

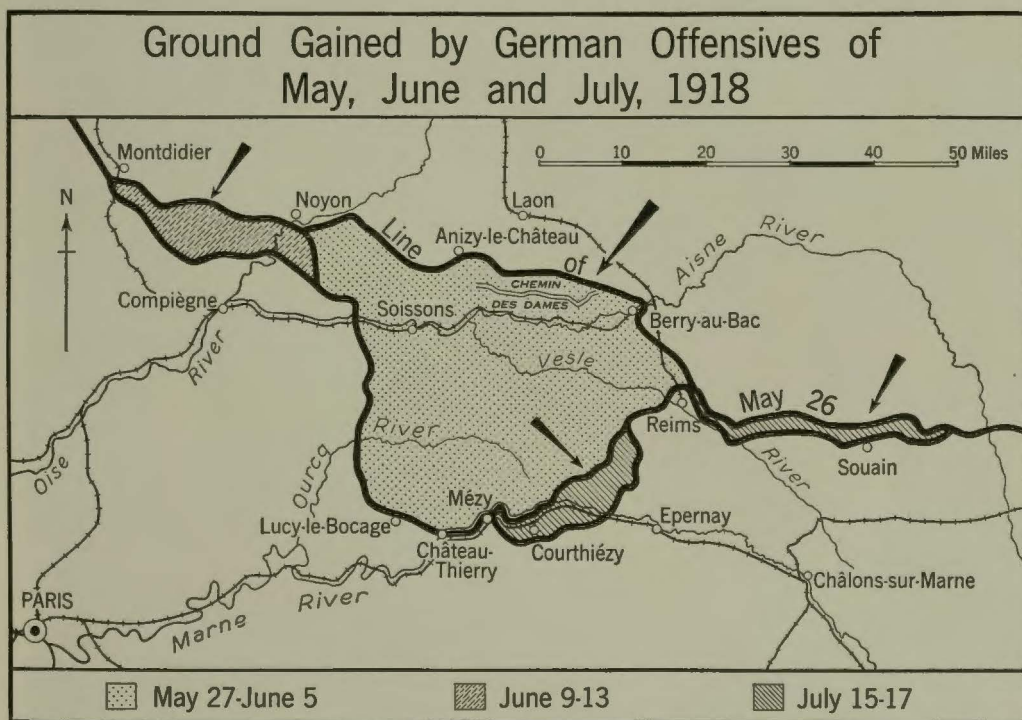
Chapter II

AMERICAN OPERATIONS IN THE AISNE-MARNE REGION

THE German strategical plan for 1918 involved the destruction of the British Army in the early spring, to be followed immediately by a crushing blow at the French. In pursuance of this plan, German offensive operations were launched in Picardy and Flanders in March and April. Although gaining considerable ground and inflicting heavy

many French troops had been shifted from there to the British area. Consequently, when a German assault struck the Aisne front between Berry-au-Bac and Anizy-le-Château early on the morning of May 27 it came as a surprise.

The Germans carried the Chemin des Dames positions in the first dash and crossed the Aisne River about noon on



losses, these operations failed in their primary purpose of destroying the British. Meanwhile preparations for a powerful drive against the French along the line of the Aisne River had been progressing.

The Allied Commanders, after the German April attack in Flanders had been checked, felt sure that a new German offensive was about to take place but were uncertain where it would fall. It was considered improbable, however, that it would fall on the Aisne front, and

bridges which the French had failed to destroy. Their progress exceeded all expectation. By evening they were south of the Vesle, and early on the 29th had captured Soissons. Advancing rapidly toward the Marne River and meeting very little resistance, they started to exploit their success toward Paris. The French people throughout the country were thrown into consternation, and the Government made preparations to flee from Paris to Bordeaux, a city much farther south.



Airplane View of Vaux Shortly After Its Capture by the 2d Division on July 1, 1918

Reserves from every quarter were rushed to the front to meet this new danger. Among these were the American 2d and 3d Divisions which had been turned over to the French by the American Commander-in-Chief. They were hurried forward by forced marches and by every available means of transportation.

The motorized machine gun battalion of the 3d Division reached Château-Thierry on May 31, and there gallantly assisted in preventing the Germans from crossing the Marne. As the infantry units of the 3d Division came up they reinforced French units holding the south bank of the river as far eastward as Courthiézy, 8 miles from Château-Thierry.

The 2d Division, arriving by truck on June 1, immediately went into position northwest of Château-Thierry. Facing northeast, with its center at Lucy-le-Bocage, the division established its line across the main route to Paris, where it repulsed all attacks and effectively stopped the German advance in that direction.

With this American assistance the French were able to stem the onslaught, but only after the Germans had driven a great salient, roughly defined by the triangle formed by Reims, Château-Thierry and Soissons, into the Allied lines.

In addition to a 30-mile gain straight toward the heart of France, the Germans captured 60,000 prisoners, 650 cannon and enormous quantities of supplies, ammunition and equipment. The situation looked very black for the Allies. Their rays of hope, however, were the rapid arrival of American troops, which were then pouring into France at the rate of about 9,000 per day, and their growing knowledge of the splendid dash and combat ability of the American soldiers, then being tested daily in battle.

These characteristics had been amply demonstrated by the troops of the 1st Division in its capture of Cantigny, north of Paris, on May 28, and in its retention of that place despite repeated counter-attacks, as well as by the brilliant fighting of the 2d and 3d Divisions near Château-Thierry. They were finally

proved beyond all doubt when the 2d Division, starting on the morning of June 6, struck back at the Germans and after prolonged and bitter fighting recaptured from them the strong positions of Belleau Wood, Bouresches and Vaux.

This fighting caused a change in the German opinion which up to that time had been frankly skeptical of the fighting ability of the American soldier and the driving power of American units. This change is illustrated by the following extracts from a communication issued on June 17 by the German corps which opposed the 2d Division and which had previously issued orders that as many casualties as possible be inflicted upon the Americans: "The personnel must be called excellent . . . The spirit of the troops is high . . . The 2d American Division can be rated as a very good division . . . The various attacks of the marines were carried out smartly and ruthlessly. The moral effect of our fire did not materially check the advance of the infantry. The nerves of the Americans are still unshaken."

Although the Germans in their May attack made a deep penetration to the west and southwest of Reims, they failed in their efforts to capture that city and its important railway facilities. As a result, the 40 divisions which they had thrown into the salient were in a dangerous situation as they were mainly dependent for food, supplies and ammunition on one railroad through Soissons. This fact was realized by the American Commander-in-Chief who saw that if the heights south of that city were seized and held by the Allies the Germans would be deprived of the use of the railroad and would be compelled to retire from the Marne, thus removing the threat against Paris. He proposed that these heights be attacked and captured at once by American troops. The Allied Commander-in-Chief approved the idea of such an attack but felt that he was not yet ready to assume the offensive.

The German High Command also realized the dangerous position of its



Vincelles on the
Marne Under
French Artillery Fire,
June 1918. © G

German Reserves
Advancing Close
Behind the Assault
Line at Chavignon,
May 1918. © G



German Troops
Just Before an
Assault Near Fismes,
on Terrain Untouched
by the War,
May 1918. © G



Germans With a Trainload
of Provisions Which Were
Left by the French
South of the Aisne,
May 1918. © G



Part of a German
Barge Battery of Heavy
Artillery Firing on
the Western Front,
May 1918. © G



Sharing a Meal Abandoned
by an English Officer
on the Chemin des Dames
Early on May 27, 1918.
© G

troops in the salient, and promptly undertook operations to relieve the situation. Consequently, on June 9 two German armies started an attack toward Compiègne, for which careful preparations had previously been made, in an attempt to widen the salient and to secure the use of the railroad between that place and Soissons. They met, however, determined resistance from the French and failed to reach their objective.

The next move of the Germans was to begin preparations for a great offensive on both sides of Reims, in the general direction of Epernay and Châlons-sur-Marne. This attack was to capture Reims and the high ground to the south of it, and by so doing secure the use of another great trunk line railroad. The separation of the French forces defending Paris from those in the vicinity of Verdun was considered a possibility. A formidable array of three armies, totaling 47 divisions, and an enormous amount of artillery were assembled; and nothing was left undone to provide both the troops and matériel considered necessary to break the French battle lines.

Meanwhile, the Allies were exerting every effort to prepare for the next German attack, and to discover where it would fall. In this last they were singularly successful, for not only did they learn the front to be attacked but they were also fortunate enough to determine

the exact day and hour the offensive was scheduled to commence.

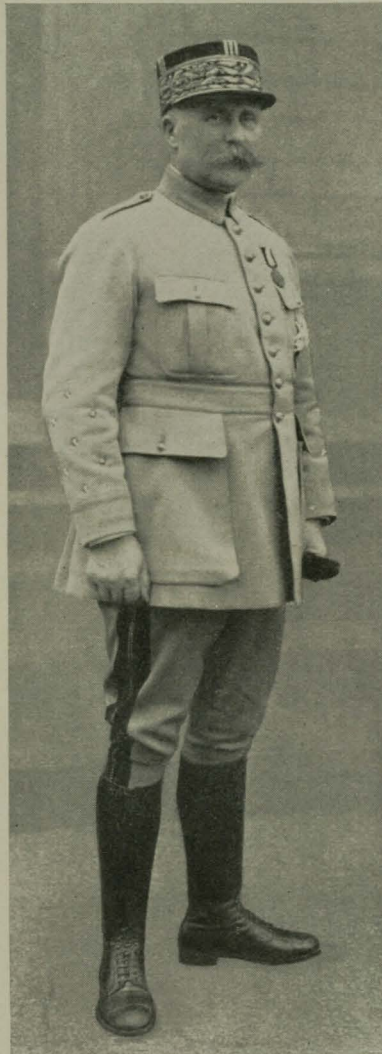
There were 26 American divisions in France on July 15 and the American and Allied strength was then superior to that of the Germans. The combat training of the American divisions was progressing well and seven were ready for battle operations, while five others were holding quiet sectors of the line. Thus 12 American divisions, the equivalent in numbers of 24 French, British or German divisions, were available for service in the front line.

With this increase in strength and with many more Americans on the way, General Foch definitely decided to attack the western face of the Marne salient, as had been previously proposed by General Pershing. In view of the enemy's known intention to advance on both sides of Reims, this Allied offensive was of the greatest importance as it was to be launched against the most vulnerable part of the hostile line.

The task of drawing up the necessary plans for meeting the German assault and for the counterattack to be launched later, fell to General Pétain, the French Commander-in-Chief. He later stated

that it would not have been possible to carry out the counterattack, which succeeded far beyond expectations, without the aid of the American troops.

To meet the German attack, General Pétain ordered that the front line be



Marshal Pétain,
Commander-in-Chief French Armies.
Picture taken at Chaumont,
January 1919



German Troops Ready for an Attack North of Compiègne, June 1918. © G

The Same Troops Jumping Off a Few Minutes Later. © G



held by weak detachments only, which were to retire before a strong hostile assault, and that the main resistance be made on the intermediate position 1 to 2 miles in rear of the front line. When the attack came, these tactics proved exceptionally successful and most of the heavy German artillery and trench-mortar preparatory fire was wasted on the abandoned French front-line trenches.

In addition the Allies profited by their knowledge of the hour of the German attack by starting their artillery bombardment about 30 minutes before the German artillery was scheduled to commence firing. The Allied bombardment caused heavy losses and much confusion in the ranks of the Germans assembled for the initial assault. Certain German units suffered so severely they had to be replaced before the attack began.

East of Reims, in the attack against the French Fourth Army, the hostile troops were heavily shelled upon reaching the abandoned front line, and upon approaching the intermediate position were met with withering fire and fierce counterattacks. The offensive there broke down all along the front. Southwest of Reims, the Germans succeeded in crossing the Marne and advancing on both banks of the river toward Epernay. When this attack was finally stopped, eight German divisions were south of the Marne in a small area between Epernay and Mézy.

In this defensive operation, the American soldiers still further distinguished themselves. The 42d Division, serving with the French Fourth Army, took part in the battle and fully measured up to the reputation of the Americans as splendid fighting men. The 369th Infantry of the 93d Division was also with the French Fourth Army at that time, although not engaged in battle on the front of the main German attack.

A graphic representation of the operations now to be described is given on the map at the end of the chapter. It should be consulted in reading this narrative.

The 3d Division, in line along the Marne River from opposite Jaulgonne to



Phosphorus Bomb Exploding

Château-Thierry, was subjected to intense artillery fire and repeated assaults in the eastern part of its sector. The French unit on its right was compelled to give way, which made the task of the 3d Division extremely difficult. However, the Germans who succeeded in crossing the Marne on its front were counter-attacked and driven back and by noon of the 16th, no enemy troops remained south of the Marne in the division sector, except on its extreme right flank where the front line was bent back to connect with the adjoining French division.

Elements of the 28th Division were in line with the French divisions on each

A Regimental Staff of the 4th Division in Conference Near the Vesle River, August 9, 1918





3d Division Troops Entrucking Near Moulins

side of the 3d, and some of its units encountered extremely heavy fighting. Northwest of Château-Thierry, the front of the American I Corps, held by a French division and the American 26th Division, which had relieved the 2d in the sector between Vaux and Torcy, was subjected to a heavy bombardment. The 2d, which had suffered over 8,100 casualties in the fighting near Belleau Wood, and the 4th Division were in reserve to the west of the salient. The 1st Division was northeast of Paris.

On July 17 the German High Command ordered the offensive stopped. The assaulting troops had suffered tremendous losses and none of the important results expected had been obtained.

Regardless of their terrific defeat, the German leaders were still determined to maintain the offensive, realizing that the American forces were rapidly increasing and that victory must be won quickly or not at all. The troops recently repulsed were directed to prepare to resume the attack as quickly as practicable, and plans for another offensive against the British Army were pushed.

The Allies, however, took immediate advantage of the German defeat and launched the previously prepared counter-offensive against the Aisne-Marne salient.

The French Fifth, Ninth, Sixth and Tenth Armies, in line from right to left on the front from Reims to Compiègne, were engaged. The Tenth Army, near Soissons, was designated to deliver the main attack. The spearhead of that Army was the French XX Corps, which was to capture the high ground south of Soissons. It consisted of the American 1st and 2d Divisions and the French 1st Moroccan Division. Its direction of attack was eastward over the plateau just south of Soissons and across the main railroad and road leading south from that place. The composition of the corps was such that four fifths of its numerical strength was American.

The concentration of troops was carried out with the utmost secrecy, the 1st and 2d Divisions going into line only at the last minute. Some units of the 2d Division marched all night and then double-timed over muddy roads in the dark in order to jump off with the barrage. The assault was launched in the early morning of July 18 and took the German troops by surprise.

The units of the 1st and 2d Divisions, with those of the 1st Moroccan Division between them, advanced with characteristic dash and vigor. They quickly pierced the hostile front lines, overran the for-

ward artillery positions, and took many prisoners. By 8:00 a. m. they had advanced more than 3 miles and were in possession of ground which practically assured the success of the whole battle.

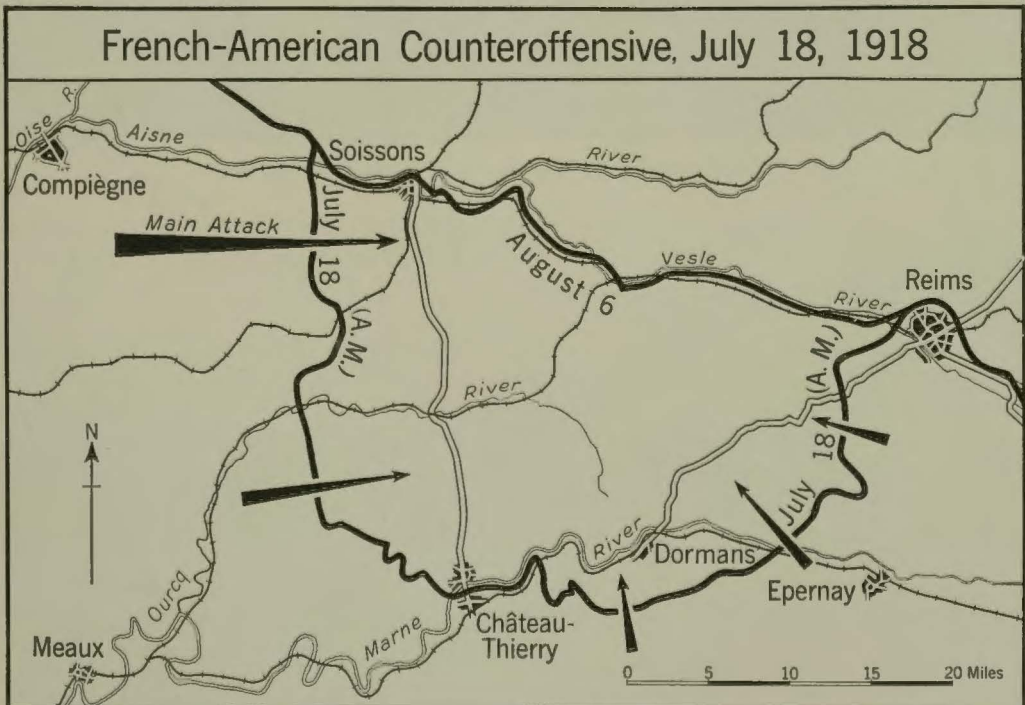
To the south, elements of the 4th Division attacking as a part of two French divisions in the Sixth Army, had progressed about 2 miles by nightfall. Still farther south the 26th Division captured the villages of Belleau and Torcy. In the Ninth Army, the 3d Division, which was in line on the south bank of the Marne, did not attack that day. The 28th Division was near the 3d in reserve.

As a result of the deep advance of the XX Corps on July 18, the situation of the German troops in the salient became most precarious and orders for a gradual withdrawal were issued by the German High Command that night. Reserves were sent to the south of Soissons with the utmost speed and orders were given to hold the ground there at all costs until the withdrawal from the salient could be accomplished. In fact, a disastrous defeat was certain if the American and

French advance at that point could not be promptly and definitely checked.

The German retirement began on the night of July 19-20 with the evacuation of all ground south of the Marne. From then on, their withdrawal was conducted in successive stages, the Germans attempting to save what they could of the enormous quantities of supplies, ammunition and equipment in the salient. Intermediate positions were prepared and each one defended desperately until the pressure of the continued attacks against it forced a further withdrawal.

The 1st and 2d Divisions encountered fresh German troops on the 19th, but in spite of bitter opposition throughout the day both made important gains. The 2d Division surged forward about 2 miles to the Soissons-Château-Thierry highway but after severe fighting was forced back and established itself just west of Tigny, with the road about ½ mile away under the control of its guns. The division was relieved from the line that night by a French division. It had driven the enemy back 6 miles, captured 3,000





2d Division Moving Up for the Attack on July 18, 1918



1st Division Artillery in Position Near Ploisy, July 20, 1918



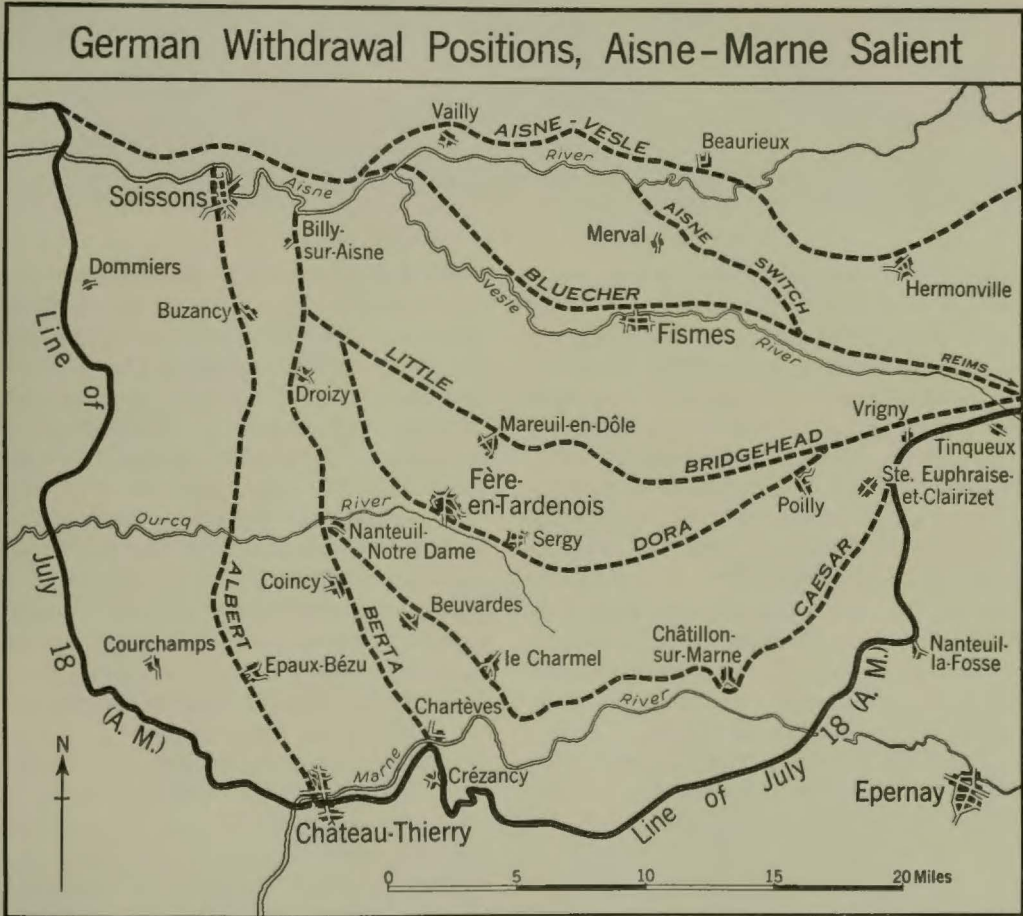
Artillery Horses Assembled Near the Front Line Ready to Move Battery Forward, July 20, 1918

prisoners and 75 guns, and in turn had suffered casualties of about 4,300 men.

On the following day, the attention of the 1st Division was directed particularly toward Berzy-le-Sec. That town had originally been in the zone of action of the adjacent French division which, after several attempts, had failed to capture it. The task was then turned over to the Americans. The fighting near the town was

and suffered a loss of about 6,900 officers and men. The 1st and 2d Divisions on this battlefield wrote a most brilliant page in American military history.

While the struggle near Soissons was going on, the American troops with the French Sixth Army continued to advance. The units of the 4th Division, whose total losses were 2,100, gained an additional 2 miles before the last of its



waged with the greatest fury, the 1st Division capturing it on the 21st. On that same day the division crossed the Soissons—Château-Thierry highway which was one of the objectives of the Tenth Army attack. The division was relieved on the night of July 22, after five days in the line. It had advanced almost 7 miles, captured 3,500 prisoners and 68 guns from 7 different German divisions

troops were relieved on the morning of July 21; and the 26th Division drove the Germans through the Bois de Bouresches and beyond, after hard fighting. Assisted part of the time by the 56th Infantry Brigade of the 28th Division, it continued the pursuit until the 24th of July, when it was stopped near La Croix Rouge Farm, having made an advance of 10 miles and having suffered more



American Battery in Action Near Chéry-Chartreuve

than 5,000 casualties during its service on the front line in this region.

