

OPERATIONS

OFFENSIVE

Aug. 28- Sept. 2	Sept. 3-6	Total
415	4	427
24		24
73	2	76
295	4	312
31		32
86	1	90
443	5	454
25		25
84	9	93
683	8	699
53		53
110	1	111
21	8	29
5		5
2		2
15	6	28
2		2
4		4
25	3	28
	1	1
1		1
61		61
1		1
3		3
68	5	81
2		2
12		12
51	1	52
4		4
2		2
4	6	15
	1	1
19	4	24
3		3
6		6
2,633	69	2,763
10	5	15
3		3
13	5	18
2,646	74	2,781

in action; DS=detached service.

Meuse-Argonne Offensive and Subsequent Service

MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE, SEPTEMBER 26-
NOVEMBER 11

SUBSEQUENT SERVICE, NOVEMBER 12, 1918-MAY 1919

FROM THE TIME that the American Commander-in-Chief arrived in France, he bent every effort toward organizing an American army under American command at the earliest possible moment. To accomplish this would normally consume considerable time because it would first be necessary to transport a large number of troops to Europe, provide for their supply and complete their training. The organization of this army was further deferred by the critical situation created by the German offensives launched in the spring and early summer of 1918. These offensives so depleted the Allied reserves that the Allies faced almost certain defeat unless they received immediate support. In this crisis the American Commander-in-Chief postponed for the time being the concentration of American divisions for the formation of an American army, and made all American combatant forces available for service with the British and French armies. With this assistance, the Allies were able not only to stop the German offensives before they gained a decisive victory but, on July 18, to launch the Aisne-Marne Offensive against the Germans in the Marne salient. On July 24, while this offensive was still in progress, a strategic offensive plan was agreed upon by the Commanders-in-Chief and the Allied Commander-in-Chief which included a mission for an American army. The immediate purpose of this plan was to reduce the salients which interfered with railroad communications which were essential to further offensive operations. One of these was the St. Mihiel salient. [3, 202]

The American First Army was organized on August 10, and

on August 30 assumed command of the front from Port-sur-Seille, east of the Moselle River, to Watronville, 11 kilometers southeast of Verdun. From September 12 to 16 it conducted the St. Mihiel Offensive which resulted in the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient. [202]

With the reduction of the St. Mihiel and other salients the immediate purpose of the strategic offensive plan of July 24 had been accomplished, and it became possible to undertake the great converging offensives which had been agreed upon by the Commanders-in-Chief and the Allied Commander-in-Chief early in September. These offensives included an American attack to be launched on September 26 between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest, supported on the left by the French Fourth Army between the Argonne and the Suippes River; a renewal of the Somme Offensive on September 27; and a combined Allied attack east of Ypres on September 28. Between these principal offensives, secondary operations were to be undertaken. [202, 203, 204, 409]

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive of the American First Army was to be directed against the principal German lateral line of supply, the Carignan—Sedan—Mézières railroad which, at Sedan, lay 53 kilometers from the front. The severing of this artery would render the German positions to the west and northwest of Sedan untenable. [202]

Protecting this vital supply line, the Germans had, during the previous four years, constructed a strong system of field fortifications. On the Meuse-Argonne front, there were four distinct defensive positions. The first lay close behind the front line. The second included Montfaucon and traversed the Argonne south of Apremont. The third, which was known to the Germans as the Kriemhild Stellung, formed a part of their great defensive system, popularly called the Hindenburg Line, which ran from the vicinity of Metz to the North Sea. This position extended from Bois de Forêt, across the heights of Cunel and Romagne, to include the high ground north of Grandpré. The fourth position included the heights of Barricourt, and extended westward to Buzancy and Thénorgues. The first three positions had been thoroughly organized, and

OPERATIONS

the front from Port-sur-Wattonville, 11 kilometers from 12 to 16 it conducted in the reduction of the

1 and other salients the offensive plan of July 24 had been agreed upon by the Commander-in-Chief included an American advance of 16 kilometers between the Meuse and the Suippes on September 27; and on September 28. Preliminary operations were to

the American First Army along the German lateral line near the Mézières railroad which, at that time. The severing of this line led to the west and east.]

The Germans had, during the offensive, a strong system of field fortifications. In front, there were four lines that lay close behind the first line. The second, third, and fourth, which was known as the Hindenburg Line, formed a part of the line from Metz to the North Sea. The line, across the heights of the high ground north of the heights of Barzancy and Thénorgues. It was roughly organized, and

numerous intermediate positions constructed between them. These defenses, together with the natural military strength of the terrain, presented a formidable obstacle to an attacking army. The importance of the communications protected by this front made it certain that the Germans would resist here to the last extremity. [202]

The plan of the First Army contemplated an initial advance of 16 kilometers and a penetration of the hostile third position. This penetration would force the enemy to evacuate the Argonne Forest, and insure the junction of the First Army with the French Fourth Army at Grandpré. A further advance of 16 kilometers was then to be made to the line, Stenay—le Chesne. Such an advance would outflank the enemy's position along the Aisne River, in front of the French Fourth Army, and clear the way for an advance on Mézières or Sedan. These operations were to be supplemented by an attack to clear the heights east of the Meuse River as far as Bois de la Grande Montagne. [202]

