

## GROUND ROUND DOUAUMONT WAS HIDDEN WITH GERMAN DEAD

The First Attacking Wave Was Soon a Mass of Corpses—The Second Met the Same Fate—No Words Can Describe the Horrible Carnage and Fearful Din of Battle—Bodies of German Dead Dam the Meuse—French Artillery Take Terrible Toll of German Advances

PARIS, Mar. 4. (delayed by censor).—The epic battle of Douaumont, which resulted yesterday in a French triumph proves to-day to have been the fiercest and bloodiest engagement of the whole war.

Anxiety such as has not been felt since the first month of the war gripped Paris as the foe slowly pushed his way towards Verdun's real defences. Inner circles received word Saturday afternoon through German wireless that the strong position of Douaumont had been lost.

The dismay caused by this news was not dissipated until Premier Briand entered the lobby of the Chamber of Deputies this evening and announced to the anxious statesmen that the battle was going on with undiminished violence, but that the French counter-stroke had won Douaumont.

The Germans advanced first into Champneuville and then carried Douaumont, while commands the plains from its extremity. After being harangued by the Kaiser personally, one of his favorite regiments, the Twenty-fourth Brandenburgers, was thrown into the burning cauldron. As the

French were about to evacuate Douaumont, the Brandenburgers were able to pluck the prize.

### Germans Swept Out.

Within an hour news of this fact was posted in Berlin, but while Berlin was celebrating the German victory part of the immense French force held in reserve about Verdun was sent into action. It was only one corps—a mere fraction of the fresh troops which France had concentrated to stem the tide—but it swept Douaumont clean, rendering the titanic German sacrifices vain.

Caught between a converging barrier fire and desolated by a whirlwind of machine gun fire, the battle-worn German resistance broke before the on-rushing of the fresh divisions. Never in history had French troops attacked more brilliantly.

Every source of information from the front emphasizes the fact that the charge of the reserve army corps was an immortal exploit.

The foe reformed his ranks, returned to the attack with desperate courage and recaptured his positions. A second French counter-stroke drove him out again.

For the third time the Kaiser, who was following the fortunes of the battle in the rear, ordered that Douaumont be retaken at all costs.

### Carried Once More.

The Brandenburgers rallied to the call. With French light guns and heavy guns ploughing bloody furrows in their ranks they carried Douaumont once more, while further west "Du Poivre" was also retaken.

A final French counter-stroke, however, definitely broke the offensive. The worn and exhausted Germans bent before this final terrific onslaught, their thinned lines falling back and leaving the French masters of Champneuville, Cote du Poivre and Douaumont.

Such was the graphic account of the battle furnished by Premier Briand.

To-day an eyewitness supplied the following narrative of another episode of the battle, which extended across a front of not more than seven miles:

"The preliminary German bombardment of the trenches levelled everything. Not a trace could be found for miles of the barbed wire defences.

"Here and there fragments of a trench or its parapets remained standing, but no real cover was left.

Countless thousands of shells had churned up the terrain like a ploughed field upon which the snow fell, leaving a "No-Man's Land" with a smooth carpet of pure white.

### Beginning the Attack.

"The gunfire slackened and in the distance dark masses advanced down the ravine which intersects the undulating Meuse landscape. A telephone message from the advanced French positions set the batteries in action.

"I saw several German regiments marching steadily down one ravine. Our shells tore ghastly holes in their compact mass, but new troops immediately filled the gaps. Watching through field glasses, I saw several groups of Germans drop in the snow, which was covered with blood.

"The first attacking wave was soon a mass of corpses. The second wave met the same fate without imperilling our positions. No words can describe the horrible carnage and fearful din of the battle.

"More Germans were thrown in. There seemed no end to their numbers. But they could not get through the bloody corridor. Our big guns had got their range and shells three feet high, burst in their midst, throwing out flames on all sides.

"Through my glasses I could no longer say whether it was soil or human limbs that were cast high in the air by our shell fire. Finally when the corpses completely barred the ravine the Germans desisted."

