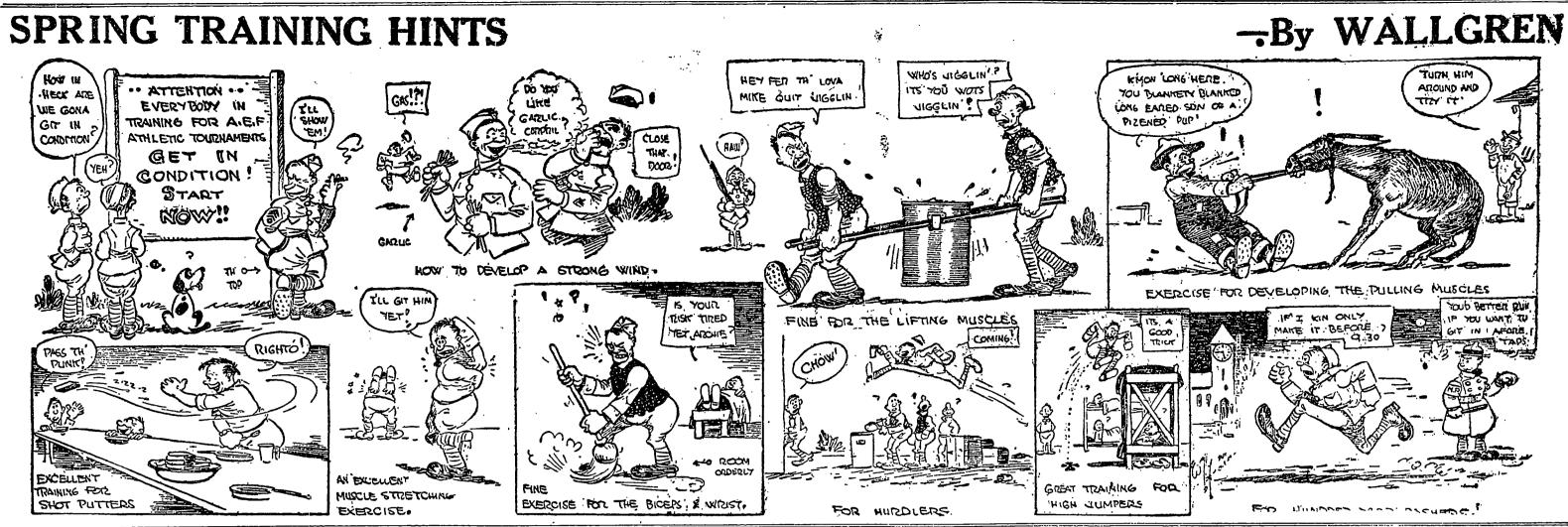
THE STARS AND STRIPES, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1919.



BITTER FIGHTING AFTER FIRST ARGONNE THRUS7

Continued from Page 1

get up. The great woods of Malancourt and Montfaucon, with jungles of underbrush beneath the trees, and the Ravin du lai Fuon and the trenches of the Hagen-Stellung stretching through them, were ahead of the 37th Division when it jumped off in front of Avocourt at 5:30

that morning. The close country made slow going and, in spite of the preliminary bombardment, there were many machine gun nests to be cleared out in the woods; but by evening the right had reached the open ridge north of the Bois de Montfaucon and the left was in the trenches of the Volker-Stellung, some three kilometers west of Montfaucon, the advance of the day having been a good seven kilometers.

The 91st Division went still faster. clearing the Bois de Cheppy and the Bois de Very before noon and having patrols in Epinonville, beyond the Volker-Stellung by 5 p.m., which meant an extreme advance of nearly nine kilometers.

The 35th Division went across the forbidding crest of Vauquois and the labyrinth of trenches east of Boureuilles almost unopposed, only to walk into a dense morning fog rising from the valleys of the Aire and the Buanthe, which at once made liaison difficult and shrouded the hiding liaison difficult and shrouded the hiding places of machine guns. As the left flank approached Varennes, a heavy crossfire from that village and the slopes of the Argonne beyond swept the length of the whole front line, and a large number of men, especially officers, were filled or wounded. With the aid of tanks, Varennes wounded. With the aid of tanks, Varennes and also Cheppy were finally taken, and by evening the right was on the hills north of Very and the left north of Varennes, diagonally across the divisional sector. The 28th Division, straddling the Ar-gonne escarpment, thrust its right rapidly

the other flank, within striking distance o tillery, which had at last been able to the Metz-Mezieres railroad. The effects of

surprise and the opportunities for flanking operations, except tactically against local objectives, were now over and there was nothing for it but to drive ahead with all the strength and determination possible and force a way forward against the most bitter frontal resistance that the power of the German army could exert.

