

"Hunger Trench" Huns Name One Of Their Positions

"Sausage," "Ham" and "Delicatessen" Among Other Significant Names.

BRITISH SMILING
DESPITE WOUNDS

Slightly Injured Smoke, Piggy Cards and Laugh while on way to Hospitals.

By M. A. Greenwall, Daily Express Correspondent.

Paris, August 11.—There was a heavy thunderstorm on the Somme battlefield recently. Torrential rains poured down, and last night lightning mingled with the red flashes of the guns. The atmospheric conditions accounted only partly for the slowing up of the operations, which was chiefly due to the character of our offensive.

We are not trying continuous attacks, as in Champagne and Artois last autumn, but are proceeding each push by minute artillery preparation.

Cataract of Steel.

At the present moment we have entirely in our possession two lines of the first German organization, and we have in front of us new lines of resistance which have not yet been sufficiently drenched with shells, but a cataract of steel is pouring down, and despite the bad weather I learn, at the moment of sending this despatch, that our guns are thundering as usual.

The French yesterday had another good day. They extended their advance towards the north and south. I have good reasons for stating that General Foch is very pleased with the success achieved, and has addressed a message of congratulation to the British and French troops. He specially mentions the Colonial infantry, and remarks on the splendid co-operation between the infantry and artillery during every yard of the advance. This was made under the protection of a wall of shells, which, as I pointed out in Sunday's telegram, reduces the casualties to a minimum, and jumps from trench to trench as the infantry approach. It was a Colonial division which captured Flaucourt, and although they had suffered only slight losses, it was decided to replace them after their magnificent work to enable them to go to the rear for a rest, but they refused, saying, "We took this place. We are not tired, and we do not want anybody else to have the glory of entering our success."

With tears in his eyes, General Foch, who was in command, gave permission for the division to remain in the front line.

Among the prisoners taken yesterday was a German colonel, who was in his dug-out shoving his order. He ran up and said to him, "The French are coming." "Go away, you fool," he cried. "It is not the French attacking but the British. Those are the instructions I have received." Ten minutes later he was rounded up, his face covered with lather.

The names which the Germans gave to some of their trenches are rather significant. Here are a few, which I give haphazard: "Sausage," "Ham," "Hare," "Delicatessen," and, most significant of all, "Hunger trench."

The New Line.

A glance at the map will show the tactical importance of the village which the French took yesterday. Estrees-Denicourt, to give it its full name, is a pretty little village, which had about 500 inhabitants before the war. It is not more than half a mile long, and stands on the switchback road from Amiens to Peronne. In a depression about half a mile to the south is a chateau, surrounded by woods, which the Germans hold, and have, no doubt, strongly fortified. Belloy-en-Santerre, a mile and a half north-east of Eserees, is a village of about 300 inhabitants. It stands at the junction of the roads from Estrees to Assevillers and Flaucourt to Barjeux.

Less than half a mile north-east of Belloy, on slightly hilly ground, are the woods which the French took. Between Assevillers and Barjeux Woods was the German second line, which passes by Assevillers and Berny-en-Santerre. Like Belloy and Flaucourt, it constituted one of the strong German stays, in case his first two lines were broken through. Behind the Flaucourt-Belloy front the enemy's only positions of resistance until the River Somme is reached are Barjeux and a sort of terrace which runs from Villers to Carbonel. It is probable that he has not organized any defense in this region, which is difficult to hold because of the Somme marshes. From Barjeux to the river the distance is about two miles. Coming down the river the French are not far from the bridgehead which the Germans have organized as part of the defense of Peronne.

This morning I visited a railway junction not far from Paris, which is a sort of clearing station for the trains of wounded. They come through at all hours of the day and night, but never too late or too early for the old men, and both the young and old women, to be there to give them a cheer, and each, according to his means,

some creature comforts. They are merry fellows these men back from Picardy. As much of a face as one can see behind bandages is wreathed in smiles. Those who are only slightly hurt play cards, smoke, and laugh all the time.

