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The Toronto World

THURSDAY MORNING AUGUST 22 1918

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LASSIGNY CAPTURED

French Troops Take Town and Advance Their Lines Five Miles at Some Points, Liberating Twenty Villages, Taking Thousands of Prisoners and Reaching the Outskirts of Chiry-Ourscamps—Now Within Gun Range of Noyon.

PARIS, Aug. 21.—Lassigny has been captured by the French forces, whose lines now have reached the outskirts of Chiry-Ourscamps, southwest of Noyon.

The official statement making this announcement also says that twenty villages have been liberated since yesterday and that the French have advanced about five miles at certain points. The text of the statement reads:

"Between the Matz and the Oise the enemy, despite his resistance, gave way under the energetic thrust of our troops, and Lassigny fell into our hands.

"Further south we gained a footing on Plemont and occupied Orval wood; we carried our lines to the outskirts of Chiry-Ourscamps.

"East of the Oise our troops continued their success during the course of the day. On the left Carlepoint wood fell into our power and we reached

the Oise to the east of Noyon between Sempigny and Pontoise.

"Further east we crossed the road between Noyon and Coucy-le-Chateau. We took Camelinet-le-Fresne and Blerancourt and advanced our lines to the outskirts of St. Aubin.

"Since yesterday we have liberated about twenty villages and advanced eight kilometres at certain points."

On the right wing of the battlefield east of the Oise the French rushed their attack vigorously during the morning, taking Laval and arriving at the edge of Pommieres, which lies about two miles northwest of Soissons.

Several thousand more prisoners have been taken, one army corps capturing 1600.

This advance brings the French troops to the plateau north of the Aisne, which will facilitate future operations by General Mangin's right.

British Troops Take Seven More Villages

"Tell the Canadian people we got the Boche today where we want him and intend keeping him there."—Sir Arthur Currie.

NEW BRITISH ADVANCE STORMS SEVEN VILLAGES

Third Army, Under Sir Julian Byng, in New Attack North of Ancre, Speedily Carries Two Lines of German Positions—Fighting Proceeds, With British Capturing Junction Near Bapaume—Many Prisoners Come In.

With the British Army in France, Aug. 21.—Having smashed into General von Below's seventeenth army during a heavy fog at dawn today, on a front of more than ten miles, extending from the Ancre River to Moyenneville, the British have thrust out the day made steady progress forward, capturing villages, taking prisoners and guns and inflicting heavy casualties on the surprised enemy.

Official communication on the battle follows: "An attack launched this morning on a front of ten miles from the Ancre to the neighborhood of Moyenneville was successful on the whole of the front. We penetrated deeply into the positions of the enemy and have taken numbers of prisoners.

"In the opening assault, under a mist, we captured the villages of Beaucourt-sur-Ancre, Puisseux-aux-Monts, Buquoy, Abainzeville and Moyenneville. Afterwards we continued our advance to the neighborhood of the Albert-Arras railway, capturing Achiet-le-Petit, the Logeast wood and Courcelles.

"West of Achiet-le-Petit a strong counter-attack was repulsed. "East of the Ancre our line reached between Bolesaux-St. Marc and Mercatel."

Exploits Confusion. Coming directly on the heels of the battle south of the Somme, the scene of which virtually adjoins the field of the new operations, this blow exploits to the limit the confusion created among the German forces by their recent defeats.

Heavy fighting has occurred along the embankment of the Albert-Arras railway, which, although well within the German lines last night, seems to have been easily reached by the storming British infantrymen, who were aided in this task by the tanks. It was from this embankment that the Germans, armed with countless machine guns, fired a rain of bullets in an effort to keep the British from coming further, but while they were doing it, they themselves must have suffered severely, not only from the flood of direct and indirect machine gun fire, but from shells which were sent crashing about their ears from directly in front of them, for the British field guns moved up closely in the rear of the infantry, and from their flank, where the big British guns hurled in an avalanche of steel from the north.

Another Disaster. As is inevitable, when a battle rages with such intensity as along the em-

bankment, the actual situation is obscure, but reports have been received that the British have broken down the German defence at various places and have passed thru to the eastern side. Behind the embankment there may not have been a great force of German reserves when the battle began, but by this time the harassed enemy certainly is rushing men to the scene as fast as he can, for another disaster threatens him.

The battle opened with a sudden heavy crashing of guns of all calibres just as day was breaking. Great billows of thick fog such as are seen only on this side of the Atlantic hung over the scene. The infantrymen and tank crews could scarcely see a hundred feet ahead of them and the flare of countless blazing cannon was smothered, while explosions from their mouths rolled up into a continuous deadened roar.

The fog was most favorable to the attacking formations, for it effectually shielded them from the eyes of the enemy, and at the same time caused the Germans opposite to believe that the attack was not directed against them.

Enemy Deceived by Fog. "The guns sounded a long way off," said one of the early prisoners, "so we congratulated ourselves that we were not to be attacked. Just then a tank, followed by infantry, rolled right over our position, and I surrendered."