In preparation for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the front of the First Army was extended from Wattonville to the west edge of the Argonne Forest on September 22. It attacked at 5:30 a. m., September 26, with the III, V and I Corps in line from right to left. West of the Argonne Forest, the French Fourth Army attacked in conjunction with the American forces. Elements of the First Army east of the Meuse did not attack during the opening days of the offensive. [202]

By September 30 the First Army had advanced approximately 10 kilometers and penetrated the hostile second position. In the center the V Corps, with the 79th, 37th and 91st Divisions in line, from right to left, had reached the line, Nantillois—Bois Emont—Tronsol Ferme. [3, 202]



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

When the Meuse-Argonne Offensive opened, the 32d Division was in reserve of the V Corps. On September 30 it relieved the 37th Division on the general line, northern edge of Bois de Beuge—south of Cierges—northern edge of Bois Communal de Cierges.

On October 1 the division advanced its center to a line north of Cierges.

During the night of October 3-4, the 32d Division shifted about 2½ kilometers to the west, taking over the zone of action of the 91st Division. The 1st Division was to the left of the 32d Division.

The 32d Division attacked on October 4 with the mission of capturing Gesnes and the heights west of Romagne-sous-Montfaucon. By night the division held a line along the Cierges—Gesnes—Exermont road.

On October 5 the attack was renewed with the same objectives and dispositions as on October 4. The line for the night extended east and west through Gesnes.

From October 6 to 8 the division readjusted its lines, improved its position and made preparations to attack.

On October 9 the division advanced about 2 kilometers. On the 10th a gain of about 1 kilometer was made on the left. The 181st Infantry Brigade, 91st Division, which had been attached to the 1st Division, to the left, was attached to the 32d Division on the latter date. There were no gains on October 11.

During the early morning of October 12 the division extended to the left and took over the zone formerly held by the 181st Infantry Brigade. On this day the 3d Division passed to control of the III Corps, the 32d Division thus becoming the right division of the V Corps. The 42d Division relieved the 1st Division to the left of the 32d.

No attack was made on October 13. On the 14th the division captured Romagne and gained a line through Bois de Chaucignon. The left flank was refused to the southeastern slopes of Hill 288.

The attack was resumed on October 15 and an advance made to the northern edge of Bois de Chaucignon. The left flank was advanced in Bois de Romagne to the southeast of La Tuilerie Ferme.

No general advance was made on October 16. On the 17th the L-shaped wood east of Bois de Chaucignon and the southern and western portions of Bois de Bantheville were taken. On the 18th the line was advanced in Bois de Bantheville. This line was held

opened, the 32d Division on September 30 it relieved the edge of Bois de Beuge—Communal de Cierges—center to a line north of

the 32d Division shifted about the zone of action of the 91st east of the 32d Division. On September 4 with the mission of clearing Romagne-sous-Mont along the Cierges—

with the same objectives and on the night extended east

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about 2 kilometers. On the night of September 11 the 181st had been attached to the 32d Division on the night of September 11.

On September 12 the division extended the line held by the 181st Infantry and passed to control of the line, bringing the right division of the 1st Division to the left

On the night of September 14 the division moved through Bois de Chauvignon. On the northern slopes of Hill 288.

and an advance made to the east of La Tuilerie Ferme. On the night of September 16. On the night of September 17 the division moved on and the southern and northern flanks were taken. On the night of September 18 the division held this line was held

until the 89th Division relieved the division at 8 a. m., October 20.

On November 9, the 32d Division crossed to the east bank of the Meuse and entered the front line as the right division of the III Corps by taking command of its 128th Infantry, which, while serving with the 5th Division, had reached Peucilliers, about 10 kilometers east of the Meuse.

The division attacked on November 10 in two columns. The right column advanced 3 kilometers, but being ahead of the units on its flanks, was forced to return to the line of departure. The left column advanced 3 kilometers to about 200 meters west of Thinte Ruisseau, where it was abreast of the right column. On November 11 the attack was abandoned because of the Armistice.

Upon being relieved in the Oise-Aisne Offensive, the 32d Division moved to the Meuse-Argonne region and, on the night of September 25-26, took position in Forêt de Hesse, about 10 kilometers south of Montfaucon, as reserve of the V Corps, First Army. The 57th Field Artillery Brigade was detached and served with the 79th and 3d Divisions until October 6. The 107th Engineers was detached and served with the V Corps until October 3. [1]

The division remained in Forêt de Hesse until the morning of September 30, when it moved forward to relieve the 37th Division west of Nantillois. [205, 206, 207]

The front line taken over by the 32d Division extended from the northern edge of Bois de Beuge, across the summit of Hill 254, thence to the southwest across the valley of L'Andon Ruisseau, through Bois Emont, thence northwest to La Grange aux Bois Ferme. The 63d Infantry Brigade took over this line, with the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, from right to left. [208, 209, 210, 211, 212]

The relief continued throughout the day and was completed early on the morning of October 1. Command passed to the 32d Division at 11 p. m., on the 30th. At the same time that the 32d Division entered the line, the 3d Division relieved the 79th Division to the right. Contact was maintained by the 32d Division with the two flank divisions. The 55th Field Artillery Brigade, 30th Division, which had been supporting the 37th

Sept.
26-29

Sept. 30

Division, remained in support of the 32d Division until October 8. The 158th Field Artillery Brigade, 83d Division, had been with the 32d Division from September 26 to 30. [1, 213, 214]

