YPRES HOLDS IMMORTAL PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF BRITISH PEOPLE FROM ALL LANDS OF SEVEN SEAS

Flower of British Professional Army Perished Here; the Canadians Won Everlasting Fame, and Anzacs' Recent Triumph Is as Gallipoli in Australian Memory.

By Frank H. Simonds

Author of "The Great War," "They Shall Not Pass."

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Two weeks ago I endeavored to set forth the geographical circumstances of the Ypres country, with a view to explaining the operations now going forward in the present battle, which is the third and mightiest of the "Wipers" conflicts. Beyond all question "Wipers" is to be the great landmark in British military history hereafter, and it has seemed to me worth while now, on the anniversary of the first conflict, to recall briefly the events of the conflict, which was the most considerable and costly in all British history up to 1915.

In 1914 Britain fought the first battle without overseas aid. In the second battle the brunt was borne by the Canadians; in the third, now going forward, Australia is on the line held by Rawlinson's 7th Division in the terrible closing days of October, 1914. Thus, in British imperial history, the Ypres campaigns are equally to have an enduring place. Finally, the ever-growing importance of the present struggle and the steady reappearance of old names give a contemporary value to a past conflict. For these reasons I mean to review once more the history of Ypres salient, concerning which I have never written in detail before, setting forth views I obtained while with the British army myself last winter.

Famed Ridges Regained.

The geographical outline of the country I have described in the previous articles. It is only necessary to recall that Ypres is situated in a basin well nigh surrounded by low hills, and that these hills on the east constitute the Messines-Zonnebeke Ridge, the scene of the main struggle in the first battle, and on the north the Gravenstafel-Pilkem Ridge, the prize of the second battle. Both sets of hills were won back practically in their entirety in June, August and September of the present year.

But in thinking of these hills people of this continent must remember that they are hardly more than gentle swells, suggestive rather of the prairies of the Western States than of the rugged New England or New York country. Any one who has visited the battlefield of Waterloo will recall his surprise at finding hills referred to in all battle histories as important actually little more than mounds. A similar impression would come with a visit to the Ypres battleground.

With this qualification in mind, however, it is still essential to recognize that, inconsiderable as these elevations are, they played a decisive part in three of the great conflicts of this war and in the most dramatic battle of British history. Beside Hill 304, or Dead Man's Hill, or the Douaumont Plateau at Verdun they are nothing. Wytschaete, the highest, is barely 250 feet high, against 1,000 feet for Dead Man's Hill and 1,300 feet for Douaumont, yet the Verdun Hills were not more bitterly contested, lost with more regret or recaptured with more satisfaction.

Nor is it less interesting to remember that this battle of Ypres, the first encounter, was an accidental battle, like Gettysburg; neither the British nor the Germans expected to meet here, as Lee and Meade had no intention of fighting a decisive battle at Gettysburg. Both were engaged in great operations of their own, both had to abandon their plans, and this first conflict about the old Flemish town marks the end of a war of movement; henceforth to the present hour the war in the west has been a war of trenches.

Stand of Immortal 7th.

On October 14, 1914, the first British troops came to Ypres. They comprised the immortal Seventh Division, commanded by General Rawlinson, which had landed at Ostend a few days before and had covered the retreat of the Belgian army, aided by some French formations. At this moment the Belgians, closely followed by General von Besseler's army, which had taken Antwerp and was advancing along the coast roads, were already near the Yser line, which they were to hold, and French troops were being railed up from the south to support them. Bad as was the condition of the Belgian army, it was still believed—justly, as the result proved—that it would be able to hold the Yser line.

