

The Great War—1409th Day

ing with great stubbornness and bravery, but the enemy is advancing steadily, if not rapidly.

The German guns are only five miles north of Compiègne. At one time the enemy reached the Aronde River, nine miles south of the original battle line, but a gallant French reaction drove them back.

Dangerous Salient Formed

The seriousness of the latest news in the advance of the German left along the Oise River, which now forms a four-mile leg of an equilateral triangle, with its apex toward Noyon. The whole wooded area between the Oise and the Aisne has become a decidedly embarrassing salient, and it is natural to anticipate a considerable French withdrawal unless a counter attack restores the original positions north of Ribecourt.

Having emerged from the Aisne battle with lighter losses than was expected, Ludendorff seems prepared to invest heavily in the Oise offensive. He is hurrying in fresh troops with a lavish hand. Tanks are being employed in great numbers, and a tremendous weight of

artillery is being rushed to the scene of battle.

Railway Centres Menaced

The Germans have reached the plain to the west of the Oise and are now trying to outflank Compiègne. They are menacing Clermont, Creil and Senlis, three highly important railway centres. Any further advance in this direction may set Rupprecht in motion and the whole line south of Arras may blaze up.

When Hutier drove the French off Belloy plateau and debouched from Theiscourt Wood, the enemy overcame the greatest natural obstacle. The Germans are employing their own conventional tactics of pushing out the sides of a salient which they have formed. This time it has been a rectangular instead of a triangular pocket.

From the tone of the French press it is perfectly evident that Foch considers this the one decisive battle of the campaign and intends to grapple with Ludendorff to a finish. For the first time since May 27 the Paris newspapers carry grave warnings.

Tremendous forces are now en-

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Military Comment

By William L. McPherson

IN FORM, tactics, enormous concentration of power and initial effectiveness the fourth German offensive has closely paralleled the preceding three. All these efforts have been fashioned on the same model. They have applied with consummate skill a method of attack made possible by the changes effected in 1917 in the old system of a "solid" first-line defence. The British stumbled into this method in the Battle of Cambrai, but were not prepared to exploit it. Now German ingenuity has improved it and turned it against the Allies.

In one respect, however, the fourth German offensive is not running true to the form of the other three. It possessed no element of surprise. It has consequently encountered a thoroughly organized resistance. Some of the most violent and obstinate fighting of the war has occurred in the sector to the south of Lassigny. German progress here has not been proportionate to the progress made in the first three offensives because the French have had reserves in hand and have been able to begin counter attacking more promptly.

On the third day of the Somme offensive the Allies were occupied solely in safeguarding their lines of retreat. The enemy advanced nine miles, with only slight rearguard opposition. This situation was repeated in the Aisne-Marne drive of May 27. On the third day the Germans, having crossed the Vesle, pushed seven miles further toward the Marne. They met only a thin French defensive screen. In the narrow valley of the Lys River the Germans advanced two miles on the third day of the drive of April 9 northwest from Lille. Here the British were content to yield further in the centre while securing their flanks.

The violence of the German attack down the west side of the Oise had not slackened on the third day. On Monday night and yesterday morning the advance, quickened by the infusion of fresh divisions, made further headway to the south. The French were pushed from Belloy, St. Maur, Marquiesse and Vandelinourt, where they stood Monday evening, nearly two miles to the valley of the little River Aronde, which runs in an easterly direction to the Oise at its junction with the Aisne.

But the French had reserves ready for a counter attack. The Germans were quickly driven back to the line of Monday afternoon in this

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sector. It was the first instance in any of this year's offensives of a third day counter attack attempted on a large scale and intended to restore an equilibrium, not merely to halt pursuit.

The chief German success yesterday morning was achieved on the French right, which, owing to the strength of the positions it occupied, had retired but little on Sunday and Monday. On this side the French were still only about a mile behind their original line below Noyon. Heavy attacks Monday night and Tuesday morning forced them to quit the wood north of Dreilincourt and retire south about a mile, forming a new line south and west of Ribecourt. Here the battle is along the west side of the Oise River. Ribecourt lies a short distance from the river, which at this point takes a deep bend to the east.

On the left wing the French not only held fast up to noon Tuesday, but recaptured the village of Mery, which they had lost on Monday.

