

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 Barri-court, and extended westward to Buzancy and Thénorgues. The first three positions had been thoroughly 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 Watronville 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 Bantherville were taken. On the 18th the line was advanced in Bois de Bantherville. 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]

Sept.
26-29

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]

Sept. 30

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

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.
1-2 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

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 departure 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:

64TH INFANTRY BRIGADE		63D INFANTRY BRIGADE	
127th Infantry		126th Infantry	
2d Battalion	1st Battalion	1st Battalion	3d Battalion
3d Battalion		2d Battalion	
128th Infantry		125th Infantry	
[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 relieved 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]

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]

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

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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

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

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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]

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 Mamelles 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

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which drove the 2d Battalion back from positions east of Romagne and in the town, to Tranchée de la Mamelles. [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 Mamelles near the divisional boundary. From that point the front line extended along Tranchée de la Mamelles 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

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 regiments 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

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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 Hazois (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

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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 Mamelles 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 Mamelles. [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 Léumont—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, 202, 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

Battalion, 128th Infantry. Patrols from the 127th Infantry reconnoitered Hills 288 and 286 and found the enemy in force on both hills. [343, 344]

There was no change in the line of the 32d Division during the day. [30]

At 3 p. m., the 3d Division passed to control of the III Corps. The V Corps now had the 32d and 42d Divisions in line from right to left. The order of the V Corps for the renewal of the attack shifted the west boundary of the 32d Division to a line extending generally from Hill 255, exclusive, to La Tuilerie Ferme, exclusive. [345, 346]

The 84th Infantry Brigade, 42d Division, was ordered to relieve the 127th Infantry by daylight, October 13. The 127th Infantry was then to replace the 125th Infantry in the line, and the 125th Infantry was to pass to division reserve. However, the 84th Infantry Brigade was unable to make the relief at the time ordered and the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, took over the zone previously held by the entire regiment. The 1st and 3d Battalions began to relieve the 125th Infantry during the night of October 12-13, but the changes were not completed during the night. Contact between the left of the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, and the right of the 42d Division was maintained during the night of October 12-13 at the same point as during the preceding night. [347, 348, 349]

On the right, the 3d Division relieved troops of the 128th Infantry in Tranchée de la Mamelle, east of the divisional boundary. Contact between the right of the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, and the left of the 3d Division continued to be maintained in Tranchée de la Mamelle. [350, 351]

The relief of the 125th Infantry by the 1st and 3d Battalions, 127th Infantry, was completed about 8:30 a. m., October 13. The relief of the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, by the 42d Division was completed about 6:30 p. m. No advance was made during the day by the 32d Division. [352, 353, 354, 355]

Corps orders for the renewal of the attack directed that the 32d Division would attack at 8 a. m., October 14, in conjunction with the III Corps to the right and the 42d Division to the left. Four objectives were prescribed at intervals of about 500 meters,

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to a line, south of Bantheville—la Dhuy Ferme. Romagne was to be bombarded during the advance to the first and second objectives, following which, it was to be attacked from the south and west and mopped up. A rolling barrage was to precede the infantry. The divisional zone of action was as follows:

Right boundary: center of Bois de Beuge—Bantheville (excl.)—road fork 750 meters west of Le Grand Carré Ferme.

Left boundary: Hill 255 (excl.)—la Tuilerie Ferme (excl.).
[345, 346, 356, 357]

Changes in orders, published by the 32d Division at 10:15 p. m., changed the hour of the attack to 5:30 a. m. Units were to attack in the following formation:

64TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

<i>127th Infantry</i>	<i>126th Infantry</i>	<i>128th Infantry</i>
1st Battalion	2d Battalion	1st Bn 3d Bn
3d Battalion	3d Battalion	2d Battalion
2d Battalion	1st Battalion	

[358, 359]

To the right of the 32d Division, the 5th Division, III Corps, was to pass through the left of the 3d Division and attack to the east of Romagne. The 3d Division was to attack to the right of the 5th Division. [360, 361]

