemy.

The First Army advances on Sedan, the 5th Corps on the right and the 1st Corps on the left.

2. Our Division will constitute the advance troops and seize Sedan.

3. (a) The Division will advance in five(5) columns numbered from east to west.

Column 1: Battalion of the 16th Infantry.
Route : Autrecourt-through the valley of the Meuse via Remilly-Wadelincourt.

Column 2: 16th Infantry (less 1 battalion), 1 Company 1st Engineers.
Route : Pourron-Autrecourt-Raucourt-Haracourt-Thelonne-Noyers.

Column 3: 18th Infantry (less 1 battalion)
Route : Pourron-Autrecourt-Raucourt-Maisoncelle-Bulson-Chaumont, thence north.

Column 4: 28th Infantry - 1 company Engineers.
Route : Stonne-Chemery-Chehery-Frenois.

Column 5: 26th Infantry.
Route : Stonne-Chemery-Omicourt-Hanngne-St. Martin.

(b) Divisional Reserve.
1 battalion 18th Infantry;
1st Machine-gun Battalion;
1st Engineers (less two companies)
Route : La Becase-Raucourt- from which point it will follow Column No.2 at a distance of about one kilometer.

(c) The 6th Field Artillery will follow close on the 18th Infantry and the 7th Field Artillery the 28th Infantry.
The 5th Field Artillery will follow in three columns - one battalion in each column, Nos.2,3,4.

(x) Column No.1 will leave small details to guard captured bridges over the Meuse along its route.

4. The Field Artillery and Sanitary Trains will move under orders to be issued by G-1.

5. The Division P.C. will close at its present location at 20:00 hours this date and march via La Becase-Raucourt-Maisoncelle-Bulson-Chaumont.

By command of Brigadier General Parker;

J.N.GREELY,
Chief of Staff. "

(56)History
1st Div.
p.447.

Distribution "C"

(56)

Liaison officers were sent to the headquarters of the First Army Corps, to the headquarters of the 6th Division, which was supposed to be the right Division of the First Army Corps and to the left brigade of the 2nd Division. (57)

(57)History
1st Div.
p.231.

The terrain to be covered was typical of the Argonne country, high hills and patches of heavy woods, all favorable to the enemy. The roads were in terrible shape as the rain had been constant, and the Germans in retiring had cut them up badly. (58)

(58) Personal
observa-
tion.

By dark the regiments had been assembled and commenced their memorable advance between 7 and 8 P.M.. All the Infantry was assembled except one platoon of Company "E", 26th Infantry which was occupying Villedonny. A message had been sent to its commander to withdraw, but the runner who carried it was killed. When the lieutenant learned unofficially that the regiment was withdrawing he refused to move, stating that the First Division never gave up any ground once captured. (59) A battalion commander of the 26th Infantry, receiving the preliminary order over the phone, made the Colonel positively identify himself before he would agree to

(59) History
1st Div.
P.232.

(60) Personal
observa-
tion.

withdraw. (60) It was to prove the First Division's hardest march. It was made over frightful roads, on a dark rainy night in the face of the enemy. Bridges had as a rule been destroyed by the enemy and at one place the 26th Infantry had to cross a stream by means of a single plank. The morale of the officers and men was extremely high in spite of the fact that they had hiked all the night before, had fought all day, and that at least in one regiment, the 28th Infantry, the men had gone without food since the afternoon of the 5th. (61) One company commander in the 26th Infantry, who had just recently rejoined his regiment from the hospital, fainted, and recovering some hours after, pushed on and rejoined his Com-

(61) Mono-
graphs
1923.
Capt.
Livesay.

(62) The 26th
Infantry
in France
p.83.

pany just before it assaulted. (62)

The First Battalion of the 16th Infantry, commanded by

Major C.W.Ryder, constituted Column 1. and marched by the

(63) Story of river road. (63) It came under machine-gun and artillery
16th Inf. fire almost immediately, and to make matters worse, all the
in France bridges were out and the road was badly mined in places.
p.66-67

(63a) History About midnight the Column was broken and the battalion com-
1st Div. mander who was with the advance party did not know of it un-
p.232. til 3 A.M., when it was too late to bring them forward.
In the rear group was the machine-gun company which was a
most serious loss. The forward group of two and a half com-
panies pushed on and encountered hand-to-hand fighting in
Allicourt. The town was cleared, the Germans retreating to-
wards Sedan. They were completely surprised, not dreaming
that the Americans were anywhere in the vicinity. At 4:30
A.M. the enemy was encountered in numbers at Pont Maugis,
but the town was taken as usual by hand-by-hand fighting.
A column of artillery from the direction of Thelonne was cap-
tured. It comprised two 77 mm field pieces, several cais-
sons and rolling kitchens. A number of prisoners were taken.
The advance of the First Battalion was halted at daybreak,
when it assembled in a ravine near Noyers and awaited the ar-
rival of the rest of the 16th Infantry, which constituted
Column 2. (63a)

Column 2 encountered heavy machine-gun fire at Thelonne
and remained there until 7:30 A.M., when it advanced to the
vicinity of Noyers where it was joined by its First Battalion.

