

BRITISH FIGHT WITHIN RANGE OF ARTILLERY ON 'HINDENBURG LINE'

Field Marshal's Report Indicates Near Approach to New Prepared Front.

CITY OF ROISEL OCCUPIED

Position Taken Is Scant Five Miles From Supposed New Line and Night Miles Beyond Peronne.

By Ed. L. Keen. London, March 24.—(U. P.)—British troops tonight fought within range of the German guns on the "Hindenburg line."

Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reported tonight his forces had fought their way through the German rear guards in a conflict that was becoming increasingly bitter, and had occupied Roisel, eight miles beyond Peronne and a scant five miles distant from the Cambrai-St. Quentin line, which is supposed to be the prepared German front.

The city is on a line with Ham, Guiscard and Chauny, all of which have been occupied by the advancing Franco-British forces.

German Resistance Stiffens.

The German resistance was apparently stiffening all along the line. Counter attacks, apparently in force rather than by a few straggling detachments, were reported in General Haig's dispatches, indicating the Germans were resorting to mass fighting again. "Between Beaumont and Cambrai strong enemy detachments attacked and gained a foothold in our trenches," said the Haig statement. "We encountered and ejected the enemy, killing many and taking a few prisoners. On a front of a mile and a half southwest and west of Ecoustain we made progress. Enemy attacks on this section, and also north of Boiry and Beaucourt were repulsed in heavy fighting."

Trenches Are Entered.

"East of Arras we launched a successful raid, which carried us into second line, enemy trenches, inflicting heavy casualties."

East of Neuville St. Vaast we entered enemy trenches, killing a number and bombing dugouts.

"Westward from Messines hostile raiders reached our trenches."

Artillery activities continued throughout the day in the neighborhood of Ypres.

In the neighborhood of Richebourg-British forces repulsed a German attack, the report said.

French Maintain Speed.

On the French front later dispatches indicated the French were maintaining the same speed which characterized their pursuit of the Germans from the start, but on the British front the resistance of the Teutons was increasing.

General Nivelle was apparently pouring in concentration forces in his effort to force the wedge which he has already driven ahead in the German rear positions of the retreat.

From front dispatches tonight it was assumed by military experts here that the whole line of the Franco-British advance now is approximately seven miles in front of the "Hindenburg line" all the way from around Arras down to La Fere. The French at points southwest of La Fere, are even nearer what is supposed to be the German defense line.

Weather Against Allies.

The weather conditions on the western front are against the allies, and it is considered remarkable that their advance has been as swift as reported, in view of the necessity of rebuilding practically the entire country and in a time when snow, rain and sleet are not conducive to good engineering programs, such as road building.

Fighting on the western front naturally overshadowed all military actions tonight, but military observers were interested in the increase in the fighting on the northeast (Russian front), reported by both Petrograd and Berlin. Apparently Germany is feeling out the strength of the Russian forces, under the new democratic government of Russia. Petrograd admitted a short retirement in certain sections, between the Sulcha and Chivnia rivers.

French Take More Villages.

Paris, March 24.—(U. P.)—Despite flooding of the ground by retreating Germans, French forces continued their advance tonight, according to the official statement.

"On the eastern bank of the Ailette several villages were captured. North of Margival many German dead were found in the trenches."

"On the Somme we pressed the enemy back to the outskirts of Savy, where they had prepared trenches."

"From the Somme to the Oise we followed up our success and our troops battled with the enemy, which defended foot by foot and was driven back one kilometer."

"Beyond Grand Serancourt and Gisors, we captured the western bank of the Oise."

"North of Banteuil we captured two advanced forts."

"At Soissons, the report said, many large shells from German long range guns fell within the French lines."

Congratulations of Kaiser Sent to King

Berlin, March 24.—(L. N. S.)—Emperor Wilhelm has sent a message of congratulation to King Ferdinand of Bulgaria in connection with the Bulgarian resistance against French attacks on the Macedonian front.

WITHDRAWN FROM BELGIUM



Brand Whitlock, United States Minister to Belgium, who, with other representatives of this government, has been formally withdrawn with instructions to take up official residence at Havre.

STATEMENT OF WHITLOCK'S WITHDRAWAL

[Following is the text of the official statement issued by the state department at Washington Saturday relative to the withdrawal of Minister Brand Whitlock from Belgium.]

Washington, March 24.—"By direction of the president, the minister at Brussels has been instructed to withdraw from Belgium, with all diplomatic and consular officers, and to take up his official residence at Havre."

"After consultation with the commission for relief of Belgium, Mr. Whitlock has also been instructed to arrange for the departure of the American members of the commission."

"The step, the seriousness of which is fully appreciated by the government, was taken only after careful consideration and full consultation with all the interests involved."

German Restrictions Tolerated.

"When diplomatic relations with Germany were broken off the normal procedure would have been to withdraw the minister at Brussels and the American members of the relief commission. Both this government and the commission, however, felt a heavy moral responsibility for the millions of innocent civilians behind the German lines and it was decided that the work of the commission must be kept going despite all difficulties until considerable participation became impossible. For over two years it has been the single minded purpose of this government and the commission to see that these 10,000,000 of civilians were fed and with this end in view, the Americans concerned have submitted to restrictions imposed upon them by the German authorities which under normal conditions would never have been tolerated."

