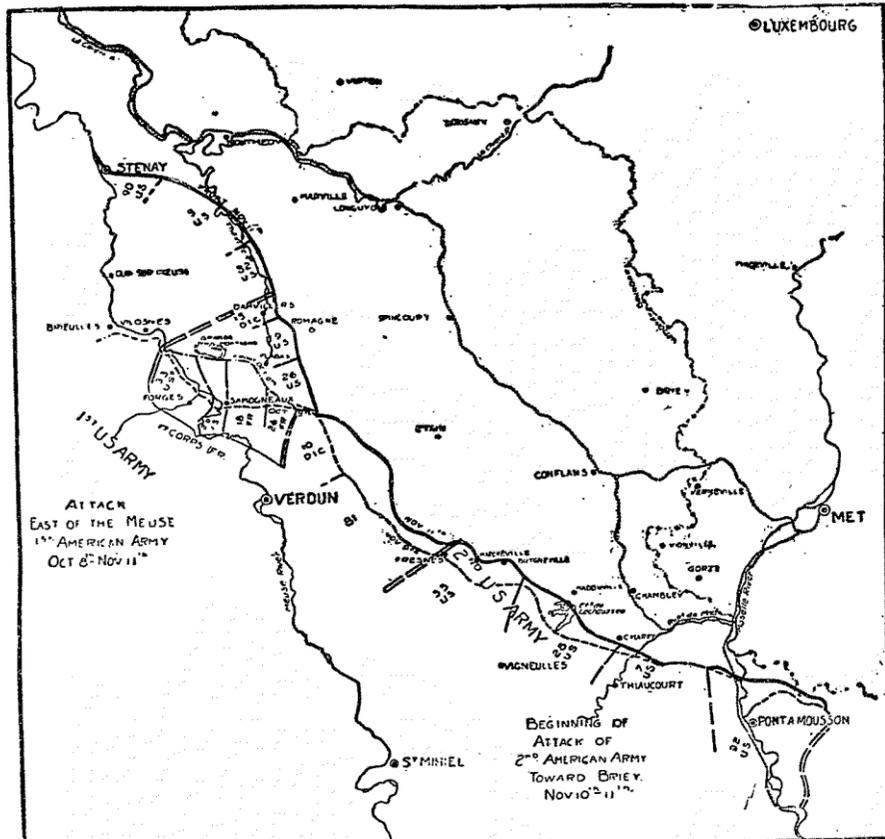


# AMERICAN DIVISIONS PRESS FIERCE DRIVES EAST OF THE MEUSE IN LAST DAYS OF WAR

Continued from Page 1

westward bend at Villeroy; this with their left flank, while further east they would take the Bois de Chaume and, in conjunction with the 58th Brigade, the Bois Plat-Chene, later coming up on the escarpments of the Grande Montagne. The 26th U.S. Division was for the present, held in reserve at Verdun.

The attack was calculated to be a surprise and it went over the top without artillery preparation at 5:00 o'clock on the morning of October 8. A vigorous barrage was started, however, at the instant that the infantry moved forward. The desired surprise was effected and the results of the first day were highly satisfactory. For the establishment of communications across the river, during the previous night the 18th Division Engineers at Sarrangeux and the Seventeenth Army Corps Engineers at Remenoy had built a permanent bridge and under intense shell fire the 15th Engineers of the 33rd Division threw one bridge about 120 feet long across the river at Brabant and another shorter bridge at Consenvoye, and these bridges the American troops utilized in carrying out their part of the attack. The 15th and 26th Divisions had their normal objectives for the latter taking the Bois de Chaume and approaching Flabas, the former going ahead about three kilometers into the Bois de Chaume, under command of Col. B. A. Caldwell, attacked from the canal bank with the 15th Infantry on the left and the 19th on the right by a vigorous and accurate barrage from the 15th F.A. Brigade. The advance pushed on rapidly and with few casualties, driving the enemy ahead and taking many prisoners. A light through the woods and around into the Bois de Brabant, on the edge of the Haumont ravine, where it had broken through two entrenched lines and captured the formidable heights of Malbrucq Hill, and Hill 338. About 9 o'clock in the morning, the 32nd Division crossed the river at Brabant and attacked north against the Bois de Chaume, taking the whole woods to its north edge, later driving back to the south edge to maintain liaison with the 58th Brigade, which was not so far north in the Bois de Consenvoye.