Oct. 14 On the right and in the center of the zone of action of the 32d Division, the attack commenced as scheduled. The 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, advanced on Romagne from Tranchée de la Mamelle. To its left the 1st Battalion advanced and had occupied Tranchée de Dantrise by 6:30 a. m. The 2d Battalion, in support, veered to the left and followed the 1st Battalion through the enemy wire. The 1st Battalion, observing that the 126th Infantry could not progress north of Bois de Valoup, moved to the left behind the hostile troops facing the 126th Infantry and caused them to withdraw. By 7:30 a. m. this action was completed, and the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, had passed Tranchée de Dantrise and moved to the right to its own zone of advance. At 8:30 a. m., when the 5th Division

passed through the 3d Division, the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, was in the southern part of Romagne, while the 1st Battalion was held up on the southern slopes of Ruisseau de Dantrise. [30, 354, 362, 363, 364]

When the opposition on the immediate front of the 126th Infantry was overcome by the action of the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, the regiment took up the advance. By 8 a. m. patrols from Company M, followed by elements of the 2d and 3d Battalions, entered the woods on the eastern slope of La Côte Dame Marie. [365, 366]

On the extreme left, the 127th Infantry, with its 1st Battalion leading, attacked at 7 a. m., against the strong positions on La Côte Dame Marie. The leading elements made little progress and were subjected to three local counterattacks; a withdrawal to the line of departure was made about 10 a. m. [30, 367]

The attack continued on the right. By 10:15 a. m. the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, was passing through Romagne; the 2d Battalion was in the line in the vicinity of the Romagne—Sommerance road; the 1st Battalion was to the left of the 2d Battalion. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 126th Infantry, had pushed into the woods about 500 meters northwest of Fontaine de Haut-Minuit. The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, was still held up on the southern slope of La Côte Dame Marie. [368]

At 10:45 a. m. the Commanding General, 64th Infantry Brigade, observing that the right was held up around Romagne while the center was well advanced, ordered an artillery concentration on Romagne until noon, when it was planned for the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, to pass the town. At 11:35 a. m. this battalion, then north of Romagne, requested that the barrage be stopped, which was done; the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, from division reserve, was then sent in to mop up the town and completed the task by noon. At noon the 2d and 1st Battalions, 128th Infantry, were still held up in the vicinity of Dépôt de Munitions, about 1 kilometer northwest of Romagne. The 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, having passed through the merged 2d and 3d Battalions about 11

a. m., was on the Romagne—Sommerance road, in the vicinity of the roadfork 2 kilometers west of Romagne. Contact between the 126th Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, was gained at 12:35 p. m., and was maintained. At 10:45 a. m. the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, had been sent to flank La Côte Dame Marie and Hill 287 from the west. Elements of the battalion succeeded in reaching the Romagne—Sommerance road. During the afternoon the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, remained in its position, while the 3d Battalion disengaged itself, passed to the east of La Côte Dame Marie and continued the advance. [354, 359, 369, 370, 371]

The attack continued during the afternoon, and small local gains were made against strong resistance. The 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, after passing through Romagne, reached the nose of the hill northeast of the town, but flanking fire from the right forced it to withdraw to Ravin des Perrières. By dusk this battalion was in contact with the 5th Division, the left of which was in the ravine about 750 meters northeast of Romagne. The gap in the line was covered by guns of the 121st Machine-Gun Battalion located in Romagne, and those of the 13th Machine-Gun Battalion, 5th Division, located in shell holes on the ridge east of Romagne. The 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, advanced several hundred meters north of the town and east of L'Andon Ruisseau where it was stopped. It was in touch with the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, which, with the 1st Battalion, had advanced to Dépôt de Munitions, about 1 kilometer north of Romagne. [30, 206, 359, 372]

The 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, took the lead in the afternoon and advanced more than 1 kilometer north of the Romagne—Sommerance road. By 3 p. m. the 126th Infantry was in liaison with the 42d Division, across the front of the 127th Infantry. At dark, the 127th Infantry was not abreast of the left of the 126th Infantry, but was still advancing, and before midnight, October 14, had established contact with the left of the 126th Infantry, and with the right of the 42d Division on the divisional boundary about 400 meters southeast of Hill 288. [373, 374, 375]

During the evening, patrols from both the 128th and 126th

Infantry Regiments penetrated Bois de Bantheville as far as the general line, Bantheville—Landres et St. Georges. [376]

