

FOE'S FIRE BOMBS DESTROYED HAM

Electrically Controlled Devices Exploded After Germans Left Town

CIVILIANS IN CELLARS French Troops Found Men and Women Without Food in Ruins of City

By WALTER DURANTY Special Cable to Evening Public Ledger Copyright, 1918, by New York Times Co. With the French Armies, Sept. 11. For pure wantonness of destruction, Ham offers an example that even the Germans will find it hard to beat.

Your correspondent has visited Ham and walked through street after street of fire-swept houses. At frequent intervals the wind still fanned the smoldering embers into a blaze, and the crash of falling walls was heard continuously. The boches had fired the town, which was virtually unincorporated, with shell fire of friend and foe, with deliberate thoroughness.

Searching for Refugees "We have just spoken with one of the municipal clerks who emerged only half an hour ago from a cellar behind the courthouse," said their leader. "He had an idea that there were two civilian refugees here, and we hope to save them. I fear several must have been taken to the rear of the town in the different parts of the city."

I waited until the work was completed, but the cellar proved empty. The soldiers stated that the civilian in the courthouse cellar had been there since Wednesday night with nothing to eat or drink save a half-pound bag of wheat ears taken from the fields and a quart bottle of water. The civilian provisions were exhausted on Saturday, it was only yesterday morning that he ventured to leave his hiding place through fear lest he be shot if the enemy for having disobeyed the order of evacuation posted on Wednesday.

When he saw the horizon-blue uniforms he broke down and wept from weakness and emotion. "Tell the Americans that the boches have done to Ham," they told her. She began in almost the same words as Senator Noel at Noyon—nothing can be more touching than the faith of the inhabitants of the devastated regions that an American has only to appreciate fully the boche vandalism for the practice to be put to an end.

Town Methodically Destroyed The woman continued: "Ham was destroyed methodically by fires simultaneously started in every quarter by electric devices. Nearly a month ago we noticed the boches had begun fixing up wires in all directions, and we commented on the strangeness of such installation at a time when everything else pointed to a German retreat. It did our hearts good to see the streams of gunfire, the shells, and the shattered and dispirited troops that had been pouring backward through Ham for the last few weeks.

"As the time passed the boches steadily continued their preparations for departure, removing wagon-loads of furniture and, indeed, everything of any value. But the wiring parties continued their work all the more busily. "Last Wednesday we had the key to the enigma. That morning the French shells fell close. At noon the boches issued orders to all civilians to evacuate the town. There were only about fifty inhabitants here, and perhaps twice that number of French and Belgian youths in the boche press gangs. Some fifty of us and six boys managed to hide in the cellars. I believe all save one or two are now safely accounted for.

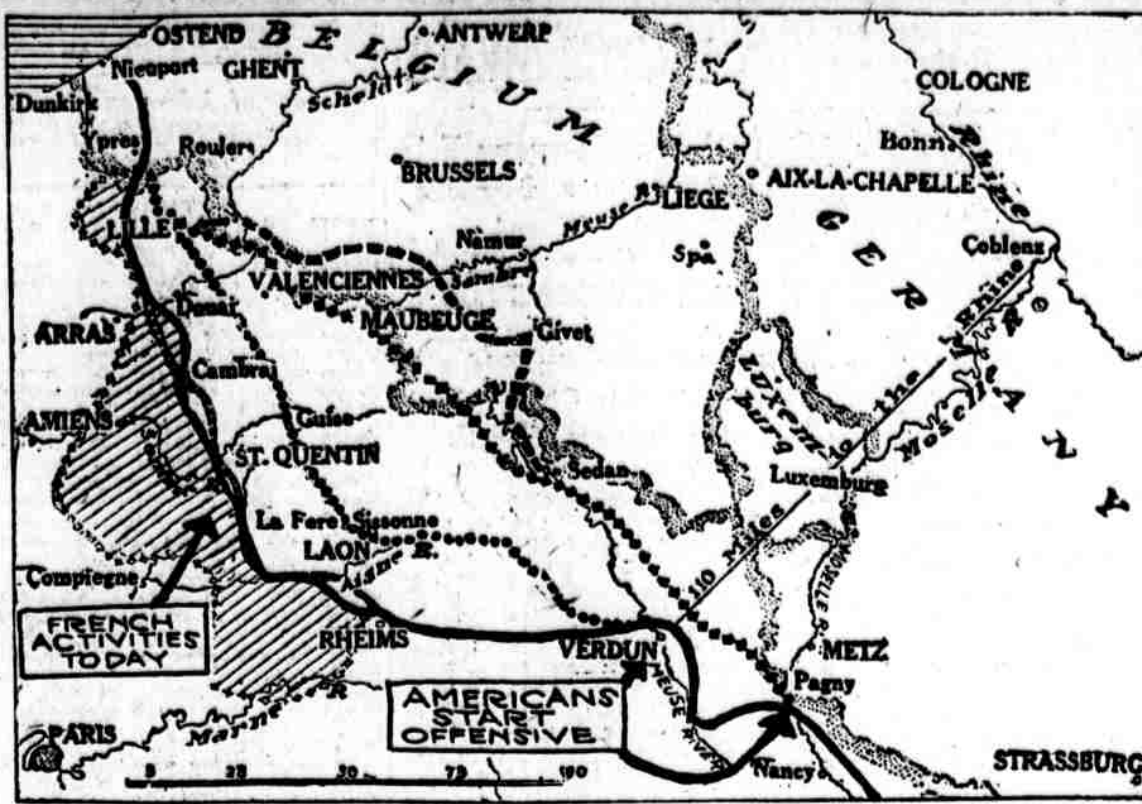
"On the night from Wednesday to Thursday we heard a sudden outburst of small explosions all around. At first we thought there was grenade fighting in the streets, as it was not loud enough for shells or air bombs. Before dawn our father stole cautiously out. The whole town was flaming above our heads, though our house had not caught fire until we were able to leave it.