The Above Map of the First Army's Attack East of the Meuse Also Shows the Relative Alignment of the Second Army's Attack Toward Briey. Which Will Be Described in Next Week's Article.

Evening of October 8 the Seventeenth Corps had made a good beginning. But a peculiar condition existed on this part of the front. It will be remembered that in an earlier reference to the general scheme of the German defensive zones across northern France, it was said that the first three of these zones virtually merged at Ornes, north of the Meuse, which was the approximate point of this merging. It is only about five kilometers east of Beaufort, which the 26th Division was attacking.

On the evening of October 8, the 15th and 26th Divisions, which were in the rear of these defensive zones, the rear ones, extended northwest along the crests overlooking the plain of the Woëvre, by Flabas, the Bois d'Ormont, and the Bois de Chaume, and the Grande Montagne, toward Haumont, Villeroy, and Brielleux, where the Kriemhilde Stellung crossed the Meuse. Consequently, in attacking north from Beaufort, the 15th and 26th Divisions, and especially the divisions of its right, were attacking in front of and almost parallel to these rear defensive zones, which were a striking feature of the German front, and which, when finally reached, would have to be taken either by attacks delivered at an acute angle or else by changing front under fire.

where, on October 21, the last elements of the division were relieved by the 15th Colonial Division and proceeded to the Troyon sector. In turn, they relieved the 70th U.S. Division. The losses of the 33rd Division had been 669 prisoners and enlisted men, while the prisoners taken amounted to about 1,200.

The 26th Division, coming into line in relief of the 18th (French) Division in the Malbrucq ravine on October 16-17, attacked on the 23rd in a generally north-easterly direction through Le Houppay Bois and the Bois de la Reine against the 10th Colonial Division, in the center, and the Bois d'Ormont, on the right, the attack being made by the 32nd Brigade on the right and the 51st Brigade on the left, supported by the fire of the 51st Field Artillery Brigade.

Attack With 26th

By the 23rd of October the division front, under very heavy losses, and struggled ahead to positions in the Bois de Chaume and southeast from there around the Mollville Farm clearing, and that morning at 6:15, after a strong artillery preparation, attacked eastward simultaneously with the 25th U.S. Division, which was now on the right. The ridge in the Bois d'Estayes and the important observatory on its crest was captured and held against determined counter-attacks, the 26th Division, which was now fighting eastward against the maze of enemy defenses in the direction of Crepion, at the same time setting a footing in the Belleu Bois, the Bois des Chenes and the Bois d'Ormont. Consolidation of the positions gained occupied most of the succeeding five days, and on the 28th of October the 29th Division, which had here fought its first great battle, was relieved by the 79th Division and retired, having lost 5,795 officers and enlisted men in casualties and having captured 2,148 prisoners and much artillery and material and gained seven kilometers of ground in 20 days of as bitter fighting as troops were ever called upon to endure.

The Part of the 79th Division

Leaving line well to the north of Montfaucon on September 30 and entering it again on the night of October 28 at the southern edge of the Grande Montagne, the 79th Division spent most of the interval between these periods in the quiet Troyon sector, where its troops were gradually relieved by those of the 29th Division and in turn relieved the latter south of the Bois Belleu and part of the 26th U.S. Division in the Bois Belleu and the edge of the Bois d'Ormont.

The 18th Infantry Brigade took the 26th U.S. Division on the right and the 316th on the left, while the 15th Infantry Brigade, which did not completely relieve in the 26th Division sector until the night of October 31, had the 314th Infantry on the left, in the Bois Belleu, and the 313th on the right, in the Bois d'Ormont, with one battalion in the Bois de Chaume and the other two in the woods. The 52nd Field Artillery Brigade, under Brig. Gen. George A. Wingate, was attached.

