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The Toronto World

TUESDAY MORNING AUGUST 20 1918

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 13,796 TWO CENTS

BRITISH OCCUPY MERVILLE

Germans Forced Back on Six-Mile Front on Lys River---French Advance to Outskirts of Lassigny, and Open Road to Noyon---British Troops Seize Railway Station of Roye and Crush Counter-Attack of Enemy From Lihons to Herleville.

GERMANS DRIVEN BACK UPON THREE SECTORS

Positions of Great Strategic Value Lost by Enemy Under Onslaughts of French and British in Flanders, Picardy and Aisne---Further Stride Made Towards Noyon.

The Germans on three important sectors of the western battlefield have been compelled to give up positions of great strategic value under the onslaughts of the French and British troops.

On the Lys river, west of Armentieres, the enemy has retreated over a front of nearly six miles, leaving the Town of Merville in British hands. Between the Matz and Oise Rivers the French have fought their way to the western outskirts of the dominating position of Lassigny and farther south in this hilly and wooded region have debouched from the Thiescourt Wood and also captured the Town of Pimprez, situated in the Oise Valley on the Noyon-Compiègne road.

Around the curve in the battle line northwest of Soissons the French from near Carlepont to Fontenoy on the Aisne, a distance of approximately nine miles, have driven back the enemy to an average depth of more than a mile and captured several villages and 2,300 prisoners.

Unofficial reports record the capture by the British of the railway station on the western outskirts of the important Town of Roye, one of the

pivotal points on the battlefield between the Somme and the Oise, but there is no official confirmation of this.

Gains Important. Viewed on the war maps the gains in the new operations are most important ones for the allies, for aside from wide areas over which the enemy has been compelled to acknowledge defeat, the weakening in the German defense is becoming daily more noticeable and apparently within a short time they probably will be forced to commence a retrograde movement on a scale that will mean the entire blotting out of old lines and the taking up of new ones to the east and southeast possibly from the region of Rheims to Ypres.

The Lys salient is fast fading away under the attacks of the British and the voluntary retirement of the Germans to new defence positions eastward, and seemingly the big westerly bulge into the allied line between Ypres and La Bassée soon must disappear. Under the new gains of the British near Roye, and particularly those made by the French from Lassigny to the Oise valley and northwest of Soissons, the Germans now are in a bad predicament. Here their positions are dominated by the allied guns from the west, southwest and south for many miles, and apparently a retreat eastward across the plains of Picardy and over the Somme, and even from the western Aisne, will be necessitated.

German Versions. The latest German official communication asserts that French attacks between the Oise and the Aisne, delivered over a wide front, failed, but the French war office statement is specific in announcing the penetration of the environs of Lassigny, the cutting of a passageway thru the Thiescourt Wood, and the capture of Pimprez. That there has been hard fighting, however, is indicated by the British official statement which says that northwest of Chaumes, the Germans succeeded in penetrating the British line at several points, but later were driven put.

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FRENCH GAINS IN OISE VALLEY ENDANGER GERMAN RETREAT

General Mangin's Army Leaves Enemy Only One Exit From Noyon-Roye-Chaulnes Corridor---Protracted Sticking to Lassigny May Prove Disastrous for Kaiser's Forces.

With the French Army in France, Aug. 19.—In a brilliant local operation carried out by General Mangin's troops from the Oise River near Ribemont southeastward to Morsain, northwest of Soissons, Saturday and Sunday, important positions were wrested from the Germans, who left 2,300 prisoners in the hands of the French.

General Mangin now holds the line running from Morsain along the southern edge of the Ravine of Audincourt to Rosette Heights, dominating the Plain of Corlepont, and thence on to Pimprez, across the Oise. This success gives the French command of the Valley of the Oise as far as Montreuil.

With these routes commanded by General Mangin's artillery, the only free route for exit from the region of Noyon and Lassigny is the narrow

gauge line running north to Ham by way of Guisecourt, and the high road running in the same direction. Unless the German General von Hutler is able to stop Mangin's advance, he will have only this narrow outlet for his troops and material, as the triangle between the Noyon-Chaulnes road and the road from Noyon to Guisecourt, while a good position for defence, is not favorable for an intense movement of troops and transport.

The Germans consequently are fighting desperately to hold their present lines, while seeking a chance to shake off the grip of the allies, break contact with them and slip away. The results of yesterday's operations, while not spectacular, were entirely satisfactory, the French overcoming the resistance of the Germans in the region of Lassigny and pressing on towards Plessier.

