

# Austrian Defeat Along the Piave Caused by Failure of Asiago Drive

### Whole Plan of Campaign Collapsed When Mountain Lines Checked Foe

### Minor Decision Sought In Santa Dona Attack

### Rout Followed Upon Enemy's Inability to Maintain Communications

By Hilaire Belloc  
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WHEN the battle of the Italian front opened, on the 15th of June, its whole interest lay in the fortunes of the Allied left wing in the mountains. It was here that a decision could be reached, if anywhere. There was no ambiguity or even difficulty about the position. It was imposed by the very nature of the ground.

Any force defending Italy against invasion from the northeast upon one long line must always lie along one of the rivers which run from the Alps to the sea, and must then curl around by its left flank to hold the mountains. This left flank will always protect the main communications of the defending force and will always run parallel to them and fairly close to them as well, because those main communications consist in the road and railway system which links up the string of large towns at the foot of the mountains on the Italian plain. Therefore, a successful advance by the enemy against this left, or mountain, sector of the defending line was the only thing that could give him a chance for a complete decision. He had but to come down a distance of from twenty to thirty miles from the hills on to the plain, and he would have cut the communications of the whole defending force and put it out of action. He did not here, as is necessary on most of the West front, have need to break this line to win a decision. It would have been sufficient to compel a comparatively slight retirement.

### Object Was to Reach the Plain

Such are the disadvantages for every defensive force when its communications run parallel to part of its front and close to that front. Such are the advantages that this situation gives to the offensive. No matter where the Italian line may stand east of the Adige, this situation will always exist, and the great test of enemy success or failure will be upon the left wing. It was so when the Italians stood on the Isonzo; it would have been so had they elected to stand on the Tagliamento. It had been so ever since they retired to the Piave, last autumn.

Now the decisive attack upon that left, or mountain, wing which was delivered on Saturday and Sunday, June 15 and 16, with the object of reaching a plain seven miles away, and the railway less than twenty miles away, was completely shattered. The blow was delivered on the only open part of the mountain front, the only place where the enemy could concentrate men and guns in great numbers with a good railway behind it, to wit: on the Asiago Plateau. He was met there by a line composed of three forces; the British on the left, in the very critical part which covered the main road to the plain; the French in the center, and the Italians on the right.

The enemy concentrated here much the largest number of troops per mile that he had at any point of the long line that was in action from Lake Garda, yet his attack was broken with such very heavy loss that it was completely stunned. He has not even attempted to renew his attack there. He may begin there again, and logically he should, but his unused divisions are now but a third of the total that he had when he launched his first attack, and he has, as we shall see, already had to mass heavy forces elsewhere.

This had check in the hills was the first phase of the battle, and it was probably the most important up to the time the Austrian rout on the Piave began. For it may well prove the original cause on this front of a curb to the forces of the Central Empires. But there happened as a consequence of this counter blow near Asiago a thing that has often happened before in military history. The main plan having failed at its critical point, an unexpected development at another point changed the form of the battle and gave a chance for success elsewhere—not for such a success as the original plan would have scored had it made good—but, at any rate, for a minor successful result.

What we watched for a week was the attempt of the enemy to achieve that minor result. That objective was the turning of the Piave line by the north or south, and therefore forced retirement of the Italian

front; without disaster, indeed, but with all the losses and weakening caused by such a movement in the presence of an active enemy. This situation came about as follows:

### Had to Keep Whole Line Pinned Down

In the enemy's first plan, while his chief stroke was delivered on the left in the mountains, it was essential he should keep all the Italian line in the plains pinned to its place by a vigorous attack protracted from the hills right down to the marshes of the seacoast, a distance of thirty miles. Only if the Italian line were thus "hooked on" by a constant attack there, would any full result be obtained from the blow against the communications behind it. Therefore, the Austrians, though depending for their decision upon a victory in the Asiago Plateau, also struck along the whole line across the plain at the same time that they attacked in the mountains.

