

The Great War—1358th Day

attempt to effect a crossing of La Bussee Canal. The British were holding well and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy, according to the latest report.

Coincidentally with this pretentious assault the Germans surged forward further north and again began hammering at the approaches to Kemmel and the neighboring high ground.

When the correspondent visited this neighborhood at 11 o'clock this morning the British artillery was sending back its thunderous answer to the German challenge, and the battle was in full swing.

Face Heavy Pressure

The attack between Givenchy and St. Venant began at 9 o'clock after a heavy bombardment by the enemy artillery lasting five hours. Hard fighting developed immediately along most of the line. It was especially intense about Givenchy and in the Robecq-Locon sector.

The defending forces at Givenchy had sustained numerous desperate attacks and had held their ground during the early hours of the battle.

At Hinges Hill, east of Locon, where the German line bulged out, close to the canal, the enemy made a particularly determined effort to get across the waterway.

French Are Meeting Fresh Attacks On Northern End of Battle Line

OTTAWA, April 18.—The French are heavily in action on the northern battle area, says a Reuter dispatch from London today.

For the British infantry cooperating with the French in the northern battle area Wednesday was "a strenuous day."

"The enemy apparently is drawing on fresh reserves," says another Reuter dispatch received to-night.

"In the course of the great battle more than thirty enemy divisions have so far appeared, and it is certain the German command is exploiting every success by the most prodigious expenditure of man power and not counting the cost.

Halt Terrific Attacks

"In the great German attack of yesterday our troops fought with heroic valor against tremendous numerical odds. They are fighting in the same irrepressible manner in the battle between Givenchy forest and Nieppe now progressing.

"For nearly a week the German gains in the battle of Flanders have been limited to the smallest extent. It has been a terribly costly advance at certain points.

"The attempts to break through the Belgian front south of the Houtholst forest was probably inspired by the discovery of our withdrawal from the Paschendaele region and a consequent assumption that there must be some discrimination at this part of the line.

Tanks No Longer Used

"Apparently the tanks, armored cars and cavalry have not been in action on either side. We are now down to a sheer contest for man power—a swaying, ceaseless attack and repulse, with the vital issue carried in the anxious problem of whether our powers of endurance can wear down the repeated bull rushes of vastly superior numbers before a decision is reached.

"At the moment the prospect assur-

the frail bridges, and the slaughter of the opposing troops was heavy. One party of two hundred Germans advanced at one time with hands over their heads to surrender. For some reason they changed their minds abruptly and fled. They were shot to pieces as they ran.

Cut Up by Infantry

There was also hard fighting about Pacaut Wood, near the canal, and between Robecq and St. Venant, where the Germans hoped to improve their positions in order to facilitate operations to the north and south. The attacks in this region were repulsed completely.

British troops in the neighborhood of Wytshaete this morning were continuing their all-night battle with the Germans. A German attack yesterday resulted in pushing a salient out northwest of the place, but a subsequent British counter-attack again drew the British line close about the town, and at one time a small body of British infantry penetrated to the southeastern section.

Attack a Failure

The British lost a very small piece of territory between Bailloul and Dranoutre yesterday, but the German attack here must be recorded as a failure. Further westward had fighting continued about Meteren, and this place today apparently was No Man's Land.

Just south of this place, near Merris, the British by a counterstroke, succeeded in pushing their lines forward toward the western outskirts of the village.

THE GERMAN DRIVE FOR BETHUNE



The Germans yesterday turned their attention to the south side of the Lys salient, sending ten divisions against the eleven-mile front between the two arrows. The British line stood firm everywhere. The solid black area is the German gain since the opening of their northern offensive on Tuesday, April 9.

On the small map the arrow points to the region where the French yesterday successfully attacked on a two and a half mile front, taking ground all along the line.

Military Comment

By William L. McPherson

HAVING bulged out the Lys Valley salient on the north side, and forced a British retirement from the heights northeast, east and southeast of Ypres, von Hindenburg turned his chief attention yesterday to the south side of the salient, hoping to secure similar results there.

This line shelters Bethune, an important British advanced base, about five miles due west of La Bassée. In its westerly reaches it also bars the way to the approaches to Hazebrouck from the south. On this side of the salient the British have been holding firm for nearly a week.

The British night communiqué says that all the German assaults on the southern side of the Lys Valley salient, from Givenchy to St. Venant, failed completely. Less violent pressure was applied on the northern sector.

Southeast of Kemmel Hill, below which the British northern line now runs, the Germans made a slight gain on Wednesday, but lost it through an Allied counter attack. On Wednesday evening German attacks were repulsed before Merris, the point in the British line nearest to Hazebrouck. Yesterday attacks southeast of Mount Kemmel again broke down.

French troops are now fighting with the British on the northern side of the Lys Valley, and undoubtedly also on the south side. General Maurice's plaintive query, "When is Blücher coming?" has thus been answered in the steadying of the entire British line.

