

# If We Beat The British We Can Deal With French, Is Opinion of Germans

London, Sept. 24.—The Official Press Bureau tonight issued a report from Field Marshal Sir John French's headquarters, supplementing the despatch of September 22 on the British operations in France. The text follows:

"The enemy is still maintaining himself along the whole front, and in order to do so is throwing into the fight detachments composed of units from very different formations, the active army, reserve and landwehr, as is shown by the uniforms of the prisoners recently captured.

**Battle May Continue for Days**  
"Our progress, although slow on account of the strength of the defensive positions, against which we are pressing, has in certain directions been continuous, but the present battle may well last for some days before a decision is reached, since it now approximates somewhat to siege warfare.

"The Germans are making use of searchlights. This fact, coupled with their great strength in heavy artillery, leads to the supposition that they are employing material which may have been collected for the siege of Paris.

**Repulsed All Attacks**  
"The nature of the general situation after the operation of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth, can not better be summarized than as expressed recently by a neighboring French commander to his corps:  
"Having repulsed repeated and violent counter-attacks made by the enemy, we have a feeling that we have been victorious."

**Brought Down German Airship**  
"So far as the British are concerned the course of events during these three days can be described in a few words. During Friday, the 18th, artillery fire was kept up intermittently by both sides during daylight. At night the Germans counter-attacked certain portions of our line, supporting the advance of their infantry, as always, by a heavy bombardment. But the strokes were delivered with great vigor and ceased about 2 a.m. During the day's fighting an aircraft gun of the Third Army Corps succeeded in bringing down a German aeroplane.

**Cut Line of Communication**  
"News was received also that a body of French cavalry had demolished part of the railway to the north, so cutting, at least temporarily, one line of communication which was of particular importance to the enemy.

**Complete Text of Sir John French's Report on Operations of the British at Battle of the Aisne**

**TESTIMONY OF SEVERAL LETTERS**

**Enemy's Officers Pay High Tribute to the Courage, Skill and Daring of Tommy Atkins in France**

"On Saturday, the 19th, the bombardment was resumed by the Germans at an early hour, and continued intermittently under reply from our guns. Some of their infantry advanced from cover, apparently with the intention of attacking, but on coming under fire they retired. Otherwise the day was uneventful, except for the activity of the artillery, which is a matter of normal routine, rather than an event.

**Found Enemy's Munitions of War**  
"Another hostile aeroplane was brought down by us, and one of our aviators succeeded in dropping several bombs over the German line, one incendiary bomb falling with considerable effect on a transport park near La Fere. A buried store of the enemy's munitions of war was also found, not far from the Aisne, ten wagons loads of cable being dug up. Traces were discovered of large quantities of stores having been burned, all tending to show that as far back as the Aisne the German retirement was hurried.

**Repulsed Enemy With Loss**  
"There was a strong wind during the day accompanied by a driving rain. This militated against the aerial reconnaissance.

"On Sunday, the 20th, nothing of importance occurred until the afternoon, when there was a break in the clouds and an interval of feeble sunshine which was hardly powerful enough to warm the soaking troops. The Germans took advantage of this brief spell of fine weather to make several counter-attacks against different points. These were all repulsed with loss to the enemy, but the casualties incurred by us were by no means light.

"In one section of our firing line the occupants of the trenches were under the impression that they heard a military band in the enemy's lines just before the attack developed. It is now known that the German infantry started their advance with bands playing.

**Infantry Always Ready**  
"The offensive against one or two points was removed at dusk, with no greater success. The brunt of the resistance has naturally fallen upon the infantry. In spite of the fact that for some days and their trenches have been deep in mud and water, and in spite of the incessant night alarms and the almost continuous bombardment to which they have been subjected, they have on every occasion been ready for the enemy's infantry when the latter attempted to assault, and they have beaten them back with great loss. Indeed, the sight of the Pickelhauben coming up has been a positive relief after long, trying hours of inaction under shell fire.

**Failed to Shatter British Nerves**  
"The object of the great proportion of artillery the Germans employ is to beat down the resistance of their enemy by concentrated and prolonged fire, to shatter their nerve with high explosives, before the infantry attack is launched.

They seemed to have relied on this with us, but they have done so, though it has taken them several costly experiments to discover this fact.

