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MARKED INCREASE IN WEEKLY TOLL OF SHIPS SUNK BY U-BOATS AUSTRO-GERMANS STRIVE IN VAIN TO BREACH ITALIAN LINES GERMANS NOW HAVE 154 DIVISIONS MASSES AGAINST ENTENTE LINES IN WEST

TEUTONS STRIVE HARD TO WIN ITALIAN PASSES

Heavy Fighting in Italian Mountain Regions-- Austro-Germans Make Attempt to Force Crossing of Piave River.

Headquarters of the Italian Army in Northern Italy, Dec. 19.—Heavy fighting has again developed both in the northern mountain region and along the lower Piave. The enemy has made five separate attempts to cross the Sile and Piave. The main effort was about three miles above the mouth of the river, where pontoons and a bridge were used. The first party succeeded in getting across, but after a series of furious attacks was driven back to the water's edge, where it still held.

of the Brenta River, and the Italian line was correspondingly retired. The fighting was desperate, as both sides feel the importance of controlling this vital link leading to the plain. Attacks Continue All Day. Rome, Dec. 19.—Austro-German forces on the Italian mountain front made a determined effort yesterday to advance on the line between Col Caprino and Monte Pericco. The war office announced today that only in the Monte Asolone zone did the enemy gain ground and maintain it. The sanguinary fighting that resulted from this enemy effort lasted all day. Took Two Thousand Prisoners. Berlin, Dec. 19.—Austro-German forces yesterday stormed the Italian positions on Monte Asolone and the adjoining heights, according to the official statement issued today by the German staff. More than 2,000 soldiers were captured.

CAN KEEP ENEMY FORCES FROM VENETIAN PLAINS

Allies in Better Shape Than Ever to Hold Teutons to Mountain Positions.

With the French Army in Italy, Monday, Dec. 17.—There is growing confidence in the strength of the allied forces to hold back the Austro-Germans from breaking thru into the plains. The snow, which after falling last week only in sufficient quantities to make the frontal positions plainly visible, but not enough to obstruct the enemy's progress, has now begun again, and apparently in earnest. Although the Austrians have had benefit for three days, every desperate effort to advance has been frustrated. A marked strengthening of the French positions since they took up their front has been noted, principally by the greatly reduced casualties. The attacks have not ceased nor lessened in violence, but the crack French troops have altered and deepened their trenches, on the one hand, making themselves more secure against the enemy, and on the other hand are taking up positions which give them controlling observation advantages such as the Austrians have elsewhere, which enable them to outflank any Austrian attack on the upper Piave. The alteration of the trenches is going on everywhere and is considered of special importance, as the original shelters were so shallow that the men were constantly exposed to rifle fire and sniping unless they moved about bent nearly double.



SACRILEGE TO THE DOGS OF WAR

No church, no matter how beautiful, is immune from the shells of the Germans. They wreck every conceivable structure, no matter whether it be a place of worship or a peasant's shack. This unique photo shows the remains of the Ypres Cathedral, and the Cloth Hall in Grande Place. The tottering walls are all that remain of one of the most beautiful structures in Europe.—British official photo.

NAVIES AND SHIPYARDS NULLIFY SUB EFFORTS

Britain Last Month Launched as Much Tonnage as U-Boats Destroyed--America Speeds Up Ship Construction.

New York, Dec. 19.—Arthur Pollen, the British naval expert, who has sailed for Europe after spending six months in the United States, gave to the Associated Press a statement in which he said that the campaign of the allied navies against the submarine has at last resulted in keeping the world's tonnage from showing a monthly decrease, or will soon do so. Mr. Pollen gives credit for this success to the change in the chief command carried out by the British admiralty last spring and the participation in the campaign of the American navy. Mr. Pollen pointed out that six months ago the German submarines were causing a net attrition in the world's tonnage at the rate of nearly 25 per cent. annually. While the present rate of attrition is difficult to estimate, it appeared that last month Great Britain launched as much tonnage as she lost; the first ship laid down by the United States since the war has been launched, and within the next twelve months a substantial portion of the six million tons provided for in this country will undoubtedly be added. Great Britain's shipbuilding program will similarly increase month by month, and moreover the campaign of the allied navies against the submarine will grow in value week by week, he said.