At this moment the Allied high command believed that between the German army approaching the Yser and the northern end of the main German front, which now extended from Switzerland to Lille, there was a wide gap, squarely in front of Ypres and extending from Menin to Roulers. Field Marshal Sir John French had sent Sir Douglas Haig north with the First Army Corps; Allemby's cavalry, already about Armentieres, was to cooperate with it, and this force, together with the Seventh Division, seizing the crossings of the Lys from Menin to Courtrai, was designed to turn the exterme flank of all the German armies, aim at their communications and compel a retirement from the coast toward Brussels, which was not felt to be beyond the reach of the Allies. Such a success would isolate Besseler, on the Yser, and probably lead to the capture of his army. In any event, it would release Lille and the industrial regions of Northern France, then firmly held by the German armies, which had been brought north and west from the Aisne and Lorraine fronts. And in conformity with this strategy French ordered Rawlinson to move out of Ypres on October 17 and seize the crossings of the Lys at Menin.

Information Was Wrong.

Once more, as at Mons, British information was wholly out of accord with the fact. Actually the Allies had in or approaching the region between the Lys and the Yser less than 100,000 men, of whom only some French cavalry and Rawlinson's seventh division had actually arrived, while the Germans were moving four corps and some other formations, upwards of half a million men, into this Ypres sector. Already aware of an impending change, but still unable to measure the extent of the threat, Rawlinson conformed to the imperious order of French, and the next day moved the seventh division out of Zonnebeke.

On October 19 the seventh division sent out a brigade from Zonnebeke, which actually reached the Roulers-Menin highroad, but there it encountered the advance guards of two German corps, and was compelled to fall back rapidly to Zonnebeke. October 19 thus marks the end of the advance toward Menin and the crossings of the Lys. That night Sir Douglas Haig reached Ypres, and the next day his first army corps came up. At once there was posed the question as to whether it should be put in to the east, to support the seventh division on the Messines-Zonnebeke Ridge north of the Menin road, or sent north to cover the flank from Zonnebeke through Langemarck to Bixschoote. Unless it was sent to the support of the seventh division there was now danger that Rawlinson would be overwhelmed, but if it were sent thither, then a gap would open in the Allied line between Zonnebeke and the marshes, and the Germans coming south through Langemarck would outflank both the British and the Belgians, drive a wedge between them and have an open road to Calais and Boulogne.

Line Complete, But Thin.

Sir John French chose to risk the former peril and sent Haig north. When he was in position the Allied line from Switzerland to the sea was complete, but from the Lys to Yser it was incredibly thin, and for some days no reinforcements were available, as the French troops Joffre was sending up would not arrive before the 23rd, and did not all come until the 24th. As the first battle of Ypres began, then, the British held the front from the inundated district at Bixschoote along the Pilkem and Gravenstafel Ridges to the Messines-Zonnebeke Ridge east of this town, and thence south along the ridge through Becelaere and Zandecvorde to the Comines Canal. South of the canal Allemby's cavalry held the Messines-Wytschaete sector with ridiculously insignificant cavalry screens.

October 20 the real battle opens.

From October 20 to October 31 the fighting about Ypres was intense. On October 23 and 24 the arrival of the French Ninth Corps permitted Sir Douglas Haig to bring his First Corps from the Pilkem-Gravenstafel to the Messines-Zonnebeke Ridge, and thus reinforce the 7th Division, which was rapidly approaching the point of annihilation. But, despite all effort, the British were slowly but surely driven from the crest of the Messines-Zonnebeke Ridge, and on October 31 their line was actually broken on the Menin road, near Gheluvelt. This was the crisis of the whole battle, the moment when Sir John French himself sent the cooks, the hostlers and every available man to the front line.

A lost battle was saved by the sudden appearance of the Second Worcesters on the flank of the Germans advancing on the Menin road, west of Gheluvelt. The line was restored, but Gheluvelt was lost, as Zandevorde had been, and the front now ran from Zonnebeke south through the Polygon wood to a point on the Menin road just west of Gheluvelt. Like Meade after the first day of Gettysburg, French had been battered into a new, but strongly defensible position; from Zonnebeke to the Menin road, the new front was now to endure for many months and never to be lost to a direct attack. But it was an exhausted and almost annihilated force which now held the line.

Germany's Greatest Victory.