The First and Second Battalions then assaulted Hill 252,
northwest of Pont Maugis, passed over and were soon organized
in the woods to the north of it. That the position gained
by the 16th Infantry was the nearest point to Sedan reached

(64) History by any American unit is claimed by the First Division. (64)
1st Div.
p.233.

Company "A", First Engineers, had been called upon to protect the right flank of the 16th Infantry and in doing so, after Hill 252 had been passed by the Infantry, met a large force of Germans who had infiltrated back into Pont Maugis. A hard fight ensued drove them out as a part of their morning's work. It was occurrences such as this and that of the attack by the First Engineers on Hill 272 in the Second Phase of the Meuse-Argonne, that caused all arms in the Division to admire the others and welded it into a great fighting team. As the attack on Hill 252 commenced, elements of the 42nd (U.S.) Division were seen approaching Thelonne and Liaison was established with them. (65)

(65)History
1st Div.
p.233.

Columns 1 and 2 had thus merged into a line, and no further advance was made.

Let us now consider the other columns.

After plodding all night along heavy roads the 18th Infantry, which was Column 3, arrived at Bulson at 5:30 A.M., November 7th, where it met elements of the 42nd Division and was ordered to halt, which it did north of the town. (66)

(66)History
1st Div.
p.233.

Column 4, composed of the 28th Infantry, followed the route ordered and found elements of the 42nd Division and of the French Fourth Army in the town of Chehery, when it reached there at 7:40 A.M. Passing beyond the town the leading battalion (3rd Battalion) deployed and advanced to attack Hill 297, north of the town of Chevenges. Machine-gun fire came from the Bois de la Queue and from the Bois de la Marfee, and to stop the fire from the latter, Company "A", cleared the western edge of the woods and then connected up with the Third Battalion which was then advancing up the southern slope of Hill 297. In coming up the 115th Infantry

of the 42nd Division was found dug in along a road from Chevenches leading to the Route National from Chehery. (67)

(67) History
1st Div.
p.233.

In compliance with an order from Division Headquarters the regiment ceased to attack at 11 A.M. and dug in well up on the southern slope of Hill 297. Division Headquarters had learned that the enemy held the heights east of the Meuse with strongly fortified machine-gun and artillery positions, and it was decided not to pass the crest of the hill until nightfall. The reason that this information was delivered so speedily to the 28th Infantry was because Division Headquarters had been established at Chehery shortly after 8 A. M. This town was under shell-fire and remained so during the day. By noon the 7th Field Artillery reached Chehery. (68)

(68) History
1st Div.
p.234.

The men of the Headquarters Company of the 28th Infantry carried their 37mm guns by hand from the assembly point of the regiment on the afternoon of November 6th to their positions behind Hill 297. (69) The carts had been sent back for

(69) 28th Inf.
Third
Phase
of
Meuse-
Argonne.
Capt.
Livesay.
Mono-
graphs.
1923.

food before the regiment left the Mouzon area and did not get back either with the food or in time to carry the guns to Sedan. (69) Superb morale such as this needs no comment. A pair of men would carry the gun as long as they could endure it then pass it on to another pair.

Column 5, composed of the 26th Infantry, with its Third Battalion leading, reached Chemery on the early morning of November 7th, and began to suffer casualties from artillery fire. At 7 A.M. the regiment neared Omicourt, when it was discovered that the enemy held the heights beyond with strong machine-gun detachments. The Third Battalion dislodged the enemy and pushed on. The First Battalion leap-frogged the

(70) 26th Inf.
in France
p.83.

Third Battalion and continued the attack towards St. Aignan. (70)

St. Aignan was in the center of a horse-shoe shaped valley formed by high wooded hills. From the foot of the hills to the town was bare open ground. Machine-gun fire came from the town, so patrols were sent beyond to the flanks. (71)

(71) Personal observation.

A regiment of the 40th French Division appeared as the wooded heights near Omicourt were being cleared. It presented a wonderful sight as it passed through the 26th Infantry and took up a position on its right. (72) The officers and men were spick and span, dressed as for a gala occasion and presented a great contrast to the sleepy, hollowed-eyed, mud-

(72) Personal observation.