The V Corps issued orders on the 14th for a renewal of the attack at 7:30 a. m., October 15, with objectives and zones of action the same as for October 14. Arrival at the final objective was to be followed by exploitation to a generally east and west line through Arbre de Rémonville, about 1 kilometer northwest of Rémonville. The 32d Division indorsed the corps orders to its brigades, without issuing formal field orders. [377, 378]

During the night of October 14-15 the area of the division was divided into two brigade zones of action. The right zone of action was assigned to the 63d Infantry Brigade, which was to consist of the 128th and 125th Infantry Regiments, less one battalion in division reserve. The left zone of action was assigned to the 64th Infantry Brigade which was to consist of the 126th and 127th Infantry Regiments. No troop movements were involved in this redistribution of regiments between the brigades. [206]

At midnight, October 14, the front line was held as follows:

<i>127th Infantry</i>	<i>126th Infantry</i>	<i>128th Infantry</i>
2d Bn 3d Bn	1st Bn 3d Bn 2d Bn	1st Bn 2d Bn 3d Bn
		1st Bn, 125th Inf

[379]

The attack of October 15 began as scheduled, behind a rolling barrage. On the extreme right the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, could not advance at once owing to flanking fire from the right. The 2d Battalion advanced to the small L-shaped wood on Hill 254, but at 8:45 a. m. was driven back to Le Niveau Ravin by a local counterattack. The 1st Battalion could not progress beyond Le Niveau Ravin. [206, 380, 381, 382]

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In the center, the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, led the attack, with the 2d Battalion in support, and advanced in Bois de Chauvignon. On the left, the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, led the attack and by 9 a. m. was abreast of the 126th Infantry in the vicinity of the clearing southeast of Fontaine de la Cayanière. [383]

By noon the 126th Infantry and troops of the left battalion of the 128th Infantry succeeded in reaching the northern edge of Bois de Chauvignon. The 127th Infantry was unable to advance. [384]

At 12:30 p. m. the corps ordered that Bois de Chauvignon would be taken during the afternoon and held. By 3:45 p. m. the 1st and 2d Battalions, 128th Infantry, had occupied the east and north edges of the wood, and extended their lines to the southeast to connect with the 3d Battalion. This battalion had two companies on the northern slopes of Le Niveau Ravin and two companies across the railroad tracks about 500 meters north of Romagne. By this time the troops of the 126th Infantry, whose three battalions were also in the line, were in contact with the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, near the Fontaine de la Cavanière—Bantheville road. The advance of the 127th Infantry, on the extreme left, was held up by the situation on the front of the 42d Division to its left. At 3:30 p. m., however, the 42d Division took Hill 242, and the advance was resumed. Although in liaison with the 126th Infantry, the line of the 127th Infantry was not as far forward as that of the former in the afternoon. At 7:30 p. m., the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, attacked and advanced across the clearing southeast of Fontaine de la Cavanière, where the line was held. The 3d Battalion, 127th Infantry, was to the left rear of the 2d Battalion, and was in contact with the 42d Division east of Hill 242. [385, 386, 387, 388, 389]

The line for the night extended from its junction with the 5th Division on L'Andon Ruisseau about 500 meters north of the northeastern outskirts of Romagne, northwest to the eastern edge of Bois de Chauvignon, thence along the northeastern and northern edges of that wood to its junction with Bois de Bantheville. From that point it extended generally west through the wood to the clearing opposite Fontaine de la Cavanière, thence southwest to its junction with the front line of the 42d Division at the divisional boundary. [390]

Oct. 16 No attack orders were issued on October 16 by either the V Corps or the 32d Division. [30]

No general advance was made on October 16. The lines

were organized for defense on this date. Strong combat patrols from the 127th and 126th Infantry Regiments reconnoitered Bois de Bantheville, and reported that the wood was not held in force. The positions of the battalions of the 128th Infantry remained as before. The 126th Infantry withdrew its merged 2d and 3d Battalions during the afternoon, replacing them with the 1st Battalion. Two companies of the 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, were placed between the 128th and 126th Infantry Regiments to strengthen that portion of the line. [391, 392, 393]

