

FRIGHTFUL LOSSES BEFORE VERDUN

THIRTY THOUSAND KILLED IN TAKING FIRST FORT

Fall of Douaumont Was Costly to Germany Which is Now Determined to Capture Pepper Heights.

VERDUN ATTACKED BY 750,000 MEN

Whole Western Front Expected to Burst Out Into Flame of Struggle, Baffling Imagination.

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] LONDON, Feb. 29.—The decisive battle for Verdun is about to begin.

Checked in savage onslaughts against Pepper heights, the Germans are moving up their heaviest artillery to blast away the armored trenches on the ridge, barring their further advance from the north.

While indescribable slaughter continues about the ruins of Fort Douaumont, the teutons are feeling out the French line along a 100 mile front with artillery poundings and infantry attacks. There is every indication that the whole western front may suddenly burst into the flame of struggle, baffling imagination.

A slackening of German artillery fire on the eight mile front north and northeast of Verdun during the greater part of yesterday was reported in Paris dispatches today. This was undoubtedly due, Paris reported, to the shifting of artillery by the crown prince and to the need of bringing up fresh reserves to take the place of the regiments blotted out in the first week of savage fighting.

Paris is coolly confident that the fortress will never fall by a frontal attack over the strongly fortified Pepper heights. French war office officials believe the Kaiser already dreams of a victory in front of Verdun and either is searching out a new road to Paris through the Champagne, or will renew the attack through Fresnes, aimed at squeezing the French out of Verdun.

All dispatches from Paris today, though recounting the rejoicing in the French capital over the checking of the Verdun drive, gave warning that the crown prince is about to renew the attack with all the artillery and infantry at his command. But Paris believes that the tide of battle is about to turn in favor of France.

Berlin dispatches received here early today were non-committal. They carried dispatches of correspondents with the crown prince's army regarding the early days of the fighting, but carried no comment on the prospects of German success.

Dispatches from Swiss sources today insisted that the Verdun attack is a mere diversion. The Germans, these sources said, are about to break out with a great blow between Noyon and St. Quentin, within the battle front is barely more than sixty miles northeast of Paris.

Swiss newspapers estimate the German dead in the early days of the

Verdun offensive at about 30,000 but make no estimates on the number of wounded.

Three-quarters of a million Germans are now taking part in the onslaught on Verdun, the Mail's Paris correspondent wired today, confirming also the report that the Pepper heights positions and the district around Douaumont is now the scene of the heaviest fighting.

"The great majority of German troops is massed on the bottle neck ridge of Meuse heights three miles across," the dispatches said. "On this narrow ledge, is concentrated the fire of 1,100 guns and in the last two days this has been the theatre of the bloodiest fighting of the war."

"During Friday and Saturday the crown prince swept with 200 batteries of heavy guns the Côte de Polvre (Pepper heights) and Fort Douaumont. The possession of these positions would have given him the mastery of the two main roads leading to Verdun from Sedan and Ornes.

"Again and again the flower of the Kaiser's troops rushed to attack Fort Douaumont. They carried Besonvaux on Friday and established themselves on the Vauche ridge only a few hundred yards from the fort. Early Saturday morning they again attacked. They were repulsed time after time, but by noon the famous Brandenburg corps stormed the position and took it. "They had been sent with orders to take Douaumont, no matter what the cost. Their losses were greater than in August, 1914, when the Germans threw themselves against the forts of Liège."

Over 45,000 Killed. LONDON, Feb. 29.—More than forty-five thousand Germans have been killed in the assault on the Verdun positions, according to a Central News dispatch from Amsterdam today, quoting Dutch sources as authority.

On one two mile front, the dispatch stated, were found 8,000 German corpses. One regiment, it was stated, has been formed from the fragments of eight German regiments, nearly wiped out in the fighting around Haumont.

Hundreds of thousands of wounded from the German front were reported to be arriving at Metz, Homburg, Coblenz, Treves, Cologne and other German cities.

