



Bridging Expedient. Used even for Artillery. In Flanders.

(Photo by courtesy of C.P.R.)

HOW AN OFFENSE IS CONDUCTED

Naturally the scheme of an offensive movement varies according to all the factors concerned; but here is how several offenses have been successfully conducted.

There are six points in a successful offensive on present methods: First is the assigning to each unit of well-defined and strictly limited objectives, which must not be exceeded. The men are permitted under no condition to go beyond definite points.

Second is the proper preparation for the attack by artillery. The aim of this is to destroy or paralyze the enemy's means of response to an attack—his machine-gun posts, his batteries, his reserves and supplies of food and munitions.

Next is the wider use of light, quick-firing guns. At the begin-

ning the French had only two machine guns for each battalion; now they have eight, together with forty-eight automatic rifles and a large number of bomb-throwing rifles. Then comes the light trench cannon, which can be moved about and fired with the utmost rapidity; and finally the famous French "75," which fires a projectile weighing about 12 pounds 30 times a minute.

The next step is the unleashing at the proper moment of the infantry. The attacking troops are assembled in the immediate rear of the front lines, but so disposed as to avoid danger from shell fire or confusion in the connecting tunnels. These troops are divided into groups. The first are the lightly equipped, armed with rifle and bayonet; the second carry hand grenades and bomb-throwing rifles, and the third carry machine guns and automatic rifles.

On a given signal the first attacking wave climbs out of the trenches and moves as rapidly as possible to the objective point. The second wave follows soon after and has the task of "cleaning up" all the ground passed over by the first wave, with hand grenades, etc. With the third wave are reinforcing troops and supply troops, and to these is intrusted the task of converting captured enemy positions into Allied positions.

In the advance, soldiers are strictly admonished to move quickly, but to take advantage of every shelter, shell hole or other form of protection, and to avoid getting into groups. It is here that the French soldier's initiative and agility—qualities possessed also by

the Canadian soldier—come into play. The Germans, on the contrary, incline to compact masses of attacking troops, and hence their enormous losses. Coincident with the movement of the attacking troops is the curtain fire.

Finally—and enormously important—is the proper cooperative connection between the artillery and the infantry. This has been developed to a marvelous degree on the French Front, so that it is now possible for the command in the rear to know exactly where the advancing forces are at every moment. This is done partly by emergency telephone lines strung rapidly along behind the attacking troops by specialists in this work; also by daylight signals, rockets, message throwers, pigeons, runners—the last being picked men—and, especially important, the airplane.

On the Allied Front there are now four kinds of airplanes in use. There is the hunting airplane or scout, acting as policeman of the air, the bombing airplane, which ventures far over the enemy country to destroy his bases; the artillery airplane, with wireless apparatus, which observes and corrects long-distance shooting; and lastly the newest of all, the infantry airplane, which, flying low, accompanies the attacking troops, signals back their position and incidents of the fighting, and even attacks enemy troops below with machine gun and grenade.

A successful offensive, under present methods in the Allied forces, is enormously costly in material, but not at all so in men. It brings about a deficit of hardly five per cent in the ranks.

"Chandler"

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