On November 1 the Germans shifted their attack to the Messines-Wytschaete front and seized the southern end of the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge. This was their greatest success in the whole battle, and a French army corps which arrived the next day and retook both Messines and Wytschaete was unable to hold either. The capture of Messines and Wytschaete really created the Ypres salient. Henceforth the Germans, from the highest ground in the whole region, looked down upon the rear and commanded the communications of the British in and east of Ypres. After November 1 the battle of Ypres continued with diminishing fury up to November 11, when the Prussian Guard made its celebrated attack, temporarily pierced the British line between Gheluvelt and Veldthoek, on the Menin road, and was thereafter annihilated.

The eleven days between October 21 and November 1 are the days of the great stress on the British front, and in this time that portion of the British expeditionary army which fought about Ypres was practically exterminated. The 7th Division alone lost 356 out of 400 officers, and 9,664 out of 12,000 rank and file. At Ypres alone the British losses were 40,000. The German loss has been placed as high as 250,000, and probably exceeded the loss at the Marne. For three weeks the British fought an enemy five times as numerous and equipped with heavy artillery and machine guns, both of which weapons were lacking to the British in any useful number. Probably 60 per cent—perhaps more—of the British army were killed, wounded or captured, but in the end they still held Ypres and the lines before it. For such an achievement all praise is inadequate. And at Ypres Britain's professional army perished, but its tradition became henceforth imperishable.

British Hold the Gate.

Unlike the Spartans, who died in defeat, the British army had held its gate.

The close of the first battle of Ypres saw the Allies holding one of the most remarkable positions in all the front from Belfort to Nieuport. Pushed eastward from Ypres was a sausage-shaped salient or bulge, extending north-northeast to its greatest depth at Gravenstafel, six miles from Ypres. The base of this salient was the Ypres-Comines-Yser Canal, and between the two points where the German line touched the canal, north and south of Ypres, was barely seven miles. South of this canal possession of the Messines and Wytschaete hills gave the Germans direct observation and splendid artillery sweep of the whole rear of the salient. But north of the canal the British still clung to the western slope of the ridge, from the vicinity of Gheluvelt to a point east of Zonnebeke, and from Zonnebeke westward they held both the Gravenstafel and Pilkem ridges as far as the western limits of Langemarck. Between Langemarck and the canal at Steenstraete a division of French colonials was in line.

In April, 1915, the British were preparing for their subsequent offensive southward near LaBassee. The French had recalled their best troops from this front to participate in Foch's great Artois operation, and most of the few heavy British guns had likewise gone south. There was no expectation of any considerable German operation in the Ypres sector, and Allied journals were heralding the coming of the spring offensive, which was to throw the Germans out of France and Belgium. Toward the last of the third week in April an attack, preceded by the explosion of a mine, had given the British a brief hold on Hill No. 60, a mound near the point where the Ypres-Comines Canal crossed the battle front. Heavy attack and counter-attack on this point occupied the attention of the world in the next few days.

The Gas Attack.

But on April 22 came one of the most dramatic and terrible episodes of the war. Toward evening the Germans suddenly loosed vast quantities of chlorine gas against the French colonial division standing between Langemarck and the Ypres-Yser canal at Steenstraete. The result was a natural and inevitable panic. The black troops fled south and west toward Ypres and across the canal. Within a brief period the Allied front was broken and for four miles between Langemarck and the canal there was a gap.

East of the colonials were the Canadians. When the French troops fled the Canadian flank was left in the air, while the troops were themselves exposed to gas fumes, and suffered severe losses from this cause. Yet, despite all the circumstances, the Canadians hung on. They drew back their left flank, forming in a half circle, and fought on, holding up for many hours the onrush of the Germans. Here, on this front, the Canadian contingent won their title to rank with the old British army which had held the Ypres position in the autumn, and with their Anzac brethren, who were soon to win equal glory at Gallipoli.