Whitlock Was Hampered.

"Immediately after the break in relations the German authorities in Brussels withdrew from Mr. Whitlock the diplomatic privileges and immunities which he had until that time enjoyed. His courier service to the Hague was stopped; he was denied the privilege of communicating with the department of state in cipher, and later even in plain language. The members of the relief commission were placed under great restrictions of movements and communication, which hampered the efficient performance of their task. In spite of all these difficulties, the government and commission were determined to keep the work going till the last possible moment."

Relief Ships Attacked.

"Now, however, a more serious difficulty has arisen. In the course of the past 10 days several of the commission's ships have been attacked without warning by German submarines in flagrant violation of the solemn agreements of the German government. Protests addressed by this government to Berlin through the intermediary of the Spanish government have not been answered. The German government's disregard of its written undertakings causes grave concern as to the future of the relief work. In any event, it is felt that the American staff of the commission can no longer serve with advantage in Belgium. Although a verbal promise has been made that the members of the commission would be permitted to leave if they so desire, the German government's observance of its other undertakings has not been such that the department would feel warranted in accepting responsibility for leaving these American citizens in German occupied territory."

Attempt to Undertake Work.

"This government has approved the proposal of the Netherlands government to send into Belgium a certain number of Netherlands subjects to carry on the work thus far performed by the American staff."

WILSON ORDERS U. S. MINISTER TO QUIT BELGIUM

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"The American people must be aroused and must make more contributions," he said.

"Should congress decide upon making any financial advances to the allies, there is no question but that \$150,000,000 would be marked for the use of the American commission in the continuation of its relief work."

American Relief Slight.

"To this extent America will repay a part of its debt to France, and will discharge also the obligation it has already felt to Belgium. It must not be forgotten that, although the American commission has done the work, France has been left by us to pay, not only the cost of food taken into northern France by the commission, but French institutions also furnish nearly one half of the funds used by the commission in the purchase and shipping of food into Belgium."

"In making our contributions, America, therefore, will only follow the precedent established by France and Great Britain, notwithstanding the difficulties and other tremendous burdens imposed by prosecution of the war."

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BERLIN SAYS HEAVY LOSSES HAVE BEEN SUFFERED BY ALLIES

Press Agency Gives Details of Retirement on the West Front.

MANY DEAD ARE COUNTED

Batteries Had Advantages Over Pursuing Troops, It Is Contended; Punishment Severe.

Berlin, March 24.—(U. P.)—Heavy losses suffered by British and French troops following the Germans in their successful evacuation of western positions were detailed in a German press agency statement today.

"During rain and snow the English and French followed the Germans across the evacuated and destroyed district," the statement said. "The pace of their advance is regulated by the protecting German cavalry and infantry."

"Being attempts to break the German lines of such posts the English suffered heavy losses in the unknown terrain. Near a village south of the Ancre, in a narrow space, 12 dead English were seen on the ground, and in another place 200, close together."

Two Battalions Caught.

"Two battalions tried to settle in a gigantic crater blasted on a street, but were caught under a heavy sniping fire by the German artillery. Grenade fire killed a number and the remainder hastened backward."

Otherwise the Germans inflicted heavy losses on the following units: The 19th division of the German army was always exactly informed about the range and had the advantage of observation posts.

"Batteries and infantry masses suffered in the same fashion. The French, on March 20, tried to occupy Ruoy, northeast of Ham, with large detachments of cavalry, but were forced to retreat in the afternoon."

Heavy Losses Alleged.

The attack, which was attempted with two battalions from the district of Leauy and Crampy, northeast of Soissons, was a heavy one. On the heights west of the Meuse, against French tanks, the captured trenches, without exception, remained in the German possession. Artillery booty was increased to eight officers, 54 of ranks, 33 machine guns and three mitrailleurs."

NEW SITUATION IN FRANCE RELEASES TROOPS, IT IS HELD

Berlin, Via Seyville Wireless, March 24.—(U. P.)—The new situation created on the western front," by the German retirement of cavalry, has been considered according to a detailed review of the military strategy of the enterprise issued today by the official government press agency.

"By the German operations on the west front," the statement said, "troops were disengaged from positions in Picardy which they had held for two years and which were in our positions. Cavalry of both sides entered into touch; thus a completely new situation has been created."

Evacuation Began February 4.

"The beginning of the German operations dated back as far as the evacuation of Grandcourt, February 4."

"Further disengagement was then carried out systematically at dates fixed exactly beforehand. The next step was that the German positions on both sides of the Ancre were withdrawn on the evening of February 22. Great changes during March occurred on the night of the 12th. A salient near Grevillers, the first district next to Bapaume, was abandoned without notice by the enemy."

A German position between Avre and the Oise, during the progress of French positions for attack, was held by uninterruptedly decreasing forces until the 23d, when only a few outposts remained. However, these sufficed to repulse sanguinarily French reconnoitering advances."