The French army continues to close in upon both Roye and Lassigny. The stubborn resistance of the enemy has slowed up but thus far has been unable to stop the progress of General Debeney's men.

By sticking to Lassigny the Germans are taking a big chance against the possibility of a further advance by Field Marshal Haig's troops north of the Aisne. The menace to Chaumes has been further increased by the latest advance of the British, and the fall of that town will put Roye and Lassigny in a pocket which it will be far more difficult to empty than the pocket at Montdidier, since General Mangin's troops northwest are advancing to the plateau west of Nampcel and are within shelling distance of the only rail road and the only good high road from Noyon eastward to Chauny.

LASSIGNY TO FALL AT ANY MOMENT

With the French Army in France, Aug. 19.—Successive blows delivered against the Germans since Aug. 10 all along the line from the Somme to Soissons appear now to have brought the operations to a crucial point. After yielding in the earlier operations, the enemy has been making a desperate stand at critical points in the past few days, but his resistance has failed to overcome the steady pressure by the allies around Lassigny and Roye.

The French third army made further progress today in the region of Lassigny and the Thiescourt hills. They have occupied the greater part of Beauvaisnes and are forging

FRENCH SECTOR FORCE ACHIEVED VICTORIES

With the French Army in France, Aug. 19.—The victories of the French armies on the Aisne and at Thiescourt were won by some of the less renowned divisions, which generally are known as "sector divisions," meaning divisions charged with holding parts of the line, while the duty of attacking the enemy was assigned to units that had earned the title "shock troops."

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Lassigny by forcing an exit from the Thiescourt Wood. These gains were made during the most severe fighting, the Germans contesting strongly every bit of ground. Lassigny is now almost turned to the south and is threatened from the north. It is likely to fall at any moment.

JAPS TO SEIZE ALL RICE.

Tokio, Friday, Aug. 16.—An imperial ordinance issued today authorizes the government to requisition all stocks of rice. The rice will be put on the market.

CANADIANS DEFEAT ENEMY AT DAMERY

Brilliant Tactical Dispositions Lead to Terrible German Slaughter.

ATTEMPT TO ENTRAP

Skillful Concealment Permits Dominion Men to Triumph.

With the Canadian Army in the field, Aug. 19, 9 a.m., via London.—So far from being the exception, the story of the fight for Damery that follows, is essentially typical of the work of the innumerable Canadian infantry during the past ten days, and here it may be remarked that throughout these operations the weather has been perfect with good visibility, and not a drop of rain. The road that leads into Damery from the west, off the main-Roye highway, gently climbs into the village, here silhouetted amid its woods against the eastern skyline. Ele hundred yards due south lies the Wood of Damery on an elevation. Superior to the village, and to the east, is the commanding eminence of "Z" Wood. During the night of last Thursday, both these were in the hands of the enemy, completely flanking the village, for it was not until the close of the afternoon that the French dashed in and stormed them. On the north side the Canadian troops held their positions holding the middle wood, about a mile northwest of north of Damery.

Famous Unit's Work. In front of the village lay a famous unit long ago christened the "Lumberman's Own." At the kick-off of last Thursday's week they brought their way thru Hargard Wood. It had lain since Sunday night in the old trenches in front of Damery, bombed and gassed and gutted. Thursday it was decided that the village should be attacked. Practically no opposition was offered, the village being gained with only five casualties. The enemy's plan was quashed on the assumption that he would hold the village and that the enemy would then have the Canadians in a trap with a concentration of gunfire and converging infantry assault. The attack immediately decided to take up a line in front of the village.

German Scheme Fails. The movement was carried out barely in time, for there broke an intense enemy cannonade with heavy shells and gas. The Canadian line rose in the ground. Then, after the preparation was considered complete, dense waves of grey-clad troops converging on the village from both fronts, the Canadians prepared to reap an easy victory. They came in full marching equipment, with their blankets, evidently expecting to break their way into the village. The enemy's machine guns and rifle fire into the panned enemy masses. He was doomed.