This line across the plain was defended by the course of the Piave River. The Piave, although its bed is wide, is essentially a mountain torrent. In the late summer it only begins to be a deep and permanent stream some fifteen miles from the sea. But when snows are melting in the Alps, or after a heavy rain along the northern part of its course, the usually half-dry stream will rise suddenly by as much as ten or even fifteen feet, and will flow with great violence of current.

### The Attempt to Take Montello

The Piave issues from the hills at a point where on its right bank—that held by the Allies—there stands an isolated hill rather over a thousand feet high called the Montello, and at the foot of this hill the road just under the mountains reaches the river where there used to be a bridge at Nervesa. The possession of Montello would have these two advantages for the enemy, if he could obtain it; first, it puts him on the left or northern flank of the Italian Piave line, so that from it he could begin to turn that line and force it back, and second, from its summit he could have full observation over the whole plain, looking right behind the Italian lines and seeing everything happening on the roads and railways which supply that line.

Apart from the importance of crossing the Piave at Nervesa and seizing the Montello, there was one other point valuable to the Austrians. It lay at the other extreme end of the Piave line and was in the neighborhood of Santa Dona. Santa Dona is the place where the great main international railway from Austria, having passed through Udine, reaches the Piave. The Austrians can supply a very large force by this railway and the road accompanying it. South of Santa Dona are marshes and lagoons in which operations are difficult. But at Santa Dona and immediately above it a force crossing the Piave can be well supplied and has an excellent chance of extending.

Now, if the crossing was made here, and what is called a bridgehead should be established, then the Austrian forces pushing forward westward would turn the whole Piave line by its right or southern end. There are opportunities of crossing the Piave, of course, at many points between these extreme ones of Montello on the north and Santa Dona on the south. But it was these two which were of capital importance.

### His Bridges Few And Too Weak

The enemy in the first blows he delivered crossed the Piave at many points by fording, by throwing across pontoon bridges and ferry cables and on individual boats. The movement was effected by the use of a great smoke screen. Once the companies had been landed on the far bank, they held bridgeheads and constructed permanent bridges behind them for infantry to cross. It would have been a long business to make those bridges capable of carrying wagons and field artillery, and this the enemy was not able to do.

Their first object was to seize Montello, and they therefore put forces of exceptional strength across the river at Nervesa. For the moment it looked as if they would effect their object, and Monday especially was a critical day. It may be that for an hour or two they reached or at any rate approached the summit, but during every succeeding day they were being forced further and further back toward the eastern slope of the river. But Saturday, June 22, after more than a week's fighting, they were holding little more than half of their original gain, they did not have a third of the hill in their hands, the Italians had firmly secured the summit and what the Austrians held of the height so far was not worth their holding. They had developed no flank attack with any chance of

turning the Piave line and they had no good observation posts.

Meanwhile, the other principal crossing twenty miles away to the south at Santa Dona had better fortune, and it was there that we turned with interest and anxiety, for there the enemy produced a very large thrust into the Italian line and was beginning to appear upon his flank. Five divisions were put over the river, and they were served by five bridges across the stream behind them. The Austrians were able to bring over field artillery in some force, though they had no bridges that were strong enough as yet to carry heavy guns. Every day from Tuesday to Saturday was marked by slight advance in this region, though the district was badly cut up by ditches and lines of willow trees, but these were forced with an exceptional pressure of men.

### Greatest Depth Was Four Miles

The next obstacle after the Piave, the Fossetta Canal, was carried in the middle of the week, and by Saturday the Austrians were attacking Losson, nearly 2,000 yards beyond the canal. Their extreme advance since they crossed the Piave was one of nearly four miles. That would have given them, under ordinary conditions, comparative security for their bridges, and they were on a sufficient front for the development of strong forces. The advantage to the Allies, on the other hand, was that this wedge of the enemy's depended on the bridges at Santa Dona and that the Austrian right flank had under the weight of the Italian counter attacks somewhat narrowed its avenues of communication. The area occupied by the Austrians there was wider at the front than at the neck, where it held on to its five bridges over the river. It was like the end of a walking stick with a knob broader than the stick itself.