tre of war. This is a tremendous result. Speaking of the change in the chief command of the British admiralty, Mr. Pollen said: "In bringing about this new order of things at Whitehall the reformers were undoubtedly assisted, first, by the fact that an extremely effective, well-equipped and brilliantly commanded contingent of American destroyers was already at work in a very important area of the theatre of war, and next, by the British Government waking up to the truth that the belligerent America meant not only the co-operation of a very gallant and enterprising ally, but the domestication, so to speak, of a new and extremely intelligent critic." Important Consultations. Mr. Pollen also mentioned the consultations with the British admiralty of "three distinguished and resourceful American naval officers"—Admirals Sims, Mayo and Benson. "Through these men," he said, "we have gained a first-hand experience of the reality of war and has been able to contribute an important and impartial judgment upon the character of the operations to be pursued and of the methods of command under which they should be carried out. I cannot doubt for a moment that much of the improved efficiency of the counter-campaign is due to this intellectual stimulus." Mr. Pollen paid tribute to Secretary of the Navy Daniels, praising what he described as the secretary's policy of obtaining loyal team work by allowing the forces under his orders to be directed, in strictly professional matters, "according to the judgment and advice of the singularly able and efficient officers that, so to speak, form his council of war." Adverting to the recent North Sea raid by Germans, Mr. Pollen said: "The only remarkable thing about such incidents is not their occasional occurrence but their rarity. Were the British or the American navy in the position of the German navy I fancy they would be far more frequent."

GEN. SARRAIL IS RECALLED FROM SALONICA COMMAND

Has Been on Macedonian Front for Over Two Years--Successor to Be Another Frenchman, Gen. Guillemet.

London, Dec. 19.—General Sarrail, commander of the allied armies at Salonica, has been recalled, according to newspaper announcements in Athens, says a Reuters despatch from the Greek capital, under date of December 15. The successor of General Sarrail in command of the Macedonian forces is it is stated, will be General Guillemet. General M. P. E. Sarrail has been identified with the allied operations based on Salonica since October, 1915, when he was sent to command the French expeditionary force engaged in an attempt to succor the Serbians during the Teutonic-Bulgarian drive that resulted in the overrunning of Serbian territory. When Salonica was turned into an allied base and active operations on the Macedonian front began by the entente forces the next year, General Sarrail directed the united operations of the allies and his

since remained in command on this front. Gen. Sarrail's chief services previous to going to Salonica were performed during the battle of the Marne when he held the German Crown Prince's army in the Argonne and prevented the investment of Verdun, and in the Dardanelles where he commanded the French expeditionary force after General Gouraud was wounded there and subsequently relieved in August, 1915. Although there are several officers bearing the name of Guillemet in the French army it seems not improbable that the man selected to succeed General Sarrail may be General Guillemet laumait who commanded the French armies at Verdun during their brilliant operations last summer when they completed the recovery of virtually all the ground that the Germans had won in their 1916 drive.

SEVENTEEN BRITISH MERCHANTMEN SUNK

Fourteen of Destroyed Ships Were in 4,600-Ton Class; Three of Less Tonnage.

London, Dec. 19.—Fourteen British merchantmen of more than 1600 tons and three under that tonnage were sunk by mine or submarine during the week ending December 15, according to a preliminary statement tonight. One fishing vessel also was sunk. The shipping losses by mine or submarine in the past week are slightly under those of the previous week, when 14 vessels of more than 1600 tons and seven under that tonnage were destroyed. Light French Losses. Paris, Dec. 19.—The losses to French shipping by mine or submarine for the week ending December 15 were exceedingly light. Only one vessel under 1600 tons was sunk, and none over 1600 tons. One ship was attacked, but escaped. No fishing craft was sunk.

ALL SURPLUS OUTPUT OF GRAIN MILLS BOUGHT

Surplus Flour and Oatmeal From Canadian Plants Purchased by Allied Nations. Calgary, Dec. 19.—It is learned that the purchasing representatives of the allied governments have arranged to take all the surplus flour and oatmeal manufactured by the mills of Canada, and that already every mill in the Dominion is working to capacity and will continue to do so until the war is over. The Calgary mills are grinding night and day and the surplus above Canada's requirements are apportioned to those plants in their order to the purchasing agents of the allied governments by the managements in the east.

HOSTILE RAIDS FAIL ALONG BRITISH FRONT

Only Minor Operations and Artillery Activities Reported by Field Marshal Haig. London, Dec. 19.—Minor operations only are reported in the statement from Field Marshal Haig's headquarters tonight. The text of the statement reads: "During the night a hostile raiding party was driven off by our fire east of Guemappe (Arras sector). Other raiding parties attacked two of our posts in the neighborhood of Avion. Two of our men are missing. "As a result of raids unsuccessfully attempted by the enemy last night near Passchendaele we captured 14 prisoners and four machine guns. "The enemy's artillery has shown considerable activity in the neighborhood of Ploegsteert and Polygon Wood (Ypres sector)."

FIELD MARSHAL HAIG REORGANIZES STAFF

Important Changes Proceed at British General Headquarters. London, Dec. 19.—Field Marshal Haig, commander-in-chief of the British forces in France, The Times says it understands, is making important changes in his headquarters staff, which up to this time has virtually been unaltered since he took over the supreme command.