Oct.
I-2 On October 1 the division advanced its line through Cierges, effecting a maximum gain of about 1 kilometer in the center. Contact was maintained with the 3d and 91st Divisions at the same points as on the previous night. [30, 215, 216, 217]

Patrolling on the front of the division was carried out during October 2, but no change in location of the front lines was made. No enemy infantry was encountered by the patrols, although hostile machine guns and artillery were active. During the night the 126th Infantry replaced its 2d Battalion in the front line with its 1st Battalion. [215, 218]

Oct. 3 Corps field orders were issued on October 3 directing the 32d Division to shift to the left, with a new right boundary just west of Cierges and a new left boundary corresponding to the corps boundary, which extended generally from Tronsol Ferme (incl.) to Hill 200 (excl.), thence northwest. The 32d Division was to relieve the 91st Division to the left, and be relieved on the right to and including Cierges by the 3d Division. By these changes the front of the V Corps would be held by the 3d and 32d Divisions, from right to left, with the 1st Division, I Corps, to the left of the 32d Division. [219]

Later in the day the corps ordered an attack to be made at 5:25 a. m., October 4. This attack by the V Corps was part of the general attack by the First Army, in which the III and V Corps were to carry the heights of Cunel and Romagne-sous-Montfaucon. The V Corps prescribed an attack on both sides of Romagne. The 32d Division was to capture Gesnes and the heights west of Romagne, and was to assist the 1st Division by capturing Bois de Moncy; the 1st Division was in turn to assist the 32d Division in capturing the heights west of Romagne. A rolling barrage was provided as far as Bois de Moncy. The two divisions of the corps were to advance independently as far as the combined army first-phase line, a line generally east and west through the center of Bois de Bantheville and

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north of Bantheville; from this line divisions were to be prepared
 to continue the advance upon receipt of orders. [202, 220]

The 57th Field Artillery Brigade was in support of the 3d
 Division during the first days of the offensive and was not
 returned to the 32d Division until the night of October 6. The
 32d Division was to utilize the 58th Field Artillery Brigade, 33d
 Division, but this brigade was not to advance. [1, 221, 222]

The 32d Division ordered the attack with brigades abreast.
 A company of tanks was assigned to assist in reducing Bois de
 la Morine and the strongpoint on Hill 240. The line of de-
 parture was prescribed as, northern edge of the small wood 500
 meters northwest of Cierges—northern edge of the small wood
 200 meters north of Bois Communal de Cierges—northern edge
 of Bois Communal de Baulny. [223]

The formation for the attack was as follows:

<i>64TH INFANTRY BRIGADE</i>		<i>63D INFANTRY BRIGADE</i>	
<i>127th Infantry</i>		<i>126th Infantry</i>	
2d Battalion	1st Battalion	1st Battalion	3d Battalion
	3d Battalion		2d Battalion
<i>128th Infantry</i>		<i>125th Infantry</i>	
		[223, 224, 225, 226, 227]	

During the night of October 3-4, the adjustment of the 32d
 Division's new line was effected. The 125th Infantry was re-
 lieved on the right by the 7th Infantry, 3d Division. The 126th
 Infantry placed its 3d Battalion in line to the west of Cierges
 and to the right of the 1st Battalion of that regiment. On the
 left of the division the line was extended by the 127th Infantry,
 which moved into the zone of the 91st Division. The regiment
 bivouacked in rear of its new lines during the early part of the
 night of October 3-4, and at 4:30 a. m., October 4, completed
 the relief of the right elements of the 91st Division. The 32d
 Division took command of its new front at midnight, October
 3. [228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234]

Supported by an artillery barrage, the 32d Division launched
 its attack about 5:25 a. m., October 4. [235, 236]

On the right, the progress of the 126th Infantry was slow.
 By 9 a. m., the troops had reached the line, Hill 241—
 point 218. The tanks which supported the attack were able

Oct. 4

to make more rapid progress and pushed ahead of the infantry. By 8 a. m. they had reached points on Hill 239 and along the creek about 500 meters northeast of Gesnes, but here they were stopped by heavy artillery fire. Hostile artillery and machine-gun fire was very severe, the machine-gun fire coming particularly from the small patches of woods west of Hill 235. By 10:45 a. m. Company D, 126th Infantry, and two machine-gun sections, were on the Cierges—Gesnes road. By 1:45 p. m. all companies of the 1st Battalion were on the road, but the front line of the 3d Battalion was at that time still on Hill 241, 800 meters northwest of Cierges. [237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245]

At 5 p. m. the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, passed through the 3d Battalion, and took up a position to the right of the 1st Battalion, with its right resting at a point about 200 meters north of crossroads 242 and about 100 meters east of the La Grange aux Bois Ferme—Romagne road, thence along the Cierges—Gesnes road to the vicinity of point 214 where it was in touch with the right of the 1st Battalion. The regimental line then continued along the road to the southeastern part of Gesnes, where contact was maintained with the right of the 127th Infantry. Contact was established with the 3d Division to the right. [242, 243, 246, 247, 248, 249]

When the 127th Infantry attacked, about 5:25 a. m., its front lacked about 1 kilometer of reaching to the west boundary of the 32d Division. Troops of the 91st Division continued to hold their former front line in the western part of the 91st Division's former sector until the afternoon, when a readjustment of the front of the 127th Infantry was made, and that part of the line was taken over from the 91st Division. [234, 250, 251]