About 5:15 p. m. the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, with the 3d Battalion in support, advanced to an east-west line through Fontaine de la Cavanière. It maintained contact with the 42d Division near the divisional boundary, about 400 meters west of Fontaine de la Cavanière. The whole northern portion of Bois de Chauvignon was mopped up and held. At midnight the line extended along the north edge of that wood. thence generally westward. [392, 394, 395]

At 10:30 p. m. the 125th Infantry was ordered to be in readiness to move forward by daybreak, prepared to pass through the lines of the 128th Infantry, for the purpose of gaining contact with the enemy. At the same time the 128th Infantry was ordered to send out strong combat patrols at daybreak to ascertain if the enemy had withdrawn. [396, 397]

At 6:30 a. m., October 17, officer patrols were sent out from both the 126th and 127th Infantry Regiments for the purpose of reconnoitering Bois de Bantheville. The patrols returned about 11 a. m. after finding no enemy troops in the western part of the wood south of the line, Hill 274—point 243, where an enemy outpost was encountered. The patrols did not penetrate the wood toward Hill 274, which was in the possession of the enemy. A patrol from the 125th Infantry advanced along the eastern edge of Bois de Bantheville as far north as Fond de Verlet, and on the ridge west of Bantheville. [398, 399, 400]

Troops from the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, advanced into the L-shaped wood east of Bois de Chauvignon during the morning. This wood was held by a strong combat group. [401]

Oct. 17

About 6 a. m. a patrol from the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, worked its way along the railroad tracks toward Bantheville. The patrol returned about 8 a. m., after observing groups of the enemy in the southern edge of the town, along Fond de Verlet and along the ridge immediately north thereof. [402]

At 12:14 p. m. the V Corps directed the 32d Division to establish and intrench a strong line of observation posts in the northwest corner of Bois de Bantheville. Strong combat patrols were to continue through Bois de Bantheville and occupy the eastern and northern edges of the wood. [403]

The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, with one machine-gun company, moved forward during the afternoon and established a line along the western edge of Bois de Bantheville facing west and northwest. The point farthest north in this line was near the point where the trail from point 243 entered the wood. It was learned that the enemy maintained an outpost line which extended through point 243 and through the wood. The 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, and two machine-gun companies, advanced during the afternoon and occupied the ridge in Bois de Bantheville southwest of Hill 262. This battalion connected with the right of the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry. The 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, sent forward two strong combat groups which filled the gap between the left of the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, which had remained in the northern edge of Bois de Chauvignon, and the right of the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry. One of these combat groups was at the road junction, 2 kilometers west of the church in Bantheville, in a position to cover the roads leading north and east from that point. [404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 410]

At 1 p. m. the 32d Division issued orders relative to the organization of a main line of resistance from Romagne to La Côte Dame Marie, both inclusive. At 4:25 p. m. the division issued additional field orders which provided that the reconnaissances in Bois de Bantheville would be continued in the areas vacated by the enemy, and that strong entrenched lines of observation would be prepared in the northern, eastern and northwestern edges of this wood. At 10:30 p. m. the V Corps

ordered its divisions to prepare to continue the advance, and specifically ordered the 32d Division to mop up Bois de Bantheville as far as Fond de Verlet. Artillery fire on sensitive points, commencing at 7 a. m., was to continue throughout the day of October 18. The 32d Division indorsed these field orders to its brigades. [206, 411, 412]

During the afternoon the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, was withdrawn from its position in the front line on the right of the divisional zone, and with the 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry, was assigned the task of assisting the division engineers in constructing a line of defense on the old Kriemhild Stellung along the new main line of resistance. The relief of the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, was effected by an extension of the zones of the 1st and 2d Battalions of the regiment. [410, 413, 414]

The order of battle of front-line elements of the 32d Division at midnight, October 17, was, from right to left: 2d and 1st Battalions, 128th Infantry; 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry; 2d, 3d and 1st Battalions, 127th Infantry. [410]

Contact with the 5th and 42d Divisions was maintained during the night of October 17-18 at the same points as on the previous night. [415]

In the early morning of October 18 there was active patrolling by all front-line units. The 128th Infantry sent patrols to the southern edge of Bantheville, but, with the exception of working parties to the west of the town, found no enemy troops in the vicinity. The 125th Infantry sent patrols along the eastern edge of Bois de Bantheville and north of Fond de Verlet. These patrols located small groups of the enemy on the ridge west of Bantheville, and in the vicinity of Hill 274. [416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421]

