

# My Experiences in the World War

By General John J. Pershing

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W. N. U. Service

## CHAPTER LXIV

Our success had been so striking since the beginning of the November 1 attack that I felt full advantage should be taken of the possibility of destroying the armies on our front and seizing the region upon which Germany largely depended for her supply of iron and coal. In accordance with these views the following order was issued to the First and Second armies:

"The energetic action of the First army should completely expel the enemy from the region between the Meuse and the Bar within the next few days. The results obtained by this army have been felt on the entire front from the Moselle to Holland."

"It is desired that, in carrying out the directions that are outlined herein, corps and division commanders push troops forward wherever resistance is broken, without regard for fixed objectives and without fear for their flanks. Special attention will be given to impress upon all officers and soldiers that energy, boldness and open warfare methods are demanded by the present situation."

"2. The First and Second armies will at once prepare to undertake operations with the ultimate purpose of destroying the enemy's organization and driving him beyond the existing frontier in the region of Briey and Longwy."

Between the Meuse and Chiers rivers, north and northeast of Stenay, there was a very strong position which commanded the crossings in that vicinity. I believed that if we should

cross the river south of Stenay and move in the direction of Montmedy we could turn this position and have an excellent opportunity to capture large numbers of German troops driven back on the line Sedan-Montmedy. By this maneuver we would also be in an advantageous position to advance on the important supply areas of Longwy and Briey.

An attack by the Third corps to the east across the Meuse, south of Dun-sur-Meuse, in conjunction with the northward movement by the French Seventeenth corps, was prepared as a preliminary to a new line of advance to the east.

November 3, 4 and 5, the Fifth division of the Third corps in a brilliant maneuver on a wide front effected crossings of the Meuse and established bridgeheads south of Dun-sur-Meuse. The heights of the Meuse were gradually cleared by the Third corps and the French Second Colonial corps, which had relieved the French Seventeenth corps. Now for the first time since 1914, the French positions around Verdun were completely free from the menace of these heights.

In these operations the Fifth division, assisted by a regiment of the Thirty-second, on November 5 had captured Milly and established its line from there south to the Bois de Chatillon. By night of the 9th it had advanced to Remoiville and north of Mouzay.

Our front was also extended to the south, and by November 10 an excellent line of departure was secured for an offensive in the direction of Montmedy. The Seventy-ninth division (Kuhn), in the French Second Colonial corps, met decided opposition in its attacks of the 4th, 5th and 6th against the Borne de Cornouiller, and this strong point was finally taken on the 7th. On the following day the Seventy-ninth, with units of the Twenty-sixth division (Bamford) attached, advanced on its entire front, and on the 9th took Wavrille.

Between November 3 and 7 the Twenty-sixth division, on the right of the Seventy-ninth, made no attack. On the 8th it took up the pursuit of the retreating enemy, and by night of the 9th occupied a line which included Ville-devant-Chaumont.

The Eighty-first division (Bailey) entered the line as the right division of the French Second Colonial corps, November 7, relieving the Thirty-fifth division (Traub). Attacking on the 9th against stiff defense, it captured Manheulles and Moranville.

Reaching the Meuse. The Eighty-ninth division, Fifth corps, overcoming stubborn opposition, captured Beaufort on the 4th and reached the Meuse. The Forêt de Jaunay was cleaned up the following day, and Cesse was occupied. The Second division in its attack of the 4th suffered heavy losses and made slight headway, but during the next two days it continued rapidly, and by night of the 6th reached the Meuse south of Villemonty.

In the First corps the Ninety-fifth division, on the 4th, in spite of the enemy's stand, captured Vaux-en-Clermont and Sommauthe. The enemy retired during the night and the division took up the pursuit, overcoming vigorous rear guard resistance until reaching a line north and west of Beaumont. During the night of the 5th its progress continued, the division being relieved the next morning.

The Seventy-seventh division was effectively opposed on the 4th north and

east of Oches, but on the 5th its line was pushed forward to the north of Stonne and La Besace. By night of the 6th the Seventy-seventh had reached the Meuse, Remilly and Villers being entered by its patrols.