The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, had crossed Ruisseau de Gesnes, just southwest of the town of Gesnes, by 9 a. m. Tanks which accompanied the attack moved up the slope toward Bois de la Morine, but were stopped by heavy fire. The attack of the 1st Battalion was likewise checked on the slopes north of Ruisseau de Gesnes, and in the ravine 400 meters northwest of Gesnes. [252]

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Infantry, passed through on to the right of the 1st point about 200 meters o meters east of the La road, thence along the f point 214 where it was ttalion. The regimental the southeastern part of d with the right of the ned with the 3d Division 249]

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The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, to the left of the 1st Battalion, met heavy machine-gun fire from Bois de la Morine as it attempted to cross the top of the ridge just north of Ruisseau de Gesnes, and by 7:30 a. m. was driven back to its line of departure. About noon the 2d Battalion extended its left flank westward, relieving troops of the 91st Division just south and southeast of Tronsol Ferme, and by 1 p. m. was in contact with troops of the 26th Infantry, 1st Division, at a point practically on the divisional boundary, about 300 meters northwest of Tronsol Ferme. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, made a number of unsuccessful attempts to advance against Bois de la Morine during the remainder of the day. A few troops succeeded in crossing Ruisseau de Gesnes south of Bois de la Morine, but were stopped at the bottom of the slope immediately north of the brook. [250, 253, 254]

In the course of the attack by the 127th Infantry, and in the process of relieving elements of the 91st Division, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the regiment became considerably separated. To close the gap, the 3d Battalion, from reserve, advanced almost due north and took positions in the vicinity of point 178; elements of this battalion penetrated across Ruisseau de Gesnes during the day, but were forced to withdraw. [30, 255, 256]

The ground gained by the 127th Infantry north of Ruisseau de Gesnes was not held. By nightfall, the regiment had dug in on a line from the southern part of Gesnes, southwest to a point about 300 meters northwest of Tronsol Ferme. The left of the 2d Battalion remained in touch with the right of the 26th Infantry at this point during the night of October 4-5. [257, 258]

The field orders of the V Corps, issued on October 4, announced that the attack would be resumed at 6:30 a. m., October 5, with zones and objectives the same as for the attack of the 4th. Flank divisions were ordered to assist the 32d Division in its attack. The 32d Division issued no formal field orders for this attack, but indorsed copies of the corps order to its brigades. [258, 259]

In the 63d Infantry Brigade, orders were issued to resume

the attack at 6:30 a. m., with Hill 255 as the first objective. A standing barrage was to begin at 6:30 a. m., and the infantry was to advance at 7 a. m., at which time the barrage would move forward. The 126th Infantry was to attack with the 2d and 1st Battalions in line from right to left and with the 3d Battalion in reserve. [260, 261]

In the 64th Infantry Brigade, the attack was ordered to begin at 6 a. m., with Bois de la Morine, Bois du Chêne Sec, and the heights west of Romagne as the objective. The 127th Infantry, with the 1st, 3d and 2d Battalions in line, from right to left, was ordered to make the attack, with the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, in close support. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, was to attack Bois de la Morine in close cooperation with the 26th Infantry while the two right battalions were to attack the woods from the southeast. The rolling barrage was to commence at the southern edge of Bois de la Morine at 6 a. m., and remain there until sufficient time had elapsed for the infantry to arrive in the vicinity, when it was to advance. One section of tanks was to support the attack on the eastern edge of Bois de la Morine. [262]

Oct. 5 On October 5, the 63d Infantry Brigade on the right, attempted to advance, but made no important gains during the morning. The enemy held strong positions in the small patches of woods west of Hill 235, which successfully prevented any material advance in that area. [263]

In the zone of action of the 64th Infantry Brigade, on the left, the 127th Infantry advanced according to plans, and by 10 a. m. had captured Bois de la Morine and Bois du Chêne Sec. During this advance the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, and elements of the 3d and 1st Battalions, 128th Infantry, advanced with and sometimes through the 127th Infantry and, during the afternoon, became mingled with elements of the 127th Infantry along the northeast and northwest edges of Bois du Chêne Sec. [264, 265]

To assist the 63d Infantry Brigade, artillery concentrations were placed on enemy strongpoints from 11:30 a. m. to 2 p. m. Aided by this fire and by a rolling barrage, the 126th Infantry succeeded in taking Hill 239 about 2 p. m. [266, 267]

255 as the first objective. At 11:30 a. m., and the infantry at that time the barrage would be ready to attack with the 3d Division to the left and with the 3d

The attack was ordered to Bois de la Morine, Bois du Chêne Sec, and the objective. The 127th Infantry in line, from right to left, with the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry in close cooperation with the right battalions were to attack. The rolling barrage was to be ready at Bois de la Morine at 6:30 a. m. when it was to advance. The attack on the eastern

Brigade on the right, at- taining important gains during the attack. Positions in the small patches of woods successfully prevented any further advance.

