

Aisne-Marne Offensive

AISNE-MARNE OFFENSIVE, JULY 27-AUGUST 6

ON MARCH 21 the Germans launched the first of their great offensives by which they hoped to win the war before the American army could take the field in force. This attack drove a deep salient into the Allied lines at the junction of the British and French armies and seriously threatened the important railroad center of Amiens. The lines in the vicinity of Amiens had scarcely stabilized when, on April 9, the Germans launched a second offensive farther north. This attack drove a salient into the British lines along the Lys River, in the vicinity of Armentières. [3]

Another of these blows was directed against the French when, on May 27, the Germans attacked between Berry-au-Bac, approximately 17 kilometers northwest of Reims, and the Oise River. The attack came as a complete surprise, and the enemy crossed the Aisne, Vesle and Ourcq Rivers and pushed rapidly to the Marne. Upon reaching the Marne River, the Germans used it to protect their southern flank and turned westward toward Paris. At the conclusion of this offensive they had driven a salient into the Allied lines bounded roughly by Reims, Château-Thierry and Soissons. On June 9, the Germans launched an attack on the front, Montdidier—Noyon, northwest of Soissons, for the purpose of widening the Marne salient and bringing their lines closer to Paris. This attack failed. [3, 202]

The German troops in the Marne salient were in an unfavorable situation. Their only rail communication was the railroad through Soissons, which lay close to the west face of the salient, and would be cut by an Allied penetration in this area. To relieve this situation, the Germans launched converging attacks east and southwest of Reims on July 15. Some ground was gained east of Reims, and the Marne River was crossed southwest of the city. However, this offensive was definitely stopped by July 17. [3, 5, 452]

While these German offensives failed to accomplish their purpose, they strained the Allies to the limit of their reserves and made it necessary to send American divisions to different parts of the front for immediate service with the British and French armies. [3, 202]

Even before the launching of the German offensive of July 15, it had been decided to reduce the Marne salient. The plan as finally adopted provided that the French Tenth Army would attack the west face of the salient and cut the enemy communications through Soissons. In conjunction with this operation, the French Fifth Army was to attack the east face of the salient, while the French Sixth Army applied pressure at the tip and supported with its left the attack of the French Tenth Army. A number of American divisions were to participate in the attack. On July 18, as soon as it became evident that the German offensive had spent itself, the counteroffensive, which is known as the Aisne-Marne Offensive, was launched. [3, 5]

The Allied and American attack was successful, and the penetration made on the west face of the salient on July 18 and 19 seriously threatened the enemy's communications. As a result, the Germans decided to evacuate the salient. Successive defensive lines were laid out in the salient which were to be strengthened as much as time permitted. In the area south of Soissons, where it was vital that the Germans protect their communications, these lines were close together. On the rest of the front, where there was to be a progressive withdrawal, they were farther apart. [6]

During the night of July 19-20, the Germans abandoned all ground that they still held south of the Marne. The first phase of their withdrawal from the salient proper took place during the night of July 20-21, the second during the night of July 23-24. After the third withdrawal, during the night of July 26-27, the Germans occupied a defensive line along the Ourcq River. [6]

In the center of the Allied attack was the French Sixth Army, with the French III, French XXXVIII, American I and French II Corps in line from right to left. On the evening of July 29 the French XXXVIII Corps was in position north of the Ourcq River facing Bois Meunière and Bois des Grimpettes, with the

American 3d and 28th Divisions in line from right to left.
[5, 6, 7]



The following paragraphs, in *italic*, are a synopsis of the service of the 32d Division in the Aisne-Marne Offensive. This synopsis is designed to make the principal facts concerning this service available to the reader in compact form.

On July 27, the 32d Division was assigned to the French XXXVIII Corps, French Sixth Army. At 11 a. m., July 30, it relieved the 3d Division north of Ronchères. Later in the day the 64th Infantry Brigade captured Bois des Grimpettes in conjunction with the 28th Division. It also occupied the southwest portion of Bois de Cierges. At 9 a. m., July 31, the 32d Division relieved the 28th Division.

