

Germany's Main Strategic Aim Failed; Enemy in Dangerous Position on Marne

Deep Wedge Driven Into Allied Line May Trap Crown Prince's Men

Novel Tactics Used By Prussian Command

Outcome of Struggle, However, Depends Upon Many Unknown Elements

By Hilaire Belloc
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THE situation shows an almost complete stabilization of the enemy's advance line between the Aisne and the Marne. The enemy having brought in to date about fifty divisions, for two days has shown no fresh troops.

The American infantry brigaded with French infantry at one point has gone forward where the enemy advance was most threatened, halfway between Chezy and Torcy. The accuracy of the American gunnery is especially to be noted.

The interest of the action lies not in its extent, which was slight, but in the increasing presence of American troops and in the enemy suffering for the first time since May 27 from counter attacks on the south side of this salient.

The enemy has made no further attempts against Rheims, but rather less than half way between that town and the Marne he made an attack on Bligny and captured the village, which was later retaken by British counter attacks. A much more violent effort a few miles to the south at Champlot failed, with over half the enemy lost.

In general the fronts for the moment are as fully established on the eastern side of the salient as on the western. We must remember, however, that this is the twelfth day since the attack on the front between Soissons and Rheims began. It is too early for the enemy to have repaired all his communications behind his advance and to have brought up the full weight of his artillery.

German Success Not Yet a Victory

In considering the Germans' great success of the last two weeks we must never commit the error of confusing an offensive advance with victory. Victory or defeat will come only at the end of the action—perhaps weeks or months from now; and they are not discoverable in this its central and least decided moment.

The chief cause of popular error in judging the extremely grave crisis through which the fortunes of the Allies are passing is the widespread conception that the enemy's object is topographical; that is, the conception that he is trying to reach this or that place or to effect such and such a maneuver upon the map. Much the greater part of everything that has been done in the past by both sides has, it is true, been of this nature, as indeed must necessarily be the case with far the greater part of the activities of all war.

But what the enemy is doing now

is novel so far as this war is concerned in the sense that results shown upon the map, are quite subordinate to another element. This is his present aim of disintegrating the forces opposed to him before the American troops can appear in strength. In other words, he is striking, as has been emphasized before, while he still has superior numbers, a series of blows upon the weight of which he depends to dissolve in the long run the armed organization of France and Britain, to break the Allied line, and to break not only the military, but the civil powers of resistance which the two nations in the West have for their support.

With his great success of March 23 the enemy destroyed more than fifty miles of the old quasi-permanent field fortifications upon which the Allies depended for their power of resistance against what was certain to be the enemy's superior numbers of men and material during the dangerous interval between the disappearance of Russia and the effective appearance in the field of the United States. Having thus destroyed fifty miles of "the wall" and having restored the war of movement over the vast triangle extending nearly to Amiens, the enemy perceived two things: first, that his strategic object, which had been the separation of the French from the British, had failed; second, that his new tactics could be relied upon to have a chance, at least, of breaking any permanent part of the line.

From that moment he turned his attention to the development of the new tactics, which consist of the secret concentration of large forces; in a brief and very intense bombardment; in pushing up every kind of light weapon, and especially field artillery, right forward with the infantry; in training his troops for a very rapid advance, and in establishing them in depth so that fresh units may go forward between the gaps of the tired units and thus keep up the rapidity of the advance once the opposing lines are broken.

Allied Line Bent, But Not Broken

He delivered blows in this new fashion in several places. He struck first in front of Arras, where he failed; then north of Montdidier, where he failed again; then five days later up north against the Lys front, where he succeeded. That was on April 9. When he had succeeded there he at once took advantage of the success and poured in troops through the gap. But though it took some days for the Allies to bring up forces about half as numerous as the enemy's, yet when this proportion had been concentrated he was stopped again, and his second effort thus came to an end in the great battle of April 29, when he was fought to a standstill.

The German then stopped his attacks for a full month to recruit his forces. He got the cases of the lighter wounded back from the hospital, put in what he could of the younger classes of lads, and on Monday, May 27, he struck again between Soissons and Rheims. The blow was successful. He went right through the old semi-permanent defenses, and though he didn't break the line in the sense of separating it in halves, he bent it back and thus extended its length with very much greater rapidity than the Allies could bring in proper reinforcements.