Infantry Brigade, on the right, according to plans, and by Bois de la Morine and Bois du Chêne Sec. The 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, 127th Infantry, and the 127th Infantry and, led with elements of the 127th Infantry and the 127th Infantry on the east and northwest edges of

positions, artillery concentrations were made from 11:30 a. m. to 2 p. m. The rolling barrage, the 126th Infantry and the 127th Infantry. [266, 267]

Repeated attempts to advance were made on the whole divisional front during the remainder of the afternoon, and small parties were able to reach the southern slopes of Hill 255 and the southeast corner of Bois de Moncy, but were forced to withdraw. At 3:40 p. m. the 3d Division, to the right, sent a message to the 32d Division, stating that it would attack at 5 p. m., in conjunction with the 80th Division to its right, and requesting the 32d Division either to attack, or to protect the 3d Division's left. In accordance with this request, the 126th Infantry, and the right of the 127th Infantry attacked again at 5 p. m., continuing the attack until about 6:30 p. m. Only slight gains were made. [266, 268, 269, 270]

The front line of the 32d Division for the night extended across Hill 239, from the La Grange aux Bois Ferme—Romagne road, where contact was established with the left of the 3d Division, to Gesnes; thence west through Gesnes and over the ridge west of the town; thence along the north edge of Bois du Chêne Sec, thence to Ruisseau du Gouffre. Liaison was maintained with the 1st Division. [30, 271]

Orders were issued late on October 5 for the relief of the 126th Infantry by the 125th Infantry, and of the 127th Infantry by the 128th Infantry. [272]

Field orders of the V Corps issued in the early morning of October 6 prescribed that the corps would organize for further attack, and would establish an outpost line which, in the zone of the 32d Division, was to include Bois de la Morine and Gesnes. A line of resistance was ordered established along the line, Bois de Beuge—Bois Emont—Bois Communal de Cierges. The 32d Division issued no formal field order, but sent instructions to its brigades covering the applicable provisions of the corps order. [273, 274, 275]

The 63d Infantry Brigade, on the right, issued orders to the 125th Infantry, to attack. The 64th Infantry Brigade, on the left, ordered the 128th Infantry to hold its lines lightly, with troops well echeloned in depth. [276, 277]

The relief of the 126th Infantry by the 125th Infantry had been completed at 5:40 a. m., and the relief of the 127th Infantry by the 128th, at 4:30 a. m. No attack was made. The

Oct. 6

128th Infantry placed its 1st, 3d and 2d Battalions in line from right to left. Following the reliefs there was some activity by patrols along the front of the division. [30, 277, 278, 279, 280]

In accordance with telephonic instructions from the 32d Division, a detachment consisting of Company L, 128th Infantry, and one machine-gun platoon, was sent out during the morning for the purpose of establishing contact with the right of the 1st Division near Ferme d'Ariétal, and for the purpose of relieving a patrol of the 26th Infantry reported to be on Cote 269. This detachment proceeded as far as the southwest corner of Bois de Moncy, where it remained throughout the rest of the day of October 6 and during the night of October 6-7. [281]

At 2 p. m. Company F, 128th Infantry, moved from the northern edge of Bois du Chêne Sec toward Cote 269, but withdrew to its starting point after being subjected to heavy shell-fire. During the day, patrols of the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, occupied the U-shaped woods about 500 meters northwest of Gesnes. Other patrols of the 1st Battalion, and some troops of the 125th Infantry, moved into the northeastern part of Gesnes. [30, 281, 282, 283]

Direct contact with the front line of the 3d Division was maintained during the night of October 6-7. Liaison between the 128th Infantry and the 1st Division was maintained during the day of October 6, and the night of October 6-7 by patrols between Company L, 128th Infantry, which was intrenched along the extreme southern edge of Bois de Moncy, and a post of the 26th Infantry near Fontaine St. Germain. [275, 284]

Oct. 7 In accordance with telephonic instructions from the Chief of Staff, 32d Division, at 12:30 a. m., October 7, Companies E and H, and a platoon of the Machine-Gun Company, 127th Infantry, were sent to relieve two companies of the 26th Infantry on Cote 269. These companies relieved the detachment of the 26th Infantry on the two knolls on the southwestern slopes of Cote 269 about 8:35 a. m. The platoon of the Machine-Gun Company, 127th Infantry, which accompanied Companies E and H, took up a position along the northern

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instructions from the 32d of Company L, 128th on, was sent out during losing contact with the e d'Ariétal, and for the 6th Infantry reported to proceeded as far as the ere it remained through- 6 and during the night

fantry, moved from the ward Cote 269, but with- subjected to heavy shell- ie 1st Battalion, 128th oods about 500 meters of the 1st Battalion, and ed into the northeastern

of the 3d Division was r 6-7. Liaison between n was maintained during f October 6-7 by patrols , which was intrenched is de Moncy, and a post Germain. [275, 284] uctions from the Chief , October 7, Companies ie-Gun Company, 127th companies of the 26th ies relieved the detach- o knolls on the south- ; a. m. The platoon of fantry, which accompa- sition along the northern

edge of the strip of woods north of Ruisseau du Gouffre. Companies E and H, 127th Infantry, maintained contact during the day and on the night of October 7-8, with the right of the 26th Infantry in the western edge of Bois de Moncy and with the 128th Infantry in Bois du Chêne Sec by patrols. [281, 285]

The enemy held the crest of Cote 269 and controlled that portion of Bois de Moncy to the south and east. [286]

During the afternoon the 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, succeeded in capturing the three patches of woods between Hill 239 and Fontaine Sainte Pie, and established its lines around them. The left flank of the 3d Division remained unchanged. [287, 288]

The V Corps on this date assigned new boundaries to the 32d Division, to be effective at midnight, October 7, which were, generally, as follows:

Right: west edge of Bois de Beuge—south edge of Bantheville.

