

roads gave a certain amount of cover in the preparatory stage, and in Gentelles Wood space was found for tanks as well as troops.

"Opposite our front," says Sir Arthur Currie, "the ground consisted of a rolling plateau cut diagonally by the deep valley of the River Luce. This river flows almost due west through a strip of wooded marsh land some 300 yards wide, from which the sides of the valley rise steeply. Numerous ravines, generally running north and south, cut deep into the plateau, the ground between these ravines forming, as it were, tactical features difficult of access and more or less inter-supporting. Woods and copses are scattered over the area and many compact and well-built villages surrounded by gardens and orchards formed conspicuous landmarks. The remainder was open, unfenced farm land, partly covered with fields of standing grain. The hostile defenses consisted chiefly of unconnected elements of trenches, and a vast number of machine-gun posts scattered here and there, forming a fairly loose but very deep pattern."

Our Intelligence had reported that the enemy had 24 battalions (less than three Divisions) in the forward area and about six battalions in support, the latter belonging to Divisions on the French front, but known to be situated within the area we were to attack. It was believed that the enemy had four Divisions in reserve immediately available, and that two of these were west of the Hindenburg Line.

The Canadian Corps Commander outlines the battle plan as follows:—"The general scheme of attack was to overrun rapidly the enemy's forward area to a depth of about 3,600 yards under cover of a dense artillery barrage which would begin at "zero" hour; then without halting to seize the Red Line, relying on the help of tanks to overcome the machine-gun defenses. At that moment the cavalry was to pass through the infantry and seize the area so far as the Blue Line, supported on its right flank by the Canadian Independent Force. The cavalry was to be followed as quickly as possible by the 4th.