"The boche wires had been connected with incendiary bombs, which were fired simultaneously from a central electric control. Ham burned furiously all Thursday and Friday. On Saturday morning the fire was dangerously close, and we left the cellar to meet the French soldiers afterward."

Thursday Red Letter Day in 1918 Offensives

By an odd coincidence all three of the great offensives of the present year were launched on Thursday. The Franco-American counter-offensive which drove the Kaiser's invading legions back to the Hindenburg line was launched on the Marne, Thursday, July 18. The "All-American" offensive, centered on the Meuse, and comprising the stretch of ground between the Meuse and Moselle rivers, southeast of Verdun, is being launched Thursday, September 12.

THEATRE OF AMERICANS' BIG DRIVE



Between the Meuse and Moselle Rivers, in the Toul sector of the western battlefield, American troops—the greatest number of United States forces engaged in any action thus far—today opened a strong offensive movement. The fortified city of Metz, a German stronghold, is believed to be the immediate objective of this drive.

RUSSIAN REBELS INVADE CAPITAL

Populace Rallies to Peasant Army Entering Petrograd, Is Report

FIGHTING IN STREETS

By the Associated Press London, Sept. 12. Russian peasants who revolted against the Bolshevik government a few days ago are reported to have entered Petrograd and to have been joined by a large part of the population, says a dispatch from Copenhagen to the Central News Agency.

Severe fighting is proceeding in the city and fires have broken out at several places. Russian White Guards have formed an unexpected front in the Arzamas district of the Russian province of Nizhni-Novgorod, according to a dispatch from Moscow, via Stockholm. Six districts in that province have united against the Russian Soviet government.

Peasants in the province of Kazan are arming against the Bolsheviks, and the dispatch adds, Soviet forces are being formed to suppress the revolt. Eleven Englishmen and eleven French citizens have been arrested and imprisoned in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, in Petrograd, according to apparently reliable information received from the Russian city.

The Englishmen incarcerated include R. H. B. Lockhart, the British consul general at Moscow, who was condemned to death by the Bolshevik government, but who escaped execution as the result of the intervention of all the neutral diplomatic representatives.

AMERICANS LAND IN NORTH RUSSIA

Washington, Sept. 12. American troops have landed at Archangel to assist in the campaign to restore order in North Russia. This announcement was authorized by General March, chief of staff.

After Allied forces landed on the shores of the White Sea several months ago American troops were reported operating with them, but it subsequently developed that the forces were marines from American warships. The purpose of the Allied campaign in northern Russia is to keep open the railroad from Archangel to Yologda, and to protect the Government of the North, which has been set up at Archangel, and through which it is hoped to re-establish order in Russia and overcome German influence.

Establishment by the new Government of northern Russia of a stable currency, which as a means of exchange is acceptable not only to the people of Archangel, but to foreign nations as well, was reported here as one of the most important developments of the situation in Russia, and is a direct result of the occupation of Archangel by Allied forces.

PETROGRAD SWEPT BY BLOOD AND FIRE

Stockholm, Sept. 12.—(By I. N. S.)—Miles of Petrograd are in flames and wholesale massacres by the Bolshevik elements of the Government of the North, according to information filtering into Sweden through Finland. Reports of the most appalling conditions throughout Russia are being received here daily. In the effort to maintain their tattered power, the Bolsheviks, formerly the opponents of capital punishment, are reported to be using fire and sword in the most ruthless manner.

