

**CANADA'S
TRIUMPH**

**AMIENS,
ARRAS,
CAMBRAI.**

August—September—October

1918

Illustrated.

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Forces of Canada.

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Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur W. Currie, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.,
Commanding Canadian Corps.

PREFACE.

This is the story of Canada's share in the recent battles of Amiens, Arras and Cambrai, as written in the field by Mr. Fred James, Official Correspondent to the Overseas Ministry of Canada. It is the brief history of two months' activities of the Canadian Army Corps, and our part in the breaking of the Hindenburg Line. The detailed narrative of these terrific engagements would fill volumes. In the battles of Amiens, Arras and Cambrai the soldiers of Canada, already the heroes of Ypres, Festubert, Sanctuary Wood, Zillebeke, the Somme, Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele, won yet more renown, added yet more lustre to their arms, crowned imperishable glory again and yet again with imperishable glory.—*Editor.*



Canadian War News by Pictograph.

The explosion of a mine in Cambrai after its evacuation by the Germans.

CANADA'S TRIUMPH.

AMIENS.

In the Field, August 20th, 1918

IN the last days of July, the Canadians were somewhere north of Arras. Only a select few knew what was planned to take place early in August. When the order came to move, no intimation of the destination was given. All units and formations travelled by night. By day men and horses rested in woods and villages. Every officer and man in the Corps was appealed to to keep silence and not to be curious or inquisitive.

On the night of August 7th, Infantry, Artillery, Engineers, Tanks, Motor Machine Guns, Cavalry, Railway Troops—all the representatives of the various arms of the Service—were mobilised in Gentilles Wood and its vicinity. Hundreds of guns of all calibres, from 18-pounders, or “pip-squeaks,” as they are affectionately called, to the ponderous 12 and 15-inch howitzers, were in position. They had moved up two nights before. Some of the guns had as many as 600 rounds each allotted to them.

That night everybody and everything of the Canadian Corps destined for the battle were in their proper places. So far the plans and preparations of the administrative general and intelligence staffs had been carried out to the letter, in spite of tremendous handicaps and difficulties. Every man, horse and machine

received his or its rations at the allotted time. Letters and parcels were delivered and despatched to the thousands of officers and men. Everyone was busy on his own particular task, but there was no confusion. In some way or other the Y.M.C.A. and the Chaplain Service had obtained transport from what is known as the "Q" Branch, and had brought up huge boilers of tea and supplies of biscuits, chocolate and cigarettes. These were distributed to all and sundry without money and without price.

THE BATTLE OPENS.

It was a clear night on the 7th. From out a velvet sky the stars looked down on the hosts waiting to go into battle at the first flush of dawn along a twenty-mile battle front that stretched from the river Avre to the Ancre. In the territory to the rear supplies were stored ready to go forward the next day; dressing stations and hospitals were prepared to receive the inevitable victims of a clash of fighting bodies.

Before the zero hour the infantry all along the front moved up close to the Hun line. The French were on the right of the Canadians, the Australians on the left. Our right flank was on the Amiens-Roye road and our left on the Amiens-Chaulnes Railway.

At precisely 4.30 on the morning of the 8th the Allied artillery crashed out in a united roar. Though the Canadians' guns had been in position for three days not a shot had been fired. Unwarned, the enemy remained unsuspecting. The gunners relied on getting results from calculations made from carefully prepared maps drafted on information obtained by the intelligence staff. This was a new departure in gunnery and proved an unqualified success. All the firing was done without previous registration by actual fire.

Four minutes after the bombardment opened—a bombardment whose roar and rumble was plainly heard many miles away—the infantry between the two rivers went over the top. The First Division was in the centre on the Canadian front, the Third on the right

and the Second on the left. The Fourth was in reserve close behind.

The nearest point to which the Boche had advanced towards Amiens in March last was Hangard Wood. There he had been held by the French, after stubborn attempts to press on which had cost him thousands of lives. This wood of gaunt, leafless trees and torn underbrush was on the front assigned to our First Division. It was carried in a few minutes by a western regiment

When the attack opened there was a low, thick mist hanging over the Luce valley. The attack was not expected, and when the infantry rushed into action, followed by the tanks, the enemy was taken completely by surprise. His artillery in the rear could not see the signals for help; his hysterical infantry began shooting wildly all along the line. For once the weather favoured us in battle. The enemy was routed from his outposts, from his strong points, from his dug-outs, from his trenches and bunk holes, from everywhere he fought and concealed himself.

The Canadians to a man had their tails up over their heads. Twenty minutes after the zero hour, the first batch of prisoners were on their way to the Corps Cage, a roomy reserve enclosed by thick fences of barbed wire and guards with loaded rifles mounted by glistening bayonets.

Meanwhile the men of the 1st Division were making progress towards Aubecourt, of the 2nd in the direction of Mareleave. The eager fighters of the 3rd had left the remnants of Hangard village behind them and were on the road to Demuin. The big tanks were beating down the resistance where it was most troublesome, while the whippets went racing ahead, making mischief for groups of Huns galloping Berlinwards in terror.

At the same time, the motor machine gun brigades were advancing up the roads and pouring a destructive fire on every favourable target. Aeroplanes flew recklessly low, bombing and using their machine guns on the routed enemy.

THE FIRST PRISONERS AND BOOTY.

Within an hour the German trench system had been passed, and hundreds of prisoners and huge quantities of booty of all kinds had been captured.

The moment the infantry began to go forward, field guns limbered up and followed on. Behind the light guns came the "heavies" in two waves. At six o'clock—one hour and a half after the attack opened—the 18-pounders had taken up positions previously chosen by the map and were firing away with painful accuracy into the Hun.

At Demuin the infantry of the Third Division met with much troublesome fighting, the toil and tragedy of which were relieved now and again by incidents in a lighter vein. An Eastern Ontario battalion happened upon a cook preparing breakfast for a party of hungry and tired-looking comrades who were sitting in a secluded pig pen, and rounded up the lot without a shot.

A short distance beyond this village two tanks ambled onward along the road that zig-zags between Hills 102 and 104. Behind a bluff an enemy battery of 4.1 howitzers was concealed. The gunners waited for the tanks to get round the corner, then fired over open sights at the monsters. One of the tank officers dashed out of his moving fortress with a machine gun, climbed up on the bluff above the battery, and opened fire on the gun crews. They fought on bravely against the tanks, but when the action was at its hottest point, a strong party of our infantry came along—and the few gunners who escaped being killed were captured with their guns. Three hundred yards ahead, a battery of 8-inch howitzers with their crews were gathered in after a short fight.

The First Division troops rounded up guns and gunners in sequestered spots in the course of their rapid advance. At Marcelcave, the Second Division came across some idle batteries of howitzers, and in near-by dug-outs found their crews asleep.

The scheduled time for the first objective to be reached was 10.20 a.m. One division arrived five

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minutes ahead of the two others, who were on time to the second. But the first objective was merely a line laid down to enable units to establish connection with one another. The meeting and pause there was a kind of curtain raiser to the main programme arranged for the day. The advance proceeded a few minutes later. Several villages, many prisoners, and a number of guns had already been captured. Twenty minutes later our tanks, six-pounder guns and machine guns were knocking at the gates of Caix and Beaucourt.

THE CAVALRY IN ACTION.

About noon the cavalry came into action; and several veterans in the infantry say it was the finest sight they have seen in the war. The horses, men and guns came on the scene in level country on a line in front of Weincourt and Beaucourt. They extended over a five mile front to a depth in waves of about 1,000 yards. The infantry cheered them, and as they rode on they signalled their appreciation of the cheers. Machine guns from nests in woods and posts to the front made breeches in the line, but bravely they rode and well. They chased the Huns from places crackling with the fire of machine guns and automatic rifles. They co-operated with tanks and cleared the way for the infantry to follow and consolidate. In no other action since the war began had all the modern dogs of war worked together so extensively and successfully. Open country fighting, in which the Boche had predicted he should shine so brilliantly, was in full swing. There was his opportunity to show his prowess, but he didn't and we did.

When darkness came on the 8th, the Canadians had advanced 14,000 yards, captured 6,000 prisoners, over 100 guns and immense quantities of materials. They had taken all their objectives to the minute, and were ready to meet a counter attack and carry on when daylight came the next morning. That night supplies of all kinds were brought up and the mail was delivered and despatched. The advantages gained had been paid for with very few lives.

During the night there was a savage tussle for Beau-court and Le Quesnel, in which the Fourth Division, which came up from the rear, did some fine work. Beaucourt Wood was infested with machine guns, but the defenders were forced to surrender in a short time. The next day the infantry and cavalry, supported by tanks, aeroplanes and artillery, began to bite further into the enemy domain. On the right Folies and Bou-choir fell to the Third Division. In the centre the First claimed Warvillers, Beaufort and Rouvrey; while the Second netted Vrely, Rosières and Maharicourt.

MISCELLANEOUS CAPTURES.

At Warvillers, a German Corps telephone was located, and when an Eastern Ontario battalion arrived the "hello" boys from Hunland were busy on their switchboards. They were transferred to the Canadian Corps Exchange, where the wires were also on a complete circuit round poles. In the same village a transport was overtaken. The four mounted officers fell back to the rear of the column to ascertain the reason for the halt—and the Eastern Ontario men explained it and introduced themselves. Now that transport column is doing good service for Canada.

Motor-lorries in this transport gave evidence that Germany is short of rubber. The wheels had iron tyres. Light cars captured on other parts of the front had rope tyres. In telephone and signal installations leather was used as a substitute for rubber.

In Rouvroy two pigeon lofts were entered in the list of spoils. A few hours later these birds were carrying our messages back from our front lines.

By the afternoon of the 9th the cavalry had chased most of the Huns out of Rosières. As they were riding towards the station they saw a train steaming in. They hurried on to meet it, and when the engineer pulled up at the platform he found that he and the 27 officers and 500 other ranks aboard were prisoners. Half an hour later an ambulance train pulled into a siding and was added to the bag.

Up to this time the advance had been so rapid that the enemy forces had naturally been seriously disorganised.

A COUNTER-ATTACK.