The division captured Cierges on July 31 and Bellevue Ferme, Hill 230 and Les Jomblets on August 1.

The German withdrawal to the Vesle River commenced during the night of August 1-2. The attack of the 32d Division on August 2 made rapid progress, and the division advanced 6 kilometers to a line north of Dravegny. On August 3 a similar gain carried the division to north of St. Gilles and Mont St. Martin. The southwestern portion of Fismes, and Bois de Larribonnet were captured on August 4. Patrols crossed the Vesle River on the 5th and 6th. The occupation of Fismes was completed on the latter date. The division was relieved by the 28th Division at daylight, August 7.

July
27-29 Upon being relieved in the Center Sector, the 32d Division on July 23-24 moved to the Aisne-Marne region. The division was first assigned to the French Tenth Army but, on July 27, it was transferred to the French XXXVIII Corps, French Sixth Army, to relieve the French 39th Division. [8, 9, 10, 11]

The German withdrawal to the line of the Ourcq River during the night of July 26-27 resulted in modifications of the French plans, the American 28th Division relieving the French 39th Division on July 28, and the 32d Division moving to Forêt de Fère, 6 kilometers southwest of Ronchères, in reserve.

[12, 13, 14, 15]

At 10 p. m., July 28, orders were issued for the 32d Division to relieve the American 3d Division during the night of July 29-30 with one brigade. Command was to pass to the 32d Division at 11 a. m., July 30. At 8 p. m., July 29, the other brigade of the 32d Division was ordered to relieve the 28th Division during the night of July 30-31. Command of this zone was to pass to the 32d Division at 9 a. m., July 31. [16, 17, 18, 19]

During the night of July 29-30 the 64th Infantry Brigade relieved the 5th Infantry Brigade, 3d Division, north of Ronchères. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, took over the front line from the 4th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, was in support at Villardelle and La Fosse Ferme, 1,500 meters southwest of Ronchères; the 3d Battalion was at Le Charmel, 5 kilometers southwest of Ronchères. Command passed to the 32d Division as ordered. The 3d Field Artillery Brigade, 3d Division, remained in the zone in support of the 32d Division until August 2, when it was relieved by the 57th Field Artillery Brigade. The 3d Battalion, 18th Field Artillery, 3d Division, continued to be attached to the 32d Division until August 6. The 147th Field Artillery, 41st Division, was attached to the 57th Field Artillery Brigade for the entire operation. The zone of action assigned to the 32d Division was as follows:

Right boundary: west edge of Bois Meunière—Coulonges (incl.)—Cohan (incl.)—Longeville Ferme (incl.).

Left boundary: Courmont (excl.)—Cierges (incl.).

The French 4th Division, French III Corps, was to the right, and the American 28th Division, French XXXVIII Corps, was to the left. [1, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27]

The French XXXVIII Corps had attacked Bois des Grimettes on July 29 in compliance with instructions from the French Sixth Army to pierce the German line of resistance. Meeting with little success, orders were issued for a continuation of the attack at 3:40 a. m., July 30, with objectives unchanged. The mission of the 32d Division, taken over from the 3d Division, was to capture Cierges, Hill 230, 1,500 meters northeast of Cierges, and Coulonges. The final objective for the day was the line, Chéry-Chartreuve—Bruys, 12 kilometers

July 30

north of the Ourcq, with advance guards at Mont St. Martin, 15 kilometers north of the Ourcq. [7, 16, 28]

Following a conference between officers of the American 28th and French 4th Divisions and the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, but without orders from the 32d Division, the battalion attacked about 10 a. m. No permanent gains could be made in the face of hostile fire from Bois de Cierges and Bois des Grimpettes. [29, 30]