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THREATEN TO BLOW UP POWDER PLANT TOMORROW

Dupont Company Receives Warning Letters and Town is in a Panic.

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] ASHLAND, Wis., Feb. 29.—Officials of the Dupont Powder company today strengthened the guard around the plant at Barkdale, Wis., and made other preparations to fight any attempts to blow up the works. Letters have been received by both officers of the company and workmen threatening that the plant will be blown up on March 1, tomorrow. Mysterious aeroplanes have been hovering over the plant during the last three days and have aroused the people of the city almost to a panic. Powerful searchlights have been placed around the plant and at night are constantly combing the sky to discover any aeroplanes which may be near.

Two Women Killed. ST. LOUIS, Mo., Feb. 29.—While rescue parties continued their search in the debris today, county and city officials began an investigation into the explosion late yesterday of a

thousand pounds of dynamite at Maplewood, a St. Louis suburb, which resulted in the death of two women. Early today the injured, mostly women and children, numbered eighty-five. The explosion which occurred in the powder shack of a sewer construction company, wrecked houses within a radius of eight blocks. The loss is variously estimated today at from \$100,000 to \$250,000. What caused the explosion had not been ascertained today.

Explosion Heard Fifty Miles. WOBURN, Mass., Feb. 29.—With a thunderous explosion which was heard for fifty miles, the trinitrotoluol building of the New England Mfg. Co., where gases used in bombs for the allied armies are manufactured, blew up early today. Although 100 men were working in the building, a warning rattle gave them time to escape and only one, who was showered with flying bricks, was injured. The terrific force of the explosion blew the building high into the air and made the ground tremble as in an earthquake for miles around. The loss will exceed \$50,000. For three weeks the building has been heavily guarded because of threatening letters received by the company.

FRANCE

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] PARIS, Feb. 29.—Standing on a hill four miles north of Fort Douaumont, Kaiser Wilhelm watched for six hours the bloody struggle for possession of the fort, according to German prisoners whose stories were telegraphed here today.

A raw wind blew sheets of rain and snow across the hill and staff officers urged the emperor, on account of his recent illness, not to expose himself.

Despite their entreaties, he held to his post, field glasses in hand and protected by a great storm proof coat until the Brandenburgers charged into the French positions.

The Douaumont guns did frightful execution before they were silenced by German howitzers. Battalion after battalion of German troops almost disappeared from sight as big shells tore their fronts.

In the village of Douaumont and on the plain outside the fort, French and Germans are now struggling in fierce hand to hand combats over piles of dead bodies. Craters blown up by the great German shells are filled with corpses. Wounded men have been crushed down and smothered under the weight of cadavers.

German and French dead are mingled in piles, mantled by the latest snowfall. The slaughter north of Pepper Heights equals that around Douaumont. Every foot of land approaching the ridge is commanded by French guns. Steady sheets of snappell and shells are breaking over this plain. Not even by defending themselves behind parapets of dead bodies could the Germans hope to advance through infantry actions. They are bringing up new guns, planning to silence the French artillery.

The number of prisoners taken by the French has been comparatively small, it was stated here today. The shell fire on both sides has been so fierce, it was stated, that groups of soldiers cut off and surrounded, have been cut to pieces before they could make their way to the enemy's lines with offers of surrender.

ALL ATTACKS REPULSED. PARIS, Feb. 29.—All German attacks in the Verdun district in the past twenty-four hours have been repulsed, said an official statement from the war office this afternoon. French troops now entirely surround Fort Douaumont, the official statement said.

The war office, however, admitted that the Germans have captured the village of Manheville, eleven miles southeast of Verdun in their eastward drive to force the evacuation of Verdun by a "squeezing out" process.

Loss of several trenches in Loraine to the Germans was also admitted. It was stated, however, that these positions were immediately captured by the French.

Heavy bombardment of the entire French front, north and northeast of

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NEARLY 1,000 WERE DROWNED

French Cruiser Provence Sank in the Mediterranean Sea on Saturday.