After a hard struggle the attack was repulsed, while the 15th Colonial Division was equally unsuccessful in trying to take Villeroy and Sillon-Fontaine Farms, near the crests of the ridges sloping down into the valley of the Meuse at Sivy. The 315th Infantry was unable to advance

**German Resistance Sliftens**

So soon as the Germans recovered from the confusion caused by the first surprise attack, that is, by the beginning of the second day's battle, their immense artillery reserves and their strength began to utilize the advantages of these conditions, and thereafter the progress of the French and American divisions was made more slowly and with more casualties.

As the progress was slow, the progress accomplished amounted, in substance, to a gradual right turn on the pivot of the 26th French Division, near Beaufort, which, as the rest of the front advanced, moved slowly worked its left up toward Flabas, while the 15th Division, further west, swung on a slightly larger arc toward Crepion and Mollville.

The 26th U.S. Division, which was moving northward toward the Grande Montagne until it had cleared out enough room between its right and the westward tending 26th Division on its left for the 29th Division to occupy. Thereafter it turned its driving power east, toward the edge of the plateau above the Woëvre as well as north, when the attack began on October 23 by the 27th U.S. Division the latter continued the pressure similarly until the entire environs of the Grande Montagne were cleared, when it turned into the valley of the Thiey river against the strong line of heights just beyond it.

The 33rd U. S. Division drove north and northeast, clearing the eastern side of the

**Work of American Divisions**

With an understanding of the general objects and development of the attack, it is possible to look upon the work performed by the different American divisions participating in it. The 58th Brigade of the 23rd Division lay on its line through the Bois de Consenvoye on October 9, because the 18th Division, moving eastward, was not far enough advanced to warrant a further attack. Consequently, when the attack was resumed on the 10th, the enemy was thoroughly prepared, and efforts in conjunction with the 33rd Division on the left, to secure the whole of the Bois de Chaume and the Bois Plat-Chene, were repulsed until its right, when the 15th Infantry and the 19th in the Bois de Consenvoye, the 58th Brigade, now under its own division command, pushed up to the south edge of the Mollville Farm clearing and consolidated positions thence west toward the Bois Plat-Chene, which were held until the 15th, when the 15th and 26th Divisions, which were in the rear of these defensive zones, the rear ones, extended northwest along the crests overlooking the plain of the Woëvre, by Flabas, the Bois d'Ormont, and the Bois de Chaume, and the Grande Montagne, toward Haumont, Villeroy, and Brielleux, where the Kriemhilde Stellung crossed the Meuse. Consequently, in attacking north from Beaufort, the 15th and 26th Divisions, and especially the divisions of its right, were attacking in front of and almost parallel to these rear defensive zones, which were a striking feature of the German front, and which, when finally reached, would have to be taken either by attacks delivered at an acute angle or else by changing front under fire.

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As had been indicated, the country was rugged by nature and well fortified. Immediately before attacking, the 26th Division took over a part of the right of the 29th Division sector and, through a projecting mist, the 10th Infantry at 6:15 a.m. advanced in liaison with troops of the 29th Division up the Estayes ridge and seized the observatory on its top. The 102nd Infantry pushed forward on the right and by mid-afternoon the front had occupied the whole of the Belleu Bois and the Bois des Chenes and the west edge of the Bois d'Ormont. Under very heavy artillery and machine gun fire, however, Belleu Bois was relinquished, and it was necessary the next afternoon to attack again, at the same moment that the 102nd Infantry advanced into the Bois d'Ormont. Fighting all the rest of the day and most of the following night against most bitter resistance, the 10th Infantry penetrated 500 meters into the Bois Belleu, only to be forced back finally by a fourth counter-attack after it had repulsed three of them. In the Bois d'Ormont, the 102nd Infantry had a similar struggle and, although it got through the greater part of the woods to the base of Hill 260, in their eastern end, the enemy clung to this valuable observation point, from which he could see as far as the Meuse, and it could not be taken before dark. The attack was renewed the next morning, but the attacking forces were so depleted that they were not merely unable to make gains, but were gradually forced back by evening to the western edge of the woods.