The Allies held firmly on either side of the breach, but forward from the place where the enemy had broken through he advanced with great rapidity, and within four days certain light forces had already touched the Marne, thirty-odd miles away; he had created a very deep salient—a salient almost as deep as it was broad. Such a position is an extremely dangerous one for the party which produces it, although it has been produced by his success; for any narrow and deep wedge of this sort presents enormously developed and vulnerable flanks, which may be broken by even an inferior opponent, and if they are broken the force in front that is between the tip of the salient and the point of the breach finds itself trapped.

Judgment Must Be Negative

Under such circumstances the effort of the force within the salient must be to widen the salient—that is, to get elbow room, as the saying goes. That is precisely what the enemy did on Saturday, June 1, the sixth day of his advance. He did not try to force the Marne or to go further in his direct advance. He threw his weight at right angles westward down the Oureq Valley, got right to Neuilly on the south of that stream and to Chouy on the north of it. He advanced in a sort of pocket five miles deep. He had also thus enlarged himself on the right and shaken the westward side of the salient, which had been cramping him, and he had further enlarged the area of his war movement and increased the length of the line upon which the

inferior forces of his opponents have to meet him.

Nothing, however, has been decided of even a subsidiary nature, and of course there is nothing whatever to be predicted of the future. Such predictions are always impossible in any large sense, but in this case one cannot even suggest the alternative possibilities of the next few hours.

What we do know is that certain factors, of which there is and can be no public knowledge, are the real essence of the situation. In other words, our judgment must be almost completely negative. We can say only that the issue depends upon certain elements which, when they become known, will explain the opposing maneuvers, but which at present are known to no one alive, only one-half of those elements being, as a matter of fact, fully known to a handful of men on either side in the opposing commands.

Of these unknown elements by far the most important is the relative rate of loss of the two sides. It was the very great rate of the enemy loss which stopped the earlier phases of the great German offensive and compelled the month's halt in operations between April 29 and May 27. It is the same factor of the comparative rate of loss which will determine the present enemy effort in his favor or ours, according to the price which each side is paying on the battlefield.

The Relative Rate of Loss

The defensive, however sorely tried, must always work to hold the offensive with a minimum number of men up to that moment when the defensive phase shall terminate. Its whole object is to compel the offensive to waste men until the equilibrium is restored. This mere calculation, however, suffers from two great disadvantages which gravely affect military practice in the field. The first is the effect upon civilian feeling in a great war of invasion which the continued advance of the enemy is sure to produce, coupled with the certain and increasing effect, greater or less, according to the intelligence and discipline of the retreating troops, upon the army which is compelled to retire. The second is the loss in material and prisoners which the retirement involves.

In the Dark About The Main Elements

Unfortunately we have no indication whatsoever of the positive numbers of loss as contrasted with the comparative rate. The whole thing has developed with such rapidity that identification of the opposing divisions is always difficult and often impossible. All we can say by this time is that something not far short of fifty divisions must have been thrown in within this six days. Certainly there was much more than forty. That means of infantry alone say 400,000 men. What proportion of these were put out of action we do not know.

Neither do we know the second element in the affair, which is the proportion of strength in which the Allied command has chosen to meet and engage this offensive. No one

Afford Greater Loss

The loss of prisoners is equivalent for the purposes of war to an actual loss in killed. The men whom the enemy seizes in his advance, many of them unwounded and many more only slightly wounded, are a complete loss to the retreating side, a loss permanent and irreparable, whereas the force which is advanced recruits itself in time from the recovery of its wounded. Therefore, the offensive can afford a much higher rate of total casualties than can the defensive and will yet remain superior.

We had a very good example of this fact during the great movements of last March. The first losses of the enemy were very high. After a two days' interval came another period of heavy loss in the battle for the ridges of the Somme Valley. Then four days later there was another period of heavy loss on the line where the enemy was at last held. But though the rate of loss—that is, the number of men hit—on the German side was very much higher than the French and British their capture of prisoners was on such a scale that no sort of equilibrium was established and the battle went on for another month unceasingly to the north.