LESS THAN HALF SAVED

Ship Had 1,800 Souls on Board and It is Feared That Many Lost Their Lives.

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] PARIS, Feb. 29.—Nearly 1,000 lives are believed to have been lost in the sinking of the French auxiliary cruiser Provence, formerly in the service as a trans-Atlantic liner, in the middle of the Mediterranean on Saturday. Eighteen hundred persons were on board the cruiser, an official statement from the minister of marine stated.

Of this number, 296 of the crew have been landed at Malta and about 400 on the Greek island of Melos.

A later official statement from the admiralty put the total number probably saved at 870 making the number missing about 930.

Ten boats are now at the scene of the disaster, continuing the search for other survivors, the minister of marine announced.

Searching for Survivors. PARIS, Feb. 29.—Between 900 and 1,000 persons are believed to have perished in the sinking of the French auxiliary cruiser Provence in the Mediterranean Saturday.

Of 1,800 persons aboard the cruiser, the latest statement from the ministry of marine declares, about 870 have been saved. Ten other vessels have rushed to the scene in search of more survivors.

Probably Torpedoed. NEW YORK, Feb. 29.—Dispatches to the United Press from Paris, transmitted through Paris direct, and also other dispatches, transmitted through London did not state whether the Provence was sunk by a submarine, by a mine or was the victim of an accident.

Submarines are known to have been operating in the mid-Mediterranean for some time, the British steamer cruiser and a Swedish steamer having been torpedoed in those waters within the past few days.

Recently the British censor has eliminated all references to submarine attacks, allowing messages that

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RUSSIA

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] PETROGRAD, Feb. 29.—The Tur are hastily evacuating the important Black sea port of Trebizond neighboring cities before the Russian advance, according to Tiflis patches today.

The evacuation of Trebizond was made necessary by the approach of two Russian forces, one moving westward along the shores of the Black sea through Rizeh and the other in a northwesterly direction from Erzerum. An official statement from the war office Saturday night said that the Erzerum troops were within fifty miles of Trebizond. Unofficial reports have placed the second attacking army about the same distance from Trebizond on the Black sea coast.

Trebizond lies 120 miles northwest of the fortress of Erzerum recently occupied by the Russians and is the capital of a vilayet of the same name. The city stands on a plateau, surrounded by an old wall. It is an important trading center and has a population of about 40,000. Xenophon and the ten thousand Greeks, in their great retreat reached the sea at Trebizond.

GERMANY

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] BERLIN, Feb. 28. (Via London).—German troops have captured a small armored works northwest of Verdun, the war office announced this afternoon.

At the same time it was announced that 16,575 French soldiers and 225 officers have been taken in the fierce fighting in the Woivre region where the Germans are assailing French positions southeast and east of Verdun. The booty includes sixty-eight cannon and eighty-six machine guns.

In the Woivre region, the statement announced, German troops have passed Dieppe, Abcourt and Blances, and captured Manheville and Champillon.

Northeast of Badonviller, a portion of a French trench was captured and many prisoners taken.

ENGLAND

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] DOVER, England, Feb. 29.—That the liner Maloja, sunk off Dover Sunday with a loss of more than 250 lives, was torpedoed and did not strike a mine, was the sensational testimony offered at the coroner's inquest today by Chief Officer Forbes.

Review of Events Which Led Up to Submarine Controversy

[By Ed. L. Keen, General European Manager United Press.]

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—America's future attitude in the submarine controversy now depends almost altogether upon the nature and extent of the secret orders alleged by the German government to have been issued to the captains of British merchantmen.

Shortly after the Germans began their undersea warfare, it was current in Europe that the British admiralty had taken steps to safeguard merchantmen against attack by submarines. It was further reported that these steps included the placing of guns and naval gun crews on certain classes of merchantmen and instructions to the captains to endeavor to sink submarines whenever encountered, either by gun fire or by ramming.

Nothing official on the subject has ever been published by the British government. On the other hand there has been no official denial of current reports.