On July 21 the 3d Division crossed the Marne River and joined the advance, capturing Mont St. Père that day and Jaulgonne on the following day. Steadily pressing on, it took Le Charmel during the 25th, after a bitter contest, and on the 28th crossed the Ourcq River and seized Ronchères. When it was withdrawn from the line on the 30th it had taken part in three major engagements and had advanced about 10 miles. Its losses, including those in the defensive operations along the Marne River, were, all told, nearly 6,600 officers and men.

The 42d Division, which relieved the 26th near La Croix Rouge Farm, succeeded in crossing the Ourcq on July 28. Just north of that river it engaged in stubborn fighting, some points changing hands as many as four times. It captured Sergy and Seringes-et-Nesles and persistently fought its way forward until relieved on August 3 during the pursuit of the enemy toward the Vesle. The division was assisted part of this time by the 47th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Division. When taken out of the battle the 42d had advanced 7 miles and had suffered almost 6,500 casualties.

The 32d Division entered the line on July 30 on the right of the 28th Division,

which had relieved a French division two days before. These two divisions delivered a combined attack on July 30 in which the 28th Division captured the Bois des Grimettes, after which it passed into reserve, while the 32d continued in the offensive covering both divisional fronts.

On the following day the 32d took Cierges, and on August 1, after determined attacks, captured the important position of Les Jomblets, holding it against sustained and vicious counterattacks. On August 2 it took up the pursuit of the Germans, who had been forced to fall back to their next prepared line north of the Vesle River.

The 4th Division, which had relieved the 42d on August 3, and the 32d were now the only American divisions in line and they pushed forward side by side. On August 4 the 32d captured Fismes, on the south bank of the Vesle. During the next few days the 4th and 32d Divisions and the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 3d, which had entered the line to the right of the 32d, made determined attempts to establish bridgeheads north of the river. On August 7 the 32d Division was relieved by the 28th. It had advanced 11 miles and lost almost 3,800 men. The 6th Infantry Brigade of the 3d Division was relieved on August 11, its losses having been approximately 600.

Meanwhile, on August 4 the American III Corps had taken command of the troops near Fismes, thus placing two American corps in line side by side for the first time in the war. The sectors of these corps comprised the entire front commanded by the French Sixth Army.

The reduction of the Aisne-Marne salient was completed when the American and Allied troops reached the Vesle River. The counterattack having achieved its purpose and the Germans having shown their intention to hold the line of the Vesle in force, the general attack on that front was stopped on August 6. The American troops, however, continued to exert pressure against the enemy. On August 10 the 28th Division succeeded in capturing Fismette, opposite Fismes. The 4th Division before being relieved on August 12, after having suffered about 3,500 casualties, established a small force on the north bank of the Vesle River.

At the start of the counterattack, the Germans had 50 divisions between Reims and Compiègne. To withstand the Allied assault temporarily, they had been forced to throw 27 more divisions into the salient. During the same period the Allies had added 8 French and 3 American divisions to the 42 French, 6 American (equivalent of 12 French divisions), 4 British and 1

Italian divisions which had previously been in line or in reserve in this region.

The results of this battle were most important. The threat against Paris was removed, important railroads were freed for Allied use, the American soldier proved to all concerned his ability as a fighter and it was obvious that the constantly increasing American forces were to be the decisive factor in the war. The attack south of Soissons completely changed the military situation. Thereafter the initiative was in the hands of the Allied Armies, and the Germans were forced into a defensive rôle and fought only to avert a serious disaster.

This situation made it possible for the American Commander-in-Chief to insist again upon the formation of an American combat army. After several conferences with General Foch an agreement was reached, and on August 10 the American First Army was organized and shortly thereafter the assembly of American divisions in the St. Mihiel region was begun.

In compliance with the desire of General Foch¹ to retain some American units with the Allied Armies, the 77th Division, which had relieved the 4th, and the 28th were allowed to remain in line

¹ General Foch was made a Marshal of France on August 6, 1918, toward the conclusion of this fighting.

Main Bridge Between Fismes and Fismette Destroyed by the Retreating Germans



on the Vesle, while the 32d was left in the area as a reserve under French orders.

With a view to continuing the pressure and giving the Germans no time to rest or reorganize, Allied operations were immediately planned against other portions of the front. The first of these, the Somme offensive, was begun by the British on August 8 against the salient immediately east of Amiens and was highly successful.

Then followed on August 18 the French Oise-Aisne offensive in the vicinity of Noyon for the purpose of flanking the German positions on the Vesle and Aisne Rivers and forcing them to be abandoned. This offensive succeeded in its purpose, aided to a large extent by the American 32d Division which attacked from August 28 to September 1, capturing the town of Juvigny in a brilliant assault and penetrating the hostile positions to a depth of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The division was taken out of the line during September 2 after having suffered more than 2,600 casualties.

The progress of the Oise-Aisne offensive forced the Germans to retire from the Vesle on the night of September 3-4. The American 28th and 77th Divisions, which were still in line there, advanced in pursuit and attacked the new German line near the Aisne River. After a number of local successes the 28th was relieved on September 8, its total losses on the Ourcq

and Vesle having been over 6,700 officers and men. The 77th was relieved later, on September 16, its casualties having totaled nearly 4,800, and both divisions moved eastward to take part in the Meuse-Argonne operations of the American First Army which occurred shortly afterward.

During the latter part of September the 370th Infantry of the 93d Division served in the line north of Vauxaillon, as a part of the French 59th Division, and made a substantial advance. It remained in line until about the middle of October, when it was relieved. It reentered the battle on November 5 and participated in the pursuit of the German Army. The activities of this regiment concluded the American fighting in the Aisne-Marne region.

During the severe battles in this area, a total American force of about 310,000 men, which comprised two corps headquarters, nine divisions, air units, heavy artillery, medical troops and transportation units, served with the Allies and suffered losses of more than 67,000.

While some American units attracted special attention due to their greater experience and the importance of their objectives, yet the reputations of all American divisions which served in this region were enhanced by their gallant conduct in battle, and they received unstinted praise from all, especially the French.

American Unit Entraining at Château-Thierry



A TOUR OF THE AMERICAN BATTLEFIELDS
IN THE AISNE-MARNE REGION

THIS tour, which is a long one, begins and ends at Paris. It can be completed in ten hours if care is taken not to spend too much time at interesting points. To save time lunch should be carried.

Soissons is suggested as a stopping place for those who desire to spend more than one day in the area. It is on the described route and from there one can conveniently reach the French battlefields along the Chemin des Dames, and those of the American 32d Division near Juvigny and the 370th Infantry, 93d Division, in the vicinity of Vauxaillon.

The data given on pages 520-521 will be helpful to those following this tour.

The narrative at the beginning of the chapter should be kept in mind and the map at the end consulted so that the various operations which took place in the region of this tour will be more clearly understood by the tourist.

The speedometer distances given are for general reference and are not essential in following this tour. They may, however, be helpful in a few places and for that reason it is suggested that at the bridge in La Ferté-sous-Jouarre the tourist set his speedometer to agree with the distance which appears in the text.

When following this itinerary, unless contrary road instructions are given, the tourist should continue straight ahead.

EN ROUTE PARIS TO NORTH OF
LUCY-LE-BOCAGE

(0 m 0 km) Leave vicinity of the Place de l'Opéra in Paris on Rue Lafayette.

Follow Highway N-3 through Claye and Meaux to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. For a considerable distance beyond Paris, N-3 is indicated on street signs as the Rue de Paris.

(18.3 m 29.4 km) Claye is the point nearest Paris reached by hostile patrols during the German advance in 1914.

(24.1 m 38.8 km) About 5 miles beyond Claye, near the right side of the road, is seen a monument to Marshal Gallieni



Monument Near Meaux
to Marshal Gallieni
Erected by the City of Paris

whose famous "taxicab army" hurried forward from Paris to this vicinity in September 1914 to aid in stopping the progress of the German Armies.

(27.5 m 44.2 km) At entrance to Meaux, at main road fork, take right branch.

Meaux was near the battle line for several days in 1914 during the First Battle of the Marne. Desperate fighting took place immediately to the north of it.

An interesting old cathedral is seen to the left of the road in the center of town.

A monument, consisting of a colossal statuary group, to commemorate the First Battle of the Marne is located a short distance northeast of Meaux. It was erected by Americans with funds raised in America. To visit, just before reaching far side of Meaux turn left on main road to Soissons (N-36) and proceed $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to monument. Time required for side trip—10 minutes.



Monument Erected
Northeast of Meaux to
Commemorate the
First Battle of the Marne
in 1914

(30.9 m 49.7 km) At **Trilport** the route goes over the historic Marne River on a masonry bridge parts of which were destroyed by the French in 1814, 1870 and again in 1914 to hinder the march toward Paris of invading armies. Small plates on the right-hand wall record the dates of the destruction and reconstruction.

(39.6 m 63.7 km) In **La Ferté-sous-Jouarre**, turn to the left at the large monument.

This monument is to the unknown dead of the British Expeditionary Force which landed in France during August 1914. It was here that this British force, after its memorable retreat from near Mons, struck back with vigor at the German divisions in the First Battle of the Marne.

To the left of the bridge, on the river banks, are markers which indicate the place where British troops recrossed the river on a temporary bridge, built by the Royal Engineers while under hostile fire.

The American I Corps Headquarters was located in this town from June 18 to July 21, and from August 13 to August 18.

American First Army Headquarters was organized here on August 10, 1918. It remained but a short time, moving to Neufchâteau three days later.

(39.7 m 63.9 km) **Cross the Marne River and continue toward Château-Thierry still following Highway N-3.**

(45.5 m 73.2 km) **Montreuil-aux-Lions** was the Headquarters of the 2d Division during the early part of its fighting in the vicinity of Belleau Wood.

(47.1 m 75.8 km) **Just after leaving town, on the right** is seen a British military cemetery. A large cross of the type erected therein is the distinguishing feature of each British World War military cemetery. Most of the soldiers buried here fell in September 1914.

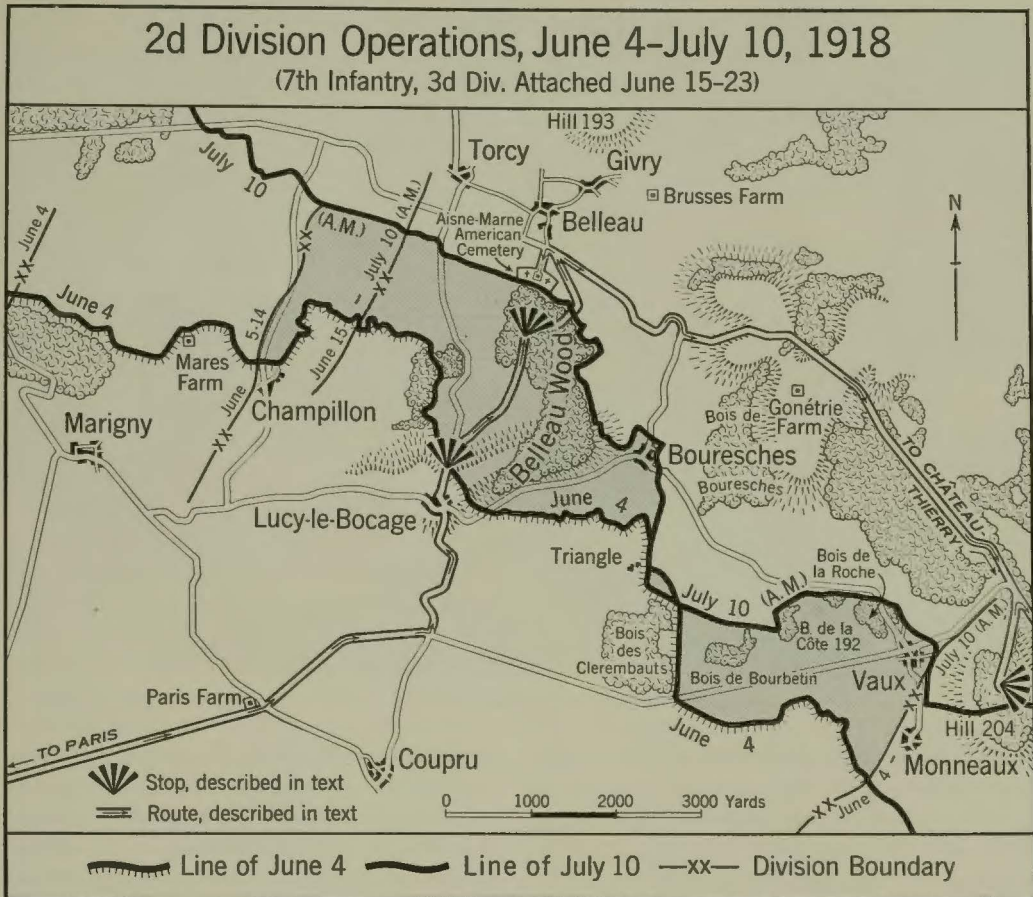
The infantry of the American 2d Division detrained at Montreuil-aux-Lions while hurrying forward to enter the battle line near Belleau Wood. They reported this road crowded and, in some places, blocked with French civilians and troops endeavoring to get out of the way of the German advance.

(49.6 m 79.8 km) **At the next bend in the road, about 2 miles farther on**, is a large group of buildings called Paris Farm. This farm was several miles in rear of the battle line during June and July, and was subjected to frequent bombardments by German heavy artillery.

(51.0 m 82.1 km) **About a mile farther**

Assault Unit of 26th Division in Attack on Torcy at 4:35 a. m., July 18, 1918





on, turn to the left toward Belleau Wood.

(51.8 m 83.3 km) In the valley just before reaching the next village, **Lucy-le-Bocage**, a culvert is crossed near which medical officers of the United States Navy, attached to the Marine Brigade of the 2d Division, maintained a dressing station. Many of the division wounded were treated here and sent to the rear along the small valley to the left.

(52.1 m 83.8 km) **Lucy-le-Bocage** was completely destroyed by German shell-fire during the fighting near by.

The boulder marker, seen at the left side of the road just before reaching the church, is one of many such markers erected by the 2d Division after the Armistice, on or near its battlefields.

(52.4 m 84.3 km) At the crest of the first hill beyond the village, **STOP**.

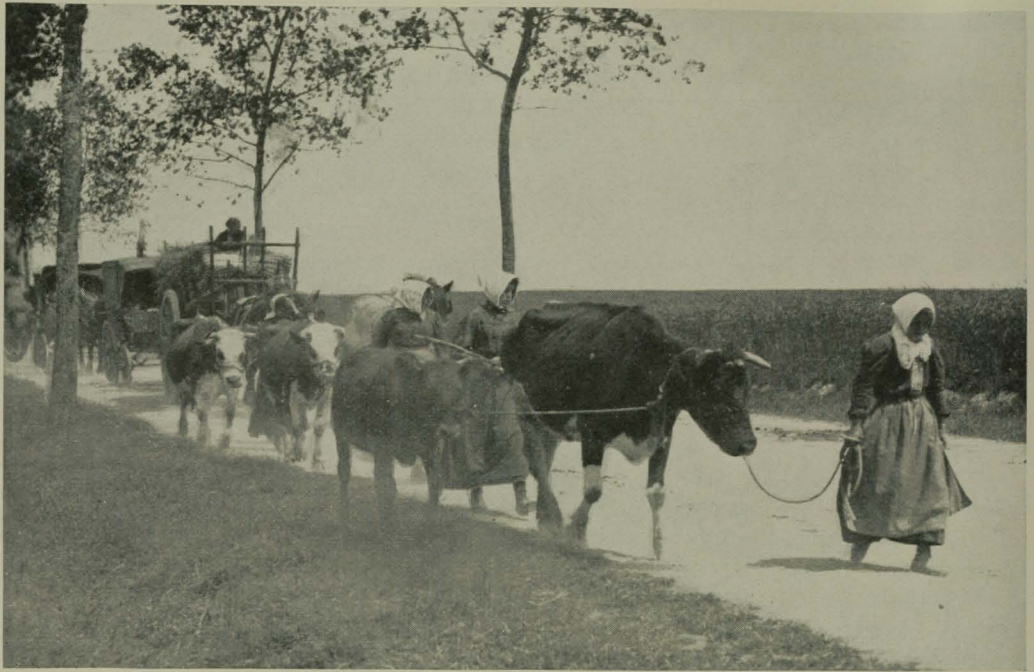
Face down the road, which direction is approximately north. (See sketch above.)

If view to the right front is obstructed for any reason climb bank at left of road.

Belleau Wood is the nearest wood seen to the right front and right. The observer is standing on the line from which the first attack against it was launched by the 2d Division.

During the last days of May 1918 a powerful German offensive had broken through the Chemin des Dames front and German troops were advancing rapidly toward the Marne River. The Allied situation was critical and reserves from all parts of the Western Front were promptly rushed to this region.

Among the troops hurriedly moved here was the American 2d Division, which included one brigade of marines. Arriving on June 1, it was assigned a battle position with its center near this point. All available men immediately began digging trenches and otherwise preparing



French Refugees Fleeing From the Germans During the Advance of May 1918

for defense, the Germans at the time being delayed by French detachments in positions on the near slopes of the line of hills seen in the distance approximately 2 miles away to the right front.

The front line organized by the division ran around the wood seen on top of the hill about 600 yards to the left front, included this point, and continued on to the right rear passing around the buildings of Triangle, seen on the hillside a mile away in that direction. It then crossed the main highway which the tour has been following from Paris, thus blocking the direct road to that important place.

Small advance groups of the enemy came in contact with that section of the American line near Triangle on June 2 and during the next day a determined assault against the left of the 2d Division position was repulsed with heavy losses. On June 4 the entire front line of the division was engaged and on that day the advance of the German forces in this region was definitely stopped.

The German High Command, upon hearing of the presence of American troops on this important battle front,

directed that they be denied any success whatsoever and that as much damage as possible be inflicted upon them. Consequently, as the Americans were determined to regain certain strong points which the Germans had captured, the fighting near here was very bitter and the casualties on both sides were out of all proportion to the amount of ground which finally changed hands.

During the morning of June 6, the first of the many 2d Division attacks in this vicinity was launched from its line on the far side of the wood to the left front. This attack, made in conjunction with the French, resulted in a gain of about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. That afternoon a powerful assault against Belleau Wood was made from here and succeeded in obtaining a foothold in that part of the wood seen to the right. While advancing across the open fields to the right front, heavy casualties were suffered. During the course of the attack the village of Bouresches to the right at the foot of this hill, but not visible, was captured and held in spite of five determined attempts made by the Germans during the next few days to recapture it.

Belleau Wood, which is shaped somewhat like a distorted hour glass, with the lower or southern section to the right of here and the larger upper or northern section to the observer's right front, was the scene of prolonged and bitter struggles in which the 7th Infantry of the 3d Division and engineer troops of the 2d Division, acting as infantry, assisted for a brief period before its capture was finally completed many days later.

Severe fighting took place in the southern part of Belleau Wood on June 7 and 8, but all efforts to advance resulted in only minor gains. The wood was abandoned on the 9th to permit the artillery to concentrate its fire on the German positions there without endangering American troops, and on the 10th a determined attack was launched against the wood from the line to the right of here. This regained the positions previously held but in spite of every effort the troops were unable to progress farther. Consequently, on June 11 another attack against the entire wood was launched from near here in the direction of the observer's right front. The assaulting units entered the northern part of the wood and took the

enemy in the flank and rear. This resulted in many captures and hand-to-hand combats. Elements of the attacking force reached the far edge of the wood where they themselves were attacked in the rear. The fighting continued violently throughout the day, the Germans making two organized counterattacks by fresh battalions. That night no part of the northern section of the wood was retained, although the southern section, to the right of here, was for the first time entirely occupied.

On June 12 the northern section of the wood was again attacked and about one third of it taken. From that day on the fighting in it was fierce and furious. Counterattacks followed attacks as each side, determined not to yield an inch, stubbornly defended its positions. The casualties were heavy as the artillery executed prolonged bombardments and the machine guns took their toll. In the end, however, the determination of the Americans prevailed and Belleau Wood, after a bitter struggle on June 25, was definitely cleared of the enemy.

On July 1, following a terrific 24-hour bombardment, the town of Vaux, to the

American Reserves Passing Through La Ferté-sous-Jouarre
En Route to the Front, July 1918



right rear from here beyond the large wood in the distance, was captured by the infantry and engineers of the 2d Division in a perfectly executed attack, with but few losses to themselves.

During the fighting on June 6 to the left front, Gunnery Sergeant Charles F. Hoffman, Marine Corps, 2d Division, performed the feat for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for bravery given by the American Government. Immediately after his company had reached its objective, several hostile counterattacks were launched against it. Sergeant Hoffman was attempting to organize the new position when he saw 12 of the enemy, armed with five light machine guns, crawling toward his group. Giving the alarm, he rushed the hostile detachment, bayoneted the two leaders, and forced the others to flee, abandoning their guns. His quick action, initiative and courage drove the enemy from a place where they could have swept the hill with machine-gun fire and forced the withdrawal of his company.

The splendid conduct of the 2d Division in fighting the enemy to a standstill on

this front, in spite of a casualty list of approximately 8,100 officers and men, was widely and enthusiastically proclaimed by the French Army and the people of France.

EN ROUTE NORTH OF LUCY-LE-BOCAGE
TO BELLEAU WOOD

(52.6 m 84.6 km) **At the road junction 200 yards ahead, turn to the right.**

(53.5 m 86.1 km) **At the flagpole in the center of Belleau Wood, STOP.**

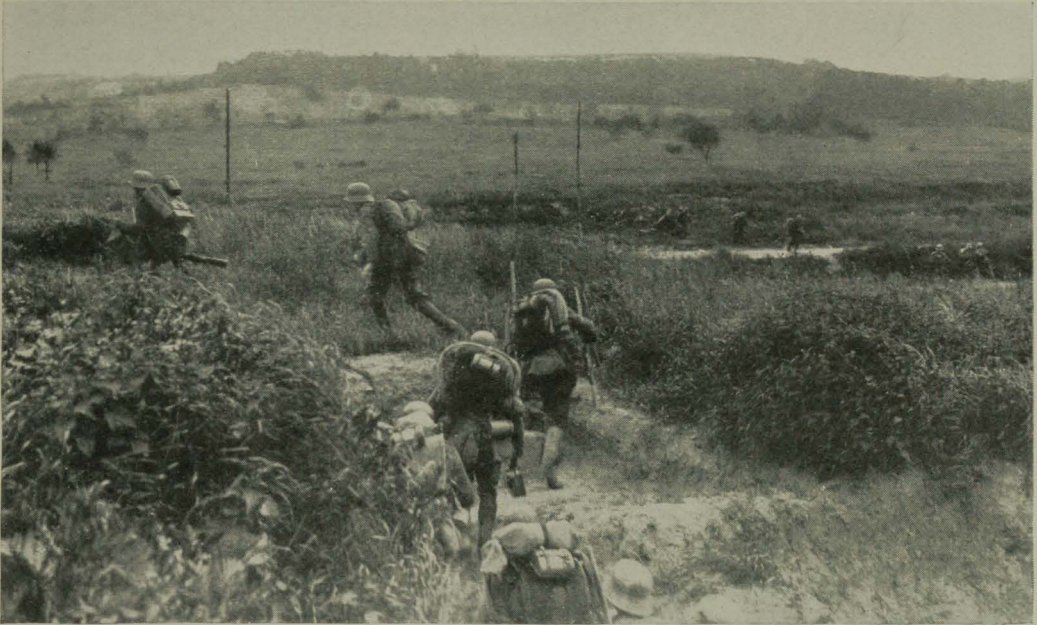
This wood, officially called by the French the Bois de la Brigade de Marine in honor of the unit mainly responsible for its capture, is now owned by the United States Government. It is being maintained as a memorial to all American troops who fought in Europe during the World War. It is the only place on this tour where evidences of the fighting still exist to any extent, as the other battlefields of this section of France again have been placed under intensive cultivation.

