Section 1

ORIGINAL MILITARY STUDY

This section contains original contributions by graduates of The Command and General Staff School.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE GERMAN FORCES OPPOSED TO THE AMERICAN 1st DIVISION FROM 1-11 OCTOBER, 1918

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FOREWORD

This is a study and a critical analysis of the tactical operations of those forces of the German Army which were opposed to the American 1st Division in that phase of the Meuse-Argonne campaign of the World War, between 1 October and 11 October, 1918. It is based on the operations of these forces as actually depicted by their respective war diaries, combat reports, messages, and other records, most of which were written on the battlefield during the period covered, the translations of which are contained in Volume IV, World War Records, First Division, A.E.F. (German Documents, Meuse-Argonne).

The study and critical analysis made are almost entirely of the infantry operations. The artillery operations have been deliberately excluded because the enormity of the subject makes it one for a study in itself. It is believed that a detailed study of the skill with which the German artillery units in this phase of the Meuse-Argonne campaign were employed to the maximum advantage in the face of greatly depleted personnel and material, together with the most trying and difficult ammunition supply problems, would prove of benefit to both the Command and General Staff School and the Field Artillery School.

Operations of aviation units and other auxiliary arms are also excluded for the reason that similar records of these arms are not available.

In a number of instances, the records of certain infantry regiments and battalions are incomplete or entirely missing,

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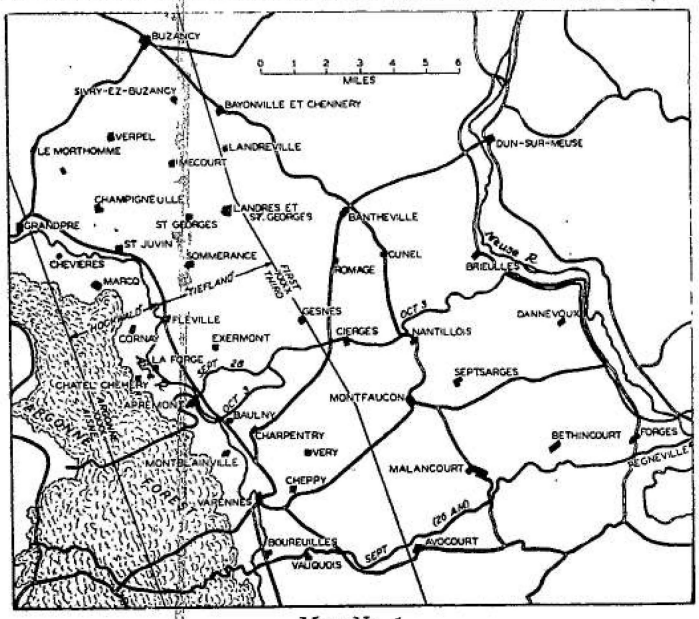
which leaves missing a verification of the operations as reported by a superior or adjacent unit.

It is believed, however, that the records available and the information contained therein are sufficient to piece together the narrative of the operations of these forces down to and including the infantry regiments, which in many cases were the equivalent in strength to our present peace strength companies.

On such a narrative is this critical analysis made.

ORIENTATION

1. *A summary of the units of the German army opposed to the American 1st Division from 1 October to 11 October, 1918:*



Map No. 1

a. Armies and corps.—The American 1st Division was opposed during this period by elements of the German Third and Fifth Armies. The sector which it took over on the night of 30 September-1 October was opposite a portion of the front line held by the German LVIII Corps, which was known

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as Group Argonne. German army corps were more commonly termed groups, usually named for some vital or prominent terrain feature located within the sector area occupied by each particular group or corps instead of their real numerical designation. As the German records refer to these units entirely by this method of designation, the same method will be used throughout this study. Group Argonne was the left group of the German Third Army until 12:00 noon, 5 October, when it was transferred to and became the right group of the German Fifth Army (see Map No. 1). At this time, Group Argonne was commanded by Lieutenant General Von Kleist.

b. Divisions.—During the period covered by these operations, Group Argonne was composed from time to time of the following divisions:

1st Guard Division
2d Landwehr Division
5th Guard Division
28th Reserve Division
37th Division
41st Division
45th Reserve Division
52d Division.

The Appendix shows the combat units of which these divisions were composed. Of these divisions, only the 5th Guard, 37th, 41st, 45th Reserve, and the 52d were actually opposed to the American 1st Division. The other divisions listed participated in these operations in that only a few of their smaller units were used as reserves and in small counterattacks.

2. *Situation as of 1 October, 1918.—a. American 1st Division.*—On the night of 30 September-1 October, the American 1st Division relieved the American 35th Division with one regiment of the 82d Division attached, on the front along the high ground running northeast from Baulny to the Bois Communal de Baulny (see Map No. 2).

b. Sector of Group Argonne.—Group Argonne was the extreme left group of the German Third Army. It occupied a sector as shown on Map No. 1. The sector of the group was divided into two subsectors: "Hochwald," which included the wooded heights of the Argonne, and "Tiefland," which

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was in the valley of the Aire River and as far east as the line: Gesnes—Landres—et—St. Georges. The boundary between the two subsectors was the Aire River. Subsector "Tiefland" stood directly in the path forward of the American 1st Division. The command post of the group was at Buzancy.

c. Terrain study of Tiefland Subsector (see Map No. 2).—The terrain in the forward part of the subsector consists of a succession of hills whose densely wooded tops and bare glacis-like slopes offer considerable advantage for defense. The most prominent of these hills are Montrebeau, Montrefagne, the prominent ridge of hill 272, hill 269, and hill 277. In addition to the heavily wooded areas which cover these hills are numerous small patches of woods that offer most favorable opportunities for machine-gun defenses. Running laterally through the forward center of the subsector is the deep and well defined Exermont Ravine through which the fordable Gesnes Brook flows into the Aire River. The right of the subsector, which slopes down to the open Aire Valley, is completely exposed to the Argonne Forest west of the Aire River. West of the Aire River is a series of high hills which are approximately the same elevation as those to the east. Artillery from the west of the Aire River can completely enfilade the Exermont Ravine. The left of the subsector is made up of broken terrain with large wooded areas and high hills interspersed to the east. Running perpendicularly from the north into Exermont Ravine are several draws and deep ravines which offer excellent approaches for the outflanking of the high ground just north of the ravine. The terrain in front of the subsector, though hilly, is quite open and offers fair fields of fire.

d. Operations of Group Argonne just prior to 1 October.—On 29 and 30 September, the troops of the Tiefland subsector launched strong counterattacks against the American 35th Division, which had taken Montrebeau Hill on the 28th. The American 35th Division was forced to give ground, losing Montrebeau Hill and finally making a stand along the high ground running northeast from Baulny, where it was relieved by the American 1st Division on the night of 30 September.

e. Battle order of Group Argonne on 1 October.—(1) The 2d Landwehr Division held the right of the group front occupying the Hochwald subsector. Although this division had been rated only as a fourth-class division and had been badly

