

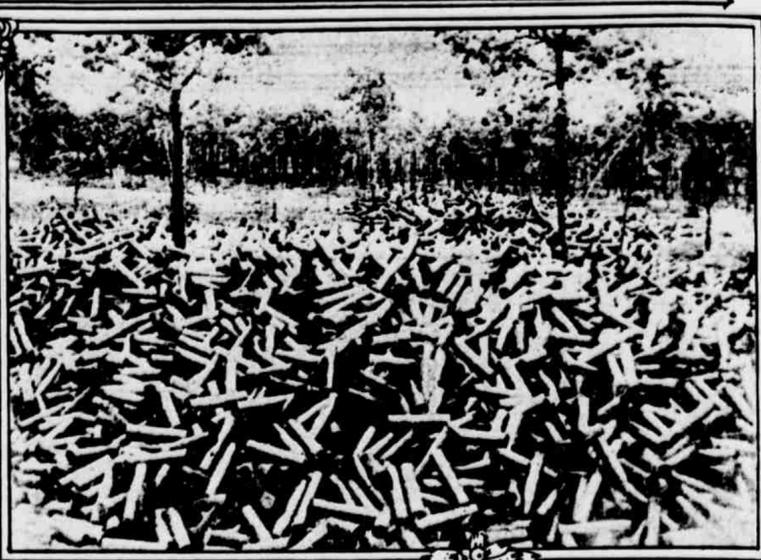
THE "GREAT DRIVE," A WAR MADE NIGHTMARE OF HORROR



TOWN CAPTURED IN DRIVE AFTER DEBRIS WAS CLEANED AWAY AND THE SOLDIERS HAD MADE THE PLACE AS HOMELIKE AS POSSIBLE



THEIR TRENCHES TAKEN, THE GERMANS PASS THROUGH AS PRISONERS ON THEIR WAY BEHIND THE FRENCH LINES.



CARTRIDGES EJECTED FROM BREECHESS 75 MM GUNS. THE GUNS SHOOT COUNTLESS SHELLS BEFORE A BIG ATTACK

An Inferno of Fire Prepares the Way for Assault and Waiting Soldiers, Maddened by Terrific Din, Welcome Order to Charge

By WILLIAM T. MARTIN.

ALMOST since the beginning of the war there had been talk among the soldiers of a big drive somewhere at this part of the front. During the hot fighting of the long months, when thousands met their death along the five miles of first lines held by the sector, the soldiers had been saying it would begin within a few days, next week perhaps, but in a month at the most. The best soldiers were sent here to guard the lines. It was a strategic position of the Somme, they all said.

While the fighting had been tense and heavy, it had been of the trench and trench sort. So strongly was each side fortified because of the advantage of the positions that the lines during the terrible months only fluctuated a trench now and then, several at the most, as each side won or lost. The lines ran along a fringe of hills overlooking the country on either side and the fighting was confined to the vantage points—splices in the landscape of living and dead things, regions of death which guns and mortars had ploughed up.

Now all through the sector the soldiers say the drive is at hand. It is rumor, nothing is positive, but they say it is certain. They make their deductions partly on the added supplies and new troops coming in.

"Wait and see" what happens in the next week or so," they tell one another. "Last week we pushed ahead another mile over at —. They are still advancing there and the fighting goes on day and night. It is a big drive and we will carry it along on the flank," they add. "Wait and see."

No excitement is everywhere. The added activity is preparation, the troops say. They are enthusiastic and nervous.

Because the fighting here has been confined to certain regions there are towns not far behind the lines in which the Germans bombard frequently, several times a day, but they throw their shells more frequently on the roads at places where the troops and the largest sections of the trains of supplies on their way up are likely to be caught, and on the trenches.

In a town but a couple of miles in the rear, running along both sides of the main road leading to the trenches, are some peasants—aged men, women and children who remained when their neighbors fled—and in their houses the soldiers are quartered. All they have in here. They risk death rather than leave it.

quartered there. She takes a motherly interest in the two young soldiers. So far they have seen little fighting and they ask many questions. In the night time, when over on the hill where the trenches are they see the flare of the rockets, hear the occasional dull boom of things exploding, they look at each other ominously and shrug.