Left: Cote 269—la Tuilerie Ferme.

The 67th Field Artillery Brigade, 42d Division, and the 361st Infantry, and 347th Machine-Gun Battalion, both of the 181st Infantry Brigade, 91st Division, were attached to the 32d Division. The two latter organizations were directed by the 32d Division to relieve the 64th Infantry Brigade during the night of October 7-8, on the front, Hill 255 (incl.)—Cote 269 (incl.). The division also directed the 63d Infantry Brigade to relieve the units of the 3d Division west of the new boundary on the night of October 7-8, with one regiment. The 55th Field Artillery Brigade, 30th Division, was to be relieved from the 32d Division. [289, 290]

The 57th Field Artillery Brigade, together with the 147th Field Artillery, which was attached to it, reverted to the 32d Division on this date from service with the 3d Division [1]

The relief of the 64th Infantry Brigade in the front line between Gesnes, exclusive, and the western edge of Bois du Chêne Sec, inclusive, by the 361st Infantry and the 347th Machine-Gun Battalion, was begun at 9 p. m., October 7, and was completed by 5 a. m., October 8. Upon telephonic instructions from the V Corps, these units of the 91st Division

Oct. 8

were attached to the 1st Division, command passing to the latter at 6 p. m. [291, 292, 293]

Companies E and H, and the machine-gun platoon, 127th Infantry, in Bois de Moncy, were relieved early on the morning of October 8 by the 1st Battalion, 1st Engineers, 1st Division, the relief being completed at 5:30 a. m. [294]

The 126th Infantry had made a reconnaissance during the night of October 7-8 for the purpose of taking over the line of the 7th Infantry, 3d Division, in the new eastern extension of the front of the 32d Division, but it was found that the 38th Infantry had already relieved the 7th Infantry. The relief of the 38th Infantry by the 126th Infantry was not made until the night of October 8-9. [295, 296]

At the end of the day, units of the 63d Infantry Brigade, the only elements of the 32d Division then in the front line, held Gesnes and a line extending east therefrom for about 1,250 meters. The 64th Infantry Brigade was in division reserve. [297]

In accordance with the plan of the V Corps, an attack was to be made at 8:30 a. m., October 9, in which the 32d Division was to advance toward Bois de Bantheville, with the mission of capturing Bois de Valoup, Tranchée de Dantrise, and that portion of Tranchée de la Mamelle within its zone of action. The division was also to seize the heights north and west of Romagne by envelopment from the east and southeast. Artillery preparation fire was to be provided. Gas was to be used freely. A barrage by the division artillery was to advance by bounds to the northern outskirts of Romagne, where it was to stop. [289, 298, 299]

The formation for the attack of the 32d Division was to be as follows:

63D INFANTRY BRIGADE

<i>125th Infantry</i>		<i>126th Infantry</i>	
3d Battalion	2d Battalion	3d Battalion	2d Battalion
1st Battalion		1st Battalion	

To the right of the 126th Infantry was the 3d Division, and to the left, the 181st Infantry Brigade, 91st Division, attached to the 1st Division. [299, 300]

OPERATIONS

Command passing to the

line-gun platoon, 127th
 moved early on the morn-
 1st Engineers, 1st Divi-
 30 a. m. [294]

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GADE

126th Infantry
 Battalion 2d Battalion
 1st Battalion

as the 3d Division, and
 91st Division, attached

The division plan provided that, after crossing the main line of trenches south of Romagne, the 126th Infantry would continue northward, while the 125th Infantry swung to the northwest and flanked the enemy positions on the high ground in Bois de Gesnes. [299]

The 64th Infantry Brigade, in division reserve, ordered a battalion of the 128th Infantry to follow the 126th Infantry, prepared to enter the line between the 125th Infantry and the 126th Infantry, when the latter should have cleared Tranchée de Dantrise. This battalion was to attack Bois de Gesnes in conjunction with the 125th Infantry and maintain contact with the 126th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, was designated for this mission. One battalion of the 127th Infantry was to follow the 125th Infantry and be prepared to enter the line between the 125th Infantry and the 361st Infantry, 181st Infantry Brigade, in case the attack against Hill 255 by the 361st Infantry should prove to be unsuccessful. This battalion was ordered to push the attack to a successful conclusion in the direction, Hill 255—Bois de Gesnes, and maintain liaison with units to both flanks. The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, was designated for this mission. [301, 302, 303]

The 63d Infantry Brigade completed its arrangements for the attack during the night of October 8-9. Between midnight and daylight the 126th Infantry completed the relief of units of the 3d Division, in that portion of the line from about 400 meters east of the Romagne—Cierges road to the vicinity of Hill 239, where it was in touch with the 125th Infantry. A further extension across Ruisseau de Coup to the new divisional right boundary was made prior to the hour of attack. [30, 297, 300, 304, 305]

