

# WHY THEY GOT OUT

HOW the British and the French forced the Germans to discard the Hindenburg Line is pretty well summed up in a statement made by a British officer to Wythe Williams, correspondent of the New York Times.

"The Germans got out because they jolly well had to go," said the officer.

From other sources of information as well as this, says Wythe Williams, I hope the censor will permit me to state a few conclusions I formed concerning the military value of the present advance. I would first refer to it—I mean this entire forward movement—as a successful conclusion of the offensive that began last July and which is known as the battle of the Somme. I would still further refer to it as the beginning of possibly the last great battle of the war, as yet unnamed. I had a different feeling while there than ever before when at the front. I had a feeling that the Germans are probably making their great last stand, that the war may be almost over. The same feeling permeates the entire French and British armies that have swept across the evacuated ground in record time—mending roads, throwing pontoons over rivers where bridges were destroyed, and bringing up heavy guns so swiftly that even while I was there the thunder of artillery all along the line was quite as great as when I stood on the plateau of Santerre in the midst of a vast semicircle of fire during the opening days of the battle of the Somme.



All that remained of some rolling-stock left by the Germans near De-Sais in the recent advance. The Australians had a good deal to do with this.



When entering the reconquered territory, says Wythe Williams, my first impression was of the enormous strength of the German positions.



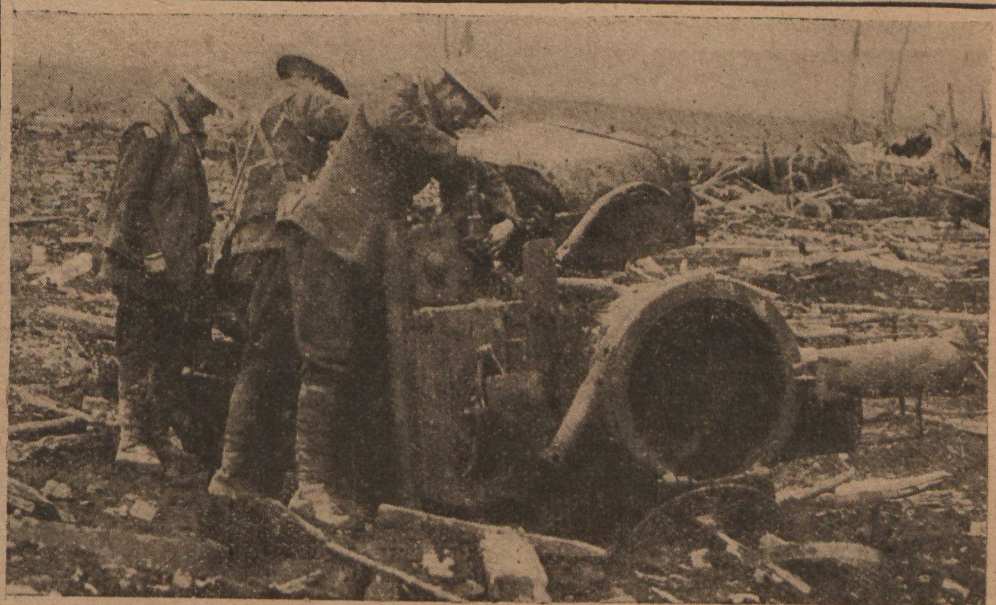
Ruined City Hall in Peronne. The bulletin says, "Don't be angry, just be surprised." This was meant for German wit. It's pretty heavy. A writer estimates that it costs this stupid nation about a hundred times more to shell-wreck a village than the whole village is worth.



The building to the right was still burning when these British soldiers entered the town. The British advance is a little swifter than some of the natural elements.



Bapaume has still a few smoke-shrouded piles of magnificent ruins left by the enemy.



And the British know very well how to tinker up the abandoned rolling-stock of the Germans.