As tanks and men followed behind the sweeping barrage, the atmosphere became even more thick, for mixed with the fog were great banks of smoke from innumerable shells fired for just this purpose of increasing the protecting screen.

The German guns retaliated only feebly, but there was sharp fighting at various points, where isolated posts filled with machine guns and snipers put up a stiff battle. At the little shell-ruined village of Courcelles, about the centre of the battlefield, the German garrison made a desperate fight, and for a time the advance of the infantry was held up at this place.

Charge of Tanks. Then the tanks arrived on the scene and charged into the enemy's positions, quickly transforming them from strongholds to shambles. The tanks repeated this performance at other places in the line where the stubborn Boches held out courageously. But their courage availed them nothing in the face of the great tanks, dipping in and out of shell holes and across old trenches that have seen some of the war's fiercest fighting, and the smaller "whippet" tanks and armored cars which sped over the ground at a great rate on their mission of clearing the way for the infantry sweeping in at the rear of the positions from which the enemy was working his guns.

In comparison with the harder fighting it is worthy of mention that at some places no resistance of any practical importance developed. For instance, the village of Beaucourt was taken with only three casualties. One wounded man returning from the fighting said he went in three kilometres thru the enemy lines be-

fore seeing a single German. But this is explained by the fact that the German positions were very thinly held at some points. Logeast Wood was one of the most strongly held positions in the foreground, and this was reached early in the day.

Happy to be Taken. As to prisoners, there is no definite information, but more than 1000 have reached the cages, and they have come in from a considerable distance, most of them having been captured during the early fighting. Some of the first prisoners arrived at the cages with handcuffs and long curved porcelain pipes. They seemed clean and were pleased with themselves as if going on leave. One of them, on being questioned, said he was very happy to be taken.

A wounded British soldier told of being separated from his platoon in the fog, but he pressed on nevertheless and joined other groups. One said that, plunging blindly thru the fog, he ran directly into a German machine gun, which he mistook for a tank. It managed to get in one shot, taking off a finger before he and his comrades finished off the Germans with their rifles.

Airmen Join Battle. In the early forenoon the fog cleared away completely and the sun appeared, and ever since the battle has been progressing under a broiling sun. As the fog disappeared the roar of airplane motors increased, the British machines pursuing the same tactics as at the Somme, harassing the enemy at the rear and strafing the German troops generally, upsetting them completely at many places.

The fast little "whippet" tanks had, as one tank officer said, "gone out into the wide world," and there is no doubt that they are exacting as great a toll here as they did south of the Somme. The armored cars had gone into action also, operating far forward, chasing the Boche from his many lairs, and making quick work of those who would not run.

In this battle the advancing troops did not stop a moment at their early objectives. Several formations joined forces and pressed on together. Successive echelons were merged at a place where the going was heavy. The battle continues with unabated fury and there is no sign that its conclusion is near.

UNCERTAIN WEATHER. It may be raining today, but you are just at that season of the year when a summer sun is a possible feature of tomorrow. For this changeable weather The Dinsien Company reminds you that they have special advantages in procuring many lines of goods needed for just such uncertain weather. Raincoats, both Civil and Military, \$9.00 to \$25.00. Heavy Trench Coats, \$35.00, and Light Weight Overcoats from \$25.00 to \$35.00. Also Tweed Hats at \$2.50; Tweed Caps, 75c to \$1.00; Umbrellas, Leather Hat Cases, and a splendid variety of Flush Auto Rugs. Call at Dinsien's, 140 Yonge street, and look over the above new goods just arrived.

The Greatest Drama in History.

So far the fifth year of the war is one unbounded success for the allies; and if it keeps on the first thing you know we'll all be cheering, the first time in four years.

The Germans and the pacifists now know that it is to be a military decision, and the greatest one in history, not a negotiated peace. Also that it will mean the break up of German military dominion in central Europe. The Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs, the Turkens and the war lords—all must go. Democracy is riding on the wind, and autocracy is in the whirlwind.

Any day we may begin to hear that the Germans are getting out of Belgium, and that is when Civilization will cheer its loudest.

The whole public opinion of the world is lining up against Germany, as well as the soldiers of the allies smashing the armies of the Hun into shattered and disheartened rabble.

These are great days, after long years of determination to win out, no matter the cost.

Let the great drama proceed to its triumphant curtain.

CORNERSTONE GONE IN ENEMY DEFENCE

Lassigny Lost by Germans—Important Plemont Height Surrounded by French.

With the French Army in France, Aug. 21.—General Humbert's troops, resuming their attacks against the Germans today, crowned their persistent efforts over difficult ground by taking the Town of Lassigny, which was the cornerstone of the German position south of the Aisne River after the fall of Montdidier.

Plemont, the important height to the southeast of Lassigny, where violent struggles occurred in April, and which bars the way to the Divette valley, from the west, was surrounded, thus opening up a way for the French infantry to pursue the Germans down the valley. The Orval wood also was occupied, and General Humbert's men, advancing along the road from Ribecourt to Noyon, reached the region south of Chiry-Ourscamps.