The remains of trenches and various relics of the war may be seen by walking through the wood, and a visit to the small museum will disclose many interesting

Belleau Wood

Note the field crossed by the 2d Division in its first attack against the wood





German Combat Group Working Its Way Forward,
May 1918. © G

weapons and articles of equipment a large number of which were found near by.

The large cleared space near the museum and that part of the wood beyond the clearing were captured on June 25 in an assault launched at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. An artillery bombardment of 14 hours preceded this attack, during which many thousands of shells of all calibers were poured into this small area. The fighting lasted well into the night before this part of Belleau Wood, the last section of the wood to be captured, was finally in the hands of the 2d Division.

The importance of the American success in this region is indicated by the following extract from a statement which a German division commander published to his troops who were engaged in the fighting:

"Should the Americans on our front even temporarily gain the upper hand, it would have a most unfavorable effect for us as regards the morale of the Allies and the duration of the war. In the fighting that now confronts us, we are not concerned about the occupation or non-occupation of this or that unimportant wood or village, but rather with the question as to whether Anglo-American prop-

aganda that the American Army is equal to or even superior to the German, will be successful."

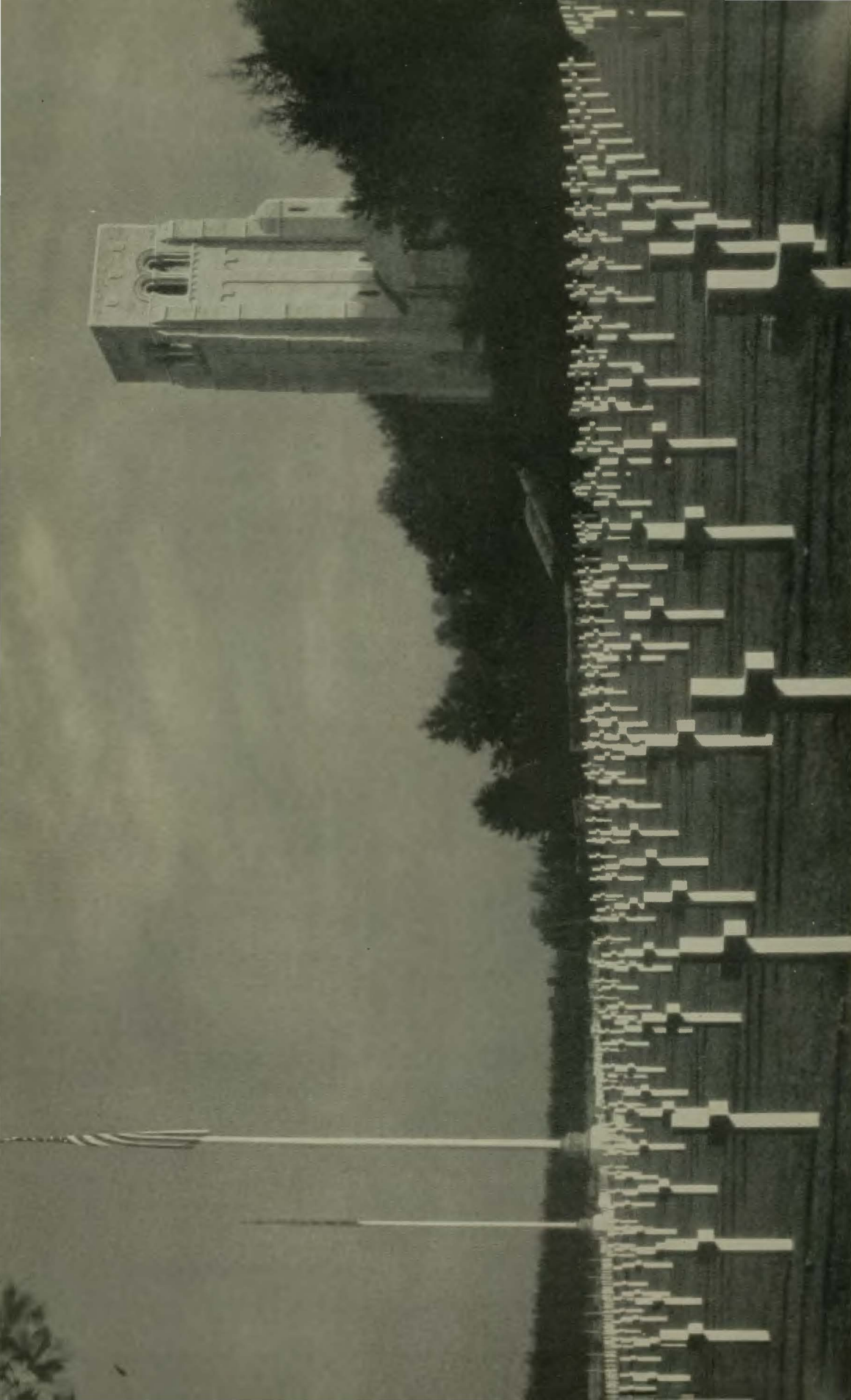
EN ROUTE BELLEAU WOOD TO AISNE-MARNE AMERICAN CEMETERY

(52.6 m 86.2 km) **While proceeding through Belleau Wood**, note the uneven character of the terrain and the tangled undergrowth which greatly hindered the advance of the American troops.

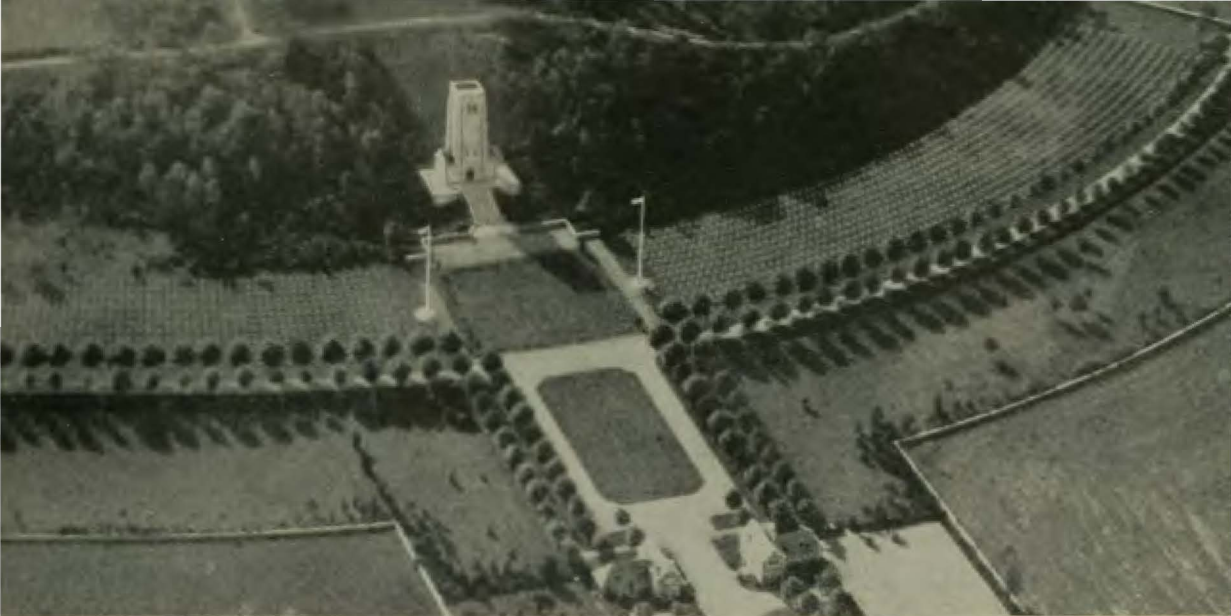
(54.0 m 86.9 km) **Soon after leaving the wood** another 2d Division boulder marker is passed and shortly thereafter to the left is seen the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. The church passed near the corner of the cemetery is one restored by an association of veterans of the 26th Division as a memorial to that division.

(54.5 m 87.7 km) **Beyond the church, turn to the left into the cemetery.**

The building on the right of the driveway contains a reception room for the convenience of visitors and the office of the superintendent in charge of the cemetery. Inquiries concerning the location of a particular grave should be made at this office. The building on the left is the residence of the cemetery superintendent.



General View of Aisne-Marne American Cemetery Near Belleau



Airplane View of Aisne-Marne Cemetery

This cemetery, laid out in a sweeping curve at the foot of the hill upon which stands Belleau Wood, contains 2,288 graves. The majority of those buried here are from units which fought in the immediate vicinity and along the Marne River. Some hundreds of bodies, however, were moved here in 1922 from war-time cemeteries in the general vicinity of Lyon and Clermont in central France.

From the center of the hillside rises the memorial chapel, a striking example of French Romanesque architecture. Over its entrance is carved the figure of a crusader in armor, flanked by the shields of the United States and France. The decorative sculpture of the door and window openings is of trench scenes and articles of military equipment. Around the top of the tower runs a frieze of shields upon which are carved the insignia of the American corps and divisions which participated in the operations that took place in the Aisne-Marne region.

The crowning feature of the interior is the exquisitely carved and gilded altar,

Altar of Chapel



Door of Chapel



Entrance to Cemetery





Machine Gun Unit of the 26th Division Going into Action
Near Belleau, July 19, 1918

the solemn beauty of which is heightened by the effect of the three beautiful stained-glass windows above it. These represent St. Michael triumphing over the powers of evil, St. Louis the great crusader, and St. Denis the patron saint of France. The transept windows are decorated with coats of arms of the United States and Allied nations and the insignia of American divisions and higher units that fought in the Aisne-Marne region. The walls are inscribed with the names of American soldiers and marines who are carried on the rolls as missing in the operations of the vicinity.

A door in the chapel gives access to a circular stairway leading to the tower from which an excellent view of the surrounding country may be obtained.

Climb the chapel stairs and go to the front window of the upper landing, which faces approximately north.

The general view of the cemetery obtained from this point is superb.

The direction arrows on the window ledges should be used to locate the places mentioned below. The map at the end of the chapter should also be consulted.

The chapel stands directly over front-line trenches dug by the 2d Division as part of the defenses of Belleau Wood after it was captured on June 25.

The ground in front of here to the foot of the high ridge, Hill 193, and to the right as far as the eye can see was cap-

tured by troops of the American 26th Division during July in severe fighting.

The 26th Division relieved the 2d Division on a line passing through this point on July 10. Its front line was then about 5 miles long. On this part of the front it faced in the direction the observer is now facing but to the right of here it followed around the edge of Belleau Wood, as the crosses do now, and thus changed direction so as to face approximately east. The division while serving here was with the American I Corps.

When the great French-American counteroffensive against the Marne salient started on July 18, the 26th was

Hunting Lodge in Belleau Wood





26th Division Memorial Church at Belleau

on the right flank of the attack. It advanced on the first day in spite of terrific fire from Hill 193, which was in the zone of action of the French division on its left, and captured Torcy, seen in the trees to the left front, Belleau just outside the cemetery gate, and Givry, just beyond the church. The Germans on Hill 193 held out against the French attacks for three days and during this time poured a deadly fire into the American troops below them. The precarious and difficult position of these troops is evident from here and too much credit can not be given to the men of the division for holding to their gains.

Go to right (east) window of tower.

The isolated group of buildings to the left front is called Les Brusses Farm.

It is situated near the end of a long ridge which runs to the right and gradually increases in height until La Gonétrie Farm, seen to the front on the top of the hill, is reached. The near slopes and wooded areas on that ridge were such as to afford ideal positions for the German troops who were defending it.

In the assault of July 18, units of the 26th Division reached the valley on this side of the ridge but severe fire from it and Hill 193 forced them back to Belleau Wood. It was during that attack that Private First Class George Dilboy of the 26th Division won the Congressional Medal of Honor. After an advance he was reconnoitering the ground in front with his platoon leader when a machine gun suddenly opened fire on them from 100 yards. From a standing position, fully exposed to view, he returned the fire at once. He then rushed forward, with bayonet fixed, falling within 25 yards of the gun with his right leg nearly severed and other wounds in his body. With undaunted courage and gallantry, he continued to fire from a prone position killing part of the machine gun crew and dispersing the rest. Private Dilboy died on the field of his exploits.

On July 20 the division attacked along its entire front and captured, after fierce fighting, La Gonétrie Farm and the Bois de Bouresches, the wood seen to the right of the farm. The ridge between Les Brusses Farm and La Gonétrie Farm was not taken on that day due to heavy machine-gun fire from

German Prisoners Captured at Belleau Wood



it and enfilade fire from the top of Hill 193.

That night the Germans withdrew to a new line, and on July 21 the division advanced over the ridge which had caused them so much trouble and continued on about 5 miles, meeting for the most part but little opposition. A severe two-day struggle then followed near Epieds before the enemy again withdrew to a new position.

On July 25 the 26th Division was relieved by the 42d Division. During the 15 days it had served in line on this front the casualties of the division were approximately 5,000 officers and men.

Go to opposite (west) window of tower.

The village to the right front on top of the ridge is Hautevesnes and to the right of it also on the ridge is Courchamps. Elements of the American 4th Division assisted in the capture of both of those places in bitter fighting on July 18.

The 4th Division, except for its artillery and one infantry brigade, was attached to the French 164th Division for the July 18 assault. In addition to the elements which fought at Hautevesnes and Courchamps, other units beyond Hautevesnes vigorously advanced about 2 miles.

Still farther along the front, about 7 miles beyond Hautevesnes, the 7th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Division was serving with the French 33d Division. Units of it attacked with the French on

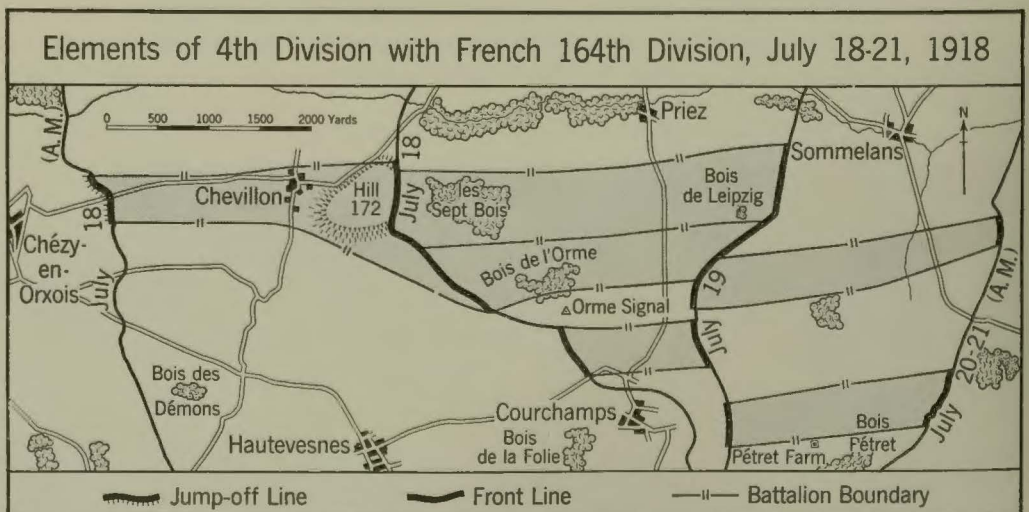


Part of Belleau Wood Soon After Its Capture by the 2d Division

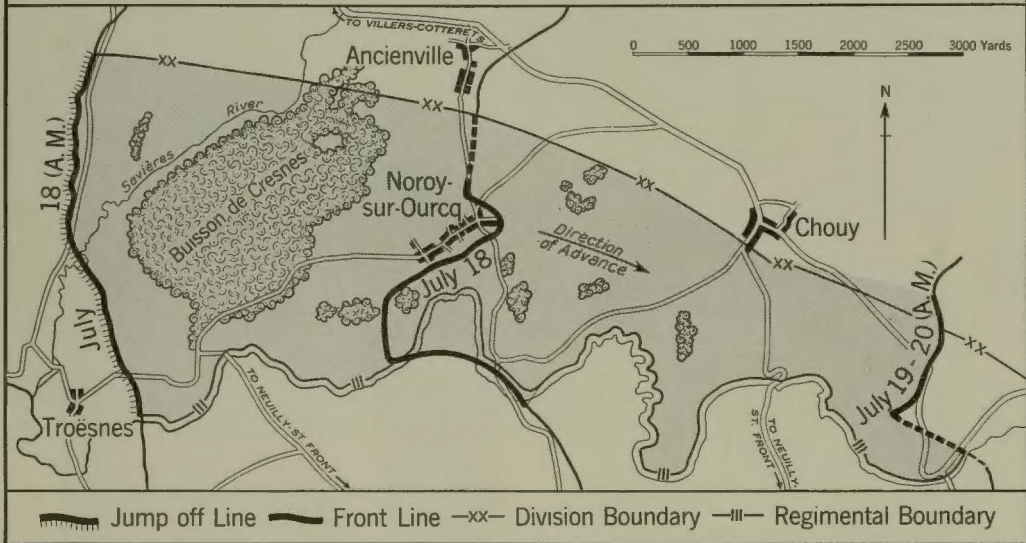
July 18, cleaned out the strong German positions in the wood, Buisson de Cresnes, and by nightfall had captured Noroy-sur-Ourcq which was about 2 miles within the hostile lines. (See map on next page.)

On July 19 the elements of the 4th Division which were still in line attacked against heavy machine-gun resistance and extended the gains of the previous day. These units were relieved from the battle during the early morning of July 21. The total casualties of the division, whose units had efficiently performed their missions during this fighting, were 2,100.

The center of the front of attack of the American 1st and 2d Divisions in the July 18 counteroffensive was about 14



Elements of 4th Division with French 33d Division, July 18-20, 1918



miles beyond Courchamps, the attack being made across the observer's line of vision in the direction from left to right.

Belleau Wood is the wood close to the chapel in rear and on both sides of it.

EN ROUTE AISNE-MARNE AMERICAN CEMETERY TO MONUMENT ON HILL 204

Opposite the cemetery gate is seen a form of marker which has been placed on most of the roads of France and Belgium to indicate the farthest advance of the German Armies in 1918. This one is incorrectly placed, the Germans having

Band, 5th Marines, 2d Division



been in possession of all of Belleau Wood. (54.7 m 88.0 km) Turn right at cemetery gate and continue straight ahead.

(55.1 m 88.7 km) Bouresches, captured by the 2d Division on June 6, is soon visible to the right front.

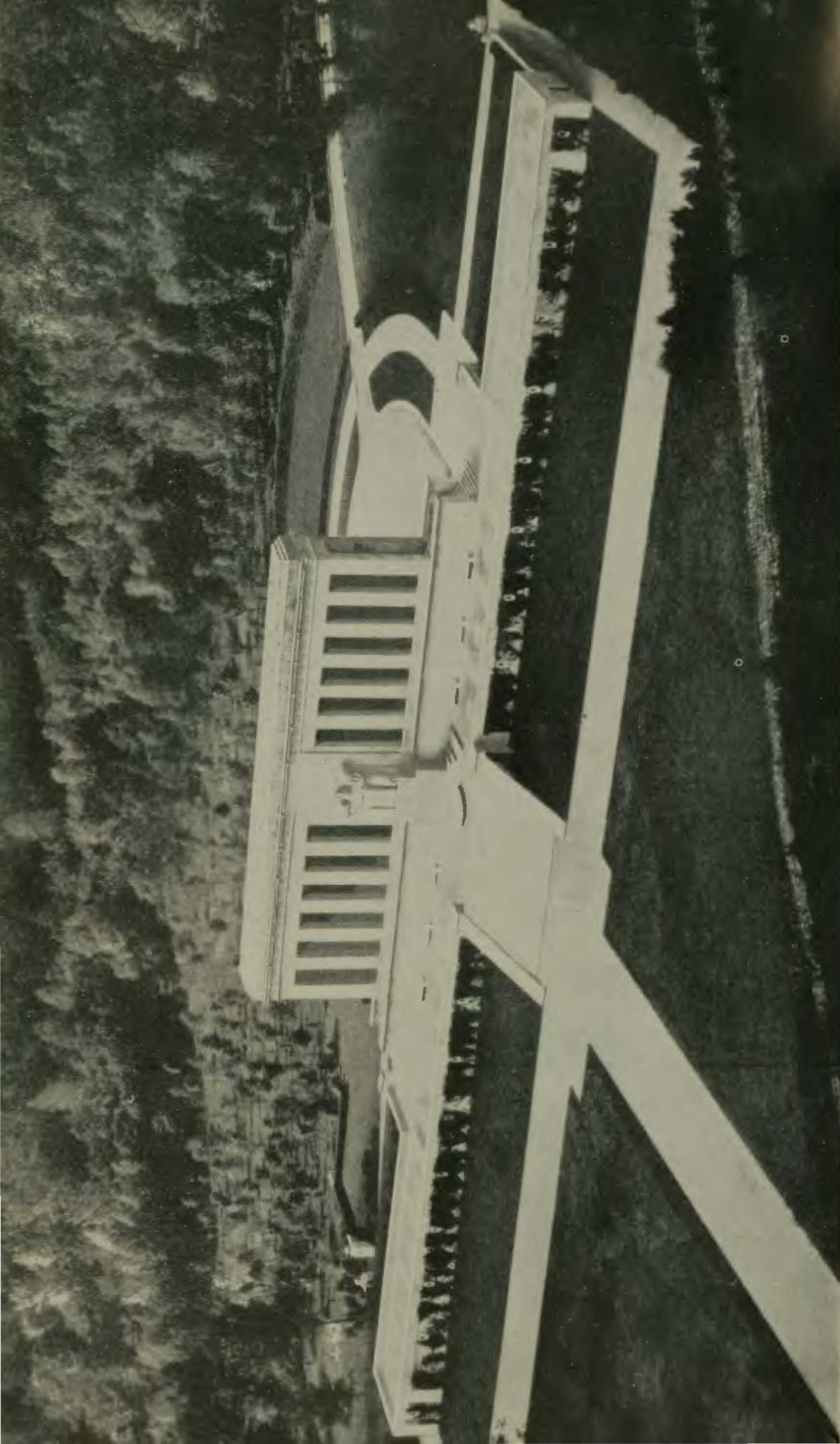
(55.4 m 89.1 km) When road starts to dip into deep valley, to the left across the valley is seen a closer view of the Les Brusses Farm-La Gonétrie Farm ridge mentioned at the last stop. The Germans on part of this ridge held out for three days in spite of the determined assaults of the 26th Division.

(55.8 m 89.8 km) On far side of valley, the road climbs up a slope stormed by troops of the 26th Division on July 20.

(57.0 m 91.7 km) After ascending hill, the first buildings seen to the right are those of La Gonétrie Farm, captured by the 26th Division as the result of hard fighting during July 20.

