NEW AND VETERAN A.E.F. DIVISIONS SHARED IN ARGONNE FURY

Continued from Page 1

morning of October 7, crossing the river on foot bridges built during the previous night by a platoon of Company E, of the 103rd Engineers.

The village of Châtel-Chehery lies along the slope of the hills with one long street traversing it at a level of about 30 meters above the river and 60 meters below the crest of the plateau, while several very short east-and-west streets drop sharply down the slope toward the river. The nature of the terrain to be traversed by the attack resembled that of Missionary Ridge, or of Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg, in the American Civil War.

The advance across it was made by the troops of the 28th Division with extraordinary dash and gallantry. At 5:45 the village had been entered and at 7:10 the 2nd Battalion of the 112th Infantry had gained possession of all the short east-and-west streets.

Parties of snipers were also working up the cliff-like slopes of Hill 244, rising immediately above the southwestern edge of the village, while the 3rd Battalion of the same regiment was already in possession of the crest of this hill, but was in an awkward position because it was being fired upon from all four sides.

Heavy Fire Sweeps Village

In the meanwhile, heavy fire was sweeping the length of the village from the crest of Hill 223, which dominated it from the north and northwest as Hill 244 dominated it from the southwest. Although Hill 223 was in the sector given over during the previous night to the 82nd Division, the troops of the latter had not yet been able to reach it in their frontal attack, so one company of infantry and one of machine gunners of the 28th Division assaulted from the north end of the village and took it.

With the commanding heights at both ends in possession, the situation in the center was relieved and the troops there were able completely to mop up the village and then, during the afternoon, to carry their advance westward up the remainder of the hillside to the crest of the plateau.

On the extreme left, in the vicinity of Le Chêne Tondu, six companies of the 111th Infantry during the morning had forced their way, in liaison with the right of the 77th Division, through the forest west of Le Chêne Tondu ridge and fighting northward past La Vierge toward the portion of the woods called the Bois de Taille l'Abbé, there came close to the patrols from the other flank which were working their way up to the plateau through the ravine between Châtel-Chehery and the Bois de Taille l'Abbé. The front that night was on the plateau about a kilometer west of Châtel-Chehery.

Next day the Bois de Taille l'Abbé and the reverse slopes of Le Chêne Tondu were mopped up, the net accomplishment being complete liaison on front line between the various separated elements of the division, as well as junction with the 77th Division.

Strangled Out of Lower Forest

In consequence of the capture of the heights on his flank and rear, the enemy was strangled out of all the lower part of the Argonne forest, this vitally important result being achieved by the combined gallant efforts of the 28th, the 77th and the 82nd Divisions. The 28th Division was relieved on front line by the 82nd Division during the night of October 8-9.

Having had experience theretofore only in so-called "stabilized sectors," there may have been some question as to how well the 82nd Division might carry out its mission when it came into the extremely active sector east of the Aire between Fléville and a point just north of La Forge on the night of October 6-7. But, if there was any such question, it was worthily answered in a very short time by the division's actual achievements.

The attacking troops went into position with the 327th Infantry on the right and the 328th on the left, the former crossing the Aire by fords east of Pleinchamp Farm and assaulting the detached Hill 180 at 5 o'clock on the morning of the 7th. The position was speedily taken, with 44 prisoners, and the advance continued northwest across the small intervening valley against Cornay, on the slope of the main plateau.

But on their attempting to ascend the hillside along the road between Cornay and Châtel-Chehery, the opposing fire produced such losses that the troops were checked and held to their positions during the rest of the day.

Hill 223 Reached

The 328th Infantry, on the left, became lost in the darkness while coming up to the jumping-off line and did not attack until 10 a.m. It had troops on Hill 223 by 1 o'clock, however, who were close to the flank of the 28th Division, and later in the afternoon they repulsed a powerful counter attack against the hill.

Parties of the enemy which during the night infiltrated into the valley between Hills 180 and 223 were captured on the morning of the 8th when the Second Battalion of the 328th Infantry moved forward in the center. The battalions which had been held in support during the previous day crossed the river in the night and, thus reinforced, the left advanced westward across the valley from Hill 223 and at 9 a.m. had covered nearly a kilometer and was well up the slope of the main plateau.

Later in the afternoon, forward elements reached the enemy's light railroad in the woods along the top of the plateau, but were forced by the enemy's machine gun fire to relinquish it.