Toward evening the 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, advanced to the vicinity of the bend in the trail 400 meters northwest of Hill 274, and held the line with strong combat groups on the edges of the wood to the north and northeast. The 3d Battalion, 125th Infantry, extended the line of the 2d Battalion to the right, and took position between the right of the 2d Battalion, 125th Infantry, and the left of the 1st Battalion,

Oct. 18

128th Infantry, facing generally east in the area west of Hill 274 between Fond de Verlet and the bend in the trail 400 meters northwest of Hill 274. The 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, continued the occupation of that portion of the wood east of point 243. The 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, remained echeloned to the left rear of that battalion. To the left of the 2d Battalion, 127th Infantry, Company D was detailed as liaison company with the 42d Division. [418, 421, 422]

The line for the night of October 18-19 extended from the divisional east boundary along the line held the previous night to the intersection of Fond de Verlet and the eastern edge of Bois de Bantheville, thence north to Les Halbutès, thence west to the western edge of the wood, thence along the western edge of Bois de Bantheville to the divisional west boundary. [30, 421]

At 8:30 p. m. the V Corps ordered the 32d Division to continue to exploit vigorously to the front. Artillery bombardment of sensitive points was to be continued during the day of October 19. The 32d Division indorsed these orders to its brigades, directing Bois de Bantheville to be mopped up, and that part of the hostile fourth position which lay along the ridges east, north and west of the northernmost portion of the wood to be developed thoroughly. [424]

Oct.
19-20 Strong combat patrols continued operating in Bois de Bantheville during the day of October 19, but no change resulted in the front line of the 32d Division. The enemy was located in considerable strength along a well-defined line on the ridge west of Bantheville, through Bois de Bantheville and at La Dhuy Ferme. [425, 426, 427, 428]

At 11 a. m. the V Corps directed the relief of the 32d Division, less the 57th Field Artillery Brigade and 107th Ammunition Train, and attached 147th Field Artillery, 41st Division, by the 89th Division during the night of October 19-20. The relief of the 64th Infantry Brigade was completed at 1:30 a. m., and of the 63d Infantry Brigade at 2:30 a. m., October 20. Command of the zone passed to the 89th Division at 8 a. m., October 20. [423, 429, 430, 431]

By the end of October, the First Army had accomplished

the first part of its plan for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. It had seized the hostile third position in Bois de Forêt, on the heights of Cunel and Romagne and on Côte de Châtillon, southeast of Landres et St. Georges. The enemy had been driven from the Argonne Forest, and the left of the First Army was firmly established, in contact with the right of the French Fourth Army, at Grandpré. East of the Meuse, the heights had been cleared as far as the southern portion of Bois de la Grande Montagne. The First Army was now in a position to undertake the second operation, i. e., cut the Carignan—Sedan—Mézières railroad, and drive the enemy beyond the Meuse. On October 12 the front of the First Army east of Fresnes-en-Woëvre, 18 kilometers southeast of Verdun, had been placed under the command of the newly organized Second Army.

[202]

East of the Meuse, the front of the First Army, which was now held by the French XXXIII and French XVII Corps from right to left was approximately 5 kilometers south of the line west of the river. West of the Meuse, the front line of the First Army, which was held by the III, V and I Corps from right to left, included Bois de Forêt, Bois des Rappes, Bois de Bantheville and Côte de Châtillon. From this point it extended generally west to Grandpré. To the west, the French Fourth Army lay behind the Aisne River, with a bridgehead north of Vouziers. Thus the hostile lines, opposite the left of the First Army and the right of the French Fourth Army, formed a salient, dominated by the wooded heights of Bois de Bourgonne. [202]

At first it was planned to launch the attack on October 28 but, owing to the fact that the French Fourth Army was not yet ready, the date was postponed to November 1. The main attack was to be delivered in the center by the V Corps. This corps was to drive north and penetrate the hostile fourth position by seizing the heights of Barricourt. The I Corps was to protect the left of the V Corps and extend the penetration westward through Thénorgues. It was then to drive on to the northwest and effect a junction, in the vicinity of Boulton-aux-Bois, with the French Fourth Army, which was to advance west