SIBERIAN FRONT MOVES EAST; BOLSHEVIKI FLEE

By the Associated Press Vladivostok, Sept. 4.—The Siberian front has disappeared overnight. In the words of an American authority, it has "moved 4000 miles to the westward." Communication has been completely established between Vladivostok and Irkutsk. Czech-Slovak forces have broken through from Lake Hailan, in the direction of Tobia, under Captain Gaida, while General Semenov's Cossacks, supported by Czech-Slovak, have approached the Trans-Baikalian capital from the Onon River. The Bolsheviks, seemingly overawed by the presence of allied troops, have retreated from their positions.

Two Notable Days in American History

Today is the anniversary of the battle that brought to life the inspiring words of the "Star Spangled Banner," and on this day was begun the great American offensive in France which is intended to sweep the Germans back to the Rhine.

It was on September 12, 1814, that the British landed at North Point on the shore of the Chesapeake and began their march on Baltimore. At the same time British fighting ships attacked Fort M'Henry, now serving as a war hospital. Both attacks were gloriously repulsed. In the midst of the bombardment Francis Scott Key penned the lines that are known around the world.

Americans Open Great Offensive

Continued from Page One in possession of several points of the German front line. At 5 o'clock the Allies had progressed generally along the line. Some prisoners were taken at different parts of the sector.

Most Daring Attack The weather is fine. The attack made by the French and the Americans was a most daring one, and so far has been successful everywhere. There has been a great concentration of Franco-American artillery and potent airplanes are operating in large numbers.

BIG U. S. DRIVE MAY MENACE RHINE WORKS

American Offensive Likely to Compel Germany to Lessen Forces Around St. Quentin

Washington, Sept. 12. Launching of America's drive in the Toul sector, where probably a million Yanks are concentrated, may mean the beginning of Pershing's forecast campaign of destruction against the German industrial centers on the Rhine.

While awaiting full details of the new offensive to determine whether or not it is destined to become a major action, officials here today were guarded in their comment. It is known, however, that systematic devastation of Rhine industries has been long under way. And it is here that the best opportunity of giving Germany an example of the wreck she has wrought in Belgium and northern France lay in a campaign across the Rhine from the American concentration point between the Meuse and Moselle.

Besides offering the opportunity of reaching Germany by a short line, the drive presents the chance of preventing added German pressure further north. The drive toward the Hindenburg line has been materially slowed the last few days by German concentrations of unused troops.

The American drive, therefore, is likely to compel Germany to thin out her forces around St. Quentin. And it is likely to be so forcible a blow that considerable gains in the Toul sector will be accompanied by further pushing toward the Hindenburg line. Some military experts felt that it offered the opportunity of shoving the Boche well past the Hindenburg line and compelling him to drop back to at least the Meuse line.

Secretary of War Baker, now in France, may have witnessed the opening of the American drive, although reports make no mention of his presence at the front and the War Department was without information save these dispatches up to noon. First news of the drive was received by President Wilson, Chief of Staff, March, Congress and other departments.

BRITISH RUSH ON NEARER CAMBRAI AND ST. QUENTIN

Cross Canal du Nord—Capture Three Towns in Plunge

By the Associated Press London, Sept. 12. The British are smashing the defenses of Cambrai and surging on around St. Quentin. These two towns are the central pivots of the German front between La Fere and Ypres.

British forces have effected a crossing of the Canal du Nord to the northwest of the town of Havincourt. Field Marshal Haig announced in his official report today. The canal line here forms the main defense of Cambrai on the southwest. Two miles to the north the British have pushed to the westerly bank of the canal east and north of Moeuvres and established themselves there. The Germans offered stiff opposition in the Havincourt and Moeuvres sectors, which the British overcame. The crossing of the Canal du Nord above Havincourt places Cambrai in grave peril. The British and French previously had pushed east of the canal along its entire length except between Havincourt and the Scarpe.

U. S. DRIVE ATTEMPTS TO WIPE OUT SALIENT

Metz Fortress Likely to Be Next Objective of Huge American Army Under Pershing

By the Associated Press American and French troops today began an offensive on a twenty-mile front in Lorraine, near the German border.

The movement evidently is aimed primarily at the elimination of the famous St. Mihiel salient, which for more than four years has projected into the Allied line southeast of Verdun.

The attacks were launched on both sides of the salient—on a twelve-mile front on the south and an eight-mile front on the westerly side. The assaults were progressing favorably at the latest reports.

German Gunfire Weak A barrage lasting four hours preceded the thrust. Heavy concentrations of French and American artillery and airplanes had been effected. The fire poured in upon the Germans from the Allied guns was a terrific one, while the German reply, on the whole, was weak.