Towards evening, after units of the Second Division had occupied Rosières, the enemy rallied sufficiently to launch a counter-attack—the first since the battle began. It was a weak effort, and costly, for prisoners who were taken stated that one battalion was almost completely wiped out. This attempt on the Huns' part to show fight acted like a tonic on the Second Division. It went ahead that same evening and took Moharicourt. By dark the Canadian line was 18,000 yards from the jumping-off trench.

In the wake of the advance moved field ambulances, hospitals, mobile repair shops, railheads, headquarters of all kinds, supply dumps, horse lines and transport settlements. The Y.M.C.A. seemed to enter one end of a village as soon as the Germans had left the other. In the first two days this Association gave away to the wounded and troops in the fighting over 150,000 francs' worth of eatables and drinkables. Our chaplains (or "padres," to give them their battle name) were busy wherever men needed them. They were modern "Gunga Dins"; only instead of dirty water they carried hot tea and coffee.

ON THE THIRD DAY.

Before the sun was up on the third day, the Third and Fourth Divisions were in action, the former on the right, the latter on the left. By this time all the artillery was well forward and so was able to give good support. From all roads and points overland offering good fields of fire the motor-machine guns peppered away. The fighting was now on the edge of the old battle line of 1916, and consequently it was difficult for the cavalry to operate extensively at this stage.

The Third Division stormed and took the village of Le Quesnoy. It yielded a quota of prisoners, machine

guns and booty. Tanks crawled over the impediments that annoyed or temporarily held up the infantry. While the Third Division was fighting at Le Quesnoy the Fourth was before Fougnescourt, Mancourt, Chilly and Hallu. The last named is on the Chaulines-Roye railroad and the Hun evidently wanted to hold the place in the interests of his business; but the Canadians, requiring it in *their* business, fought and took it.

During the tussle the enemy made desperate use of a battery of field guns, firing over open sights.

In the evening the 32nd Imperial Division attacked strongly at Parvillers, but the defenders took advantage of the old shell craters and old trenches overgrown with vegetation, to conceal in them numbers of machine guns. In the 32nd are some of the best troops of the army. They got on the edge of the village but were held up by wire after a period of splendid fighting. When the day ended our line had been nosed ahead approximately 2,000 yards.

By night it was evident that the Germans had rushed up a number of guns and reserves, for shells were being splayed over our lines rather indiscriminately, indicating that they had not had time to register on the best targets.

On the fourth day the plans called for the straightening out of our front. On the right and left the French and Australians had met with and overcome serious opposition.

One Eastern Ontario, one Nova Scotian and one Western battalion advanced on Parvillers. They encircled it and shut in its garrison at a cost of only five casualties. Next day we cleared the Huns out of Parvillers and took possession.

By the time the first phase of the attack was concluded our front rested on a line approximately beyond Parvillers to the south and before Chilly to the north.

SIR ARTHUR CURRIE'S SPECIAL ORDER.

On the fifth day Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur W. Currie, commanding the Canadians, wrote the following message, in which he outlined briefly what had been

accomplished, thanked all those under his command and gave the reasons for the success. This message, later published as a Special Order, is as follows:—

“The first stage of this battle of Amiens is over, and one of the most successful operations conducted by the Allied Armies since the war began is now a matter of history.

“The Canadian Corps has every right to feel more than proud of the part it played. To move the Corps from the Arras front and in less than a week launch it in battle so many miles distant was in itself a splendid performance. Yet the splendour of that performance pales into insignificance when compared with what has been accomplished since zero hour on August 8th.

“On that date the Canadian Corps—to which the 3rd Cavalry Division, the 4th Tank Brigade and the 5th Squadron, R.A.F., were attached—attacked on a front of 7,500 yards. After a penetration of 22,000 yards the line to-night rests on a 10,000 yard frontage. Sixteen German divisions have been identified, of which four have been completely routed. Nearly 150 guns have been captured, while over 1,000 machine guns have fallen into our hands. 10,000 prisoners have passed through our cages, and casualty clearing stations, a number in excess of our total casualties. Twenty-five towns and villages have been rescued from the clutch of the invaders, the Paris-Amiens railway has been freed from interference and the danger of dividing the French and British Armies has been dissipated.

“Canada has always placed the most implicit confidence in her Army. How nobly has that confidence been justified, and with what pride has the story of your gallant success been read in the homeland. This magnificent victory has been won because your training was good, your discipline was good, your leadership was good. Given these three, success must always come.

“From the depths of a very full heart I wish to thank all staffs and service—the Infantry, the Artillery, the Cavalry, the Engineers, the Machine Gunners, the Independent Force (consisting of the Motor Machine

Gun Brigade and the Cyclists), the Tank Battalions, the R.A.F., the Medical Services, the Army Service Corps, the Ordnance Corps, the Veterinary Corps and the Chaplain Services, for their splendid support and co-operation, and to congratulate you all on the wonderful success achieved. Let us remember our gallant dead, whose spirit shall ever be with us, inspiring us to nobler effort, and when the call again comes, be it soon or otherwise, I know the same measure of success will be yours."

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BATTLE.

The second chapter of the battle opened on the fifth day. The enemy had fled from the open country, and had taken defensive positions in the trenches that were part of what is now termed the "Old Somme Line"—the battle-line of July, 1916. Behind these old breastworks, still guarded by barbed wire, he had an opportunity to stiffen his resistance. But he is gradually being forced back. In this trench scarred, shell-torn area cavalry cannot operate; and because of the many obstacles and impediments, tanks find their difficulties multiplied. But the second chapter has not closed yet. When it does the third may begin.

Along the twenty mile front of the Allies in this battle the second act of the show opened on a familiar stage. The tactics of the previous days had to be altered. Bold dashes for objectives long distances ahead were not now possible without elaborate preparations, so the nibbling process was adopted, each nibble biting off a piece of ground which yielded prisoners and booty. At the time of writing we have crossed the railways some distance beyond Hallu and we link with the French in front of Fresnoy le Roye. The fall of Damery to a Western battalion of our Third Division has enabled the French to take Damery and "Z" Woods. The Second Division has pinched off Fransart in a merry fight, and the First Division has added La Chavette to its list of captures.

The Battle of Amiens saw Canadians fighting side by side with Australians for the first time in this

war—a linking of hands across the sea. For the first time Canadians and Americans in France have been engaged together in the common task—not in the actual fighting but on work in the rear areas. There has never been such a welding together of the Allied Forces.

To-day what is known as the Pan Germanic Brigade, three batteries of captured German guns manned by Canadian artillerymen, are firing thousands of rounds of Boche ammunition into the Boche lines. The Pan Germanic Brigade is now an established part of the Corps Artillery.

This ingenious idea was conceived and put into effect by the G.O.C., Canadian Artillery.

What the Canadians have done in the Battle of Amiens has been considered of sufficient importance for Marshal Foch, Premier Clemenceau, Sir Douglas Haig, General Rawlinson, Commanding the Fourth Army, high representatives of the Allied Armies, and many others, to call personally on Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Currie to offer their congratulations and thanks through him to Canadians.

While this is being written the band of a Nova Scotia unit is playing, on the edge of a wood that only a few days ago was in German hands, "O, Canada." The fame of Canada is established on another battlefield.



ARRAS.

In the Field, August 30th, 1918.

Since August the 26th the Canadians have advanced 12,000 yards from the jumping off point in front of Arras over a country shell-torn, wire strewn and honeycombed with old and new trenches. Thus a big chunk has been bitten out of the Hindenburg line. On the night of August 26th the Corps Commander issued this brief but characteristic Special Order:—"I desire to congratulate all concerned on the magnificent success achieved this day. It has paved the way for greater success to-morrow. Keep constantly in mind Stonewall Jackson's motto, 'Press forward.'"

Up to last night the Canadian Corps had captured in the Battle of Arras 3,781 unwounded prisoners, 87 of whom are officers, more than 60 field guns and howitzers, and many hundreds of heavy and light machine guns and trench mortars.

In conjunction with Imperial divisions on our right and left we are on the threshold of the Drocourt-Queant line. We are knocking at the door and peeping through the key-hole.

To-day the Canadians bit into territory beyond Pelves south of the river Scarpe, and swallowed 1,500 yards at one gulp. The artillery is more than knocking at the Drocourt-Queant door. It is rudely hammering on it, but as Fritz does not show a willing disposition to open it we are compelled to resort to the rude process of forcing an entrance. This Drocourt-Queant line is his chief stronghold. If it is pierced it may seriously jeopardise his position in the north which, for commercial reasons as well as military, he is loth to give up. Consequently he is resisting strongly; and his resis-

tance is costing him heavily. His artillery is barking and growling; while ours is roaring savagely and pouring metal into his wire, his trenches, his roads and wherever it can spell death, destruction, and annoyance.

What our tactical intentions are he has yet to learn. So far we have been going east; and so has he, from Arras way, the birthplace of a Frenchman who had a vision of democracy. His eastward inclination is being inspired by men from the Great West, who know what democracy means. It is not an easy fight. The present battle is more difficult in many ways than the battle of Amiens. In some respects the Canadians have accomplished already greater things than that wonderful show.

All the units that have so far taken part in the fighting have maintained the reputation of the Canadian Corps, but none has added a more glorious chapter than a French Canadian battalion, which, on the 28th, fought magnificently north of the Scarpe, against extremely heavy odds. The general commanding their division said to-day, "the fighting of the French Canadian battalion in my division was magnificent. Their spirit and morale is simply extraordinary. Yesterday I saw them, and in spite of their losses I found them smiling and ready to go in again if required." Continuing, he said, "This show has been a wonderful performance. Since the 6th of August we have had no rest. The Staff work helps the men, but it is the Battalion, Company and Platoon Commanders and the men in the line who do the work. The spirit of our boys puzzles me. It is beyond words to describe. They have a scorn for the Boche and they have him on the run whenever they get up against him. The courage and morale of our men is beyond words."

Some of our men are resting just now. They are tired but not downhearted.

So far this battle on our front has been left for the most part to the infantry and artillery. Tanks have helped; but the two closest brothers in war—infantry and artillery—are entitled to the most credit for the success.

THE DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE.

In the Field, September 2nd, 1918.