*Oct. 21—
Nov. 8*

of Bois de Bourgogne. The III Corps was to assist and protect the right of the V Corps, and extend the penetration eastward to the heights west of the Meuse River. With the hostile fourth position securely in American hands, the enemy positions west of the Meuse would be untenable. The V and I Corps were to pursue vigorously toward Sedan, in conjunction with the French Fourth Army. The left of the III Corps was to pursue toward Stenay, while its right forced a crossing of the Meuse south of Dun and drove on Louppy-sur-Loison. The French XVII Corps was to support this crossing by exerting pressure on the enemy and, in case of a withdrawal, was to advance on Damvillers. [202, 453]

The attack was launched on November 1 and was highly successful. The defenses and artillery lines of the hostile fourth position were penetrated and the enemy pursued vigorously toward Sedan. By November 8 the V and I Corps had driven the enemy beyond the Meuse River, occupied the river line from Stenay to Sedan and cut, by artillery fire, the Carignan—Sedan—Mézières railroad. The III Corps, upon reaching the Meuse River, had forced a crossing of the river on its right south of Dun-sur-Meuse. The bridgehead thus established had been rapidly enlarged by clearing the heights east of the river. On November 8 the III Corps had the 5th and 90th Divisions in line from right to left. The 5th Division, east of the river, had reached the general line, Brandeville—Côte Saint Germain—Lion-devant-Dun. The 90th Division held the west bank of the Meuse from opposite Lion-devant-Dun to Stenay. The left of the French II Colonial Corps, which had relieved the French XVII Corps on November 6, had advanced in conjunction with the 5th Division. [3, 202]

Following its relief from the front line in Bois de Bancheville on October 20, the 32d Division, without its organic artillery, had been held in Bois de Cheppy, Bois de Véry and Bois de Montfaucon, as reserve of the V Corps until October 27, and of the III Corps thereafter. The 158th Field Artillery Brigade, 83d Division, was attached to the division on October 29 and remained with it until after the Armistice. The division, still in III Corps reserve, moved to the vicinity of Romagne-sous-

Montfaucon on November 3, and to Bois des Rappes and Bois de la Pultière on November 4. On November 6 the 128th Infantry, which had been attached to the 5th Division, entered the line in Bois de Châtillon and Bois de Sartelle east of the Meuse River and about 9 kilometers southwest of Bréhéville. [1, 432, 433, 434]

At midnight, November 8, the III Corps ordered the 32d Division to be ready to take up the pursuit at any time after 8 a. m., November 9, on the axis, Briulles-sur-Meuse—Ecurey—Vittarville, in advance-guard formation. In the event that this pursuit was ordered, the 128th Infantry, then in the front line in the vicinity of Brandeville, was to revert to the command of the 32d Division. The immediate movement of one regiment of infantry of the 32d Division to Briulles was also ordered. The zone of action of the division was to be as follows:

Nov. 9

Right boundary: Ecurey (incl.)—road from Ecurey to Damvillers (excl.).

Left boundary: Brandeville (excl.)—point 206 (excl.)—Hill 240.7 (incl.).

The French 15th Colonial Infantry Division of the French II Colonial Corps was to the right of the zone assigned to the 32d Division and the American 5th Division to the left. Elements of the French division in the zone of action assigned to the 32d Division were to be relieved by the latter. [435, 436]

Upon receipt of these instructions at 1:10 a. m., November 9, the 32d Division at once ordered the 127th Infantry to proceed to Briulles. This movement was completed at 5:40 a. m. [437, 438]

At 6:30 a. m. the division directed that in the event of an enemy withdrawal, pursuit would be initiated with brigades in column. The 128th Infantry was ordered to relieve elements of the French 15th Colonial Infantry Division in the zone of action of the 32d Division. The formation of the leading brigade was to be as follows:

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64TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

127th Infantry, with one company, 121st Machine-Gun Battalion attached	128th Infantry, with one company, 121st Machine-Gun Battalion attached
121st Machine-Gun Battalion, less two companies	119th Machine-Gun Battalion
	1st Battalion, 322d Field Artillery
	2d Battalion, 107th Engineers
	[438, 439, 440, 441]