(57.4 m 92.4 km) Beyond the farm, the advance of the 26th Division on July 21 was generally from right to left across this road. Its zone of action extended as far as the next main road crossing, now marked by the entrance pylons to the American monument on Hill 204.

(59.3 m 95.4 km) Cross main highway and proceed to the site of the monument



Airplane View of East Face of Aisne-Marne American Memorial Near Château-Thierry



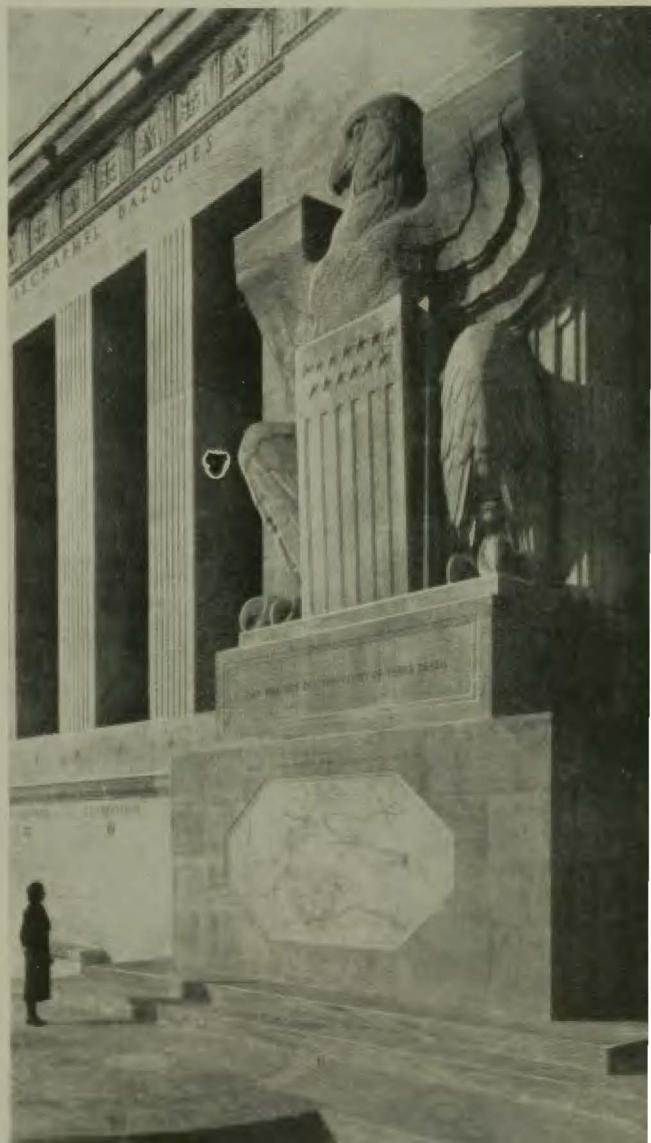
West Face of Aisne-Marne American Memorial

This impressive memorial was erected by the United States Government to commemorate the American fighting in the Aisne-Marne region and the friendship and cooperation of the French and American forces during the war.

The two sculptured figures at the center of the colonnade are symbolic of France and the United States. The names inscribed above the columns are those of places where important American fighting occurred. Inside the colonnade at the closed ends are marble tablets upon which appear inscriptions giving a brief résumé of all of the American fighting in this general vicinity.

From the terrace of the monument, a wonderful view of the Marne River valley is obtained. On this terrace is located an orientation table giving distances and directions to various places and above it is an ornamental map of the region showing the ground gained by American troops on July 18 and thereafter. Along the walls on each side of the map are carved the names and wartime insignia of the corps and divisions whose services are commemorated at this place.

Jean de la Fontaine, who was born in Château-Thierry, is said to have written a number of his fables on this hill. Napoleon, just prior to the battle of



Symbolic Eagle and Ornamental Map
Aisne-Marne Memorial

Montmirail, camped his army in this neighborhood. The old main highway to Paris passed through this spot.

The following description of the American fighting in this vicinity has been written to be read while on the main terrace of the monument.

The large town which is seen about a mile away, located on both sides of the Marne River, is Château-Thierry.

Face its tall, square church tower, which direction is approximately east.

Just beyond and to the left of the church are the tree-covered ruins of the old château which gave the town its name.

During the critical days of late May 1918, when the German troops were advancing rapidly in this direction, the American 3d Division was training in an area some distance to the southeast of here. As the hostile rush continued and the gravity of the situation became more apparent, this division, which had had no front-line experience, was hurriedly moved up and thrown into the line in scattered detachments near Château-Thierry, to assist in preventing the Germans from crossing the Marne River.

The 7th Machine Gun Battalion of

that division arrived late in the evening of May 31, about the time the German troops were entering the northern (left) outskirts of Château-Thierry, and took up a position along the south (right as seen from here) bank of the river to defend the crossings in town. Two guns of that unit were sent to assist French detachments fighting just beyond the château and, though orders for their withdrawal had been issued, they were still there when during the night of June 1 the highway bridge was blown up by the French to prevent the Germans from crossing. Arriving at the bridge just after it had been destroyed, the men who had manned these two machine guns resolutely fought their way to the railroad bridge where they and their French comrades, after a hand-to-hand conflict with German infantry, succeeded in recrossing.

This machine gun battalion of the 3d Division, assisted by French troops, prevented the Germans from crossing the river in town and inflicted exceptionally heavy losses on them.

It was due to this spirited defense, to the gallant stand of the 2d Division in the area just visited and to the desperate

Main Bridge at Château-Thierry, Blown Up by French to Prevent Germans from Crossing





American Troops in Public Square of Château-Thierry After Its Capture, July 1918

efforts of the French units that the German advance on this front was definitely stopped on June 4. The hostile front line at that time did not cross the Marne River but did include all of this hill.

On June 6 and 7 the French 10th Colonial Division with the 30th Infantry of the 3d Division attached, starting about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the right of here, launched two attacks against this hill and succeeded in gaining a foothold on top of it. The 4th Infantry, 3d Division, later in June, held a front-line position in the wood behind here for a few days.

The 3d Division held the south bank of the river from Château-Thierry on as far as the eye can see during part of June and July, the German lines being on the other bank. Its activities until July 15 consisted mainly in preparing its own position for defense and in sending an occasional patrol across the river to capture prisoners and attempt to secure information concerning the enemy troops.

On July 1 small units of the 111th Infantry, 28th Division, and on July 6 elements of the 111th and 112th Infantry Regiments, 28th Division, assisted the French in local attacks which gained some ground in front of here. On July 6 the small wood, Bois de Courteau, seen directly ahead on this slope, was captured. On the night of July 8-9, the Germans recaptured that wood in an attack during the course of which four companies of the 28th Division became engaged.

As a result of the French-American counteroffensive which began on July 18 south of Soissons, the Germans withdrew from this vicinity during the night of July 20-21. They were immediately pursued by the troops on this front.

EN ROUTE MONUMENT ON HILL 204
TO NEAR MÉZY

(61.0 m 98.1 km) Return to main highway, turn sharply to the right and continue into the town of Château-Thierry.



3d Division Monument at Château-Thierry

(63.0 m 101.4 km) **Just before reaching the main bridge in Château-Thierry, on the left is a building containing a small museum of war relics, and near it is a monument erected by the 3d Division.**

(63.1 m 101.5 km) **Cross the river.**

From bridge, to the right in the distance can be seen the monument on Hill 204.

(63.6 m 102.3 km) **Beyond the viaduct over the railroad, turn to the left.**

(65.0 m 104.6 km) **Beyond the town, for the next few miles the tour runs near the Marne River, which winds its way in the valley to the left of this road.**

(65.2 m 104.9 km) **The high ridge seen to the left is on the opposite side of the river. German observation posts there kept close watch of the American activities near this road. All suspicious movements were communicated to German batteries concealed in woods and ravines in rear of the ridge and the places concerned on this side were generally subjected to immediate shellfire.**

(67.0 m 107.8 km) **Near first sharp left bend in road is the village of Fossoy. This was close to the west flank of the last**

Machine Gun, 3d Division, in Position at Château-Thierry, June 1, 1918



great German offensive of the war, which started on July 15. That part of the 3d Division in the area seen to the left front was caught by the full force of the assault units of the powerful German attack.

(67.6 m 108.8 km) **From top of first hill beyond Fossoy, to the left about 1/2 mile away are seen two farms. The troops of the 3d Division defending those places on July 15 fought to the last man. The few Germans who then advanced beyond this road were later either killed or captured by the American troops.**

The area where units of the 28th Division assisted the French in stopping the German advance on July 15 lies about 4 miles south-east of the next village, Crézancy. To visit, at second street in Crézancy turn right and travel via St. Eugène, Monthurel, Celles-les-Condé to St. Agnan. Consult map on page 65 before starting. To complete a loop and to visit the sectors held by units of the 28th Division along the Marne continue through St. Agnan toward Dormans. Upon joining main highway near Dormans turn left and follow it to Crézancy. Rejoin the tour there. Length of detour about 18 miles. Amount of time required—1 hour.

(68.7 m 110.5 km) **Soon after entering the next town, Crézancy, turn sharply to the left on the road to Mézy.**

Crézancy was never captured by the Germans although the other side of Surrélin Creek valley, seen to the right, was in their possession for four days, and during two days fighting occurred in rear (south) of the town on the high ground across the creek from it.

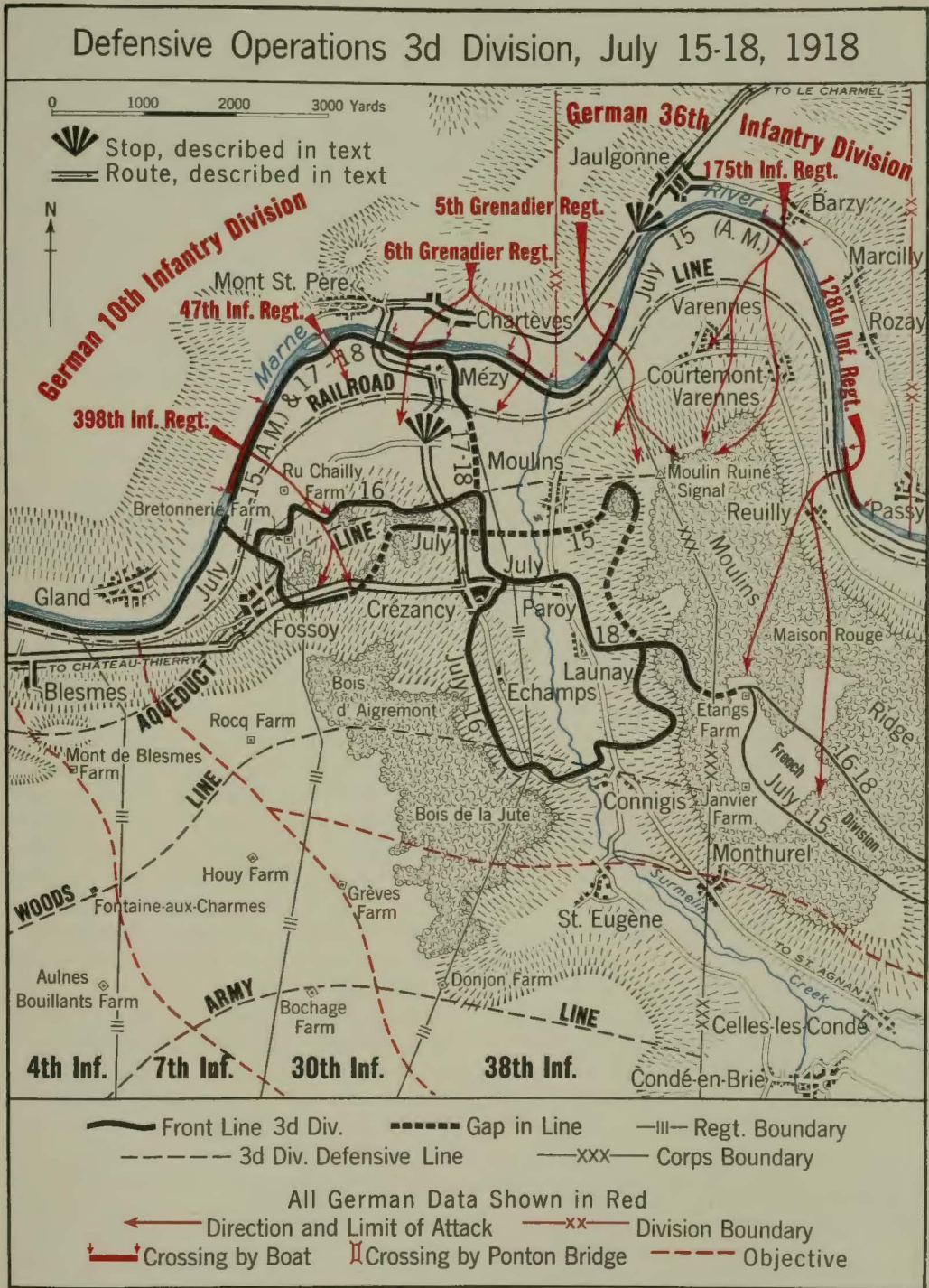
(69.6 m 112.0 km) **At first crossroads beyond the village cemetery, STOP.**

In this vicinity occurred some of the most desperate fighting of the war.

Face down the road which direction is approximately north.

Except for Moulins Ridge, seen directly to the right, all other hills on the horizon to the front and sides are on the opposite bank of the Marne River and were in German hands on July 14.

The German attack of July 15, their last great offensive, involved a 50-mile front from near here to beyond Reims.



In this vicinity the 3d Division held the line of the river from Moulins Ridge to Château-Thierry, 5 miles away to the left.

On the evening of July 14, prisoners

were captured east of Reims from whom it was learned that the long-expected German offensive would begin shortly after midnight. Taking full advantage

German Anti-Aircraft Shells Exploding Near American Observation Balloon
Stationed in the Vicinity of Château-Thierry

of this information, at 11:45 p. m. every gun on this side of the river blazed forth in an intensive bombardment which caused great havoc in front of here in the German masses forming up for the attack. The support trenches and other points where German troops would naturally assemble for an assault were so heavily shelled that some of their units had to be replaced before the attack began.

At 12:10 a. m. on July 15 the German artillery opened up, and about 2:00 a. m. there was a sudden increase of machine-gun and rifle fire along the river as the enemy started his attempts to cross by means of ferries and ponton bridges. One of the six German regiments which attacked the 3d Division crossed in front of here. It was badly cut up by American artillery fire, and the troops who reached the railroad near Mézy, the village seen ahead, were counterattacked and forced back over the river, the remnants reaching the far bank about 5:00 a. m. Another regiment which crossed to the left of here suffered heavily from artillery and machine-gun fire. However, it wiped out the American troops on the riverbank and advanced about 5:00 a. m. in the face of rifle and machine-gun fire from Americans in the woods above them. The attack was stopped near the edges of the woods to the left rear of here. A third regiment, after several disastrous attempts, crossed near Mont St. Père, seen

on the hillside to the left of Mézy, about 8:45 a. m. and in spite of heavy casualties a considerable part of it reached the railroad and the field in front of here, in both of which places large numbers of German soldiers later surrendered.

Early in the morning, the Germans succeeded in advancing over ground held by the French on the far side of Moulins Ridge. This exposed the right of the American line, and detachments on the ridge had to withstand several attacks against their front and flank during the day. The fighting there and near this point was of the greatest severity, involving repeated attacks and counterattacks until the units concerned were almost destroyed.

On the entire front of attack this side of Reims, the Germans succeeded in advancing about 4 miles on July 15 at all places except near here where they were opposed by American troops. At midnight of that day the Germans to the front and left front were retreating across the Marne while the front line of the 3d Division was about 600 yards behind this point in the woods.

On the 16th the detachments of the 3d Division still on Moulins Ridge, being almost cut off from neighboring units, were withdrawn to a line about 1 mile to the rear. On that same day the 111th Infantry of the 28th Division relieved that part of the 3d Division in rear of here and on July 17 that regiment rees-

tablished its part of the front line along the riverbank to the left of Mézy.

The Germans made no organized attacks in this vicinity on the 16th, but farther to the right their advance continued although slowed up to a large extent by a French counterattack.

Of the two regiments of the 3d Division which were caught by the full force of the initial German attack, the 38th Infantry on the right was eventually forced to meet assaults from the front and from both flanks. In this precarious position it gallantly fought the storm troops of the enemy to a standstill. The 30th Infantry on the left, in a different but no less difficult situation, performed its task with equal determination and bravery, and consequently on the front of these units the Germans gained nothing to compensate them for their careful preparations and heavy losses. The conduct of the American troops in this action gave further impetus to the rapidly increasing reputation of the American divisions.

By July 17 the German offensive had been definitely stopped on the whole front, and the next day the French and Americans began their great counteroffensive south of Soissons. As a result of the Allied counteroffensive, the German High Command promptly ordered a withdrawal from this part of the Aisne-Marne salient, which began during the night of July 19.

On July 21 a regiment of the 3d Division crossed the river near Château-Thierry and occupied Mont St. Père from which place it protected the crossing of the remainder of the division.

From here to Fismes, about 19 miles away, the American divisions advanced along the axis of the Marne salient. The ground passed over on the tour is part of that which they restored to France during the period July 20 to August 6.

EN ROUTE NEAR MÉZY TO NEAR COURMONT

(70.0 m 112.6 km) **To the right of the bridge on which this road passes over the railway in Mézy, an American detachment held out until late in the afternoon of July 15 in spite of all efforts of the Germans to capture them.**

(70.1 m 112.8 km) **Beyond bridge, at curve in road, in the excavations seen to the left, a small group of Americans held their position on the first day of the offensive long after the German lines had swept beyond them on both their flanks.**

(70.4 m 113.3 km) **Upon approaching the river note the open fields on this side of it. Reports of German officers state that their troops suffered heavy losses on those flats from the accurate rifle fire of the American soldiers.**

During the night of July 21 and the next morning a large part of the 3d Division crossed the river on a temporary

German Anti-Balloon Gun in Action. © G





Le Charmel Château, Captured by the
3d Division, July 27, 1918

bridge built by the division engineers near the site of the present structure.

(70.8 m 113.9 km) **After crossing bridge, at first junction bear to the right.**

(71.2 m 114.6 km) **Pass through the village of Chartèves, which was occupied by the 3d Division on July 22.**

(71.4 m 114.9 km) **At far side of village, by looking to the right across the river a view of the American position as seen by the attacking German troops on July 15 is obtained. Detachments of Americans with machine guns were in the underbrush**

along the riverbank while stronger forces were along the railroad seen beyond it. The division orders prescribed that the main line of resistance on the high wooded ground in rear be held at all costs.

(72.7 m 117.0 km) **Just before entering the next village, Jaulgonne, STOP without leaving car. (See map on next page.)**

To the right front, on the other side of the bridge, the course of the river bends abruptly, its valley being visible for some distance extending to the right. Four companies of the 28th Division, attached to French units, were stationed along that part of the river when the enemy launched the July 15 attack. One of them was on the opposite bank with its nearest flank at the bridge, while the other three were up the valley just beyond the next bend. The Germans forced a crossing between these two groups and also advanced past their outer flanks for a considerable distance, but were unable to cross the river in their immediate front. Shortly after daybreak, when the full power of the German attack developed, the French fell back without advising the Americans or ordering their retirement, thus abandoning the four American companies on the riverbank. Although surrounded,

Ponton Bridge Near Mézy Built by Engineers of
the 3d Division



these companies maintained their positions until 8:00 a. m., when they started to fight their way back to regain the French lines which had been reestablished, with the help of other units of the 28th Division, about 3 miles to the rear. The survivors reached these new French lines during the afternoon.

On July 16 and 17 the French units and those of the 28th Division on these new lines launched counterattacks which succeeded in recovering some of the lost ground. During July 18 the elements of the 28th Division were withdrawn from the front line, its losses in this area from July 15 to 18 having been about 1,200 officers and men.

Continue.

(73.2 m 117.8 km) **Straight through Jaulgonne**, which was captured by the 3d Division on July 22.

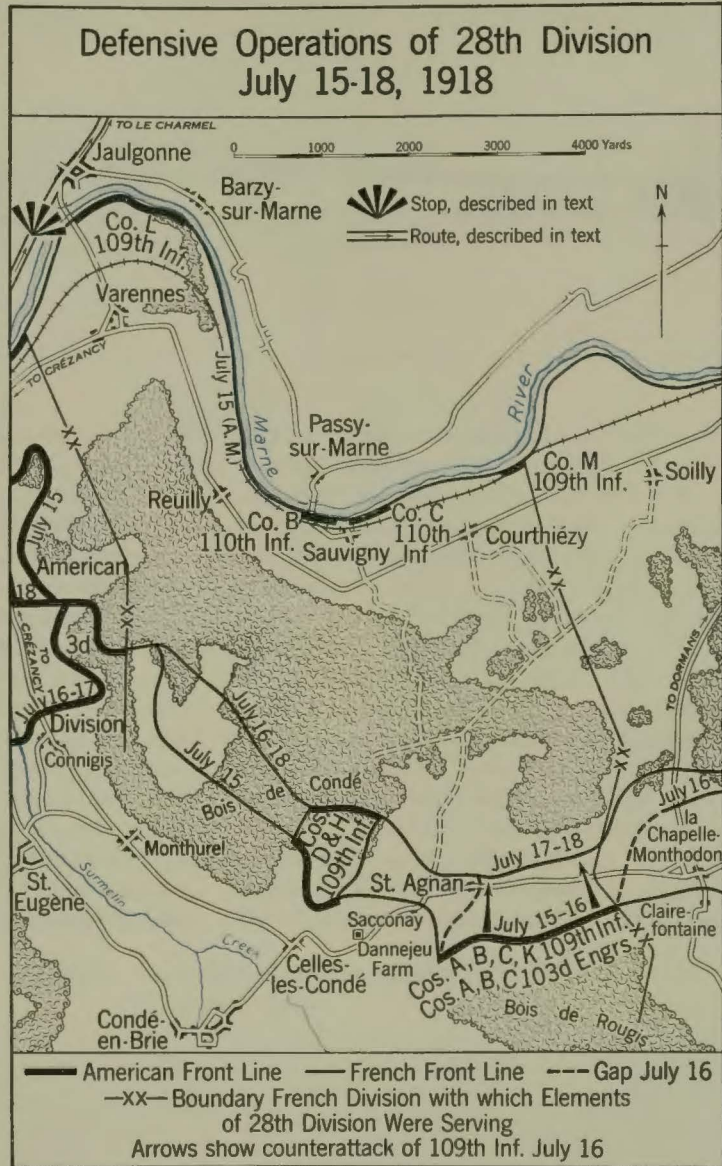
(73.7 m 118.6 km) **Beyond town, in the ravine along this road**, a part of the division advanced on July 22 to the far edge of the next village, Le Charmel. Threatened with isolation, these units, which were then several miles ahead of the troops on both sides of them, withdrew to the general vicinity of Jaulgonne.

