BLUE RIDGE MEN OF THE EIGHTIETH

Summary of Official History of the Division from Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania in Picardy, St. Mihiel, and Argonne

First Army. On the night of the 14th

the division was transported in buses

fell under the command of the 3d Amer-

ican Corps. On the night of the 20th it

again moved forward to the Bois la

Ville. During this period preparations

for the attack were completed, and re-

connoissance of the sector assigned to

the division was made. The troops, al-

ways moving under cover of darkness,

were carefully concealed in the forests

by day. By night also the troops were

exercised in combat drills, and by day

in the use of the newly issued weapons.

On the night of Sept. 24-25 the entire

160th Brigade, which had been desig-

nated to first represent the division in

attack in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

was concentrated in the Bois Bourrus,

near Germonville, while the 159th, or

support brigade, was assembled in re-

serve in the Bois de Sartelle, near Fro-

merville, several kilometers west of Ver-

dun. That night the 155th Field Artil-

lery Brigade occupied its previously se-

lected battery emplacements along the

south slope of Dead Man's Hill. On the

25th orders were issued that the ex-

A. M. the following morning, and the

troops were pushed forward during the

Opposite Bethincourt.

night to their battle positions.

EPITOME OF OPERATIONS.

The 80th Division shared in the following operations of the American Expeditionary Forces: (1) Picardy Sector, France, July 23-

Aug. 18, 1918. (2) St. Mihiel Offensive. France. Sept. 12-Sept. 16, 1918. (3) Meuse-Argonne Offensive, France, Sept. 26-Oct. 4, 1918.

France, Oct. 4-Oct. 12, 1918. (5) Meuse-Argonne Offensive. France, Nov. 1-Nov. 6, 1918.

(4) Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

NE of the original twelve divisions of the National Army, the 80th, or "Blue Ridge," Division, was organized Aug. 27, 1917, at Camp Lee, Petersburg, Va. Its name was derived from the fact that the enlisted personnel of the division was drawn exclusively from Virginia, West Virginia, and the western part of Pennsylvania, the Blue Ridge Mountains being common to the three States named. The insignia of the division shows three blue peaks on a shield of khaki.

The division commander was Major Gen. Adelbert Cronkhite, and his Chief of Staff, Colonel William H. Waldron. The 159th Infantry Brigade, Brig.

Gen. C. S. Farnsworth, and the 314th Machine Gun Battalion were formed exclusively of the men of Virginia; to the 317th Regiment those of the western part of the State were assigned, and to the 318th those of the tidewater or eastern section. The 160th Infantry Bri- sky, making the night almost as bright was, therefore, determined to draw these gade, Brig. Gen. Lloyd M. Brett, com- as day, but strangely exaggerating the two dvisions apart and create an inposed of the 319th and 320th Regiments, silent distances. Off to the north loomed tervening sector for the 80th Division, were formed of the men from Pitts- the outlines of the Mort Homme, about which was relied on to break through burgh and Westmoreland County. Penn. Erie, and that of the 305th Engineers

the men of West Virginia were assigned, Division considerably to the west of the vision. those from the northern tier of coun- river, opposite the destroyed village of For this new attack the 159th Brigade ties forming the 313th, while the cen- Bethincourt, from which its line of de- was designated. tral and southern tiers of counties con- parture lay distant less than a thousand For some reason there was no artillery tributed, respectively, to the 314th and yards. 315th Regiments.

lice, and 305th Field Signal Battalion and break the hostile resistance between late and was closely followed by the were composed of selected personnel the Rau de Forges and the Bois de 2d Battalion of the 318th Infantry. from the whole draft area.

Changes in Personnel.

Brig. Gen. C. S. Farnsworth of the 159th Infantry Brigade was subsequently promoted to the command of the 37th Division, being succeeded in command of the 159th Brigade by General Jamerson, formerly in command of the 317th Infantry. Colonel Briant H. Wells, later promoted to Brigadier General, was relieved from command of the 318th Infantry and assigned to duty on the Supreme War Council at Versailles, while Colonel O. E. Hunt, commanding the 320th Infantry, was promoted to Brigadier General and transferred from the division. The 317th, 318th, and 320th Infantry Regiments were then commanded by Colonels Howard R. Perry, U. G. Worrilow, and E. G. Peyton, respect-