One non-commissioned officer, a great bearded, laughing fellow, who might have stepped straight from the pages of "The Three Musketeers," said to me when I asked how it happened:—

"I got in the way of a machine gun. It was near Curlu. We were in a trench about a hundred yards from the Boches. We had strict orders not to sing or shout, but I had the greatest difficulty keeping my men quiet. They wanted to be off, and every now and again one would stick his head up and shout 'What are we waiting for. The motor-bus?'"

Into Action.

"Then the captain said, 'Fix bayonets,' and stuck his whistle in his mouth, took a revolver in each fist, blew his whistle, and leapt out of the trench to lead us into action."

"We did the hundred yards in two minutes, and you should have heard the shout of 'Forward, forward! They're counting on us at home!' We cleared the first line in a twinkling, leaving a few fellows to clean up with knives and grenades, and then on towards the second line. We passed that, but some pigs of Boches, wounded or not I do not know, fired at us as we went on. Our captain turned round and fired with both revolvers, and killed seven out of ten. One of these, an officer, when he saw what was going to happen to him, held up his Iron Cross, but you bet it didn't save him from paying the penalty."

"We were ordered not to go further, but to stay and organize the positions won. The men were quite angry about it, saying, 'Why can't we go on?' Those who were told off to guard the prisoners and take them back wept, and asked the officers, 'Why can't I stay? Let me go on.'"

Hit Twice.

"I had been hit for the second time, so I went back as a guard. You should have seen the prisoners dodging their own shells," and D'Artagnan gave a loud gasp. As the train drew out of the station on the way to a Normandy hospital men put their heads out of the windows and shouted to us:—

"Give our love to the Boches. Tell them we will be back in time to eat sauerkraut with them in Berlin," and a trainload of laughing wounded went on its way. A little old woman in black wiped a happy tear from her eye and said to me, "Ah, well, monsieur, I am not going to worry any more."

I learn this evening from Northern France that the Kaiser is expected on the Somme front to harangue his men and try to stem the tide of demoralization which has begun to flow. Whether the news of his visit be true or not I do not know, but he will have great difficulty in explaining why the Allies' losses are so small and those of the Germans so great. Of course, we know it is because at last we have munitions and guns, and, as M. Albert Thomas, the French Minister of Munitions, told me a little while ago, every shell saves a life.

The majority of the wounded I have seen in these last three days will be back at the front very shortly. A certain French regiment fought a very brilliant action. The company that suffered most when carrying a certain front line, of which Dompiere was the centre, had twenty-two casualties, of which sixteen were wounded. In other companies the losses varied from eight to nineteen men, and the whole division only had 640 men put out of action.

The head of the house is the one who winds the clock and feels the windows.



MET BY CAVE-DWELLERS ARMED WITH BOMBS

Terrific Struggle in Enemy's Dug-outs When British Entered.

HEROISM OF THE LONDON REGIMENTS

Chapter of Accidents Robbed them of what would have Proved a Fruitful Victory.

By John D. Irvine, Daily Express Special Correspondent.

With the British Army in the Field, August 5.—The Germans continue to bring up reinforcements of men and guns, and are throwing them with lavishness against our most recently acquired positions. They have had some temporary successes, but I hardly think they expect to recover and hold anything they have lost. Rather are they struggling against time in order that they may be able to prepare new defenses farther back.

The Worst Corner.

I am able to give first-hand information concerning the part which has been played by certain famous London regiments. These regiments included the Rangers, the Queen Victoria Rifles, the London Rifle Brigade, the London Scottish, and the Queen's Westminster, were assigned certain objectives near Commeucourt, towards the northern end of our original line of advance, where, owing to the extraordinary preparations made by the enemy, we did not far so well as we have done and continue to do farther south.

The London regiments, who fought with magnificent gallantry and tenacity, did in fact accomplish their primary objects, but owing to circumstances beyond their control they subsequently had to retire to a line which nearly corresponds to that they occupied before the battle began. It certainly represents no surrender of territory; the enemy is fully contained and is kept busy night and day, with the result that he can send neither guns nor men to assist his hard-pressed troops within the zone of our continuous penetration of his lines.