On the right, the First and Second Battalions of the 327th Infantry, reinforced by the Third Battalion of the 328th, had renewed the attack on Cornay. After an all-day fight, they took the village but could not hold it, though they retained possession of the heights in its immediate vicinity. A force of two companies of the 327th Infantry under Captain Davis, which undertook to fill the gap in the line between the two flanks by attacking the hill west of Cornay, reached their objective across the open valley from Hill 223 but suffered such losses in crossing the valley that they arrived with only 40 men, and Captain Davis was obliged to withdraw them.

On Upper Rim of Plateau

Despite the fact that the forward elements of the 82nd Division had been unable to hold the most advanced points which they had attained, they were now, nevertheless, along with the 28th Division, established on the upper rim of the plateau. The light railway by which the enemy had been supplying his troops further south in the forest was paralyzed and, recognizing the impossibility of remaining there with their left flank and rear uncovered, the Germans began withdrawing, but methodically and in order.

Having relieved the 28th Division during the night of the 8th-9th, on the following day the whole front of the 82nd Division, pivoting on the positions held on the hills near Cornay, executed a right turn against comparatively slight resistance which by nightfall had brought it up facing north on a line about half a kilometer south of Cornay. The right of this line had contact with the 1st Division, near Fléville; its left was in liaison in the Bois de Cornay, a part of the Argonne forest, with the right of the 77th Division, which similarly had forced its way northward, and was holding the west part of the forest over to the flank of the Fourth French Army, in the valley of the Aisne.

The 327th and 328th Infantry were now holding the front line. On the morning of the 10th, the First and Second Battalions of the 325th Infantry, advancing through the holding line, again assaulted Cornay and the hills west of it. This time the attacking troops not only took but held their objectives, and the whole line was pushed northward from one to several kilometers, with patrols clear through the forest, at Marcq and Martincourt, near the bend of the Aire by which it turns westward through the gap of Grand-Pré to join the Aisne.

Its fraction of the forest having now been cleared by a remarkable right turn of nearly 180 degrees, the further zone of action of the 82nd Division was inclined sharply to the northeast, passing through Marcq and crossing the Aire east of St. Juvin, just beyond which village it again turned north approximately up the valley of the Agron river, with Champigneulles, in the Kriemhilde Stellung, as an objective.

With the purpose of possessing this sector, the 327th Infantry on the right and the 326th on the left advanced to the crossing of the Aire on the morning of the 11th. The 327th got across and advanced nearly two kilometers to the line of the Kriemhilde Stellung between Champigneulles and St. Georges. But positions here could not be held and the troops fell back to a line west of St. Juvin.

The 326th, attacking the river crossings southeast of St. Juvin, which was virtually a strong outwork of the Kriemhilde Stellung, could not get across the Aire at all in the face of the fire from the village and fell back to the hills east of Marcq.

The next two days were spent in consolidating the disjointed front and on the morning of the 14th the attack was renewed, the 328th Infantry on the right moving toward St. Georges, the 325th toward the Kriemhilde Stellung west of that village, and the 326th again advancing toward the east of St. Juvin. During the course of the day or evening the 328th Infantry got through the Ravin aux Pierres to the ridge south of St. Georges, east of which place it had liaison with the 42nd Division, which had now replaced the 1st Division on the right.

Advanced elements of the 325th Infantry went even through the Kriemhilde Stellung in places but were eventually driven back to the St. Georges-St. Juvin road. The 326th Infantry did not make much advance but in the meantime, the 77th Division had taken St. Juvin and part of Hill 182, north of it. During the 15th, the existing front was strengthened and also extended somewhat on the left, taking over St. Juvin from the 77th Division.

Division Front Straightened

At 6 a.m on the 16th, supporting an attack by the 78th Division, which had relieved the 77th, the First Battalion of the 326th Infantry, on the left, passed through St. Juvin and up Hill 182, the capture of which it completed and straightened out the division front approximately in front of the wire of the Kriemhilde Stellung. Hill 182, commanding the valley of the Agron, furnished a point of departure for attempts against Champigneulles, and during the day a detachment of the 326th approached within half a kilometer of that village but found itself in an untenable position and withdrew after the fall of darkness.

Efforts to push ahead during the next two or three days resulted in only inconsiderable gains, and the front virtually remained on the line taken October 16 until the last day of the month, when preparatory to the general attack of November 1, the weary 82nd Division was relieved by the 80th and 77th Divisions and withdrew for rest.

