

Austrian Offensive Against the Italians

Proves Costly for Enemy and No Gains are Recorded. British Soldiers Retake Positions. Huns Third Drive on Western Front Now Mastered.

ON THE ITALIAN FRONT—GREAT BATTLE RAGING.

ROME, June 16. (Official.)

A great battle has been in progress on the front since yesterday. After preliminary preparation, which was exceptionally intense, on account of the violence of the fire and the number of guns employed, the enemy began his expected offensive by launching large masses of infantry to attack our positions in the east sector of Asiago plateau, at the end of the Brenta Valley, and on Monte Grappa. By attempts at many points to force the Piave and by carrying out heavy local demonstrative actions on the remainder of the front. Our infantry and that of the Allied contingents bravely bore the tempest of destructive fire and supported by batteries of their own artillery, which had already prudently anticipated the preparation with a timely and deadly counter-preparation bombardment, heavily sustained the enemy onslaughts in the advanced areas. The enemy reached our front lines, but made very little progress. They were repulsed on the right completely, but pushed a few hundred yards near the left bank of our centre. Our line following a shell-like depression, in which is the town of Asiago, is irregular in outline and thickly wooded places. Flat as it looks from our positions the country is full of hidden fields in the grounds, and lends itself to attack by small isolated detachments. The morning of the attack was more than unusually misty, and the bulk of the enemy troops approached along the line of railway running from Asiago to the little village of Cossina, which follows a marked depression in the ground. In accordance with recent German methods, the attacking troops were pushed up during the night from Val Sugana by motor transport. Heavy gas was the preliminary bombardment, gas shells were only sparingly used against our troops. The attack on the British formed only a part of the Austrian plan.

ITALIAN OFFICIAL.

ROME, June 16. (Official.) On the 150 kilometres front more intensely attacked, the powerful storming columns of the enemy occupied in their initial rush forward a few front line positions in the Mont Val Bella region, in the Asolone area and at the head of the Monte Solarola salient. Some troops succeeded in passing to the right bank of the Piave River in the Nervosa

area and in the Fagare Musile region. During the day our troops initiated along all the front attacked energetic counter attacks which succeeded in holding back the powerful pressure of the enemy and in regaining a portion of the positions, temporarily yielded, on some of which, however, isolated detachments had, with great valor, continued to remain at all costs. The struggle had not diminished in violence during the night, and is continuing fiercely, but our troops are firmly holding the front along the Asiago plateau. They have completely re-occupied their original positions on Asolone and at the Mont Solarola salient, and are very closely pressing the enemy infantry, which has passed to the right bank of the Piave. The number of prisoners so far counted is more than 3,000, including 89 officers. Our own and the Allied airmen are taking a strong part in the battle by bombing the crossing points of the Piave and by attacking the enemy's massed troops with machine gun fire. Thirty-one enemy planes have been brought down.

BRITISH RE-ESTABLISH LINE.

LONDON, June 16.

The Austrian troops who penetrated the line held by the British on the Italian front, have been driven back and the British line has been re-established. This announcement is made to-night in the official report issued by the war office on operations in Italy.

PENETRATE BRITISH LINES.

LONDON, June 15.

The war office issued the following statement concerning operations of the British army in Italy: A heavy bombardment by Austrian guns opened along the entire front from the sea to the Adige at three o'clock this morning, followed by infantry assaults. Throughout the day four Austrian divisions attacked the British forces. On the right the attack failed completely, the enemy losing heavily. On the left the enemy penetrated our front line on a width of 2,500 yards and to a maximum depth of 1,000 yards. He has been firmly held here all day. The enemy suffered the heaviest losses. Flying has been impossible for several days owing to the weather. To-day was unsuitable for flying except very early in the morning when seven hostile machines were destroyed and two balloons were sent to earth in flames. Our flying squadron in the afternoon continually engaged in machine gun attacks on

the marching columns, and bombed enemy bridges and transports on the Lower Piave, doing great damage to low altitudes.

ORLANDO'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

ROME, June 15.

The Austrians began a great offensive at seven o'clock this morning on the front from the Asiago plateau to the sea. This announcement was made in the Chamber of Deputies today by Premier Orlando, who added, our troops are everywhere resisting magnificently. Nearly the whole of our front is engaged, as the offensive extends with extreme violence from Asiago to the Brenta, from the Brenta to the Piave, along the Piave, everywhere, involving the Asiago plateau, the Mount Grappa sector and the plains. Premier Orlando declared that the Austrians had failed to achieve even the preliminary results which usually followed a crushing offensive. Describing the operation the Premier said, "A very violent bombardment began at three o'clock, and at seven o'clock an infantry attack was launched along the whole line. The latest news which has reached me summarizing the situation at one o'clock is that our troops have offered magnificent resistance." A message sent from the front to the Premier concludes as follows: "A comparison of all reports received shows that the offensive was pressed only in the first zone of resistance, and not even at a few points has it obtained the effect which the enemy must have hoped for from his powerful bombardment and the enormous effective launched, an attack against which our troops are resisting magnificently."