One of the most notable triumphs of the war was accomplished this morning by Canadian and Imperial troops when they broke through a portion of the German main line of resistance on the Western front, the notorious Drocourt-Queant line or "Switch line," on a width of over seven thousand yards. This elaborate trench system, which took over two years to build, was carried in less than an hour this morning. It consisted of five lines of trenches, heavily wired and fortified. Deep dug-outs and tunnels were built beneath the surface, so constructed that they were a maze of ingenious catacombs.

The Germans have intimated that this Drocourt-Queant line, the work of Hindenburg, would prove impregnable. It stretched across the front, east of Arras, on a sector that the Allied Armies had not set foot on since 1914.

The battle is going on in our favour. The casualties have not been heavy when the advantages gained are considered; and in the face of what has been accomplished the number of our killed has been remarkably small. Between dawn and four o'clock this afternoon we have gone forward nearly four miles—and we are still going.

The Corps Commander said this morning that he could not describe his feeling of pride in the men under his command. "I do not ask them to do anything where I think they haven't a chance. They know that fact, I believe. We try to pave the way for them, and when we ask them to deliver the goods they never fail. The whole Corps is keeping up its reputation."

The morning of September 1st.

Our assault on the "Switch Line" was launched at five o'clock yesterday morning on a front just east of Riencourt extending to the Scarpe river on the north.

There was the usual prelude from the guns, a kind of noisy curtain-raiser—a carefully planned and skilfully applied curtain-raiser it was, that threw down a deluge of metal with a force of destruction not to be described in words. Then the bayonets and tanks went into action with a dash; and soon there was a wide gap in what Germany has long considered a sort of national lifebelt. It was not broken without a stern fight. Ludendorff had ordered it to be held at all costs. Machine guns spat furiously from redoubts and pill boxes. Field guns a short distance in the rear were fired point blank at the attackers. Many of the Huns tried to carry out the orders of their chief. Others, less gallant, turned and fled before the advancing tanks and the infantry, while many quickly surrendered. Early this afternoon two Canadian divisions had checked through their cages over 2,000 unwounded prisoners. At dressing stations and other points there were hundreds who had not been ticked off by the adding machine. Already no less than sixteen enemy divisions have been identified, which indicates a notable state of disorganisation.

By 8.30 engineers were making alterations in the captured trench system, and were patching up the Cambrai road a mile ahead of the point where the show began to-day. Before this, our motor machine guns were in action, advancing wherever it was possible to run the vehicles and peppering away helpfully. By noon they were sweeping with fire defensive positions in the neighbourhood of the line along the Nord Canal north and south of the Cambrai road.

By 8.15 a.m., our field batteries had taken up positions east of the pierced line, and our "heavies" were on the way. This gives an idea of the rapidity and success of the advance.

The village of Gagnicourt was quickly taken; and by noon Loison and Bouche Woods were claimed, both of which had afforded cover for many hostile machine guns. On the left another division of Canadians swept through Dury with such speed that the German town-major and his staff were rounded up. Coming into the village one of our battalions met a mounted boche officer but then

arrived from leave. This officer's sad case seems to suggest the advisability of overstaying one's leave.

A FIRMER RESISTANCE.

Beyond these villages and woods the resistance stiffened. Our aeroplanes reported reserves being rushed up in every conceivable kind of conveyance. The hostile infantry and machine gunners were evidently ordered to try and hold the position, for while they were pushed westward their artillery was heading eastward, probably to avoid capture.

From the Drocourt-Queant system the ground slopes down gently for about 4,000 yards except where it is here and there relieved by a knoll or small ridge. Then it rises gradually for some distance. For the first phase of the show the ground was in our favour. The country was but little scarred by shell fire. Though the main defensive position had fallen, there was a sprinkling of small strong-points and little trenches across the front, to which the defenders fell back and fought, in some cases, with commendable zeal. At times counter-attacks were launched, always without the slightest success. Nowhere did we give a foot of our new ground.

Our officers say that on the whole the morale of the prisoners is good. One presumably intelligent non-commissioned German officer, who can speak English and French fluently, told me that in his opinion Germany has no chance of winning the war. He said the soldiers have enough food, but the civilian population is pathetically in want of it. This N.C.O., with other wounded prisoners, was enjoying a good meal when I saw him, at the same table in a dressing station with a number of our men, and there was no sign of enmity among them. On the contrary our fellows were offering "Fritz" cigarettes and working hard to make themselves understood.

To-day's battle has produced its quota of gallant deeds. I was told by a general of engineers of one of his officers who was sent out to make a reconnaissance of the bridge over the Sensee River near Nis en Artois.

After much effort in the dark, he found the bridge. It was intact, but mined, with the leads attached so that it could be blown up at a moment's notice. He cut the leads and crawled back to an infantry outpost and instructed the garrison of the post to prevent enemy interference with the bridge. This piece of work had a far greater importance in relation to our advance across the river than even the energy, daring and quick thought displayed would suggest to the uninitiated.

The fight so far has been one for the tanks, motor machine guns, artillery, aeroplanes, and the irresistible and indefatigable infantry.

FUTILE COUNTER-ATTACKS.

Yesterday afternoon the enemy sent over two strong battalions against one of our Western battalions. The two hundred of those two battalions that escaped death were taken prisoners. Not content with this unhappy sequel to a foolhardy adventure, he tried a midnight frolic with a Middle-West battalion, and the remnants, numbering one hundred, were captured. After smashing these two efforts, our men went forward to their jumping off trench for to-day's show.

At five o'clock this morning we broke through the fifth trench system since Monday, August 26th. There was much brisk fighting, in which the enemy came off second best, as usual. The condition of defeat seems to grow on him like a habit.

There are immense possibilities ahead now that the enemy's main resistance system has been badly punctured. The Amiens Battle, that opened on August 8th, was the curtain-raiser for the subsequent advances all along the front. The success of that battle was the key that opened the door to later successes, but it has been a patent fact that at some time or other the chief Hindenburg line would have to be broken in order to exploit recent progress. This has been done, and the Canadians have had a prominent part in the operation that has changed the tactical complexion of affairs on the Western front.

THE MORNING OF THE THIRD.

Daylight this morning disclosed how hard the Canadian and Imperial troops had hit the Hun yesterday when they tore his main defence system wide open at the Drocourt-Queant line. Our airmen flew eastward with the first peep of dawn and returned with news that the enemy was falling back, not actually in disorder, but certainly not in a manner that indicated the carrying out of a pre-arranged plan—on his part at least. As far as the Nord Canal, from where we dug in last night in front of Dury and Bois de Bouche to wait for daybreak, the main body of the defenders had vanished. Only a few machine gun groups, evidently left to cover the retreat, could be seen by our flying men. Patrols at once went forward, and sent back encouraging news, corroborating that given earlier by the 'planes; so the whole front began to go forward. At the time of writing—early in the evening—we are approaching the enemy's line on the east side of the canal, where he appears to be in moderate strength.

There is evidence that the fear of direful happenings is in the German veins, for all day traffic of all kinds, men, guns and gear, have been trudging and rolling eastward. Our artillery has given him a bitter lashing to speed him along. We have made shambles of his bridges over the canal and raked his roads and assembly points. Our shells have unlimbered several of his retiring guns. Douai, Cambrai and other substantial towns a few kilometres away, north and south, are now in very real danger of falling. Never before were the prospects for a rapid change in the situation on the Western front so hopeful.

A DISORGANISED RETREAT.

Some idea of the disorganisation we have effected may be gathered from the fact that since yesterday morning the Canadian Corps alone has identified over twenty German divisions, and has captured more than six thousand unwounded prisoners. The roads leading out to our rear area are clogged with groups of Huns.

The advance to-day went on according to the information sent back by patrols well to the front of the main attacking force. Most of the opposition was from small machine gun posts, which were to be sacrificed at the expense of the more or less fortunate hordes who ran away under cover of darkness last night. Enemy guns from the north have been trying to cause damage by flanking fire. Early this morning battalions of a Canadian Scottish brigade mopped up what is known as the Buissey Switch, which was a kind of capillary to the main Drocourt or Woton position. This took the "ladies" to the edge of the village of Buissey, at whose portals they were about to enter when I left a point near by.

Etaing, which had been a troublesome hive of machine guns, fell this morning to the Imperials; and all that was left of the garrison was seventy-seven. This capture helped the troops on the right.

Among our latest captures are several senior officers. Two ex-battalion commanders admitted to-day that Germany is being beaten. Another, an arrogant Prussian, said that England started the war and the Canadians and Australians were particular kinds of fools to come into the fight. Still another opined that his country might have had a chance of victory against Britain and France, but it was hopeless to go on against the millions from America.

A GERMAN IDEA OF CANADA'S STRENGTH.

A document issued by the German General Staff, taken from an officer prisoner, stated that since the war began no less than fifty-two Canadian divisions have been identified in France. Some of the prisoners are inclined to think the Canadians' first name is legion, for we have rudely introduced ourselves at several levees held from the sea-board to Amiens since February, 1915.

A bespectacled Bavarian who was gathered in yesterday with a round hundred comrades, told of looking over the parapet of the trench he was in and seeing no less than twenty tanks waddling in his direction.

"What was the good of attempting to fight?" he asked the intelligence officer to whom he was talking.

There are butchers, bakers and candlestick makers among the captured. They were hustled out from what they thought were bombproof jobs when their stronghold crumbled up at the break of dawn yesterday. Even a concert party, with a long list of bookings, had to join the line troops. This afternoon I saw the frayed remnant of the party step airily aboard a box car that was labelled *forty hommes* or *eight chevaux*, to be transported back beyond the war zone.

A batch of Prussians brought in at two o'clock this afternoon had recently come up from the Italian front. They wore boots that were soled with as much metal as there is in a pony's shoe.

OUR BATTALION COMMANDERS.

The fighting of the past few days has been marked by real leadership. No less than five Canadian battalion commanders have personally led their units in going out to meet counter-attacks to inspire courage in their men by personal example. All the officers have shown how sincere is their pride in the men. I met a platoon commander to-day, coming up from action badly wounded in the left arm and shoulder, and though he was suffering severe pain his only complaint was that he had to leave his platoon.

