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## ALLIES AGGRESSIVE IN WEST SUCCEEDS IN FORCING ENEMY TO REMAIN ON THE DEFENSIVE

Operations Attended by the Many Hardships Contingent On Bad Weather—Cold Liquid Mud Puts Rifles Out of Business and Most of Fighting is Done With the Bayonet—Review of Operations, December 16th to 24th

Paris, Jan. 2.—There has been given out in Paris the official recital of principal events between Dec. 16th and Dec. 24th.

"This period of nine days resulted in consolidating the successes won by us during the ten days preceding. Our aggressive attitude has been continued with even increased energy; everywhere the enemy has been reduced to a defensive attitude.

"The violence of counter attacks has been evidence that he accepted this attitude reluctantly. The checking of every movement made by him in his endeavor to recapture the ground lost to us made our advantage the greater.

"It is proper to say that at various points along the front, particularly near Arras, on the western boundary of the Argonne district, and near Verdun, we have made ourselves the masters of important points of support.

"The operations to the north of Lys have been attended by hardships because of the bad weather. The cold liquid mud in which the men have to move has got into the breeches of their rifles. This made it impossible to shoot. The fighting consequently has been done with the bayonet, the butt-end of muskets and even with fists.

### "Blots of Mud."

"According to an expression used by one of their leaders, the soldiers are literally blots of mud. There has been organized for them a system by which they can bathe and change their clothes when they leave the trenches. This they appreciate very much. Their unflinching good humor helps them to support in a wonderful way the very hard life that this rigorous winter is inflicting upon them.

"In considering the operations during this period of days along this part of the country, we can divide the country into three parts—the region before Nieport, the region to the north of Ypres, and the region to the south of Ypres. In front of Nieport there is on one side the sea and on the other flooded country. Between them are the sand dunes. Here it is that we have made good progress.

**Progress Near Nieport.**  
"December 15th, in the evening, we moved out of Nieport as far as the western boundary of Lombaertzyde. December 16th we advanced as far as the sea, occupied the lighthouse, and made more than 100 prisoners. Dec. 17th we occupied the point where the Lombaertzyde road crosses the dunes. This day we also made certain progress more to the south in front of St. Georges. Dec. 19th, further progress; we advanced 200 yards along this entire front. Dec. 20th, we occupied a German trench, and Dec. 21st we made a further onward rush gaining 150 yards in the direction of Westende. The enemy delivered a counter attack, Dec. 22nd, but was repulsed.

### Ground is Retained.

"All the ground gained by us remains in our possession. The German marines and the German coast artillery have not been successful in recapturing from us the positions we have taken.

"Dec. 20th, to the north of Ypres the fighting concentrated near Steenstraete, and near Bixchoote, in the vicinity of the Korteker Inn, and at a point further to the southeast where there is a windmill. Dec. 17th we captured in one engagement several trenches, four machine guns, and made 150 prisoners and advanced 150

yards. During Dec. 18th we took one by one the houses close to our lines. The next day the jinn came under our control. We swept up the surrounding country and took possession of a forest, certain houses and a redoubt. On Dec. 22nd we gained another 100 yards. The enemy delivered counter-attacks but in vain. The operations of Dec. 17th and 18th, represented together an advance of more than 700 yards.

### Gains South of Ypres.

"To the south of Ypres, near Weldeke and near Wartelen, we gained on Dec. 16th a total of 400 yards. Dec. 17th and the days following we continued our advance, capturing two machine guns, certain caissons, and several groups of houses. Dec. 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. At this point also the ground presented great difficulties. It was necessary for our men to fight in the water, and never once did we falter.

"From the Lys to the Oise in the region of Lens and of Arras, there occurred several very brilliant actions, which in their entirety presented the same characteristics as those developed in the north. To the north of Lens, in the region of Bermilles we made gains not far from Notre Dame de Consolation, on Dec. 16th, running from 200 to 300 yards. On the 17th a further rush forward won us 100 yards in one direction and 500 in another. Our total advance Dec. 18th was 800 yards. Dec. 20th we made further progress of 150 yards, which brought us to the junction of the roads from Loos to Rutoire, and from Loos to Vernelles. In this fighting our artillery was strikingly successful. In spite of his efforts at resistance, the enemy was compelled to abandon his ground.

### Uncomfortable Trenches.

"To the south of Lens, there was fighting in the region of Carency and of Notre Dame de Lorrette. Here the territory, even on the heights, is clayey and filled with springs. The trenches become inundated as soon as they are dug. As happened in Belgium, the rifles became mud-covered and the men made use of their butts. Dec. 17th the first German trenches of Notre Dame de Lorrette came into our possession. Three days later the first line trenches were occupied by us. The following days we were stopped by the fog which made it impossible to regulate the firing of our artillery.