At 11 a. m. the 32d Division ordered the 64th Infantry Brigade to attack at 2:30 p. m., in conjunction with the 28th Division, with Bois des Grimpettes and Cierges as objectives. The advance was to be preceded by a 20-minute artillery preparation and covered by a rolling barrage. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, was to make the attack with Companies F and G in the assault line and H and E in support, from right to left. [31]

On the right, Companies F and H did not advance at H-hour. On the left, Company G entered Bois des Grimpettes, while Company E, receiving heavy fire from Bois de Cierges, changed direction to the east and attacked that wood. Companies F and H then entered the fight. They were joined about dusk by Companies B and C, and at 10 p. m. by Companies A, D, I and K. By midnight the southwestern corner of Bois de Cierges was free of the enemy and contact established with the French 4th Division south of the wood. [30, 32, 33, 34, 35]

Company G had been preceded in Bois des Grimpettes by elements of the American 28th Division which occupied the position. Company G cleaned up the eastern edge of the wood, along which it established a line in contact with the 28th Division at the northeast corner. [30, 36]

As a result of this penetration of their main line of resistance, the Germans withdrew from Bois de Cierges and Bois Meunière during the night of July 30-31 to a line north of Goussancourt and Cierges. [37]

At 7:30 p. m. the French Sixth Army issued orders for a general attack at daybreak, July 31. The mission assigned to the French XXXVIII Corps was the capture of Cierges. The

corps issued its attack order at 10 p. m. designating the 63d Infantry Brigade, 32d Division, as the attacking unit. Cierges was to be secured by capturing Cote 220, north of Les Jomblets. For this attack the right boundary of the brigade was to be the Courmont—Cierges—Chamery road, while the left boundary was modified so as to extend from a point 200 meters northwest of Cote 212, thence northeast through Bois Pelger, thence generally north to the existing boundary. [38, 39]

The 63d Infantry Brigade relieved the 55th Infantry Brigade, 28th Division, in Bois des Grimettes and on Cote 188 during the night of July 30–31. The new front was occupied by the 1st and 2d Battalions, 125th Infantry, from right to left, with the 3d Battalion in support in Bois de la Garenne, 500 meters west of Courmont. Front-line contact was established with the 64th Infantry Brigade to the right and with the American 42d Division, I Corps, to the left. Command of the zone of the 28th Division passed to the 32d Division at 9 a. m., July 31. The latter now occupied the entire front of the French XXXVIII Corps. The 107th Machine-Gun Battalion, 28th Division, remained in the sector until August 2. [24, 30, 40, 41, 42]

At 2:30 a. m. the 32d Division issued advance information concerning the attack ordered by higher headquarters. Later in the morning it was discovered that the enemy had withdrawn from Bois Meunière. The division promptly ordered both brigades not to wait for H-hour, but to take up the advance as soon as possible. The 64th Infantry Brigade was to regulate its advance on the French 4th Division, while the 63d Infantry Brigade was to capture the objectives previously ordered by the corps. The front of attack assigned by the French XXXVIII Corps was to be covered by the movement of the 63d Infantry Brigade to the west as it advanced, gradually moving northwest from the zone of the 64th Infantry Brigade. [43, 44]

In the 64th Infantry Brigade, the 127th Infantry ordered an attack at 2 p. m. in conjunction with the French to the right and the 125th Infantry to the left. The 127th Infantry was to advance with the 1st Battalion leading and the 2d Battalion in support. Reddy Ferme was designated as the objective. [30]

July 31

The 63d Infantry Brigade issued orders at 12:45 p. m. for an attack at 2 p. m., with Bois Pelger and Bois du Pelger as objectives. The formation of the brigade was to be as follows:

63D INFANTRY BRIGADE

3d Battalion, 125th Infantry	2d Battalion, 125th Infantry
3d Battalion, 126th Infantry	1st Battalion, 126th Infantry
2d Battalion, 126th Infantry	1st Battalion, 125th Infantry

The attack was to be preceded by a 30-minute artillery preparation and was to be covered by a rolling barrage. [45]