THIRD OFFENSIVE MASTERED.

PARIS, June 16.

The third of the enemy's great offensives has been mastered ever since the third day, says an official comment issued to-day. When one stops to think that the Germans, electrified by their success on the Marne, expected to overwhelm us and advance along the road to Paris through Compeigne, which was their first objective, the importance of June 11th, which obliged them to stop, can be seen. For seven days the enemy was able to make progress in the offensive beginning March 21. Following his attack of May 27th his advance was interrupted in the same length of time. On this occasion the enemy, who had let loose his attack on June

6th, had to give up after the battle of June 11th. Our soldiers, inferior in numbers, have beaten the best assault troops of the German empire, and inflicted upon them terrible losses and closed again the barrier. This result gives us confidence in the future.

AUSTRIAN OFFICIAL.

VIENNA, June 15. (Official.) Our armies this morning broke into the enemy lines on the plateau of the seven communes, and also crossed the Piave. Up to noon the reports have arrived reporting the capture of over 10,000 Italian, English and French. The capture in guns is considerable.

A TRIBUTE TO THE FRENCH.

LONDON, June 16.

The London press generally pays tribute to the valor of the French in withstanding and finally checking the recent impetuous rush of a vastly greater enemy force. At the same time the value of American co-operation in achieving this result is fully recognized. Not only did the enemy fail to gain his objectives while suffering considerable losses in effectives, but it is contended that the repeated postponements of the promised victory must materially weaken the confidence of his people at home. In recognizing, however, that the crisis remains, the press is turning to speculation as to what point the German staff will choose for the next assault. This, it is maintained, must be revealed soon, owing to the shortness of time remaining before the Allied lines are strengthened by the full power of the Americans. This, says the Daily News, will rob the enemy of his last dwindling hope of victory. According to the Daily Mail's correspondent on the British front, the expectation exists that the next drive will be against the British. That the Germans complete a further long period of offensive activity he contends from the vigorous manner in which every man capable of service is being drafted for the army, while in addition to bringing up more men they are doing all possible to make things easier for the men at the front, including improvement in the food.

BRITISH OFFICIAL.

LONDON, June 15. (Official.)

The local successful operations carried out last night north of Bethune is 196. We also captured several machine guns as a result of this attack. Our troops have gained possession of the enemy's forward positions on a front of two miles, securing all our objectives. In the fighting reported this morning east of Nieppe forest the enemy by a local attack carried out under a heavy bombardment, succeeded in driving in three or four advanced posts west of Vieux Berquin. The hostile artillery was active this morning east of Arras, and has shown some activity this afternoon north of Bethune.

SERIOUS CRISIS IN AUSTRIA.

LONDON, June 15.

Reports of a serious crisis in Austria are current to-day. They come from various outside sources, but there is no direct confirmatory news. A news message to-day from the semi-official Fabra Agency, of Madrid, says private information from re-

liable sources states that grave events are about to occur in Austria, where the population is demanding peace at any price. Amsterdam messages say a rumor was circulated on the Bourse yesterday that rioting had begun in Vienna.

THE STORM BREAKS.

LONDON, June 16.

The Germans late Saturday night carried out heavy bombardments against British positions north of Bethune and between Locre and the Ypres-Comines canal, says the British official statement issued to-day. The artillery was particularly active early Sunday morning in the neighborhood of Dickebusch Lake.

ASCANIA'S CREW SAFE.

AN ATLANTIC PORT, June 16.

The passengers and crew of the wrecked steamer Ascania, arrived here this morning on a patrol boat. On the Ascania were 191 in the crew, of whom only one was a woman, and eight passengers, three of whom were Marconi operators en route to the Pacific coast, two returned soldiers, and a priest. The ship will be a total loss, according to members of the crew, she having commenced to break up yesterday when they left her. She was submerged at high water, and there was about four feet showing at low water. The vessel struck the reef at Rose Blanche, Cains Island, Newfoundland, at 10.50 p.m. the 13th, during a heavy fog. Fifty men volunteered to stay on board, but they were forced to leave Friday. A moving picture man was on hand during the departure of the crew. Miss Batley, the stewardess, the crew said, was the coolest person aboard, and by her example caused all to keep their heads.