Resistance Offered Pursuers.

"Only on the 16th, did the French succeed in occupying German positions, after violent engagements with our reconnoitering parties."

"Simultaneously, positions farther north were abandoned, and on the 14th Peronne was evacuated. The English did not occupy the burning town until the evening of the 17th."

"During this time the French entered Noyon. The inhabitants were not dragged away, as has been the practice of our enemies; but all positions surrendered—a Prize

sible consideration was taken, and a majority of them were left behind.

"These complicated operations of the disengagement succeeded completely, and they belong to the most splendid achievements of the whole war. They were carried like maneuvers in time of peace."

PREPARATIONS ARE RUSHED BY ALL BRANCHES

(Continued From Page One.)

formed today that another American was jeopardized in the sinking of the Norwegian steamer Ronald, though there was some warning in the case.

The government, however, expects no change in Germany's policy.

There is still talk that Germany may be forced into an earlier peace now that the United States is being drawn in, but the government is not permitting this to react in any way upon full, immediate preparations for the defense of defense—and possibly offense.

By April 2, when congress assembles to frame the government's course toward Germany, the war department will have completed plans for the part the army will take in the scheme of defense—and possibly offense.

Secretary of War Baker announced today he will at that time present a full program with requests for necessary appropriations.

Whether universal military service will be urged it has been impossible to determine yet. Army officers and department officials are known to be virtually unanimous in favor of immediate adoption of the system.

Secretary Baker and President Wil-

son have yet to indicate the position they will take in this big question.

On one point, however, there seems to be no question. The army will have to be vastly augmented, even if it is not decided to send an army abroad.

A request for large numbers of additional officers to put into training an adequate army is expected as one of the first steps.

There was every indication today that the pending army appropriation of \$227,000 will not stand. Just how much "war money" will be asked of congress for land defense, officials said, will depend on what congress wants the army to do, and what system will finally be adopted.

Quartermasters Are Active.

Though the last congress failed to pass the army appropriation measure, this fact does not hinder the collection of needed army supplies. On the contrary, contractors are taking contracts without signatures, realizing that they will be paid when the bill passes the new congress.

Even so, the quartermaster and ordnance branches are going ahead thoroughly and efficiently. Secretary Baker said tonight that all the army measures which failed of passage are being inspected and will be presented in a sort of budget to the new congress.

The destroyer contract signed by the navy department today called for 24 war boats to be built in rapid time.

Even so, the navy wants more of these craft, and has set at work to round up other builders, with a view to getting 25 to 50 more on the way in a short time.

Many Submarines Wanted.

The bidders today said they could furnish only 24 and they pledged that

questions of securing material made the delivery time uncertain.

The contracts went to Cramps, Philadelphia; Force River Shipbuilding company, Quincy, Mass.; and Union Iron Works, San Francisco. All shipyards which have done construction for the navy will be called upon to assist in creating the other destroyers.

Aside from destroyers, the navy still has to award contracts for numerous submarine chasers and 58 submarines.

The big battleship New Mexico will be launched at New York navy yard April 23, but the yard will be closed so that there will be no danger from spies or cranks.

California Militia Is Ordered to Be Ready

San Francisco, March 24.—(P. N. S.)—Believing that the calling of the California National Guard into active service of the government is now but a matter of days, Adjutant General J. J. Borree has issued a call for all militia units to be ready to report for duty to the commanding general of the western department of the army.

British Capture Freight Submarine

New York, March 24.—(I. N. S.)—A German freight submarine, captured by the English, is now held in the Fifth of Force and another German freight undersea boat is held in Queenstown, according to officers of the new United Fruit company steamer Telsa, arriving here from Belfast today.

Shattered Knee Cap In Auto Accident

James F. Clarkson Underwent Serious Operation at Hospital, Necessitated by Injury Friday Afternoon.

As a result of the automobile accident on the Broadway bridge Friday afternoon when his automobile skidded and struck a steel pillar at the base of the east bacule, James F. Clarkson, of the Standifer-Clarkson Shipbuilding company, underwent a serious operation at St. Vincent's hospital Saturday morning.

Mr. Clarkson's worst injury was a badly shattered knee cap and a complicated operation was necessary. He was reported to be resting comfortably Saturday night, but probably will not be able to leave the hospital for many weeks.

M. F. Sandstrom, of 115 Humboldt street, who was with Mr. Clarkson in the machine, had his injuries dressed, and was able to go home Friday night. His nose was broken and several teeth knocked out.

German Minister Leaves for Shanghai

Leipzig, March 24.—(U. P.)—The German minister to China and his staff left here today for Shanghai from which port they will sail shortly for San Francisco on the Dutch steamer Hembart.

This final act in China's break in diplomatic relations with Germany was accomplished without any demonstration.

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Disaster Caused by Plotters.

New York, March 24.—(L. N. S.)—The Black Tom explosion July 30 was due to a fire started by persons "who desired the destruction of war material to such an extent as to be indifferent to the attendant loss of innocent life and property." This is the report of Colonel E. W. Dunn, of the federal board which has been investigating the explosion.