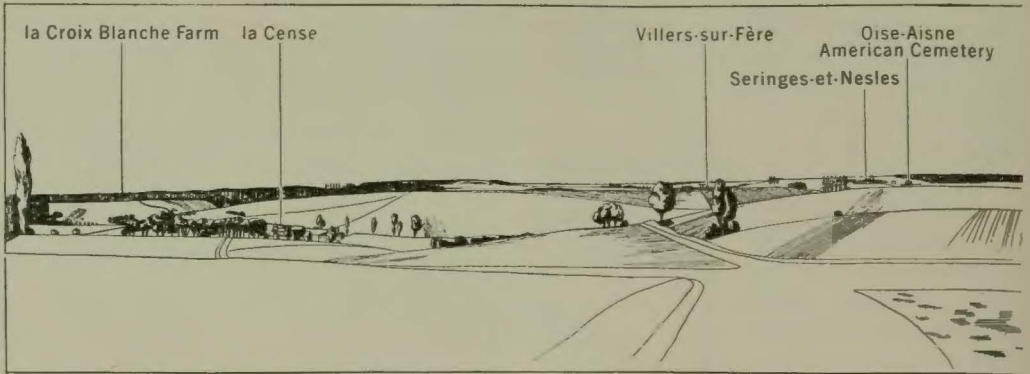
During the next few days bitter struggles took place near this road as the German Army fought for time to withdraw the great quantities of supplies and ammunition which had been brought to this front but which had not been used, due

to the sudden unsuccessful ending of their offensive which started early on July 15.

(74.3 m 119.5 km) **Some distance farther on, to the right front up the valley**, can be seen Le Charmel Château. That château, now rebuilt, was the scene of intense fighting, the Germans holding it against severe attacks until July 27.

(75.1 m 120.8 km) **At next main road junction, keep straight ahead passing through Le Charmel**, which although stubbornly defended was captured by the





Panorama From Stop

3d Division during daylight hours on July 25 after an extremely hard fight.

For the next few miles the American advance encountered only slight resistance as the main German forces had been withdrawn to the Ourcq River during the night of July 26-27.

The operations, described later, of the 28th and 32d Divisions on the Ourcq were directed from their division headquarters located in Le Charmel.

(78.1 m 125.7 km) **About 3 miles beyond the town of Le Charmel, Courmont is seen to the right of the road.**

(78.5 m 126.3 km) **After passing the village of Courmont, a few yards before reaching the next main crossroad, STOP.**

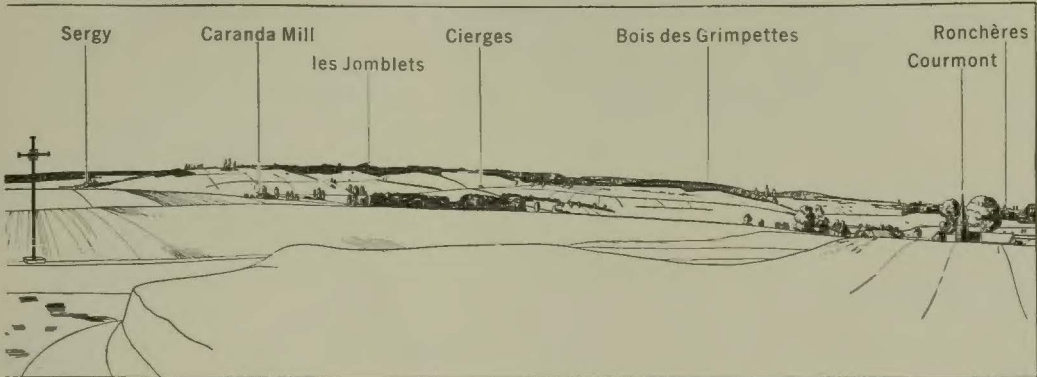
The panoramic sketch on these pages will be of great help in case difficulty occurs in locating the places mentioned below.

The Ourcq River lies in the valley to the right and right front. The far slopes of it had been organized by the Germans into a formidable position by the time the American and French troops arrived here on the evening of July 27 and began the series of attacks which finally drove the German troops from it.

This fighting was of the most severe character and although most of the American divisions were participating in an offensive for the first time the natural courage and fighting spirit of the American soldiers carried them forward to

German Trench-Mortar Bombardment of Allied Strong Point,
July 15, 1918. © G





West of Courmont

accomplishments which could not have been excelled by veteran assault divisions.

From this point many of the attacks made against the German defenses were visible. Long thin lines of khaki-clad American soldiers could be seen advancing up the slopes across the valley, preceded by bursts of smoke as the artillery barrage moved forward to prepare the way for them. Hostile fire took heavy toll from the attacking units, and counterattacks launched from the wooded heights often forced the Americans back. Such setbacks, however, were but signals for new assaults, which were bravely and persistently repeated until all of the heights were finally in American hands.

The nearest village to the front in the Ourcq River valley is Sergy. To the right front a road is seen, in the distance, entering a large wooded area.

Face that point, which direction is approximately northeast.

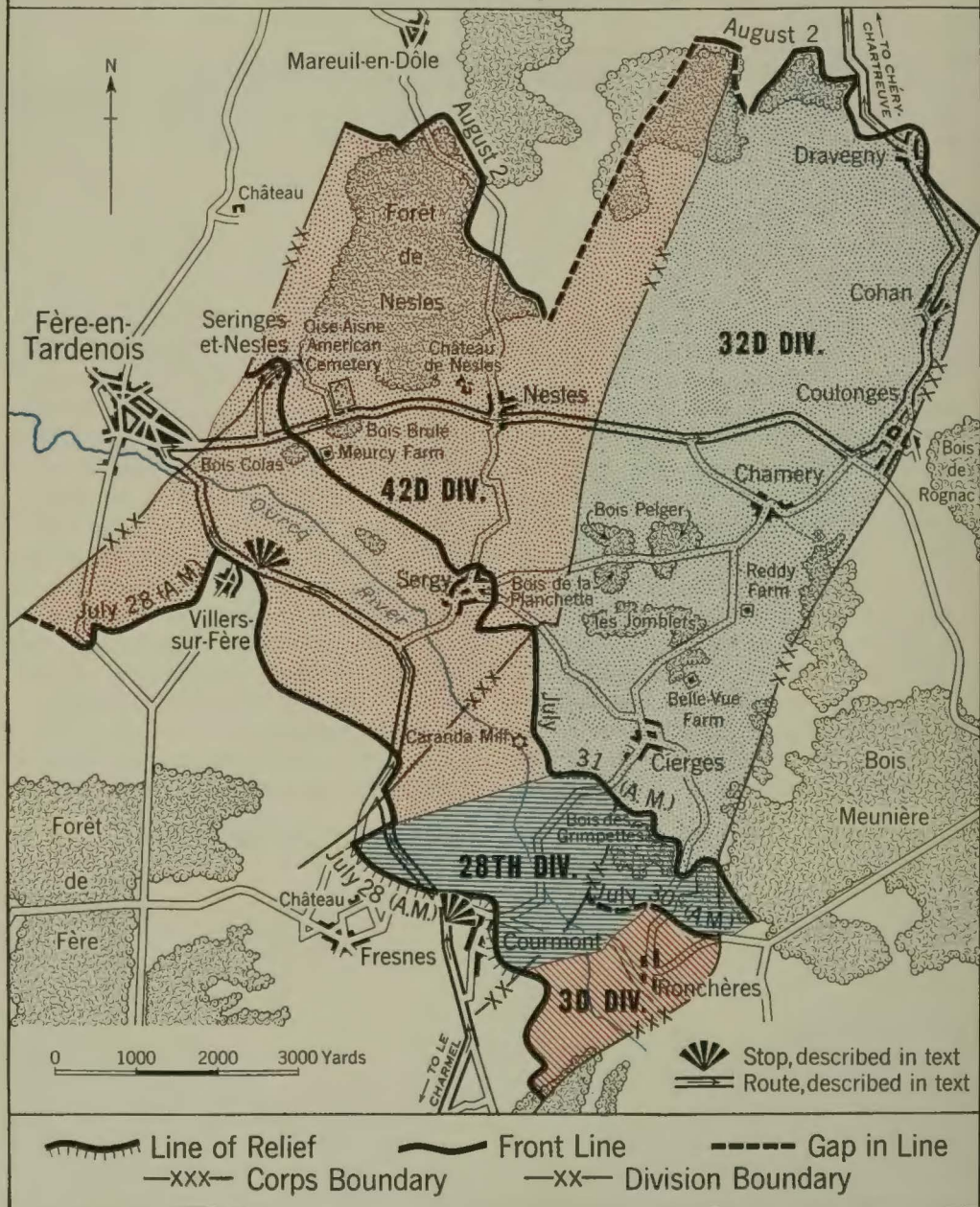
Courmont, the nearest town seen to the right, was captured by a French division on July 27. That night the 28th Division relieved the French, taking over a line the center of which was near this point and which changed direction so as to run along the far side of Courmont. The 3d Division had the zone of action to the right of Courmont.

On July 28 Ronchères, seen on the hill beyond Courmont, was captured by the

German Heavy Machine Gun Unit Advancing Through Captured Village,
July 15, 1918. © G



Ground Gained Near the Ourcq River by the 3d, 28th 32d and 42d Divisions, July 28-August 2, 1918



3d Division, and the 28th Division advanced its lines to the other side of the Ourcq River all along its front. During the fighting that day the German resistance was such that it became evident they intended to make a determined

stand on the opposite side of this valley. About a mile from here, on the nearest hill seen to the left of and beyond Courmont, is the Bois des Grimpettes, a key point of the German position. Although in the zone of action of the 3d and later

of the 32d Division, it commanded the 28th Division front to such an extent that it had to be captured before any appreciable advance could be made. On both July 28 and 29 it was attacked, but not captured, by the 3d Division from near Ronchères and by the 28th Division from its position in front of here.

On the night of July 29 the 3d Division was relieved by the 32d, after having been in line since early June and having made an outstanding record in combat. Its casualties were nearly 6,600.

On July 30, as the result of two attacks supported by brief but intense artillery preparations, the 28th Division succeeded in taking the Bois des Grimpettes in the afternoon, after a savage hand-to-hand fight in which it was assisted by the 32d Division. It also occupied for a short time part of the village of Cierges, whose church tower, which looks like a small house from here, can be seen to the right of and below the point the observer is facing. A German counterattack was repulsed about dark of that day.

During the night of July 30-31 the 32d Division relieved the 28th Division, whose casualties had totaled more than 1,400 officers and men, thus extending its front to the left as far as Caranda Mill, the building partially seen in the small clump of trees at the foot of this hill about midway between Cierges and Sergy.

The wood which covers the crest of the ridge to the right of and beyond Caranda Mill is Les Jomblets. It lay in the German main line of defense and was an important strong point. On July 31 the 32d Division, in an attack launched about 2:00 p. m., captured Cierges and reached Les Jomblets, but was forced by heavy hostile fire to fall back from that wood. On the next day, in an attack made in the early morning, the division captured Les Jomblets and established itself about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile farther on. There the troops repulsed a counterattack made shortly after daybreak. About 9:00 a. m., however, they were driven back by a fierce German counterattack supported by artillery. That afternoon Les Jomblets



42d Division Artillery Passing Through Sergy,
August 3, 1918

was finally taken and held by the 32d Division as the result of two separate regimental assaults, made about the same time, which converged close to the point which the observer is now facing.

Sergy, in the valley to the left front, and Seringes-et-Nesles seen well to the left of it, are both located beyond the Ourcq. Villers-sur-Fère in the distance to the observer's left, is on this side of the river. These towns were captured by the 42d Division in operations which will be described at the next stop.

To the left front in the distance, the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, which is distinguished by its field of white headstones, is seen slightly to the right of and below the village of Seringes-et-Nesles.

Street Barricade at Northern Edge of
Le Charmel, July 1918
Built by the Germans in their retreat





Snipers Firing in Villers-sur-Fère After Its Capture by the 42d Division, July 27, 1918

The route now follows closely the south bank of the Ourcq River and a better view of many of the places just mentioned will be obtained. The natural strength of the German positions across the river will also be more evident at that time.

EN ROUTE NEAR COURMONT TO NEAR
VILLERS-SUR-FÈRE

(79.5 m 127.9 km) While ascending the next ridge, Cierges is seen to the right, about a mile away.

(80.4 m 129.4 km) The next village seen to the right is Sergy. That town

led a platoon in an attack which resulted in the capture of that wood, and although again hit several times during the assault, he broke up a hostile counterattack mainly by his own accurate automatic rifle fire. He remained in charge until the position had been made secure, after which, suffering from nine wounds in various parts of the body, this gallant soldier dragged himself to shelter.

(81.8 m 131.6 km) Just before reaching the next town, Villers-sur-Fère, about 100 yards from top of hill, where a clear view to right is obtained, STOP.



German Dressing Station Near Château de la Forêt
Being Used by Americans Soon After Its Capture

and the steep slopes on both sides of it were stubbornly defended by the German troops who were holding them.

(80.9 m 130.2 km) A short distance farther on, to the right on the hillside across the valley, is seen a small triangular-shaped wood where Private Sidney E. Manning, 42d Division, performed the deeds on July 28 for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Private Manning, who had been severely wounded shortly before,

The village of Seringes-et-Nesles and the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery to the right of it are seen across the valley.

Face the cemetery, which direction is approximately northeast.

The Ourcq River is located in the valley at the foot of this slope.

The 42d Division captured Villers-sur-Fère on the 27th and continued its attacks on the 28th gaining a foothold on the other side of the Ourcq. Sergy, seen to the right, which was strongly held by



42d Division Infantry in Position Near Seringes-et-Nesles, July 29, 1918

the Germans, was entered by patrols that day but not captured although ground was gained in its immediate vicinity.

Across the river in front of here an unusual exploit was performed on July 28 by Sergeant Frank Gardella, Jr., of the 42d Division. Two enemy airplanes were flying parallel to the American infantry lines and pouring machine-gun bullets into them, driving everyone to cover. Sergeant Gardella, noting the situation, rushed to his machine gun and took aim at the upper of the two machines. Although he was constantly subject to a storm of bullets from the planes and from enemy snipers on the ground, he nevertheless coolly sighted his gun and riddled the upper plane, causing it to collapse and fall in flames. In falling it struck the lower plane and brought it to the earth also. For his coolness and bravery he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Part of the 47th Infantry, 4th Division, was attached to the 42d Division and, with this additional strength, Sergy was captured on July 29 and other advances made. In the valley to the front, the nearest wood in line with the cemetery,

Bois Colas, which was literally bristling with hostile machine guns, and the town of Seringes-et-Nesles were captured on that day in brilliant attacks. Although the gains at Seringes-et-Nesles and Sergy formed pronounced salients in the line and the troops in them were subjected to fire from three sides, the Germans were unable to retake that ground.

On July 30 the attacks were continued but in spite of determined efforts no substantial gains were made. A strong German counterattack near Meurcy Farm, identified by the buildings seen to the right of the cemetery, was repulsed.

In the bitter fighting around that farm, Sergeant Richard W. O'Neill, 42d Division, advanced ahead of the assaulting line and attacked an enemy force of about 25 men. In the ensuing hand-to-hand encounter he sustained pistol wounds but heroically continued in the fight, during which he received additional wounds. With great physical effort he remained in active command of his detachment until he was again wounded and was forced by weakness and loss of blood to be evacuated. He insisted upon being taken first

to the battalion commander in order to transmit to him valuable information relative to the enemy positions and the disposition of his men. For his conspicuous bravery above and beyond the call of duty Sergeant O'Neill was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On July 31, after a very heavy bombardment in which smoke and thermite shells were used, the tiny Bois Brulé, which covered the ground near this end of the cemetery, was abandoned by the Germans and the 42d Division occupied it and Meurcy Farm, thus forming another salient in the German lines. By the evening of August 1 the 42d and 32d Divisions were in secure possession of a large portion of the high ground on the other side of the river, from Seringes-et-Nesles to beyond Les Jomblets.

These successes, and those of the French farther to the left, caused the Germans to withdraw during the night of August 1-2 to their next prepared position at the Vesle River, 10 miles in front of here. The pursuit, which was begun by the Americans and French on the morning of August 2, had to overcome

many hostile machine-gun nests cleverly placed in mutually supporting positions throughout the entire area between the Ourcq and the Vesle Rivers.

The 42d Division on August 2 advanced over the ground on which the cemetery stands and through the Forêt de Nesles, the large wood seen beyond the cemetery. On August 3 the division, having suffered nearly 6,500 casualties, was relieved by the 4th Division which, together with the 32d Division on its right, continued to push forward until the Vesle River was reached.

EN ROUTE NEAR VILLERS-SUR-FÈRE TO
OISE-AISNE AMERICAN CEMETERY

(82.6 m 132.9 km) **Cross Ourcq River.**
Note its extremely small size.

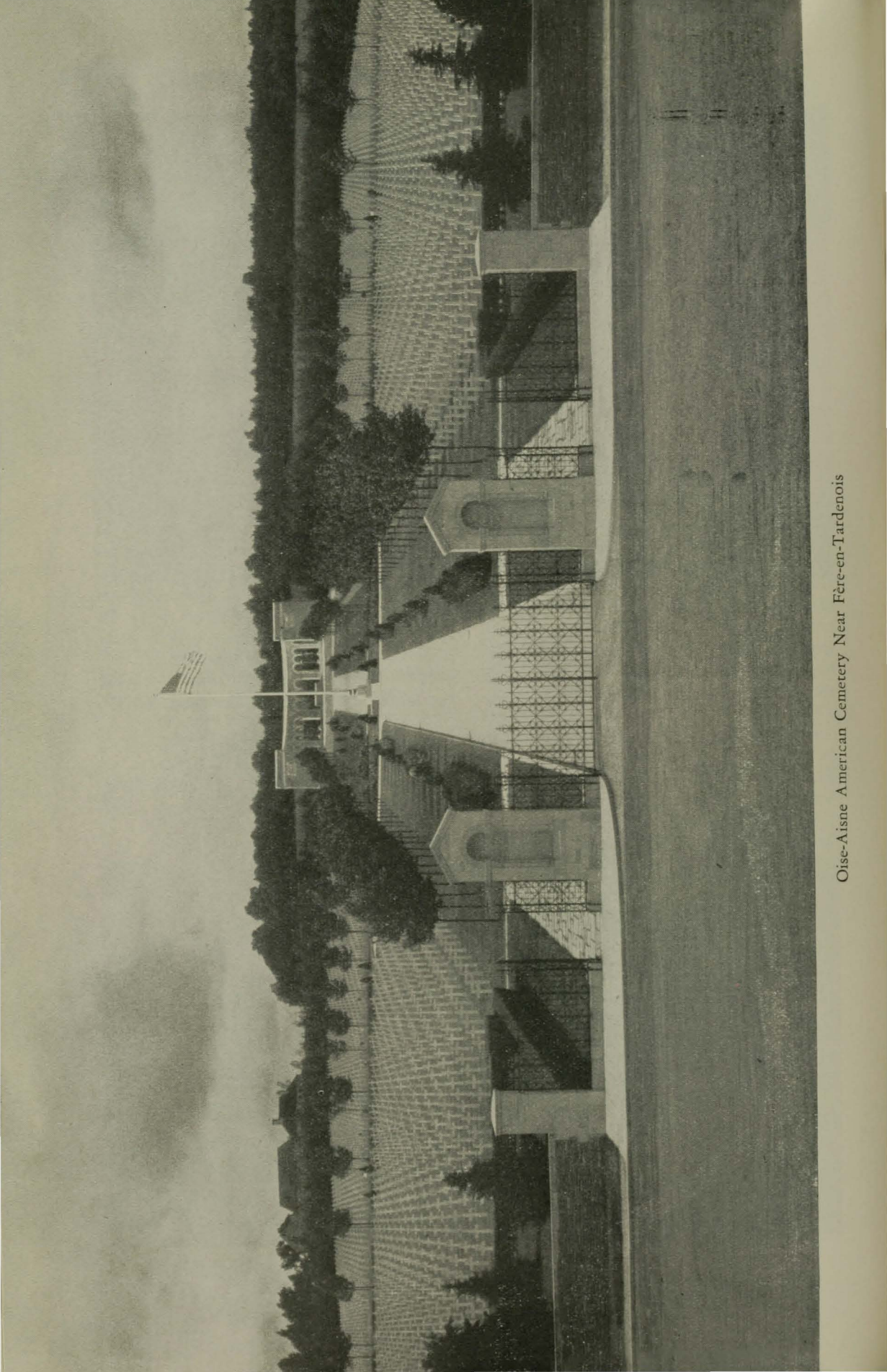
(83.0 m 133.5 km) **Turn sharply to the right on the first street in the next town, Fère-en-Tardenois.**

The American I Corps Headquarters was located here from August 5 to 13 after the Germans had been driven back from their position near the Ourcq.

(84.3 m 135.6 km) **Beyond town, at the large cemetery near the road, STOP.**

German Ammunition Train Destroyed by American Shellfire at Cierges





Oise-Aisne American Cemetery Near Fère-en-Tardenois

This is the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, the second largest American military cemetery in Europe. It contains 6,012 graves. The majority of the battle dead who rest here were killed in the fighting along the Ourcq River and in the territory between here and the Oise River. In 1922, American soldiers then buried in France in the general area west of the line, Tours-Romorantin-Paris-Le Havre were moved to this cemetery.

The building across the road contains a

rearranging themselves into a succession of symmetrical geometrical designs.

The chapel is a harmony of color, with its pink and gray sandstone walls and variegated marble columns. It is semi-circular in form and from its terrace a fine view of the cemetery and the surrounding country can be obtained.

The decorative sculpture of the chapel is Romanesque in style but modern in subject. On each front wall appears the coat of arms of the United States,



Oise-Aisne Cemetery Chapel
Note the exterior altar in the foreground

reception room for visitors and the office of the superintendent, where inquiries for information or concerning the location of a particular grave should be made.

The cemetery is entered through an ornamental wrought-iron gateway. Rows of trees and beds of red roses line the central paths. The chapel overlooks the cemetery from the rear and as the visitor walks toward it the fields of white marble headstones constantly change pattern, the crosses apparently arranging and

beneath a frieze of shields which display the insignia of branches of the Army. The column capitals are carved with the insignia of the American divisions which took part in the battles in this region and with various military weapons and articles of equipment. In the four medallions above the columns the modern soldier is contrasted with the medieval crusader.

The simple lines of the interior are softened by the subdued light from the windows whose panes are thin slabs of



Field Artillery During a Lull Between Engagements, July 1918

Algerian onyx. The chapel contains a beautiful altar of carved stone, and upon the walls appear in carved and gilded letters the names of American soldiers who fought in this region and who sleep in unknown graves. The museum room across the terrace from the chapel proper contains flags of the United States and France and a beautifully carved and decorated wall map, upon which are shown the areas in this region captured by the different American divisions.

While visiting the cemetery it is only with effort that the visitor can bring his imagination to picture the scenes of bitter combat which took place on these slopes when the 42d Division was fighting for them, and on the various other battlefields of the Ourcq River valley which were fought over by soldiers of the American 3d, 4th, 28th, 32d and 42d Divisions.

Joyce Kilmer, the poet, was killed in the fighting near here and now rests in this cemetery with so many other of his brave friends and comrades.

As the inscription which is seen above the columns of the chapel states:

"THESE ENDURED ALL AND GAVE ALL THAT HONOR AND JUSTICE MIGHT PREVAIL AND THAT THE WORLD MIGHT ENJOY FREEDOM AND INHERIT PEACE."