Tactics of Hannibal. It was the tactics of Hannibal over again with the centre thrown back, not on the river, but on the village, and our closing flanks, not elephants and slingers, but riflemen and machine gunners. Some two hundred and fifty surrendered, the rest died. One officer conservatively estimates the dead at 1,000, others as high as 1,700. These rampart of high masses of twisted enemy dead, still unburied on Saturday, for then the Canadian line was advanced 500 yards beyond and toward the stronghold of Fresnoy, at that time being subjected to an intense bombardment of private who relates his experiences:

Every Shot a Bull. "The best I can remember," he said, "I had many a mouse fight and have tussled with the grizzly in the Rockies, but this beats all. I used up two of our rifles and one Boche fired off all my ammunition, two bandoliers more, and then had to borrow from the men who came up to our support. My rifle got so hot that I had to work the bolt with my foot.

BRITISH GAIN IN LYS SALIENT FRENCH ADVANCE TO LASSIGNY

Haig's Men Move Forward on Ten Thousand Yard Front.

FIGHT NEAR CHAULNES

German Counter-Attacks Fail From Herleville to Lihons.

London, Aug. 19.—The British forces on the Lys Salient have advanced on a front of 10,000 yards, entering the Town of Merville and reaching the road running from Paradis to Les Puresbecques thru Merville.

Northwest of Chaumes the Germans this morning, in an attack over a mile front between Herleville and Lihons, penetrated the British line at two points, but immediately afterward were driven out in a counter-attack and the line was restored, according to Field Marshal Haig's communication from British headquarters in France tonight.

The text of the communication follows: "The enemy this morning strongly attacked on a front of a mile against our positions between Lihons and Herleville. He succeeded in penetrating our line at two points, but was immediately driven out by our counter-attack and the situation was completely restored.

Our advance has continued in the Merville sector (Lys Salient). Considerable progress has been made on a front of 10,000 yards. We reached the line of road running thru Merville from Paradis to Les Puresbecques and have entered Merville. "There was sharp fighting at different points in the course of our advance and a number of prisoners and machine guns were captured. "The total of prisoners captured yesterday in the neighborhood of Ouffres was 876, including 18 officers. The machine guns and trench mortars captured by us have not yet been counted.

U-BOAT DESTROYED BY BRITISH TANKER

German Submarine Sent to Bottom of Atlantic in Fight off Nantucket.

Philadelphia, Aug. 19.—A German submarine was sunk in a running battle with a British tank steamer last Friday about 200 miles northeast of Nantucket, according to members of the tanker's crew. The oil ship arrived here tonight from Mexico.

When first sighted the U-boat was two miles away, according to the captain of the tanker, who said he immediately opened fire. Two shots from the submarine struck the British ship, one of them passing thru the boiler room and the other thru a tank. Neither of the shells exploded and did no material damage, the captain reported.

Twenty-seven shots were fired by the tank ship, one or more of which her master declared scored clean hits, as flames were seen burning from the port side of the submarine, which he said sank a few minutes later.

TWO WINDSOR BOYS HELD FOR STEALING CIGARETTES

Windsor, Aug. 19.—Six thousand cigarettes intended as gifts for American soldiers passing thru this city were stolen from a booth in the Grand Trunk Railway yards here a few days ago. Today two boys both under 16, and whose names are withheld, were arrested for the robbery. Some of the smokes have been recovered.

BRITISH CAPTURE ROYE STATION

Tenth French Army Brings Attack to Satisfactory Conclusion.

London, Aug. 19.—British troops today captured the railway station at Roye, according to the latest news received this evening from the Anglo-French battlefront.

The attack today by the 10th French army under General Mangin was brought to a satisfactory conclusion. All the objectives were attained. The French entered the Village of Le Hamel, north of Ribecourt, which represents an advance of one mile and three-quarters.

M.S.A. DEFAULTER IS SHOT BY POLICE

Cyprian Ganeau Meets Death From Random Bullet Near Sudbury.

OFFICERS FIRED UPON

Group of Men Open Fusillade in Dark After Police Visit.

Sudbury, Aug. 19.—Cyprian Ganeau, aged 26, supposed to be a Military Service Act defaulter, was shot thru the stomach and killed late last Friday night during a round-up of military defaulters by the civil section of the military police, at a house situated in the bush country near this town. The shot which struck Cyprian Ganeau was a chance one, fired by Constable Tougher as the military police were retiring from the house being subjected to a fusillade of nine or ten shots aimed at them by a group of men hidden in the darkness of the night.