At the same time the loss of material was so heavy that though it was rapidly replaced it also delayed the moment when the enemy was compelled to halt. On this last point, however, we have to remark that the present war with its vast industrial bases fully developed as it now is in the west differs from wars of the past. In the past a great capture of material was often

in itself decisive of the campaign. Today, even such losses as those suffered last March are replaced in a few weeks.

Enemy Losses Light at First

Now, if we turn to the present great action which is going on upon the watershed between the basins of the Oise and the Marne, though we have very few indications to guide us on this question of the proportion of losses, yet we have a few hints afforded even by the meagre news which has reached us so far. It would seem that the enemy's losses on the first day were comparatively light. The blow was a sudden advance, it was very rapid, and opportunity for engaging the enemy heavily in the centre was clearly not presented. His losses began to be heavy on the two wings in front of Rheims and in front of Soissons; then came at the close of the second day and throughout the third what evidently were very heavy losses all along his line; that was the day when he was fighting his way forward over the Vesle River and up the slopes of the Tardenois plateau. Much of the country during this day's fighting was wooded and confused and he by that time was opposed even in the centre by forces which may have been as much as a third of his own. On the flanks he lost very heavily indeed in failing to debouch out of Soissons, and he lost heavily in the series of attacks and counter attacks outside of Rheims. In the forty-eight hours following, during which he again advanced rapidly in the centre, his losses were once more light, but towards the end of that period he met heavy counter attacks on both his flanks, and his loss must again have been very high. Lastly came the great local action of Saturday, June 1, in the valley of the Oureq, which gave him a pocket of about five miles in depth by eight miles in breadth and brought him as far west as Neuilly.

I take it if one could have a curve plotted of the enemy's losses during these six days, from the morning of May 27 to the evening of June 1, we should have not a steadily rising line, but one rising in three great waves, of which the last is perhaps the steepest.

People sometimes write as though the defensive were a sort of hurried attempt to stop the attack by throwing in everything one has and rushing up all available resources just as men rush up water to put out a fire. The offensive in its bulletins always represents the defensive in this light, because that is the one which must unfavorably describe it to the public. All the more must we in the present crisis remember that the reality is far otherwise. The defensive is always doling out men sparingly and thinking of the least force with which the task at hand can be accomplished.

The Military Theory of Defence

Jews Murdered by Hundreds in Ukraine

Pogroms among the Jews of Turkestan and Ukraine have taken place, recently, according to advices reaching the Jewish Press Bureau in New York, through Stockholm and Petrograd. In Kiokani more than three hundred Jews have been murdered and thousands deprived of their property. From many other towns, especially Samarkand and Tashkent, have come reports of the almost constant persecution of the Jewish population. M. Herzfeld, the Minister of Finance of the Turkestan Republic, who also was a representative of the Zionist district committee, was murdered in a recent race uprising. In Chirchik, almost the entire Jewish population has been put to death. Relief committees for the victims of these excesses are being formed in various parts of Russia.

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knows how an action is proceeding unless he knows at least the mere numerical standing of the opposing forces. It is impossible for that element in calculation to be made public. Nevertheless there is something more than a mere negative point here and it is important that public opinion should appreciate that something.

This is the fact that the defensive up to what it judges to be the climax of any action works on the principle of the use of the minimum numbers. The defensive may misjudge the moment of the climax and if so it loses the battle. It may, as was the case at the Marne, judge its moment exactly, in which case it wins the battle, however impressive the previous successes of the offensive may have been.

But the thing to remember is that up to this chosen moment the defensive must in the nature of things keep back as many men as possible. In those words "as possible" resides, of course, the whole difference between good and bad calculation, between victory and defeat. But the commander, whether he is good or bad, whether he will be victorious or defeated, while he is on the defensive works on the minimum. That is the very meaning of his position.

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We do not know how many divisions the Allied command has put forward to meet the fifty divisions, more or less, of the enemy up to date, but we do know with absolute certainty that it has deliberately met them with a smaller number. That is the point we must keep fixedly in mind during the whole course of the action up to the point where the counter attack is engaged. Of that moment and of the fate of such a counter attack neither we nor the enemy know anything.