EN ROUTE OISE-AISNE AMERICAN CEMETERY TO NEAR FISMES

(85.5 m 137.6 km) The next village, Nesles, was taken by the 42d Division on August 2. Near it can be seen the ruins of a 13th Century château.

(86.0 m 138.4 km) Beyond Nesles, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, the zone of action of the 32d Division is entered.

During an aerial combat on July 14, First Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt, son of ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, was shot down near Chamery. The Germans buried him where he fell, and marked his grave with the wheels of his plane and a rough cross bearing the inscription "ROOSEVELT, AMERICAN AVIATOR". On

4th Division Troops on Way to Front, Seringes-et-Nesles, August 4, 1918





Camouflaged Road Just North of Dravegny
Road followed by tour

August 2 the grave was found by advancing troops of the 32d Division, who held appropriate services and built a fence protecting the spot. Since that time it has been more permanently marked.

To visit grave, turn right at crossroad indicated in next paragraph. At next village, Chamery, take first road to the left (impassable in wet weather) and go 800 yards to grave, which is 100 yards to left of road. Total length of side trip—2 miles. Amount of time required—30 minutes.

(88.2 m 141.9 km) At next main crossroad at foot of long slope, turn left toward the village of Coulonges.

(88.6 m 142.6 km) In next village, Coulonges, beyond bridge turn left.

This village and the next one, Cohan, were captured on August 2 by the 32d Division. The right boundary of the division was just to the right of the road which the tour is following.

(89.6 m 144.2 km) Continue through the town of Cohan.

(90.9 m 146.3 km) In the next village, Dravegny, at the church turn to the left, at the next corner turn to the right toward the village of Chéry-Chartreuve.

Dravegny was captured by the 32d Division on August 2. The front line of the division on that night was established in the north edge of the town.

The 28th Division Headquarters directed operations from this village during the period August 4–14, while the division was fighting along the Vesle.

(91.7 m 147.5 km) Beyond the next hill, the town seen in front across the valley is Chéry-Chartreuve. The 4th Division, after relieving the 42d Division during the early morning, advanced on August 3 to the wood seen just to the right of and beyond that town.

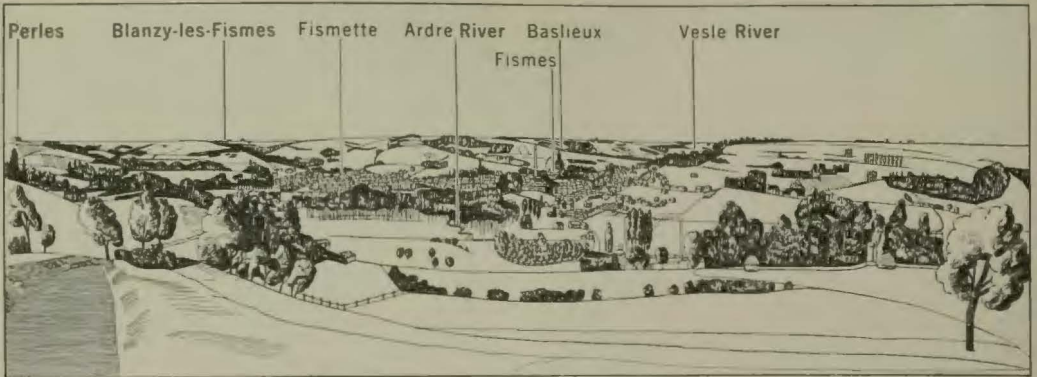
(93.7 m 150.8 km) At small monument near entrance to Chéry-Chartreuve turn right. Note speedometer reading.

(97.8 m 156.6 km) 3.6 miles farther on, when the large town, Fismes, comes in full view to the right front, STOP.

Face the church, the right one of the

Observation Balloon Trucks Passing Through
Coulonges, August 4, 1918





Panorama From Stop Near Fismes

two buildings with a tower, which direction is approximately northeast.

The stream at the foot of this hill is the Ardre River, which joins the Vesle River at a point to the left front in the valley. The German troops fought stubbornly to hold Fismes and the slopes which are seen beyond it.

On the afternoon of August 4 the 32d Division attacked Fismes from this hill, suffering severe losses from hostile artillery and machine-gun fire before the town was finally captured.

On August 6, the 6th Brigade of the 3d Division was placed in the line to the right of Fismes. Although worn out by its heavy fighting on the Marne River, the brigade on August 7 and 10 made valiant efforts to cross the river but did not succeed in establishing a foothold on the far bank. On August 11 the brigade was relieved, its losses in this general vicinity being about 600 officers and men.

On the night of August 6-7 the 28th

Ruins of the City Hall of Fismes, August 14, 1918



Division relieved the 32d Division, which had advanced 11 miles and whose casualties had been almost 3,800 since entering the battle on the Ourcq River.

The 28th Division on August 7 launched an unsuccessful attack upon Fismette, which is beyond the Vesle River, adjoining Fismes on its left side. The next day, after two attacks with heavy artillery preparation, parts of Fismette were captured and held. The town was completely occupied on August 10, but because of the German efforts to retake it, desperate fighting took place in the streets of the town almost daily during the next two weeks.

In the fighting in Fismette on August 10 Sergeant James I. Mestrovitch, 28th Division, performed the act of gallantry for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Seeing his company commander lying wounded 30 yards in front of the line after his company had withdrawn to a sheltered position behind a stone wall, Sergeant Mestrovitch voluntarily left cover and crawled through heavy machine-gun and shell fire to where the officer lay. He took the officer upon his back and crawled back to a place of safety where he administered first aid treatment. His exceptional heroism saved the life of his company commander.

During the early morning hours of August 27, the Germans inclosed Fismette in a heavy barrage and attacked in force with flame throwers, capturing or killing all Americans holding it except a few who escaped by swimming across the river.

On August 12 the 77th Division relieved the 4th to the left of here and on the 13th changes were made in the division boundaries so that the 28th Division held Fismes and the riverbank for about 2½ miles to the right of it, while the 77th Division held the line along the river from Fismes to the left for about 3 miles.

The American III Corps directed active operations for the first time on this front, holding a sector immediately alongside that of the American I Corps.

On the night of September 3-4, as a result of the Oise-Aisne offensive, which began north of Soissons on August 18, the German lines here were turned and the enemy troops along this front withdrew toward the Aisne River. This movement was covered by rear guards composed mainly of machine gun organizations.

On September 4 the divisions here started in pursuit, and by September 6 the 28th had pushed its front line about a mile north of Baslieux, partially seen in the little valley 3 miles away beyond the church in Fismes. There the division again faced a prepared German position and had severe fighting in front of it until relieved on the night of September 7-8 by one of the French divisions.

The 77th Division was stopped on September 6, south of the Aisne River, after an advance of 5 miles. From that day



Engineers Exploding Mine Trap Left by Germans in a Dugout Near Blanzylles-Fismes, September 5, 1918

until September 16, when it was relieved by an Italian division (of which there were two serving on the Western Front), its line remained approximately in the same place. A brief description of its service on the Aisne is given at the next stop.

In these operations the casualties of the 28th Division were about 5,300 and those of the 77th Division nearly 4,800. By their repeated efforts to cross the river and by their energetic pursuit after the Germans had retired, both divisions brought great credit upon themselves and upon the American forces.

The State of Pennsylvania has built a memorial bridge over the Vesle between Fismes and Fismette. To visit it, bear

Fismette, Scene of Hard Fighting by the 28th Division



right at road junction indicated in the next paragraph, go to open plaza in town, turn left and cross railroad to bridge. Total length of side trip—1 mile. Amount of time required—15 minutes.

EN ROUTE NEAR FISMES TO
NEAR BAZOCHES

(98.2 m 158.0 km) **At the near edge of Fismes, beyond the small bridge turn sharply to the left toward Soissons.**

The American advance passed from the left to right across this road.

(98.8 m 159.0 km) **After crossing the Vesle River and the railroad, a densely wooded area is seen on the left. Part of it surrounds a château called, on war time maps, the Château du Diable (Castle of the Devil). Troops of the 4th, 28th and 77th Divisions, who engaged in many hot fights with the Germans near this château, agree that the place was well named.**

(99.4 m 160.0 km) **Beyond the far end of the wooded area, a 4th Division monument is passed on the right.**

(100.3 m 161.4 km) **At the second crest, when the next village is plainly seen down the road ahead, STOP.**

Face to the left, which direction is approximately south.

From this point a good view is obtained of the ground fought over by the 4th and later by the 77th Division.

The 4th Division, advancing in this direction over the line of hills in front of here, on August 4 captured St. Thibaut, seen on the hillside to the right front, and Ville-Savoie, seen to the left front. The next day the division repulsed a counter-attack and began attacks to gain a foothold on this side of the river. Small detachments succeeded in crossing to the

left front of here and also near Bazoches, seen in the valley to the right, but they were later withdrawn to the far bank.

On August 6 the division attacked in force, after a 4-hour artillery preparation, with this road as its main objective. It forced a crossing opposite Ville-Savoie and reached this highway about ½ mile to the left of here. The line was maintained there, in spite of strong counterattacks, until August 8, when it was withdrawn to the railroad which runs in the valley near this side of the river.

From August 7 to 9, the 4th Division launched several attacks near Bazoches.

Hostile fire preventing the building of suitable footbridges, many of the men courageously attempted to swim the river or crawl over on fallen trees. Those who succeeded were insufficient in number to establish themselves on this bank. Between August 3 and 12, when it was relieved by the 77th Division, the 4th Division lost approximately 3,500 men.

For the next ten days this sector, like others along the front where troops of neither side were trying to advance, was comparatively quiet except at night. During the

daytime all troops remained well concealed to escape the vigilance of snipers and hostile observers searching for favorable artillery targets. After night-fall, however, the hillside swarmed with men busily strengthening the positions, while patrols from each side, trying to discover the dispositions and intentions of the other, frequently clashed along the banks of the river and engaged in small but desperate battles in the dark.

On August 22 the Germans attacked the Château du Diable, located to the



4th Division Monument
Near Bazoches

left in the trees, and drove the 77th Division troops holding it across the river. Early the next morning, the 77th counter-attacked and in desperate fighting lasting into the night regained part of the wood.

Bazoches was the objective of a carefully prepared assault by the 77th Division launched early on August 27. The Château du Diable was also attacked and in each case the objectives fixed for the day were reached after severe combats, but in the end could not be retained.

Two German attacks were repulsed during the night of September 1-2. On September 4 the division crossed the river, occupied Bazoches, and advanced

lead his company in making a hazardous attack on a commanding trench position near the Aisne Canal, which other troops had previously attempted to take without success. His company immediately met with intense machine-gun fire, against which it had no artillery assistance, but Captain Miles preceded the first wave and assisted in cutting a passage through the enemy wire entanglements. In so doing he was wounded five times by machine-gun bullets, both legs and one arm being fractured, whereupon he ordered himself placed on a stretcher and had himself carried forward to the enemy trench in order that he might encourage and direct



Street in Soissons, September 1918

in pursuit of the Germans who had withdrawn during the previous night. The division reached the Aisne River valley on September 6 and established its front line close to this side of it.

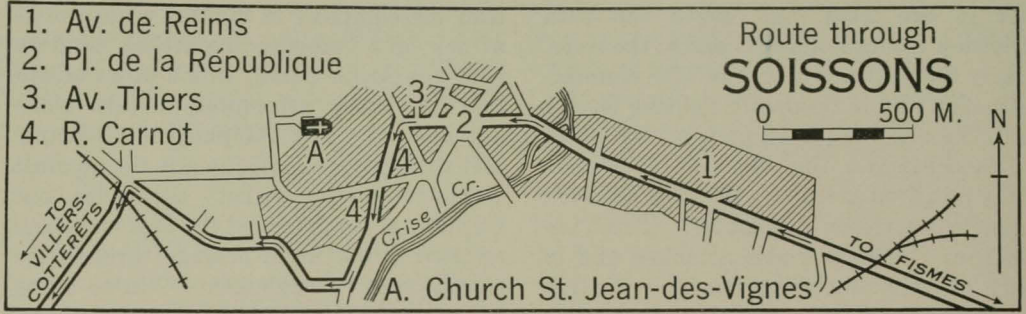
The next few days were marked by frequent local actions bitterly fought but with only minor results. On September 14 the division attacked as part of a general assault and made some gains in spite of stubborn resistance.

It was during the fighting of this day that Captain L. Wardlaw Miles, 77th Division, performed the heroic services for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. He volunteered to

his company, which by this time had suffered numerous casualties. Under his inspiration the men held the hostile position and consolidated their front line after an action lasting two hours. This gallant officer was then carried against his will to a first-aid station for treatment.

On September 15, after repulsing a German counterattack, the division was relieved from the line and was sent to the Meuse-Argonne region to take part there in the great offensive of the American First Army later in the month.

The tour now follows the Vesle River valley as far as near Sermoise and then continues along the Aisne River valley to



Soissons. No American fighting took place in the area which will be passed over.

EN ROUTE NEAR BAZOCHES TO NEAR
MISSY-AUX-BOIS

In its long and eventful history Soissons has been destroyed and rebuilt many times, and no less than 32 sieges and major battles have occurred there or in the immediate vicinity. Among the points of interest in town are the cathedral and the church of St. Jean-des-Vignes.

The American battlefields at Juvigny and near Vauxaillon may be reached by following the main highway from Soissons to St. Quentin. See pages 91-93.

An American 14-inch naval gun on a railroad mount, manned by men of the United States Navy, fired from a position in St. Christophe Cemetery, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Soissons, from September 10 to October 24. Its target was the railroad junction

in the town of Laon, about 19 miles away.

(116.5 m 187.4 km) Upon reaching the large monument in Soissons, continue straight ahead toward church for one block. Bear left onto Rue Carnot and take second street to right. Continue to railroad, then turn sharp left across the tracks toward Villers-Cotterêts.

(120.1 m 193.2 km) After leaving the valley, the large cemetery passed contains French, British and German graves.

(121.2 m 195.0 km) Beyond cemetery 1.1 miles, Missy-aux-Bois is seen to the right front. When the village is in full view, on top of the next rise in the road (beyond the kilometer post), STOP.

Face Missy-aux-Bois, which direction is approximately west.

The reader is now on ground swept over by the main attack of the French-American counteroffensive of July 18 which marked the turning point in the succession

Advance Command Post and Aid Station, 1st Division,
Near Missy-aux-Bois, July 20, 1918



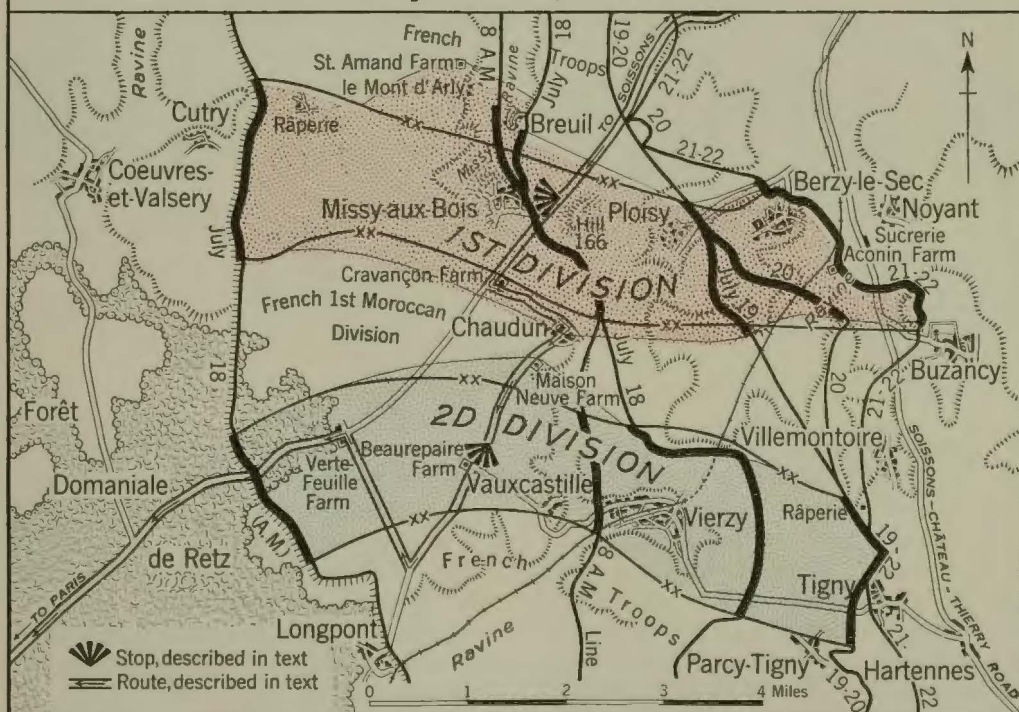
of dramatic military events that so closely followed each other in the year 1918. Up to the time of this attack, the Allies had been compelled to withstand a series of powerful German offensives which almost gained a decisive victory. It was in this region that the tide definitely turned in favor of the Allies, and this battle was the first of a series of offensives, made possible by the rapid arrival of American troops, which, within less than four months, forced the enemy troops back and compelled Germany to sue for an immediate armistice.

It is difficult to imagine this peaceful countryside as the scene of such a bitter struggle. The fields were covered with wheat, breast high, ready for harvest. The Germans had dug here no elaborate system of trenches, but every little rise in the ground had its group of individual

rifle pits and nests of machine guns, while along the farm roads and ravines and hidden by banks of earth and the tall grain, were batteries of German artillery. The farm buildings and villages, largely of stone construction, afforded admirable protection, and each constituted a strong point which could be taken only after the most desperate fighting.

The 1st Division attacked toward this road from a line about 3 miles in front of here, this point being near the center of its zone of action. The zone of action of the French 1st Moroccan Division, one regiment of which was the famous Foreign Legion, included Cravançon Farm, the group of buildings a mile down the road to the left, and the zone of action of the 2d Division (to be visited later) lay beyond. These three divisions formed the spearhead of the attack which started at

French - American Attack South of Soissons July 18-22, 1918



Jump-off Line
 Front Line
 Division Boundary

4:35 a. m. on July 18. This assault was made without artillery preparation but behind a rolling barrage, and quickly overran the forward German positions.

About 7:00 a. m. the 1st Division reached Missy-aux-Bois and the far edge of Missy Ravine, which extends to the right from that village. By that time the resistance had greatly stiffened, and Missy-aux-Bois and the ravine itself were full of enemy troops. The assaulting units at once pushed on into the ravine in the face of point-blank fire from many batteries of German artillery located therein. These guns, whose removal

French division. During the attack, hostile fire from there held up the advance of part of the 1st Division, whereupon a support battalion of the division, attacking in conjunction with the French, captured the place in a hard fight. St. Amand Farm, seen on the hill above Le Mont d'Arly, had been previously captured by the 1st Division although also situated in the French zone of action.

After the leading troops of the 1st Division had reached this side of the valley, a large hostile force came out of a cave on the far slope near Le Mont d'Arly and formed up to attack the



Infantry of 1st Division Near Berzy-le-Sec, July 21, 1918

had been prevented by the rapidity of the American advance, destroyed a majority of the tanks which accompanied the brigade of the 1st Division on that flank. However, after a terrific struggle the Germans in the ravine were killed or taken prisoner, and the guns emplaced in it were captured.

The little group of buildings called Le Mont d'Arly, seen $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the right front in the trees below the edge of the ravine, was in the zone of action of a

American troops in rear. This force, however, was driven back into the cave by an American support unit. After futile attempts to bomb this German force out of its cave, late in the afternoon an officer appeared at the mouth of it waving a white flag and surrendered his entire command, consisting of approximately 600 officers and men.

While the advance to Missy Ravine was being made, other troops of the 1st Division captured Cravançon Farm, and

the artillery placed a heavy barrage upon the German positions along this highway and on Hill 166, which slopes up to the left rear from this point. When the barrage moved forward at 7:53 a. m., the infantry continued the attack, meeting desperate resistance. To the left of here, the far slope of Hill 166 was reached and held. Soon thereafter the troops which advanced from Missy Ravine toward this locality encountered heavy fire from the top of the hill and from points to the observer's right along this road. A few Americans reached the highway near here, but not in sufficient numbers to hold the gains they had made.

The 1st Division captured most of its objectives by 10:00 a. m. and spent the afternoon in preparing to renew the attack. Fresh troops were brought up, the artillery moved forward, telephone lines were strung and food and ammunition distributed. The enemy during this period became increasingly vigilant and every movement in the American lines promptly drew machine-gun fire.

The division front line that night was established along the near edge of Missy Ravine. It crossed this road about 300 yards to the left of here and continued on from there, in the direction of the observer's left rear, for about one mile to where it joined with the French.

Face to the rear.

After the loss of their original position and most of the artillery in it on July 18, the Germans rushed every available reserve to this area. An enormous number of machine guns were set up in front of here; new artillery was placed on the hills bordering the Soissons—Château-Thierry road, 3 miles away; and the troops were told to hold the ground then occupied regardless of cost. Machine guns were ordered to be sacrificed, if necessary, but were not to be withdrawn.

About 4:00 a. m. on July 19 the 1st Division, supported by tanks, attacked all along its front behind a rolling barrage. The troops who jumped off from Missy Ravine advanced, in the face of devastating machine-gun fire, up the bare exposed



1st Division Artillery Changing Position
Near Missy-aux-Bois, July 19, 1918

slopes of Hill 166, seen to the right front, and captured the top of it. Those attacking to the left of this point reached this road where they were stopped by a withering fire from the front and left flank. All tanks which accompanied the assault units were disabled. The troops attacking from the right of the division line which was to the right front from here, made an advance of about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in spite of intense opposition.

At 5:30 in the afternoon, that part of the 1st Division near here attacked in conjunction with the French. It started from this road, advanced over the fields seen ahead, which were being swept by severe hostile machine-gun fire, and captured the town of Ploisy, about 1 mile from here just to the right of the direction the observer is facing. Against obstinate resistance the troops on the right of the division advanced that part of its line another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile during the afternoon.

The next day the attacks of the 1st Division were continued. In addition to terrific machine-gun and artillery fire, many hostile airplanes flew low over the area, machine-gunning and bombing the troops, as the Germans frantically tried to stop the American advance. In spite

Captured German Field Gun
Near Missy-aux-Bois





German Prisoners Being Marched to the Rear, South of Soissons, July 18, 1918

of this the right part of the division front line was advanced an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the other side of the main railroad leading south from Soissons.

On the 21st the fighting continued with much fury. Berzy-le-Sec was captured that day, the division reaching Buzancy, beyond the Soissons-Château-Thierry highway, thereby cutting the most important road of the German communication system within the salient.

The 1st Division, after its remarkable demonstration of fighting ability in this attack, was relieved from the line on the night of July 22-23. The casualties of the division, an indication of its exceptional services during the five days of fighting here, reached the total of 6,870 officers and men. Three fourths of all the infantry field officers of the division were either killed or wounded and one regiment was at the end commanded by a captain of less than two years' service.

EN ROUTE NEAR MISSY-AUX-BOIS TO NEAR BEAUREPAIRE FARM

(122.4 m 196.9 km) Just beyond the next group of buildings, Cravançon Farm, turn sharply to the left.