The work of our infantry has been splendid throughout these vast operations, as it has always been; but the wonderful successes have been made possible to a great extent by the support given by our artillery. Yesterday's bombardment of the Drocourt-Queant line tore the wire to fragments, and before the attack began enemy batteries had been located and disposed of, in spite of the fact that during the night some of them had moved to new positions.

These are extremely busy days with every branch of the Service, but for none more than the Medical services, Chaplains, and Y.M.C.A. Yesterday I saw chaplains doing Christian work everywhere. At dressing stations

they were helping to bind men's wounds, moistening the parched mouths of wounded too helpless to move, answering requests to attend the dying, to whom an assurance of hope and rest is given. I saw them under fire helping stretcher-bearers; and wherever men needed help there the padres were.

The nursing sisters of the casualty clearing hospitals are working with very little rest. Theirs is a task that only those who have seen a field hospital in operation during a great battle can appreciate.

Since August 26th, when the Canadians went into the battle of Arras, the signallers have kept up unbroken communication by wire and 'phone from the ever-moving front line to England. In one day nearly 5,000 telephone calls were checked in and out and almost 8,000 messages sent, transmitted and received over 20 miles of pole lines in the forward area and one hundred and ten miles in the rear sector, in addition to miles of buried cable on the Canadian front alone. In a week, one thousand five hundred miles of new wire have been issued for communication purposes. Without the means of sending and receiving messages rapidly, the success of the most carefully organised battle would fail.

The Canadian Cyclists are up in the thick of things in this show.

The Canadians claim the honour of establishing the first Y.M.C.A. Centre across the famous Hindenburg defence system, the Drocourt-Queant line. A few hours after it was broken yesterday the sign of the Red Triangle was tacked up on a convenient place, where the good work of the "Y" could be carried on.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SINCE AUGUST 8TH.

In less than one month the Canadian Corps has wrested a creditable total of assets from the Germans in the two battles in which they had figured so prominently—Amiens and Arras. Among the principal items are over twenty thousand prisoners, two hundred and seventy-eight guns (exclusive of machine guns, which total over two thousand, and trench mortars num-

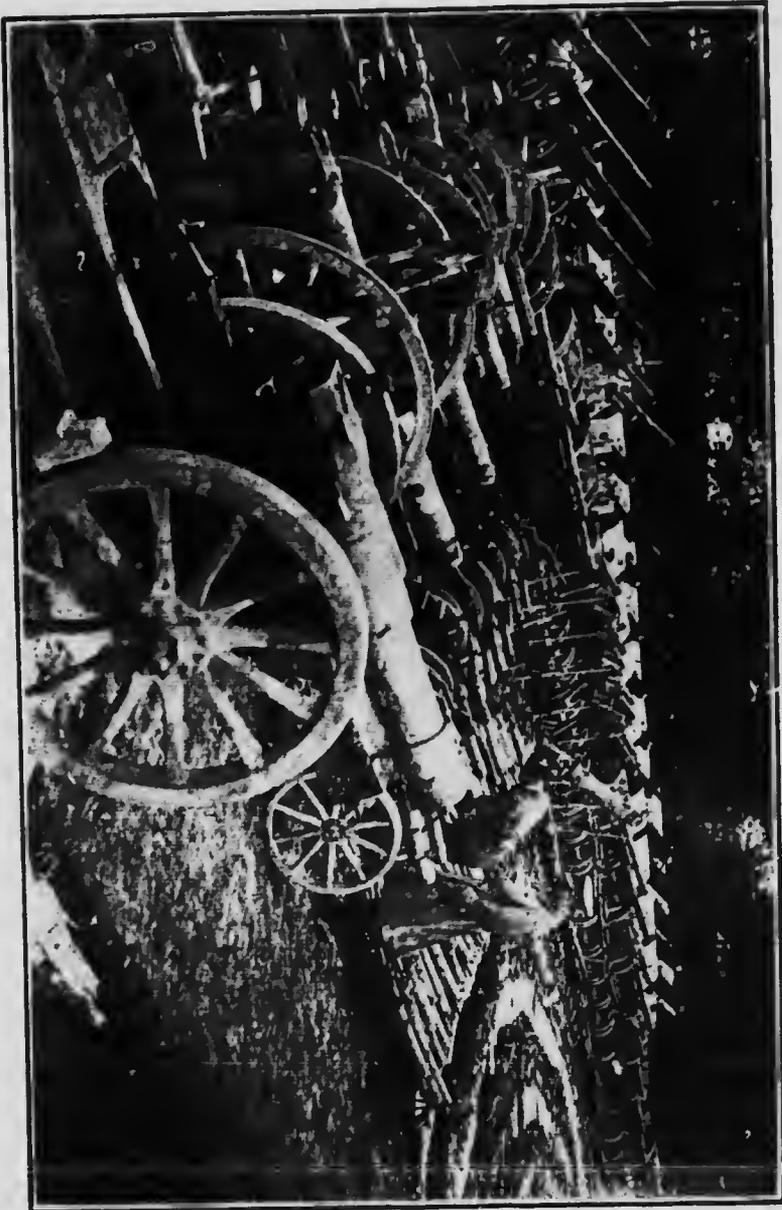
bering almost two hundred), many thousands of rounds of field, howitzer and naval gun ammunition and huge quantities of engineering material and booty of every conceivable kind. In territory the Canadians have recaptured an area that measures some one hundred and forty square miles. Besides this encouraging list of the chief prizes, for which we paid a price in casualties much less than the number of prisoners taken, must be added the military and commercial advantages that of course inevitably result to the Allies and reversely to the disadvantage of the enemy.

At a conservative estimate the Canadians have, since August 8th, put out of commission fully four divisions.

Since the battle of Arras opened on August 26th we have captured two hundred and sixty-two officers and some ten thousand other ranks. The total area of terrain taken measures over fifty square miles. The greatest depth penetrated is about twelve miles. A tabulated statement of the guns, etc., netted includes:—

- 89 heavy and field guns.
- 2 4.1 naval guns.
- 6 anti-tank guns.
- 1,016 machine guns.
- 73 trench mortars.
- 2 searchlights.
- 1 heliograph.

We engaged eleven German divisions during this battle, partially engaged four others, and identified several more. Five complete trench systems were broken through—systems of extremely strong defensive construction representing the best skill and ingenuity of the Hun in trench fortification work. First of these was what had once been the old British line. In this the Boche had his outposts and main line of forward resistance. There his forces were stormed at the opening of the battle and quickly over-run. Then came what had been his own old front line and reserve system, a substantia' stronghold. This fell after a sharp fight; and his repeated counter-attacks to retake it were futile and costly for him. The third system was the Fresne



A few of the guns and machine guns captured by Canadians in front of Arras.

Canadian War Records Photograph

Rouvroy line and Vis en Artois Switch. It was very strongly held and reluctantly yielded. The fourth was the peer of them all, for it was the famous Drocourt-Queant or Switch line, a part of the Wotan or special Hindenburg fortress. It was laced with many depths of wire, and the dug-outs, subterranean passages and tunnels were like catacombs beneath it. If the Germans were doubtful about the impregnability of the three systems of defence ahead of it, they were not about the Drocourt-Queant line. But a huge gap in it was burst open on the morning of September 2nd. Beyond it lay the fifth system, known as the Buissy Switch, supported by the defended villages of Recourt, Saudemont and Rumacourt. By brilliant tactics and gallant fighting this was subjugated. The capture of the villages beyond soon followed, and the advance pushed on to the bank of the Canal du Nord.

Greater difficulties had to be overcome in the Arras battles before progress could be made, than were encountered in the Amiens operations. At Amiens the enemy was taken completely by surprise and chased back for a long way before he could recover himself, but at Arras the element of surprise did not contribute so much to our victory. Here he expected to be attacked, but in spite of this he was forced back from the first; and later with such sternness that his retirement developed into a rout.

These great achievements by the Canadians accomplished within the period of twenty-eight days, on two different sectors of the front, testify to the splendid courage, fighting ability, initiative and morale of all ranks—qualities in which we have not once failed since those memorable April days of the Second Battle of Ypres, four years ago. Since the Canadians first took the field their fighting spirit has been so high that it is now an accepted tradition.

SUMMARY OF OUR OPERATIONS AUGUST 26th to SEPTEMBER 4th.

In the Field, September 7th, 1918.

The achievements of the Canadian Corps in the Battle of Arras stand out as the supreme triumph of Canada's arms in this world-war. They eclipse the wonderful record of our accomplishments at Amiens. The two battles were fought over sectors of country differing greatly from one another in both natural and military features. Down south the fighting was over a wide stretch of open, unbroken territory, where the verdant fields were scarcely marked by the grim necessities of war, and the cultivated areas had ripening crops standing untouched. Agriculture flourished over an area lying beyond the narrow system of trenches and outposts that had for its furthest westward point the nose of Hangard Wood. It was not until the Hun was driven back helter-skelter to the old Somme line of July, 1916, beyond Meharicourt that he was able to stiffen his resistance against us. This was more than twelve miles from our starting point. We left the Amiens front after penetrating to a depth of almost fifteen miles.

Over that open country with scarcely any wire impediments the cavalry, tanks and motor machine guns were able to operate to advantage. But in front of Arras, from where the Canadians began the attack on the morning of Monday, August 26th, at 3 o'clock, to the points about twelve and a quarter miles eastward, where our line now runs, there were five elaborate trench systems to be dealt with. From our jumping-off trench to a distance of four miles, the terrain had been a cockpit since 1914. There survived scarcely a yard of it that had not been ploughed up with shells. It was impossible for cavalry to enter the fight to assist the advance on such ground. Even the tanks found travel difficult over such country; so the fight depended almost entirely on the activities of the infantry and artillery.

TO EXPLOIT OUR SUCCESSES.

Beyond the Fresne-Rouvroy defence system we entered territory that had not been in the Allies' hands since the German advance in the early days of the war, nearly four years ago. The tactics employed at Amiens could not be applied at Arras. But the Arras advance could not have been made if the enemy had not been hurled back from Amiens. That show, which had for one of its objects the freeing of the Amiens-Paris Railway, also opened the door for the advances all along the line to the north and south.

