

VERDUN IS NOT A BATTLE, BUT A SURGICAL BLOOD-LETTING ON A GRAND SCALE.

When One Blow Begins to Slacken Another Vein is Opened—Re-Serves For the German Army Are Depleted—They Are Losing More in Killed and Wounded Than Can be Made up—Net Losses Are 800,000 Yearly

Germany at last has reached the turning point where her fighting force is being depleted much more rapidly than it can be supplied with new men, and military observers believe her entire reserves, which cannot possibly exceed 700,000, will be completely exhausted within a very few months. Reduced to figures, Germany is losing 100,000 men a month in killed, incapacitated, by wounds from further service and prisoners of 1,200,000 a year. Some authorities place the number at double these amounts. She is gaining from new recruits fewer than 400,000 a year. This leaves a net loss to the army of 800,000 men a year, a loss which cannot be replaced.

Already Germany has called to the colors the class of 1917 to furnish stock for slaughter—"kanonnenfleisch" (meat for cannon). Bismarck used to call them.

Germany's population in 1910 was 64,925,993; in 1900 it was 56,367,178, showing an increase of 8,558,815 in the ten years. This does not include a population of about 15,000,000 in the German colonies in Africa and Asia, which were immediately cut off on the beginning of the war from being of any use to the mother country from the viewpoint of military strength. The colonies of England, France and Belgium, it may be mentioned, have, on the other hand, been a source of constantly increasing additions to the military power of these countries. Germany's average increase in population for the ten years mentioned was about 860,000. There is a slight excess of male births—1,160 boys to every 1,000 girls. This would give an average increase of 443,000 males to 417,000 females. An estimated yearly addition of 400,000 men to the army out of 443,000 born is certainly a very liberal allowance.

Yearly Net Loss 800,000.
Regarding losses the German official lists of casualties since the war began up to June 1 give 734,412 dead, 1,851,652 wounded and 338,522 prisoners and missing, a total of 2,924,586 for the twenty-one months—about 138,000 a month or 1,600,000 a year.

This yearly gross loss is four times as much as the annual addition to the army by the most liberal estimate. Assuming that forty per cent. of the wounded return to the ranks, this would reduce the net loss to 1,900,000 a year, against an annual recruitment of 400,000. Even if all the wounded should return, the dead, missing and prisoners (600,000) outnumber the new recruits half as much again.

It should also be remembered that these figures of 1,200,000 loss against 400,000 gain are the most extreme figures in favor of Germany. Even the German staff, in a statement issued last month, asserted that

it was assured of only "30,000" recruits a month as long as the war lasted, which makes 360,000 a year, of 40,000 fewer than the number above allotted.

Total Strength of 4,547,000.

Concerning the strength of the German army, the Paris Liberte estimates the total at 4,247,000 of which there are 180 divisions of 20,000 men each on both fronts and 647,000 left as reserves. Swiss reports say that the German reserves have diminished this year by 500,000 and that 200,000 recruits have been added, making a net decrease of 300,000 men. All the German reserves, according to the Agenzia Libera, cannot exceed 700,000 men, whereas there were more than a million at the end of 1915. Contrary to her hopes aroused by the Balkan drive, Germany can expect no help from Bulgaria or Turkey. On the contrary, she has been obliged to keep men in Turkey, in Bulgaria and in Austria.

Verdun is eating into Germany's strength at a more rapid rate than any other event since the war began. Colonel Feyler, a Swiss military expert, generally recognized in Europe as one of the most impartial and best informed critics of the war, estimates that the Germans up to June 1 used about 800,000 men at Verdun and puts their losses at 350,000. The Paris Petit Journal describes Verdun as not a battle, but a surgical blood letting on a grand scale, and says that when the flow begins to slacken another vein is opened.

Rapid Exhaustion.
British estimates place the German losses at Verdun for four months at 415,000 men; that 65,000 more men than Col. Feyler's estimate of 350,000 up to June 1. These estimates are based upon captured documents, statements of prisoners and other sources. At the same time the French losses from the same source were placed at 165,000 men in killed and wounded.

With the net loss of 800,000 men a year, Germany's present army of 4,000,000 men would be exhausted in five years if no other factor should intervene. But while Germany's man power is declining that of the allies is growing. True, the French army is losing, though not so rapidly as that of Germany, but the British forces are being constantly recruited from all quarters of the globe, and Russia has practically an inexhaustible supply. At the worst the allies can maintain their present strength, while that of Germany is bound to decline at an increasingly arithmetical ratio.