The Seventy-eighth division on the 4th captured Les Petites Armoises, and on the following morning advanced more than a mile to the north. The Forty-second division relieved the Seventy-eighth on this line, and by the 6th established itself north of Bulson.

It was the ambition of the First army, and mine, that our troops should capture Sedan, which the French had lost in a decisive battle in 1870. I suggested to General Maistre that the prescribed boundary line between our First and the French Fourth army might be ignored in case we should outrun the French, to which he offered no objection, but on the contrary warmly approved.

To reach the objective the left boundary of the First army would have to be ignored, as Sedan lay to the northwest beyond that limit. The afternoon of November 5, the First corps was directed to head its energies to capture Sedan "assisted on its right by the Fifth corps."

A misconception in the Fifth corps of the exact intent of my orders resulted in the First division erroneously going beyond the left boundary of the Fifth corps and marching directly across the sector of the First corps during the late afternoon of the 6th and throughout the night. The troops of the First division carried out this unnecessary forced march in fine spirit, despite their tired condition.

Considerable confusion resulted in the Forty-second and Seventy-seventh divisions, and their advance was delayed as roads became blocked by the columns of the First division. The Forty-second and the First then began a race for the honor of capturing Sedan. Part of these divisions had entered the zone of the French Fourth army and were waging a fight with the enemy for the possession of the heights south and west of Sedan.

The morning of November 7 found men of the Forty-second and the First divisions on the heights overlooking the city. Under normal conditions the action of the officer or officers responsible for this movement of the First division directly across the sectors of two other divisions would not have been overlooked, but the splendid record of that unit and the approach of the end of hostilities suggested leniency.

The enemy's main line of communications was now within range of the machine guns of the First army, which had driven him 24 miles since November 1. His position on the western front was no longer tenable and he urged immediate consideration of an armistice.

Late on November 9 Marshal Foch, then in conference with German representatives regarding the terms of the armistice, sent telegraphic instructions to all allied commanders in chief from which it might be inferred that he was uncertain regarding the outcome of negotiations and wished to let the enemy know that there would be no further delay. The following was the message received:

"The enemy, disorganized by our repeated attacks, retreats along the entire front."

"It is important to co-ordinate and expedite our movements."

"I appeal to the energy and the initiative of the commanders in chief of their armies to make decisive the results obtained."

No Respite for Enemy.

Orders in response to this appeal were immediately issued and their execution by the First army was under way November 10 and 11. Yet here again no sort of urging was necessary. Our troops were determined not to give the enemy any respite. Already the crossing of the Meuse had been planned for the whole army, and the Fifth corps got over during the night of the 10th-11th. Part of the Eighty-ninth division crossed on rafts just west of Pouilly, and others in the rear of the Ninety-fifth division (Allen).

The Second division was unable to force a crossing at Mouzon, as planned, but about a mile south of Villemonty the engineers of the division, with exceptional rapidity and skill, threw two bridges across, over which one regiment passed. The Seventy-seventh division, now on the left of the Fifth corps, only sent over patrols on the 10th and 11th, the low ground north of the river opposite its front being flooded by heavy rains and damming operations by the Germans.

The First corps from November 6 to 10 was withdrawing its divisions to points on the Meuse between Dun-sur-Meuse and Verdun, preparatory to a general attack which would have as its object the turning of the enemy's strong position in front of the Fifth corps.

East of the Meuse the First army advanced in conjunction with the Second army, which had been earnestly preparing for this moment ever since its organization.

Under the instructions issued by me November 5 for the advance of the First and Second armies, which re-

ceived approval of Marshal Foch in a personal note of November 8, the Second army made advances along its entire front in the direction of the Briey iron basin during the last three days of hostilities.

Attacking on the 10th, the Thirty-third division reached the Bois d'Harville and captured Marcheville, but was forced to retire. The Twenty-eighth division occupied a part of the Bois des Haudronvilles Bas, as well as Marimbols farm. The Seventh division took and held against counter-attack Hill 323. The Ninety-second division captured the Bois Frehaut.