When, on October 1, the 77th Division developed and the next day attacked the German line lying east and west through the Bois de Naza to the unfinished Bagatelle trench, the troops were so entangled in the mazes of the Argonne forest that they could hardly tell even where they were, while the effective use of artillery was impossible. The battalions operating on front line had orders to push ahead regardless of progress by the units on their flanks, but only one detachment succeeded in penetrating the enemy's positions during the day. This detachment, consisting of the First Battalion of the 308th Infantry under Maj. Charles S. Whittlesey, elements of the 307th Infantry under Captain McMurtry and elements of the 306th Machine Gun Battalion, at about 4 p.m. of the 2nd found a weak spot in the enemy's line, pushed through and advanced down a hillside into a deep ravine on the woodland road that runs from Apremont westward across the forest to Binarville.

Americans Are Isolated

The troops on the flanks failing to advance, during the night the enemy filtered in along the ridge which Major Whittlesey's men had cossed, established machine guns and wired up the underbrush, thus connecting their own line between the Bois de Naza and the Bagatelle trench and completely isolating the small body of Americans behind it.

In this extremely exposed position, at the bottom of the ravine about 500 meters east of the old mill at Charlevaux, with the enemy firing upon them from all sides, the Americans heroically stood off their assailants for five days, during which period the men subsisted on the two days' reserve rations which they had with them, as the supplies of food brought over and dropped by American airplanes all fell within the enemy's lines.

Fortunately, some carrier pigeons had been taken along in the advance, and by these Major Whittlesey was able to send an occasional message out to the divisional command. As soon as the latter learned of his situation, every possible effort was devoted to breaking through the enemy's front and rescuing him and his men.

Already on the night of the 2nd, a reserve battalion of the 154th Infantry Brigade attempted to get forward and connect with his left flank, but failed. Next day, five attacks on the part of the 154th Brigade were repulsed, chiefly because of the scarcity of artillery and the impossibility of observing the fire effect of even of such of it as was in position. The continued efforts made on the 4th, 5th and 6th met with no better success.

Liaison Finally Established

At length, on October 7, a point was found near a junction of two ravines just west of the Bois de Naza, through which men from the left of the 153rd Brigade and the right of the 154th were able, by taking advantage of the irregularities of the ground, to infiltrate through the enemy's front to points in his rear from which they could direct reverse fire on his defensive positions.

Thus attacked, the Germans were gradually driven out, and at about 9 o'clock that night liaison was finally established with Major Whittlesey's troops. It was done none too soon, for they had suffered 50 per cent casualties but in spite of this fact and their state of exhaustion their spirits were still unbroken, as was evidenced by the fact that on that morning a summons to surrender sent in by the Germans had been treated with contempt and the defense continued with increased vigor.

The operations which had resulted in the rescue of "the lost battalion" had, at the same time, broken the enemy's line of defense effectively and prepared for a further advance along the whole divisional front of the 77th. This result, taken in conjunction with the success of the 28th and 82nd Divisions in reaching the plateau in the region of Châtel-Chehery, on the enemy's flank and rear, enabled the 77th Division during the following three days to push northward without encountering further abnormal resistance until it issued into the open valley of the Aire opposite St. Juvin and Grand-Pré, having completed the clearing of the Argonne forest in a series of operations unique in the annals of the American Expeditionary Forces.

Attack on Grand-Pre

The artillery finally got up on October 11, and, with adequate preparation, the 153rd Brigade next day brilliantly attacked and carried St. Juvin and part of Hill 182, north of it, against a desperate resistance, capturing about 500 prisoners, including two majors, and this, in spite of the physical condition of the men who for 16 days had been continuously wet and cold in the rain-soaked underbrush of the great forest.

At 7:30 on the morning of the 15th, covered by the fire of two machine gun companies from the wooded ridge south of the river, the 1st Battalion of the 307th Infantry attacked Grand-Pré from the south, where existed the only crossing of the Aire in that vicinity, while the 308th Infantry, protected along the river bank by the 2nd Battalion of the 307th, demonstrated against the flank of Grand-Pré by advancing on the north side of the river from the vicinity of St. Juvin.

The enemy resisted violently and the advance was slow, but patrols of the 307th finally got across the river by infiltration, reached the town by 5:30 in the evening, and had it in possession an hour later. Foot bridges across the river were built after the patrols got over, the whole battalion crossed, and next day the town proper was organized for defense along its west and north edges, exclusive of the steep hill at the north end on which stand a château and park.