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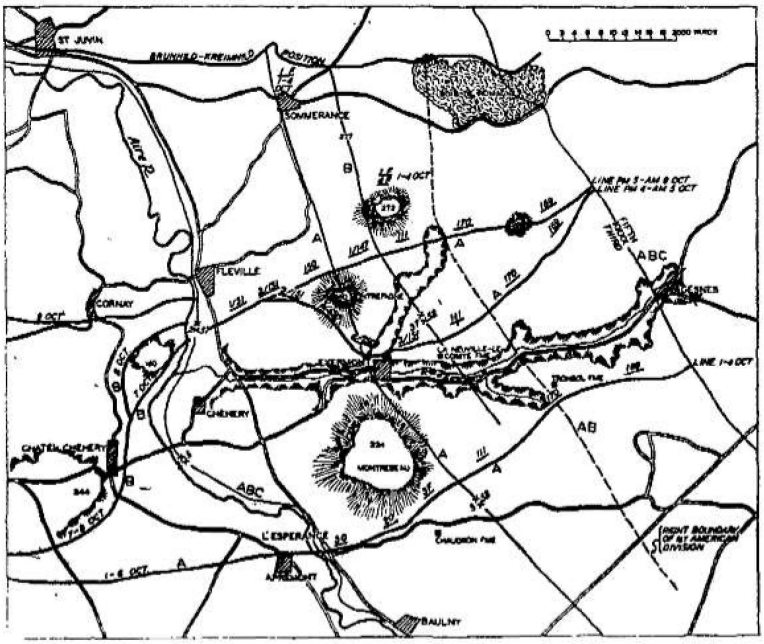
used in the earlier days of the Meuse-Argonne campaign, it fought hard and for days to come was to offer some of the strongest resistance encountered by American troops in the Aire Valley. While the American 1st Division never directly attacked the sector of this division, it was subjected throughout the period of 4 October to 8 October to the enfilading fire of the artillery of the 2d Landwehr Division.



Map No. 2

(2) The 5th Guard Division (see Map No. 2) held the western half of the Tiefland subsector and was directly opposite the sector of the American 1st Brigade. It is interesting to note that its left boundary almost exactly conformed to the right boundary of the 1st Brigade. The division, at this time, was commanded by Major General von Haxthanson. Its command post was at St. Juvin. The division had participated in the counterattack of 28 and 29 September against the American 35th Division and had played the major role in the recapture of Montrebeau Hill, which had been lost in the first three days of the American offensive launched on

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26 September. By morning, 1 October, the division as the result of its counterattack had reached the line shown on Map No. 2. Its battle order from west to east was: 3d Foot Guard Regiment, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3d Grenadier Guard Regiment. The 1st Battalion, 122d Landwehr Regiment of the 2d Landwehr Division on the right, was in regimental reserve located in the Exermont Ravine.

The 5th Guard Division had been rated as a first-class division until the spring of 1918. Because of its rough handling, however, in the Hautevesnes-Torcy sector in early June, 1918, when it lost about one-half of its effectives, much of its value as an attack division had been destroyed. Again on the Aisne in September and in the first four days of the Meuse-Argonne, its losses had been extremely heavy; so by 1 October the division had reached a stage of almost complete exhaustion and demoralization.

Amongst the official records of the division on this date are a number of messages which tend to picture its true condition at that time. In one instance, a battalion commander, a first lieutenant, informed his regimental commander that because of the extreme hardships suffered during the past month, his men had reached a stage of exhaustion where they could "scarcely be induced to stay in line." And then he added that in the event of an attack he denied all responsibility for what "he knows will happen."

A message from a company commander to his battalion commander stated that despite the arrival of new men from furlough, the strength of his company was only 2 officers, 4 noncommissioned officers, and 22 enlisted men; that many were reporting sick and some had disappeared; that the men were unable to perform their ordinary duties because of their state of exhaustion.

A message from another company commander to his battalion commander stated that he refused any responsibility because of the exhaustion and depletion of his command by men disappearing.

One company commander demonstrated a sense of humor in the face of what must have seemed a hopeless situation by making the following entry in his company war diary for 2 October: "Received the following replacements: one private. Reorganized 2d Platoon."

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A message from the battery commander of an accompanying battery attached to the 3d Guard Foot Regiment complained of the exhaustion of his men and animals from being in the line eight days during severe, inclement weather and requested the battery's relief. The regimental commander disapproved the request and was so indorsed by the brigade commander.

The numerical strength of the infantry units of the 5th Guard Division at this time was as follows:

3d Guard Foot Regiment:
- One battalion:
  - 24 officers, 48 noncommissioned officers, 351 enlisted men
- One provisional battalion of mixed units attached:
  - 3 officers, 30 noncommissioned officers, 154 enlisted men

20th Infantry Regiment:
- One battalion:
  - 18 officers, 47 noncommissioned officers, 263 enlisted men

3d Grenadier Guard Regiment:
- Three battalions totalling:
  - 19 officers, 63 noncommissioned officers, 293 enlisted men

1st Battalion, 122d Landwehr Regiment:
- 9 officers, 319 noncommissioned officers and enlisted men

Total strength of division:
- 73 officers, 1568 enlisted men.

With this force of exhausted men the 5th Guard Division prepared to defend its position against the onslaughts of the fresh and newly inserted American 1st Brigade, at that time totalling more than 5500 officers and men.

The hopelessness of the situation at this time, not only to the 5th Guard Division but to the entire German cause is demonstrated in a message received by Group Argonne on 1 October from the Third Army, which states:

> "Several events of the last days of combat force me to accent anew that Army reserves of the Groups will be *inserted or moved only with the prior approval of the Army*

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Headquarters. * * * Army Headquarters has only a very limited number of reserves at its disposal and *can not count upon further reinforcements.* This serious situation forces us to a very sparing use of the same. * * *

"The Commanding General
Sgd. V. Einem"

The reason for leaving the 5th Guard Division in the line at this time and thus holding the left of Tiefland subsector so weakly may or may not be expressed in the war diary of Group Argonne in which is written on 3 October: "The enemy, cautious since 29 September, will have to silence the enfilade fire from the Argonne before he again renews his attacks east of the Aire."

(3) The 52d Infantry Division (see Map No. 2) was holding the eastern half of the Tiefland subsector, having just completed the relief of the 1st Guard Division on the night of 30 September-1 October. The major portion of its sector was opposite the sector of the American 2d Brigade, both units having almost the identical west boundary, while the eastern boundary of the German 52d Division extended somewhat further to the east than that of the American 2d Brigade. The division was commanded at this time by Major General von Borries. Its command post was located at Landres. Its order of battle from west to east was: 111th Infantry Regiment, 170th Infantry Regiment, 169th Infantry Regiment. The 3d Battalion 170th Infantry Regiment was in division reserve just north of Neuviller Comte Farm.

In contrast to the 5th Guard Division, the 52d Division was rated at this time as one of the best in the German Army. Throughout the war, and especially in 1918, it had participated in a great deal of heavy fighting and had always acquitted itself most creditably. Until the time that it relieved the 1st Guard Division, it had not yet participated as a front-line division in the Meuse-Argonne campaign; so it seems reasonable to consider it as having been a fresh division.

Each one of the three infantry regiments was composed of three battalions. The average strength of each battalion was about 600 men. In addition to the three battalions, each regiment had a machine-gun company, the average strength of which was about 120 men each, and a trench mortar com-

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pany, the average strength of which was about 100 men each. Each regiment, therefore, totalled about 2000 men. While the numerical strength of the regiments of the 52d Division was much greater than those of the 5th Guard Division, only two regiments of the 52d Division, the 111th and 170th, were opposite to the American 2d Brigade, the numerical strength of which was also about 5500 officers and men.

(4) The 1st Guard Division was in Army and Group Reserve disposed as shown on Map No. 2. This division had just been relieved on the front line during the night of 30 September-1 October by the 52d Division after bearing the brunt of the American attack on 26 September and participating in the counterattack against the American 35th Division on 28 and 29 September. Its physical condition and state of morale at this time was even worse than that of the 5th Guard Division.