We must not lose sight during the next few days of the matter already mentioned in these articles, and that is the great importance to the ultimate issue of the human material composing the Austro-Hungarian armies. Unlike the Germans in the West, these armies are built up of most diverse elements, which are of very different military value, and range in political character from Tyrolean troops passionately devoted to the dynasty and good Magyar elements which are defended through the dynasty of Hungary, to the doubtful Southern Slav units and frankly hostile Bohemian or Czech regiments, which can only be constrained to fight by force and individuals of which are always ready to desert and help the Allied cause. This patchiness of the Austro-Hungarian line brings a factor into the battle which modifies all mere considerations of number and ground.

### New British Labor Party Is Projected

(By The United Press)  
LONDON, June 29.—More than 200 representatives of various British trade unions met to-day to form a distinct trade union political party as opposed to the present British Labor party. Resolutions were adopted protesting against the Labor party's termination of the political truce and against the party's attempt to spread propaganda in behalf of labor or any other question. "Our purpose is to remove the Bolsheviks, the undesirables and those who do not represent labor movements from our councils," declared Havelock Wilson, head of the seamen's union, who was the leading spirit of the meeting.

# British Sea Patrol Fights Squadron of Enemy Destroyers

### Four English Craft Have 15-Minute Battle at Long Range Off Belgium

### Report No Damage Berlin, However, Declares Hits Were Observed on Enemy Craft

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LONDON, June 29.—Four British torpedo boat destroyers fought a long-range engagement with a German destroyer force off the Belgian coast on Thursday evening. The action was broken off before any decisive results were attained.

An official statement issued to-day by the British Admiralty recounting the affair says: "On Thursday evening four of our destroyers while patrolling off the Belgian coast sighted eight enemy torpedo boat destroyers. Our destroyers proceeded on an easterly course at full speed, engaging the enemy at long range.

"After the action had lasted a quarter of an hour the enemy was joined by three more torpedo boat destroyers, whereupon our force fell back on their supports. The enemy did not follow and the action was then broken off. No damage was sustained by any of our vessels."

The Admiralty to-day announced that German torpedo craft of the Flanders flotilla engaged British destroyers on the evening of June 27 off Ostend. The clash took place while the Germans were out on patrol.

### British Naval Aircraft Drop 15 Tons of Bombs

LONDON, June 29.—Fifteen tons of bombs were dropped by British naval aircraft on enemy targets in the period from June 24 to June 26, the Admiralty announced to-day. In engagements with hostile aircraft three of these were brought down. The British lost two of their own machines. The text of the statement reads: "During the period from June 24 to June 26 our naval aircraft, working with the navy carried out continuous offensive operations. Fifteen tons of bombs were dropped on enemy targets and three enemy aircraft were shot down. The enemy aircraft were brought down. Two of our machines are missing.

### Draft Dodger Sent To Cell for 15 Years

Ward C. Daisenberger, twenty-eight years old, of 553 South Seventh Avenue, Mount Vernon, a drinker, who was arrested in Bethel Temple, Brooklyn, the headquarters of the International Bible Students' Association, where he was hiding, was sentenced to fifteen years in Federal prison yesterday.

### No More Perishable Goods May Be Mailed to Troops

WASHINGTON, June 29.—No more perishable goods such as fruit and foods, will be accepted at postoffices for mailing to troops, because almost always they cannot be delivered in edible condition.

### Commander of French Squadron Shot Down

PARIS, June 29.—Captain Marcel Doumer, commander of a French squadron, was killed in an aerial combat at Villers-Cotterets yesterday.

# The Casualty List

### WASHINGTON, June 29.—The army and marine casualty list to-day contained 81 names, divided as follows: Killed in action, 29; died of wounds, 20; died of accident and other causes, 2; died of disease, 2; wounded severely, 21; missing in action, 7.

(Names without rank given are those of privates.)

The list follows:

### Army Killed in Action

CONNOR, Eugene M., Winchester, Mass.  
DUBOUE, Charles, Nashua, N. H.  
ROY, Charles, Lowell, Mass.  
SEVERANCE, Earl L., Topsfield, Me.  
SHERMAN, Fred, Calais, Me.