Second Attack Launched

Perhaps the events of the battle as it was fought under those conditions can be as clearly set forth by outlining separately the struggles of each division through certain well defined phases of the operations as by any other method. The first well defined phase was the one extending from the night of September 26-27 to the morning of October 4, when, having fought itself to a standstill on the various sectors of the front, the

due preparation, launched a second simultancous attack. It has been seen that the 33rd Division, on the extreme right, reached its army objective along the Meuse on the first day and

thenceforth it lay on this line until October 8, when it attacked Consenvoye in the opennight. ing of the offensive to the east of the The 80th Division, next on the left, though it overran on the first day by far the greater part of the territory assigned to it, came up at the northern end of its sector against a nighty obstacle in the fortified villages of Brieulles-sur-Meuse and the de villages of Brieullos-sur-Alcuse and the de-fenses south of it, all of them completely enfiladed by an immense number of German batterics and machine guns on the bluffs across the bend in the Meuse, in the vicin-ity of Vilosnes. The 4th Division, further to the west, was also trying to advance on Brieulles and meeting with desperate oppo-sition, so, although the right of the 80th Division was able during the 27th to ad-vance a little along the river bank, the left way held back in the woods.

Infantry had forced an entrance into the streets of Nantillois before 11 o'clock, where it reorganized and pushed on over high ground toward the woods around the Ferme de Madeline, organized as parts of the Kriemhilde-Stellung. The progress of the 315th was being as

sisted by some tanks, but, on approaching the edge of the woods, two of the heavy tanks were put out of action by anti-tank rifles, while the drivers of three light tanks were wounded. Long-range fire from across the Meuse was also enfilading the front, and the first attack was repulsed, as well as a second which followed it, the line falling back for the night to the reverse slope of Hill 274, on the flank of the

316th. All night of September 28-29 the corp and divisional Artillery poured shells into the Ferme de Madeline and the entrenche woods around it, the Bois de Cunel, the Bois des Ogons and the Bois de Fays; but, in spite of that, the next day's battle wa a repetition of that of the day before. The 315th Infantry and the adjoining flank of

the 316th contrived to work into the Bois Army gathered itself together and, with des Ogons and through it to the north edge, clearing it temporarily of machine guns, but they could not hold it under the terrific fire from the Ferme de Madeline and the crossfires from other directions, and at night the front line held on the open slopes only a few hundred meters in dvance of the position of the previous

Less Than 1,000 Effectives

The 316th Infantry was now reduced to less than 1,000 effectives, and the reserve regiments again took the front line, but the men were too much exhausted to accomplish an advance, and about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the whole front dropped back to the north edge of the Bois de

During the afternoon of September 20 the German artillery, directed by an airplane, vigorously shelled the advance dressing station of the 314th Ambulance Company, on the road between Nantillois and Montfaucon, its presence being re-vealed by large red crosses painted on the roofs. Having lost approximately 300 ofand men killed and over 3,100 ficers wounded, the 79th Division was relieved on the night of September 30 by the 3rd Division, which continued to occupy the without notable activity until October 4. When it halted south of Ivoiry and west of Montfaucon on the night of Septem-ber 26, the 37th Division front lay diagonally across its sector from southeast to northwest. The attack was resumed at 5:30 next morning, and the 74th Brigade, on the left, was through the Volker-Stellung trenches at 9 o'clock and half a kilometer south of Ivoiry. At about this time the 73rd Brigade, not so far advanced on the right, was stopped by a sudden counter-attack. The brigade re-serve was thrown in and the counter-attack repulsed, and the 73rd Brigade too Hill 256, northeast of Ivoiry, before noon, while Ivoiry itself was occupied on the other

low, open valley into the patch of woodland on Hill 268. Further east, the 315th men took shelter in shell holes. It having been found impossible to re inforce the advanced lines, they were accordingly drawn back and a line of resistance established just south of the Bois Emont, which was consolidated on September 30 and on which the completely exhausted 37th Division was relieved by the 32nd Division during that afternoon and

> evening. On coming into the sector the 32nd Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. W. G. Haan, went in with the 63rd Infantry Brigade in front, the 64th Infantry Brigade in reserve and the 55th Field Artillery Brigade in artillery support. The day after preciable advances by the divisions on the flanks, combat patrols pushed ahead and half a kilometer north of it. In the readjustment of division fronts

preparatory to the renewal of the general attack, the 32nd Division on the 3rd of October relieved the 91st Division on it left, in front of Gesnes, the 64th Brigade taking over this front of about two kilometers, while on the right the 3rd Division in turn took over a similar extent of the 32nd Division sector north of Cierges. In this position, side-stepped to the left, the 32nd Division attacked on October 4.