"From statements of prisoners it appears that they have been greatly disappointed by the moral effect produced by their heavy guns, which, despite the actual losses inflicted, have not been at all commensurate with the colossal expenditure of ammunition which has really been wasted. By this it is not implied that their artillery fire is not good; it is more than good—it is excellent. But the British soldier is a difficult person to impress or depress, even by immense shells filled with a high explosive which detonate with terrific violence and form craters large enough to set as graves for five horses.

**British Rifle Fire Effective**  
"The German howitzer shells are from eight to nine inches in calibre, and on impact they send up columns of greasy black smoke. On account of this they are dubbed 'coal boxes.'

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"black Maria, or 'Jack Johnson,' by the soldiers.

"Men who take things in this spirit are, it seems, likely to throw out the calculations based on the loss of morale so carefully framed by the German military philosophers.

"A considerable amount of information has been gleaned from prisoners. It has been gathered that our bombardment on the fifteenth produced a great impression. The opinion is also reported that our infantry make such good use of the ground that the German companies are decimated by our rifle fire before the British soldier can be seen.

**German Losses Heavy**  
"From an official diary captured by the first army corps it appears that one of the German corps contains an extraordinary mixture of units. If the composition of the other corps is similar it may be assumed that the present efficiency of the enemy's forces is in no way comparable with what it was when the war commenced.

"The losses in officers are noted as having been especially severe. A brigade is stated to be commanded by a major; some companies of foot guards by one-year volunteers, while after the battle of Montbrail, one regiment lost fifty-five out of sixty officers. The prisoners recently captured appreciate the fact that the march on Paris has failed and that the forces are retreating, but state that the object of this movement is explained by the officers as being to withdraw into closer touch with the support which have stayed too far in the rear.

**Officers Try to Encourage Troops**  
"The officers are also endeavoring to encourage the troops by telling them that they will be at home by Christmas. A large number of the men believe that they are beaten. The following is an extract from one document:  
"With the English troops we have great difficulties. They have a queer way of causing losses to the enemy. They make good trenches, in which they wait patiently; they carefully measure the ranges for their rifle fire and they open a truly hellish fire on the unsuspecting cavalry. This was the reason that we had such heavy losses. According to our officers, the

English striking forces are exhausted, the English people really never wanted war."

**The Englishmen Are Brave**  
"From another source: 'The English are very brave and fight to the last man. One of our companies has lost 130 men out of 240.'

"The following letter, which refers to the fighting on the Aisne, has been printed and circulated to the troops:  
"Letter found on German officer of Seventh Reserve Corps:

"Corny, South of Laon, Sept. 17, 1914.—My dear parents: Our corps has the task of holding the heights south of Corny in all circumstances, till the fourteenth corps on our left flank can grip the enemy's flank. We are fighting with the English Guards, Highlanders and Zouaves. The losses on both sides have been enormous. For the most part this is due to the brilliant French artillery.

**British Well Trained**  
"The English are marvellously trained in making use of ground. One never sees them and one is constantly under fire. The French aim men perform wonderful feats. We cannot get rid of them. As soon as an airman has flown over us, ten minutes later we get their shrapnel in our position. We have little artillery in our corps; without it we cannot get forward.

"Three days ago our division took possession of these heights and dug itself in. Two days ago, early in the morning, we were attacked by an immensely superior English force—one brigade and two battalions—and were turned out of our positions. The fellows took five guns from us. It was a tremendous hand-to-hand fight.

"How I escaped myself I am not clear. I then had to bring up support on foot. My horse was wounded and the others were too far in the rear. Then came up the Guard Jäger Battalion, Fourth Wager, Sixth Regiment, Reserve Regiment, Thirteenth and Landwehr Regiments, Thirteen and Sixteen and with the help of the artillery, we drove the fellows out of the position again. Our machine guns did excellent work; the English fell in heaps.

"In our battalion three Iron Crosses have been given, one to C ———, one to Surgeon ———, (names probably deleted). Let us hope that we shall be the lucky ones the next time.

**Short of Food**  
"During the first two days of the battle I had only one piece of bread and no water. I spent the night in the rain without my great coat. The rest of my kit was on the horses which have been left miles behind with the baggage and which cannot come up into the battle because as soon as you put your nose up from behind cover, the bullets whistle.  
"War is terrible. We are all hoping that a decisive battle will end the war, as our troops already have got round Paris. If we beat the English, the French resistance will soon be broken. Russia will be very quickly dealt with; of this there is no doubt.

(Continued on page 5.)

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