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5 British 'Planes Fought Squadron Of Twelve Boches

Account for Two in Battle Off the Dutch Coast

Also Suffer Loss of 2

One Machine Forced to Descend, Crew Sets It Afire and Then Escapes

THE HAGUE, June 8.—Five British and twelve German seaplanes of the largest type fought a battle Tuesday evening off the Dutch coast, according to a Terschelling dispatch to the "Handelsblad." One of the German machines was observed to fall in flames into the sea. One British machine was forced to descend, but landed safely.

Another British machine which had descended to the surface of the sea for repairs because of a defect in the propeller, two hours before the battle, was later set on fire by its five occupants, all of whom waded ashore and gave themselves up for internment. The crew included two Canadians.

The British machines were a squadron of five seaplanes which started Tuesday afternoon on a reconnoitering expedition off the northern Dutch coast. During the afternoon they had met a squadron of five German seaplanes, which they drove off without difficulty in three successive encounters.

The Germans, however, returned reinforced by seven seaplanes. A lively fight ensued, and in addition to the German machine which fell in flames another German was brought down.

A British machine commanded by Robert Paul, of Buffalo, N. Y., a member of the Canadian Flying Corps, developed engine trouble and was forced to descend to the surface. Ensign Joseph Eaton, a New England man, who was senior pilot of another of the squadron, was detailed to protect the disabled plane and circled about it for an hour while the Germans were continuously attempting to attack the cripple.

During Eaton's defensive work his machine was riddled with bullets, but he was able to keep the air until the Germans were driven off. He then descended, his machine wrecked, but all the crew got ashore safely.

Write Home Often, Is Pershing's Order To American Forces

WASHINGTON, June 8.—The War Department to-day made public a general order issued recently by General Pershing encouraging members of the American expeditionary forces to keep up correspondence with their relatives and friends at home. One of the greatest arguments for a constant flow of letters between France and America, General Pershing said, was that it relieves much distress and anxiety.

General Pershing's order said: "1. Duty to one's country does not end on the parade ground, nor even on the battlefield, but consists in doing everything in one's power to help win the war. To write home frequently and regularly, to keep in constant touch with family and friends, is one of the soldier's most important duties. Mothers and fathers will suffer if they do not hear often from sons fighting in France. In the present large companies it is not possible for officers

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to write letters for their men, and every man must do it for himself. "When no letters are received from overseas the greatest distress is caused to those at home. They either feel letters have been written, but lost en route, or else they imagine all sorts of evils, such as sickness, wounds, even death. Both are bad for the active militant spirit which every true American man and woman must possess if our army is to obtain the real victory that all so earnestly desire. "Every one in the United States who has a son or brother in the American expeditionary forces is proud of him, is constantly thinking of him, is anxious to hear from him. Letters home will bring many letters in reply, and the closer home ties will have potent influence for good, both in France and in the United States. All officers should realize this fact, and both by encouraging their men and providing them with the proper facilities do everything in their power to interest them in this vital question of writing home."

Keel Laid 90 Seconds After Ship Quits Ways

Chairman Hurley Congratulates Savannah, Ga., Company on New Replacement Record

WASHINGTON, June 8.—In laying a new keel in ninety seconds after the Quinsee had been launched the Terry Shipping Company, of Savannah, Ga., has set a new record for rapid replacement in vacated blocks, the Shipping Board announced to-day. This feat drew from Chairman Hurley of the Shipping Board the following telegram:

"I beg to congratulate you upon the launching of the ship Quinsee at your yard, and Mr. Schwab joins with me in offering your company, your organization and your employees hearty thanks for patriotic speeding of our shipbuilding programme. We are particularly gratified at the spirit shown in laying a keel in ninety seconds after the way was vacated."

Miss Lucile Wood Is Bride of Donald Dietz

Miss Lucile Jean Wood, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Oakley Wood, was married to Donald Elmore Dietz, of this city, yesterday afternoon, in the chapel of St. John the Divine. Canon Robert E. Jones performed the ceremony.

The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a gown of orchid colored tulle with hat to match, and carried a bouquet of many orchids and morning glories. Miss Carla Dietz, sister of the bridegroom, in a costume of blue tulle, was the maid of honor and only attendant. Corporal Charles A. Hunter, U. S. R., was best man.

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