91st Division Goes Ahead

In piercing the line of the Volker-Stellung in its sector on the first day of the battle, the 91st Division accomplished a part of fits mission which would have proved in-finitely harder a few hours later because, if it had held against the first attack, the machine guns in this section of the Volker-Stellung and the artillery in the woodlands behind it would have had terrific sweep

over the long, open slopes to the southward Even as it was, the advance next morning against Epinonville and Eclisfontaine suf fered very heavily from the German artil-lery, though the attacking troops were well supported by the batteries of the 122nd and 124th Field Artillery from cast of Very. The 361st Infantry, on the right, prog-

ressed through Epinonville and was stopped just north of it by fire from the woodlands to the north, the 364th, in the center, was held up by the broad belts of wire in front of Eclisiontaine, while the 363rd on the left, being out of touch with the 35th Division, further to the west, pushed slightly over into its sector, crossed iillered through the wire belts in the ravine beyond the Infantry went forward at 5.30 next morning, with two battalions of the 135th it, working toward the west of Eclisfontaine until well across the Eclisfontaine-Varennes Infantry in front line on the right and two road. The advanced positions might have battalions of the 137th Infantry in line on the left, the enemy's resistance was so bit-ter that the right, after reaching Exermont. been held for the night, but danger from their own artillery barrage caused the for-ward troops to be withdrawn across the was unable to hold it, while the left was similarly forced to relinquish positions gained in the ravine to the west of the wagon road. The impetus of the division was by no means lost, however, for on the morning of the 28th, the 361st Infantry pushed on village. through Epinonville and captured an or-chard north of it which had caused a great The losses had been so heavy that the attack could not be pushed further at the deal of trouble on the preceding day and then entered the Bois les Epinettes, where the energy's machine gun fire was com-batted by machine guns and one-pounders time and in the evening a line was con-solidated from the Bois de Bouleaux through Serieux and Chaudron Farms to PiEsperance, near the Aire. Here two strong German counter-attacks were reuntil afternoon, when another attack carried the front into the Bois de Cierges. On the left the 182nd Brigade, to protect its left, occupied the Bois de Bouleaux and October 1 the 35th Division was relieved by Scrieux Farm, in the adjoining sector, then turned northeast and took Exmorieux Farm, after which the 163rd and 164th Infantry the 1st Division, having suffered losses of over 6.100 officers and men. At noon on the second day of the battle the 28th Division had pushed its right 500 drove on northwest and scized the Bois de Baulny, Trousol Farm and the slopes de-scending to the Gesnes brook. meters north of Montblainville, just west

instantly killed, the attack holted and the terrific German artillery counter-barrage of the River Aire, while the left was fur- an attempt by the 112th Infantry to flank and machine gun fire, from the front and ther back but slowly struggling ahead along Chene Tondu came to nothing, while all the right flank across the open ridge to Gesnes, which it took, together with the ridge north of it.

On the left, the 348th Machine Gun Battalion, posted south of Tronsol Farm, broke up around Exermont a large concentration of the enemy apparently gathering for a counter attack. An offensive movement in that direction by a company of Engineers

then temporarily assured the safety of that flank, while further north other troops broke into the Bois de Morine. The advanced position of the front, how

ever, was now so precarious that a line of resistance was established extending from the middle of the Bois de Borleaux, only strong patrols being left in the country fur-ther north. From September 30 until the night of October 3-4, the men of the 91st Division lay on this line of resistance, con-solidating it under constant heavy fire, the men burrowing in fox holes in the cold, wet weather and suffering from diarrhoea caused by cold food and bad water, until finally re lieved in the sector by the 32nd Division.