The Paris night communiqué reported a second successful counter attack on the French left. Foch struck back at the Germans on a front of seven and a half miles, from Rubecourt, just below Montdidier to St. Maur, in the centre of the line, southwest of Lassigny. Belloy was recaptured. So were Genlis Wood and the heights between Courcelles and Mortemer. More than 1,000 prisoners were taken. This action, coupled with the successful counter offensive in the centre, shows a

healthy power of reaction on the side of the Allies.

On the right, in later fighting, the Germans got a foothold in Bethancourt, on the Oise, below Ribecourt, and also in Machement, but both places were still being bitterly disputed by the French. On the whole, the Germans gained ground yesterday along the Oise, on the French right wing, but suffered serious setbacks in the centre and on the left wing.

The development of the German attack so far indicates plainly a purpose to work down to the Oise crossings at Compiègne, Pont St. Marie and Creil, and thus outflank the French in the strong salient east of the Oise, between that river and the line down from Soissons to Villers-Cotterets. This salient would be come untenable after the Oise crossings had been lost, and the Allies would probably have to retire to a line running west from Senlis through Crepy-en-Valois to Villers-Cotterets Forest. Such a retirement would bring Paris almost within range of the German heavy artillery and would compel a desperate eleventh-hour Allied offensive for its deliverance similar to the great effort of 1914 south of the Marne.

Two Are Killed, 9 Wounded In Bombardment of Paris. PARIS, June 11.—The long distance bombardment of Paris was resumed this morning. Two persons were killed and nine were wounded in yesterday's bombardment, according to the "Eclair."

The Official Statements

PARIS, June 11.—The official statements from the War Office to-day said:

NIGHT.—The battle continued to-day from Montdidier to the Oise. On the left our troops, supported by tanks, counter attacked this afternoon along a front of twelve kilometres, between Rubecourt and St. Maur, and despite desperate resistance on the part of the enemy reached the southern approaches of Le Fretoy, captured the heights between Courcelles and Mortemer, and carried our lines more than two kilometres to the east of Mery.

We have also retaken Belloy and Gemlis Wood and reached the southern outskirts of St. Maur. The enemy, who suffered heavy losses, left more than a thousand prisoners and several guns in our hands.

In the centre the Germans, who had succeeded in rushing forward to the south of Loge Farm and Antheuil, were driven back beyond these two points by our troops, acting in concert with adjoining units.

On the right the enemy increased his pressure, seeking to gain the Matz Valley. Several violent attacks launched against Chevincourt were repulsed.

The enemy succeeded in gaining a foothold in Machement and Bethancourt, which were bitterly disputed.

South of the Ourcq River the American troops this morning brilliantly captured Belleau Wood and took 300 prisoners.

Our day bombing machines continued their operations on June 10, despite the bad weather against points of a more exposed nature on the battlefield. Airplane groups flying low dropped projectiles on enemy concentrations, dispersing reinforcing troops and causing considerable losses.

Certain squadrons made sorties, and during the day eight tons of explosives were employed in this manner, giving the best results.

On the night of June 10-11 the bombing of the enemy's rear areas was continued actively. Our escadrilles dropped twenty tons of projectiles on convoys, cantonments and railway stations, as well as on two munitions depots. An explosion occurred in the region of Chaulnes; another in the neighborhood of Soissons. A fire is reported to have broken out in the station at Fismes. On June 10 four German planes and one captive balloon were brought down by our pursuit machines.

DAY.—Late yesterday and in the night the Germans continued to exert pressure in the direction of Estrees-St. Denis and Ribecourt.

On our left our resistance was effective. The Germans were able to capture neither Le Ployron nor Courcelles. The village of Mery was recaptured by the French at 10 o'clock last night.

The principal effort of the Germans was exerted along the front of Belloy and Marquiesse. By powerful attack, delivered with a great number of effectives, the enemy succeeded in driving back the French to the vicinity of the Aronde River, but by a magnificent return offensive French troops hurled back the enemy all along this front, reestablishing their positions on a line south of Belloy, at St. Maur, south of Marquiesse and at Vandelinourt.