May 17, 1918, the division began moving to France. Division Headquarters of the 318th Infantry embarked at Hoboken for Brest on the Leviathan, while all other elements shipped from Newport News, Va., for St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, and Brest. The troops debarked at the three ports mentioned during May 30 and 31, June 8, and June 12, after various adventures on the high seas which lent interest to the voyage. The Leviathan was unsuccessfully attacked May 30 at the very entrance to the harbor of Brest by a flotilla of German submarines, the strength of which was estimated at from seven to two craft. From the ports of debarkation the di-

vision, less the artillery, was transported to Calais, where the troops exchanged American for British arms. Before the middle of June the division was assembled in the Samer training area, several miles east of Boulogne, under the tutelage of, first, the 16th, (Irish,) and then the 34th British, Divisions, which had been reduced by losses to mere cadres. The artillery brigade, with the ammunition train, proceeded from the ports of Bordeaux and Brest to ltedon, near St. Nazaire, where it received its animals and most of its material. Remaining at Redon until the last part of July, the officers and men of the advance detail, composing the specialists, received training at the Artillery Firing School at Camp de Coequidan. Early in August the artillery brigade was assembled at the American training area of Camp Meucon, also near St. Nazaire, where it was to remain until the middle of September.

Fighting with the British.

After the completion of its first phase of training under the British, the division was transferred southward to the Third British Army sector, with headquarters in Beauval. Until Aug. 20 it was posted along the secondary lines between Albert and Arras. During this period battalion units entered the frontline trenches of the Artois sector, between Aveuly Woods, on the right, and Arras on the left, both inclusive, being attached to the 4th, 5th, and 6th Corps. But while the 80th Division was attached to the British for the dual purpose of its own training and the support of the British in an emergency, it participated actively in all the operations of the Third Army, with which it was serving. Several battalions were most seriously engaged with the enemy while holding independent trench sectors; one battalion, went, "over the top" with the New Zealanders in an attack, and at the moment of relief two of the infantry regiments of the division were formed to take part in a large scale operation. The nature of its experiences during

Aug. 20 the move to the American sector was commenced. From the Artois sector the division was transported by rail through Amiens via Paris to the Fourteenth Training Area, between Chaumont and Chatillon - sur - Seine. where a remained in comfortable billets until Aug. 31. On Sept. 1 the division moved by rail to the Stainville and later marched to the Tronville area. While in the latter it composed the reserve of the First Army during the St. Milliel operations of Sept. 12-15, except the 320th Infantry and the 315th Machine Gun Battalion, which were at-

this period is evidenced by nearly 400

cusualties in August alone.

tached to the 2d French Colonial Corps, corps, the 228th French Field Artillery positions, but they continued to advance. and took active part in the operations. 289th French Field Artillery Regiment At this time the 155th Field Artillery Brigade rejoined the division. Now be- (155's), the 90th Air Squadron, and a gan the concentration of the American balloon company.

On the 27th the entire army objective within its sector was taken by the 80th to the vicinity of Ippecourt, where it Division, and that night, after the brilliant success which it had attained during the two preceding days, it was relieved by the reserve brigade of the 33d Division. The 80th Division, less the 318th Infantry, and its artillery then moved to the Bois Montfaucon in re-

During the first phase of the offensive the 80th Division, opposed by three entire hostile divisions and various Landstrum battalions, had advanced nine kilometers and captured 35 officers, 815 other ranks, 16 pieces of artillery, 7 minenwerfers, 77 machine guns and a large quantity of ammunition and stores, including over 5,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and 5,000 boxes of grenades. In addition, an entire ammunition dump on the bank of the Meuse. with stores valued at \$10,000,000, was

troops of the 80th Division were held in right during the day. readiness in support of that division. pected attack was to be made at 5:30 against which a counterattack in force was expected, but which did not develop.

Breaking Through the Line.

On the 30th the 3d Division had relieved the 79th in Nantillois in front of Sleep was impossible on that night. A Montfaucon, but the 3d Division, like the huge and brilliant moon hung in the 4th Division, was unable to advance. It which spread in full view one of the the Bois des Ogons in front of Nantil-To the 155th Field Artillery Brigade north of Verdun, which threw the 80th barrier was demanded of the 60th Di- woods south of Cunel, surprised the gar- St. Georges. The attack was to be made the north of the hostile position men- in May, 1919.

preparation upon the Bois des Ogons The mission of the corps was to attack and the machine-gun zones on its flanks, The Headquarters Troop, Military Po- northward in the direction of Mezieres but the barrage rolled forward slightly

Upon the support companies of this For this operation there were attached battalion the hostile counter-barrage to the 80th Division, in the centre of the fell as they were leaving their assembly

(75's) Regiment, one battalion of the while the leading companies reached and entered the Bois des Ogons.