When the regiments received the order to leave their trenches at 7.30 on the morning of July 1, a gap of from 250 to 300 yards in a valley separated them from the first line trenches of the enemy. At the given signal they leapt across their parapets and with magnificent steadiness, advanced in the open under cover of smoke which had been sent up with the object of screening their movements from the enemy. Within half an hour they were in possession of the main objective.

Desperate Bravery.

Immediately afterwards the enemy started to set up a terrific barrage fire, which almost pulverized the front line trenches from which our men originally started, and, what was of graver consequence, stopped all efforts to send up supports and carrying parties bearing munitions essential to the continuance of our advance. The most gallant attempts were made to establish communication, and a series of enterprises characterized by desperate bravery involved us in heavy losses. Out of one party of fifty-nine which started across the shell-swept valley, one only reached his comrades and but three returned to our lines.

Reports sent back shortly after this showed that our artillery had succeeded in smashing up the German parapets and barbed-wire entanglements, but had failed—as has been the experience everywhere—to crumple up the deep dug-outs in which it is the habit of the Boches to sit down and bide their opportunity. So, when our men entered the enemy trenches, they were confronted by crowds of these cave-dwellers armed with

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bombs, and a series of hand-to-hand conflicts in which we succeeded in killing many and capturing some Germans, ensued. A certain number of the Boches showed a readiness to surrender, but they were influenced by more courageous comrades, who assured them that the English could not send up supplies, and that very soon they would have to go back to their own territory.

Helpless Captives.

The Londoners did succeed in capturing about 200 unwounded or slightly wounded Germans, but as these helpless individuals were being sent across to our lines they came under the fire of their own artillery. In bombing during the time they were in the trenches, the Londoners easily outthrew the Germans, and all along they were getting the best of the fight when the enemy succeeded in working partially round our flanks, cutting off communication with the units of another division. The London Scottish on the right flank put up a great fight, and further towards the left, superb gallantry was displayed by the Queen's Westminster, the L.R.B., and the "Vic." Owing, however, to the fact that our supply of bombs and other ammunition had now reached the point of exhaustion, and that it was impossible to send up fresh supplies, our men had no option but to fall back, which they did with extreme reluctance, though in perfect order. A chapter of accidents robbed them of what would have been a fruitful victory.

The German troops against which the Londoners fought were the 2nd Division and a Guards Reserve Division. Officers testify that in his conduct on this particular occasion the enemy showed himself a "white man." He allowed our stretcher-bearers to come out into the open, pick up some of our wounded close to his trenches, and carry them back without molestation. He even handed over some of

the wounded he had in his possession. This has not been an isolated experience during the present month where highly-disciplined German troops have been concerned; and even occasional acts of ordinary humanity on the part of the soldiers of a nation which for nearly two years has waged war with the ferocity of a primitive barbarism may be recorded.

The London Territorial Artillery, which carried out the preliminary bombardment of the enemy trenches, deserves the highest praise. In no sector of our line of advance, so far as my information goes, had the work been done more effectively. Many deeds of heroism were done throughout an eventful day by these London men of ours. I may not anticipate recommendations or mention names, but for the following instances

of conspicuous personal bravery—only three among a large number—I am able to venture—

Captain — led his company in the assault on the German trenches; after his senior officer had been killed he took command of all the men who were left. Surrounded by the enemy, under very heavy artillery, machine gun, and sniping fire, with every bomb and almost every round of ammunition expended, he called on six or seven men to rally round him. With the utmost disregard of their own lives, he and his little band held off the enemy while the wounded and other men withdrew to the British lines. All but two of these heroes were killed.

Captain — continued to hold on, and was the last to leave the position. There is no doubt that by his

bravery and resource he saved the situation, as well as the lives of many of his men. By extraordinary good fortune he escaped unwounded, and is again commanding his company in the trenches.

Rifeman —, who was severely wounded in the fight of July 6, lay down on the field of battle with three of his injured comrades, and remained there till the night of July 6. During that period he constantly tended his wounded companions, bringing them food and water, which he obtained by crawling round at night and taking possession of the supplies he found on the bodies of dead men. When he reached the British lines after an interval of five days and had his wounds dressed he insisted on guiding our stretcher-bearers to the spot where the other wounded men lay.



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