On the front of the First army, the Ninety-fifth division, on the left of the Third corps (Hines), had crossed the Meuse on the 9th and attacked on the 10th, meeting decided opposition throughout the day. Elements of the division entered Stenay but were unable to clean up the town, while others, after hard fighting in the nearby wood, reached but could not take Baalon.

The Fifth division (Ely) captured Jamez and cleared the Forêt de Woivre. The Thirty-second division (Haan) re-entered the line on the 9th, as the right division of the Third corps, and made substantial progress. On the 10th the division moved forward until stopped by heavy fire from east of the Thinte river.

On Other Fronts.

Meanwhile other of our divisions were engaged on distant fronts. In Flanders our Thirty-seventh and Ninety-first divisions, which had been sent to the French Sixth army at Marshal Foch's request, entered the battle October 31. The Cruyshautem ridge was taken by the Thirty-seventh division (Farnsworth) on the first day, while the Ninety-first (Johnston), advancing against intense fire, seized the strongly defended wooded area in its front. Both divisions moved forward rapidly to the Escaut river on the following day in pursuit of the enemy. Despite resistance, crossings of the river were effected by the Thirty-seventh, November 2 and 3, the division being relieved the following day. Audenarde was occupied by the Ninety-first division on the 2nd, and the division was relieved on the 3rd by the French.

Both divisions re-entered the line for the general attack of the French Sixth army November 10. The Thirty-seventh division was directed to relieve two French divisions east of the Escaut the morning of the 10th, but these divisions had been unable to cross, and were relieved on the west bank. Despite severe losses the Thirty-seventh succeeded in again crossing the river and moved forward the following day, advancing two and a half miles eastward. The Ninety-first division met slight opposition on the 10th and none on the morning of the 11th, reaching a line east of Boucle-Saint-Blaise.

In the First army the Fifth corps advanced rapidly the morning of the 11th. Elements of the Eighty-ninth division occupied Stenay and established a line on the hill to the north. Pouilly-sur-Meuse was mopped up early in the morning and Autreville occupied. The Second division advanced to the ridge west of Moulins, while the Seventy-seventh division held its line of the 10th.

In the Third corps, the morning of the 11th, the Nineteenth division entered Baalon, and the Fifth and Thirty-second divisions were preparing to attack. The Seventy-ninth division of the French Second Colonial corps attacked against the Cote de Romagne and advanced a short distance. The Twenty-sixth division made slight gains, and the Eighty-first division again took Grimoucourt.

On the front of the Second army the attack of the Thirty-third division on the 11th was held up. The Twenty-eighth division carried its line forward north of Marimbols farm, the Seventh division made no attack, and the Ninety-second division attacked but did not hold all its gains.

The line of the First army, November 11, extended from Fresnes-en-Woivre to Pont-Maugis. The Second army line ran from Port-sur-Seille to Fresnes-en-Woivre. Thus both American armies were now in position to carry out the offensive as directed by my orders November 5, which was what I had planned and advocated when Marshal Foch insisted that there should be a covering movement of all the armies west of the Meuse, with Metzerees-Sedan as the objective of the American First army.

CHAPTER LXV

As the conference between Marshal Foch and the German delegates proceeded, and in anticipation of advice regarding the armistice, telephone lines were kept constantly open between my headquarters and those of the First and Second armies.

When word came to me at 6 a. m., November 11, that hostilities would cease at 11 a. m., directions to that effect were sent to our armies immediately. Our troops had been advancing rapidly during the preceding two days, and although every effort was made to reach them promptly a few could not be overtaken before the prescribed hour.

A brief account of the conference with the German delegates was given to me a few days later by General Weygand. He said the Germans came across the line by automobile the afternoon of November 7 and boarded a special railway coach sent by the French to meet them. During the night this car and the marshals were placed side by side in the forest between Complegne and Soissons.

The emissaries were ushered into the marshal's presence, and after producing their credentials were asked the object of their visit. They replied that they had come to discuss the terms of an armistice. The marshal then made it clear that he himself

was not requesting an armistice and did not care to have one.

When asked if they wished an armistice they replied that they did. The marshal said that if that was the case, here were the terms, a copy of which he handed them. The severity of the demands seemed to surprise them and they appeared very much depressed. They had no power to sign an armistice they said, without the consent of the chancellor, and after some little discussion they started an officer to the German capital with the terms.