Hold on Line of Resistance

The 35th Division, after its difficult experience of the first day at Varennes and Cheppy, advanced again at 5:30 a. m. on September 27, the advance regiments each with two battalions in line. On arriving before the strong point of Charpentry, the attack was checked and then forced back with severe losses and when repeated with the aid of tanks was again repliced, there being at the time only one battalion of ar-tillery up to support il. At 5:30 p.m., however, a third attack carried Charpentry and also Baulny, just beyond which village the main line dug in, though some units went as far as Montrebeau Woods before

stopping for the night. The enemy made a counter-attack next morning, and after it had been repulsed the Americans pushed on, the right taking positions north of Chaulron Farm while the left cleared the Bois de Montrebeau to its north edge, despite heavy cross fire from beyond the Aire. The strong position of Exermont now lay

in front and preparation were made to attack it on the morning of September 29, all the 77mm, batteries of the 128th and 129th Field Artillery Regimen's and one battalion of the 219th French Regiment, the 155mm. batteries of the 130th Field Artillery and the 317th French Regiment, and the 105mm. batteries of the 45st French Regiment, preparing for and sup-porting the attack.

Despite this concentration of fire, when

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the edges of the hills and through the trees and thickets of the Argonne, where it was able to keep somewhat in touch with the flank of the 77th Division. But the peculiar tactical situation of the division nade progress so difficult on the left that

, was determined to try another method or getting ahead.

Around Through River Valley

During the night, the left brigade, the i6th, less two battalions of the 111th In- held against several determined enemy Cantry which remained in the old positions. withdrew from the Argonne and marched patrolling down the river toward Chatelround through the river valley into the deep and precipitous ravine which was next

ahead to the northwest. Here, for the time, the 56th Brigade was slightly ahead by several days of slow and difficult adof the right, and it directly confronted a vance through the woods, the troops drivhigh ridge called Le Cheen Tondu, which ing before them the enemy, who had been was very strongly held by the enemy.

The next morning, September 28, the whole line attacked, with the result that noon the right had taken Apremont, nearly three kilometers down the valley from Montblainville, while the left was still held to its position by the intense machine gun fire from Chene Tondu when-

ever it attempted to move. At the same time, both divisions on the flanks were being held back by stubborn resistance, so that in effect the 28th Division was gradually swinging diagonally across its sector, with the 55th Infantry Brigade on the right, projecting a salient

chine gun barrage was put down by three companies of Infantry and five tanks, and still more ground gained in the direction of Chatel-Chebery, but, on the other hand,

efforts to make an impression on it from the front were futile.

Against Several Counter-Thrusts

During the évening the 327th Infantry, of the \$2nd Division, reinforced the 28th Division, and, in accordance with an order of the First Army Corps, a line of resist ance was consolidated covering Apremont and extending in front of Chene Tondu. Druing the ensuing four days this line was counter-attacks and with constant energetic

Chehery. The flerce fighting of the first day on the part of the 77th Division was followed entrenched at the Abri St. Louis, Four Zube and St. Hubert's Pavilion. After passing the front lines, organized positions of the Germans were not encountered for some time, though every opening in the forest was entiladed by machine guns and

the underbrush was slashed and wired wherever possible. On October 1, however, the forward elements developed a position stretching east and west along a ridge through the Beis de la Naze and thence across a ravine and a lower ridge to a German line east of

Binarville called the Bagatelle trench. No progress was made against this posi-tion on the 1st, but next day, in a general Brigade on the right, projecting a small down the river valley. An attempt by the enemy during the morning to stop the growth of this aslient by a counter-attack under cover of a ma-chine gun barrage was put down by three companies of Infantry and five tanks, and both the story of the second general attack.



gonne escarpment, thrust its right rainaly and easily down the Airc valley, passed Varennes and came well up the belts of wire in front of Montblainville. The 112th Infantry, going up the slopes of the Argonne, went too far to the left into the woods, encountered some machine guns in the sector of the 77th Division, and did not reach its objective line till 4:30 in the afternoon, though that night the front had gone across Hill 263, the height on the edge of the plateau which had dominated Varennes and Very carlier in the day.

Savage Fight in Wilderness

Stepping straight off into the forest, the 17th floundered some two kilometers through the front trench systems, and plunging into the twisting ravines, many of them 180 feet from floor to crest, began at once the savage fighting that a wilderness always entails, the 305th Infantry taking the Abri St. Louis after four attacks and the 306th taking the Four Zube after three attacks, as well as an immense dump of engineer and light railroad material near the Barricade Pavillon. St. Herbert's Pavillon was also taken, as well as warehouses, barracks and light railways all through the ravines, for the whole region was a German storage and rest area of long standing. The right of the 77th Division thus got ahead some three kilometers: the left did not make so much advance, but it was well into the heart of the enemy trench system at dusk. In the meantime the Fourth French Army, westward across the Champagne, had progressed nearly as far the First American Army, penetrating the German positions to depths of about five kilometers, taking the powerful positions of Navarin Farm, Butte de Souin, Mont Murat, Butte de Tahure and Butte de Mesnil, and the vil-lages of Tahure, Ripont, Rouvroy, Cernay-en-Dormois, Servon and Melzicourt, and capturing 7,000 prisoners. Already the curve of the salient around the Argonne forest was becoming clearly defined, par ticularly on the American side, where the average advance of the first day had been ten kilometers and where 5,000 prisoners had been taken.