On the right, the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, attacked at 2:30 p. m. and by 4:30 p. m. had occupied Cierges. The attack was continued toward Bellevue Ferme without success. Company H joined the 1st Battalion in establishing a line on the north bank of Ruisseau du Bois de Cierges and in the northern edge of Cierges. At 10 p. m. the 127th Infantry was ordered to attack again at 11:45 p. m. and capture Reddy Ferme. Owing to the exhausted condition of the troops, this attack was not executed. [30, 46, 47, 48]

In the 63d Infantry Brigade, the attack started shortly after 2 p. m. The 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, advanced west of Cierges against Les Jomblets, sending a patrol into the wood. The assault waves reached the southern edge of Les Jomblets, but under heavy fire from the east fell back several hundred meters, and at dark withdrew to the north Cierges—Sergy road, immediately northwest of Cierges. The 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, in support, halted along the south Cierges—Sergy road and in Cierges. [30, 49, 50, 51, 52]

The 3d Battalion, 125th Infantry, moved north from Bois de la Garenne during the morning, crossed the Ourcq River west of Moulin Caranda and attacked Les Jomblets from the southwest. The advance elements reached a line along the north Cierges—Sergy road on the brow of Cote 212. The 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, in support, halted for the night on the south Cierges—Sergy road at the foot of Cote 212. [30, 50, 53, 54, 55]

Of the third line battalions, the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, remained in Bois des Grimpettes throughout the day while

the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, moved up to Cote 188, south-east of Moulin Caranda. [30, 56, 57]

The 32d Division was in contact with units to its flanks. [58, 59]

Anticipating a further German withdrawal, the French Sixth Army issued orders for all units to maintain close contact with the enemy. In case the enemy failed to withdraw, his position north of the Ourcq was to be broken by maneuvering on the hills north of Cierges in the direction of Chéry-Chartreuve. The French XXXVIII and American I Corps were to engage in this operation. The French XXXVIII Corps ordered the 32d Division to continue the attack on August 1 without change in mission. [60, 61, 62]

Believing that the 3d Battalion, 125th Infantry, was in Bois de la Planchette, and that the other five battalions of the brigade were along the Cierges—Sergy road, the 63d Infantry Brigade ordered an attack for 3:30 a. m., August 1, against the south and west edges of Les Jomblets and Bois Pelger. The 125th Infantry was to take command of the three battalions on the right, and the 126th Infantry command of those on the left. The attack was to be preceded by a 30-minute artillery preparation. The adjacent brigades were requested to support the attack by advancing in liaison with the 63d Infantry Brigade. [63]

At 8:25 p. m. the 64th Infantry Brigade ordered the 128th Infantry to relieve the 127th Infantry during the night of July 31–August 1, the relief to be completed before 3 a. m. The 128th Infantry was to advance to Hill 230 in liaison with the 63d Infantry Brigade. [64]

Owing to a change in H-hour, the attack of August 1 was not coordinated. In the 63d Infantry Brigade, the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, passed through the 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, northwest of Cierges, and attacked at 3:45 a. m. The 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, captured Les Jomblets, Bois de la Planchette and Bois Pelger, and organized a line in the northern edges of these woods. The 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, advanced in support to the western part of Les Jomblets. [30, 65, 66]

Aug. 1

The 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, attacked at 4:30 a. m. from Cote 212. Passing through the lines of the 3d Battalion, 125th Infantry, on the Cierges—Sergy road, it entered Les Jomblets from the west and took up a position in the northern edge of the east half of the woods. Contact was established with the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, about 5:45 a. m. and the consolidation of the position commenced. [25, 30, 66]

The 1st and 3d Battalions, 126th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, defeated a local counterattack shortly after daybreak, but at 9 a. m. were forced back to their line of departure by another counterattack supported by artillery. [25, 30, 67]