After a very heavy artillery preparation

at all and the 316th lost some men as prisoners in a subsequent counter-attack. Reports of the rapid progress then being made by the American divisions further to the northwest, however, were very encouraging and when the 316th, supported by three companies of the 315th, attacked again at 9 o'clock on the morning of the 5th, although it was at first held back, it persisted grimly and finally conquered Hill 378, while a violent counter-attack made by the enemy from Soltorion Farm and the Canif Trench, further north, failed to recover any of the lost ground and was repulsed by artillery fire.

Although the divisions of the 3rd U.S. Army Corps got across the Meuse on the 5th and were slowly pushing toward the rear of the Canif Trench and the other parts of the enemy's Kriemhilde Stellung system extending from Damvillers to Villers, he clung to this line with great determination, and the efforts of the 313th and 315th Infantry to get beyond Hill 378 during November 6 were all put down. But the continuation of the attack on the 7th brought better results. After an all-day struggle, the enemy's works and wire on the ridge of Les Clairs-Chenes and near Soltorion Farm were broken through about 7 p.m., and at about the same time the 15th Colonial Division mastered Villeroy and Sillon-Fontaine Farms.

The heights along the Meuse, further west, having been taken by other divisions, the 79th was ordered to divert its offensive on the morning of the 8th to a direction almost due east, aiming to conquer the spur of the plateau running out into the Woëvre plain. The sharp change in direction involved making up provisional attack regiments out of the battalions as they were taken over from the divisions of the previous day. This was accomplished by making up one regiment of a battalion each of the 315th, 313th and 316th Infantry, which was to attack on the left, along the ridge between the villages of Ecurey and Reville; and another composed of two battalions of the 315th and one of the 313th, which was to attack on the right along the ridge between Reville and Etrépy.

With due artillery preparation and behind a barrage, the attack jumped off early in the morning, two battalions of the 26th Division advancing at the same time in the right sub-sector of the 79th. The enemy was moving out and by night the front had advanced about five kilometers and lay on the eastern edge of the heights, from which next day the movement was continued, without serious opposition, down into the valley of the Thiey river, coming to a halt before an elaborately fortified and extremely rugged line of heights extending from Damvillers southeast to Romagne; the Cote d'Orme, Cote de Morimont, Cote de Romagne and others.

On these heights, rising between 300 and 400 meters and supporting his last line of organized defenses, the enemy stood and the 79th Division spent the day of the 10th in maneuvering up to positions near enough to assault them. On the

morning of the 11th of November the attack was begun and the troops on the right had advanced beyond Chaumont-devant-Damvillers, while the 315th Infantry was halfway up the slope of Cote de Morimont when, at 11 a.m., hostilities were suspended. Had these heights been taken, nothing remained in the way of defenses between them and the enemy's recede railroad line at Spincourt, toward which the 79th Division was moving.

The 32nd Division returned to an active sector after a rest of about 20 days almost on the eve of the armistice, but it contrived, nevertheless, to put in one day of heavy fighting and the sort of progress it had been accustomed to making when on the offensive. Coming into line in a position between the 15th Colonial Division and the 5th U.S. Division as the front expanded in consequence of the northward advance from the Meuse, it lay on the night of November 9-10 between the villages of Le Petite Lissey and Brocheville, on the eastern edge of the heights overlooking the Woëvre. Thence at 6 o'clock on the morning of the 10th it moved down into the valley, the 12th Infantry on the right advancing toward Neuvillers, on the west side of the Thiey river, and the 12th on the left moving toward Beaufort Farm, east of the river.

The enemy resisted strongly with both artillery and machine guns and the advance was a continuous all-day fight which caused large casualties, including 215 wounded. But at evening the 12th Infantry had taken Neuvillers, pushed on beyond it into the edge of the Bois de Dombas, and meeting there a heavy fire, had dropped back again into the village, while on the left the 12th had cleaned up several woodlands in its sector, ending with the Bois de Lissey beyond the eastern edge of which it lay along the Thiey river. The front was well up with the 15th Colonial Division which, further to the right, was between Pouvilleux and Damvillers and with the 5th U.S., further to the left, which had taken possession of Janets.

