

THE THIRD BATTLE OF

YPRES

On June 7th. 1917, by the capture of MESSINES and WYTSCHAETE the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, began what was destined to become the long series of engagements which history will know as the THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES. Having now got into his possession the high ground to the south of the Salient the Field Marshal turned his attention to the half circle of hills around YPRES which in successive waves rise to the height of PASSCHENDAELE, and from whence the enemy who held all these heights could command the whole Salient. These von Arnim the German commander was resolved not to yield ; so while the British army was winning its way elsewhere he had proceeded to construct a formidable barrier to any British advance in this quarter. Still hoping to break through at YPRES, he had gone on nibbling at the Salient ever since the Second Battle of YPRES, until his troops were established hardly further than two miles from the town. HOOGHE was in his hands with the BELLEWAARDE Farm.

Yet von Arnim was still playing a defensive game : he knew the British would soon concentrate themselves for the capture of NIEUPORT, OSTEND, BRUGES and the Belgian coast, where the submarine bases were and they must be checked.

Owing to the myriad shell-holes and the sodden condition of the intervening ground, it was impossible to construct another Siegfried line of deep dug-outs and concrete lined trenches. He therefore had recourse to the "pill-boxes".