At 12:45 p. m., the III Corps ordered the pursuit to be taken up. Advance guards were to cross the line, Damvillers—Lissey—Brandeville, at 2 p. m. Movements which had been provided for in the field orders of the 32d Division were begun immediately and continued throughout the afternoon. The 128th Infantry, having reverted to the 32d Division, reported the location of its battalions at 5:30 p. m. as follows: 3d Battalion in the front line in the vicinity of Peuvillers; 2d Battalion in the front line in the vicinity of Bréhéville; 1st Battalion in support in Ecurey. [438, 442, 443, 444]

During the night of November 9-10 the 127th Infantry relieved the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, east of Bréhéville. Other movements necessary to place the elements of the division in the desired formation were completed under cover of darkness. [437, 440]

Nov. 10 The 64th Infantry Brigade advanced at 6 a. m., November 10. The 128th Infantry attacked in column of battalions, the 1st, 2d and 3d in that order, from a north and south line on the road east of Peuvillers. Under cover of a heavy fog, rapid progress was made. The 1st Battalion fought its way through Bois Demange and into Bois Pommepré, the leading elements reaching the northern edge of Bois de Dombas and the southern slopes of Côte du Mont. About 9 a. m. the fog lifted and the 128th Infantry found that it had advanced over 3 kilometers into the enemy lines, and was unable to establish liaison with troops to either flank. Machine-gun nests that had been passed over in the fog opened fire from the flanks and rear. The regiment withdrew in good order, and at 2 p. m. joined the main body along the road east of Peuvillers, the original line of de-

parture. Liaison was established with the French 15th Colonial Infantry Division, to the right, which had not advanced, and, later in the day, with the 127th Infantry to the left. The 128th Infantry held this position during the remainder of the day. [30, 438, 440, 445]

The 127th Infantry, with the 1st Battalion leading, the 3d Battalion in support and the 2d Battalion in reserve, attacked in the direction of Boëmont Ferme from a line 1,500 meters east of Bréhéville. This was about 3 kilometers to the left rear of the line of departure of the 128th Infantry. Company F advanced abreast of the 1st Battalion, and acted as a combat-liaison group between the 127th Infantry and the 5th Division to the left. Overcoming enemy rear guards, the advance of the regiment was steady until 4:30 p. m., when it was stopped about 200 meters west of Thinte Ruisseau by fire from the east bank. This line was held during the night by the 1st Battalion and Company F. Liaison was established by patrols with the 128th Infantry and the 5th Division. [30, 438, 446]

During the afternoon the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, moved into support in the center of Bois de Lisse to cover the gap between the 127th and 128th Infantry Regiments. [438]

At 8:30 p. m. the III Corps issued orders for the continuation of the attack on November 11. The 32d Division was to capture the line of hills overlooking the Crusnes River on the line, Arrancy—Longuyon, 20 kilometers to the east of the front then held. [438, 447]

In accordance with these instructions the 64th Infantry Brigade ordered an attack for 7 a. m., November 11, with Bois de Grand Failly, Bois de Rupt, Bois de Marville, and the wooded heights east of Delut, as objectives. There was to be a short artillery preparation on known enemy positions prior to the attack, and the advance was to be covered by artillery and machine-gun barrages. There was no change in the formation of the brigade other than the attachment of the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, to the 128th Infantry. [156, 448]

Shortly before the hour of attack on November 11, the III Corps informed the 32d Division that an armistice was to take

Nov. 11

effect at 11 a. m. and that all troops were to hold the positions then occupied until further orders. These instructions were rushed forward to the front-line troops and the attack was stopped. The lines remained the same as on the previous day. [30, 438, 440]

Nov. 12, 1918—
May 1919

Following the Armistice the division outposted the Armistice line and made preparations for the march into Germany. On November 14 it relieved the 5th Division on the line, Jametz—Remoiville—Louppy (incl.). On November 17 it began the march into Germany, taking positions in the Coblenz Bridgehead in the vicinity of Dierdorf and Rengsdorf on December 14. On April 18 the division moved to Brest where it was rejoined by the artillery brigade. The 107th Trench-Mortar Battery sailed for the United States on April 20, followed by the remainder of the division during April and May. The last elements arrived in New York on May 22. [1]