It has been quiet recently over there, but the woman has told them of the fighting of the past. The one whose name is Joliet comes from a village on the side now held by the Germans. The other, Perrot, comes from a town near Paris. The two are of the same company. They are great friends, for they have known each other a long time. Before the war they went to school together in Paris.

They too are on their way to the trenches, but do not know how long they will remain in the town, when they will be sent up. So they sit along the road and watch the now never ending line of vehicles creaking under bulky loads on their way through the town toward the lines. Over the broad stony road leading up from the rear they continue to come—all day and night. It has been so for three days and two nights. So compact is the line that but a foot or so separates the heads of the horses from the rear ends of the wagons in front. It is thus as far as the eye goes either way. In the towering loads is equipment of all description. The line begins at the trains, some miles back, out of shell range.

In ordinary times the wagons come up in sections that pass under cover of darkness. But now, in the daytime, the sky is guarded with the aeroplanes of the French. They are in such numbers that the Germans have not been able to fly over for any length of time. At dusk the planes fly homeward. Darkness comes thick and the line goes on.

The third night and through the rain there is still the incessant rumble and creaking of heavy, burdened wheels, the clanking of chains, the snorting of horses. The drivers, high in their seats, clad in heavy coats and loose rubber boots, look like strange beings in the darkness instead of fellow soldiers. They pass by saying nothing. In the night guns are brought up. In the day they pass on the road in the daytime they are carefully covered.

The following morning breaks and the train still rumbles on. In the past months, except in the biggest of the attacks, the mornings have always found the roads clear. The train continues all through the following day and more troops arrive. The aeroplanes swarm overhead.

There are other main roads in the sector and villages like this one. It is the same there, too, but the soldiers of a town ordinarily are not allowed beyond its limits.

continue to come up. Heavy boxes of grenades stand stacked high. The wagons approach nearer the lines when it is dark. They unload, then return to the rear. There is little confusion and no noise. Morning, and the supplies still come up, but the piles of munitions of the night before seem to have disappeared. They are invisible from above, but off from the path the soldiers take close observation shows seemingly countless stacks of them stacked under branches.

The big attack may come any minute now, the soldiers at this part say. Everything has been kept as quiet as possible. No precaution has been overlooked.

It is late in the afternoon, a comparative calm is over the sector, so that a dull booming of cannonading far over on the left can be heard. Through the sector among the thousands of soldiers is a note of expectancy. They are quieter than usual.

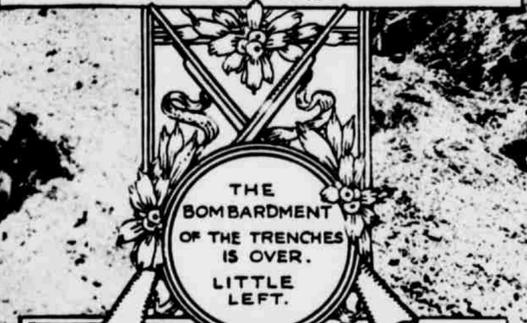
Suddenly from near the village in the rear come several sharp reports in quick succession from a battery. There are several answering booms further away. Immediately more reports nearer at hand, and instantly it is followed by a crash a mile or so of sound. The first impression is that the town is being blown up in a bombardment. Few have ever heard anything like it. The soldiers look at each other.

"It is the attack beginning," they say. Later they get their orders. In a smaller town nearer the trenches where there is even more artillery the noise is still greater. By the sound there seems to be a gun every few square feet, one thinks when thinking is possible. The scream of the shells passing over from batteries in the rear is drowned in this din. It is an inferno of air splitting noise.

In the trenches the few soldiers cover in the ditches. Heaps of debris fall about. To them the noise of the guns in the rear is drowned in the crash of hundreds of shells bursting in the German trenches before them and the shrieks of the shells as they tear above them in the air faster than sound in such numbers that the noise is indescribable. Where the enemy's trenches are is now a continuous mass of spouting dirt that shuts out everything. The whole German line here is being beaten to pieces.

Few of the soldiers have ever experienced anything like this. The trenches of the Germans are but 400 feet away. Now and then a shell falling short of its range comes near the French trenches or tears into them, but with the innumerable shells now tearing about it cannot be helped.

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The flashes dart out from everywhere like summer lightning. More guns are being run up, an increased number of ammunition wagons, and troop-countless numbers.

