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The Toronto World

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GERMANS BEATEN

British and French Forces Who Have Assumed the Offensive in Northern France Captured 20 Miles of Trenches and Penetrated German Positions for 4000 Yards, Took Souchez, Loos, Hill 70 and the Quarries Near Hulluch and Hold Nearly 25,000 Unwounded Prisoners.

GREATEST ADVANCE SINCE THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE

Sir John French Reports That British Troops Have Made Great Gains South of La Bassee Canal and East of Vermelles and Hold All Ground Gained, Except North of Loos, With Five Thousand Prisoners That Were Captured.

LONDON, Sept. 26.—The British and French armies have taken several large "nibbles" out of the German lines between Verdun and the Belgian coast, capturing in the process trenches along a front of about 20 miles, and just under twenty-five thousand prisoners, eight guns, and a number of machine guns.

At the same time British warships and French and Belgian batteries heavily bombarded the German positions on the coast between Zeebrugge and Nieuport.

The offensive, which resulted in the French and British victories, began Saturday morning. For several weeks there has been an almost incessant bombardment with big guns, which late last week increased in intensity, particularly in the sectors where the infantry attacks took place.

FRENCH GAIN MOST IMPORTANT.

The French, who have the most important gain to their credit, made their chief onset against the German lines around Perthes, Beausejour and Suippes, in Champagne, where in December they made a considerable gain of ground. Saturday's attack, however, backed by a tremendous artillery fire, gave them possession of more territory than they had retaken from the Germans since the latter dug themselves in after the battle of the Marne.

According to the French account, the Germans were driven out of their trenches over a front of 15 miles, varying in depth from two-thirds of a mile to two and a half miles. The French in this engagement captured 12,000 prisoners. Apparently the advantage is being pressed still further, as the French communication makes only the briefest mention of the operation.

GERMAN POSITIONS WEAKENED.

The importance of this gain lies in the fact that every yard of ground taken in this region weakens the German position around Verdun, from which the Germans might be compelled to retire should the French succeed in making any further advance.

The French also have regained the cemetery of Souchez and trenches east of the "Labyrinth" in the Arras district, which was the scene of much heavy fighting earlier in the year. There the Germans had built what they considered almost impregnable fortifications.

This attack was made in co-operation with the British, who attacked on either side of La Bassee Canal. The attack to the south of the canal was, Field Marshal Sir John French reports, a complete success. Trenches five miles in width, and about 4000 yards in depth, were taken at this point.

MAY OUTFLANK THE ENEMY.

This push forward gives the British possession of the road from Lens to La Bassee, which was used by the Germans for moving troops and supplies north and south, and threatens to outflank the German troops which hold the Town of Lens.

Hill No. 70, one of the positions taken on the road, is less than a mile directly north of Lens, while Hulluch, which also fell into the hands of the British, is at the end of the road near La Bassee. It is only 12 miles from Hulluch to Lille, the capital of northern France.

POSITIONS WERE CONSOLIDATED.

North of the canal, the British, although they fought all day yesterday, were unable to hold the ground gained, and had to fall back to the trenches which they had left in the morning. The attack, however, accomplished one purpose, as, according to Field Marshal French, German reserves were sent to check this move, this giving the British south of the canal an opportunity to consolidate their new positions unmolested.

A somewhat similar manoeuvre took place to the north

GERMANS ADMIT DEFEATS

BERLIN, via London, Sept. 26, 10.40 p.m.—A repulse of a German division near Loos, northwest of Lens, with considerable casualties and the loss of material is admitted in the German official communication, made public today. The evacuation of an advanced German position north of Perthes, between Rheims and the Argonne forest, is also admitted by the war office.

THE Toronto World is able to point out this morning what looks like the beginning of good news. The French have crushed and rushed fifteen miles of the German trenches in the Champagne and are now beating at the second German

and south of the Menin road, east of Ypres, and the results were the same. North of the road the British were unable to hold the ground taken, while to the south they gained about 600 yards of the German trenches, and consolidated the ground won. So far as is reported, the British took 1700 prisoners with eight guns and several machine guns.

