

PARIS' FATE AGAIN DECIDED IN MARNE VALLEY STRUGGLE

After Four Days of Fruitless Offensive Ludendorff Loses Initiative in the West.

FIRST BATTLE IS RECALLED

Germans and French Met on Historic Battlefield Just 46 Months and 10 Days Ago.

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ensive the Americans promptly re-established their lines and drove the Germans back across the river, inflicting heavy losses and achieving what was, up to that moment, the most brilliant American success of the present war.

Unfortunately, the French to the eastward, between Jaulgonne and Dormans, fared less well. Here, on a front of some 12 miles, the Germans successfully passed the Marne, mounted the hills on the southern side of the valley and temporarily established themselves as securely as had the Austrians at Montello in the opening phase of the battle of the Yve.

Fall to Envelope French
Having done this the Germans turned their attention eastward and, advancing up the Marne on either bank of the river, struck boldly and heavily for Epernay with the obvious purpose of enveloping the French troops on the Rheims salient and abolishing this obstacle to their later attack upon Paris.

By Wednesday night the position of the French and their few Italian comrades in the Rheims salient had become difficult if not desperate. On either bank of the Marne the Germans were not more than eight miles west of Epernay. Northward they were climbing the western slope of that considerable elevation, the mountain of Rheims, which is the military element in the Rheims position. But if the position of Rheims was difficult on Wednesday night the whole situation as Foch could see it at that moment was extremely favorable.

Opportunity for Counter Offensive
Except for the single local achievement about Rheims the entire German offensive had failed. It had failed without achieving preliminary gains which compromised French reserves or compelled Foch to devote his resources to repairing breaks. He was in a position now to launch a counter offensive. His enemy's troops were engaged to the utmost. They were weary by days of bitter fighting. Their food and ammunition were running short. In a word, the critical moment of the battle had arrived, a moment that must have recalled to the allied generalissimo that other time when at the crisis of the battle of the Marne he launched his counter thrust at La Fere-Champenoise which decided the issue on that other battle.

Foch Strikes Promptly
Foch struck promptly on the front between the Marne and the Aisne between Soissons and Chateau-Thierry, as I have already said, under conditions exactly recalling Maunory's thrust eastward from Paris on September 5, 1914. He used for his blow French and American troops, the latter in the greatest number that had yet appeared upon the western front, and he placed these troops under the command of General Mangin, who in October and December of 1914 had delivered

MILITARY LEADER OF ALLIES



General Foch, generalissimo of the allied armies, at his desk.

Verdun by retaking Douaumont and Vaux, and till more recently in the battle of Compiègne had, by a similar counter thrust, paralyzed the German effort, a little more than a month ago.

On a 25-mile front, issuing from the woods and thickets behind them, advancing across fields already memorable because of the fighting of our American marines, Mangin's army promptly broke the first line of the German resistance and crashed forward for gains of from six to eight miles, which brought them to the heights dominating Soissons, and for the moment, at least, across the highway and railway connecting Soissons with Chateau-Thierry and serving as the main line communication for all the German troops fighting on the Marne front.

In Same Position as Von Kluck
Here was exactly the situation which Von Kluck confronted when on September 5 his fourth reserve corps held the flank on the hills west of the Ourcq river, was suddenly assaulted by Maunory's whole army and driven rapidly backward.

Von Kluck saved himself from ultimate disaster by promptly recalling all his infantry from south of the Marne, and in the succeeding days, he finally checked Maunory and even pushed him slowly back toward Paris. But by recalling his troops from south of the Marne he abandoned the German thrust against the French armies and opened the way for the return of all the French forces to the offensive and with a subsequent victory of the Marne.

Obviously, the immediate purpose of this thrust of Foch was to relieve the pressure which was becoming dangerous both on the western side of the Rheims salient and south of the Marne river.

Means Abolition of Paris Front
As Mangin's forces advanced westward they approached and brought under their artillery fire all the roads and railroads essential to the existence of the German

forces on the Marne and striking toward Epernay. Unless the thrust could promptly be stopped it would become necessary for all the German troops in the deep salient between Soissons and Rheims to retire. And this would mean not merely the abandoning of the small gains of the present battle and the surrender of the far greater gains incident to the collapse of the French on the Aisne in May, but it would mean the abolition of that "Paris Front," so frequently mentioned in German dispatches.

In a word, the situation on Friday, July 13, when this article is written, was this: Mangin's thrust has been immediately and locally successful. It was already on the edge of Soissons and across one of the vital German roads. The problem now was whether within the next few hours the Franco-American forces could be pinned down and the German salient southward to the Marne preserved, or whether the Germans would have to retreat behind the Vesle river or even the Aisne, abandoning that front on which they could alone make a later drive for Paris.

May See Great Retirement
All forecast and prophesy at the critical stage of the decisive battle is idle. We may, however, see that within the next few hours a further slight advance of the Mangin forces will compel the most considerable German retreat on the western front since the famous Hindenburg retirement following the battle of the Somme. We may see that such a retirement would destroy all the German menace to Paris with it the doom of the German offensive of 1918.