During the morning the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, moved into Sergy, in the zone of action of the American 42d Division, for the purpose of attacking Bois Pelger and Bois de la Planchette from the west in conjunction with an attack from the south by the 125th Infantry. This attack was not made. Shortly after noon Company F took up a position on Cote 212 west of Les Jomblets; later, Company G deployed east of Sergy along the north Cierges—Sergy road. [30, 68, 69]

In the 64th Infantry Brigade the regimental relief was not carried out. The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, attacked Bellevue Ferme about 2:30 a. m. with little success and returned to its former position east of Cierges. No other attack was made during the morning because of the lack of artillery support. [30, 70]

At 2 p. m. the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, attacked Bellevue Ferme and Hill 230 from the northern edge of Bois de Cierges in the French zone of action. Shortly thereafter the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, attacked Bellevue Ferme from Ruisseau du Bois de Cierges. These converging attacks pierced the enemy main line of resistance and resulted in the capture of Bellevue Ferme, the woods to the north, and Hill 230. A line was organized with the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, on Hill 230, and the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, plus Companies K and M, in the northern edge of the wood south and west of Reddy Ferme. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, took up a position north and east of Bellevue Ferme. During the

night of August 1-2 the 128th Infantry relieved the 127th Infantry in these positions. The right of the 128th Infantry was refused in order to maintain liaison with the French in Cambronne wood. [25, 30, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75]

At 3:25 p. m. the 63d Infantry Brigade sent the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, into the western part of Les Jomblets to fill the gap between the 127th Infantry and Company F, 126th Infantry. Contact was established with the 42d Division at Sergy. [30, 76]

A German concentration in Forêt de Nesles, northwest of Nesles, having been reported, the French Sixth Army and French XXXVIII Corps ordered the preparation of a defensive position. In the zone of the 32d Division, this was laid out along the general line, western edge of Bois Meunière—Bois des Grimettes—Bois des Lutes. The 107th Machine-Gun Battalion of the 28th Division was in division reserve. [30, 77, 78]

The French Sixth Army ordered a general attack for 4:15 a. m., August 2, without change in mission. Effective at 10 a. m., the left boundary of the 32d Division was to be, Sergy (excl.)—Ferme de Camp (excl.)—Evry Ferme (incl.)—les Bouleaux (incl.)—Mont St. Martin (incl.). The French XXXVIII Corps planned to capture the area, Chamery—le Montcel, by advancing over the hills to the east and west of those villages. The slopes to the southeast overlooking Chamery and Le Montcel were the objective of the 64th Infantry Brigade, while that part of the Chamery—Nesles road west of Le Montcel was the objective of the 63d Infantry Brigade. The corps ordered the attack made by one battalion in each brigade zone with a maximum of two companies in the assault line. There was to be a 10-minute artillery preparation prior to H-hour and the advance was to be covered by a rolling barrage. [79, 80, 81, 82]

The 64th Infantry Brigade ordered the reserve battalion of the 128th Infantry, the 3d, to make the attack. The 63d Infantry Brigade organized a provisional battalion from elements of the 125th Infantry for the advance. Liaison was to be maintained with the 42d Division by the 2d Battalion, 126th

Infantry. Upon reaching the assigned objectives, the troops were to dig in. [83, 84]

Aug. 2 During the night of August 1-2 the enemy executed the first phase of his withdrawal to the Vesle River. Opposite the 32d Division, the German outpost line was along the southern edges of Dravegny and Bois du Faux. [85, 86]

The attack was made at 4:45 a. m. On the right, the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, overcame resistance at Reddy Ferme and reached its objective before 7 a. m. The 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, reached the Chamery—Nesles road about the same time. The provisional battalion of the 125th Infantry, consisting of the consolidated 2d and 3d Battalions, cleaned up the woods and came abreast of the 126th Infantry just before noon. [30, 87, 88]