It is altogether likely that some sort of general instructions covering the conduct of merchantmen when in the vicinity of submarines were issued, but whether they were as sweeping as the Germans charge, will not be definitely known until the receipt of the facsimile photographic copies now said to be on their way to Washington from Berlin. Last special instructions directing captains of passenger ships how to avoid the submarine menace have been issued from time to time is not denied. This fact was brought out before the court of inquiry that investigated the Lusitania case, although the text of the instructions which were sent to Captain Turner by wireless, was suppressed.

Granted that orders for merchantmen to operate offensively against submarines were secretly issued, as charged by the Germans, the defense of the British government doubtless will be that this step became necessary in view of the adoption by the Germans of the policy of sinking vessels without warning. It was not long after "Der Tag" that there began a series of submarine attacks without warning not only of unarmed passenger liners and cargo ships, but also of offensive fishing vessels.

The British view is that the inauguration of this sort of warfare thoroughly justified the nullification by Great Britain of the pledge given to the United States through Ambassador Sir Cecil Spring Rice that British merchantmen would never be used for purposes of attack; that they would be armed only for defense and that they would never fire unless first fired upon.

Recent dispatches from Berlin quoting various public men to the effect that the recent practical suspension of submarine warfare in the vicinity of the British Isles was due to a desire to conform to the wishes of the United States government, are probably being read with considerable amusement in British official circles. For example, to Count Reventlow, is attributed the statement that this suspension was undertaken expressly to please President Wilson. Furthermore, the count is reported to have said that England had gotten the full benefit of Wilson's action whereas "Germany has sacrificed much valuable time on the altar of America's friendship."

This is not the way the British look at it. President Wilson's notes to Germany had nothing whatever to do with this "practical suspension" of under sea warfare in near-English

waters, according to the British. It was British ingenuity, applied through the British navy that turned the trick.

The North sea and adjacent waters have been rendered exceedingly unsafe cruising grounds for the undersea boats of the enemy. The British claim to have conquered the submarine menace, so far as this field of operations is concerned, by the adoption of various devices, including steel nets and drags, the utilization of the famous Sperry detector—an American invention whereby not only the presence but the direction and approximate distance of a submarine are disclosed—and a number of other schemes concerning which the admiralty has not yet taken the public into its confidence.

The Germans continued sending submarines into English waters until so few of them came back that further operations in this particular quarter became an expensive luxury, say the British. The last official British statement on the subject made in the house of commons last November credited the British navy with putting out of business either by sinking or capture seventy-eight German submarines. The exact score, to date, is problematical, but common gossip in England now fixes the total at more than 100.

Some four or five months ago the Germans transferred their undersea activities to the Mediterranean where the British and their allies have not yet been able to perfect their anti-submarine defenses to the extent that prevails about the British Isles. Nearly all the recent submarine attacks have been in the Mediterranean waters. Most of the vessels officially reported as sunk in the vicinity of England have been the victims of mines—not submarine.

LID IS BLOWN OFF; ORATORY GUSHES FORTH

Congressman Mondell Opens Up With Bitter Criticism of the Stand Taken by the President.

STARTS DEBATE OVER WAR MEASURES

Parallel Drawn Between the Rights of Americans in Mexico and on the Submarine Infested Seas.

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—The lid upon debate in congress of the dispute with Germany over armed merchantmen was blown off today. In the first speech on the subject, disregarding the administration's desire to prevent open discussion, Representative Mondell (Republican) Wyoming, today delivered a lengthy address in the house bitterly criticizing President Wilson's refusal to warn Americans off armed ships.

"Any neutral country that has any regard for the lives of its citizens or its own peace and honor; any nation that desires to escape complications that may lead to war over mere definitions, line spun as a spider's web, will not allow its citizens to wantonly expose themselves to harm and their nation to the horrors of war," said Mondell. Mondell's speech threatened to provoke an outburst of debate from both factions in the house.