> advance, the result being that the attacking battalion of the 80th Division was enfiladed from both flanks by machine guns, and encountered the concentrated direct fire of the hostile artillery upon the narrow front of the Bois des Ogons. The four accompanying four hostile divisions and a sturmtrup- the line with the 3d Corps when it was French tanks withdrew immediately.

Throughout the day the position consolidated in front of the woods by the 318th Infantry was subjected to a constant bombardment with high explosive and gas shells, and hostile planes were

At 6 P. M. on the 5th the division made another attack upon the Bois des Ogons. The enemy appeared to have been taken by surprise, and, though his machine guns were active, the usual hostile artillery fire did not fall upon the approaches to the wood in which the assaulting battalion managed to get a foothold. The position gained on the night of the 5th was improved on the 6th, which enabled the division on the On the 29th the 37th Division beyond left to press forward. Some advance Montfaucon was hard pressed, so that was also made by the division on the

One Advance After Another.

gade took over the entire front line of replacements were received and many left of the division heavy machine-gun Cronkhite, who had made and led the the division, and the 159th Brigade new officers. At this time the Browning and artillery fire had been encountered division throughout the war, was aswithdrew to the rear. During the same automatic rifles and machine guns were from the Ravine aux Pierres and the signed to the command of the 9th Corps. night the position in the Bois des Ogons received. was organized for defense, with the On Oct. 13 the division had been trans-beyond Alliepont, or to keep abreast of Sturgis. preparation being continued on the 9th. where it remained until the 30th con- 1st Corps was made by the 80th Di- was assigned to the command of the At 3:30 P. M. on that day two battal- cealed in the woods. ions of the 319th Infantry advanced, fol- A new and general attack by the First In front of the corps the enemy re- With the gradual reduction of the most famous battlefields of history. At lois. This strong point had proved a lowing closely a rolling barrage. By American Army was now planned for mained in a wood which barred the American Expeditionary Force, many Machine Gun Battalions was drawn 11:30 P. M. the artillery of the Amer- stumbling block for three other divisions, nightfall the front line of the divisions was drawn and the division was drawn and the d from the more northerly region about ican First Army opened its preparation. and presented no slight obstacle. Strong- had reached La Villa an Bois Fme., line of resistance which the enemy had the 319th Infantry. The independent to the command of which General The 3d Corps was formed for the at- ly held machine-gun zones swept its and the attack was directed to be successfully occupied after his initial action of the 80th Division command Cronkhite had been transferred from from the southern section of the Penn- tack with the 33d, 80th, and 4th Di- approaches from either flank, while pressed as far as the Cunel-Brieulles withdrawals. The 1st American Corps, alone enabled the difficulty to be over- the 9th in March. This enabled him to sylvania draft area of the division. The visions in line, from right to left, with strongly held posts confronted the north- road, which position was reached and on the left of the First Army, was astrains also were formed of Pennsyl- the 3d Division in reserve. The right ern exits from the wood. Nevertheless, held. Later on the same night two com- signed that the 319th Infantry, 80th Division on April 12, and to return of the corps rested on the Meuse itself, the attempt to force a way through the panies of the 319th filtered through the German line between Grande Pre and which had made a splendid advance to to America with his original command

ers. However, the right of the line and zancy, advancing between Exermont, abreast of the 80th. ion was relieved by the 5th Division, hery, Cornay, Buzancy, (inclusive.) and sweep the front on the left by a flank whereupon it was moved to the Foret St. Pierremont (exclusive) on the left. attack, he had not proposed to delay de Hesse. On the morning of the 14th The enemy held a very strong position the advance on the right and thus fall the division was moved by bus to the with its front line roughly a few hun- behind the 2d Division. During the

immediate steps were taken to reorgan- Georges. ize and re-equip the command, prepara- The division marched twenty-five kilotory to its expected return at an early meters through the Argonne Forest on day to the front lines.