The next morning, Friday, April 23, the situation was critical in the extreme. The Germans had forced the crossing of the Yser canal, between Boesinghe and Steenstraete, and taken Lizerne, while they were in possession of Langemarck and Pilkem and crowding down the roads from these towns towards Ypres itself. Could they push on for but three miles more Ypres would be in their hands and all the troops in the salient east of Ypres would be caught like rats in a trap. That they did not do this can only be charged in part to the bravery of the Canadians and their British supports. In point of fact, the true explanation appears to be that the Germans had not expected so tremendous a success and lacked reserves at the decisive point of the favorable moment. A better chance than the British had had at Neuve Chapelle therefore slipped through their fingers.

Fighting Enemy Back.

In the next few days the siutation slowly improved, although it remained critical during the first days of May. First the French threw the Germans back to the east bank of the canal. At the same time the British brought up troops from all points of their line and closed the gap between the canal and the flank of the Canadians. Even the Belgians from their side of the Yser River sent over reinforcements. Meantime, Germans heavy artillery destroyed the beautiful buildings of Ypres, so far little injured, and the British army suffered from shellfire as it had not suffered even in the first days of the battle about Ypres in the preceding year. To this heavy gunfire it had neither the artillery nor the ammunition to make answer.

By the first of May, the day on which the Germans were to win their great victory of the Dunajec, it was plain that the old Ypres salient could no longer be held. It had become a rectangle three miles wide by six long, thrust forth into the German lines. From the Pilkem Ridge, as well as the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, the Germans had now a sweep over British communications. Accordingly, in the second week of May the British sullenly drew back from the Gravenstafel Ridge, from Zonnebeke, from all the ridge between the Roulers railroad and the Menin road, and occupied a new front in a narrow circle, rather more than a mile east of Ypres.

Almost all the high ground was now lost. All the salvage of the first battle of Ypres, defended with such great gallantry and obstinacy, was surrendered. Second Ypres had been far more costly than the first in territory given up, although it must be remembered that for this the British were not responsible. It was the collapse of the French, under the first gas attack of the war, that precipitated the disaster. Yet even this was a small solace for the Allied publics, which had expected news of a great victory, both in the east (Russian front) and in the west, and in the same hour read of the Dunajec and the surrender of all the ground made memorable in the first Battle of Ypres.

World Indignation Roused.

By May 13 the second Battle of Ypres closed. The German purpose had been accomplished; there had been greater success than in the earlier attack, but the purpose of the April operation was far less colossal than that of the October campaign. Then the road to Calais had been sought. Now the Germans aimed merely to weaken the Allied offensive by drawing from it men, munitions and guns. They sought also to impress the neutral nations, Italy most of all, with their great strength on both fronts. Their strength was proven, but Italy was already lost as a prospective German ally, and the use of the poison gas served to arouse the indignation of all nations outside the Central Alliance. It was one more circumstance in the indictment of civilization against Germany. After Ypres quarter was neither given nor taken for many months on the Ypres front, and before very long the Germans, in their turn, were compelled to endure the suffering incident to a gas attack.

Without the gas the German success would have been unlikely. As it was, the success was limited and the moral consequences evil in the extreme for the Germans. The sinking of the Lusitania while the second battle of Ypres was still proceeding was instantly associated in all minds with the crime of the poison gas. And just as the zeppelins were the best recruiting agency in Britain, German savagery roused Canada to new effort, and in the first three years of the war more than 400,000 Canadians crossed the sea to fight in Flanders and Artois.

Tide Definitely Turned.

Such, briefly, is the history of the origin and development of the Ypres salient. In the first battle of Ypres the Germans, attacking east of the town, mainly on either side of the Menin road, gained the hills of Wytschaete and Messines. In the second they took the Pilken Ridge at the other side of the salient. Henceforth they held it as in a vise between these two ridges until June and August, 1917, when the British first retook Wytschaete and Messines, and then, with the aid of French divisions, swept the Germans off the Pilkem Ridge, retook Pilkem, Bixschoote, Langemarck and St. Julien, and thus abolished the whole salient. Until this time the Ypres salient remained the worst point on the whole Allied front, and for a long period there was a sharp debate in British military circles as to the advisability of holding Ypres or retiring to the hills behind it, Scharpenberg and Kemmel.