Throughout the war it had been rated as one of the best German shock divisions. During the last year of the war it had fought a great deal, and until the latter stages it had fought well. It had suffered severe losses, however, and finally, due to its lack of effectives, which it was found impossible to replace, its morale had greatly deteriorated and it had failed to measure up to its former reputation.

(5) *Army and group reserves.*—The German method of locating and employing army and group reserves in the defense at this time is worthy of note.

Reserves consisting of both infantry and artillery were portioned out and placed at strategical locations in the rear of each group by the army and in the rear of each division by the group. These forces were termed "counterattack groups," and the term well implies the purpose for which they were used in every case.

Where a counterattack group was placed by the army in the rear area of a group, or by the group in the rear area of a division, it apparently could, under ordinary circumstances, be used by the group or division in whose rear it was located when and where their respective commanders saw fit. In this situation, however, we find the use of the army counterattack groups by the group commanders restricted by the message of the Third Army, which states because of the limited number of reserves available they would be inserted

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or moved only with the prior approval of Army Headquarters. Nothing in the records show that any such restriction was placed on the use of reserves of Group Argonne by the divisions.

The Third Army had located at Sommerance (see Map No. 2), as its counterattack group in the sector of Group Argonne, the 1st Foot Regiment, with three battalions of the 53d Reserve Division and one battalion of the 1st Guard Field Artillery Regiment, both of the 1st Guard Division, attached. Other army counterattack groups of the same strength were located at Marcq and Chevieres in the sectors of Groups Anne and Aisne, respectively, the other two groups of the Third Army located further to the west.

The German Fifth Army had located the entire 37th Infantry Division as one of its counterattack groups at Romagne (see Map No. 1), in the sector of the Group Meuse-West, which held the group sector adjacent to and just east of Group Argonne.

Group Argonne had in turn located the 2d and 3d Foot Regiments of the 1st Guard Division and the remainder of the 1st Guard Division Artillery at hill 272 as a sort of main counterattack group for the entire Tiefland subsector. The 1st Battalion 111th Regiment with one section of horse artillery and one battalion of the 169th Regiment with one section of horse artillery, all from the 52d Division, were located at Exermont and hill 269, respectively, as minor counterattack groups.*

Nothing can be found in any of the available records to show that any of the artillery attached to the counterattack groups either of the army or the groups was actively employed until the counterattack group itself was actively employed in making a counterattack. This may or may not have been done due to the lack of ammunition supply which was apparent throughout the operation.

OPERATIONS

1. *1 October to 3 October.—a. Intelligence.*—Orders of the army, the group, and the divisions on 1, 2, and 3 October all warned of an immediate resumption of the American attack.

*While nothing in the available group records state such, it is believed that the latter two counterattack groups were so established because of the apparent ineffectiveness of the units of the 1st Guard Division.

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These warnings were evidently based on the voluminous amount of information brought in or obtained by the intelligence agencies of all echelons. Either the German battlefield intelligence system functioned to a high degree of perfection or the Americans were unduly negligent in their efforts to prevent the Germans from obtaining information that clearly showed an impending attack of great magnitude. German intelligence reports for this period report the movements of long truck columns, troop columns, and troop and large tank concentrations in the rear areas of the American 1st Division. Artillery positions newly occupied seemed to be readily located.

Reports of 30 September and 1 October indicate that the Germans were well cognizant of the relief of the American 35th and 91st Divisions by the American 1st and 32d Divisions, respectively. A group order for 1 October states that "the American 35th and 28th Divisions have been relieved by divisions bearing the names of 'Iron Division' and 'Pershing's Pride,' a measure of the accomplishment of our troops." The evening report of Group Argonne on 2 October correctly states that the American divisions then in front of the group, from west to east, consisted of the 77th, 28th, 1st, and 32d Divisions and terms them as being amongst the best American attack divisions. Group evaluation of air reconnaissance reports caused the group also to conclude correctly that the American divisions being relieved were to remain closely in rear as reserves. Prisoners taken in the early morning of 1 October from all four infantry regiments of the 35th Division by the 5th Guard Division apparently furnished the Germans all the information desired concerning the relief that was made the night before on the front of the Tiefland subsector.

The ease with which intelligence information can be incorrectly evaluated and the danger resulting therefrom is shown by the noon report of Group Argonne of 3 October, which states that "information received indicates that because of the great reverse of the 29th (September) that the enemy had in morale" it was concluded that before he could resume his attack he "will first get his forces in hand." This conclusion was apparently based on the fact that while the attack had been expected momentarily for the past three days, it had failed to materialize up to the time that the report was issued; also certain information had been brought in by infan-

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try patrols and other reconnaissance agencies of enemy entrenchments being constructed at several points along the group front east of the Aire River. Just how much this report detracted from the alertness of the divisions on the following morning, when the attack did come, can not be determined. That the attack was to come eventually was apparent by the announcement in the same report of a captured signal plan disclosing preparations for the installation of telephone lines via Fleville—Imecourt—Buzancy as far as Pierremont (see Map No. 1).

While warning the groups daily to be prepared for the impending American attack, the same optimistic spirit of assurance, as a result of the American inactivity on 1 and 2 October, seems to have crept into the headquarters of the Third Army. Entered in the war diary of the army on 3 October is the following statement: "Thanks to the offensive spirit that has been manifested by the troops to date on all sides, the initial success of the enemy has again been neutralized almost everywhere." Were this a message published to troops in orders, its sincerity could be questioned; however, the fact that it is entered in a document (which it is assumed records the actual sentiments of the commander and staff of the Third Army), it would appear reasonable to accept these sentiments as expressed in that document at their face value. Events of the past few days, as it will be seen later, in a way justified this conclusion, although it tends to show a total ignorance of the true condition of divisions such as the 1st and 5th Guard Divisions.

b. Reorganization and preparation for defense.—While army, group, and division orders for 1, 2, and 3 October all stress the need for being prepared for an impending resumption of the American attack, they also emphasize the great need for utilizing the time until it did come for the organization and strengthening of the new positions, and the effort to be made for raising the morale of the troops. Pioneer troops were sent forward to all divisions to assist in the organization of the new position. Army orders prohibited the use of these troops on combat missions. Orders of the group and divisions particularly emphasize plans for counterattacks and antitank defense. In both cases, these orders proved to be well warranted during the days that followed.

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The antitank defense consisted chiefly of the attachment of an accompanying battery of light field artillery to each regiment of the 5th Division and each front-line battalion of the 52d Division. This attachment was made at the expense of the division light artillery. The wisdom of this will have to be judged in the conclusion of this analysis by weighing the results obtained in the tank attacks to come against the disadvantages of the lessening of the fire-power of the division artillery in normal artillery missions.

On 1 October, the Third Army ordered contacts between divisions to be made by officers. This order was issued because of the numerous penetrations that had been made by the enemy in the past few days directly on boundaries. This order proves of special interest because of the penetrations that were to be made up the Aire Valley, the boundary line between the 2d Landwehr Division and the 5th Guard Division during the operations of the next few days.

Apparently not holding the assurance for the future that was later gained by the inactivity of the enemy during the next three days, the group commander on 1 October issued an order which might be termed a preparation or a precaution in the event of a forced retirement. Zones of march were assigned to each division, and reconnaissance of roads and covering positions was to be made in each zone at once. March tables for the withdrawal march were to be prepared at once. The order even goes to the extent of stating what demolitions were to be made.

c. Activities.—All major attacks made by the enemy during 1-3 October were made west of the Aire River. After a day of inactivity along the entire group front, a strong hostile attack was launched on the morning of 2 October against the 2d Landwehr Division holding the Hochwald subsector west of the Aire River. By 7:30 AM a penetration was made on the right of the 2d Landwehr Division against the 122d Landwehr Regiment. However, the counterattack group of the 2d Landwehr Division promptly counterattacked and restored the main line of resistance.