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The Gallant Part Played By the "New Zealand" In the Jutland Battle

The Scotsman has published the following from a special correspondent:

In the great battle the work of our battle cruisers so magnificently upheld the deathless traditions of the British navy that any distinction between the parts played by them need not be too finely drawn, but the people of this country will share the gratification of the colonies on learning something of the place which the New Zealand had in one of the greatest sea fights in history.

From a reliable source I am able to furnish some information regarding the splendid ship and her place in the battle. The order of our battle cruisers as they went into action was as follows: Lion, carrying the flag of Admiral Sir David Beatty; Princess Royal, Queen Mary, Tiger, New Zealand and Indefatigable.

The New Zealand flew the flag of Admiral Pakenham, in the absence of His Majesty's ship Australia, to which is given as a rule that distinction, and thus in a double sense was the vessel representative of a part of our Empire whose readiness in patriotic effort has been exemplary. In this connection, too, an interesting coincidence may be noted. When the New Zealand figured in the Dogger Bank affair she also carried an admiral's flag, for Sir A. Moore, who was second in command.

She sailed into the great adventure off the Jutland coast proudly bearing other evidence of her Antipodean connection. There floated in the breeze of the eventful evening the White Ensign and Union Jack presented by the women of New Zealand, which figured in her previous engagements also, and is now showing the marks of action, though the Maori emblem on the forepart of the fighting top is so far practically unscathed.

Maori Charm is Carried.
Whether the captain shares the superstitions of men "who go down to the sea in ships" I cannot profess to say, but I understand that he fulfilled on this occasion the conditions attaching to a small greenstone charm given to his predecessor by a Maori chief. This tiki was to be worn by the captain who first took the ship into action, and that, I believe, was done.

Of a Maori mat, also given by the patriotic and well-intentioned natives, which was to be donned by the captain in action, I cannot say so much. Modern battle conditions on the sea do not permit of liberties in the direction of ceremonial dress.

Perhaps before I leave the more personal side of the ship's life, I may mention that the bulldog which has taken the place of a better known predecessor in the role of mascot, the former animal having died last year by an accident, slept peacefully through the action.

Probably no better index to the spirit with which the men of the fleet went into the action could be given than the efforts which the crew of the New Zealand made. Like everybody concerned, they were "itching for the scrap." I am told that everything the men did was not faced unemotionally as a duty or executed mechanically as a task. The big heart of every sailor was in the job. With them all it seemed to be a personal matter. The New Zealand men "down below" worked like Trojans.

Made Great Speed Record
They seemed to get every available ounce and more out of the ship. She was not expected, naturally, to produce the capacity of her battle companions, but she surprised her officers with her speed. It may be recalled that in the Dogger Bank affair she broke all her records for sailing, but in the present instance she surpassed anything she had previously achieved in speed record, and had no difficulty in holding her place in the line. The fact is a splendid compliment to the splendid fellows below, who never spare themselves when in the service of their country. When in the service of the lower deck, there is "something doing."

When the scene of the conflict was reached and the enemy opened fire about the same time at a range approximately of ten miles. A few minutes after the opening of the battle, in which deadly work and heavy damage was being done by the guns on both sides, the sinking of the Indefatigable left the New Zealand the rearmost ship in the line.

the reinforcements the ship held the place nearest to the enemy. There was a particularly hot spell at this time.

The firing of the Germans was concentrated and intense, and the particular turning movement which was carried through at that time is recalled by the expressive phrase, "the widy corner." The fall of projectiles was fast and furious. The time was one of admitted anxiety for the daring cruisers, which was allayed by the welcome news of the ships behind racing to the fray.

Tornado of Shell.
With the widening of the scope of the fighting there was a tornado of shell. It churned the sea with its splashing. Splinters pattered on the ships' sides like hail, while over all was the roar of the guns. I am told that the New Zealand played her part right well. She seemed almost to have had a charmed life, for her damage was of the slightest, and her casualties really negligible.

I believe I am not exaggerating when I say that only two of her sailors were wounded. I am equally correct, I think, in suggesting that she gave a great deal more than she received. On the assumption that the unit of the enemy's line she was engaging was devoting its attention to man had much the worst of the encounter.

After some ten minutes' fighting, at any rate, his fire lost both in rapidity and accuracy. The slackening told its own tale. It should not be overlooked, too, that the light was all in favor of the enemy. I am told that, whereas for us this condition was exceedingly difficult, it was well-nigh perfect for the Germans who had us between them and the light while it lasted.