Ypres was not evacuated, mainly because of the moral value that attached to it, as a result of the two great battles. Only Verdun could rival the old Flemish citadel, now gone to dust and ashes, in sentimental value in the first three years of the war, and the return of the British to the offensive in this region in the fourth year of the struggle makes it probable that Ypres will remain for the British and the Canadian public the greatest incident in the war. Even the Australians, who came to Flanders ultimately, and rewon Zonnebeke and its surrounding woods in the last days of September, 1917, will probably rank it with Gallipoli, and thus Ypres will retain a place in British imperial history above all other battlefields, for here the solidarity of that empire Germany sought to destroy was proven by its sons from all the lands about the Seven Seas.

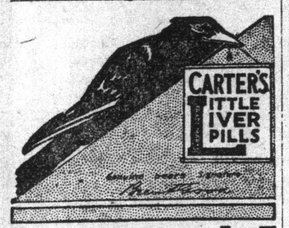
Next week I hope to discuss in detail British progress in recent days in the Ypres salient—the most brilliant achievement of British arms in the war. As these lines are written the British now hold all of the ground on which they stood in October, 1914, save a salient between the Commines Canal and Becelaere. Zandevorde, Gheluvelt and Becelaere are all that remain to be taken—then the road to Menin and to Roulers will be open, and the advance begun and ended on October 17, 1914, can be resumed. Then the third anniversary of first "Wipers" should be a cause for pride and rejoicing everywhere in the British Empire.

FLOUR COMING DOWN.

STRATFORD, Oct. 12.—All grades of flour are reported as having taken a 10-cent drop in price today. Quotations now are: Chief, $6.10; Special, $5.80; Juliet, $5.70.

MAGISTRATE LAWRIE IS CRITICALLY ILL

ST. MARYS, Oct. 12.—Police Magistrate George D. Lawrie is at present seriously ill with pneumonia at his home Church street south. There is little hopes held out for recovery.



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Bile, nature's own laxative, is getting into your blood instead of passing out of your system as it should.

This is the treatment, in successful use for 50 years:—one pill daily (more only when necessary).

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS

Genuine bears Signature Brentwood

Colorless faces often show the absence of Iron in the blood.

Carter's Iron Pills will help this condition.

Cough Nearly Gone in 24 Hours

That's the usual experience with this home-made remedy. Costs little—try it.

Anyone who tries this pleasant tasting home-made cough syrup, will quickly understand why it is used in more homes in the United States and Canada than any other cough remedy. The way it takes hold of an obstinate cough, giving immediate relief, will make you regret that you never tried it before. It is a truly dependable cough remedy that should be kept handy in every home, to use at the first sign of a cough, night or day.

Any druggist can supply you with 2½ ounces of Pinex (50 cents' worth). Pour this into a 16-oz. bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup. The total cost is about 55 cents and you have 16 ounces of the most effective remedy you ever used.

The quick, lasting relief you get from this excellent cough syrup will really surprise you. It promptly heals the inflamed membranes that line the throat and air passages, stops the annoying throat tickle, loosens the phlegm, and soon your cough stops entirely. Splendid for bronchitis, croup, whooping cough and bronchial asthma.

Pinex is a highly concentrated compound of Norway pine extract, and is famous the world over for its healing effect on the membranes.

To avoid disappointment ask for "2½ ounces of Pinex" with full directions and don't accept anything else. A guarantee of absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded goes with this preparation. The Pinex Co., Toronto, Ont.

Ah! That's the Spot

Sloan's Liniment goes right to it. Have you a rheumatic ache or a dull throbbing neuralgic pain? You can find a quick and effective relief in Sloan's Liniment. Thousands of homes have this remedy handy for all external pains because time and time again it has proven the quickest relief.

So clean and easy to apply, too. No rubbing, no stain, no inconvenience as is the case with plasters or ointments. If you once use Sloan's Liniment, you will never be without it.