It was a recognised fact that advance where we would on the Western front, the Drocourt-Queant stronghold would have to be broken down and run over before our successes elsewhere could be exploited. This the Canadians and English troops did on the morning of September 2nd, with a celerity that took the wind out of the Hun.

By this brilliant operation the complexion of the situation on the Western front took on a rosier tint for the Allies.

The front of attack on the morning of August 26th was on a line running through Neuville Vitasse on the south to Tilloy les Mafflaines, and bending round and spanning the Scarpe River slightly east of Fampoux in the north. The line measured about nine thousand yards. With the two Canadian Divisions that went into the attack was a famous Scotch division—the same one that fought on our right in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. This time it was on our left, north of the Scarpe.

Before dawn the artillery roared out along the front. At three o'clock the infantry and tanks went into action. The Boche was not taken by surprise as he had been at Amiens, so the fight opened hot and heavy. By nightfall our line ran east of Guenappe, Monchy le Preux and Rouex, over three miles from the starting point, or six thousand yards to be exact.

In that day the villages of Heninel, Wancourt, Guenappe, Monchy le Preux, Martiere and Roeux were captured—villages in name only, for they were nothing more than promiscuous heaps of ruins.

MONCHY AND ORANGE HILL.

The most notable feature of the day's operations was the taking of Monchy and Orange Hill. From these elevated positions the Germans had been able to look right into the back door of Vimy Ridge, captured by the Canadians in April, 1917. These two hills were extremely useful to the Boche for observation and other purposes. While one force drove the enemy from the trench system to the right of Monchy, our cavalry, by the application of extremely ingenious tactics, encircled first Orange Hill and then Monchy. What was left of the garrisons defending these two points evidently agreed that discretion was the better part of valour, and surrendered. Soon after 8 o'clock on the morning of the 26th, our men were in Monchy.

Meanwhile the Scottish division to the north of the Scarpe pushed forward with an astonishing boldness that could not be withstood. Trenches were rushed, dug-outs were cleared, villages, woods and wherever the enemy concealed himself with machine guns were attacked in a way that swiftly brought about the desired result with the least possible loss of life.

The next morning the attack was resumed by the same divisions, and while the day was, yet young we had crossed the old German front line running approximately from the western edge of Greenland Hill to the north to the western fringe of Fontaine-lez-Croiselles in the south and were on ground that had been held by the enemy since 1914, four miles from Neuville Vitasse.

ALONG THE CAMBRAI ROAD.

That day Telegraph Hill, Cherisy Rohart Factory, Vis en Artois, Bois du Vert and Bois du Sart, fell into our hands after stubborn fighting. When the operations finished that night (August 27th) an Ontario battalion was at the furthest point along the Cambrai road, three thousand five hundred yards from where they had set out that morning. Another trench system with all its defences had been rolled up; more high ground was in

our possession; more guns, more prisoners, more booty had been taken and more German divisions had been disorganised and shattered. We were heading nearer the Drocourt line which the German General Staff still dreamed was a veritable Gibraltar.

In addition to overcoming almost insuperable difficulties the Canadian and Scottish divisions were beating off spasmodic counter-attacks, some of which were tolerably well organised and delivered in strength. All the time the artillery was hammering away merrily; and in the wake of the infantry as it went forward followed the medical details to clear up the wounded, the chaplains to help in whatever capacity they could and minister comfort to the dying, and the Y.M.C.A. with supplies of all kinds. All the departments of the gigantic and complex organisation necessary in a big battle drove forward on the heels of the bayonetmen and Lewis-gunners.

On the next day our line was pushed forward to Remy, Haucourt, Boiry-Notre-Dame, Jigsaw Wood, Hatehet Wood, Pelves, and a point in the Vis en Artois Switeh. It was on this way, August 28th, that the French-Canadian battalion of our Second Division fought so gallantly against a heavy hostile defence in the Fresne-Rouvroy trenches. The story of this one battalion's work on that day, if told in detail, would be an epic of glory. And yet it fought only as all our battalions fought when the opportunity offered.

WITH OLD FRIENDS.

On August 29th the oldest Canadian division took over on the right and an English division came into the line on the left—a division that is an old friend of the Canadians, for it was the one to which our battalions were attached for instruction in trench warfare when we first came to France in February, 1915. The 29th was a comparatively quiet day, except for a little local war carried on by Canadians and English motor machine gunners and eyelists in the neighbourhood of Pelves and Jigsaw Wood. This little independent force formed a

defensive flank, pushed ahead fifteen hundred yards on a three thousand yard front, straightened out the line, beat off two counter attacks, captured Quarry Wood, Victoria Copse, Bench Farm and a number of prisoners. One of the counter attacks was launched by a substantial Bavarian battalion. Two platoons of Canadian cyclists went out to greet the oncoming Bavarians, who then and there turned tail and fled, only to be literally ripped to pieces by our machine-gun and rifle fire.

The first stage of the battle ended on the night of the 28th, with nothing left undone in the tasks assigned to the divisions engaged. The commanders of divisions, brigades, battalions, companies and platoons and the men under them had won the fight by good leadership, good discipline, good training, unstinted effort and high courage. Directed by a Corps Commander in whom they held implicit confidence, the great victory was theirs.

The second stage of the fight opened on the 30th, when a famous old Ontario battalion began to nibble hungrily into the Fresne-Rouvroy line, with all its intricate network of trenches strongly fortified and strongly manned. Their first attack was a tactical masterpiece. It took place in the neighbourhood of Cemetery Trench, which proved a fitting name, for the enemy was out-manceuvred and hammered to a standstill. The remnants of his garrison, numbering about two hundred, were gathered in. Then on the left Western troops hit him, while the English division demanded possession of Haucourt and Eterpigny Wood and refused to desist in the demand until the defenders yielded.

THE SWITCH LINE.

From then until the threshold of the Drocourt-Queant line was reached the advance was slow, owing to the stiff resistance which the enemy was able to put up in his strong trenches. He fought bravely to keep us from approaching his main line of defence; but the utmost he

could do dwindled and failed at last before the determination of the Canadians.

On September 1st another Canadian division entered the line and got down to business for the big event the next day. The Hun evidently expected something important to happen, for he made repeated counter-attacks.

By dawn the Canadian Corps was ready to burst open the Germans' strongest trench system in France or Flanders. When the attack was opened at 5 a.m. the third stage of the Battle of Arras had begun. By nightfall we were three thousand yards beyond the Drocourt-Queant line.

The day's fighting had taken the villages of Cagnicourt, Villiers le Cagnicourt, Dury, Etaing, the Bois de Bouche, four thousand five hundred prisoners, several batteries of guns, hundreds of machine guns and a huge stock of material. This was a rather satisfactory bag for one day. The tally of prisoners in the other two stages of the fight had yielded some four thousand five hundred.

It was evident that we were not expected to break through the main defensive system, for the Town Major of Dury with his staff were found asleep and an officer was met riding with his servant into the village. They had just returned from leave.

That night the enemy fled under cover of darkness to take up a line east of the Nord Canal, leaving behind little groups of machine gunners, who were quickly mopped up. Then Sandemont, Rumancourt, Ecourt St. Quentin, Buissy and Barelle were soon taken. In Rumancourt forty-six French civilians were found hidden in a cellar of one of the houses, who refused to leave with the Germans when they heard the Canadians were advancing.

By September 4th our line was established along the west bank of the canal and the final objective was reached. The third stage, like the two others, had ended in a victory for the Canadians.

FOUR MILES BEYOND.

In the Field, September 18th.

The Drocourt-Queant line is now over four miles to our rear. Yesterday we went ahead from in front of Bois de Bouche and Dury, took the villages of Buissy, Barelle, Sandemont, Rumancourt, Ecourt St. Quentin and the intervening ground, and to-day began to establish ourselves quite close to the Canal. The fighting for these villages was quick and decisive for us, and yielded a thousand odd prisoners, making the total capture by the Canadians since August 26th over nine thousand, with many wounded who passed through our hospital yet to be counted.

Now Ludendorff's pawns are east of the canal putting up as good a fight as possible, principally with machine guns. The enemy naturally doesn't want us to cross the canal for this would make his already sorry plight doubly pitiable.

One wag said to-day that the reason "Fritz" is trying to stop us crossing the Canal is because he knows Canadians like to have a wash and swim, and he hates people who appreciate either cleanliness or godliness.

In order to help out his decimated divisions who are fighting a rearguard action he is uncorking the floodgates of waterways about the River Scarpe to protect his left flank. This he hopes will retard our progress toward Douai to the north—if we try to go there. He is frantically resorting to all kinds of desperate tactics to ward off blows on his front and flanks. He is also more than half expectant of receiving a punch in the back.

The advance has been so rapid in the past two days that we are off the road map that has been such an old companion since 1914. It was put in the souvenir corner the other day and another one that gives the country to the east has taken its place.

When Rumancourt was stormed and taken yesterday, forty-six French civilians, thirty of whom were women, were found by the Canadians huddled up in a cellar.

They had refused to be evacuated, preferring to endure the danger from our shelling than a further period of slavery under the Teuton. These people are now in good hands, and the complexion of life for them has once again taken on a rosy tint.

Among yesterday's booty gathered in during the advance was a battery of 5.9 guns. While the rout was in progress yesterday our artillery punished the enemy severely and our airmen chipped in vigorously to speed the parting, self-invited guest. Shells of all calibres raked his roads, spoiled the rolls of several units, disorganised transport convoys, set on fire ammunition dumps and played "Old Harry" everywhere. Altogether it was an unhappy day for "Fritz," and when night came it brought him no respite, for then our night birds flew over and dropped their eggs.

In Bois de Quesnoy he was seen to-day massing men and machine guns, and this provoked our artillery to pour metal prodigally all over that wooded area. After such a bombardment there must have been a big toll of casualties.

These are anxious days for Germany and encouraging ones for us. Marshal Foch is hurling his opponent against the ropes of the ring. The knock-out blow will follow later.



CAMBRAI.

In the Field, October 8th.