On the right the French engaged in violent struggles in the wood north of Dreilincourt. The Germans, who had concentrated very heavy forces in this region, were able to reach Antoval, compelling the French troops to withdraw their line of resistance to the west and south of Ribecourt.

Eastern Theatre, June 10.—Spirited artillery activity occurred on both sides west of the Vardar, particularly in the region of Skra di Legen. In the region of Dobropolje the enemy, after violent artillery preparation, attempted a surprise attack against the Serbian positions, but were repulsed, leaving prisoners in our hands. Southwest of Pogradetz French troops, after a brilliant engagement, occupied Crete, Kamia and the villages of Strelkaskas and Popovici, capturing 140 prisoners, including two officers, three mortars, numerous machine guns and important food and munitions supplies.

Berlin Claims 75,000 Prisoners in Two Weeks' Fighting. BERLIN (via London), June 11.—The official reports from headquarters to-day said:

NIGHT.—On the battlefield southwest of Noyon renewed French counter attacks failed, with the heaviest losses for the enemy.

DAY.—Fighting activity, which had been moderate throughout the day, revived only on both sides of the Somme. After the firing had greatly increased the enemy attacked in the evening between the Ancre and the Somme. A local break through by the enemy on the Corbie-Braye road was brought to a standstill by a counter attack. On the rest of the front the attack broke down with sanguinary losses.

During the two storming days the attack by the army of General von Hutier led to the intended results and put us in possession of the hilly district southwest of Noyon. The thrust was directed against the strongest position of the enemy, who was deeply echeloned in preparation for the attack. In spite of this, the French divisions could not withstand the impetuous attack of our troops.

Divisions of the French army reserves, who were brought up for centralized counter attacks, were also repulsed yesterday in bitter fighting.

On the right wing of the attack the troops under General von Oettinger maintained the lines which had been captured from the enemy south of Assain-Villers against violent counter attacks.

The troops of General von Ebern are fighting in the neighborhood of Courcelles and Mery. On both sides of the highroad between Roye and Estrees-St. Denis they captured the ridge east of Mery, broke through the fourth enemy position and threw him back on the Aronde River.

In spite of the stubborn enemy defence, the troops of General von Schoeler fought their way across the Matz, and, after storming the heights of Marquiesse and Vignemont, pressed forward in an uninterrupted assault as far as Antheuil.

In continuous fighting General Hoffmann's corps penetrated the enemy's position and entanglements on the heights south of Theiscourt. On the slopes running south to the Oise we pressed forward as far as Ribecourt.

The number of prisoners has increased by more than 10,000, thus raising the number of prisoners captured by the army group of the German Crown Prince since May 27 to about 75,000.

On the front from the Oise to Rheims the situation is unchanged. Renewed attacks launched by the enemy northwest of Château Thierry broke down with heavy losses.

Australians Advance Line Before Amiens, Says Haig. LONDON, June 11.—Field Marshal Haig's reports from the British front to-day said:

NIGHT.—The number of prisoners captured by us in a successful operation carried out last night south of Morlancourt is 298, including five officers.

DAY.—Last night another minor operation was undertaken with complete success by Australian troops in the region of Morlancourt. The line south of the village has been advanced to the depth of nearly a half mile on a front of over a mile and a half, and 233 prisoners, twenty-one machine guns and a trench mortar were captured by us.

Successful raids, in which we captured several prisoners and two machine guns and inflicted numerous casualties upon the enemy, were carried out by us during the night northwest of Morlancourt, south of the Scarpe and east of Nieppe Forest. The enemy raided one of our posts in Aveluy Wood. One man is missing.

The hostile artillery has been active during the night with gas shells to the west of Lens.

gaged on this comparatively short front, and the battle is developing with such unprecedented fury that some French papers talk of a decision before the end of the month. The Parisians have been under such a frightful strain for the last month that it is only natural that they should view the present developments with greater anxiety than usual.

But serious as is the menace to Paris, Ludendorff and the Crown Prince have many miles between them and their goal. The Allied reserves are far from exhausted. It must always be remembered that Ludendorff is betting to the limit and is not hedging. If he wins, the stakes are large; if he loses, the Allies' job will become much simpler.

The present drive is more like Verdun than anything Ludendorff has directed in this campaign. Either he considers his reserves in marked numerical superiority, or he fears the growing American army. Probably he fears the latter, because the difference in the size of the forces engaged is comparatively small.