Under these conditions, with the extreme left in not very complete contact with the right of the French forces down the Aire below Grand-Pré, the 77th Division was relieved by the 78th.

Moving up from 1st Corps reserve near Montblainville and Varennes to relieve the 77th Division, the 78th Division became somewhat confused on unfamiliar roads and did not reach its positions so soon as expected. The consequence was that the 312th Infantry, relieving elements of the 77th Division in Grand-Pré, did not get possession of the whole town, into part of which the Germans returned and were only ejected again after several days of severe fighting.

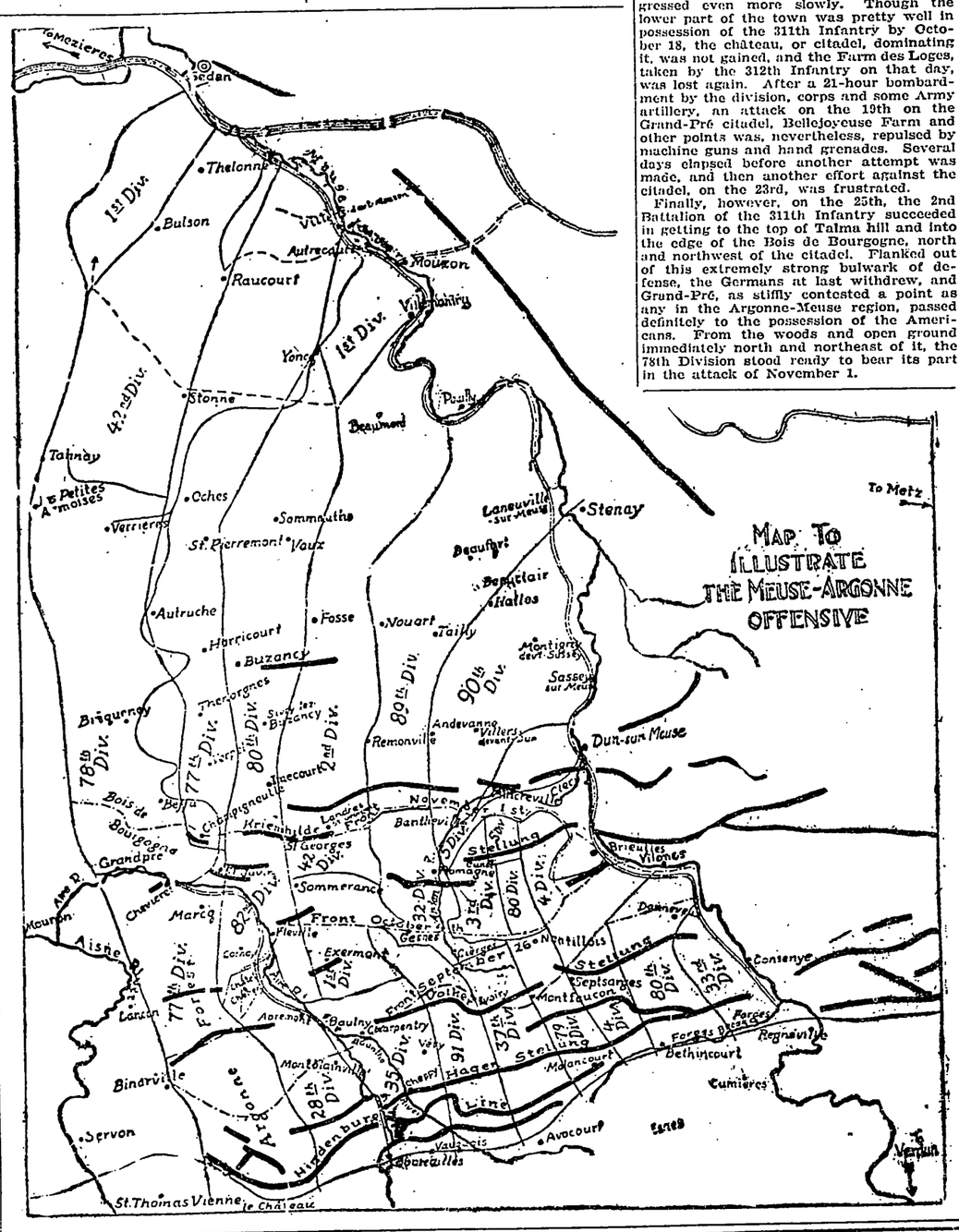
On the 16th, along a front of five and one-half kilometers, with the 309th, 310th, 311th and 312th Regiments of Infantry in line from right to left, the division advanced, the 309th moving against the Bois des Loges, just west of Champigneulles, and the 311th undertaking to complete the capture of Grand-Pré.