By the end of the second phase of the Battle of Cambrai the Canadian Corps has penetrated from its starting point on the morning of September 27th to a depth of eight miles, captured 7,174 prisoners, of whom 230 are officers, ranging in rank from a brigadier-general downward; 205 guns, 20 trench mortars and 950 machine guns. These captures loom up as more significant when it is understood that against the Corps the enemy has hurled, since the morning of last Friday week, 13 picked divisions, representing every available reserve he had, in his desperate and vain efforts to hold up our advance. He fought with unabated fury, but at the finish of the second round he finds all of his thirteen divisions had met with the misfortune such a number might expect. Other parts of the front had been milked to supply the unlucky divisions, particularly the sectors north of the Scarpe.

The Cambrai battle was the Canadians' third show of the season. The first was at Amiens, commencing August 8th, the second at Arras opening August 26th—and both, like the third, were successfully staged and carried through. But Cambrai was the most difficult. Not since the Canadians have been in France have they faced more relentless opposition or sterner fighting from the morning of the attack on September 27th, until the lull a few days ago.

October the 1st may be marked down as one of the most stubborn days in the history of the war. On that

day the Boche brought up ten divisions to try and prevent the progress of the Canadians, without result, for at the end of the day we still held most of the ground seized early in the attack, which had begun at dawn. In addition to the ten divisions of infantry to face less than half that number of Canadians, there were thirteen companies of the best German marksmen machine gun detachments. Supporting this large force, was the artillery of over ten divisions.

SEVEN THOUSAND TONS OF SHELLS.

Some idea of the casualties inflicted on the enemy on the 1st of October may be obtained from the knowledge that our artillery fired between dawn and dark over 7,000 tons of ammunition from guns of every calibre. The gunners say they had never had such splendid targets. The " heavies " alone engaged 200 moving masses of men, and the field pieces put on a creeping barrage from this front line for a mile back; while all day long our infantry and machine gunners literally mowed down waves of grey figures which broke again and again in futile counter-attacks, and finally vanished. The full details of that memorable day are sufficient to make several chapters in the historian's narrative.

To return to the commencement of the battle. It began at 5.20 on the morning of September 27th, on a nine-mile front. The Canadian line ran from about Moeuvres to the Arras-Cambrai Road, west of the Nord Canal, and measured between 3,000 and 4,000 yards. The plan called for an extension of the front upon gaining the first line of objectives 6,000 yards ahead to a frontage of 9,000 yards, opening out from the starting point like a fan. The task assigned to the Canadians was to protect the left flank of the Third Army which was operating to the south, seize the high ground overlooking the Sensee Valley, and capture Bourlon village and the adjoining wood. With this done, the success was to be exploited as the strategical and tactical situation offered the opportunity. It was not part of the plan to capture Cambrai.



A part of the famous Canal du Nord

Canadian War Records Photograph.

AN ELABORATE BARRAGE.

Ever since we dug ourselves in near the Nord Canal, after rolling up the five strong trench systems between there and Neuville Vitasse in the series of great engagements which commenced on August 26th, the various staffs have been at work on their plans for the attack towards Cambrai. No detail was overlooked. It was known that the enemy intended to defend his positions at all costs, if possible. The task confronting our artillery was an extremely difficult one. The barrage had first to be laid along a narrow frontage, then to widen at every lift. The barrage map for the show offers an interesting picture to anyone who knows anything about artillery work. Elaborate calculations in time and range had to be made for each gun, for each battery, for each group, then for all as a whole.

On the night of September 26th, a little show was put on with a great deal of noise north of the Scarpe, for the purpose of attracting the attention of the enemy to that point of the line, away from the destined scene of the big operation. In this it was entirely successful.

That night of September 26th was one of uncanny quiet along the section of our front from which the storm was so soon to burst.

At 5.20, of the morning of September 27th, sharp on the minute, one of our 18-pounder guns barked twice. Then the length and depth of our front broke into red and orange and violet flashes; our whole line gave tongue in a crashing roar of innumerable explosions, all blending into one terrific tide of sound, wrenching the waiting earth and quiet air from peace to furious tumult in an instant of time.

As the barrage lifted, our infantry crossed the swampy and low-lying ground between the jumping-off line and the Nord Canal, which had been converted into a fortified stronghold. At the Canal a stiff resistance was encountered. Machine gun fire poured from every point and angle of the ditch. But the Canadians pressed forward, the Fourth Division on the right, the First, accompanied by tanks, on the left.

By 7.15 the Fourth Division had captured Quarry Wood, lying 1,000 yards beyond the Canal, and was pressing on rapidly towards Bourlon Wood. This advance broke the Marquion trench system. The First Division, on the left, had crossed the Canal, rolled up the Canal du Nord line, taken the village of Sans-lez-Marquion, with a rich haul of material, and was making headway towards Pilgrim's Rest. All this time the Boche fought stubbornly. His machine guns, concealed in pockets of the grounds, in nests where the crews could see and not be seen, rattled out their swift streams of destruction until they were silenced, one by one, by bayonet or bullet or shell.

Our artillery carried out the most carefully and skilfully planned barrage in its most careful and skilful way. The gunners—so the infantrymen said—seemed to know just what to do and where to do it. Many guns that were detailed to take part in the first stage of the barrage were soon out of action, owing to the rapid widening of the front and the nature of the fire that had to be employed in consequence. They were quickly rushed forward to selected positions on the edge of the Canal, where the engineers were feverishly working on the construction of bridges. Then, as the infantry advance proceeded, and the spans over the waterway were completed, the guns again went forward, the light pieces in a long wave in front, mediums next, and the heavies in the rear. Once across the Canal, the field-guns and limbers went into action at the gallop. Where shot and shell struck down horses, the drivers cut the traces and urged the surviving animals on.

THE SPEED OF OUR ADVANCE.

So rapid was the progress that the enemy was taken by surprise. Some of his batteries were captured while they were coming into action, and others while they were in the act of getting out. A siege battery with its crews fell into our hands early in the fray.

At 9.15 a.m., the Fourth Division had reached the outskirts of Bourlon Village and Wood, and commenced

the envelopment of the two. For five days prior to the attack, our artillery had poured a huge volume of gas into the wood; and because of this, and to avoid the expected heavy penalty in casualties that a frontal attack might involve, our men were warned to keep out of the place. From the village the machine gun fire was hot, but the crews were quickly put out of action, and at 10.20 the place was in our possession.

About noon the enemy received reinforcements and rallied them with the remnants of his troops already in action to deliver a counter-attack against the Fourth Division. This was met and repulsed; and less than an hour later—at one minute past one o'clock, to be exact—Bourlon Wood was captured.

On the left the First Division had been making good progress. It had overcome the obstinacy set up to prevent the taking of the Village of Marquion, and had pushed well over the Arras-Cambrai Road by 10 o'clock. By the time Bourlon Wood had fallen, the "Old First" was anchored on the line of the first objective and ready for the work of exploitation ahead. Thus, an hour after mid-day on the first day, the Canadian Corps had gained this high ground, and so accomplished the primary object of the operation.

The battle proceeded without delay. At 3 o'clock, the Eleventh English Division entered the fray, and made splendid progress behind an enfilade barrage. Four hours later it captured Epinoy, and by 7.30 had taken Oisy-le-Verger. Before tea-time, the First Canadian Division had passed through Haynecourt; and our Fourth Division, in spite of obstinate resistance, had netted Cantaing. At night-fall the general line on the Corps front ran east of Epinoy, Oisy-le-Verger, Haynecourt and Bourlon Wood.

ONE DAY'S BAG.

This day's captures included over 4,000 prisoners, 102 guns, hundreds of machine guns and huge quantities of material of every conceivable variety. Our line had been pushed forward 7,000 yards at its farthest point. Altogether, the day had been notably successful. It



One of the numerous 8-inch Howitzers captured by the Canadians in Bourlon Wood.

Canadian War Records Photograph

had seen one of the most brilliantly executed pieces of work in the war. Never before had the infantry's big brother—the artillery—rendered such skilful assistance. The capture of Bourlon Wood, with such rapidity and with so few casualties to our men, must be reckoned as an exceedingly fine tactical performance.

Next day, September 28th, the Hun was bumped again at six in the morning. Our divisions went into action in this order, from right to left—the Third, Fourth and First, with the Eleventh (English), forming a kind of defensive flank to the north. On the right of the Canadians was the gallant and dashing old 17th Corps.

From the commencement of the attack the opposition was heavy, but so hot and determined were our efforts that by 8.45 the Third Division had captured Fontaine Notre Dame, spanning the Bapaume—Cambrai Road, and was biting into the famous Marcoing line at 10 o'clock. It was not until evening that this line was punctured, and we were on the outskirts of St. Olle.

All day the Fourth Division had progressed in the face of severe fighting. The villages of Raillencourt and Saily had fallen before them, and they had wound up the Marcoing line.

Before the sun set the Corps' tally of prisoners was swollen to about 5,000, the number of guns totalled 150, and our line was further east by 3,000 yards. All along our front we were established on high ground, from which we could look right into the heart of Cambrai.

The 29th, being Sunday, did not find the Canadians at work quite as early as usual. However, they were up and about soon enough to be ready to commence another smash at the Hun at 8 o'clock in the morning. From then till darkness fell, the fighting was severe, but we managed to pre-empt another 3,000 yards in places. The villages of Petit Fontaine and St. Olle fell to the Third Division, with the western outskirts of St. Reimy. The Fourth took Sancourt, and tested the fringe of Bleecourt. The First got up as far as Abancourt Station. There it met very heavy machine gun fire and, having an exposed left flank, fell back a little for the night.

On the 30th, the Third Division captured Tilloy and the Fourth Blecourt; but a heavy counter-attack prevented our troops from retaining the occupation of the latter village. Prisoners captured during the day stated that they had been instructed to hold their ground at all costs.

SWARMING UP TO DEATH.