They did not seem to object to turning over 5,000 cannon, but deplored the condition which required them to surrender 30,000 machine guns. They finally succeeded in having this reduced to 25,000 machine guns on the ground that they might have some left for riot duty. In speaking of the danger of riots, the delegates were asked why they did not send some of their reserve divisions to maintain order in the interior.

Their reply was that they had no divisions in reserve, as every division that they had was actually in line. Then they complained about the short time allowed for evacuation, stating that the German army was in no condition to move, either forward or backward.

What America Had Done.

Between September 26 and November 11, twenty-two American and six French divisions, with an approximate fighting strength of 500,000 men, on a front extending from southeast of Verdun to the Argonne forest, had engaged and decisively beaten forty-three different German divisions, with an estimated fighting strength of 470,000. Of the twenty-two American divisions, four had at different times during this period been in action on fronts other than our own.

The enemy suffered an estimated loss of over 100,000 casualties in this battle, and our First army lost about 117,000. The total strength of the First army, including 185,000 French troops, reached 1,081,000 men. It captured 23,000 prisoners, 874 cannon, 3,000 machine guns and large quantities of material.

The transportation and supply of divisions to and from our front during this battle was a gigantic task. There were 26 American and seven French divisions, besides hundreds of thousands of corps and army troops, moved in and out of the American zone. A total of 173,000 men were evacuated to the rear and more than 100,000 replacements were received.

It need hardly be restated that our entry into the war gave the allies the preponderance of force vitally necessary to outweigh the tremendous increase in the strength of the Germans on the western front, due to the collapse of Russia and the consequent release of German divisions employed against her. From the military point

of view we began to aid the allies early in 1918, when our divisions, with insufficient training to take active part in battle, were sent to the inactive front to relieve French divisions, that they might be used in the fighting line.

The assistance we gave the allies in combat began in May, with the successful attack of one of our divisions at Cantigny. This was followed early in June by the entrance into battle of the two divisions that stopped the German advance on Paris, near Chateau-Thierry, and by three others that were put in the defensive line.

In July two American divisions, with one Moroccan division, formed the spearhead of the counter-attack against the Chateau-Thierry salient, in which nine of our divisions participated. There was a total of approximately 300,000 American troops engaged in this Second Battle of the Marne, which involved very severe fighting, and was not completed until the Germans were driven beyond the Vesle in August.

In the middle of September an army of 550,000 Americans reduced the St. Mihiel salient. The latter part of September our great battle of the Meuse-Argonne was begun, lasting through 47 days of intense fighting and ending brilliantly for our First and Second armies. November 11, after more than 1,200,000 American soldiers had participated.

A Time to Forget Hardships.

It was a time to forget the hardships and difficulties, except to record them with the glorious history of our achievements. In praise and thanks for the decisive victories of our armies and in guidance for the future, the following order was issued:

"G. H. Q.

"American Expeditionary Forces.

"General Orders No. 203

"France, Nov. 12, 1918.

"The enemy has capitulated.

It is fitting that I address myself in thanks directly to the officers and soldiers of the American expeditionary forces who by their heroic efforts have made possible this glorious result. Our armies, hurriedly raised and hastily trained, met a veteran enemy, and by courage, discipline and skill always defeated him. Without complaint you have endured incessant toil, privation and danger. You have seen many of your comrades make the supreme sacrifice that freedom may live. I thank you for the patience and courage with which you have endured. I congratulate you upon the splendid fruits of victory which your heroism and the blood of our gallant dead are now presenting to our nation. Your deeds will live forever on the most glorious pages of America's history.

"These things you have done,

There remains now a harder task which will test your soldierly qualities to the utmost. Succeed in this and little note will be taken and few praises will be sung; fail, and the light of your glorious achievements of the past will sadly be dimmed.

"But you will not fail. Every natural tendency may urge toward relaxation in discipline, in conduct, in appearance, in everything that marks the soldier. Yet you will remember that each officer and each soldier is the representative in Europe of his people, and that his brilliant deeds of yesterday permit no action of today to pass unnoticed by friend or by foe.