Because the counterattack group of the 2d Landwehr Division had been consumed in this action, the group, after obtaining permission from the army, ordered the 1st Guard Regiment, with three battalions of the 53d Reserve Division

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attached, and its attached artillery, all of which composed the Army Counterattack Group in the sector of Group Argonne, from Sommerance to a position on the Chatel—Bayern Ridge road between Bayern Ridge and the intersection of the north-south road with the Chatel—Bayern Ridge road. Here it was put at the disposal of the 2d Landwehr Division, thus indirectly weakening the Tiefland subsector. At noon the Americans renewed their attack against the Hochwald sector but were repulsed.

Activities on both sides of the front along the Tiefland subsector during 2 October consisted entirely of patrol activities.

On 1 October, after the American 1st Division had completed the relief of the 35th American Division, contact was lost with the enemy along the fronts of the 5th and 52d Divisions. Patrols were pushed forward by both divisions during the night of 1-2 October to regain this contact. At 6:45 AM on the morning of 2 October, strong combat patrols were pushed forward by the American 1st Division against the fronts of both the 5th and 52d Divisions. The 5th Guard Division reported that a patrol of 50 men attacked along the boundary between the 20th Regiment and the 3d Foot Guard Regiment which resulted in severe losses for the Americans, 22 prisoners (all members of the American 18th Infantry) being taken.

It is no wonder that the regiments of the 5th Division, whose companies in numerical strength in most cases consisted of less than one-half the strength of this one patrol, at first reported a general attack along their front. It should have given them, however, once the nature of the engagement was discovered, some idea of the avalanche which was to follow two days later.

Other large American patrols were able to penetrate up the Aire Valley during the day, operating against the right of the 5th Division, one even working up as far as Chehery, where it attacked an artillery observation post.

The patrol action of the early morning against the 52d Division was apparently of greater strength than that against the 5th Division. It was launched against the sector of the 170th Regiment and was led by two tanks. The tanks were promptly put out of action by the accompanying battery of the 170th Regiment and the attack repulsed with severe losses.

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On 3 October all major activity in the group sector was again confined to west of the Aire. An American attack launched in the early morning succeeded in penetrating the extreme right of the 2d Landwehr Division. A counterattack, launched in conjunction with the left division of Group Aisne holding the sector on the right of that held by Group Argonne, resulted again in the restoration of the original main line of resistance and in cutting off, as reported by the 2d Landwehr Division, "about 2 American companies." Contact with the division on its right was promptly reestablished by the 2d Landwehr and plans were made for combined action of the two divisions "to capture or destroy the 2 American companies." These two American companies are now known to us as the "lost battalion" of the American 77th Division.

Orders were issued by the Third Army on this date for a voluntary retirement of the army's right wing. Group Argonne, however, was to hold its present position. Of particular interest in the retirement order is a statement that "ammunition will not be evacuated." Such an order in the face of the shortage of artillery ammunition that seems to have existed in Group Argonne a few days later seems unwarranted.

Infantry action against the Tiefland subsector on 3 October consisted of minor patrol action only.

Toward evening the entire front of the group became so quiet that a message was sent by the group to all divisions warning that the "momentary quiet of the enemy does not indicate weakness," and ordering "great alertness" during the night and the early morning of 4 October. Counterpreparation (called annihilation) fire was also ordered on all probable hostile assembly areas on the morning of 4 October. These orders were apparently the result of several troop and tank concentrations observed and reported during the late afternoon of 3 October and an unusually heavy air blockade along the American front.

Of special interest on this date, 3 October, and the eve of the resumption of the American attack, is an order issued by the commander of the division artillery which states that "no harassing or registration fire will be fired until 1½ days' supply is delivered to the firing positions." If such a shortage in artillery ammunition existed as this order would

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indicate, how then was a counterpreparation fire of any great density on "all probable hostile assembly positions" to be fired as ordered by the group commander on the same day?

2. *4 October.*—Shortly after midnight on the night of 3-4 October, the enemy made an assault against Tronsol Farm (see Map No. 2) in the sector of the 170th Regiment of the 52d Division and succeeded in capturing it. By seizing and holding this locality the Americans apparently hoped to assist the advance of the American 2d Brigade in the main attack to follow by outflanking the position of the 52d Division to the left. A prompt counterattack by the 1st Company 170th Infantry, however, succeeded in retaking the position.

At 5:15 AM the Americans opened up with a heavy drum fire from the Argonne Forest to the Meuse River. At 6:30 AM under the cover of a heavy fog a general attack was launched against the entire sector, Group Argonne. The 2d Landwehr Division still strongly entrenched in its position in the Argonne held fast.

A far different story was taking place, however, on the east side of the Aire River. Tiefland subsector was assaulted again and again in attacks heavily supported by tanks. Assisted by the heavy fog and completely escaping the German counterpreparation fire, the American 1st Brigade attacked the front held by the weakened 5th Guard Division, completely overrunning its small regiments. Attacked from the front and outflanked from the Aire Valley, the infantry of the 5th Guard Division was forced to evacuate Montrebeau Hill by 7:30 AM and by 8:45 AM had been forced to withdraw north of the Exermont Ravine under cover of the fire of the 1st Battalion 111th Infantry in group reserve just north of Exermont.

The advance of the Americans was so rapid on this front that at one time infantry of the 1st American Brigade came within 30 paces of the command post of the front-line battalion of the 3d Grenadier Guard Regiment, the battalion commander and his staff believing at the time that the attack had just started.

The 1st Battalion 122d Landwehr Regiment in division reserve north of Montrebeau Hill was so surprised by the rapidity of the advance that it found itself completely involved

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in the defense of Montrebeau Hill before it had an opportunity to prepare for a counterattack.

Fog and hostile artillery fire had destroyed all means of communication, both to the front and rear, making it impossible for regimental commanders to communicate with either the brigade or the division headquarters.

On the front of the 3d Foot Guard Regiment the advance was so rapid and the fog so heavy that the Americans succeeded in reaching its front line before they could be seen. The front-line battalion of this regiment after being completely cut off succeeded in fighting its way to the rear, reaching the vicinity of Montrefagne with only about 20 men.

The first attack against the 52d Division was repulsed. The tanks heading the attack against the 169th Regiment were forced to retreat by the fire from the accompanying battery attached to the regiment.

The loss of Montrebeau Hill by the 5th Guard Division permitted the Americans to outflank the 111th Regiment from the Exermont Ravine with an enveloping attack with tanks, and by 9:30 AM both the 111th and 170th Regiments were forced to retire north of the ravine to a line: southern limits of Montrefagne-Neuviller Comte Farm, with severe losses.

At 10:00 AM the group commander released to the commander of the 5th Guard Division the counterattack group consisting of the 2d and 4th Foot Regiments, located on hill 272, for the purpose of making a counterattack along his entire front to recapture Montrebeau. The 3d Battalion 169th Regiment also in group reserve on hill 269 was to participate in this counterattack. This counterattack failed to materialize. It was later disclosed that the commander of the 5th Guard Division had arbitrarily taken over the 2d and 4th Foot Regiments earlier in the morning to assist in stemming the American advance north of Exermont Ravine and had already committed them when the order for the counterattack was received.