HUGE GERMAN ARMY MASSES FOR BIG DRIVE

One Hundred and Fifty-Four Enemy Divisions on West Front. RANKS ARE FILLED UP

Allies, However, Have Considerable Numerical Superiority.

Washington, Dec. 19.—Germany's strength on the Franco-British front is placed in official despatches received today at 154 divisions, or within one division of the great force massed there last July, when the German military effort against France was at its maximum. Withdrawals from Russia and drafts upon the younger classes of reserves have enabled the kaiser not only to make up the enormous losses suffered in bloody battles with the allies, but to replace the men sent to aid the Austrians in their invasion of Italy. Winter therefore finds the Germans with armies facing the allies in France very equal to the largest ever before, with advertisement of a great offensive, which may preface another peace proposal. The allies, however, are understood to maintain a considerable superiority in numbers on the French front.

VIOLATED HOLY PLACES IN CITY OF JERUSALEM

Turks Robbed Church of Holy Sepulchre and Brutally Mistreated Christian Dignitaries.

Washington, Dec. 19.—An official despatch received here today, from France says that the Turks before surrendering at Jerusalem to the British brutally mistreated Christian priests, carried off the famous treasure of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, valued at millions of dollars, and sent to Berlin the church's celebrated ostensory of brilliants. Monsignor Camassei, the patriarch of Jerusalem, is said to have been deposited from his office, and Father Piccardo, an Italian priest, to have died from the effects of Turkish brutality. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre had remained unlooted heretofore during all the centuries of Moslem occupation of Jerusalem. The same despatch told of indignation among Mussulmen of Asia Minor over the action of a German general in establishing staff headquarters in the great mosque of the City of Aleppo, near the Syrian border.

INVEST IN DINEEN'S FURS.

Make your Christmas purchase one of furs. The high cost of wearing apparel does not apply to furs, and prices are therefore moderate. There is an article at Dineen's for every member of the household. Dineen's values may be counted at 15 to 25 per cent. price advantage in quality. Dineen's, 140 Yonge street.

BRITISH BRING DOWN TWO GERMAN RAIDERS

Six Squadrons of Enemy Planes Bomb British Counties--Ten Killed and Seventy Injured in City of London.

London, Dec. 19.—Ten persons were killed and seventy injured in London during last night's air raid. Outside of London five persons were injured. The following official communication in regard to casualties was given out: "Last night's air raid casualties were: Ten killed and seventy injured in London; only five injured outside London. "Several fires occurred. The material damage was not serious. There was no damage to naval or military establishments. "Sixteen Enemy Raiders. The text of the statement issued today by Lord French, commander of the British home forces, reads: "The latest reports indicate that from 18 to 20 enemy airplanes took part in last night's air raid. Three groups of raiders crossed the Kent coast between 6:15 and 6:25 p.m. Three other groups crossed the Essex coast between 6:30 and 6:45 p.m. All six groups made towards London. Most of the raiders were turned back by gun fire at various places, only about five machines actually reaching and bombing the capital between 7 and 8 p.m. "After the main attack on London had terminated a single airplane made its way over the capital about 9 p.m. "One raider, hit by gunfire, finally came down in the sea off the Kentish coast, two of its crew of three men being captured alive by an armed trawler. There is reason to suppose that another enemy airplane came down in the channel, but this has not been confirmed up to the present. "One of our pilots attacked and fired two drums of ammunition into a raider as the latter was in the act of dropping bombs on London from a height of 13,000 feet. Another of our pilots also engaged the enemy over London and a third in the vicinity of the capital coast between 6:15 and 6:25 p.m. All our machines returned safely. "Full reports of the casualties and damage in London have not yet been received. "Bombs also were dropped at various places in Kent and Essex."

BOLSHEVIKI FACING MANY HOME TROUBLES

Maximalists, Talking Peace With Central Powers, Can't Keep Their Own House in Order.