"You will meet this test as gallantly as you have met the tests of the battlefield. Sustained by your high ideals and inspired by the heroic part you have played, you will carry back to our people the proud consciousness of a new Americanism born of sacrifice.

"Whether you stand on hostile territory or on the friendly soil of France, you will so bear yourself in discipline, appearance and respect for all civil rights that you will confirm for all time the pride and love which every American feels for your uniform and for you.

"JOHN J. PERSHING,

"General, Commander in Chief.

"Official:

"ROBERT C. DAVIS,

"Adjutant General."

The experience of the World war only confirmed the lessons of the past. The divisions with little training, while aggressive and courageous, were lacking in the ready skill of habit. They were capable of powerful blows, but their blows were apt to be awkward—teamwork was often not well understood. Flexible and resourceful divisions cannot be created by a few maneuvers or by a few months' association of their elements. On the other hand, without the keen intelligence, the endurance, the willingness, and the enthusiasm displayed in the training areas and on the battlefields, the decisive results obtained would have been impossible.

There is little to add in praise of the spirit of determination that stimulated each individual soldier to overcome the hardships and difficulties that fell to his lot. With fortitude and perseverance he gave his every energy to the accomplishment of his task, whether it required him to charge the enemy's guns or play the less conspicuous role of forwarding supplies. In their devotion, their valor and the loyal fulfillment of their obligations, the officers and men of the American expeditionary forces have left a heritage of which those who follow after may ever be proud.

[END.]

## THE FACTORS FAVORING SMALL-TOWN BUSINESS

(Continued From Page 1)

has increased 235 per cent in ten years, and with more than 17,000 people now, it has definitely emerged from the small-town class. Now what happened here? Well, Klamath Falls acquired better railroad and highway facilities. As a result, new agricultural and timber lands were opened. New industries came in. Existing plants expanded their equipment and activities. More tourists flowed into the town as they passed between California and the Pacific Northwest.

Let us look for just a moment at Dodge City, Kansas, which doubled its population during the past ten years. One of the main reasons, here, is to be found in the development of power farming—transforming the plains country west and south of Dodge City. And this progressive town has utilized wisely the business advantages of its strategic location.

And the South, the vigorous new South of fine, aggressive business spirit, has plenty of good illustrations. For instance, there is Bogalusa, Louisiana, registering a 70 per cent gain since 1920—increasing from 8,000 to 14,000. In this case, aggressive industrial development did the job—exploiting a paper mill, a new furniture factory, and a box plant.

One cannot emphasize too strongly that new developments in transportation have an immensely vital bearing on the business future of the small town. The story of Novi, Michigan, illustrates that. It seems that the town was once Stop Number Six—"No." Roman numeral "VI"—on an old-time stage route. When the railroad first came through that that country they missed this village of Novi, going 20 miles away to the then equally small village of Detroit. Partly as a result of that action (and partly as a result, because of its water transportation advantages) Detroit is a great metropolis. Novi remains a hamlet of 800.

But who knows—possibly some little hamlet of the plains may be a Detroit of the future, given prominence by our newest mode of transportation, the airplane. Already many small towns have been "put on the map" by the airlines serving them, and hundreds of others have derived some additional income, whether fairly large and transient or rather small and steady, from air transportation.

Take the case of Pasco, Washington, an important division point on the airline serving the great Northwest, which has sprung connecting the major cities of the Pacific Coast and the "Inland Empire" with the transcontinental route, and which will soon be connected with an airline serving Alaska. The airline has made Pasco famous throughout the country. It is a surprise to seasoned air travelers to learn that its population is less than 5,000; one of them had doubtless expected newspapers and double-decked buses

there. If air traffic goes on increasing as it has been doing recently, that supposition may become a reality.

Another small town in somewhat the same position is Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, which owes much of its present renown—and some increase in business to the fact that it is important as a stopping place for mail and passenger planes when bad flying weather sets in over the Alleghenies.