At 12:00 the command post of the 5th Guard Division was moved from St. Juvin to Verpel. Early on the morning of 4 October the army commander had arranged for the transfer and immediate movement of the 37th Division, then in 5th Army reserve in the vicinity of Romagne, to Group Argonne.

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The 150th Regiment was to move to hill 272, the 151st Regiment to Husard Farm, and the 147th Regiment to Landres. Toward noon the 150th and 151st Regiments had begun to arrive at their destinations.

By 12:30 the 5th Guard Division, reinforced by the 2d and 4th Foot Regiments of the 1st Guard Division, was beginning to lose its hold on Montrefagne and by 3:00 PM had been driven north of Fleville and Montrefagne Hill.

The steady retirement of the 5th Guard Division north of Fleville and Montrefagne forced a withdrawal of the 52d Division to north of Montrefagne heights northeast of Exermont.

Anticipating the retirement of the 5th Guard Division and finding all of his reserves used up by noon except the 3d Battalion 169th Regiment still on hill 269, the group commander issued orders for a counterattack by the 150th and 151st Regiments of the 37th Division and the 3d Battalion 169th Regiment. The 151st Regiment was to counterattack against Fleville, and the 150th Regiment with the 3d Battalion attached against Montrefagne. These troops were placed under the orders of the commanding general 52d Division, who was to issue the detailed orders for the counterattack.*

The 147th Regiment was ordered to move to Sommerance as group reserve. The 1st Foot Regiment still in group reserve in the Argonne Forest which had been placed at the disposal of the 2d Landwehr Division on the day before, was ordered to move to St. Juvin to "a position in readiness."

At 12:50 AM the army commander ordered the 211th Regiment with a battalion of light artillery, both of the 45th Reserve Division, at that time located in the sector of Group Aisne on the right of Group Argonne, to Sommerance by trucks as a new army reserve for Group Argonne.

The counterattack ordered by the group was launched at about 4:00 PM and by 6:00 PM had succeeded in recapturing Fleville and Montrefagne. By dark the 150th and 151st Regiments held a line south of Fleville and Montrefagne in the order named and greatly mixed with units of the 5th Division, the 2d and 4th Foot Regiments of the 1st Guard Division, and the 1st Battalion of the 122d Regiment of the

*The order for this counterattack can not be found in any of the available records.

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2d Landwehr Division. The 147th Infantry had reached a vicinity just west of Sommerance and was being held there in group reserve.

Shortly after dark the group issued an order for the relief of the 5th Guard Division by the 37th Division, the relief to be made under the orders of the 5th Guard Division. The present front line was to be held and improved by "assault advances." All units of the 2d and 4th Foot Regiments of the 1st Guard Division, together with their attached artillery, were to be withdrawn and assembled with the remainder of the division then in group reserve at St. Juvin, in army reserve around Briquenay—le Morthomme—Beffu, north of the Argonne. Forest. Withdrawals of these units were to be made only as far as the regiments of the 37th Division could occupy the sector of the 5th Guard Division with the assurance that no gaps would exist. Regiments of the 37th Division were to be put in position by staff officers of the 5th Guard Division. The 147th Regiment with one battery of horse artillery was to be "disposed in a position of readiness on hill 272 under group orders."

The same order also included the following: The 37th and 52d Divisions were instructed to provide their "own strong reserve from their assigned regiments." The 52d Division was instructed to "dispose" one battalion of infantry and one section of horse artillery on hill 269. The 2d Landwehr Division was instructed to protect its left flank and prevent the enemy from "*advancing east of* the Aire by ample (enfilade) artillery and infantry fire." It was also to reconnoiter the Aire River as to its fordability for a flank attack to the east from the Argonne.

Late on 4 October the group commander submitted an estimate of the situation to the army commander in which he reports that there was at that time opposite the group: two elite divisions, the American 1st and 32d; three good average divisions, the 77th, 82d, and 91st; and strong reserves in readiness.

Assuming that the group commander knew the approximate strength of the American infantry division, we can not help but wonder what his thoughts and emotions were as to the hopes of days to come when he included in the same estimate the following "battle value" of his own divisions:

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2d Landwehr: still effective despite losses as well as fatigue.

5th Guard: completely exhausted and no longer effective.

52d Division: displays excellent fighting qualities.

1st Guard: exhausted. Needs replacements to strengthen and 4 weeks' training in rear.

An interesting feature of the attack on 4 October was the effective use of the accompanying battery against the American tank attacks.

The evening report of Group Argonne this date lists the following American tanks accounted for:

8th Battery 104th Field Artillery	5
69th Minnenwerfer Company	1
4th Battery 4th Guard Field Artillery	6
1st Battery 4th Guard Field Artillery	4
Total	16

3. *5 October.*—For the disposition of troops, the front line, and new boundaries of the Tiefland subsector as of the morning of 5 October, see Map No. 2.

The relief of the 5th Guard Division by the 37th Division was completed early on the morning of 5 October, but at daylight the command of the sector was still under the commanding general of the 5th Guard Division. The actual transfer of the command was not made until 11:00 AM, well after hostilities of the day had commenced. The command posts of both divisions, however, were located at Verpel.

The battle order of the 37th Division seems to have been somewhat mixed, due probably to the confusion of the night before. The 151st Regiment was on the right with two of its battalions at Fleville, then two battalions of the 150th Regiment, then the other battalion of the 151st Regiment. One battalion of the 150th Regiment was behind hill 272 out of the division sector in division reserve.

The 37th Division had always been considered a first-class shock division. One of its regiments, the 147th, bore the name of "The Marshal von Hindenburg Regiment." Until 4 October it had not actively participated against the

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American attack on the Meuse—Argonne front, so it can be considered as having been a fresh division. The division at this time was commanded by Lieutenant General von Eberhardt.

The strength of the 151st Regiment at this time amounted to 99 officers and 2363 men, this one regiment alone being some 800 men stronger than the entire 5th Guard Division was before the attack of 4 October. Nothing exists in the available records of this division to show the numerical strength of the other two infantry regiments, the 150th and 147th. It would seem reasonable to believe, however, that their numerical strength would approximate that of the 151st Infantry; in which event the 1st Division found its way blocked with a far stronger force in its attacks of the next few days than was the case on 4 October.

Before the relief had been completed and the units of the 1st Guard Division assembled, Third Army ordered the 1st Guard Division to relieve the entire 45th Reserve Division in the Group Aisne sector. After being relieved, the 45th Division was to assemble as the army counterattack group in rear of Group Argonne. This action was taken, apparently, because of the more favorable situation that existed west of the Aisne where heavy attacks by the French in that locality had been successfully repulsed.

After a fairly quiet night along the entire group front, new and heavy attacks, again assisted by a heavy fog, were launched against the Tiefland subsector for possession of Montrefagne Hill.

Not until 10:30 AM was an attack made against the 2d Landwehr Division. This attack was again repulsed with heavy losses to the Americans.

Taking advantage of a very heavy fog in the deep ravine leading up the east side of Montrefagne Hill, the Americans by 9:00 AM had penetrated east and west of the hill and almost succeeded in cutting off the 3d Battalion of the 150th Infantry. This battalion after heavy fighting to its rear cut its way through on order from the regimental commander, leaving Montrefagne in the possession of the Americans at about noon. While the 151st Infantry still held a line along the southern limits of Fleville, the 150th Regiment with a

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battalion of the 151st Regiment on its left had fallen back to the southern edge of hill 272.