On the other hand, recognizing how vast are the issues at stake and how fatal to the morale of their own people would be the announcement that the second battle of the Marne had ended in a defeat comparable with the first, we must believe that the Germans will make

every possible effort to avoid any retreat and to retain their positions, which are vital to the largest strategic purpose of their campaign. Defeat of Paris is the aim of the offensive. It would seem that the menace to Rheims has been abolished. It would seem that the prospect of German gain as a result of the fifth offensive is already gone. It is hardly too much to say in the present showing that the Germans have suffered a defeat at Chateau-Thierry comparable with the defeat of their allies, the Austrians, on the Piave a few weeks ago.

Even if our allies make no further gains and the battle line stabilizes themselves as they stand now, Foch has won a victory of enormous importance. Today marks the beginning of the fifth month since the opening of the German campaign of 1918. In that period more than 750,000 American troops have been transported across the sea. Britain has had time to raise new levies, so the allied armies are infinitely stronger in all respects than they were when the German attack began and, after a loss of at least 750,000 in casualties, German victory is as far away as it was on March 29, on the eve of Ludendorff's first and greatest blow.

Germany May Seek Old Lines
It is conceivable that the allies will not pass to the offensive. It is possible, although unlikely, that a further abatement of the Mangin thrust will result in a considerable Sedan and in the capture of large German forces caught in the salient between Rheims and Soissons. It is more probable, however, that the Germans will have to retire behind the Aisne and that the lines will stabilize themselves on something like the positions occupied by the respective armies at the close of the first battle of the Marne. But in any event the German "Peace Storm" has ended, like the Austrian "Winter Offensive," in defeat, which is already a moral disaster and may become a military crash.

In this great battle more American troops have fought than in any battle since Grant opened the campaign of 1864 by the battle of the Wilderness. In this battle our troops have already revealed qualities which won them the deserved praise of all allied nations, and they have made a contribution to victory positive in itself and a promise of the far greater service our troops are to render hereafter.

Little Probability of New Drive
There remain two months of campaigning weather. There remains the possibility of one more German offensive but every sign that one can now see indicates that we have already turned the corner.

The second battle of the Marne, while it lacks the grandeur and the extent of the first, may prove only less significant than the first in the history of the war and as fatal to German plans in 1918 as was Joffre's victory to German hopes in 1914.

As I close this article the announcement is made of the fall of Soissons. This was a logical consequence of the success of Thursday's push, not to be avoided unless the German counter thrusts were at once and tremendously successful. It deprives the Germans of their chief lines of communication southward to the Marne and almost inevitably precludes a retreat to the Aisne. Taken together with the news of the capture of 20,000 prisoners and more than 100 guns, it seems to hand out the promise of a smashing triumph. There is left to the German now only one line of railway to munition, his troops on the Marne, and even this is under long range fire.

Major Roosevelt Slightly Wounded

New York, July 20.—(U. P.)—Major Theodore Roosevelt Jr. has been wounded in action in France and has been removed to a base hospital in Paris. It was stated in a cablegram received here today by Colonel Roosevelt at his home in Oyster Bay. The message, which was from Mrs.

Resigns County Job To Aid Government

Theodore Roosevelt Jr. stated that her husband had been wounded, but that the wound was not serious and advised the family not to worry. Major Roosevelt's wound makes the second time he has been on the casualty lists. Previously he had suffered from a gas attack. Kermit Roosevelt is the only one of Colonel Roosevelt's four sons who has escaped a wound. Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt's death in an aerial battle was confirmed only today. Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. went to France to do war work about the same time her husband left as a fighting man.

the national government to forward spruce production. He has been appointed by Colonel Disque as supervisor of the Clatsop county district and delegated with full authority over all operations attendant upon getting out logs. The work is in line with his past experience in the logging industry. It has been known for some time that Mr. Yeon has wanted to resign the readership ever since the completion of the Columbia river highway and other main county roads, but had been prevailed upon to defer the step from time to time.

Mother of Ten Has Six Sons in Army

Springfield, Ill., July 20.—(U. P.)—A service flag of six stars adorns the window of Mrs. and Mrs. Jacob Widmer's home here. Each one represents a son in Uncle Sam's military service. Two others may join the colors within the next year. Mrs. Widmer, 52, is the mother of 10 children. She and two younger daughters are ardent Red Cross workers.

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Pictograph

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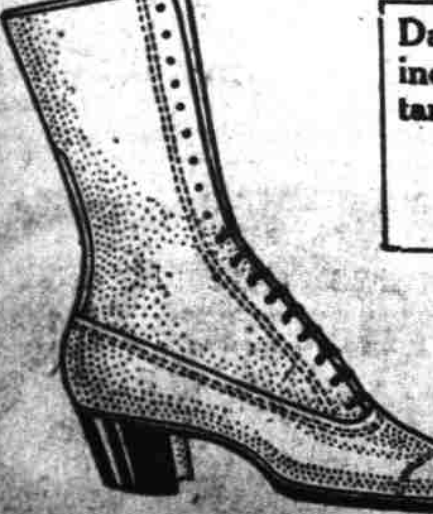
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