The German resistance appeared to weaken during the day, both the artillery and infantry letting down in the efforts they had made in the past few days to bar the way to the French.

BRITISH ADVANCE LINE UPON FRONT OF LYS

Patrols Push Way Forward East of Paradis and Near Nerville.

London, Aug. 21.—A British official statement, issued tonight, says: "Patrol fighting has taken place also on the Lys front, as a result of which our line has been advanced near Le Touret, east of Paradis, and between Meruille and Ottersteun. A few prisoners were taken by us in these encounters. "In a successful local operation carried out by us this morning south of Leere we captured 135 prisoners."

CANADIAN FORCES PUT OVER BIGGEST SURPRISE PACKET

Keep Up Old Practice of Taking All Objectives on Time and in Attack Bigger Than Vimy Inflict Tremendous Casualties.

With the Canadian Army in the Field, via London, Aug. 21.—Speaking on today's victory, Sir Arthur Currie, commander of the Canadian forces, said to the Canadian Press:

"The Canadians have kept up today our old practice of taking all our objectives, and taking them on time. When the full reports for the day come in, we expect to have penetrated the Boche defences 14,000 yards. We attacked on just as wide a front as at Vimy Ridge, and we have come three times as far with the whole division as any single division was able to penetrate, while we have taken more guns and more prisoners than at Vimy. Our whole attack came as a surprise for the Boche," Sir Arthur Currie continued.

"Altogether, it was the biggest surprise packet the Canadian forces ever put over. Many of the Boches

threw up their hands as soon as they realized they were up against the Canadians. As our men leaped down into their trenches, they carried with them the slogan, 'Remember the Llandovery Castle,' and with that on their lips they were not to be denied. The Boche dead were never so thick on any of our battlefields as there, but our own casualties were very light. All the Boche guns captured were turned round and promptly manned by our gunners, and now are shooting at the enemy. Everybody is very happy. The force has never been in such good shape for a fight. It is well trained, well organized, and, thanks to the measures taken by the Ottawa government, is up to strength, with sufficient reinforcements on the ground to replace all casualties. Tell the Canadian people we got the Boche today where we want him, and intend keeping him there."

GERMAN LINE IS MENACED FROM YPRES TO SOISSONS

French Troops Materially Push Forward Their Fronts, While British Make Splendid Gains on Ten-Mile Front Between Arras and Albert.

The tide of defeat still surges heavily against the German armies in France and Flanders. On four important sectors French and British arms again have been served, and the entire German front from Ypres, in Belgium, to Soissons on the Aisne, now is more seriously menaced than before.

French troops of General Mangin, operating from the region two miles northwest of Soissons to the Oise River, and those of General Humbert, fighting between the Oise and the Matz, have materially pushed forward their fronts, bringing them to positions which threaten to compel the immediate evacuation of the entire Somme-Aisne salient from Bray to Noyon.

Farther to the north, between Arras and Albert, Field Marshal Haig has followed up his successes of previous days by a new offensive over a front of about ten miles and driven forward his troops for splendid gains over the entire line, capturing a number of villages, taking prisoners and guns, and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Still farther north, in the famous Lys sector, a general eastward advance on a front of more than four miles has been made by the British, who have brought their positions ap-

preciably nearer the old 1916 battle-line, running east of Armentieres.

Noyon is Now Outflanked. Numerous additional villages have been liberated by the French northwest of Soissons, and positions have been captured on both sides of the Oise River, which seemingly make untenable for occupation by the enemy the important town of Noyon, which is now outflanked on the southeast, and dominated by the French guns from the south and west.

On the south the French are standing in Sempigny, a mile and a half distant, while on the west they have captured the important pivotal town of Lassigny, the key position to Noyon and the plains to the north.

With the latest advances by the French east of the Oise there has come under the range of General Mangin's guns the broad-gauge railway line leading from Noyon eastward to La Fere—the sole remaining line except for two narrow-gauge roads, over which the enemy may transport his men and supplies beyond the range of the French artillery.

At last accounts Haig was still pressing forward on the heels of the Germans between Albert and Arras, with tanks innumerable, clearing the

way for the infantry and machine guns and the field artillery which was keeping close up to the advance. The Arras-Albert railway already has been crossed by the British east of Bolesaux-St. Marc and Mercatel, and south of these towns, the new line has been pressed eastward in conformity.

Counter Attacks Fail. On the Lys salient the Germans have delivered a violent counter-attack in an endeavor to recoup in part the losses they have sustained.

Their efforts, however, were fruitless, for the British everywhere withstood their assaults and pushed back the enemy beyond the points of his departure.

What is to be the effect of the allied drives along the 120-mile battleline from Ypres to Soissons cannot be foretold at present, but it seems highly probable that this entire front soon must be realigned.

The particular menace to the Germans, aside from that in the territory between the Somme and the Oise, appears to be on the sector along the Vesle River from Soissons to Rheims, which from the war maps looks to be untenable. Even the Aisne and the Chemin des Dames do not look so any to safe for a defence line if Gen. Mangin presses much further north-west of Soissons.

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