At 10:55 AM the division ordered the 1st Battalion 150th Infantry, the division reserve, to counterattack against the hostile penetration west of Montrefagne between the 151st and 150th Regiments. This counterattack encountered a strong American attack just before it was launched and so was stopped before it started.

Outflanked by the hostile penetration up the deep ravine west of Montrefagne and the subsequent withdrawal of the left of the 37th Division, the 52d Division was forced to withdraw to the line: hill 272—hill 269. Late in the afternoon the division ordered the 147th Regiment, less one battalion, to counterattack against Montrefagne. Both the 37th Division and the 52d Division were to join in the attack. The time for the counterattack was set for 5:15 PM and the enemy was to be driven back across the Exermont Ravine.

Again a strong American attack, this time against hill 272, prevented the counterattack, and at 5:40 PM it was postponed. The group ordered the 1st Battalion 147th Infantry to fill the gap between the 37th and 52d Divisions that had resulted from the penetration there in the morning. At dark the front line of the Tiefland subsector was as shown on Map No. 2.

In the midst of operations during the day, Group Argonne was transferred from the command of the Third Army to the command of the Fifth Army, making the group the right wing of the Fifth Army. With it were transferred all artillery and other troops then attached to Group Argonne. Also transferred and definitely assigned to Group Argonne was the 45th Reserve Division which earlier in the day had been ordered relieved by the 1st Guard Division, at the time en route from Group Aisne.

The 45th Reserve Division had been considered a second-class division. Early in September it had received replacements from the 222d Division, which had been disbanded and had also been considered a second-class division.

In June, 1918, two regiments of the 222d Division had threatened to leave the trenches if not relieved. This mutinous spirit was apparently carried to the ranks of the 45th Reserve Division and was undoubtedly responsible for the mutiny of

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the 45th Division late in October. Under these circumstances the degree of effectiveness of this division at the time must have been low. Having just been relieved from the front line, it was not a fresh division.

During the day the Fifth Army issued orders for the moving of certain army reserves to the west in rear of Group Argonne. These reserves included the 41st Reserve Division which was ordered to Landres.

Of particular interest to Americans is a Third Army estimate of the situation written on the night of 5 October and signed by General von Einem. It lays the pause of 5 October to the "limited operative mobility of the Americans." It further states that the Americans can be expected to continue "to smash our front by increasing blows without regard to his losses"; that "the enemy still has ample forces at his disposal for the continuation of the attacks."

In summarizing the German forces it states that "the effectiveness of the divisions has diminished proportionately due to the continuous attacks against limited forces and these lacking rest"; that "judging from experiences up to this time, each day at least one division has to be withdrawn as no longer effective for defensive action."

This estimate is undoubtedly a correct analysis both of his opponent's and his own forces written by a master tactician commanding an exhausted and worn out army, who was making a remarkable stand due almost entirely to a most superior leadership that apparently existed at that time throughout his entire army.

4. *6 October.*—During the night 5-6 October the group ordered six companies of the 122d Landwehr Regiment of the 2d Landwehr Division to the ravine running west of Sommerance where they were placed at the disposal of the 37th Division. The 211th and 212th Reserve Regiments, the only two regiments of the 45th Reserve Division that had arrived by daylight on 6 October, had been placed along the road running east of Sommerance as the counterattack group.

No attacks were made during the day against the Hochwald subsector; however, strong American patrols were constantly attempting to work up the Aire Valley and operate against the left and right flanks of the 2d Landwehr and 37th Divisions respectively.

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Attacks against the Tiefland subsector were spasmodic, entirely of a local nature and all without artillery preparation, but some were supported by tank action.

The first attack of the day was launched about 7:00 AM against hill 272 and was promptly repulsed. At about 2:00 PM another attack was launched against hill 269, followed shortly afterward by another attack against the eastern side of hill 272.

Seeing evidence of a general retreat from both hills 272 and 269, the regimental commanders of the 212th and 211th Regiments both seem to have spontaneously and voluntarily launched counterattacks, the 212th Regiment against hill 272 and the 211th Regiment against hill 269, repulsing the American attacks against both of these hills. Statements from prisoners taken in these two attacks informed the Germans of contemplated new general attacks in the Aire Valley on both sides of the Aire River.

Earlier in the day the Fifth Army ordered the group to plan a counterattack using all three infantry regiments of the 45th Reserve Division for the purpose of regaining the line: Gesnes—Exermont. This counterattack was never executed because of the unfavorable artillery ammunition situation existing at this time.

By dark all lines of the group were approximately the same as the night before (see Map No. 2).

At 6:00 PM units of the 41st Reserve Division had begun to arrive by train at Landres.

During the day the Fifth Army issued an order to Group Argonne designating the "Brunhild" position in the group sector at the "Kriemhild" position. This position was located on a line along the northern bank of the Aire River from the Bois des Loges to St. Juvin, thence east along the high ground north of Sommerance (see Maps Nos. 1, 2, and 3). The group was instructed to take over the construction of this position. Certain pioneer troops were attached to the group for this work.

5. *7 October.*—During the night of 6-7 October the 3d Regiment of the 45th Reserve Division, the 210th Infantry arrived at Sommerance. Also during the night and throughout the day of 7 October, the 41st Reserve Division continued to arrive at Landres.

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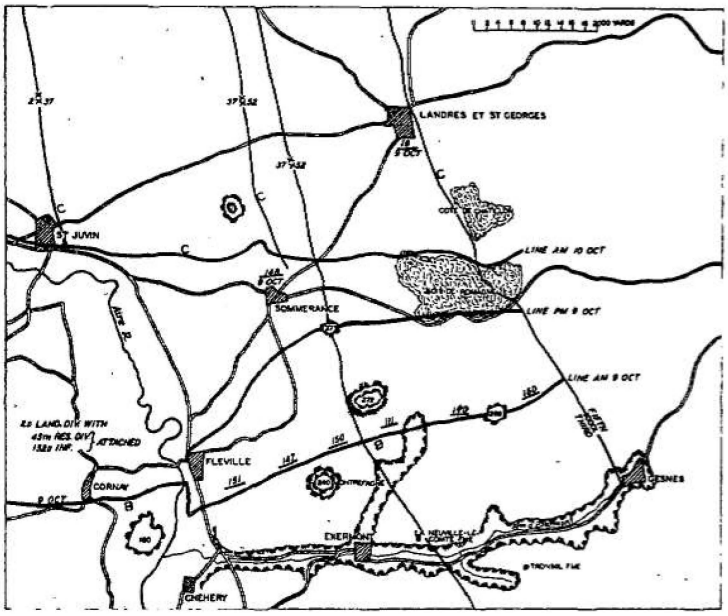
Upon orders received from Fifth Army, Group Argonne had ordered the 2d Landwehr Division to retire south to the line: hill 180—Chatel—hill 244, thence to the southwest. This withdrawal was effected during the night of 6-7 October and had been closely followed up by the Americans.



Map No. 3

By 9:00 AM expected American attacks along the front of Group Argonne had failed to materialize. At 11:00 AM the Fifth Army issued an order which stated that barring any serious change in the situation, the 41st Reserve Division, still detraining at Landres, would make a counterattack in the direction of Exermont on 8 October. Preparations for this counterattack were to be made at once. Plans for the counterattack were made up and submitted to the army by Group Argonne.

At 10:00 AM a strong attack was launched against the 2d Landwehr Division in which the Americans succeeded in making material advances along the entire division front. The American advance, gaining momentum rapidly, captured hill

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244 and the town of Chatel by 12:00 noon. By 1:00 PM the Americans had also captured hill 180.