### Bodies Dam the Meuse.

Throughout the battle, French batteries had enfiladed the Meuse ravines. In several places the bodies of Germans formed huge dams, checking the flow of the water into the Meuse. As the melting snow increases the rush of the streams the dams give way and the blood-stained water carries hundreds of corpses into the river.

Shells began to fall in the town on Saturday. Sunday was quiet, but on Monday showers of shells fell every few minutes. The firing continued all Monday night.

One refugee says he witnessed a night fight in the rear of his village, Forges, on the left bank of the Meuse. The battlefield was lighted as bright as day by the flares and star shells. Great masses of German infantry came on under cover of their artillery. For some time the French guns were silent, then, when the Germans entered a basin-shaped depression, there came a deluge of shells, doing terrific execution. On one sector alone, 100 yards long and 50 deep, thousands of Germans were killed.

### As We are Seen Abroad

ST. JOHN'S N.F.—Feb. 25.—Fearing that the colony of Newfoundland will face a food famine in May or June unless immediate action is taken to secure better facilities, the St. John's board of trade has made a vigorous demand on the colonial government to procure steamers. The board in a statement today, asked that arrangements be made with the British government to provide steamers even if it becomes necessary for the colonial government to subsidize them.

Newfoundland has already faced a similar problem regarding coal. Last December a coal shortage caused by a lack of vessels to bring it here, forced the government to commandeer all the available coal in St. John's and distribute it to the people in small lots. There is also a shortage of salt for fish curing. The colony uses about 60,000 tons annually, but so far only 10,000 tons have been received. The colonial government, however, is negotiating with the British admiralty to secure ships to import salt from Spain and Sicily.—Boston Paper.

### A Good One

Some time ago a local corps was reviewed by Sir Ian Hamilton, and there is a story that one of the officers was mounted on a horse that had previously distinguished itself in a bakery business.

A wag in the crowd is supposed to have recognized the horse, for he shouted out, "Baker!" The horse promptly stopped dead, and nothing could urge it on. The situation was getting painful, when the officer was struck with a brilliant idea, and remarked, within hearing distance of his steed: "Not to-day, thank you."

The procession then moved on without further delay.

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## Joffre Ready for German Attacks

Verdun Onslaught May Be Preliminary to Other Big Operations—Joffre Will Not be Caught Napping—Has all Possible Done to Meet German Attacks—Will Deliver the Goods When Moment Comes

PARIS, March 4.—(Delayed)—The press and public of France are mystified at the continued pause in the German attacks around Verdun. Caution, born of experience, leads generally to the rejection of the view that the Germans have given up all hope of trying to capture the Lorraine fortress. It is thought more likely that they are merely resting before starting afresh with greater energy. It is believed in many quarters that the attack on Verdun, was only a preliminary to operations on a much larger scale, for the purpose of trying to crush the French once and for all. However, that may be it is affirmed that General Joffre is fully prepared for all eventualities. So far only the local French reserves have been called upon at Verdun, the great general reserve forces remaining intact for use in repelling other heavy onslaughts or for carrying out a greater counter attack when the opportune moment comes.

The question is raised as to whether the next German attack will again be at Verdun, or along the front from the Somme to the Aisne, as it is known that the Germans have been making preparations along the latter lines, the southern limit of which is many miles nearer to Paris than Verdun. These preparations, however, are not so elaborate as those which had been made for Verdun, and should the Germans attempt the latter plan, the military observers say they would be liable to a flank attack by the British in Artois and Flanders.

On the other hand, if the Germans continue their assaults against Verdun, from the plain of the Woëvre, their infantry will have to attack virtually unsupported by the heaviest of the German guns, it is argued, as the water soaked clay soil of the Lorraine plain makes the transport of such guns almost impossible.

The plain is only crossed by four military roads, and troops and light artillery obliged to deploy in the open under fire from the French positions on the heights of the Meuse.

Two valleys leads to Verdun from the plain. Both are blocked by forts Des Tannes and Rozellierand everywhere else, the infantry would face thickly wooded heights, with a straight drop of 250 feet. The Germans would have here, however, all the resources of Metz within easy reach.