AMERICANS HOLD THEIR POST.

WITH THE AMERICAN ARMY IN FRANCE, June 15. (By the Associated Press.)—A German raiding party of 150 men and three officers attacked the American line south of Thiancourt at 2 o'clock this morning. As a result the enemy lost at least 20 killed, of whom one officer and four men died in the American trenches. The American casualties were light and they took one wounded prisoner.

OVER HALF A MILLION FIGHTERS

WASHINGTON, June 15.

American troops sent to France now number more than 800,000, General March, Chief of Staff, announced to-day. The 800,000 figure includes all branches of the services necessary to make up a complete army both

combatant and units, General March said.

MUNITION WORKS EXPLOSIONS.

AMSTERDAM, June 15.

Much damage was caused in Kiev, the Ukraine capital, by an explosion in the munition works there on June 8th, says the Lokal Anzeiger of Berlin. There were twelve big explosions and several smaller ones lasting from ten o'clock in the morning until late in the afternoon. The correspondent refers to rumors that the explosions were due to machinations of the Bolsheviks against General Skoropodski, the Ukrainian Heman.

BRITISH OFFICIAL.

LONDON, June 15. (Official.)

A successful local operation was carried out last night by British and Scottish battalions north of Bethune. More than sixty prisoners were captured by us during the night as the result of the successful raids in the Villers-Bretonneux sector. A raid attempted by the enemy upon one of our posts in Aveluy Wood was repulsed. Local fighting took place during the night about certain of our posts east of Nieppe forest.

COMMANDS AUSTRALIANS.

LONDON, June 15.

(Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency.)—Major-General Sir John Monash has been promoted to the rank of Lieut. General and given full command of the Australian Army Corps. This is the highest position in the British Army a few has ever held.

AUSTRALIA IN IT TO THE FINISH.

LONDON, June 16.

(Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency.)—The Australian representatives to the Imperial Conference, Hon. Mr. Hughes, Premier, and Hon. Joseph Snook, Minister of Defence, have arrived in London. They were enthusiastically received at Euston station. In the course of an interview Premier Hughes said that England stood like a giant rock lashed by the fiercest hurricanes, displaying in the hour of her greatest trial a spirit worthy of the glorious cause for which she fought. In regard to Australia, said Mr. Hughes, the enemy's separate blows have rekindled more fiercely the fire of the people's enthusiasm. In the Commonwealth the war spirit is growing, and recruits are offering in greater numbers than for the past two years. Australia will have nothing to do with a German peace. The overwhelming majority of the people stand solidly for the prosecution of the war to the last ounce until a decisive victory for the Allies. "Ameri-

ca is now stripped for the fray," stated Mr. Hughes. "I have seen these men in thousands calmly preparing for the battlefield, and they are coming in their millions. We are going to destroy militarism, root and branch from the face of the earth." Mr. Hughes said he and his colleagues had received a new impression of the British Navy that would last a life time. The arrangements for policing the Atlantic were marvellous. All throughout the journey of 14,000 miles they had not seen a trace of the enemy. What a tribute to the mighty power and supremacy of the British Navy!

PREMIER LLOYD INTERVIEWED.

LONDON, June 15.

(Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency.)—Premier Lloyd of Newfoundland, interviewed by the Daily Mail, said it is impossible to imagine a people more unanimous toward the prosecution of the war than those of my country. We got out of politics at the start. Strongly behind the policy is our Fishermen's Union, over 25,000 strong, chiefly well to do fishermen, many of whom have their own craft. The fisheries, our chief industry, are still working, the gradual introduction of motor craft having more than made up for the loss of men who have gone to the war. Like England, Newfoundland depends on her shipping, and owing to the risks our sailors run, the Government put them in the same category as naval reservists. The United States, unable to get Norwegian or Scottish fish, turned to Newfoundland and now the trade is growing rapidly. A barrel of fish from the Newfoundland nets brought \$8 last fall instead of \$2 as before the war, but we must have bait to keep our fishing industry alive, and we must have steamers to carry salt to Newfoundland. Efforts are being made to bring Newfoundland fish to England. We have the fish, and the cold storage plant, but the transportation question must be solved. We can then get ahead. Our fisheries might play an important part in the Allies' food problem.

AMERICA'S BIG ARMY.

WASHINGTON, June 15.

Three million Americans will be under arms by next August, so the Senate Military Committee was told to-day by Provost Marshall General Crowder. An extension of the age limits in the army draft will be necessary, General Crowder said, if the present rate of draft calls is continued. He estimated that all the men in class one would be exhausted soon after next January.

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