At 10:40 AM the group had ordered the 210th Regiment from Sommerance and placed it at the disposal of the 2d Landwehr Division.

Further advance by the Americans beyond hill 180 was prevented by enfilading machine-gun fire from the 151st Infantry south of Fleville and the artillery fire of the 37th Division Artillery east of the Aire River. Apparently for the purpose of eliminating the source of this enfilade fire on the west bank of the Aire, an assembly of considerable strength for an attack was observed in the ravine about one mile south of Fleville at about 2:00 PM. Counterpreparation fire on this ravine was requested by the 151st Regiment, and the attack was broken up, forcing a withdrawal to the south from the ravine with many wounded being carried.

A counterattack launched by the 125th Landwehr Regiment late in the afternoon recaptured hill 244 and Chatel, but hill 180 remained in the hands of the Americans.

At 11:00 PM the Fifth Army countermanded its previous order for a counterattack by the 41st Reserve Division and directed the disposition of reserves as follows:

45th Division less 211th Regiment: rear of 2d Landwehr Division.
1/3 of 41st Division: north of hill 272.
1/3 of 41st Division: Fontein Farm.
1/3 of 41st Division: remain at Landres.

6. *8 October.*—Early on the morning of 8 October the Americans attacking from the south and east continued their efforts against the 2d Landwehr Division. They succeeded again in advancing their lines to hill 244—Chatel and southwest of Cornay in spite of reinforcement of the 210th and 212th Regiments of the 45th Reserve Division and the enfilading machine-gun and artillery fire from the 37th Division east of the Aire. A counterattack against this success was not attempted, as the group considered the only available forces, the 210th and 212th Regiments, insufficient for the purpose.

At 4:00 PM Group Argonne received an order from the Fifth Army to withdraw the 2d Landwehr Division again,

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this time to the line: Bois de Marcq—Cornay during the night of 8-9 October.

Operations east of the Aire River in the Tiefland subsector were confined to patrol attacks in the late hours of the afternoon against the sector of the 169th Regiment and hill 269. Both attacks were repulsed.

During the day the 5th Guard Division, still located at St. Juvin where it had been reorganized as a single reinforced regiment, was ordered to Stenay in the sector of Meuse—West.

During the day the group in compliance with orders received from the Fifth Army had moved units of the 41st Division from the detraining area at Landres as follows:

152d Infantry to Bois de Marcq.
18th Infantry still at Landres.
148th Infantry east of Sommerance.

All three of these regiments were held as group reserves.

The 211th Infantry of the 45th Reserve Division, units of which were intermingled with the front-line units of the 52d Division, was moved west of the Aire River during the night of 8 October in contemplation of a relief of the 2d Landwehr Division by the entire 45th Division.

7. *9 October.*—For troop dispositions at daylight, 9 October, see Map No. 3.

In accordance with orders issued on the afternoon of 8 October the 2d Landwehr Division withdrew during the night of 8-9 October to the line: Bois de Marcq—Cornay.

From dawn until 9:30 AM the Americans fired a heavy artillery preparation along the entire front of the group. At 9:30 AM a general attack was launched against both the Hochwald and Tiefland subsectors.

Repeated heavy attacks against Cornay were repulsed, during which considerable house to house fighting took place. In this fighting 2 officers and 164 men (Americans) were taken prisoners. The 125th Landwehr Regiment of the 2d Landwehr Division, the 212th Reserve Regiment of the 45th Reserve Division, and the 152d Regiment of the 41st Reserve Division were all used in repulsing the attacks against Cornay.

In the sector of the 37th Division strong attacks along the entire division front made considerable headway. By

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10:00 AM the Americans had captured Fleville. Attacks on both sides of hill 272 were making progress.

The 1st Battalion 151st Infantry Regiment, in division reserve, located in the wooded area south of Sommerance, was ordered to counterattack against the western slopes of hill 272. This counterattack appears to have been very effectively supported by artillery fire, as most reports seem to indicate that the attack on the west side of hill 272 was stopped due more to the artillery fire than to the counterattack.

The attack on the east, however, in the sector of the 52d Division continued to gain, and by 11:30 AM a penetration had been made between the 111th Regiment and the 170th Regiment by an American force which was beginning to advance on hill 277.

Earlier in the morning the group had ordered the 148th Infantry from Sommerance to hill 277, and at 11:30 AM it was still en route.

The 170th Regiment and the 169th Regiment of the 52d Division located on the west and east slopes of hill 269 had succeeded in holding their positions at noon. The position on hill 269 at this time was becoming precarious due to the penetration between the 111th Regiment and the 170th Regiment and the steady retreat of the 109th Regiment in the sector of Group Meuse-West to the immediate east.

By noon it appears that all reserves of the divisions and the group had been inserted except the 18th Regiment of the 41st Reserve Division, which was in march from Landres to the Bois de Romagne under orders of the Fifth Army, apparently to be used in the sector of Group Meuse-West.

At noon the group commander, Lieutenant General von Kleist, issued a confidential order to all the division commanders, which demonstrates how serious he viewed the situation at the time. He stated that "the gravity of the situation demands the concerted collection of all forces; the expenditure of the last effort of all officers and men to prevent the slacking of discipline and sinking of morale. *Otherwise catastrophe.*"

In the same message he cites the hero of East Africa, General von Lettow-Vorbeck, as an example of how "to master a desperate situation and regain the offensive without reinforcements."

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At 2:00 PM the 151st Regiment of the 37th Division was still holding the front between Fleville and the west slope of hill 272. The 147th and 150th Regiments, also of the 37th Division, and the 111th Regiment of the 52d Division had been forced to evacuate hill 272 by the strong penetration up the draw on the east side of the hill. The American troops making this penetration, assisted by those which quickly followed up the withdrawal from hill 272, began an assault against hill 277. The 148th Infantry of the 41st Reserve Division which had arrived at hill 277 was ordered to counterattack and retake hill 272. For some reason that can not be determined from the records, this counterattack does not appear to have been made, the regiment instead becoming involved in the defense of hill 277. By 5:00 PM hill 277 was captured after serious fighting.

Due to the gains of the enemy on both sides of hill 269, the 52d Division ordered the 170th and 169th Regiments to withdraw early in the afternoon to the southern edge of the Bois de Romagne. By dark the withdrawal had been effected and contact reestablished with the 111th Regiment just east of hill 277.

Shortly after 5:00 PM the Fifth Army issued an order for Group Argonne to retire during the night of 9-10 October to the Brunhild-Kriemhild position, which the army had ordered the group to organize on 6 October. Immediately after dark the withdrawal was started. Actual orders covering the withdrawal were not issued until 11:45 PM. The main line of resistance of the new position was along the north bank of the Aire River from the Bois des Loges to St. Juvin, thence along the southern slopes of the hill just south of St. Georges and Cote de Chatillon. The new troop dispositions and new boundaries as prescribed in the group order for the retirement were as shown on Map No. 3.

The 2d Landwehr Division with the units of the 45th Reserve Division attached was to withdraw early in the evening of 9-10 October, leaving weak rear guards to veil the movement. Bridges across the Aire still intact were to be destroyed.

The 37th Division after first covering the withdrawal of the 2d Landwehr Division was to retire to its new position in time to complete the movement by 5:00 AM.

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The 52d Division with the 18th and 148th Regiments of the 41st Reserve Division attached was to complete its withdrawal to the new position also by 5:00 AM, 10 October, and was to establish contact with the 115th Division on the left.