CASUALTIES, MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE

		Sept. 26- Oct. 3	Oct. 4-13	Oct. 14-20	Oct. 21-27	Oct. 28- Nov. 9	Nov. 10-11	Total
<i>32d Division</i>								
125th Inf.....	W.....	60	603	96	16	7	6	788
	DW.....	5	59	9	1			74
	K.....	11	172	32	20		1	236
126th Inf.....	W.....	171	646	214	6	10	4	1,051
	DW.....	10	63	13				91
	K.....	19	157	30	8			214
	W.....	23	628	261	11	8	31	962
127th Inf.....	DW.....		70	27			4	101
	K.....	3	131	105	8	5	6	258
	W.....	30	596	254	3	6	255	1,184
128th Inf.....	DW.....	2	56	20	1		22	101
	K.....	3	100	104	7	4	95	313
119th FA.....	W.....		9	8		1		18
(DS Sept. 26-Oct. 6; Oct. 20- Nov. 2; Nov. 8-11)	DW.....		1	1				2
	K.....		1	1				2
120th FA.....	W.....		4	8				12
(DS Sept. 26-Oct. 6; Oct. 20- Nov. 2; Nov. 8-11)	DW.....		1	1				2
	K.....		1	1				2
121st FA.....	W.....		4	3				7
(DS Sept. 26-Oct. 6; Oct. 20- Nov. 2; Nov. 8-11)	DW.....		1					1
	K.....		1					1
119th MG Bn.....	W.....	7	22	14	1	1		45
	DW.....							
	K.....		1	2				3
120th MG Bn.....	W.....	47	36	19				102
	DW.....	2	5					7
	K.....	4	5					9
121st MG Bn.....	W.....	5	74	12		1	3	95
	DW.....	1	5					6
	K.....	1	15				1	17

CASUALTIES, MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE—Continued

		Sept. 26- Oct. 3	Oct. 4-13	Oct. 14-20	Oct. 21-27	Oct. 28- Nov. 9	Nov. 10-11	Total
<i>32d Division—Continued</i>								
107th Engrs. (DS Sept. 26-Oct. 3)	W		11	5	1	1	3	21
	DW						2	2
	K							
Others	W	21	31	9	4	6	8	79
	DW	3	4				2	9
	K	7	6	3		1	1	18
Total		435	5,519	1,257	87	51	484	5,833
<i>Attached Units</i>								
361st Inf (91st Div) (Oct. 7-8; 11-12)	W		41					41
	DW		5					5
	K		24					24
362d Inf (91st Div) (Oct. 11-12)	W		53					53
	DW		2					2
	K		9					9
347th MG Bn (91st Div) (Oct. 7-8; 11-12)	W		5					5
	DW							
	K							
147th FA (41st Div) (Oct. 7-19; Nov. 3-7)	W		4	12		1		4
	DW		1					21
	K							1
322d FA (83d Div) (Sept. 26-30; Oct. 30-Nov. 11)	W	1				3	7	11
	DW						1	1
	K					2	1	3
323d FA (83d Div) (Sept. 26-30; Oct. 30-Nov. 11)	W					1	2	3
	DW							
	K							
324th FA (83d Div) (Sept. 26-30; Oct. 30-Nov. 11)	W					1		1
	DW							
	K							
113th FA (30th Div) (Oct. 1-8)	W	16	14					30
	DW							
	K	4	1					5
114th FA (30th Div) (Oct. 1-8)	W	4	11					15
	DW							
	K	1	3					4
115th FA (30th Div) (Oct. 1-8)	W	8	11					19
	DW							
	K		1					1
122d FA (33d Div) (Oct. 4-11)	W		9					9
	DW							
	K							
123d FA (33d Div) (Oct. 4-11)	W		22					22
	DW							
	K		3					3
124th FA (33d Div) (Oct. 4-11)	W		27					27
	DW		4					4
	K		7					7
149th FA (42d Div) (Oct. 7-12)	W		22					22
	DW							
	K		2					2
150th FA (42d Div) (Oct. 7-12)	W		15					15
	DW		2					2
	K		4					4
151st FA (42d Div) (Oct. 7-12)	W		16					16
	DW							
	K		1					1
Total		34	307	12		8	11	372
Aggregate total		469	3,826	1,269	87	59	495	6,205

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