"The Germans endeavored to debouch from Carency, which possession they still held. They were driven back with heavy losses, but still they maintained possession of Carency.

### Ground Won at St. Laurent.

"In the approaches of Arras at St. Laurent and at Blangy we delivered attacks and were successful in winning ground. The first houses of St. Laurent have been in our possession since Dec. 17th. This position we held in spite of violent counter attacks, both by day and by night. Dec. 24th we gained one hundred yards more.

"Our artillery never loses time or opportunity when the weather is clear enough to shoot. Our guns succeeded in blowing up a depot of munitions at Thelus, to the north of Arras, and several caissons at a point to the east of Blangy.

"A German trench taken by us Dec. 16th and evacuated Dec. 17th was retaken on the 18th. During this time our artillery destroyed the German trenches to the north-east of Carney and demolished two machine guns (Dec. 19th). The following day, extending the range of its fire, our artillery demolished two pieces in a German battery at a point near Hem.

### Trenches Captured.

"In the region of Lisons, we captured on Dec. 17th, certain trenches which we were compelled to defend vigorously Dec. 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd. The counter-attacks delivered by the Germans were furious. The engagement of Dec. 19th saw the Germans advance in columns of four men abreast. The enemy was cut down in this fighting by our artillery. They all remained on the field of battle. Dec. 24th we occupied another trench, in spite of the desperate resistance of the enemy.

"From the Oise to the west of the Argonne, between the Oise and the Aisne, our artillery gained a measurable success. It accomplished the destruction Dec. 16th of a machine gun and an observation tower at a point near Tracey le Val; on the 19th it destroyed a barricade in the region of

Valley; on the 20th we put a German howitzer out of business and on Dec. 21st we destroyed another machine gun. On the 22nd it broke up the descent of a German captive balloon and two days later on the plateau of Houvron, our artillery demolished the trenches of the enemy.

### Good Work of Infantry.

"Our infantry made some interesting advances in the region of Nam-pool. On the 21st of Dec. these troops occupied the first line trenches of the enemy along a front extending for 500 yards and they captured a machine gun. Dec. 22nd we lost to the enemy and on the 23rd we recaptured from them part of this original gain. On the 23rd all the counter attacks of the enemy were brilliantly repulsed with the bayonet.

"Dec. 24th we were masters of the entire line occupied by us on the 21st, with the exception of a few yards at the eastern extremity of his line. This point is still in the possession of the enemy.

"Our infantry losses still diminish, which is the best criterion of the results obtained by our batteries. Each night the enemy sets off a huge amount of 'fire-works' in addition to their infantry fire, marking in a word, a nervousness with which we are well satisfied.

### Vigorous Attacks.

"Between Rheims and the Argonne our attacks, delivered with confidence, did not permit the enemy, in spite of vigorous counter attacks, to recapture the positions lost by him between the 15th and the 24th. These attacks developed particularly between St. Hilaire le Grand and Beausjour (to the east of the village of Ville Sur Tourbe). We can sum up all by saying that all the points of support which they proposed to seize are to-day in our possession.

"In the environs of Perthes we gained 200 metres on the 20th, also on the 21st, and 800 metres on the 22nd. This gain extended our front a kilometre and a half, which represents the whole line of the enemy's trenches upon this front.

"Our attack resulted in the capture of several blockhouses, a section of machine guns with its personnel, caissons with numerous projectiles, and a gun protected by a cupola, certain proof that the Germans, confident of their ability to resist, have nevertheless been mastered by our troops.

### Counter Attacks Checked.

"The checking of five counter attacks which they directed upon this point has likewise affirmed our superiority. On the 24th we chased the Germans from some zig-zag trenches which they still occupied, and consolidated our position upon all of their first line.

"The positions around Perthes have been supplemented by others more available to us—a gain of 400 metres at Mesnil-les-Hurtus, on the 23rd, and the possession of Calery Hill, near Beausjour on the 20th. On the 24th we seized a forest to the east of the trenches, captured on the 23rd near Mesnil. Here again the results attained have been secured, in spite of the enemy's counter attacks. In this region we have better succeeded in conquering the various points of support which were presented to us as an objective.

"The enemy suffered huge losses and our soldiers are in high spirits.

### Harder Warfare.

"From the Argonne to the Swiss frontier, in the woods of Argonne the warfare is harder and more disagreeable, the difficulties of the wooded and muddy terra firma making more not-

(Continued on page 3.)

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