The value of taking the initiative has been strikingly apparent all through this spring, but never more so than during the last fortnight. If the gigantic battle between Arras and the Marne develops, Foch will not work at any greater disadvantage, for then he can dispose of his forces without fear of a serious threat elsewhere.

So long as Prince Rupprecht remains inactive Foch must cover the vulnerable points, such as the Channel ports, the Bethune coal fields and Amiens.

Ludendorff has conducted a masterful campaign up to date. He has dealt the Allies terrific blows, he has upset many preconceived views, but he has still to win a strategic success. Ludendorff has some twenty-odd fresh divisions in addition to those already employed and now ready to be used again. But time is always fighting against Germany, and if the Allies can weather the next few months, the course of the war will change in the Entente's favor.

Premier Clemenceau plans some changes in his government. Former Premier Briand probably will join the Cabinet soon. Naturally, the Socialists are bringing pressure to bear on the Premier and the political situation has become unsettled, but Clemenceau holds a tight rein.

The censor has forbidden the export from France of any publications containing advertisements. Paris is being organized as an armed camp and everything is being done to withstand a siege. These developments are bound to have an effect upon the people, but the morale is remarkably good under the circumstances.

Fear that the loss of Paris would force France out of the war is disappearing. It is needless to tell Americans that speed in sending assistance counts above everything else. It is useless to think about 1919 and 1920 until 1918 is safely weathered.

French Command Awaits Weakening Of Teuton Forces

PARIS, June 11.—"Our command is allowing the enemy to weaken his forces in attacks which are inevitably extremely costly and is awaiting the moment when the enemy's fatigue permits our reserves to be engaged, with every probability of success," writes the "Temps's" military critic in dealing with to-day's statement from the War Office.

"That we have retired is indisputable," he writes, "but a favorable reaction executed in the centre of the battlefield gives proof of the resolution and valor of our soldiers."

In summing up his comment on the military situation the "Echo de Paris" says:

"The enemy is striving to attain a decisive success at all costs, expecting to end the war. Before the end of the month all the German forces will have been brought into action. In this supreme moment it would not be a surprise if he should shortly attempt a naval action, with full naval forces combined with a new effort on the British front."

"The desperate onslaught, however, will not prevent the arrival of American troops every day in greater force and enthusiasm for the fray. Together with young America, we shall resist and conquer."

"The military critic of 'Le Journal' bases his hopes of Allied success on the wearing out of the enemy's effectives.

"The enemy's effort," he says, "is

a gigantic one, but it cannot last forever. He is now bringing into action about 190 divisions. The time is not far distant when all of these will have reached a dangerous state of exhaustion, and this at the moment that the young and vigorous American army, impatient for action, will have been formed. Experience shows that an offensive is bound to play itself out in not more than three and a half months."

Premier Clemenceau conferred with several of the generals at the front yesterday and brought back with him, it is declared, very reassuring news on the situation. The information which he gathered confirmed the reports of the enormous losses being suffered by the Germans.

Counter Attacks Made Over Ground Covered With Dead

WITH THE FRENCH ARMY IN FRANCE, June 10.—Undiminished feverity marks the fighting between Montdidier and Noyon. The situation is rather satisfactory for the Allies, those obstinate resistance and frequent counter attacks have caused great consternation to the Germans. Enemy losses under the direct fire of the French artillery have been horrible. Every time the Allies counter attack they find the ground covered with German dead.

Throughout Sunday the enemy threw his greatest pressure toward the centre of the Allied line in an effort to gain as much ground as possible southward in the direction of Compiègne. Under the powerful push of the continually reinforced enemy columns the Allies were forced to give way at little, where they fought tenaciously for every inch of ground.

An epic struggle occurred in the vicinity of Bloncourt, where the small garrison of dismounted cavalrymen, possibly may still hold out. French soldiers who managed to get through the German lines late yesterday declared that before them lay the German dead delivered terrific assaults, all of which had been repulsed with heavy losses for the enemy.