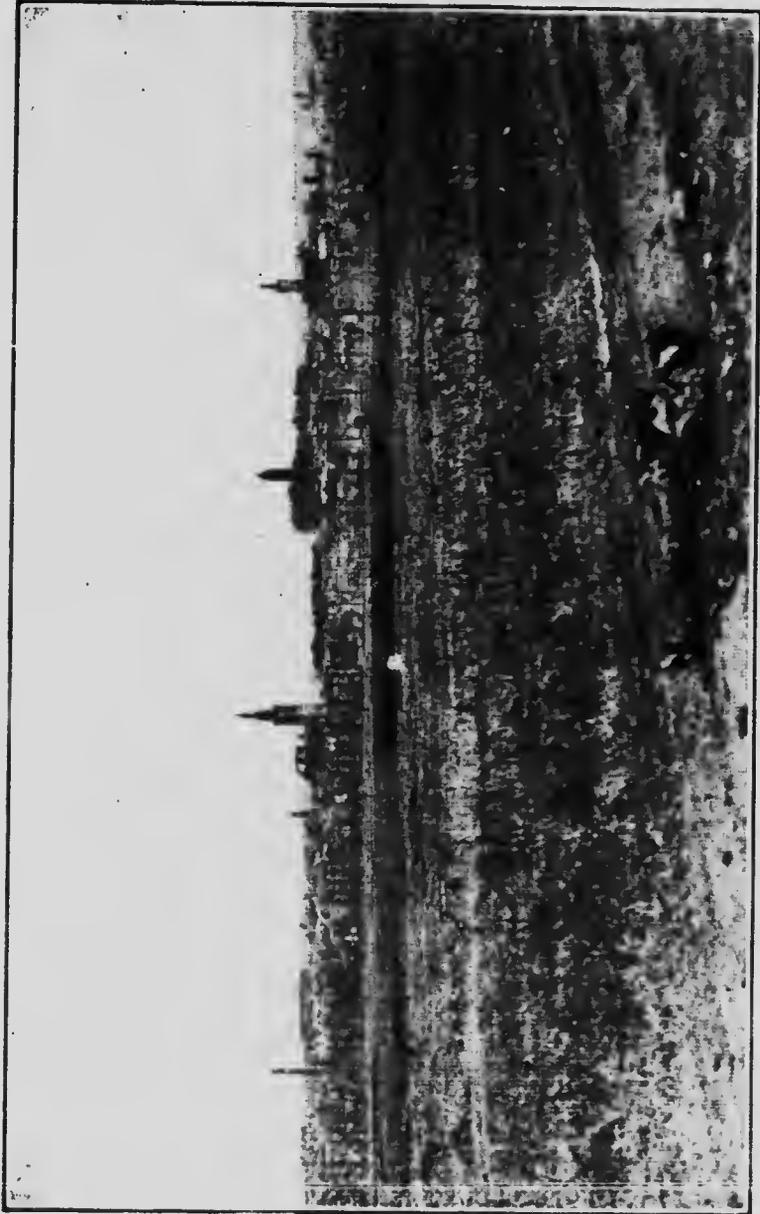
On October 1st the attack was continued, and the fighting was severe and stubborn all day. Counter-attack followed counter-attack.

Masses of men were thrown against our ever encroaching line with a pitiable disregard of the cost. Our advance was opposed without thought of the price. The Third Division, however, made headway to the plateau beyond Tilloy and got into Neuville St. Reimy and stayed there. The Fourth finished its work at Blecourt and also took Bantigny, and in both villages repulsed several particularly bitter counter-attacks. On the left the First Division entered Abancourt.

Pockets of the enemy, cleverly hidden and active with machine guns and automatic rifles, became so troublesome that our line was straightened out to the west of Abancourt, taking in Blecourt and the high ground east of Tilloy, down to Neuville St. Remy. The enemy hordes concentrated in little valleys behind their lines and swarmed up to attack and certain death. Our artillery roared against them all day long. One battery of heavies that I visited had fired 1,600 rounds, an abnormal number. The day finished with new ground in our possession, with the ten opposing enemy divisions and their assistant forces tattered and torn, and with many of his batteries knocked out by our counter fire. It was a terrible day's work—one of the hardest and deadliest fights of the war—and again we were victorious.

ON THE EDGE OF CAMBRAI.

Next morning the enemy threw three strong attacks against the Second Division, each of which was so severely punished before getting near our lines, that it



Canadian War Records Photograph.
Cambrai as seen from the Canadian front line October 1st, 1918. In the foreground lies a dead German.

retired to liek its sores. Since then, the fighting has been more or less desultory. Cambrai, of course, is no longer any use to the Boche. The Canadians are on the edge of the town to the north and west, while the English flank is on the south. Some of our patrols have entered almost to the heart of the place.

Throughout the battle the Canadian railway troops and the Corps tramways followed in the wake of the advance, building a network of standard gauge and light railways, over which supplies were taken up to the line and wounded brought out. The engineers carried out a stupendous programme of work, and the medical staffs, chaplains, Y.M.C.A., motor transport—in fact, every branch of the service—worked with a tireless energy to contribute to the success.

With the high ground to the north and north-west of Cambrai in our hands, there was nothing left for the enemy to do, so far as that position was concerned, but to clear out of the town. He had fought desperately during the five-days' battle, which was concluded so decidedly in our favour on the 3rd of October. In those five days the Canadians, to whom were attached the 11th and portions of the 56th British Divisions, had crossed the Nord Canal and possessed themselves of one commanding position after another in the face of an opposition that showed, by its vigour, how vital was all this ground to the military policy of the enemy. Bitter was his resistance in his elaborate strongholds and bitter were his counter-attacks. In the last two days alone he used twelve divisions in his violent but futile efforts to stop our advance.

THE OCCUPATION OF CAMBRAI.

At half-past one o'clock on the morning of October 9th, in utter darkness, the Canadians entered Cambrai. They took the garrison of the town by surprise, quickly obtained the upper hand in all the numerous instances of street encounters and house-to-house fighting, reached and occupied the Place d'Armes, and from there spread throughout the entire area. By daylight they were clear of the south-eastern edge of the city and well

along the Avenue de Valenciennes; in the south-west they were established at the Paris Gate. Units of our Third Division pressed due east to the line of the Scheldt Canal, secured all bridgeheads as far as Esuars, and captured several villages and hundreds of prisoners. By 6 a.m. our engineers had spanned the canal with a pontoon bridge. In the town itself several hundred prisoners were taken. British troops on the right won to the road leading to Le Cateau.

We had refrained from shelling Cambrai, hoping to get possession of it unbroken. With this end in view, we had moved against it without artillery preparation, had entered it and overcome the resistance of its garrison with bayonet and machine gun. But our care went for nothing. Again the Hun played true to his nature and his reputation. Explosions great and small, followed in some cases by the crashing down of roofs and walls, in others by the leaping up of fires, resounded from all quarters of the town throughout the day of our occupation. Our men fought the fires as vigorously as they had already fought the garrison—but they could not foresee or forestall the explosions. The city had been thickly planted with mines and incendiary bombs by the enemy, before his flight. The time fuses and other detonating contrivances had not been set for a simultaneous explosion. Singly and in couples, now in one street and again in another, the detonating of mines and bombs continued all day, varied occasionally by the bursting of shells. The Place d'Armes, intact at the time of our entrance, was a square of ruins by nine o'clock that morning. The destructive work of these set explosives was somewhat feebly opposed by occasional shells, incendiary and other, from the range guns.

Our troops did all that was humanly possible to extinguish the fires. Engineers and infantry toiled together at the good work, and by the 11th had succeeded in checking the spread of the flames. But by then the centre of the city and the eastern suburbs were in ruins.

The Town Hall and the Bishop's Palace are two of the more important victims of the Huns' spirit of wanton destruction. The Cathedral of St. Sepulchre is a partial



Canadian Troops passing the burning Hotel de Ville, Cambrai.

Canadian War Records Photograph.

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ruin. The tower, though shattered about the base, still stands. The interior of the nave is a desolate sight and all the fine windows are broken. The work of dismantling houses and public buildings on a grand scale of meaningless destruction was begun immediately after the evacuation of the civil population on September 8th.

All factories had been gutted of their machinery.

In two months the Canadian Corps has captured more than 28,000 prisoners, 501 guns, 3,000 machine guns, 69 towns and villages, 175 square miles of territory, and defeated decisively 47 German divisions. Three battles have brought in these captures—*Amiens, Arras, Cambrai*. Three great battles have been fought and won by us in the short space of two months—three battles in which the difficulties to be overcome, the opposition to be broken, the ground to be taken, multiplied and grew continually.

Of all the hard-won victories of Canadian Arms, these three achievements must rank as the crowning triumph.



SPECIAL ORDER BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL.
SIR ARTHUR W. CURRIE, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.,

COMMANDING CANADIAN CORPS, 3RD OCTOBER, 1918.

I wish to express to all Troops now fighting in the Canadian Corps my high appreciation of the splendid fighting qualities displayed by them in the successful battle of the last five days.

The mission assigned to the Corps was the protection of the flank of the Third and Fourth Armies in their advance, and that mission has been carried out to the complete satisfaction of the Commander-in-Chief.

In your advance you overcame the very formidable obstacle of the Canal du Nord; you carried by assault the fortified Bourlon Wood, the Marcoing Line, and seized the high ground extending along the Douai-Cambrai road. The towns of Oisy le Verger, Epiney, Haynecourt, Marquior, Sains lez Marquion, Saneourt, Bourlon, Fontaine Notre Dame, Raillencourt, Sailly, St. Olle, Neuville St. Romy, and Tilloy are now ours, and your patrols have entered Cambrai itself.

How arduous was the task assigned to you, and how valuable to the enemy was the ground that you captured, can be judged by the fact that whereas in the operation of the First, Third and Fourth British Armies thirty-six enemy divisions have been engaged to this date, twelve of those divisions, supported by eleven independent machine gun units, have been met and defeated by the Canadian Corps.

As you formed the flank you suffered enfilade and frontal artillery fire all the way, and the hundreds of machine guns captured testify to the violence of the opposition from that source. Every evidence confirms the fact that the enemy suffered enormous casualties. He fought stubbornly and well, and for that reason your victory is the more creditable.

You have taken in this battle over seven thousand prisoners and two hundred field and heavy guns, thus

bringing the total captures of the Canadian Corps since the 8th August of this year to twenty-eight thousand prisoners, five hundred guns, over three thousand machine guns, and a large amount of stores of all kinds.

Even of greater importance than these captures stands the fact that you have wrested sixty-nine towns and villages and over one hundred and seventy-five square miles of French soil from the defiling Hun.