The attack began at 8:30 a. m., October 9. The 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, on the right, broke through Tranchée de la Mamelle during the morning and penetrated as far as Romagne by 1 p. m. The 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, astride the La Grange aux Bois Ferme—Romagne road, advanced to the left of the 2d Battalion, but was held up at Tranchée de Dantrise. During the late afternoon, the enemy launched a counterattack

Oct. 9

which drove the 2d Battalion back from positions east of Romagne and in the town, to Tranchée de la Mamelle. [30, 306, 307]

On the left, the greater part of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 125th Infantry, advanced into Bois de Valoup, where Hill 258 was taken and held. Elements of the regiment reached the southern slopes of La Côte Dame Marie. The advance on the left of the 125th Infantry tended to follow the slopes leading up to La Côte Dame Marie, and contact was lost with the units of the 181st Infantry Brigade (attached to the 1st Division) which did not succeed in passing Hill 255. About 3 p. m. the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, moved into the gap and established liaison. [308, 309, 310, 311]

In the evening, the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, went into line between the 2d and 3d Battalions, 126th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, went into line between the 125th and 126th Infantry Regiments in the eastern edge of Bois de Valoup. [30, 312]

By nightfall the 3d Division, to the right, had arrived abreast of the 32d Division. Contact was maintained in Tranchée de la Mamelle near the divisional boundary. From that point the front line extended along Tranchée de la Mamelle across the two roads leading south from Romagne, thence southwest along the slope facing Tranchée de Dantrise for about 500 meters, to the lines held by the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, in the eastern edge of Bois de Valoup. The line of the 125th Infantry then continued to the west through the northern portion of Bois de Valoup, thence southwest to the northwestern slope of Hill 243; here it joined the line of the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, which was facing northwest and was in contact with the line of the 181st Infantry Brigade, about 200 meters south of the summit of Hill 255. [313, 314, 315, 316]

The V Corps directed a continuation of the attack at 7 a. m., October 10. The 32d Division was ordered to advance to the line, eastern edge of Bois de Chauvignon (Hill 254)—la Tuilerie Ferme (incl.). It was ordered to mop up Bois de Gesnes in conjunction with the 181st Infantry Brigade, to its

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left, and the 1st Division, to the left of the latter. The 3d
Division, to the right, was ordered to advance in conformity
with the movement of the 32d Division. [317]

The 32d Division ordered the attack to take place in two
phases. In the first, troops were to maneuver into positions
along a line of departure from Hill 286 to Romagne. These
positions were to be taken up under a thorough covering fire
which was to commence at 7 a. m. and continue until 2 p. m.,
at which time the second phase would commence. In this
second phase the attacking troops were to advance to the corps
objective. The 63d Infantry Brigade was to attack with regi-
ments abreast. The 64th Infantry Brigade was to be in reserve.
A rolling barrage was to precede the infantry. [318, 449, 450]

During the night of October 9-10 the 64th Infantry Brigade
succeeded in withdrawing the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry,
from the line, but the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, remained in
place. The 127th Infantry and the 2d and 3d Battalions, 128th
Infantry, moved up to the line of departure of October 9. [319]

The first phase of the attack, the maneuver to the new line
of departure, which was in the hands of the enemy, resulted in
confusion. The 125th Infantry, on the left, attacked at 7
a. m., although the artillery preparation was very light. On
the right the 126th Infantry recognized the barrage at 7 a. m.,
but having received orders not to attack until 2 p. m., held its
positions during the morning. [30, 320, 321, 322]

The attack of the 125th Infantry resulted in an advance
toward Ferme du Transvaal. Progress continued during the
day, and at 3:45 p. m., elements of the regiment penetrated the
enemy's trenches on La Côte Dame Marie directly north of
Ferme du Transvaal. An enemy counterattack caused some
withdrawal, but positions were held on the southern slopes
of La Côte Dame Marie. The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, in
position on the eastern side of Bois de Valoup, joined in the
attack in the afternoon, but no material gains were made; the
battalion strengthened the defensive line on the right of the
125th Infantry. [30, 320]

At 2 p. m., in accordance with the division order, the three
battalions of the 126th Infantry attacked, with inadequate

Oct. 10

artillery support, in an effort to take Romagne on the right, and capture the whole of Tranchée de Dantrise on the left. No material gain was made. [323, 449]

The line on the right remained in Tranchée de la Mamelle, south of Romagne, in contact with troops of the 3d Division. It was generally unchanged on the left as far as the western part of Bois de Valoup, whence it extended north on La Côte Dame Marie. The 125th Infantry was in contact with the 181st Infantry Brigade. [324]

At 9 p. m. the V Corps issued orders directing an attack at 7 a. m., October 11, to be pushed with utmost vigor. This order provided that the 181st Infantry Brigade would pass to the command of the 32d Division. The zone of action of the 32d Division was redefined as follows:

Right boundary: Romagne (incl.)—Rémonville (incl.).

Left boundary: Cote 269 (in Bois de Moncy)—la Musarde Ferme (incl.)—Bois des Hazcis (incl.).