"The president strikes a pose of mock heroism," said Mondell. "When did it become so tremendously sacred an American right to ride on an armed ship? Why this sudden insistence by the administration to become a party to a situation created by greed and savagery of the nations at war that may involve us in a long, bloody and causeless war?"

Mondell declared that "thoughtless, heedless, uninformed and emotional persons might throw their hats in the air at any bombastic declaration that no right of Americans should be abridged," but that common prudence and sense should cause the administration to warn Americans off armed merchantmen.

Mondell drew a parallel between the Mexican and European situation regarding the warning to Americans. "What is the difference between the fundamental and treaty right of Americans in Mexico and the alleged rights for which, with fine Falstaffian fury, it is now proposed to contend?" asked Mondell.

Warped German Raider. [United Press Leased Wire Service.] NEW YORK, Feb. 29.—Warnings to watch for a German commerce raider attacking shipping in the Atlantic, possibly accompanied by consorts, were received here by the Standard Oil tanker Communiapaw February 17 when the vessel was south of the Azores, she reported today.

The Communiapaw arriving from Algiers reported receiving a wireless message saying two other ships had been chased by the raider. The raider carried two guns.

All Passengers Saved. [United Press Leased Wire Service.] MARSHFIELD, Oregon, Feb. 29.—All twenty-five passengers and sailors were believed to have been saved today from the wreck of the steam schooner Fifield which ran on the rocky beach near Bandon shortly before 7 a. m. A hole was stove in the Fifield's bow below the water line. The sea is moderate, but the small vessel of 400 tons displacement is expected to be a total loss.

Lyman is Coming Back. [United Press Leased Wire Service.] NEW YORK, Feb. 29.—Dr. J. Grant Lyman, alleged mining stock swindler today is on his way back to New York from Tampa, Fla., to face a

NO IMMEDIATE DANGER FOR TRAVELING AMERICANS

Small Likelihood of Any Being Killed in New German U Boat Campaign.

[United Press Leased Wire Service.] WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—Americans are in little immediate danger from the new teutonic U boat campaign which goes into effect on the stroke of 12 tonight, official Washington was agreed today. There is small likelihood of any Americans being killed or injured, it is declared. The administration's policy, however, today awaited receipt of German evidence that England has given all merchantmen commanders secret orders to attack submarines.

Ambassador Bernstorff's note to Secretary Lansing, repeating assurances against unwarranted attack of passenger liners, was to be laid before the cabinet today by President Wilson. It was clearly indicated this government will withhold response or the formulation of any new policy until the alleged British admiralty order arrives. The administration will find a way to keep Americans out of the danger zone, it was practically assured today, without surrendering or abridging

charge of using the mails to defraud. Lyman decided not to fight extradition after federal authorities had left him alone for several hours perusing volumes from a law library dealing with similar cases.

Six Miners Killed. [United Press Leased Wire Service.] KEMPTON, Maryland, Feb. 29.—Six miners were killed, a number were injured and thirty-three are still reported entombed in mine number 42 of the Davis Colliery company here, following a terrific dust explosion early today.

Mine rescue cars were rushed to the scene in an effort to save those still buried. Following the explosion twenty-six men were brought out uninjured, carrying the bodies of the six dead.

Practices What She Preaches. [United Press Leased Wire Service.] CHICAGO, Feb. 29.—"Miss" Crystal Eastman Benedict, suffragist, peace advocate and former member of the New York industrial commission was on record today as practicing what she preached.

In her suit for divorce against Wallace Benedict, electrical engineer, she made no demand for alimony. "Alimony is a relic of the dark ages," "Miss" Benedict has declared in feminist addresses.

Permission to Sail. WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—The state department today gave permission for the Italian steamers Giuseppe Verdi and San Guglielmo, both armed "for defense" to sail from New York harbor. The department has been considering since Friday the questions involved.

Assurances were given by the Italian embassy that the guns mounted aboard the vessels would be used only for defensive purposes. The treasury department wired Collector

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