(72a) 26th Inf. in France. p.83.

spattered but grim and determined 26th Infantry. (72a) Almost immediately following the French Battalions which were in assault formation, came the rolling kitchens of the regiment. (73) Needless to say, the smell of hot food, although a bit garlicky, presented a tremendous temptation to the men of the First Battalion of the 26th, who had halted in assault formation near the road on which the kitchens were. Very few men moved on the kitchens, which spoke a great deal for the discipline in the 26th.

(73) Personal observation.

The closest liaison had existed with the French elements on our flanks, the P.C. of Lieut. Colonel Roosevelt, commanding the 26th Infantry, and that of the French battalion commander of the troops on the right, being located together, when the Commanding General of the 40th French Division drove up to the P.C. and informed the regimental commander that our troops were advancing directly in the path of his preliminary artillery fire and orders required its immediate employment. ^{replied} Colonel Roosevelt that his mission was to flank ~~as~~ as ordered by his superiors, and that unless orders were changed such were his intentions. No sooner had

(74) 26th Inf. he made this statement than orders were received to withdraw.
in France
p.83.

(74) The regiment was pulled out of the line immediately and marched back 10 kilometers to Chemery.

General Summerall, reached Division Headquarters at Chehery at 2 P.M. on November 7th, when he learned that the 42nd was in the area, so ordered the First Division moved to the east to clear the area for them. About an hour later, at Chemery, the rear echelon of the Division Headquarters, he received a wireless from the First American Army, ordering the First Division south of the line La Becage-Autrecourt. Orders were issued immediately and that night all elements began to trace their weary way to the new area. (75) Thus ended the last fight of the First Division in the World War.

(75) History
1st Div.
p.235.

It was the next day before any food was to be had, and never was food more enjoyed than when it was finally gotten.

(76) Personal
observa-
tion.

(76) From 4:30 P.M. on November 5th to midnight on November 7th, the Division had fought and marched without sleep, rest, and practically without food. The 16th Infantry had marched 54 kilometers; the 18th, 53 kilometers; the 28 Infantry, 52 kilometers; and the 26th Infantry, the astounding total of 71 kilometers or nearly 45 miles.

Fifty-four prisoners, two 77 mm guns, two anti-tank guns, a number of machine guns, four rolling kitchens and some transport had been captured at a cost of ten officers and four hundred and ninety-six men as casualties. (77)

(77) History
1st Div.
p.235.

From the vicinity of the Bois de Yoncq on November 8th the Division moved to the vicinity of the Bois de Belval and Sommauthe, being held in corps reserve, pending the operations of the 2nd and 89th Divisions, between Pouilly and Mouzon. These operations were accomplished by these Divisions

(78)History
1st Div.
p.231.

on the night of November 10-11th. (78)

On the morning of November 11th the news of the Armistice was announced. Little emotion was shown as the real significance of the thing did not sink in. That night however, in the Bois de Folie, the men began to realize that the war was over when fires were permitted for the first time during the campaign. All night long flares were sent up and grenades set off in celebration. (79)

(79)Personal
observa-
tion.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.

It is indeed difficult to criticise a successful operation. In preparation for its entry into the Third Phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the First Division had made the most of the little time allotted to train its replacements. That its training program was sound, was proved by the result of the campaign. Great efforts had been made to appeal to the pride of the officers and men, and this had much to do with the fine results obtained.

No criticism can be found of the action of the First Division when in corps reserve. It was ready, and it might be said, more than eager to get into the line. It always promptly moved to any place ordered by the High Command.

The attack on Mouzon was successfully executed and the Division carried out its mission to the letter. A few mistakes were made by subordinate commanders, such for example as that of location of a command post in a conspicuous quarry, the location of which was known by the enemy. Naturally, in open warfare such as this was, communication was difficult,

~~but this was not necessarily so by the higher commanders of all~~

units, pushing their headquarters as far forward as possible.

So far as the Division itself is concerned, no criticism can be made, either of the plan or the execution of the march on Sedan. The tactical principle that a force be not too much dispersed was violated in favor of the greater mistake of crowding a unit into a space too small to maneuver in, as was the only other plan open. It is true that a great many sound tactical principles were violated, such as the utter lack of preliminary reconnaissance before committing a force to the attack, as was the case here, but here it was done knowingly, the enemy situation permitting it.

The splendid morale, spirit of cooperation and confidence existing between all ranks in the Division made such an undertaking as a night march in the face of the enemy feasible.

LESSONS.