The French are there and they are apparently there in time. The question of the timeliness of their arrival can hardly be settled otherwise than in General Foch's favor. Considering the necessities of the West front situation as a whole it would have been rash to send reserves in large numbers to the extreme northern sector, until the character of the German offensive there had fully developed.

The loss of the eastern half of the Ypres salient or all of it is in itself of little military consequence. There are other lines in Flanders on which the Allies can defend the Channel ports. The critical sector on the West front is still the Amiens sector, and whatever is done in the Lys Valley or in the Ypres and Yser regions must be subsidiary to greater future operations north and south of the Somme.

If the present British positions in the north are held, the Allied situation there will not be materially impaired. The Allies can afford to lose a little ground if they make the Germans pay more for it than it is worth. And certainly the mere driving of a salient up the Lys Valley and the recapture of the commanding ridges east, southeast and northeast of Ypres are not worth in themselves the price that von Hindenburg has already paid for them.

To produce ponderable results the German northern offensive must be pushed much further—and at a still heavier cost. There are indications that besides sending French troops north General Foch has also undertaken to relieve the pressure in Flanders by counter strokes on the west side of the Montdidier salient. The German night communiqué reports a French attack in force yesterday northwest of Moreuil. The French say they made progress there.

It is still more important to reestablish an equilibrium on the Somme, thus safeguarding Amiens, than it is to concentrate Allied strength unduly in the north in order to check von Hindenburg's desperate and costly incursion into French Flanders.

four weeks of hammering by the immense German reserves, estimated at 420,000 men, in a fashion which led the French writers to describe the British armies as the "wing of sacrifice," says the dispatch.

Expect Renewed Attacks "Experts do not indorse the opinion advanced in some quarters that the advance, critical in the northern theatre, has been definitely checked. It is agreed that the Germans have not obtained the decisive result aimed at, thanks to the extreme stubbornness of the British resistance.

"The battle, in fact, appears to have been following the course of the great series of German thrusts of October, 1914, which ended in Ypres and failure for the enemy. There was then no Allied reserve. That reserve now exists and has not yet been used.

"There will probably be continuous fluctuations in the northern area for some time to come, but the salient fact of the fighting is the staying power of the British soldiers."

One Division of Canadians Engaged In Picardy Battle (By The Associated Press) OTTAWA, April 18.—Advices have been received in Ottawa which indicate that at least one Canadian division (believed to be the First) is now participating in the mighty conflict on the Lys battlefield. Detailed information was hourly expected tonight by the authorities.

Up to the present Dominion troops

The Official Statements

LONDON, April 18.—Field Marshal Haig's reports to-day follow: NIGHT.—There has been severe fighting again to-day on the greater part of the Lys battlefield. From La Bassée Canal to Givenchy to the Lys River, east of St. Venant, a bombardment was reported this morning, followed by strong hostile attacks, all of which have been repulsed.

The losses inflicted on the attacking German infantry by our fire are again reported to have been extremely heavy, and over 200 prisoners have been taken.

The struggle has been particularly fierce in the neighborhood of Givenchy, where the enemy made determined efforts without success, to retrieve his previous failures. The fighting in this locality has not yet ceased, and the activity of the enemy's artillery is continuing on the whole of this front.

Later in the day further attacks, accompanied by heavy shelling, developed against our positions south of Kemmel and were repulsed.

Beyond considerable artillery activity in different sectors, particularly south and north of the Somme, there is nothing of especial interest to report from the rest of the British front.

DAY.—There has been no change on the British front during the night. The hostile artillery has shown great activity on the southern portion of the Lys battlefield from Givenchy to east of Robecq. A heavy bombardment of our positions between Locon and Robecq was still continuing at dawn. Local attacks were repulsed by our troops yesterday evening in the Merris sector.

More detailed accounts of the fighting of yesterday on the Forest of Nieppe-Wytshaete front establish the severity of the enemy's losses Southeast of Kemmel Hill the German infantry attacked in three waves, and at one point pressed back our line slightly. In this locality the situation was restored by a counter attack, and shortly after mid-day the attack had been repulsed at all points. In the Bailloul sector the enemy attacked three times before mid-day, and in each case suffered a complete repulse.

Our line yesterday evening was reported intact on the whole front.

Cleared Most of Senecat Woods, Paris Reports

PARIS, April 18.—The communications issued to-day by the War Office follow: NIGHT.—We have attacked various enemy positions on the Avre on a front of four kilometres (two and a half miles between Thennes and Mailly-Raineval.

East of the Avre we have made progress and west of it we have taken the greater part of the Senecat Woods and carried our line to the outskirts of Castel. Further south we reached the slopes west of the heights dominating the Avre.

The number of prisoners taken by us exceeds up to the present 500, of whom fifteen are officers. We captured several machine guns. It is confirmed that an enemy raid last night east of Caurieres Wood was deadly for our assailants. We found about forty German bodies on the ground. We took twenty prisoners, including one officer.