In the short period of two months the Canadian Corps to which were attached the Thirty-second Division for the Battle of Amiens, the Fourth and Fifty-first Divisions for the Battle of Arras, and the Eleventh Division for this Battle of Cambrai—has encountered and defeated decisively forty-seven German Divisions—that is nearly a quarter of the total German forces on the Western front.

In the performance of these mighty achievements all the arms and branches of the Corps have bent their purposeful energy working one for all and all for one.

The dash and magnificent bravery of our incomparable Infantry have at all times been devotedly seconded with great skill and daring by our machine-gunners, while the Artillery lent them their powerful and never failing support. The initiative and resourcefulness displayed by the Engineers contributed materially to the depth and rapidity of our advances. The devotion of the Medical personnel has been, as always, worthy of every praise. The administrative services, working at all times under very great pressure and adverse conditions, surpassed their usual efficiency. The Chaplain services by their continued devotion to the spiritual welfare of the troops and their utter disregard of personal risk have endeared themselves to the hearts of everyone. The incessant efforts of the Y.M.C.A. and their initiative in bringing comforts right up to the front line, in battle, are warmly appreciated by all.

The victories you have achieved are the fruit of the iron discipline you accepted freely and of the high standard you have reached in the technical knowledge of your arms and the combined tactical employment of all your resources.

A Canadian Brigadier-General and his Staff in the streets of Cambrai immediately after the occupation of the city by his brigade.

(Canadian War Records Photograph.)



You must therefore with relentless energy maintain and perfect the high standard of training you have reached, and guard with jealous pride your stern discipline.

Under the lasting protection of Divine Providence, united in a burning desire for the victory of right over might, unselfish in your aims, you are and shall remain a mighty force admired by all, feared and respected by foes.

I am proud of your deeds and I want to record here my heartfelt thanks for your generous efforts and my unbounded confidence in your ability to fight victoriously and crush the enemy wherever and whenever you meet him.



AROUND AND BEYOND CAMBRAI.

We must not think that the Canadians rested on their arms between the victorious conclusion of the great battle which gave them the ground commanding Cambrai (October 3rd) and the storming and capture of the city in the darkness of the early morning of October 9th. Far from it.

On the night of the 7th, Canadians raided northward into hostile territory in force and returned with prisoners; and on the morning of the 8th these same troops pushed up to the outskirts of Douai. Our front north of the Sensee River was brought into alignment. Under cover of a barrage and smoke screen put on by our artillery on Tuesday morning, our patrols went forward and discovered the enemy to be strongly established, his positions thick with machine-gun posts. Our patrols crossed the river and took possession of Sailly-en-Ostrevant, but were soon forced out of this and back to the south side of the river by overwhelming pressure. This daring thrust had served our purpose, however, in disclosing the dispositions of the enemy. At three o'clock next morning we attacked, with English troops on our left. Our patrols had found the way and our gunners paved it with a heavy bombardment. We attacked on a front extending from the fragments of the Drocourt line to the Scarpe. We took Mont Bedu; we crossed the river; and by nightfall we had broken the Sporcourt-Queant line and were established from Brebieres to points beyond Estrees and Hamel.

This advance was on the 9th, the day of the capture and investment of Cambrai by other Canadians. It was continued next day to the Sensee Canal. With our left close to Douai and our right in Arleux, we had accomplished in thirty hours a drive into hostile territory nine thousand yards deep and twelve thousand wide.

While this was happening, other Canadian battalions had fought the enemy out of strong positions around Iwuy, they had pierced his flank between Douai and the Scheldt River, and cleared Estrun and Hordam. Our men from the Maritime Provinces established themselves north of the river.

BEYOND THE CITY.

After occupying Cambrai on the morning of October 9th, the Canadians did not confine their activities to the saving of the city from fire. While some remained to struggle with the flames, others pressed forward on the heels of the enemy—and wherever he stood and turned he received the pressure in his face.

We kept in touch with the Germans in every direction, fighting outwards and forwards always, through the suburbs and beyond. One platoon commander, after placing his men and a machine gun in advantageous positions, went forward accompanied by only one man and took fifty-four prisoners and eight machine guns from a strong trench.

On the 10th, Ontario battalions turned the enemy out of Naves and fought his rearguard along the Cambrai-Bavai front. Western troops on the left cleared Thun St. Martin and other villages and enveloped a strongly held, strongly situated position on a backwater of the Scheldt Canal.

For a few days the Canadians were held in leash along their new line. On the 17th they advanced again, and the Germans fell back under cover of a heavy fog. The Sensee Canal was crossed at several points and Douai was entered. We lost touch with the retiring enemy. He was not to be found in Cantin or Goculzin. Our cavalry patrols pushed forward in search of him.

He is expected to stand before Valenciennes.

CANADIAN CAVALRY AT LE CATEAU.

Le Cateau fell to battalions of the Manchester, Lancashire, Dublin, and Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Connaught Rangers on the 10th of October; but the first British troops to enter the town were patrols of the Fort Garry Horse, a regiment of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. In less than twenty-four hours the Canadian cavalymen with other troops advanced eight miles on a three-mile front, cleared that section of the country of the enemy, and thus opened the road for the infantry to forge ahead without hindrance, except from a limited

volume of shell fire, into Le Cateau, captured 400 prisoners, several artillery pieces of different calibres, a few trench mortars, tank rifles, two motor-cars, 100 machine guns, and killed a large number of Germans.

Officers and troopers were almost pulled from their horses as they passed up the streets by the women, who seemed to believe that the best way they could show their gratitude was to kiss every khaki-clad figure, mounted or dismounted, irrespective of rank or anything else. They were delirious with joy. They laughed and cried almost at the same time. In one village men and women rushed out of their houses with cups of coffee and bottles of wine, while machine-gun bullets from enemy positions ahead spat about the street. Immediate danger seemed of small consequence in face of the fact that deliverance had come after four years of serfdom, which the entry of the Canadians had brought to an end. One officer of Lord Strathcona's Horse was pulled from his charger and forced to submit to a heavy barrage of kisses and embraces. This advance to Le Cateau is quite the most romantic experience the Canadian Cavalry Brigade has had.

But the incidents with the French villages were only pleasant punctuations in an operation that produced some spectacular features. Several times the troopers used their sabres generously. One squadron of the Fort Garry Horse charged at the gallop into Gattigny Wood, where machine guns were making as much noise as a busy boiler factory produces; and before the wood was finally cleared, approximately 100 Germans were killed with the sabre, and those who escaped death, numbering 200, were taken prisoners.

An officer with a troop of the Fort Garrys in another case galloped down on a nest of fifteen machine guns. The Boche stood to his guns for a time, and directed such a fire on the charging cavalymen that soon nearly all the horses were casualties. Undaunted, the troopers pressed forward on foot. By this time the Germans' nerves failed them, and they turned and fled and kept going eastward until rounded up by supporting forces on the right.

To the left of the Bertry-Cléry road machine-gun fire spat angrily from a little factory building and farmhouse. There was a charge, a skilful wielding of sabres, and the 42 Germans who were not killed were taken prisoners, and the five machine guns that had been used to help defend them were captured.

As the Royal Canadian Dragoons were advancing on Reumont waves of the enemy were seen to be coming forward with the evident intention of delivering a counter-attack. The Dragoons first dismounted and used their rifles, and then finished off the job with their sabres. One sergeant and three men in this regiment charged a small pocket with three machine guns in it and netted 30 prisoners, among whom was an officer and three sergeant-majors.

During the whole action the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery were engaging targets with excellent results. In the time the gunners were in action they fired over 2,800 rounds of ammunition.

ENVELOPING VALENCIENNE.

In the Field, October 25th.

The Germans in Valenciennes are defending themselves by means of water. The Canadians touch the edges of the town at several points, but even at these points we are separated from the garrison of the place by floods. The enemy has played the possibilities of the intricate canal system of the area against us most skillfully. The opposing forces harass one another with rifle and machine-gun fire across the flooded wastes. Our artillery shells the enemy's approaches to the town and his positions beyond, and he, in turn, harass us untiringly. Within one week the Canadian Corps has advanced on the Valenciennes front a depth of 23 miles and has captured 28 towns and villages in which there are thousands of French civilians.

At the present time the Corps is feeding over 70,000 of the people freed from German rule entirely from its own resources, and has organised and established a special department for providing comforts for the women and

children who are still living in these centres. Add to the huge family of 73,000 civilians the thousands of fighting troops that make up the Corps, and it can be readily appreciated that to meet the combined needs of both presents a problem that is one of the biggest the Canadian authorities in the field have had to face in their long experience in France. Yet it is being handled smoothly and satisfactorily to all concerned.

DENAIN.

In the large town of Denain there were over 20,000 civilians to greet the Canadians when they entered the place on the heels of the retreating Germans, who greeted our men with indescribable enthusiasm. They were told by the enemy that if they displayed flags or any signs of rejoicing the town would be bombed, but the French people knew differently, and when the infantry swarmed into the town at one end as the Boche galloped out of the other, flags of the Allies appeared as if by magic.

As soon as the occupation of Denain had been definitely established, a well-known French Canadian officer was sent forward as the Town Commandant. Earlier in the war this officer was awarded the Legion of Honour by the French authorities for gallantry in the field, and when the civilians saw the ribbon of this honour on his tunic and found that he was a French Canadian, he was given a welcome and reception that could not have been more demonstrative or sincere to the President of the French Republic or the King of the British Empire. The men shook his hands until his arm ached and the women kissed him in the most liberal and unabashed manner. He is now regarded by them as a kind of President or King. His word is law, and his instructions are obeyed with a cheerful willingness.

The inhabitants say that, had it not been for the supplies sent by the American Relief Committee, they would have fared very badly. Many of them were cast into the big prison in the town for the slightest offence, and some were found there by our men and, of course, quickly released.

The Canadian Corps has, to date, occupied the northern portion of Valenciennes, and is continuing the advance beyond the town.

It is impossible to write into a story even a part of the thrilling and dramatic incidents that have marked the Canadians' advance in the last few days, nor can any conception of the joy shown by the released civilians or the pathos that has been linked with their lives in the past few years be described. These are subjects too big and deep for the pen; they are only fully known and understood in the hearts and minds of those who say that they feel as if they have passed from a terrible nightmare to a day of happy realities.

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