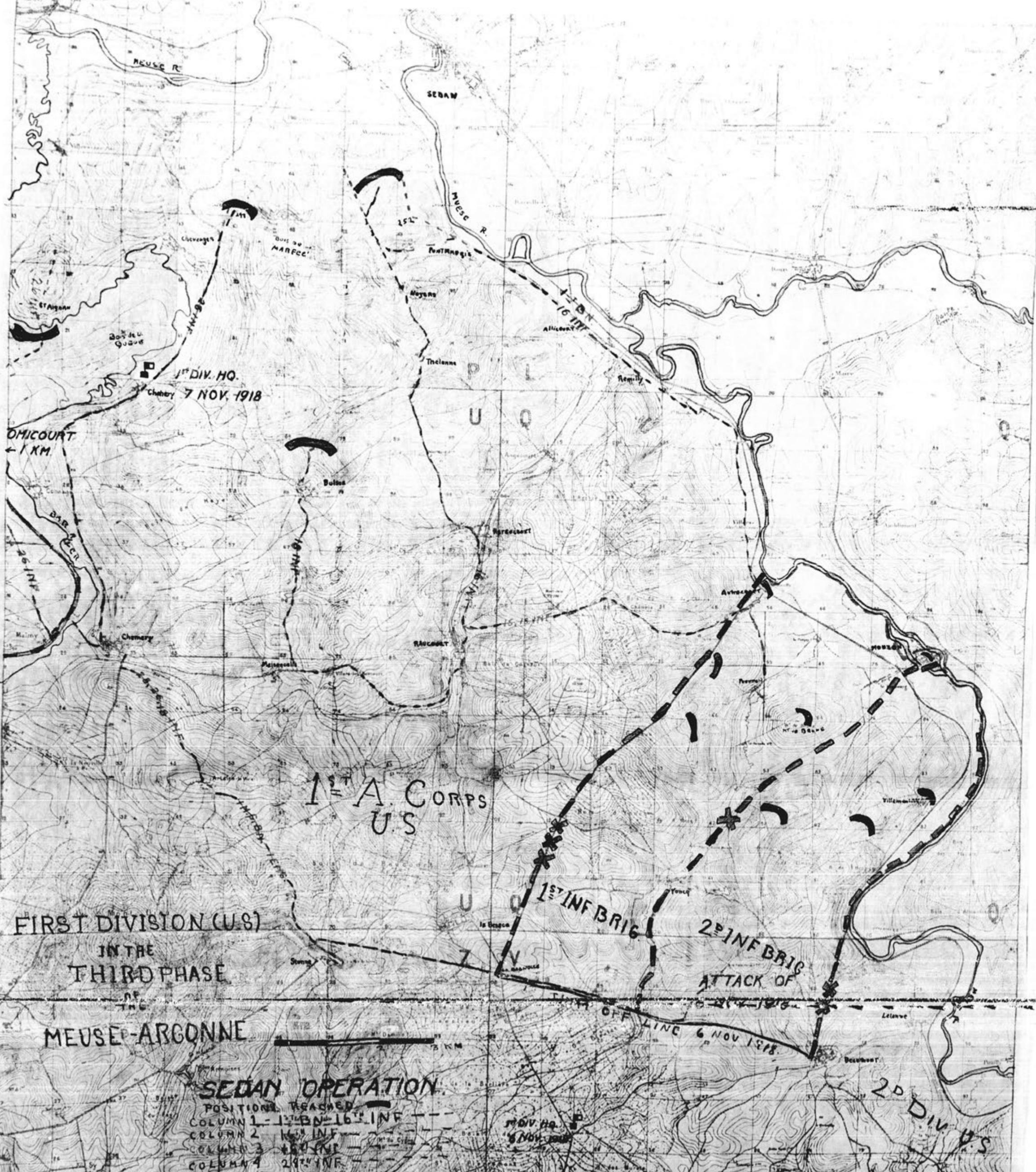
1. Morale is the greatest asset that any organization can possess.

2. An organization that has a cadre of highly trained leaders, endowed with high morale can be counted upon to assimilate replacements in a minimum of time.

3. Open warfare training is essentially the best training for any sort of warfare.

4. In open warfare communication is best obtained by having the posts of command of the higher echelons well forward.

5. Coordination and cooperation of the various arms of the service is vital to the success of an organization.



FIRST DIVISION (U.S.)
IN THE
THIRD PHASE
OF THE

MEUSE-ARGONNE

SEDAN OPERATION

- POSITIONS REACHED
- COLUMN 1 - 1st BN - 16th INF
 - COLUMN 2 - 16th INF
 - COLUMN 3 - 16th INF
 - COLUMN 4 - 24th INF
 - COLUMN 5 - 24th INF