Several small villages, including Mery, Belloy and St. Maur, changed ownership a number of times, but last evening were in German hands. At no moment is it possible to say positively that this or that place is occupied by the enemy or the Allies, such is the terrific nature of the conflict. Ebbs and flows occur everywhere. On the Belloy plateau fighting went on continuously for several hours, man tackling man in single combat.

The artillery is engaged more actively than in any battle in a long while. The Germans have been able to bring forward field guns in considerable number. The French artillery fire is most violent and very destructive, especially when turned against attacking enemy troops.

Germans Ignore Heavy Losses to Keep Up Attack

WITH THE FRENCH ARMY IN FRANCE, June 11.—The difficulties confronting the enemy are very great in the nature of the country he has now entered in his new drive. The terrain comprises sharp hills, deep valleys and thick forests. Where the announced progress has been made, in the centre of the battlefield, the ground forms a sort of hollow, through which runs the main road from Senlis to Roye and the Compiègne-Roye railroad.

The Germans are apparently trying to increase the rapidity of their advance by entirely ignoring the losses they sustain, the object being to acquire possession of as much territory as possible before the Allies are able to stabilize the front. Each division seems to have received orders to go ahead heedless of what the others are accomplishing.

While attempting to do this the Germans are coming under the fire of the Allied batteries and groups of machine guns, which possess the accurate ranges of all points.

"This fierce opposition offered by the Allied batteries and groups of machine guns, which expected to be able to reduce the Allied salient around Noyon much more easily."

"The enemy guns were very busy

throughout yesterday and last night, but were well countered by the Allied artillery. In addition, the wind changed its direction and tens of thousands of poison gas shells fired by the Germans did more damage to themselves than to the Allies.

Indications show that some of the enemy divisions which started the attack are already being withdrawn from the line because of the severity of their casualties, and are being replaced by fresh units.

Heavy Losses Force Enemy to Call Upon Rupprecht's Reserve

LONDON, June 11.—(British Admiralty, per Wireless Press)—The military correspondent of the British wireless service writes: "On the Montdidier-Noyon sector the enemy attack is meeting with so little success, in proportion to the heavy sacrifices he is making, that so far the engagement may undoubtedly be characterized as a considerable Allied success. The French continue to hold stubbornly on both flanks, taking over 500 prisoners at Ville, a signal proof of the enemy's desperation."

"In the centre the advance of about three miles forced by the first enemy onslaught was followed on the second day by a further advance of about two miles on a still narrower front. But for these very limited and, so far, useless gains the enemy has had to pay a price so heavy that he has at last been compelled to draw upon Prince Rupprecht's till now jealously withheld reserves. This is a point of deep significance."

"The enemy apparently anticipated a success as easy for him as that on the Aisne, and he has been taught a severe lesson. Though he has a temporary numerical superiority and the initiative on the Western front, yet even that is proving insufficient to overcome the determination of the Allied defence. Some ground will inevitably be gained by the enemy, and the salient at Noyon is becoming so acute as to necessitate a rectification of line, but if the enemy is made to pay the same price as hitherto such transfer of ground will within limits be to the Allied advantage."

Australians Throw Enemy Back on The Somme Front

WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE, June 11.—Further improvement in the British battlefront last night of the River Somme, between Sully-Laurette and Morlancourt, was achieved last night by a comparatively small but highly successful attack made by the soldiers from Australia. Driving forward along the ridge of high ground which runs east and west below Morlancourt the Australians forced the enemy back for a distance of about 750 yards on a considerable front.

Two German officers and 231 of other ranks were made prisoner. Twenty-one machine guns and a trench mortar were captured.

British troops also carried out several satisfactory raids at various points along the front.

20 to 30 Divisions Used in Two Days Of German Attack

FRENCH HEADQUARTERS IN FRANCE, June 11 (via Ottawa).—The enemy succeeded, at an immense cost, in pushing his advance from a mile to three miles deeper into the Allied front yesterday. At Marquiesse, the southernmost point of the salient, he was about seven miles from his starting point.

The fighting was almost unprecedented in fury yesterday. The Germans, it is estimated, had used between twenty and thirty divisions up until last night. As the enemy's advance is slow, he is able to bring up his light artillery, while his heavier guns are still being fired from their old positions. The artillery strength of the two armies is almost equal, although the fire of the French guns is more effective, because the French are more familiar with the ground.

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