To St. Juvin-Grand-Pre Road

The Bois des Loges was virtually a part of the Kriemhilde Stellung, being thoroughly enfiladed by cross fire from Bellejoyeuse and Des Loges Farms, on the west, and Champigneulles, on the east, and after four days of stubborn fighting, though well supported by the 310th Infantry on its left, the 309th had not been able to get further than the south edge of the woods, and eventually, on October 29, by order of the 1st Corps, withdrew to the St. Juvin-Grand-Pré road.

The operations around Grand-Pré progressed even more slowly. Though the lower part of the town was pretty well in possession of the 311th Infantry by October 18, the château, or citadel, dominating it, was not gained, and the Farm des Loges, taken by the 312th Infantry on that day, was lost again. After a 21-hour bombardment by the division, corps and some Army artillery, an attack on the 19th on the Grand-Pré citadel, Bellejoyeuse Farm and other points was, nevertheless, repulsed by machine guns and hand grenades. Several days elapsed before another attempt was made, and then another effort against the citadel, on the 23rd, was frustrated.

Finally, however, on the 25th, the 2nd Battalion of the 311th Infantry succeeded in getting to the top of Talma hill and into the edge of the Bois de Bourgogne, north and northwest of the citadel. Flanked out of this extremely strong bulwark of defense, the Germans at last withdrew, and Grand-Pré, as stiffly contested a point as any in the Argonne-Meuse region, passed definitely to the possession of the Americans. From the woods and open ground immediately north and northeast of it, the 78th Division stood ready to bear its part in the attack of November 1.



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE

TENTH OF THIRD ARMY IS GOING TO SCHOOL

Figures Show 22,006 Soldier Students Listed in Full-Time Classes

Ten per cent of the men in the Third Army are going to school, according to enrollment figures given out last week. These figures showed that 22,006 men were listed on the rolls of the full-time vocational schools, the full-time academic schools and the evening schools.

The departure of the Rainbow Division for the United States is expected to decrease the number of students, although there may be little change in the figures if another division moves in. Classes in the 42nd Division stopped April 1.

The vocational courses have made good emphatically in the eyes of the Third Army, and in the divisional centers every day groups of soldiers may be seen studying the practical principles of many trades and callings. A score of men with farming experience go out to an orchard to learn all about fruit trees under the direction of a lieutenant who is a graduate of the University of Maine Agricultural College.

Two hundred and fifty men are learning how to repair automobiles with the big repair and overhaul shops of the Army in Coblenz as their workshops. It is a trade that pays extremely well back in the States.

Studying Live Stock

Men of the 89th and 90th Divisions, whose homes had been in the grazing States from Texas to Colorado, are studying the live stock end of the agricultural course, and among them are many men whose practical experience qualifies them as experts.

At the bridgehead where the 1st, 2nd and 32nd Divisions are, forestry is making the biggest appeal to the men, because the magnificent forest of the Princes of Wied, encircling the town of Neuwied, seems to have a spell of romance heightened by its history and the dozens of legends that the people of the neighborhood tell of it. A German forester accompanies the men into the woods and explains the system by which the growth of the forest was maintained through the centuries, while at the same time the forest furnished thousands of the heavy timbers needed for building German towns.

Another unusual training ground is the great reach of vineyards along the Moselle, the white wine center of Germany, and, rivaling it, the district of the Rhine and the Ahr, which produces the best red wine in Germany.

Soldier students in cobbling do work on real shoes in the American salvage plant at Coblenz-Lützel, where German cobblers also are employed. Students in mechanical drawing work in the chief engineer's office at Third Army headquarters. Telephone men study their trade at the telegraph barracks, and bakers go to the Third Army bakery. The school for barbers is to be established in Coblenz. There is also to be an Army conservatory of music in Coblenz.

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Composed at the Offices of the Continental "Daily Mail," Paris, R. Dilly, Gerant. Printed at the Office of "Le Journal," Paris.