OFFICIAL FRENCH REPORTS.

PARIS, Sept. 26.—(11.06 p.m.)—On the western front the British and French have captured in two days more than 20,000 unwounded prisoners, according to the French official statement issued tonight.

New progress by the French troops to the north of Arras is also reported, Souchez being stormed and captured.

In Champagne the allied forces still continue to gain ground.

The text of the statement follows: "Our attack to the north of Arras has realized fresh progress. We have occupied by sheer force all the Village of Souchez, and have advanced towards the east in the direction of Givenchy.

"More to the south we reached La Folie, and pushed to the north of Thelus as far as the destroyed telegraph. We made in the course of this action about a thousand prisoners.

"In Champagne our troops continue to gain ground. After having crossed on nearly the whole front extending between Auberive and Ville-sur-Tourbe, the powerful network of trenches, passages, small forts and shelters perfected by the enemy during long months, our troops advanced towards the north, compelling the Germans to fall back on their trenches of the second position, from three to four kilometres to the rear. The struggle continues on the whole front.

"We have reached L'Epine de Vedegrange and passed the cabin on the road from Souain to Somme-Py, and the hut on the road from Souain to Tahure. More to the east we are holding the farm of Maisons de Champagne.

FIERCE HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING.

"The enemy has suffered by our fire and in hand-to-hand struggles very important losses. He left in the works which he abandoned considerable material, which has not yet been inventoried. Already the capture of 24 field guns is recorded.

"The number of prisoners is increasing steadily, and is actually more than 16,000 men, not wounded, of whom at least 200 are officers.

"The total number of prisoners captured on the whole front by the allied troops in two days is more than 20,000 men not wounded."

BELGIAN COAST TOWNS BOMBARDED.

The following official statement was issued by the war office Saturday night:

"On the Belgian coast our batteries have co-operated in the bombardment by the British fleet of the German positions at Westende and Middelkerke.

"The British troops have attacked with success enemy positions to the west of Loos and Hulluch. Our troops operating in conjunction with the British army delivered to the north of Arras an energetic attack, which permitted them to gain a foothold at several points in the enemy's lines.

"Between the Somme and the Aisne, fighting by means of torpedoes and bombs has been going on in the sector of Canny-sur-Matz. Our artillery exploded a munitions depot in a fortified house at Beauvraignes.

"In Champagne, after a new and very violent bom-

ardment of the trenches, shelters, blockhouses and batteries of the enemy, our troops began an assault of the German lines between the Suippes and the Aisne. The first advance positions have been occupied on almost the entire front attacked. Our progress continues.

"Artillery actions have occurred in the Woevre, in Lorraine, and in the Vosges, in the environs of Chapelette and of Schratzmannelle."

Whether this is the beginning of the "big push" for which the British Empire has been waiting remains to be seen from the events of the next few days. Influential men in London are convinced that it means an offensive that will develop into the greatest engagement in the west since last October.

12,000 PRISONERS TAKEN.

More than 12,000 Germans were taken prisoner by the French in a terrific battle yesterday in the Champagne district of France, according to an official statement issued Sunday morning by the French war department.

French troops penetrated the German lines along a front of 15 miles, and for a depth at some places of two and one-half miles, the announcement says. Stubborn fighting still is going on today in the Champagne region.

ALL POSITIONS MAINTAINED.

The text of the statement follows: "In Artois we maintained during the night the positions which we yesterday won. These include the Chateau de Carleul, the cemetery of Souchez, and the last trench which the enemy continued to occupy to the east of the fortified position called the 'Labyrinth.'

"In the Champagne stubborn fighting continues on the whole front. Our troops have penetrated the German lines along a front of 25 kilometres (15 miles) for a depth varying from one to four kilometres. Our troops in the course of the night maintained all the positions taken.

"The number of prisoners actually enumerated exceeds 12,000 men.

"Except for one surprise action of our artillery on the German works in the region of Launois, in the Ban de Sapt, there is nothing to report on the rest of the front."