[325]

The 32d Division directed a renewal of the attack by the division and the attached 181st Infantry Brigade, on the morning of October 11, with the object of reaching the line, Bantheville—la Tuilerie Ferme. The 181st and 63d Infantry Brigades were to continue the attack, and the 64th Infantry Brigade was to remain in division reserve. A rolling barrage was provided as far north as an east and west line through Bantheville. Exploitation was to be made, if possible, as far north as a line, Bantheville—la Dhuy Ferme. [326]

The formation of the 63d Infantry Brigade for the attack was as follows:

<i>125th Infantry</i>			<i>126th Infantry</i>		
3d Bn	2d Bn	1st Bn,	3d Bn	1st Bn	2d Bn
		128th Inf			

The formation of the 181st Infantry Brigade was, the 362d Infantry, in column of battalions, in the assault echelon, with the 361st Infantry in brigade reserve. [327, 451]

The attack began at 7 a. m., and by 8:35 a. m. the right of the line was north of Tranchée de la Mamelle, and the center in

Oct. 11

Romagne on the right, Dantrise on the left. No

Tranchée de la Mamelle, troops of the 3d Division. As far as the western end north on La Côte in contact with the 181st

leaders directing an attack with utmost vigor. This Brigade would pass to the zone of action of the

—Rémonville (incl.).
de Moncy)—la Musarde (incl.).

[325]

of the attack by the 1st Brigade, on the morning of the attack, Bantheville. The 63d Infantry Brigades and the 127th Infantry Brigade was relieved. A command post was provided through Bantheville. As far north as a line,

Brigade for the attack was

126th Infantry

1st Bn 2d Bn

Brigade was, the 362d Infantry, the assault echelon, with [327, 451]

At 8:35 a. m. the right of the Mamelle, and the center in

the neighborhood of Tranchée de Dantrise. The attack was renewed on the right by the 126th Infantry about 1 p. m. and an advance of about 300 meters made in conjunction with troops of the 3d Division. On the left, the attempts of the 125th Infantry to advance were unsuccessful throughout the day. On the extreme left, the 362d Infantry, which had that morning relieved the 361st Infantry in the front line, made an unsuccessful attempt to take Hill 288; at nightfall the junction point of its line with the 32d Division was unchanged. The troops of the 126th Infantry which had advanced north from Tranchée de la Mamelle early in the afternoon returned to the trench, and the same line was held for the night of October 11-12 as on the previous night. The right of the line was in contact with the 3d Division in Tranchée de la Mamelle. [206, 328, 329, 330]

On the night of October 11 the V Corps ordered reorganization of units and consolidation of the positions occupied, with a view to holding the ground. The 58th and 67th Field Artillery Brigades were ordered returned to their own divisions. In compliance with the corps orders, the 32d Division ordered the relief of the 181st Infantry Brigade by the 127th Infantry, and the relief of the 126th Infantry by the 128th Infantry. Both reliefs were to be completed during the night of October 11-12, and command of the entire front line was to pass to the Commanding General, 64th Infantry Brigade, at 6 a. m., October 12. The 125th Infantry was left in line, without change in dispositions. [331, 332, 333]

During the night of October 11-12 the 42d Division relieved the 1st Division to the left of the 181st Infantry Brigade, command passing at 8 a. m., October 12. Troops of the 181st Infantry Brigade had been in contact with the 1st Division near the divisional left boundary in the northern edge of Bois de Romagne, and contact was established with the 42d Division at the same point. [30, 334, 335, 336]

By October 12 the First Army, west of the Meuse, had advanced approximately 13 kilometers and reached the general line, Meuse River—Bois de la Côte Lémont—Bois de Fays—Bois de Forêt—Bois de Romagne—north tip of the Argonne

Oct. 12

Forest. It had reduced the hostile first and second positions, cleared the Argonne Forest and gained a foothold in the hostile third position south of Cunel. On October 8 the front of attack had been extended to the east bank of the Meuse River, when the French XVII Corps launched an attack to clear the heights of the Meuse. This attack had gained the southern edge of Bois de la Grande Montagne. In the center of its line west of the Meuse, the First Army was confronted by strong hostile positions in Bois de Romagne and Bois de Bantheville, which commanded and flanked the terrain to the east and west. It was necessary to reduce these positions before further progress could be made. It was planned that two fresh divisions, the 5th, as the left division of the III Corps, and the 42d, as the left division of the V Corps, would drive salients through the hostile third position on both flanks of Bois de Romagne and Bois de Bantheville to the general line Les Grands Carrés—la Bergerie Ferme. Advancing between these main attacks, the 32d Division was to mop up Bois de Bantheville and connect the salients created by the 5th and 42d Divisions. The French XVII Corps was to continue its attack east of the Meuse. The I Corps was to hold on its left and advance its right in conjunction with the left of the V Corps. West of the Argonne Forest the French Fourth Army was to attack in conjunction with the First Army. [3, 292, 356]

The relief of the 362d Infantry, 181st Infantry Brigade, by the 127th Infantry was completed during the early morning of October 12, as was also the relief of the 126th Infantry by the 128th Infantry. The 181st Infantry Brigade rejoined the 91st Division. [337, 338, 339, 340]

Front line regiments and battalions of the 32d Division were now in the following order:

<i>127th Infantry</i>	<i>125th Infantry</i>	<i>128th Infantry</i>
2d Bn 3d Bn	2d Bn 3d Bn	1st Bn 3d Bn
1st Bn	1st Bn	2d Bn

[341, 342]

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 128th Infantry, sent patrols to reconnoiter Tranchée de Dantrise and found it strongly held. Enemy fire prevented a patrol from leaving the front of the 3d