The terrific cannonading continues all night. Soldiers, who are able, sleep in doses. Morning breaks. The soldiers near the front begin to march up. As soldiers enter the rear towns those who were there, equipment ready and waiting, leave.

In one of the companies is Joliet. Half a dozen lines ahead, rifle over shoulder and slender body weighted with the equipment, goes Perrot. As the company marches along with the characteristic swish of French troops through the noise that takes everything in his grasp, Joliet keeps his friend in sight when it is possible—otherwise, in mind. There is something in this that in the din keeps him linked somehow with the past and his mind steady.

As they march they frequently turn off into the fields along the road to avoid the guns and wagons thundering by. As far as Joliet can see the whole road, ahead and behind, is a compact mass of equipment marching up the road. The Germans are now shelling the road at many places. At first the shells fall among them. There are the usual scenes of the dead, torn up in every manner, while the brandardiers, facing the almost certain death of their lot, are not all speaking Italian and their thick clouds of choking smoke rushing about, some themselves wounded, helping those asking for aid.

At these points the soldiers following turn off from the road, take to the fields or other roads until they are past. By this time the Germans know what is coming and are making desperate efforts to stop the onrush of troops by shelling the roads. The

gigantic shot gun charges of their strangled bark over the heads of the soldiers, while many are torn to bits by the concussion shells crashing into the road among them. The soldiers then take poundabout courses. Most of them are getting through.

Past the last town, where the road remains because it has been blown into nothing, Joliet finds he is to go with a detachment separate from the one Perrot is in. In the bewildering of the din and the haze of the smoke of the shells bursting around, Joliet sees his comrade marching away. The other shouts something, but in the racket he does not hear. Joliet waits, then his friend disappears in the smoke and dust.

There was much in that last look. This is the last Joliet sees of the companion he had counted upon being with when the time came. Joliet waits. With a legion ahead and an endless number behind, they enter the ditch and continue their way, now in single file, for there is not enough room for two to walk abreast. As they proceed the trenches get deeper and deeper and soon their heads are below the surface of the ground.

Casualties are lessened now. Shells continue to burst about, even in

water numbers than in the land they have left. But the most of the shells bear up columns of earth about, but above them. Because the ditches they are traveling in are so narrow few shells explode there and most for the most part they are caught only when debris that in some places partly buries them.

There seems to be no end to the trenches that branch off, continue to separate until they enter a region of trench network. The detachment Joliet is with receives orders which of the boys, the communication trenches, to take as they proceed. Now they move forward slowly, frequently crouch under the fall of the dirt, stones and things and strike against the all-penetrating fog, the misty explosions of the shells near them and the shriek of others passing overhead.

As they approach the first line the confusion of noise of the batteries pounding away behind them lessens in sharpness, takes on more of a roar, a regular working as though of some gigantic machine, grows less harsh and a new confusion in front begins to grip the senses.

They turn out to be shrieks. The order has been given to jump out and advance. They come from men delirious in a frantic haste to rush on after the strain of it.

As the men in front jump out and rush along in advance, the hold almost at arm's length, with the bayonets in the dim of smoke clouds sticking out in front, the other crouching back in the trenches rush out to fill their places and in turn jump out and rush on. It is all done as quickly as possible, there is no time lost and hardly a motion.

And while the mass of frenzied men runs on toward the trenches of the Germans, taking scores, whole groups of them turn the way and that as the Germans concentrate their fire among them, others keep filling in from the rear. There is no end to their number, apparently. The entire rear is now packed with men and more men, while behind them are still more men—men without number.

There is a great when you get out there, they are told. "It is an order to fall on your faces. Fall on them! No time to lose."

The men who first leaped out and started to rush along fell in another way long ago—it was but several seconds ago—and the ranks behind them in turn dissolved. Still others came, and now the first of the advancing mass are at the first trenches of the Germans.

Comes the signal. Suddenly in the frenzied men cease to leap from the trenches, while the advancing ranks rushing blindly on fall flat. Almost at the same instant, possibly a couple of seconds later, to the men lying there comes a noise that is even greater than the crash of a few minutes before. But it is hardly perceptible for the senses, working at capacity, cannot grasp it all.