sive the division had been confronted by vin. Its own artillery had continued in of the town. pen battalion. It had advanced four relieved, so that to it was now attached kilometers against the most resolute the 157th Field Artillery Brigade of the opposition which the Germans were ca- 82d Division, reinforced by two Amerpable of offering, and had captured 80 ican and ten or more French batteries. officers and 102 other ranks of the Again the 160th Brigade, General enemy and a large number of guns and Brett commanding, was selected to much equipment.

tailed to the Staff College and succeeded On Nov. 1, after an artillery preparain command of the 319th Infantry by tion of unprecedented intensity which Colonel James L. Love, Jr., formerly lasted two hours, the 319th and 320th Lieutenant Colonel of the 318th Infantry. Infantry, each in column of battalions, So also was Colonel George R. Spalding on the right and left, respectively, adrelieved from the command of the 305th vanced to the assault behind the rolling Regiment of Engineers, which he had barrage, in liaison with the 2d Division organized and led with marked success. of the 5th Corps on the right and the His services were now to be recognized 77th Division on the left. by his elevation to the post of Corps

Resting for New Battles.

A brief rest was allowed the division

rison of the town, and took two battal- with the 80th, 77th, and 78th Divisions tioned, should deliver a flank attack annihilating fire of the hostile artillery the advance.

Oct. 30 and 31, and relieved the 82d Dimake the assault, while the 159th Bri-At this time Colonel Cocheu was de- gade was held in reserve near Chehery.

Ahead on Its Own Initiative.

vision.

ion staffs, consisting of 27 officers and in line from right to left, in liaison with upon it directly to the west on the fol-60 men, whereupon they returned to the Fourth French Army on the left. lowing day. This was done at 6 A. On the right of the 1st Corps was the M. and was completely successful. The At 7 A. M. on the 10th an attempt 5th Corps, the left flank of which the 320th Infantry then advanced from was made to advance the line, but an 80th Division was expected to cover in Alliepont practically without resistance, so that Verpel and Thenorgies were virtually destroyed the two left compa- The mission of the 80th Division on reached during the morning. Several nies of the attacking troops and in- the first day of the attack was to seize hours later the 77th Division, and on flicted serious casualties upon the oth- the high ground north of Sivry-le-Bu- its left the 78th Division, moved up the reorganized left made slight gains. Fleville, Sommauthe, and St. Georges on But while the divisional commander During the night of the 11th the divis- the right, and Apremont, Chatel Che- had undertaken of his own initiative to

The divisions on its flanks failed to Triaucourt area, in army reserve, and dred yards south of St. Juvin and St. night of the 1st he had ordered the 317th Infantry forward from reserve, and on the 2d. at 10:15 A. M., it advanced to the attack. The strong position of Buzancy was carried, and before night During the second phase of the offen- vision along the line St. Georges-St. Ju- on the 2d the line was established north

Achievements of the Autumn.

On the 10th of November official information was received that hostilities were to cease at 11 A. M. the following day, and the 80th Division was ordered to march on the 11th to Les Islettes area, whence it had moved forward. During the twenty-three days it was

engaged in the American sector the

80th advanced thirty-seven kilometers, or nearly twenty-four miles. It three times broke through the main enemy lines of defense on Sept. 26-27, on Oct. 4-12, and Nov. 1 and 2, respectively. It captured 103 officers, including three entire battalion staffs. and 1,710 men; 88 pieces of artillery of various calibres, and 641 machine guns, besides a vast quantity of small arms The 319th Infantry advanced rapidly ammunition, equipment, and stores. and by nightfall had reached a point This was accomplished with a total loss on the Buzancy-Bayonville road north of but 210 officers and 5,464 men, inin the Triaucourt area. During the ten of Imecourt, where connection with the cluding 37 officers and 592 men killed. On the night of Oct. 6-7 the 160th Bri-days it remained there several thousand 2d Division was established. On the On Nov. 18 Major Gen. Adelbert

320th Infantry had been unable to press | He was succeeded by Major Gen. S. D. assistance of the 305th Engineers, while ferred from the 3d to the 1st Army the 319th. The centre and left divisions Early in December, General Jamerson the artillery continued to pound the Corps, and on the 23d it was ordered of the corps made no progress, so that resumed the command of the 155th Brienemy's positions north of the wood, the forward to the vicinity of Les Islettes, the only advance made on Nov. 1 by the gade, and Colonel George D. Freeman