At 8:45 a. m. the French XXXVIII Corps issued telephonic orders for the 32d Division to push its advance, in order to prevent the enemy from making a stand. The axis of advance was to be the line, Villomé—high ground to the north—le Bois Chenet. The 32d Division ordered the advance resumed by both brigades; the interbrigade boundary was to be the dirt road, Chamery—point 300 meters northwest of Villomé—Hill 198.8—southeast corner of Le Bois Chenet. The 64th Infantry Brigade ordered the pursuit to commence at noon in advance-guard formation; the 63d Infantry Brigade planned to move at 2 p. m. At 3 p. m. the French XXXVIII Corps assigned to the 32d Division as objectives, Dravegny and Le Bois Chenet. [30, 89, 90, 91, 92]

In the 64th Infantry Brigade, the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, advanced about 1 p. m., occupied Coulonges, and halted because it had lost liaison with adjoining troops. At dusk this battalion again moved forward and established a line in and southeast of Dravegny, in liaison with the French to the right and in contact with the 63d Infantry Brigade to the left. [30, 93]

The 63d Infantry Brigade advanced at 2 p. m. The provisional battalion of the 125th Infantry overcame resistance at Party Ferme, the edges of Bois du Faux and Le Bois Chenet, and was west of Dravegny at 4:15 p. m. Outposts were estab-

lished in Dravegny and between Le Bois Chenet and Bois du Faux. [30, 87]

The 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, advancing on the left, cleaned up Bois du Faux and occupied Le Bois Chenet at 8 p. m. It organized a line under shellfire in the northern and western edges of the latter wood after dark. It was in contact with the 117th Engineers, 42d Division, which, acting as infantry, had advanced to the northern edge of Bois de Voizelle. [30, 87, 94, 95]

In compliance with army and corps orders, the 32d Division ordered the pursuit resumed by both brigades at 4 a. m., August 3, using advance guards consisting of one regiment of infantry, one battalion of engineers and a battery of field artillery each. The advance guards were to maintain close contact with the enemy, but the main bodies were to enter the fight only in case serious resistance was encountered. Should the Vesle River be crossed, the hill north of Blanzly-lès-Fismes, 3 kilometers north of Fismes, was to be organized for defense in order to cover the approach of the main bodies. [96, 97, 98]

During the night of August 2-3 the Germans completed their withdrawal to the north of the Vesle River. Rear-guard detachments still remained south of the river. [99]

Aug. 3

In the 64th Infantry Brigade, the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, led the advance guard, moving out at 4 a. m. At 8 a. m. it was on the hill 1,500 meters south of St. Gilles. As the troops crossed the valley of Orillon Ruisseau south of St. Gilles, they came under machine-gun and artillery fire. The leading elements reached the hill northwest of St. Gilles during the afternoon. A strong patrol moved through St. Gilles and down the Ardre River for about 1 kilometer, returning to the Orillon valley later in the day. [30, 99, 100, 101, 102]

The 63d Infantry Brigade had issued an order at 11:45 p. m., August 2, providing for an advance at 4:30 a. m., August 3, with regiments abreast. A provisional battalion, 125th Infantry, was to lead the advance on the right, while the 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, was to lead on the left. Three objectives were assigned, the final one being an east-west line through Mont St. Martin. At 4 a. m., August 3, the brigade revoked this

order and published another based on the corps and division orders. The 125th Infantry was to form the infantry component of the advance guard and move out as soon as possible. [103, 104]

The advance of the 63d Infantry Brigade started at 6 a. m. and encountered slight resistance. The leading elements of the 125th Infantry were on the plateau about 1 kilometer east of Mont St. Martin by 10:30 a. m., where they came under artillery and machine-gun fire and halted. Contact was established with the 128th Infantry to the right, but no troops could be found to the left. [30, 102, 105]

In the afternoon the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, came up to the left of the 125th Infantry, established a line along the St. Gilles—Mont St. Martin road and occupied Mont St. Martin. About dusk, in order to cover the exposed left flank, the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, was placed in the northern edge of Bois de Mont St. Martin, outside of the divisional zone of action. [30]