It is their guns opening up again. They are tearing out a way for them, tearing away what humanity is left in the second and third line trenches. Even during the previous hours of bombardment the Germans tried to keep these in some semblance of order. There cannot be many beings left in them, but reinforcements probably are coming up.

A few seconds later the gunfire of the French again ceases as though by magic. Immediately the soldiers jump to their feet and again rush on. They pass over the first line of German trenches, reach the second line and on to the third line. Another signal, a loud shouting and they again fall down. The guns open up again.

The work of each gun, its various ranges, the number of times it fires and when it fires have been so planned that the gunners in back work automatically almost. They work at tension and at white heat, but with no loss of motion. Twenty hours have they now been going, some of the guns have burst with the strain of it, which even the tempered steel could not stand, killing their own men. About the 75 mm batteries are great piles of cartridges discarded from the breeches after the shells have been fired.

This time the guns point away on German works further in the rear. They stop again and the troops dash on. Every man knows his place in the drive and every body of men. When one man falls another is there to do what he was doing. Every detachment has its objective. As they cross the lines of trenches there are those who jump down and capture what Germans are left in them. The few of them crouch there dazed. They hold up their hands in surrender and beg for life in utter fear. They too have never been in anything like this bombardment.

The soldiers feel the success of it this time. They are inflamed with enthusiasm, the wild joy of victory. Shells fall among the advancing

hordes, but in the wild din just passed these who escape hardly know it. Now there are fewer guns firing on the German side. Others of the French artillery, when not firing at places ahead of the advancing soldiers, quickly change their range to the batteries.

The French have now passed the first four lines of regular trenches and are running over the network of connecting trenches. Masses of Germans are in these. Terrified by what they have been through, few show resistance. It is useless. The French soldiers continue to advance, charging when resistance is offered, deluged with the wave of a successful drive. They do the feat of superhumanity and are unaware of it.

They gain the first town, pass through it and dash on to the next. They capture guns, vast supplies of munitions and more men.

Little Less Spectacular Lines of Marching Men and Artillery Moving for Attack Under Sky Filled With Air Craft

Nothing is left standing except a small part of a wall now a pile of rubble, the place at any time, tends, torn and splintered, but a few feet up from the ground. It is the work of the French artillery, the town, and it seems impossible that life of any kind could have existed in any square yard of it while the bombardment was going on. Such was the work of the last few days.

Later, soldiers find a bottle among the ruins. It is unbroken—the only thing whole found in the town. Some one has set it on part of a battered wall. It is an attraction. It is distributed the place at any time.

As the troops advance more supplies, men and guns are being rushed up and their destinations kept advancing. A part never comes through, for the German guns shoot death along the roads. It is a matter of weary and speed.

Hours later, after it has crossed and the lines are again unblocked, soldiers in the towns of the old sector gather in groups around the bulletin boards where is posted the brief official communiqué. Part of it reads:

October 25. After a terrific bombardment of the enemy lines, soldiers from the preceding day, were able to break through the German lines of — along a 700 meter front averaging 1,500 meters, taking the villages of — and —. We made both of the enemy prisoner, capturing a large quantity of munitions, including the enemy's strong points, and attacks were repulsed."

The soldiers standing around bulletin boards are now troops. They are on their way to the trenches.

Amidst the still rush up from the rear and back again, outside the trench work.

As one of the cars passes through the village on its way to the rear, the hospital in the rear the driver leaves a faint knowledge from within. He sees down in the streets and steps —

GRANDNIECES OF PAGANINI

IT has taken an interesting play and a pretty little story behind the quiet life four young girls are living in this city.

Her own musical career seemed of vastly more interest to her than the remote notes of Paganini's violin. Yet she looked with a calculating and housewifely glance at the heaped basket the butcher boy brought into the little black and white tea room, and stood carefully aside that he might not spot her very clean blue apron which covered her like an English nook; her sense of the things of art had not touched her common sense from it.

And she added simply, "There is just us—nothing more to tell."

Mr. Arliss met the young ladies through the Countess Prabalste de Castelvecchio. They are the daughters of Caesar Paganini, who was the son of Giambattista Paganini, born in the year 1823, and his father was Angelo Paganini, the brother of Nicolo, the great musician. Angelo Paganini was two years older than his brother. The names of the four girls are Junnita, Adelaide, Helen and Marie Louise Paganini.

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Adelaide Paganini, with a bright smile