Generous sized bottles, at all druggists, 25c., 50c., $1.00.

Sloan's Liniment KILLS PAIN

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England's most popular **SAUCE**

There's economy in using H.P.—the odds and ends are made simply delicious with just a few drops of H.P. Sauce.

Of all Stores.

Feared Paralysis When Right Arm Gave Out

Blood Was Thin and Watery and Nerves Starved—Doctored for Years Before Cure Was Found.

St. Thomas, Ont., Oct. 13.—A considerable proportion of the blood is used up in nourishing the nervous system. When the blood gets thin and watery the nerve cells are starved, and there comes headache and neuralgic pain to warn you of the exhausted condition of the nerves.

For years the writer of this letter suffered because she could get no treatment that would form new, rich blood, and thereby restore the starved nervous system.

As time went on she found that she was losing the power of her right arm. Finally she began the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and by persisting with this treatment succeeded, not only in getting back the strength in her right arm, but also in fully restoring the whole nervous system.

Mrs. C. Bremner, 14 Arthur avenue, St. Thomas, Ont., writes:

"I had doctored for some time for a weakness of my right hand, and also for thin blood. I doctored for years for this latter, and all my trouble seemed due to this. My nerves were so bad that I was afraid to stay alone, and if I had to stay up late at night to complete any work I was doing, I would keep some of the children up with me. I used to have some of the most hideous dreams and would wake up in great excitement. I tried a great many remedies without benefit. My husband brought home a box of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food one day, but I was using some doctor's medicine at the time, so did not bother. Later a lady friend said to me: 'Why don't you persevere with the Nerve Food? They have certainly helped me.' So I commenced using them, and dropped all other medicines. After a good treatment of the Nerve Food I felt much better and stronger, and had the full use of my hand. I found that as I got stronger, the nervousness disappeared. I am feeling so much better now that I am able to do all my own work. I always keep a box of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food in the house and would not want to be without it.

"My little girl has also received great benefit from taking some of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. She seemed to be nervous, and was troubled with bed wetting, so I thought I would try them with her, and was pleased to find that she has been completely cured of both troubles.

"I cannot speak too highly of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and would recommend it to anyone suffering from nervous trouble of any kind."

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50c a box, 6 for $2.75, all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Limited, Toronto.—Advt.

"Darkness . . . but look! In Heaven, a light,
And it's shining down . . . God's accolade!
Lift me up friends. I'm going to win—my cross!"

From "Tricolor," by Robert Service

TO the sick and the wounded, the British Red Cross ministers according to the highest traditions of the Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

Small wonder, then, that their insignia dawns upon many a sufferer's returning consciousness as God's Accolade!

To Ontario is given the privilege of once more leading the Empire in aiding the work of the British Red Cross, by contributing generously to its cause.

On "Our Day"—October 18
Let Your Gift Be Generous

A Few Facts About the Work of the British Red Cross

The British Red Cross Society is the only institution which carries voluntary aid to the Sick and Wounded of the British forces on land and sea in every region of the War.

Its work is therefore the concern of all classes of British subjects, whether living in the British Isles, in the Dominions and Colonies beyond the seas, or in foreign countries.

IN GREAT BRITAIN

$100,000 for initial outlay in providing and equipping after-care institutions for totally disabled men.

$100,000 for materials for Red Cross Working Parties.

40,000 books and magazines supplied weekly for the sick and wounded.

460 Motor Ambulances, Cars, etc., for Home Service.

28 Command Depots and Convalescent Camps regularly visited and supplied with Comforts and Games.

The home (London, Eng.) administration and management expenses (excluding hospitals) for the year ended 20th October, 1916, represent 2.92 per cent. of the total expenditure, or less than 3 cents on the dollar. Audited accounts have been supplied to the Canadian Red Cross Society.

Red Cross work costs over $300,000 per week or $30 a minute.

SIR GEO. C. GIBBONS, Hon. Chairman
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