London, Dec. 19.—Britain officially is taking no notice of the "general peace negotiations" between the Bolsheviks and the Central Powers, for Russia, and the foreign ministers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Having negotiated an armistice, it was assumed the Russians and central powers' delegates would doubtless agree upon the terms of a separate peace. The main interest here was whether the Bolsheviks were able to make such a separate peace stick. The Lenin-Trotsky combination is now faced with at least two formidable revolts—that under the Cossack generals, and a separatist movement, which today's despatches indicated had broken out in violent fighting between Ukrainians and Bolshevik troops at Odessa. More than a score of Russian provinces have repudiated the Bolsheviks and are attempting independence. "Fighting at Odessa. Dec. 19.—Ukrainian troops and Bolshevik guards are fighting in the streets here today. The opera house, headquarters of the Ukrainians, has been equipped with machine guns, which have been turned on the Bolsheviks. The latter are replying with rifle fire. "Maximalists vs. Ukrainians. Petrograd, Dec. 19.—Heavy fighting at Odessa was reported today. The Maximalists still hold the port. Ukrainian troops are snelling them. The Bolsheviks' office also announced today that their forces are advancing toward Kiev. Cossack rebels are attacking Astrakhan. "Threaten the Revolvers. Petrograd, Dec. 19.—The Bolshevik Government today served an ultimatum on the Ukrainians demanding that they cease granting aid to the Cossack rebellion of General Kalaidnes within 48 hours else a state of war would be declared against them.

STATE OF SIEGE NOW IN RUSSIAN CAPITAL

Bolshevik Take Stringent Action to Restore Order in Petrograd--Cossacks Take Rostov.

Petrograd, Dec. 19.—The executive council of workmen and soldiers' deputies has proclaimed a state of siege in Petrograd in an effort to repress disorders due to the looting of wine cellars and shops. "COSSACKS CAPTURE ROSTOV. London, Dec. 19.—A Petrograd despatch to The Post says that the Cossacks finally occupied Rostov Monday. The infantry joined the Cossacks, the rearwards surrendering. Gen. Kalaidnes, hetman of the Cossacks, has proposed to the Bolshevik government that civil strife cease, stipulating the independence of the Don territory and non-intervention by the Maximalists.

AMERICA'S FIGHTING SHIPS NOW TOTAL OVER THOUSAND

Personnel of U. S. Fleet is 280,000, as Against 64,000 When Uncle Sam Entered War ---424 Naval Craft Building.

Washington, Dec. 19.—A recital by Secretary Daniels of how the navy prepared for war by adding several hundred ships to the fleet and letting contracts for hundreds of others, including dreadnoughts, battle cruisers, destroyers and auxiliaries, and an explanation of the operation of the navy supply department by Rear Admiral McGowan, paymaster-general, marked the opening today of the inquiry by a house sub-committee into the navy's war activities. "We have 424 ships in course of construction," Secretary Daniels told the committee. "That does not include

FARMERS HERE TO CONFER ON BIG PROBLEMS

Agriculturists From All Over Province Meet in Toronto for Three Days.

ASSOCIATION GROWS

This Year Shows Great Increase in Membership of the Organization.

The fourth annual conference of the United Farmers of Ontario commenced a three-day session in Toronto in the assembly hall of the Labor Temple yesterday morning amid much enthusiasm. President R. H. Halbert was in the chair. The features of yesterday's meeting, which continued far into the night, and which was attended by over 500 delegates from all over the province, were the secretary-treasurer's report, President Halbert's address, and an extended discussion upon the projected increase in the per capita tax and a splendid all-round progress of the affairs of the association was reported. Secretary-Treasurer J. J. Morrison, in the course of his annual report pointed out that the strength of the organization had increased in membership from 8000 to 12,000 during the past year, and the number of clubs within the purview of the organization had increased from 200 in 1914-17 to 315 during the present year. At the time there were some 250,000 farmers in Ontario, the membership of organized farmers still stood in the ratio of 1 to 20. But the increase in the membership had been remarkable during the past year. Another notable feature of the history of the past year was the quickening of the interest among women, many of whom were directly interested in the grain growers' movement, due to some extent to the increase in the per capita tax and the largest club in the country was at Uxbridge, which had a paid-up membership of 150, and was sending nine delegates to the convention. Per Capita Increase. The discussion as to the need of increasing the per capita tax per member was full of interest. Secretary Morrison, touching upon the need of the increase, pointed to the many benefits that would accrue to the farmer through legislation which would bring about a balance of interest on \$2000 to the credit of the association, but this was being used up to a considerable

AIRDROME AT ENGEL BOMBED BY BRITISH

Explosives Dropped on Ammunition and Railway Sidings--Foe Planes Are Downed.

London, Dec. 19.—The successful bombing by British naval aircraft of the Engel airdrome, behind the German lines in Flanders, is announced in today's admiralty statement. The text reads: "Naval aircraft dropped bombs which burst close to the sheds and on the ammunition dump and railway sidings at the Engel airdrome on Tuesday. One enemy aircraft was brought down ablaze and one out of control. All of our machines returned safely."

OLD CRUISER IS TORPEDOED.

London, Dec. 19.—An enemy submarine has torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea the old French cruiser Chateaufort, which was being used as a transport. The soldiers aboard the vessel were saved, but ten members of the crew of the vessel were lost.