DAY.—In the region of Corbeny the French caught under their fire and dispersed a strong German detachment which attempted to approach the French lines after artillery preparation.

The Germans undertook several raids in the Champagne and on the right bank of the Meuse, especially to the east of Caurieres Wood, and near Damloup. All the enemy's efforts were repulsed, and prisoners remained in our hands.

Northwest of Roize, in Lorraine, we succeeded in several incursions into the German lines, and took a certain number of prisoners.

Lys Battle Situation Unchanged, Says Berlin

BERLIN, April 18.—To-day's reports from headquarters read: NIGHT.—In Flanders, on the Lys battlefield, the situation is unchanged. Northwest of Moreuil strong French attacks broke down with sanguinary losses.

DAY.—Yesterday the enemy left to us a large part of the Flemish territory which had been gained by him after months of struggle at the price of huge sacrifices. General Sixt von Arnim's army took from the enemy, retreating step by step, Poelcapelle, Langemarck and Zonnebeke, and, following him up closely, drove him back behind the Steenbeek (Steenbeck).

South of Blankaert Lake an enemy counter thrust checked our forward movement.

North of the Lys, under protection of a vigorous fire, we gained ground and cleared some machine gun nests. During the fighting of the past few days over 2,500 prisoners, some guns and numerous machine guns have been brought in.

On the other battlefronts on both sides of the Somme the firing duel is temporarily reviving. It was resumed with greater intensity near Moreuil and Montdidier.

On the eastern bank of the Meuse minor undertakings near Ornes and Watronville were completely successful and some prisoners were brought in. To the north of Fliere, between the Meuse and the Moselle, a strong French thrust failed with sanguinary losses.

side the Germans struck south of the Canadian lines, and only the Dominion cavalry brigade and some Canadian armored cars took part in the battle which followed. Their losses, it is understood, did not exceed two thousand in killed, wounded and missing.

Official expectations are that before a few days have elapsed the entire Canadian force will be brought into action once more to help crush the German attempt to reach the Channel ports.

Canadian Guns Pour Endless Fire On Foe's Batteries

(By Canadian Press, Ltd.) CANADIAN ARMY HEADQUARTERS, April 18.—All night long Canadian guns, both heavy and light, have been active against the enemy positions, shelling hostile batteries, routes, railways and dumps, while time after time hostile infantry positions, assembly areas and communications have been swept with a harassing fire. Indeed, artillery activity recently has been the main feature on the Canadian front. There have been constant duels between our own and enemy batteries. A considerable amount of gas has been used.

Early this morning we carried out a small projector gas bombardment against the enemy positions, to which the Hun replied with gas shelling, but neither operation approached the mag-

Italians and French Rout Teuton Patrols

Put Men in Advanced Post to Flight and Capture Prisoners

ROME, April 18.—"In the Arsa Valley," says to-day's official statement, "a detachment of our troops attacked the hostile advance post of Val Morbia, put the garrison to flight, destroyed the entrenchments and brought back a few prisoners."

"Enemy patrols were driven back in the region of Corno del Signori by our effective fire. There was a similar happening on the Asiago plateau after an encounter with a French party."

"There was increased artillery action in the Lagarina Valley, in the Posina-Astico sector, on the Asiago plateau, and between Fossalta and Caposile."

"Yesterday we brought down five enemy airplanes. The British shot down eleven and compelled another to land."

Foch Now Sending In His Reserves, Washington Belief

[Staff Correspondence] WASHINGTON, April 18.—Official and diplomatic Washington to-day were cheered by the arrival of French reserves at the British front, and look confidently to immediate arrest of the German drive. It was not known here whether the troops sent by General Foch to the aid of the British were a part of the so-called army of manoeuvre projected by the Versailles war council or troops from reserve depots, but there was an inclination to believe that the fresh forces were drawn from depots.

It is believed, however, that the arrival of the French will not of itself influence the enemy to give up his attempt to break through and destroy the British army.

"Even should the utmost the Germans set out to accomplish be realized by them, however, neither England nor the United States would quit fighting," said a high authority to-day. He stated that the retirements made by the British in every instance had been made when there was no longer any useful purpose to be served by holding the contested positions longer, the men thus being saved "to fight another day."

He stated that there had been occasions when, if the British soldiers had not stuck till the last man was shot down, holding the Hun to the very last minute, the British army would have been rolled up.

U-Boats in Week Sink Only 4 French and Italian Ships

PARIS, April 18.—During the week ended April 13, German submarines did not succeed in sinking a single French ship of more than 1,600 tons. One ship under that tonnage, however, fell prey to the enemy.

ROME, April 18.—One Italian steamship of more than 1,500 tons and two sailing vessels, one of more than 100 tons, were sunk by German mines and submarines in the week ending April 17. One steamship was attacked unsuccessfully by a submarine.

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