I could greatly lengthen this list of new airline towns. Elko and Las Vegas, Nevada, and Midland, Texas, are other pertinent examples. Cheyenne, Wyoming, had an early history closely identified with the pony express, but recently our newest (and almost equally glamorous) means of communication has furnished a sequel to those frontier days. Cheyenne is now an airline division point, with repair shop, pilots' quarters, and so on. At the airport a plane comes swinging down from the sky, mail bags are transferred, and another plane roars away in a cloud of dust. The weekly drama of the pony express is revived, in a way, in the speed and hustle of the skyway service.

There can be no doubt that radio has worked to the advantage of the small-town business man. Supplying an endless variety of entertainment for the home—and for the store as well—it tends to counteract the lure of city amusements. It keeps people closer to their own hearth-stones and to their home-town merchants or neighborhood shops. And when television comes, in full power and perfection—as it surely will some time—this stay-at-home influence will be enhanced and intensified immeasurably. Small-town business will inevitably benefit from such a striking transformation and forward step as this.

Let us take a brief look now at one of the liveliest and most contentious questions that bear upon such business: Namely, "Can the chain store successfully invade the small town?" Certainly a vital problem—this one? of the survival of the independent, who, as President Hoover has put it, is "the foundation of American business."

Of course, I cannot begin to answer such a controversial question in the two or three minutes at my disposal. I just want to mention a few of the things that influence the situation. A chain store in a real small town—not a suburb, mind you—lacks some of the characteristics that help to "make the wheels go round" in typical chain-store activity. In the nature of things it cannot have so much large-scale requisition, distribution, accounting, and other city chain-store advantages. Probably that is why our census figures show that, in towns of less than 10,000 the chains do less than 10 per cent of the total business. To increase that, they are up against one of the great assets of the small-town independent, namely, personal relations and special service.

Take the credit question. The independent merchant can take advantage of the fact that it is probably as safe to extend "open credit" in the American small town as it is anywhere on earth. He runs across very few cases like the one in which an exasperated merchant, desperate over a bill long due, accosted the debtor with these words: "Look here, John, you've been owing me this bill for a year. Now I'll meet you half-way. I'm ready to forget half what you owe." And John came right back with: "Fine! I'll meet you. I'll forget the other half!"

A pretty weighty factor in determining the flow of business in a small town is that of personal friendship. The local people go to the same churches—belong to the same lodges—swat mosquitos at the same picnics. The independent small-town merchant knows the typical wants and proclivities, even the dispositions of his townspeople. He would never make such a blunder as that of the old ragman who approached a sharp-visaged housewife with the query: "Any bottles, ma'am—any wine bottles?" Thor- oughly outraged, the woman snapped: "Do I look as if I drank wine?" The questioner peered at her more closely and hastened to exclaim: "My mistake—my mistake, lady. Any vinegar bottles?"

The element of personal contact is one of the factors in the situation with respect to the mail-order trade. What is the mail-order situation, taking it by and large? It is easiest to express it by index figures. Let us take the 1923-25 average as our basis, or 100. For 1919 the index figure for mail-order sales in the country as a whole was 93; for 1930 it was 172, or a little less than double what it had been 11 years before. It seems reasonable to assume that the business of small-town stores has been injured to some extent by this mail-order expansion, though I find no figures available to indicate the exact extent of such encroachment. Our experts at the Department of Commerce say that, from their experience, it looks as if the mail-order houses get a much larger business from the farmers, in proportion to the number of people, than they do from the actual residents of small towns. (Of course, that rural business would otherwise come, in major part, to the small-town stores.) In the villages, the factor of convenience—the possibility of looking over the goods and comparing and selecting, and again that highly important element of personal friendship for the storekeeper, combine to hold the trade for the good local storekeeper against the distant establishment selling merchandise by mail.

And so, although there are unfavorable factors against small-town business, there are, on the other hand, strong favorable elements which are more modern, more in the spirit of the "new age," than are the adverse circumstances. A business friend of mine, Mr. A. M. Matson, of Dallas, Texas, director of a great wholesaling house operating all over the country, writes me: "I have been convinced—not through guesswork, but by actual experience—that there is a comeback in the small town in Texas; there are many good reasons for it, but the most outstanding is more efficient storekeepers."

Small-town industry and business in this country are justified in entertaining a lively hopefulness and sturdy courage.