The right boundary of the 1st Division during the advance was 200 yards to the left of and parallel to this road.

(123.3 m 198.4 km) Immediately after entering the next village, Chaudun, turn sharply to the right.

This town, although in the zone of action of the Moroccan division, was captured on July 18 in an attack in which the 2d Division participated. The attack

Large Cave South of Soissons
Many similar caves are in this vicinity



French Tank With American Forces South of
Soissons, July 18, 1918

was launched from the direction opposite to the one the tourist is now traveling.

(124.2 m 199.8 km) The next large group of buildings, La Maison-Neuve Farm, was in the zone of action of the Moroccans but was captured on July 18 by troops of the 2d Division.

(125.0 m 201.1 km) About $\frac{3}{4}$ mile beyond La Maison-Neuve Farm, where a good view is obtained of the group of buildings directly ahead, STOP.

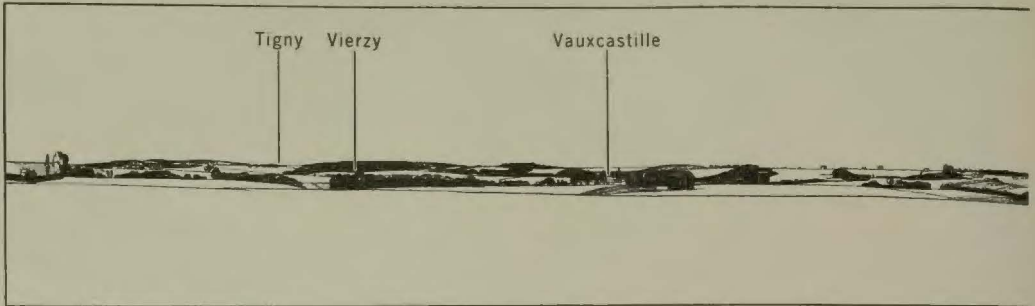
Face down the road, which direction is approximately southwest.

After some of its units had marched all night and double-timed over muddy roads in a driving rain in order to jump off at the time designated, the 2d Division attacked at 4:35 a. m., July 18, in this general direction from a line about 2 miles to the right front. The initial attack was made without the machine gun companies, as they had been unable to reach the line of departure in time to participate, and without the full support of the tanks, which were late in arriving.

About 5:45 a. m. the French tanks which had caught up with the front line circled around La Verte-Feuille Farm, partially visible through the trees to the right front, while troops of the Marine Brigade charged out of the woods seen beyond it and overpowered the German garrison after a sharp encounter.

Beaurepaire Farm, which the Germans had converted into a veritable fortress, is seen straight down the road. It was near the center of the 2d Division zone of action and was captured early on the morning of July 18 by the Infantry Brigade





Panorama From Stop

of the division. At least 100 prisoners were captured in or near the farm.

Batteries of German artillery in the wheat fields in this general vicinity fired point-blank at the Americans as they advanced, and before they could be silenced these guns had destroyed many of the tanks accompanying the attack.

Adding to the confusion caused by these terrific bombardments, low-flying airplanes, both Allied and German, machine-gunned and bombed the troops of their opponents. The Americans crawled or darted through the wheat, steadily advancing against the Germans, who were often unseen until the infantry practically stumbled on them or until the rapidly moving tanks drove the German soldiers from their cover into the open.

La Verte-Feuille Farm After Its Capture by the 2d Division. July 18, 1918

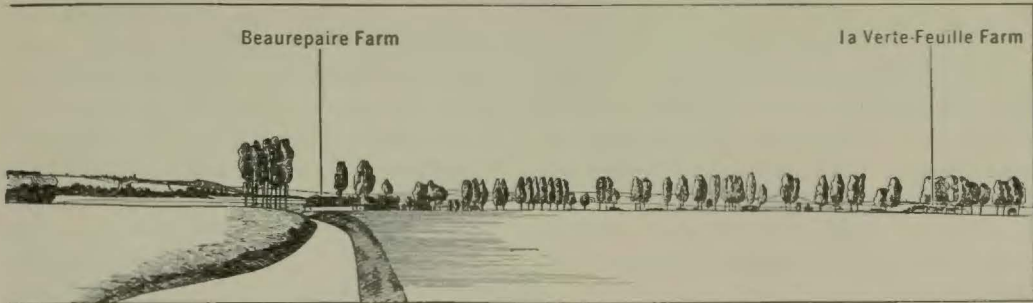


Across the open field to the left, on the low ground a mile away, is Vauxcastille, and running toward the left from it, approximately parallel to this road, is a deep wooded ravine. Attacking from right to left across this road in the early morning of the first day of the offensive, troops of the 2d Division swarmed into that ravine, where a desperate conflict raged until about 7:00 a. m., when the Germans were driven beyond it. A large number of the enemy who had been surrounded at Vauxcastille took refuge in the caves in that vicinity. They received a message dropped from a German airplane directing them to retire, and late in the afternoon were captured while attempting to fight their way back from the town to their own lines.

Vierzy, situated in a ravine to the left of and beyond Vauxcastille, is about 2 miles from here on this side of the nearest heavily wooded hill in that direction. It was reached by American troops about 7:00 a. m. The town was entered about 9:30 a. m. but the American soldiers were later compelled to retire on account of the presence of persistent gas.

Early in the evening the 2d Division attacked from the vicinity of Vauxcastille, and after a hard fight in Vierzy, where a large number of Germans were made prisoner, pushed on and by midnight was about a mile beyond that place. Desperate counterattacks launched against the 2d Division during the night of July 18 were unsuccessful.

On July 19 the division attacked about 9:00 a. m. The Germans were driven back steadily until 10:00 a. m. when the



North of Beaurepaire Farm

American troops were near Tigny, which can be seen on a clear day 4 miles away from here, beyond Vierzy. There a German counterattack against the division's exposed left flank was repulsed.

The 2d Division was relieved by a French division during the night of July 19-20, after brilliantly accomplishing, during two days of continuous attacks, almost every mission assigned to it. Its losses were over 4,300 officers and men.

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This is the last stop of the tour. Every important area of American fighting in the region has been visited or pointed out except that of the 32d Division near Juvigny and the 370th Infantry (93d Division) near Vauxaillon. The operations of these units are described in detail a few pages farther on in this chapter.

The battle areas were visited very closely in the chronological order of the fighting, except for the one here. The reader should remember that the counter-offensive just described occurred after the defensive fighting of the 2d, 3d and 28th Divisions near Château-Thierry and before any of the American divisions had gained any appreciable amount of ground in the Aisne-Marne region.

Although the American divisions in this region served with French units and not as part of an American army, they supplied the numbers which made it possible to attack and contributed greatly to the strength of the offensive and to the Allied morale. The American part in the actual fighting is evident when it is realized that 310,000 American soldiers were engaged in battle and that 67,000 were casualties.

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Those desiring to complete a loop in this area or who started the tour at a place other than Paris or Belleau, should proceed to the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery either by way of Vierzy, Tigny and Château-Thierry or via Longpont and Neuilly-St. Front. The route through Château-Thierry is easier to follow and will take less time. The other is more picturesque and goes through the area where elements of the 4th Division fought. For information concerning this fighting see page 54.

About 1 mile from road junction beyond Beaurepaire Farm is Longpont, location of interesting ruins of a large Cistercian abbey which was built in the 12th Century. A visit to the town is worth while if time is available. Length of side trip—2 miles. Time required for side trip—20 minutes.

Beaurepaire Farm, July 19, 1918



EN ROUTE NEAR BEAUREPAIRE FARM
TO PARIS

The Headquarters of the 2d Division was established in the ruins of Beaurepaire Farm after it was captured on July 18, and remained there until the division was relieved from the front line.

(126.6 m 203.7 km) **Beyond Beaurepaire Farm, at the first road junction turn sharply to the right.**

Compare the present appearance of La Verte-Feuille Farm, at the next corner, with the picture on page 88.

(128.3 m 206.4 km) **Upon reaching the next road crossing, turn to the left.**

The advance of the 2d Division on July 18 was in the direction opposite to that which the tourist is now following.

In the woods to the right of this road were performed early on the morning of July 18 the deeds for which Sergeants Louis Cukela and Matej Kocak, Marine Corps, 2d Division, were later awarded Congressional Medals of Honor.

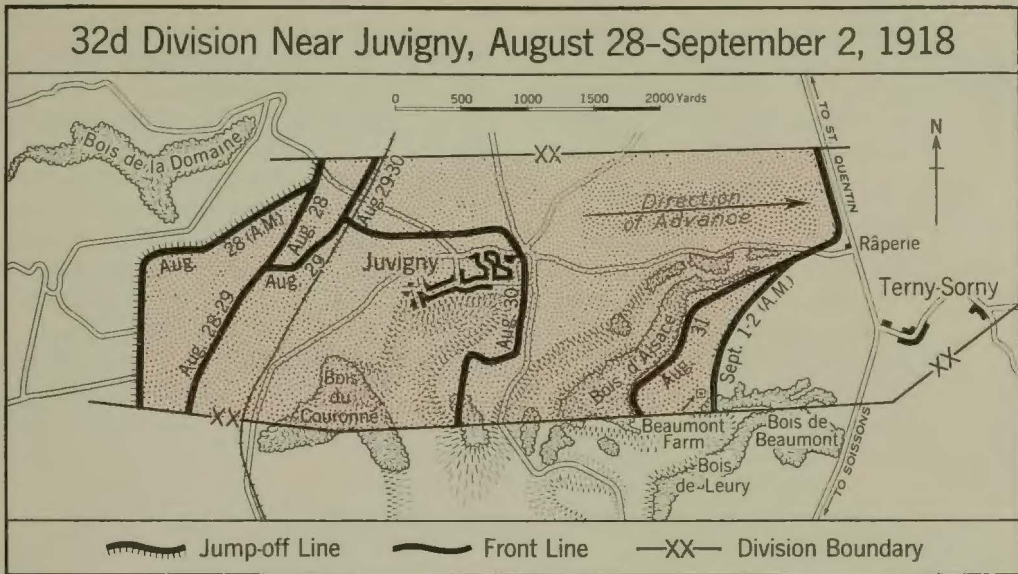
Sergeant Cukela was near this road when his company met with heavy fire

from an enemy strong point in the wood. Disregarding the warnings of his comrades, he crawled out from the flank and made his way toward the German lines in the face of heavy fire. He succeeded in getting behind the enemy position and rushed a machine-gun emplacement, killing or driving off the crew with his bayonet. With German hand grenades he then bombed out the remaining portion of the strong point, capturing four men and two machine guns.

About the same time Sergeant Kocak, who was in the wood about 500 yards from this road, went forward alone against another machine-gun nest that, hidden in the underbrush, had checked the American advance. Without the protection of fire from his own men, he worked his way in between the German positions in the face of fire from hostile covering detachments. Locating the machine-gun nest, he rushed it and with his bayonet drove off the crew. Shortly thereafter he took command of 25 French colonial troops who had become separated

Captured Weapons in Public Square at Villers-Cotterêts, July 27, 1918





from their company and led them in an attack which succeeded in wiping out another machine-gun nest.

(129.4 m 208.2 km) **Beyond the farm about 1 mile** are a 2d Division boulder marker and a marker indicating the farthest advance of the German Army in 1918. They are on the left near the road. The jump-off line of the 2d Division ran near the location of these markers and was at right angles to this road.

(134.9 m 217.1 km) **From Villers-Cotterêts** there are three main roads to Paris—via Senlis, or La Ferté-Milon and Meaux, or Nanteuil and Dommartin.

32D DIVISION NEAR JUVIGNY, AUGUST 28–SEPTEMBER 2

The 32d Division, after its relief on the Vesle River early in August, was assigned on August 23 to the French Tenth Army. That Army was then engaged in the Oise-Aisne offensive northwest of Soissons which, if successful, would force the Germans to withdraw from their positions along the Vesle and Aisne Rivers.

The division was held in reserve until August 28, when it entered the line about 1 mile west of Juvigny. That day it launched local attacks and gained some ground in spite of heavy hostile fire.

On August 29 a general assault was made by the entire Tenth Army. This

attack met with severe enemy fire and the net result was only slight gains.

During the afternoon of August 30 the 32d Division flanked the town of Juvigny from the south and captured it in a skillful attack, after some vicious street fighting. That evening two strong German counterattacks were repulsed. The American line that night formed a small salient projecting into the German lines.

The attacks were resumed on the 31st, during which the artillery supporting the attack fired a double barrage, instead of a single barrage, as was customary. The Germans, who had been in the habit of remaining in the numerous caves during the artillery bombardments and then manning their trenches and machine-gun nests when the barrage moved on, were caught by the second barrage and suffered heavy casualties from it.

By the end of the day the 32d Division had reached in hard fighting the important Soissons–St. Quentin road at a point northwest of Terny-Sorny. The next day local efforts to advance met with determined resistance. The division was relieved by the 1st Moroccan Division on the night of September 1–2, having made a total advance of 3 miles and having suffered over 2,600 casualties.

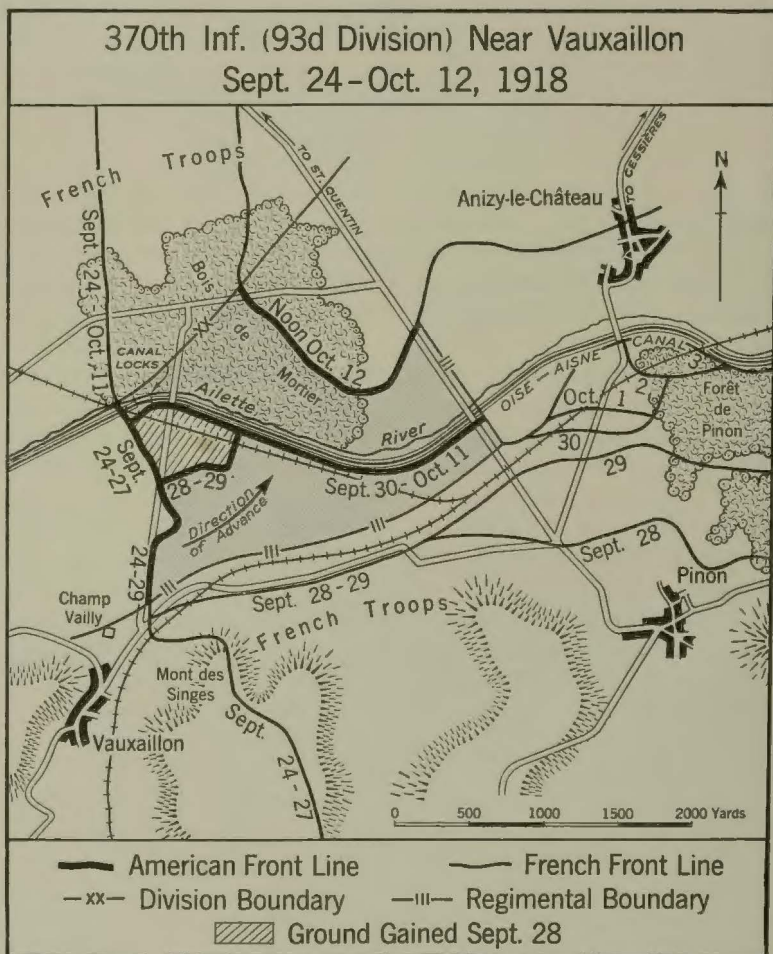
The success of the 32d Division in this operation was of great assistance to the

French Tenth Army, whose pressure caused the Germans on this front to retreat from the Vesle River on September 4 to a new position on the Aisne River, east of its junction with the Vesle.

370TH INFANTRY, 93D DIVISION,
SEPTEMBER 15-NOVEMBER 11

The 370th Infantry, which had served during the summer in both the St. Mihiel

Participating in the attack of the 59th Division, which began on September 28, the 370th Infantry succeeded in advancing its lines to the Ailette River valley by September 30. The Germans withdrew from this front on the night of October 11, and the American regiment crossed the Ailette and advanced into Bois de Mortier on the 12th. Thereafter, acting as division reserve, it participated in the pursuit



and Argonne regions with units of the French Army, moved into the Vauxaillon area on September 15 as part of the French 59th Division. Four of its companies assisted French troops in unsuccessful attacks against Mont des Singes between September 17 and 20, and on the 24th the regiment as a unit took command of that part of the front line just north of the small village of Vauxaillon.

as far as Cessières. The losses in these operations were about 500 officers and men. The French 59th Division was then relieved, only to reenter the battle near Grandlup-et-Fay on October 30, the American regiment being placed in support near Chantrud Farm, about a mile southwest of Grandlup-et-Fay. There, on November 3, it suffered a loss of 41 men from the explosion of a single shell.

The Germans made a general retirement in early November, and the 59th Division took part in the pursuit. Although spasmodic fighting occurred, the

leading the advance of the 59th Division.

At the time of the Armistice the forward battalion of the regiment was at Le Gué d'Hossus, having marched about 40 miles



French Tanks With the 32d Division at Juvigny, August 29, 1918

370th Infantry moved forward mainly in march formation. Battalions of the regiment alternated with French units in

during the last week of the war. There were 65 casualties in the regiment during the fighting which has just been described.

ADDITIONAL PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE AISNE-MARNE REGION

IN addition to the places whose World War history has been described in the itinerary, there are a number of other places in the Aisne-Marne region where interesting war events occurred, where there now exist features of special interest, or which are of sufficient importance in pre-World War history to warrant special mention. For reference purposes and for the benefit of the tourist who travels in the area on roads other than the described route, these places with some of their history have been recorded here.

The map on the next page indicates the general location of the places mentioned. At those places indicated by a star there is some existing interesting object such as a memorial, ancient ruins or World War feature of an outstanding character in excellent state of preservation.

Arcis-le-Ponsart. 28th Div. Hdqrs. during the period Aug. 14-20.

Belle-Vue Farm, north of Cierges. Scene of heavy fighting by the 32d Division on both July 31 and August 1.

★ **Beugneux.** About halfway between Soissons and Château-Thierry, south of Beugneux, on the road to Wallée is located a large French monument to com-

memorate the Second Battle of the Marne. It consists of a statue near the road symbolizing France and a sculptured group on a hillside representing eight phantom spirits. The monument has a beautiful location and commands a fine view of the surrounding country.

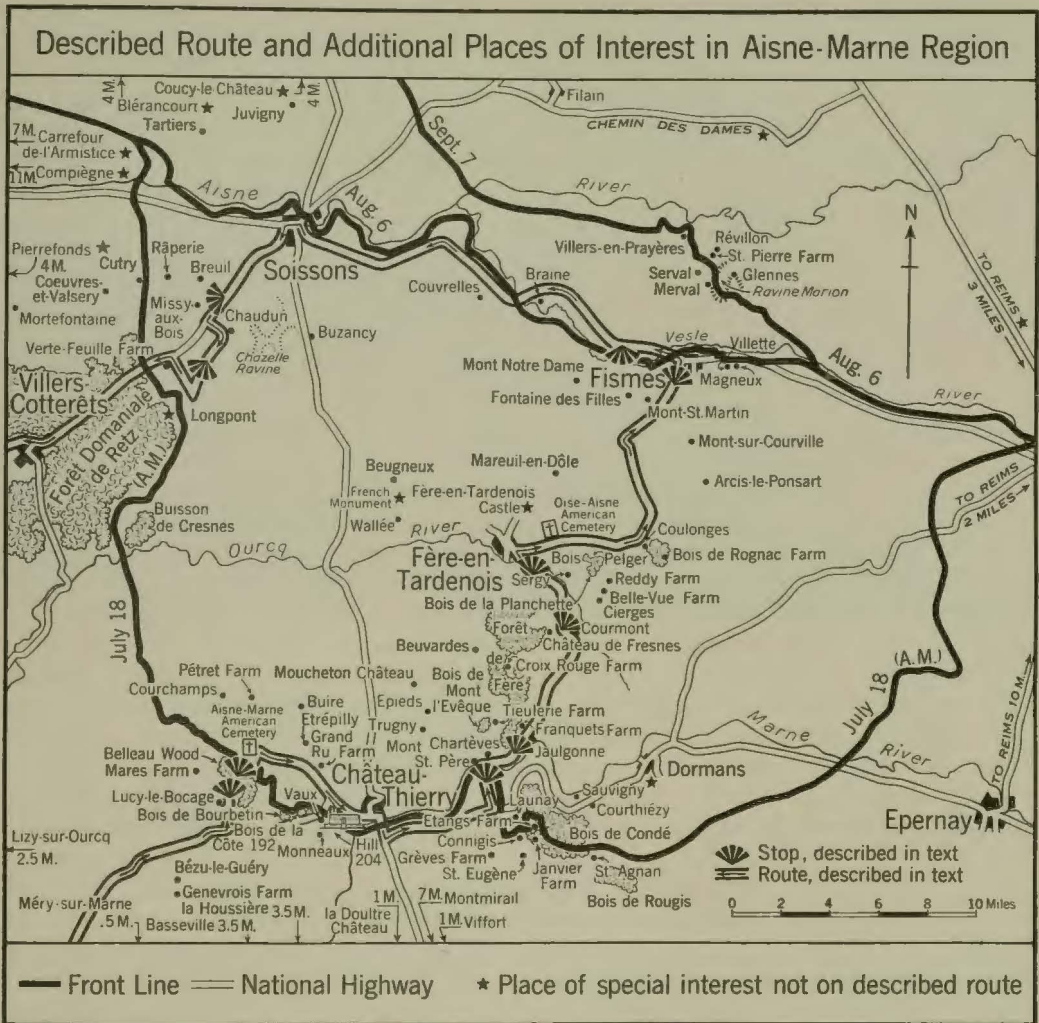
Beuvardes. Location of 42d Div. Hdqrs., during the period July 28-Aug. 12.

★ **Blérancourt.** In a 17th Century château, which has been partially restored, is displayed in this town an interesting collection of paintings, engravings and other articles relating to the historical cooperation of America and France. The establishment, financed by Americans, is called the "Musée de Coopération Franco-Américain" and is one of the national museums of France. A visit, if in the neighborhood, is recommended.

Bois de Bourbetin; Bois de la Côte 192; Bois de la Roche. These woods near Vaux were the scenes of hard fighting by the Infantry Brigade of the 2d Division. On June 6 the division captured the Bois de Bourbetin and the Bois de la Côte 192 in spite of heavy hostile fire, and then defeated an enemy counterattack close to the last-named wood. The positions

Museum at Blérancourt





were ordered evacuated that night. In the late afternoon of July 1 an attack was launched on Vaux and the near-by Bois de la Roche. During the course of this attack the Bois de Bourbetin and the Bois de la Côte 192 were taken. All objectives were gained within two hours and many machine guns were captured. A German counterattack early in the morning of July 2 was repulsed with heavy losses. In all, over 400 prisoners and much matériel were captured.

Bois Pelger; Bois de la Planchette. These adjoining woods northeast of Sergy were strongly held by the Germans after their retreat to the Ourcq River. The 32d and 42d Divisions, and elements of

the 4th attached to the latter, were heavily engaged in the vicinity of these woods from July 29 to August 1. The woods were finally captured by the 32d Division during August 2.

Bois de Rognac Farm, one mile south-east of Coulonges. III Corps Hdqrs., Aug. 8–19, while directing operations on the Vesle. 28th Div. Hdqrs. during the period Aug. 20–Sept. 5.