GROUND GAINED IS ALL HELD

LONDON, Sept. 26.—The British forces fighting in France still hold all the ground they gained Saturday from the Germans, except to the north of Loos, according to an official communication issued tonight. The Town of Loos is being held by the British, the quarries northwest of Hulluch have been captured, and the French on the British right have been enabled to make further progress the statement says.

"There has been severe fighting today," reads the official communication, "on the ground won by us yesterday, the enemy making determined counter-attacks east and northeast of Loos.

"The result of this fighting is that, except just north of Loos we hold all the ground gained yesterday, including the whole of Loos itself.

"This evening we retook the quarries northwest of Hulluch, which we rewon and lost yesterday. We have in this fighting drawn in the enemy's reserves, enabling the French on our right to make further progress.

"The number of prisoners collected after yesterday's fighting amounted to 2600. Nine guns have been taken, and a considerable number of machine guns.

"Our aeroplanes today bombed and derailed a train near Loffres, east of Douai, and another which was full of troops at Rohult, near Saint Amand. The Valenciennes station was also bombed."

GREAT BRITISH SUCCESS.

British forces which have assumed the offensive in northern France captured on Saturday five miles of German

French Official Report Says Souchez Was Stormed and Captured, New Progress Made North of Arras, 20,000 Prisoners Taken, Belgian Coast Towns Bombarded and German Lines Penetrated Along 15-Mile Front.

trenches south of La Bassee Canal and east of Vermelles, according to a report of Field Marshal Sir John French, made public Sunday morning by the British official press bureau. In some instances the British troops penetrated the German positions for a distance of 4000 yards.

The British have captured the western outskirts of Hulluch, the Village of Loos, and the mining works around it, and Hill No. 70."

FIVE MILES OF TRENCHES.

The text of the report of the British commander-in-chief in France follows: "Saturday morning we attacked the enemy south of La Bassee Canal, to the east of Grenay and Vermelles. We captured his trenches on a front of over five miles, penetrating his lines in some places for a distance of 4000 yards.

"We captured the western outskirts of Hulluch, the Village of Loos, and the mining works around it, and Hill No. 70.

"Other attacks were made to the north of La Bassee Canal, which drew a strong reserve of the enemy toward the point of the line where hard fighting occurred throughout the day with varying success. At nightfall our troops north of the canal occupied their positions of the morning.

"We made another attack near Hooge, on either side of the Menin road.

"An attack north of the road succeeded in occupying Bellewaarde farm and ridge, but this subsequently was retaken by the enemy.

"In the attacks to the south of the road we gained 600 yards of the enemy's trenches, and we consolidated the ground won.

"The reports of captures up to the present include about 1700 prisoners and eight guns, besides several machine guns, the number of which is not yet known.

"The report in Friday's German communication, that we attempted to make an attack on the previous day south of La Bassee Canal, and which broke down under hostile artillery fire, is false. No attack was attempted."

HOW LONDON HEARD THE NEWS.

London received the news of the successes of the allies on the western front early Sunday afternoon, and it spread rapidly by means of extra editions of the newspapers. In the hotels, clubs and churches great joy was shown. In many instances the churches turned their evening services into meetings of thanksgiving.

The morning newspapers today employ the biggest type they have used during the war in telling of the progress of the British and French troops. Editorially, they greet the news with enthusiasm, and express relief for the victories after months of waiting. Some of the newspapers evince surprise in view of the fact that they deem the gains of the allies as offsets to the week-end casualty lists they published this morning, giving the names of 103 officers and 3874 men, who have either been killed or wounded or are missing.

MEANS MORE HEAVY LOSSES.

The editorials announce the realization that the pushing forward of the British and French troops means further heavy losses, but all of the writers welcome the move as proving that the German front is not impregnable. The Times says it regrets that the series of operations of such importance should be so scantily recorded.

"Could the story of Saturday's action have been told in some fulness and under due restrictions," says The Times, "it would have carried a message of joy to countless British homes. The nation needs cheering, and the present occasion seems to have afforded a suitable opportunity. Presumably we shall learn the details in dribbles from Dutch or American sources, to which the press of this country is now compelled to turn for information, which is often of doubtful validity."