On the morning of the 11th the advance was about to be resumed into the Bois de Dombas by the 12th Infantry and toward Beaufort Farm by the 12th, when hostilities were ordered suspended. After 11 o'clock, however, the German artillery, probably through ignorance or misapprehension, opened fire on Le Petite Lissey village, causing a few casualties. The 32nd Division artillery immediately retaliated by opening on some of the known German battery positions and thereupon the enemy's fire promptly ceased. This was the last firing reported along the American front.

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The lieutenant stepped up to the colonel's desk. "There's a discharged W.A.A.C. outside who would like to sign up for service in this department. Would you like to see him?"

"Well, er, no doubt," said the colonel. "All right."

The lieutenant stepped into the adjoining room and returned, preceded by a shy person in a tattered blue costume. The colonel shifted in his chair. "Harrumph! So you want to enter the employ of the department?"

"Yes, sir," the shy person was rather shy as a voice.

"The colonel paused, astonished. The shy W.A.A.C. had burst into quite unfeminine roars of laughter. Moreover, the lieutenant was trying to suppress a broad grin. So the colonel was half-way prepared for the shock when the W.A.A.C.'s blonde wig fell off and revealed a close-cropped cauchemar.

Down at Tours they've got an outfit that fools even the colonels. Although it has been in business only a comparatively short time, it has developed and produced so far an extent that it now operates under the title of "the play factory."

Multitudinous are the duties of the play factory. Its staff of expert playmakers, directors and managers, following the course conceded wisest, first catch the rabbit. Front out on the highways and by-ways they gather the men who are caught behind the footlights and then set up into and figure out whether the heroine shall die or marry the hero in the last act. Finally, they dress up the performers, coach them and send them out with a blessing, to show the rest of the A.E.F. that the Army can get by on the show game without having to holler for reinforcements from the members of the Government who elected to do their campaigning along the subway trenches at roadway and Forty-second.

The play factory was instituted after the armistice, limited killings to the A.E.F. stage. Maurice Stewart, who used to line up shows for Morocco and Belasco back in the United States of America, is the boss director of the plant. Sgt. Ted Symon, the rest of the busy staff are all veterans of many a dressing-room battle and have all seen service here and there.

By May 1 five big shows will have been

**OVERHEARD IN BREST ABOVE TRAMP OF FEET**

When the transport Levantian hitched to her lorry in the outer bay at Brest, among her passengers, accompanied by a Secret Service man, was a colonel, whose left arm was decorated with three silver chevrons.

"In four weeks I would have gotten another chevron," he confided to a field officer as the party went ashore, "but I'm glad to be here even if all the soldiers seem to be going home."

The Provost Marshal at Brest and all of his flock of M.P.'s are exponents of proper dress and uniform. These M.P.'s can see a button which isn't buttoned and a cap which isn't regulated in a way that there are brave soldiers at Brest. One of them is a Quartermaster sergeant, who not only got married last week and walked past Base Headquarters with his young French bride clinging tenderly to him, but flaunted a pair of white kid gloves in the eyes of the soldier M.P. who keeps the entrance to Headquarters closed to all but the M.P.'s.

The M.P. gazed, for, as the sergeant passed, a general stepped out and spied the sergeant, who was wholly mindful of just one thing—that he had just been married.

"I didn't call him down," the M. P. explained later, "because he has been stung enough today. He's married, poor fellow."

Brest, in so far as privileges, such as entrances into cafes, buvettes and cormac shops are concerned, is strictly a gobs' town. Here the gobs can quench their thirst with something stronger than milk shakes. But for the soldiers it is decidedly otherwise.

However, soldiers are admitted to theaters, picture shows and other places of amusement where drinks are not sold. But the cafes and other shops where it is possible to buy cognac, vin blanc, or rouge without blushing or being stared at are still out of bounds. Good cadnet passes are issuable to enlisted men, valid until 10:30 each evening. The former time limit was 9:30 p.m.

produced by the Tours show shop, to say nothing of innumerable smaller affairs. The Tours agency does not book outside of the S.O.S. areas, although a number of the month of March shows that 10,650 theatrical performances were given during that period to audiences numbering a total of 7,352,600 people. Thus the play factory at Tours is established as one of the greatest amusement enterprises in the world.

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