German Reinforcements Rushed

But it was only now, after the victoriou But it was only now, after the victorious first rush, that the grind of the terrific bat-(le was really to begin. On the first day the Germans, dazed and confused by the initial bombardment, overwhelmed by the rapidity and fury of the attack and com-paratively weak in numbers, had given way almost everywhere. But instantly their high command herear rushing un reinforcehigh command began rushing up reinforce-

Although there was appreciation of the seriousness of the loss of their strong front lines, there was little doubt of their ability ultimately to wear out and stop this offen-sive, as they had stopped others in the past, such as the British offensive at Cambral in the fall of 1917. This they expected to ac-complish, not so much by the use of masses of Infantry, which they no longer had to spare, but by the most stubborn and skillful machine gun defense that it had ever been possible for human ingenuity to devise.

By the 29th of September they had rein-forced their front by the introduction of three more divisions, so that on that date three more divisions, so that on that date their order of battle stood, from the Meuse westward; the CNVth Division, astride the Meuse; the VIIth Reserve Division, XXXVIIth Division, CXVIIth Division, I Guard Division, Vth Guard Division, XLVth Division and IInd Landwehr Divi-sion, of which the Ist and Vth Guard Divisions were immediately east of the Aire river.

Except on the extreme right, where it had reached the army objective along the Meuse, the American front on the night of September 26 was approximately upon the corps objective everywhere, but still about five kilometers short of the army objective, the attainment of which line was essential to the strangling out of even the lower part of the Argonne forest, not to speak of the still more important object of arriving, on

was held back in the woods.

Counter-Attack Put Down

Early next morning the Germans made strong counter-atlack from the direction of Brieulles, but it was promptly put down, and at 7:15 the left of the 80th, in turn attacked toward Brieulles. The frontal resistance, and particularly the recording conscience from Vilosnes and the down, and at 7:15 the felt of the soft, in turn attacked toward Briculles. The frontal resistance, and particularly the searching crossfire from Vilosnes and the Bois de Chatillon, across the Meuse, stopped the attack as well as the later ones

stopped the attack as well as the later ones by which it was followed throughout the day. The right, however, was again able to advance a little along the river, where, opposite Vilosnes, it captured during the day a huge German dump containing mate-rial worth about \$10,000,000. During the night of the 28th, the 80th Division, hav-ing contracted its sector to a narrow front between the 33rd and the 4th Division, gave over its front line to the reserve brigade over its front line to the reserve brigade of the 33rd and withdrew to recuperate for attack again in whatever quarter it should flank. be needed.

On the second day of the attack the 4th Division, like nearly all others, suffered from the lack of artillery support, its gun having as yet been unable to get up, de-spite the fact that the 4th Engineers had managed to build a complete road from Esnes to Malancourt across No Man's Land, employing 40,000 sandbags in the operation. Nevertheless, at 7:30 on the morning of the 27th, the 4th Division at-tacked again and the 47th Infantry, on the right, gained the north edge of the Bois de Brieulles. On the left the 39th Infantry went even farther at first, pene-trating the southern part of the Bois de Fays, but it suffered heavy casualties here and fell back before the day was over to the southern slopes of Hill 295, thus draw-ing the left sharply back along the line of the Brieulles-Nantillois road.

Captured Battery in Service

In spite of repeated efforts, the from was unable to advance beyond this line during the next two days. Owing to short-age of ammunition for the American bat-

teries, a captured battery of German 77's was pressed into service near Culsy, and during this time it fired 15,000 rounds of captured ammunition into the lines of its former owners. The 7th Infantry Brigade being pretty

thoroughly used up by September 29th, the 8th Brigade on that day took its place in the front line, and the 58th Infantry, which the front line, and the soft minintry, which had taken the front of the 39th along the Nantillois-Brieulles road, contrived to gain a little ground, though whenever it started ahead the enemy's artillery and machine gun fre increased violently. By the next day the 59th Infantry had mopped up the entire north edge of the Bois de Brieulles, and the first three days of October wave const the first three days of October were spent in consolidating a line of resistance along this front, while the divisional Artillery did no more firing the divisional Artillery nccessary, endeavoring to build up a re-serve supply of ammunition, which had to be brought in at night over roads con-gested with traffic and knee deep in mud.