It appears that a prisoner of the Sudbury police had volunteered the information that he knew of there being a band of military defaulters in the vicinity and was willing to act as guide. His word was accepted and late on the Friday night a party of six members of the C.S.M.P. arrived at, and entered, the house thought to harbor the delinquents. While the police were in the house looking over the papers produced by two of the occupants, it was discovered that other men were hiding in the house and keeping watch from darkened rooms. The police considered it best to return to the house as soon, however, as the police were outside, the volley was directed at them, the return shot by Constable Tougher being only a chance shot, made to cover the retirement of the other constables.

It was not until the police made a second visit to the house, the next morning, that it was discovered the chance shot had found a mark Cyprian Ganeau was known by the police as a bad character. The other men in the house had gone, and with them a brother of Cyprian Ganeau, also listed as a military defaulter.

On the second visit to the house the police got four guns and a large quantity of ammunition, left behind by the delinquents. Constable Tougher was arrested and then re-arrested on bail, the magistrate and the crown attorney being satisfied that he was not to blame in the matter.

FRENCH DROP BOMBS

Stations at Mezieres and Chaplet, With Bivouacs, Receive Eight Tons of Explosives.

Paris, Aug. 18.—A French official statement says: "Aviation—During the 18th three German airplanes were brought down and one captive balloon was sent down in flames. On the night of the 18th-19th, our bombing squadrons dropped eight tons of bombs on bivouacs in the region of Berry-au-Bac and Guignicourt and the railway stations of Mezieres and Chaplet-sur-Returnne."

SIX GERMAN MACHINES DESTROYED BY BRITISH

Sixteen Tons of Bombs Dropped on Different Enemy Targets. London, Aug. 19.—The official communication dealing with aerial activities issued tonight, says: "Low clouds, and a high wind restricted work in the air on Aug. 18. Enemy aircraft was not active. We brought down six hostile machines and shot down a German balloon in flames. One of our airplanes is missing. "Sixteen tons of bombs were dropped by us during the day and the following night on different targets."

FIRST SHIPMENT MEN'S FALL HATS.

Yesterday the Dineen Company, Ltd., received the first shipment of Fall Hats from Messrs. Christy & Co., London, England, comprising new Silk Hats, new Stiff Felt Hats, new Soft Felt Hats, and a special line of fine English-made Tweed Caps. This is an opportunity for those returning from their holidays of getting a really fashionable Fall Hat so early in the season. Christy's Hats are all stamped with the above, which is a guarantee of quality.

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Allies Continue Progress on Front From Matz to Oise.

MORE VILLAGES FALL

Twenty-Two Hundred Prisoners Are Taken in Aisne Attacks.

Paris, Aug. 19.—The French troops north of the Oise River have reached the outskirts of Lassigny, according to the official communication issued tonight. They also have made their way out of the Thiescourt Wood and further south have captured the Village of Pimprez, on the Noyon-Compiègne road. Northwest of Soissons the Village of Morsain has been captured and 2,300 Germans have been made prisoners in this region. The text of the communication follows:

"Between the Matz and the Oise we continued to make progress during the day. Our troops, in spite of stubborn resistance by the enemy, have captured Fresnoires and reached the western outskirts of Lassigny. "Further south we have succeeded in debouching from the Thiescourt Wood. "On our right we have conquered Pimprez and advanced up to the southern outskirts of Dreuilcourt. "To the north of the Aisne, completing our success between Carlepont and Fontenoy, we have captured the Village of Morsain. "The number of prisoners captured in this region since yesterday has reached 2,300.

To Both Banks. With the French Army in France, Aug. 19.—The battle has now extended to both banks of the Oise and the enemy, hitherto fronting on the west, is now menaced on his southern flank.

General Mangin's whole objective has been attained along the entire front of ten miles. The enemy, who seems to have been aware of the coming attack, had miscalculated the date and was in effect taken by surprise on a weakly held front, the German commanders apparently having no reserves within call.

The allies now command the valley along the whole of its length. The enemy must accordingly withdraw all but his immediate fighting line behind the plateau on his side of the valley.

The operation recalls in scope and purpose General Mangin's attack at the end of June on similar ground in the Cœuvres-St. Pierre-Aigle Valley south of Soissons, which gave General Mangin possession of the valley and then a footing on the heights above, which afforded him a safe departure line for his attack of Aug. 18, while the possession of the valley enabled him to bring up tanks and muster reserves unobserved by the enemy.

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