At 2:50 p. m. the French Sixth Army issued orders for the advance guards to cross the Vesle River during the evening. If this proved impossible, a general attack supported by artillery was to be made at 3:30 a. m., August 4, for the purpose of forcing the river crossings. [106, 107]

At 6 p. m. the French XXXVIII Corps ordered the 32d Division to advance to the Vesle River without loss of time and make the necessary preparations for crossing. The 28th Division, in corps reserve, was to be ready to cross the river as soon as bridges were built. At 6:25 p. m. the 32d Division ordered the advance resumed. The engineers were directed to assemble material for bridges. [1, 108, 109]

In the 64th Infantry Brigade, the 128th Infantry formed for attack on the plateau west of St. Gilles with the 2d Battalion in the assault line and the 1st Battalion in support. The attack began at 7 p. m. St. Gilles, to the right of the zone of action of the 32d Division, was entered and outposted and the front was extended to the northwest for about 1 kilometer, with elements of both battalions in line. The troops halted at

nightfall under artillery and machine-gun fire. The 63d Infantry Brigade did not attack. [30, 110, 111, 112]

There was no front-line liaison with the French 4th Division, which was in advance-guard formation with the main body south of the Ardre River, or with the American 4th Division, which had relieved the 42d Division to the left. [30, 112]

The French XXXVIII Corps now ordered the 28th Division to move up to the line, St. Gilles—Mont St. Martin, and maintain close liaison with the 32d Division. The original plan for the 28th Division to pass through the 32d Division and continue the pursuit was modified. The 28th Division was to be ready to pass through the 32d Division, but meanwhile, the latter was to continue the advance. [113, 114]

The 63d Infantry Brigade issued orders at 11:30 p. m. directing that the pursuit be resumed at once. The 126th Infantry was to proceed along the Chéry-Chartreuve—Fismes road with the mission of establishing a bridgehead beyond the Vesle. [115]

The advance started about 6:30 a. m., August 4, with the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, leading. Strong resistance was encountered as the troops started down the hill overlooking Fismes. The battalion halted in an old trench on the plateau and in the woods just below the crest. [30, 116]

At 8 a. m. the American III Corps took command of the zone of the French XXXVIII Corps, and announced that instructions issued by the French would remain in force. [117]

At 3 p. m. the 127th Infantry attacked with the 3d Battalion leading and deployed astride the St. Gilles—Chezelles Ferme road, the 2d Battalion, in support, echeloned to the left rear, and the 1st Battalion in reserve. When the assault troops came abreast of the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, the latter joined in the advance. [30, 118, 119]

By 8:50 p. m. the 3d Battalion, 127th Infantry, held the southwestern portion of Fismes, with elements of the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, holding positions along the railroad north of the town and along Route Nationale No. 31 to the west. The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, was southwest of Fismes in support. [30, 120, 121]

Aug. 4

The 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, advanced down the slope to the railroad yards northeast of Villesavoye but withdrew under heavy fire to Bois de Larribonnet. [30, 122]

The 32d Division was in liaison with the French to the right, but was out of touch with the American 4th Division to the left. [30, 123]

Pursuant to instructions from the French Sixth Army, based on the assumption that the Germans were retreating to the Aisne River, 9 kilometers north of Fismes, the American III Corps ordered the 32d Division to push its advance guards across the river, seize the plateau to the north and continue the advance to the Aisne. [124, 125]

Aug. 5 In issuing its instructions at 2 a. m., August 5, the 32d Division ordered the advance resumed by both brigades in advance-guard formation as soon as possible. They were to cross the Vesle River by any available means. The boundary between brigades was the line, Le Champ Gaillard—west edge of Fismette. [126]

The 64th Infantry Brigade sent several patrols across the river and improved its positions. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, held the railroad track along the south bank of the Vesle northwest of Fismes. The 127th Infantry occupied the west half of the town, and patrolled the remainder, which was free of the enemy. At 4:30 p. m. this regiment ordered the attack resumed at dusk. Troops were ordered to cross the river on rafts; however, attempts to do so were not made. The 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, was sent to Fismes during the night of August 5-6 to reinforce the 127th Infantry. [30, 127, 128]