After their spectaculor storming of Montmaucon and the ravines east of it, the men of the 79th Division, who had been anable to receive any supplies since the beginning of the advance, were too ex-hausted to carry their next objectives, Nantillois on the right and the Bois de

Nantillois on the right and the Bois de Beuge on the left, in the first attack, de-lievered late on the afternoon of the 27th. But at 7 o'clock next morning, having changed front-line regiments during the night, they went ahead again, while low-flying German airplanes machine-gunned the front line and the whole area was raked with shrapnel and high explosive accurately directed by a German Drachen, which was aloft to the northwest. Nevertheless, early in the afternoon the Nevertheless, early in the afternoon the 316th Infantry had gone through the Bols

de Eeuge, where captured machine guns were turned to use in pushing the advance on northward across the kilometer of shal-

Captured German Guns in Play

Captured German Guns in Play The intensity of the fire from Cierges and the western part of the Bois de Beuge ahead of them forced the forward elements of the 145th and 147th Infantry, on the right, to give up Hill 256 and drop back to the Volker-Stellung trenches along the Montfaucon-Ivoiry road, while the left clung to the line of the same road where it entered Ivoiry, partly because of the gallant work of two French officers and eight enlisted men of the Signal Corps, who furnished artillery support by work-ing four captured German 150mm. guns. The chief enemy positions now just ahead consisted, from east to west, of the Bois de Beuge, partly in the sector of the Bois de Beuge, partly in the sector of the 79th Division, then the broad and rather shallow valley of the River Ardon, then the

Bols Emont, and then a corner of the Bols Communal de Cierges, most of which lay in the sector of the 91st Division, to the

left. Cierges village nestled along the banks of the Ardon half a kilometer north of the Bois Emont. The 37th Division went for-ward again at 7 o'clock on the morning of the 28th, and in 35 minutes troops were in the Bois de Beuge and the Bois Emont, while before 11 elements of both brigades were slowly approaching Cierges. The enemy artillery, however, especially from the woodlands north and northeast; around the Ferme de Madeline, was very active and filled the Bois Emont, the Bois de Beuge and the valley of the Ardon with left. Beuge and the valley of the Ardon with phosgene and mustard gas to such an ex-tent that many of the men there became gas casualties. Although the batteries of the 55th Artillery Brigade during the afternoon took the woodland mentioned under viewoons for thereby reducing the under vigorous fire, thereby reducing that of the enemy, and although between 5 and 6 o'clock in the evening a second attack by the 74th Brigade cleared the Bois Emont of machine guns for the time, the north edge of that woods and of the Bols de Clerges was held through the night only by a light line of very much exhausted men.

Tanks Beaten Back

An attempt was made the following morning by ten small tanks, covered by artillery fire, to advance along the eastern edge of the Bois Emont and clean out the machine guns north of it, which were enfilading the valley of the Ardon between the Bois Emont and the Bois de Beuge. As soon as the tanks topped the crest of Hill 265 they were taken under a terrific artillery fire and at the edge of th Bois artillery fire and at the edge of th Bois Emont they turned back, five of them fail-

The Infantry line which had accom-panied them took shelter along the south edge of the woods. A little later a bat-tatlion of Infantry on the extreme left of the line attacked through the narrow gap between the Bois Emont and the Bois de Clorres through which passes the diain Cierges, through which passes the Liain road from Run-sur-Meuse to Varenne's and Bar-le-Duc. The major commanding was

Along Eight Kilomeer Front

In consequence of these progressive suc-cesses, the 91st Division states that its front, normally about two kilometers across its sector, was now about eight kilometers long, extending back from the spearhead thrust out south of Gesnes to make liaison with the 35th Division, southeast of Exermont, on the left, while, on the right, the outer flank of the 361st Infantry was in the air in the Bois de Clerges, but with the 362nd Infantry disposed in echolon behind it to protect the forward elements. That night the 362nd passed through the 361st and next morning, reinforced by one

battalion of the latter and the 347th Machine Gun Battalion, advanced against

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