### Died of Wounds

MONGA, Chester, sergeant, San Marcos, N. J.  
TIPPEY, John R., sergeant, Sesser, Ill.  
GODFREY, Robert E., corporal, Columbus, Ohio.

### Died of Disease

MARTIN, Harold, corporal, Winnemucca, Nev.  
STRAND, Harry A., corporal, Princeton, Ill.

### Died of Accident and Other Causes

HUSHLAW, William J., cook, Cohoes, N. Y.

### Severely Wounded

BARIBAU, Henry L., sergeant, Springfield, Mass.  
HOGAN, John J., 205 Bar street, Syracuse, N. Y.

### Missing in Action

DAVIS, Philip W., lieutenant, West Newton, Mass.  
CONGLETON, Leroy E., corporal, Philadelphia, Pa.

### Swiss Paper Calls Germans Knaves

Lausanne "Gazette" Warned to Cease Violent Comment Based on Gerard's Book

PARIS, June 28.—The "Gazette" of Lausanne, Switzerland, has again been warned by the Swiss Federal Chancery in connection with its savage criticism of the Germans incorporated in its review of former Ambassador Gerard's book, "My Four Years in Germany." The newspaper has been notified that another article of the sort, characterized as threatening to compromise Swiss relations with Germany, will be more severely punished. The warning cites the following passages in the introduction to the review as objectionable:

"One sees in the author, the memoirs of an absolutely honest man required to live four years among knaves and other malefactors. . . .  
"But Germany has always violated divine right and human laws. The world must destroy it, or the world is lost."  
The "Gazette" received a similar warning on June 7, 1915. The "Journal" of this city reproduces the warning, without comment.

### Uruguay Makes July 4 A National Holiday

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay, June 28.—Uruguay has made July 4 a permanent national holiday, in honor of the United States.

### Bill Making It Permanent Is Promptly Signed by President Viera

A bill to that effect has been passed by both the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and President Viera signed the act immediately.

# Marines Killed in Action

McCOLM, William J., sergeant, Portland, Ore.  
PEGGS, John C., sergeant, Canton, N. Y.  
SPIRE, William J., sergeant, Nashville, Tenn.  
BLOMQUIST, John W., corporal, Cheyenne, Wyo.  
LOTTUS, Michael, corporal, Cleveland, Ohio.  
GERR, Harold R., corporal, Bellefontaine, Ohio.  
POMEROY, Robert J., corporal, Baltimore, Md.

BABB, Claude A., Hampton, Va.  
RAMFORTH, Jack, 849 West 178th street, New York.  
BELK, Charles, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
RIGLEY, Walter S., Pittsburgh, Pa.  
BIGLOW, Leslie, 77 West 102d street, New York.  
BOKOSKY, Frank J., Scranton, Penn.  
CAYLOR, Joseph B., Mount Houston, Tex.

COSTELLO, Frank M., St. Helena, N. C.  
COTTRELL, Oscar, Tuscaloosa, Ala.  
DEAN, James B., Middlesex, N. C.  
RODD, James B., Marietta, Ohio.  
GALL, Paul W., Dalton, Ill.  
LESEN, Leo T., Denver.

MCKENNA, James J., 955 Carroll street, Brooklyn.  
ROHRIG, Ralph J., Detroit.  
ROBERTS, Sidney C., Toledo, Ohio.  
TOMAKA, George, Chicago.

### Died From Wounds Received in Action

STOCKHAM, Fred W., sergeant, Belleville, N. J.  
DUDA, Walter F., sergeant, Chicago.  
GREEN, Herbert E., sergeant, Indianapolis, Ind.

ROLANDER, Peter R., Lake City, S. D.  
BROWN, Hoge, Rock Creek, Tex.  
GEIGER, Harold C., Mount Vernon, Ga.  
KRIGER, Edward L., 44 Timon street, Buffalo, N. Y.  
RAWLINS, Rexall J., Washington, D. C.