On the left, in the 63d Infantry Brigade, the 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, relieved the 2d Battalion of that regiment near the railroad yards northeast of Villesavoye. The 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, moved up to Bois de Larribonnet in support and also covered the gap between the two brigades. [30, 129, 130]

There was no front-line liaison with the French to the right, but contact had been established with the 4th Division to the left. [30, 131]

Pursuant to instructions from the French Sixth Army, the American III Corps ordered the pursuit continued on August 6. [132, 133]

There was no offensive action by the 32d Division on August 6. The 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, relieved the elements of the 127th Infantry in Fismes during the morning and extended the line to the south bank of the Vesle, including all of Fismes. Liaison was established to the right with the American 6th Infantry Brigade, 3d Division, which had relieved the French during the night of August 5-6. The 107th Engineers completed preparations for bridging the river at Fismes. [25, 30, 134, 135, 136]

In the 63d Infantry Brigade, the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, relieved the 3d Battalion northeast of Villesavoie. Patrols found the woods between the railroad and the Vesle occupied by the enemy. [30, 137]

The III Corps ordered the 32d Division relieved by the 28th Division during the night of August 6-7. Command was to pass at daylight, August 7. The relief was accomplished as ordered, and the 32d Division moved south of an east-west line through Dravegny in corps reserve. The 57th Field Artillery Brigade remained in the sector in support of the 28th Division. [1, 25, 138, 139]

Aug. 6

CASUALTIES, AISNE-MARNE OFFENSIVE

		July 27-29	July 30- Aug. 1	Aug. 2-6	Aug. 7-11	Total
<i>32d Division</i>						
125th Inf.-----	W	16	419	201	12	648
	DW	1	24	12		37
	K	1	166	49		216
126th Inf.-----	W	19	282	300	15	616
	DW	1	13	16	1	31
	K	2	67	46		115
127th Inf.-----	W	9	464	398	16	887
	DW	2	32	25	4	63
	K		70	109	1	180
128th Inf.-----	W	2	156	443	16	617
	DW		13	13		26
	K		56	40		96
119th FA (DS Aug. 7-11)	W			8		8
	DW			1		1
	K					
120th FA (DS Aug. 7-11)	W	1		12		13
	DW			4		4
	K			2		2
121st FA (DS Aug. 7-11)	W			6		6
	DW			1		1
	K		1	2		3
119th MG Bn.-----	W					
	DW					
	K					
120th MG Bn.-----	W	1	41	34		76
	DW		2			2
	K		12	1		13
121st MG Bn.-----	W	2	32	36	4	74
	DW			4		4
	K			6	1	7
107th Engrs (DS Aug. 7-11)	W	3	1	20		24
	DW			3		3
	K					
Others-----	W	4	5	10	1	20
	DW			1		1
	K			3	1	4
Total-----		64	1,856	1,806	72	3,798
<i>Attached Units</i>						
147th FA (41st Div) (July 27-Aug. 6)	W		1	9		10
	DW					
	K			5		5
10th FA (3d Div) (July 30-Aug. 2)	W		14	1		15
	DW		1			1
	K					
18th FA (3d Div) (July 30-Aug. 2)	W		1			1
	DW					
	K					
76th FA (3d Div) (July 30-Aug. 2)	W		12	1		13
	DW		1			1
	K		1			1
107th MG Bn (28th Div) (July 31-Aug. 2)	W		1			1
	DW					
	K					
3d Bn, 18th FA (3d Div) (Aug. 3-6)	W			1		1
	DW					
	K					
Total-----			32	17		49
Aggregate total-----		64	1,888	1,823	72	3,847

W=wounds not mortal; DW=died of wounds; K=killed in action; DS=detached service.