Breuil. This village was captured in severe fighting early on July 18 by the combined efforts of the 1st Division and the adjoining French troops.

Buire. I Corps Hdqrs., July 22–28, during part of the time that its troops were moving forward to the Ourcq River.

Buisson de Cresnes. This wood was captured on the morning of July 18 by units of the 4th Division which were serving with the French 33d Division.

Buzancy. Near this town the Soissons-Château-Thierry highway was cut by the 1st Division on July 21 and hostile counter-attacks were repulsed in heavy fighting. At the château near the village several hundred prisoners were captured. A small 1st Division monument is located alongside the main highway.

★ **Carrefour de l'Armistice.** The place in the Forêt de Compiègne where the Armistice was signed is now marked by several interesting monuments. Marshal Foch's headquarters car is housed there in a building donated by an American.

Château de Fresnes, west of Courmont. III Corps Hdqrs., Aug. 19-Sept. 6.

Chazelle Ravine, east of Chaudun. Scene of bitter fighting by the 1st Division during its attack on July 19.

★ **Chemin des Dames.** The terrain in the vicinity of this road was fought over by the French and Germans many times during the war. A number of French war monuments are to be seen alongside it.

Coeuvres-et-Valsery. 1st Div. Hdqrs. during the period from July 18 to 23.

★ **Compiègne.** This city was occupied for a short time in 1914 by the Germans and the Armistice was signed near it. Joan of Arc was captured at Compiègne in 1430 by the Burgundians, who sold her to the English. The city contains a fine historic château which is open to visitors.

★ **Coucy-le-Château.** Location of interesting ruins of a large ancient castle, partly destroyed by Germans during the war. The massive concrete emplacement of a large German railroad gun is still to be seen a short distance across the tracks from the railroad station.

Courthiézy and Sauvigny. Front-line positions on the south bank of the Marne River near these villages were held by elements of the 3d Division from June 3 to 8 and by units of the 28th Division from July 9 to 15. The 28th Division units, due to the retirement of the French on their flanks, were surrounded and nearly annihilated in the German attack of July 15. (See sketch on page 65.)

Couvelles, about 2 miles west of Braine. Location of 26th Div. Hdqrs.

Marshal Foch's Train Arriving at Compiègne
The Armistice was signed in the car in the foreground





Ruins of Old Castle at Coucy-le-Château

for a six weeks' period in February and March, 1918, while the division received front-line training with troops of the French XI Corps then occupying the Chemin des Dames Sector. At various times during this period elements of the 26th Division held portions of the corps front which extended to the westward from Filain for about 11 miles.

Croix Rouge Farm. The 26th Division, whose front line at the time was composed entirely of troops of the 56th Brigade, 28th Division, attached to it, was held up near this farm on July 24 by heavy resistance in the Forêt de Fère. The farm was captured two days later, after severe hand-to-hand fighting by the 42d Division which had relieved the 26th.

★ **Dormans.** An interesting World War memorial church has been constructed on the hill in rear of this town.

★ **Fère-en-Tardenois Castle.** An interesting medieval castle built about 1200 A.D. is located about 1½ miles northeast of Fère-en-Tardenois, close to the road to Fismes. The 77th Div. Hdqrs. was located in the adjoining château for the period from August 13 to September 4.

Fontaine des Filles, west of Mont-St.

Martin. In a cave north of this point was located the 77th Div. Hdqrs. from September 4 to September 16.

Franquets Farm, about ½ mile north of Jaulgonne. Scene of heavy fighting by the 3d Division on July 22 and 23. The farm was finally captured on July 24.

Genevrois Farm, near Bézu-le-Guéry. 2d Div. Hdqrs., June 10–July 10. 26th Div. Hdqrs., July 10–15, and on July 20.

Glennes. On the plateau south of this village the 28th Division engaged in severe fighting on September 6, capturing four enemy strong points and holding them against a counterattack.

Grand Ru Farm, southeast of Etrépilly. 26th Div. Hdqrs., July 21–30.

Grèves Farm, 1½ miles west of St. Eugène. On July 15 a battalion of the 3d Division advanced from near this farm to counterattack the advancing Germans. It was heavily shelled by hostile artillery and suffered severe losses.

Close to this farm First Lieutenant George P. Hays, Field Artillery, 3d Division, rendered the gallant services for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. At the outset of the terrific enemy artillery bombardment on



German Troops Advancing Across the Chemin des Dames, May 1918

the night of July 14–15, his telephone line was destroyed beyond repair. He immediately set out to establish contact with the neighboring command post and while so doing established liaison with two French batteries, visiting their positions so frequently that he was mainly responsible for the accurate fire therefrom. While thus engaged he was severely wounded. His deeds were an important factor in checking the advance of the enemy troops on this front.

During the same battle and also near this farm, Second Lieutenant Jay F. Hostetter, Field Artillery, 3d Division, having discovered that two French guns on his left had lost their crews during the heavy German bombardment, requested and obtained permission to use them. Securing eight volunteers from his ranks, he pressed the guns into action, and for

several hours poured an effective fire into the advancing enemy. For this action he and the eight men were awarded Distinguished Service Crosses.

Janvier Farm, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of Connigis. Near this farm a battery of the 3d Division on July 15 fired at point-blank range against German infantry until its ammunition was exhausted. The guns were then disabled and the gunners retired to the infantry lines.

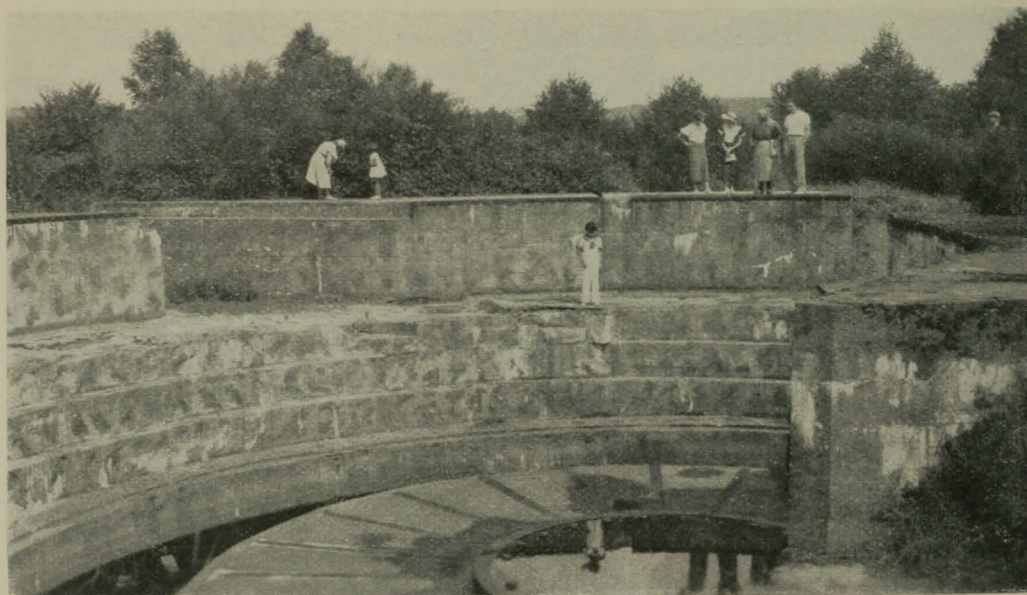
La Doultre Château, near Viffort. 3d Div. Hdqrs., June 11–July 22.

La Houssière, east of Bassevelle. 28th Div. Hdqrs., July 15–18.

Launay. In the vicinity of this village and Etangs Farm troops of the 3d Division on the afternoon of July 15 repulsed a strong German attack.

Lizy-sur-Ourcq. 4th Div. Headquarters during the period from July 5 to 23.

Large German Gun Emplacement at Coucy-le-Château in 1934





German Batteries in Position Near the Marne River, June 1918. © G

★ **Longpont.** In this town are the ruins of a large Cistercian abbey, said to have been built in the 12th Century.

Magneux. Near this place on August 16 and 25, the 28th Division launched attacks to advance its lines closer to the Vesle River. These attacks resulted in heavy fighting although no permanent gains of ground were made.

Mares Farm. About noon on June 2 a marine battalion of the 2d Division hurried into a second-line position at this farm, which is about 2 miles northwest of Lucy-le-Bocage. Late the next day, the Germans pushed through the French troops and reached the farm where their advance was stopped by the American battalion after a severe fight.

Mareuil-en-Dôle. 4th Div. Hdqrs., Aug. 4-12, and 77th Div. Hdqrs., Aug. 12-13. The town was captured by the

42d Division on August 2 after a battle with German machine gun units but was voluntarily abandoned the same day. It was reoccupied on August 3 by the 4th Division, which had relieved the 42d.

Merval and Serval were occupied on September 5 by the 77th Division while it was moving its front line forward from the Vesle toward the Aisne River.

Méry-sur-Marne. 26th Div. Hdqrs. during the period July 15-20.

Missy-aux-Bois. During the fighting in the ravine north of Missy-aux-Bois a gap had developed between the American 1st Division and the French division on its left, thus exposing the left of the 1st Division to terrific fire from several German machine guns located in a rock quarry. Second Lieutenant Samuel I. Parker, 1st Division, observing this serious situation, ordered his depleted platoon

Artillery of I Corps on the March Near Vaux, July 1918





8-Inch Austrian Howitzer Captured by the
26th Division at Epieds, July 24, 1918

to follow him in an attack upon the strong point. Meeting a disorganized group of French soldiers wandering about in the ravine, he persuaded them to join his platoon. This consolidated group followed Lieutenant Parker through direct enemy rifle and machine-gun fire to the crest above the ravine and, rushing forward, took the quarry by storm, capturing six machine guns and about 40 prisoners. Lieutenant Parker remained in the combat the following day and, although painfully wounded, led the battalion he then commanded to its objective. For this example of conspicuous gallantry and spirit of self-sacrifice he was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Monneaux, on the western slope of Hill 204. This town was captured on June 6 by elements of the 3d Division serving with the French 10th Colonial Division.

Montmirail. The non-motorized units of the 3d Division detrained at this town early in June when the division was hurrying forward to enter the battle near Château-Thierry. Near Montmirail important battles were fought by Napoleon on February 11 and 14, 1814.

Mont Notre Dame. The large church located here replaces one destroyed by the Germans and stands on a site occupied by historic churches since the 9th Century.

Mont-St. Martin. On August 3 this village was occupied by the 32d Division after a sharp fight in the vicinity with German machine gun units.

Mont-sur-Courville. 28th Div. Hdqrs. during the period Sept. 5-9.

Mortefontaine. 1st Div. Hdqrs., just before the offensive of July 18. III Corps Hdqrs., July 24-30, prior to its assuming active direction of operations. The 1st Division assembled in the vicinity of this village before it started its attack early on the morning of July 18.

German Gun Firing Near Reims, June 1917. © G





Americans Marching to Attack Near Beuvarde, July 24, 1918
The men are in gas masks, the road having recently been gassed by the Germans

Moucheton Château, north of Epieds. I Corps Hdqrs., from July 28 to Aug. 5.

Pétrét Farm, 1 mile east of Cour-champs. A battalion of the 4th Division attached to the French 164th Division captured this farm and the near-by wood during the day of July 20.

★ **Pierrefonds Château**. This magnificent castle is a fine example of French medieval military architecture. Originally built in 1390, the castle was restored in 1862. During the war, while used as a hospital, it was shelled several times.

Râperie, about 1 mile east of Cutry. In the vicinity of this mill, the 1st Division had a short but bitter fight early on the morning of July 18. During this engagement, Private First Class Daniel R. Edwards, 1st Division, who had been under treatment for several weeks for numerous and serious wounds and was suffering intense pain from a freshly shattered arm, crawled alone into an occupied German trench. He killed four men and captured four more. While conducting them to the rear a shell completely shattered one of Private Edwards' legs but he continued to the rear, forcing

one of the prisoners to carry him. The bravery of Private Edwards, then a tradition in his battalion because of his previous gallant acts, again raised the morale of his comrades to a high pitch. For his exceptional bravery during this fighting, Private Edwards was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Ravine Marion, southwest of Glennes. Scene of sharp fighting by the 77th Division on September 8, 9 and 14.

Reddy Farm, northeast of Cierges. The vicinity of this farm was the scene of heavy fighting by the 32d Division on August 1. It was captured by that division during August 2 after a sharp fight.

The Repairing of Roads Was a Problem
for the Engineers





Troops of the 2d Division En Route to a Rest Camp During a Temporary Relief from the Front Line, June 17, 1918

★ **Reims**, one of the historic cities of France, was badly damaged by German bombardments during the war. Objects of interest in it are its Roman ruins and the world-famous cathedral where many of the kings of France were crowned. A visit to one of the vast champagne cellars at Reims will prove interesting.

St. Agnan. In the near-by Bois de Rougis and Bois de Condé, the 55th Brigade of the 28th Division assisted the French in checking the German July 15 offensive. It sustained heavy losses in two counterattacks launched by it from the Bois de Rougis on July 16. (See the sketch which appears on page 65.)

St. Pierre Farm, southwest of Révillon. Intense local fighting by the 77th Division occurred near this place on September 8, 9 and 14. On the latter date positions near the farm changed hands as many as three times before they finally remained in the possession of the Americans.

Tartiers. 32d Div. Headquarters during the period Aug. 27-Sept. 6.

Tieulerie Farm and the near-by Bois de Mont l'Evêque, about 1½ miles north of Chartèves. This farm and wood were

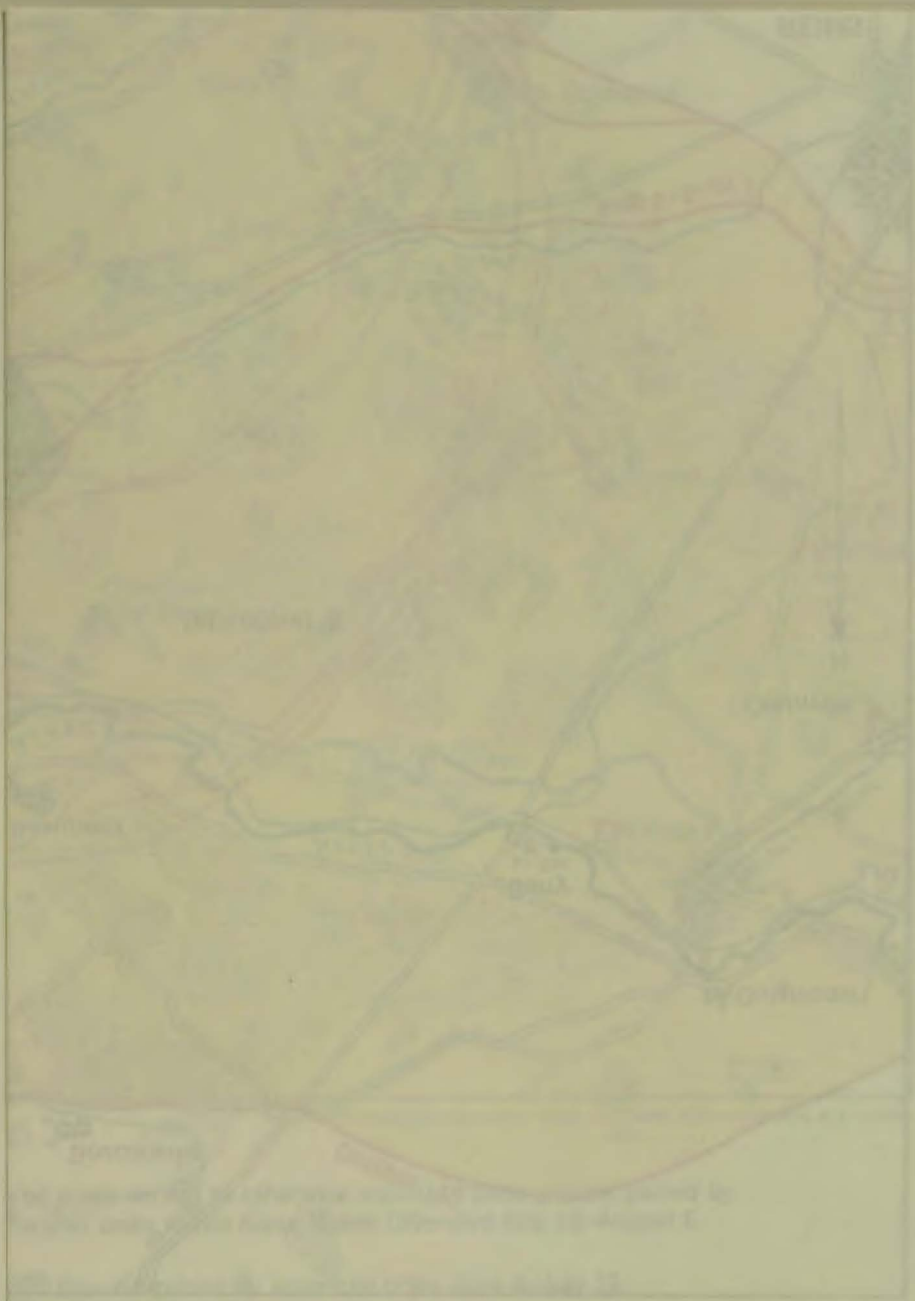
the scenes of bitter fighting on July 22 and 23 by the 3d Division. They were both finally captured on the latter date.

Trugny and Epieds. The 26th Division engaged in severe fighting for the possession of these two villages, which were part of a strong German defensive position. In four different attacks made during July 22 and 23 the towns changed hands a number of times.

Verte-Feuille Farm. Southwest of Soissons, on the main road to Villers-Cotterêts, about 1 mile northeast of Verte-Feuille Farm is located a French monument "TO THE GLORY OF THE FRENCH AND ALLIED SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT VICTORIOUSLY ON THIS PLATEAU FROM MAY 29 TO JULY 25, 1918." Among the many units listed are British divisions and the American 1st and 2d Divisions.

Villers-en-Prayères. Captured by the 77th Division on September 6.

Villette. The 6th Brigade of the 3d Division held the front line northwest of the village of Villette near the Vesle River from August 6 to 11 and during this period made two determined attempts to establish a bridgehead north of the river.



Large circled numeral in a colored area indicates the American division which fought there

Small circled numeral indicates part of American division which fought attached to another division

SUMMARY OF COMBAT SERVICE OF AMERICAN DIVISIONS
IN THE AISNE-MARNE REGION

<i>Name of Div.</i>	<i>Period of Service 1918</i>	<i>Character of Service</i>	<i>Location of Service General vicinity of—</i>	<i>Army to Which Attached¹</i>	<i>Corps to Which Attached¹</i>	<i>Casualties²</i>
1	July 18-22.....	Battle.....	Missy - aux - Bois and Berzy-le-Sec.	Tenth.....	XX.....	6, 870
2	June 2-5	Battle.....	Lucy-le-Bocage.....	Sixth.....	XXI.....	546
	June 6-July 10.	Sector.....	Belleau Wood and Vaux.	Sixth.....	XXI until June 21, then III until July 4, then Am. I.	7, 225 (363)
	July 18-20.....	Battle.....	La Verte-Feuille Farm and Vierzy.	Tenth.....	XX.....	4, 319
3	May 31-June 5.	Battle.....	Château-Thierry and along the Marne River to Courthiézy.	Sixth.....	XXXVIII.....	65
	June 6-July 14.	Sector.....	Château-Thierry and along the Marne River to Courthiézy.	Sixth.....	XXXVIII.....	432
	July 15-30.....	Battle.....	Mézy and Ronchères...	Sixth until July 17, then Ninth until July 20, then Sixth.	XXXVIII.....	5, 964 (92)
(6th Brig. only)	Aug. 6.....	Battle.....	Vesle River east of Fismes.	Sixth.....	Am. III.....	32
(6th Brig. only)	Aug. 7-11.....	Sector.....	Vesle River east of Fismes.	Sixth.....	Am. III.....	574 (2)
4	July 18-21.....	Battle.....	Noroy-sur-Ourcq and Chevillon.	Sixth.....	II and VII.....	2, 100
	Aug. 3-6.....	Battle.....	Mareuil-en-Dôle and St. Thibaut.	Sixth.....	Am. I.....	1, 625 (33)
	Aug. 7-12.....	Sector.....	St. Thibaut.....	Sixth.....	Am. I.....	1, 761 (59)
26	Feb. 6-Mar. 19.	Training in Line	Chemin des Dames....	Sixth.....	XI.....	404
	July 10-14.....	Sector.....	Belleau Wood.....	Sixth.....	Am. I.....	213
	July 15-25.....	Battle.....	Belleau and Epieds....	Sixth.....	Am. I.....	4, 644 (149)
28	July 1-14.....	Training in Line	Château-Thierry and along the Marne River to Courthiézy.	Sixth.....	XXXVIII and III.....	178
	July 15-18.....	Battle.....	Château-Thierry and along the Marne River to Courthiézy.	Sixth until July 17, then Ninth.	III and XXXVIII.....	1, 233
	July 28-31.....	Battle.....	Bois des Grimpettes....	Sixth.....	XXXVIII.....	1, 416
	Aug. 7-17.....	Sector.....	Fismes.....	Sixth.....	Am. III.....	1, 899 (124)
	Aug. 18-Sept. 8.	Battle.....	Baslieux.....	Sixth.....	Am. III.....	3, 277 (25)
32	July 30-Aug. 6.	Battle.....	Cierges and Fismes....	Sixth.....	XXXVIII until Aug. 4, then Am. III.	3, 662 (49)

See footnotes on page 104.

SUMMARY OF COMBAT SERVICE—*Continued*

<i>Name of Div.</i>	<i>Period of Service 1918</i>	<i>Character of Service</i>	<i>Location of Service General vicinity of—</i>	<i>Army to Which Attached¹</i>	<i>Corps to Which Attached¹</i>	<i>Casualties²</i>
	Aug. 7.....	Sector.....	Fismes.....	Sixth.....	Am. III.....	42
	Aug. 28-Sept. 2	Battle.....	Juvigny.....	Tenth.....	XXX.....	2,633 (13)
42	July 25-Aug. 3.	Battle.....	Sergy and Seringes-et-Nesles.	Sixth.....	Am. I.....	5,476 (976)
77	Aug. 12-17.....	Sector.....	St. Thibaut.....	Sixth.....	Am. I until Aug. 13, then Am. III.	1,407 (136)
	Aug. 18-Sept. 16.	Battle.....	Bazoches, Merval and Villers-en-Prayères.	Sixth until Sept. 8, then Fifth.	Am. III until Sept. 9, then XVI.	3,200 (13)
93 (370th Inf. only)	Sept. 17-Oct. 12.	Battle.....	Northeast of Vauxaillon.	Tenth.....	XXX until Oct. 6, then XVI.	504
(370th Inf. only)	Nov. 5-11.....	Battle.....	Northeast of Laon and Rocroi.	Third.....	XVIII until Nov. 10, then XVI.	65

¹ All armies and corps are French unless otherwise indicated. In this table Am. = American.

² Casualties are for period in line only. Figures in parentheses give casualties for units temporarily attached. Add figure in parentheses to the one above in order to obtain the total casualties during entire operation.



32d Division Troops Resting Near Mont-St. Martin, August 6, 1918