### Severely Wounded in Action

SCHULER, Hiram B., corporal, Milwaukee, Wis.  
BELLES, Edwin C., Wallula, Wash.  
GORDON, Fred, Jr., Chicago.  
HAMLIN, David W., Oberlin, Ohio.  
MCKENNA, Abraham L., 324 Sackett street, Brooklyn.  
RICHARDSON, Lowell F., Salt Lake City.  
SKALA, Leon F., Chatham, N. Y.

### Army Casualties Summary

Reported June 29, to date.	Total
Killed in action	1,619
Died of disease	4,983
Lost at sea	201
Died of accident or other causes	462
Total deaths	3,265
Wounded	4,837
Captured	120
Missing	264
Total	8,923

### Marine Casualties Summary

Reported June 29, to date.	Total
Killed in action	42
Died of disease	16
Lost at sea	8
Died of accident or other causes	8
Total deaths	74
Wounded	788
Captured	7
Missing	1
Total	1,247

# Evans Heads Fire Section

WASHINGTON, June 29.—Reorganization of the advisory committee of the fire prevention section of the War Industries Board, with Henry Evans, of New York, as chairman, was announced to-day.

# Three N. Y. Youths Killed in Action

### Four Boys of Nineteen Appear in American Casualty List

The four New Yorkers whose names appeared yesterday in the Marine Corps casualty list were all youths of nineteen. They were John Danforth, of 849 West 178th Street, killed in action; Leslie Bigelow, of 77 West 102d Street, killed in action; James J. McKenna, of 955 Carroll Street, Brooklyn, killed in action, and Abraham Lincoln Ommundsen, of 324 Sackett Street, Brooklyn, wounded severely.

Danforth was an only child. Bigelow was the foster son of Mrs. Susan Merrills. He had been wounded several weeks ago and recovered. Charles Gunderson, a son of Mrs. Merrills, was killed recently in an explosion on a French ammunition ship. Two other sons of Mrs. Merrills are in the navy. McKenna lived with an aunt, Mrs. Mary O'Keefe, to whom he recently wrote that "we will carry the Stars and Stripes over the top." Ommundsen, whose birthday was February 12, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Ommundsen.

# U. S. Ball Teams Keen For Game Before King

### Various Evidences of July 4 Will Be Seen Throughout England

LONDON, June 29.—The rivalry between the American army and navy baseball teams which are to play before King George at Chelsea on July 4 increases daily, and the general opinion among Americans in England is that the game will be fast and closely contested.

Every American soldier and sailor in London will have evidence on all sides that the Fourth of July is being celebrated in England as well as in America. The bells at St. Paul's Cathedral are to be rung. The Bishop of London has issued directions for the celebration of communion in every church in the diocese, with prayers for the United States.

# British Losses for June Total 141,147

LONDON, June 29.—British casualties reported during the month of June totalled 141,147. This compares with total casualties reported during 1 May of 186,892.

The losses were divided as follows: Killed or died of wounds—Officers, 816; men, 17,494.

Wounded or missing—Officers, 3,619; men, 119,218.

The losses reported during the last eight days, rounding out the weekly reports for the month, were as follows: Killed or died of wounds—Officers, 142; men, 4,778.

Wounded or missing—Officers, 553; men, 32,244.

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Sport Coats and Golfing Regalia, for July 4th or for any day that business can be conveniently neglected.

Men's Flannel Sport Coats, in colors . . . \$2000  
Men's Knitted Sport Coats . . . 2200  
Men's All-Wool White Flannel Trousers . . . 600 to 1250  
Men's Flannel or Serge Trousers, striped . . . 700 and 850

### MEN'S SHOE SHOP

Shoes for Tennis, Tee, or Orange Pekoe on the verandah.

Men's Sport White Buckskin Shoes . . . \$950  
Men's Golf Shoes . . . 750 and 850

### MEN'S FURNISHINGS SHOP

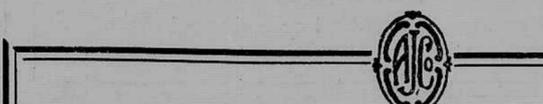
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