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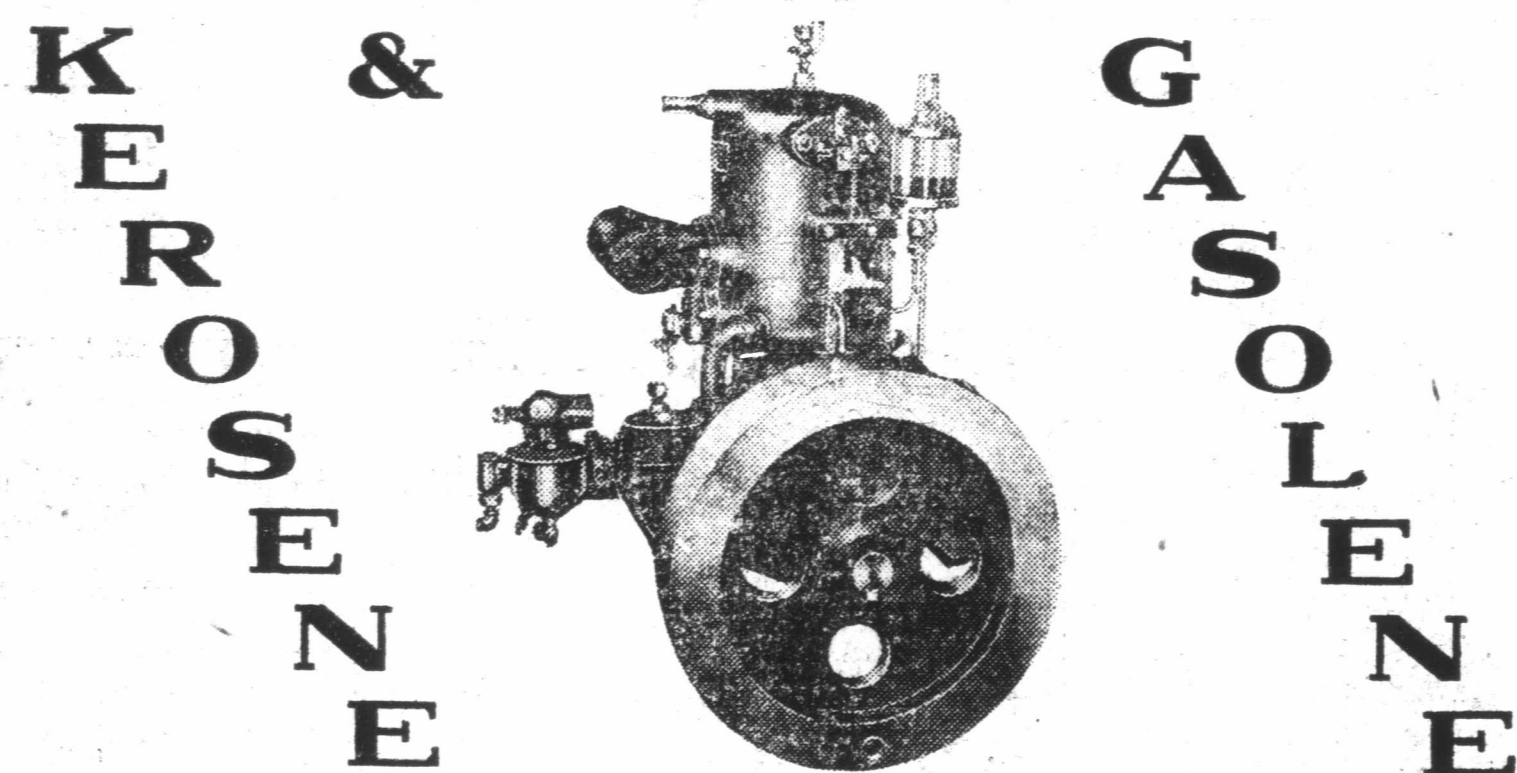
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