Torpedo Attack Failed.
From the source I am quoting, I have confirmation of the view that the Germans suffered much more heavily than can be definitely ascertained. Only the disadvantageous weather conditions and the enemy's retreat prevented further knowledge of their damage as well as a good deal more havoc among their ships. The immovable conviction among the men who were on the spot is that the Germans were the beaten side actually as well as morally.

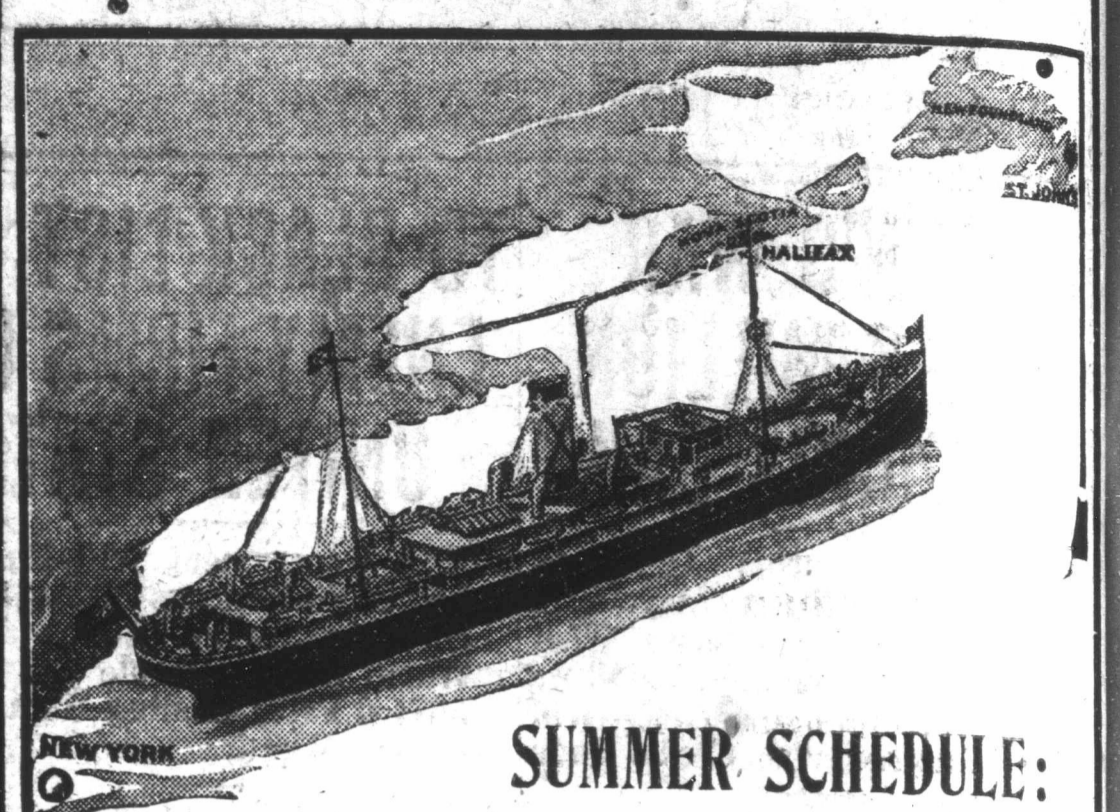
Their daylight torpedo attack was an absolute failure. It was frustrated in the cleverest fashion possible. Our light cruisers rushed in at the right moment. The timing could scarcely have been better, and the attack was easily countered. From first to last it might to all appearances, so smartly was it conceived and carried out by our cruisers, have been a bit of work in manoeuvres done strictly by the drill book.

The men of our Fleet came home satisfied with what had been achieved, but disappointed in being deprived of the fruits of their will had they only had been left the way. The weather and the German refusal to "fight it out" are at the bottom of the British Navy's disappointment.

Their outlook, however, is colored with the hope that the chance will yet come. If and when it does, I fancy the New Zealand man will much want to be there, and I know that they will supplement with more glory a record they and the people of New Zealand and all of us can be justly proud.

FRANCE AT WORK
Providence Journal:—Practically all Frenchmen of military age are fighting, and practically all Frenchmen of every age are engaged in some kind of national service. And not the men alone; the women of France have been mobilized also. In fact, the routine life of the country is maintained very largely in face of the depletion of its manhood, by the devotion of its female population. The agriculture of France has been carried on by the women, assisted by the old men and the children, and if the intensive cultivation goes on up to the very battle zone itself, it is because of their willing hearts, and untiring hands, assisted by mere schoolboys. When the French roll of honor is complete there will be room upon it for these humbler millions who, though not on the firing line, have done their full part.

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