The following units were to be held in readiness as group reserves at 5:00 AM on 10 October:

> The 152d Regiment with one battery of field artillery just northeast of St. Juvin.
>
> One battalion of field artillery of the 37th Division in the position in observation southwest of Imecourt. The batteries, however, were placed at the disposal of the 37th Division for the "utilization of their fire-power."
>
> The 2d Landwehr was instructed "to designate and locate its own strong reserves near Champignuelle; likewise the 52d Division in the region north of Landres and north of Romagne woods."

8. *10-11 October.*—The retirement of the entire group front was effected on the night of 9-10 October most successfully and without interference from the Americans.

The retirement of the 2d Landwehr across the Aire River apparently was not discovered by the Americans before early morning of 11 October. All during the day of 10 October and part of the night the American artillery continued to shell the old positions south of the Aire.

Not until early morning of 11 October did the Americans start feeling toward the Aire and attempt to cross it with patrols. Infantry activity in front of the sectors of the 37th and 52d Divisions on 10 October was confined entirely to patrol actions in which the Americans felt their way forward cautiously in an attempt to develop the new position.

All records indicate that 10 October was the first really quiet day since 4 October. For the German infantry, however, this did not mean that the much needed rest was at hand. Group headquarters issued an order early on the morning of 10 October which stated that "organization of the position occupied will be pursued with the employment of all forces."

During the day of 10 October command of the sector of the 52d Division was transferred to the 41st Reserve Division. No actual relief of troops appears to have been made. Troops of both the divisions concerned apparently remained in the lines.

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Likewise during 11 October command of the sector of the 2d Landwehr was transferred to the 45th Reserve Division without the relief of troops.

Activity along the group front on 11 October was again limited to patrol action as on 10 October. One strong American patrol attacked the front of the 151st Regiment in the sector of 37th Division, apparently in an effort to develop its new position. The attack was repulsed and 14 prisoners were taken.

During the night 11-12 October the American 1st Division was relieved.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the circumstances under which the German forces on this front were fighting, it is believed that the system of defense used by them was a sound one. That it was passive in nature was due to circumstances over which these units had no control.

In July, 1918, the German High Command had been forced to surrender the offensive on all fronts. By October, 1918, the entire German Army in France was engaged in but one type of military operation, that of trying to hold on to what French territory was then in their possession.

From a study of the different plans for the employment of the limited forces available, it is quite evident that the German higher commanders and their staffs had become, at this stage of the war, past masters as military tacticians.

Their plans for defense embodied all the important means which should be employed in defensive combat. The innumerable and strategically located so-called "Counterattack Groups" of infantry, always reinforced with artillery, were intended to provide those essential means that must be included in any good system of defense; namely, movement and fire-power, shock-action, and surprise. Their plans seem to have truly called for a "mobile defense."

In every instance the defense lines chosen made the maximum use of the natural and artificial features of the terrain. Whenever driven from one of the positions, no hesitancy was ever shown in ordering a withdrawal to the next position in rear that offered the best features for defense. These withdrawals, always a difficult operation, were in every instance masterfully executed.

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Why, then, with such superior leadership were these German units forced to steadily give ground to the attacks of the Americans who were not nearly so well led? The answer lies in two important factors that must always be considered when comparing the relative value of two military forces; namely, combat efficiency and numerical strength.

That the German forces opposed to the 1st American Division during the period covered by these operations were superior in training it is believed goes without saying.

The divisions concerned were, in most cases, regular divisions, all of which, up until 1918, had enviable records. Their commissioned and noncommissioned personnel, generally speaking, were products of what had been at the outbreak of the war in 1914 the world's most efficient fighting machine; and at this time all had been thoroughly trained in the principles of war and their application by the greatest of all military teachers, war itself.

What, however, would appear to be a tremendous advantage from the start seems to have been offset by a great lack of that quality that the personnel of any military force must possess to win battles: a will to win and a high degree of morale.

That the rank and file of the lower German units had reached a low degree of morale and had lost the will to win seems most evident throughout the entire period of operations.

Coupled with this fact, we find German units all very much under strength and greatly overextended. The outstanding example of this is the 5th Guard Division, which was allowed to remain in the front line until after the American attack of 4 October. This is the one great criticism that can be made of the German higher commanders. It seems reasonable after a study of these operations to conclude that had the 5th Guard Division been relieved by the 37th Division before, instead of after the attack of 4 October when the American advance had gained its momentum through the failure and inability of the 5th Guard Division to hold, the success of the American 1st Division, in the initial attack at least, would not have been so pronounced.

In comparing these German units to the American 1st Division and its adjacent units we find some interesting contrasts:

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From our own knowledge of ourselves we must admit that regardless of what division we might have fought with in France, the commissioned and enlisted personnel of the American Army at this time were inferior in training to that of the German Army. What the Americans did possess, however, was a high state of morale and an indomitable will to win the war. This quality was especially pronounced at this time in the rank and file of the American 1st Division.

From the point of view of numerical strength, the Americans had what proved to be overwhelming numbers, which permitted units to attack on narrow fronts and in great depth.

The attack of the 26th and 28th Infantries of the American 2d Brigade, each containing approximately 2500 officers and men, on 4 October was on fronts ranging from 1000 to 1200 yards, a great contrast to the weakly held and overextended fronts of the German units to which the 1st Division was opposed.

The one outstanding conclusion or lesson that can be drawn from this study is that regardless of how high a degree of training a military force may possess, it must have a high morale and sufficient numbers in order to win battles against another military force which has that high degree of morale and is overwhelming in numerical strength, even though it be inferior in training.

APPENDIX

1st Guard Division:

- 1st Guard Infantry Brigade
  - 1st Foot Infantry Regiment
  - 2d Foot Infantry Regiment
  - 3d Foot Infantry Regiment
- 1st Guard Artillery Command
  - 1st Guard Field Artillery Regiment
  - 1st Detachment Light Guard Field Artillery (1st, 2d, and 4th Batteries)

37th Division:

- 73d Infantry Brigade
  - 147th Infantry Regiment
  - 150th Infantry Regiment
  - 151st Infantry Regiment
- 37th Artillery Command
  - 73d Field Artillery Regiment
  - 2d Detachment 16th Foot Artillery Regiment (2d, 9th, and 10th Batteries)

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2d Landwehr Division:

54th Land Infantry Brigade
- 120th Land Infantry Regiment
- 122d Land Infantry Regiment
- 125th Land Infantry Regiment

2d Land Field Artillery Regiment

41st Division:

74th Infantry Brigade
- 18th Infantry Regiment
- 148th Infantry Regiment
- 152d Infantry Regiment

41st Artillery Command
- 79th Field Artillery Regiment
- 2d Detachment 15th Foot Artillery Regiment (5th, 7th, and 8th Batteries)

5th Guard Division:

2d Guard Infantry Brigade
- 3d Foot Infantry Regiment
- 3d Grenade Infantry Reserve
- 20th Infantry Regiment

5th Guard Artillery Command
- 4th Guard Field Artillery Regiment
- 1st Detachment 1st Guard Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment

45th Reserve Division:

90th Reserve Infantry Brigade
- 210th Reserve Infantry Regiment
- 211th Reserve Infantry Regiment
- 212th Reserve Infantry Regiment

45th Reserve Field Artillery Regiment
1st Detachment 20th Foot Artillery Regiment (1st, 2d, and 4th Batteries)

52d Division:

56th Infantry Brigade
- 111th Infantry Regiment
- 169th Infantry Regiment
- 170th Infantry Regiment

52d Artillery Command
- 104th Field Artillery Regiment
- 84th Foot Artillery Battalion (1st, 2d, and 3d Batteries).

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