There have been many predictions in unofficial quarters recently that an American offensive was likely to be witnessed this fall, and Lorraine has been mentioned as one of the more probable fields for the attack. The German citadel of Metz lies only some fifteen miles to the northeast of Pont-a-Mousson, at the easterly edge of the salient under attack, and it seems not unlikely that this may be a further objective of the offensive, should it develop favorably in the crushing out or material reduction of the salient.

Try to Remove Salient The removal of this salient, in fact, would seem to be a necessity before any drive in great force into German territory on this front were attempted, as otherwise the German forces to the west would be left in a threatening position on the left flank of the attacking armies.

It is known that General Pershing has a huge American army under his command and there seems little doubt that adequate forces would be at the disposal of Marshal Foch for an important push in this sector were the opening moves to develop a suitable opening.

The St. Mihiel salient is nearly twenty miles wide at its mouth, from Fresnoy, twelve miles southeast of Verdun, to Pont-a-Mousson, and somewhat more than fifteen miles in depth, with its apex just to the southwest of St. Mihiel. It was driven into the French line in a sudden German eruption southeast of Verdun early in the fall of 1914 before the line had become entirely stabilized after the Marne and Aisne battles. The French checked the German push near St. Mihiel and prevented a debouching movement on the flanks. The positions taken up by the Germans were strong ones, however, and there is on record no previous organized attempt to reduce this menacing bulge pointing at the heart of France between the fortresses of Verdun and Nancy.

Marshal Foch has caused the launching of this attack almost coincidently with the virtually complete elimination of the various salients the Germans drove into the Allied lines in their offensive during the present fighting year. The Hindenburg line had again become the German defensive position along almost its entire length, and the German defense was stiffening materially at all points where the French, British and Americans were pressing in upon them.

New Menace to Enemy The German command now will have, it appears, another problem to meet in dealing with the outbreak of its foe in another and comparatively distant quarter from that in which the bulk of the fighting has been done in this year's campaign. The question will be it seems whether the reduced German man-power has left General Ludendorff with forces sufficient to maintain his front from Rheims to Ypres and at the same time beat back a powerful thrust by the Allies far to the southeast on the battlefield.

The Hindenburg line itself, however, already has not proved too strong for either the French or the British at some points in the recent fighting. The British breached it on the Quant-Droouart line, and today there came the official announcement from London that the British had made further progress behind this line in the direction of Cambrai, one of the principal German bases in the north.

A strong defensive line had been taken by the enemy here along the Canal du Nord, but this line now seems turned on its left flank, as the British have forced a crossing of the canal to the northwest of Havincourt and are in a position to push up the easterly bank providing Field Marshal Haig decides to employ his driving force in this direction.

Additional progress also was made by the British yesterday and last night in closing in upon St. Quentin, another of the Hindenburg line strong points. They captured the towns of Vermand, Attilly and Vendelles, and advanced beyond Attilly, directly west of St. Quentin, as far as the outskirts of Holnon wood, where they are not more than four and one-half miles from St. Quentin.

Official War Reports BRITISH

London, Sept. 12. We crossed the Canal du Nord northwest of Havincourt and established ourselves on the west bank of the canal east and north of Moeuvres. During the night we attacked and captured the strongly fortified position known as the railway triangle southwest of La Bassée, taking a number of prisoners and eight boats.

Yesterday evening we captured Attilly, Vermand and Vendelles. During the night we progressed to the western outskirts of Holnon wood. The English in successful local operations yesterday afternoon in the Havincourt and Moeuvres sectors overcame considerable opposition.

FRENCH Paris, Sept. 12. North of the Ailette a raid by French troops resulted in the taking of prisoners. There was artillery activity in the Rheims and the Progne regions. Two enemy raids in the Champagne and in the Vosges were repulsed.

Allegheny to Train Officers Meadville, Pa., Sept. 12.—Allegheny College, at which will be put at the disposal of the Government for an officers' training school, according to a decision reached by the War Department executive committee. Details of the plan were left in the hands of President W. H. Crawford.

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U. S. Offensive Crowns This Date in History 490 B. C.—Battle of Marathon. 1777—Washington returned to Philadelphia with the remains of his army. 1814—British attacked Baltimore. (Battle of North Point.) 1847—Battle of Chapultepec. 1857—China declared war on England. 1871—French Assembly authorized the President to conclude a treaty with Germany to hasten evacuation of France. 1918—Thirteen million Americans register for service against Germany. 1918—American offensive opens.

AUSTRIA STARVES ITALIANS Thousands of Prisoners Reported Dying of Hunger and Disease Paris, Sept. 12.—(By I. N. S.)—Thirty thousand Italian prisoners are dying of hunger and disease, according to prominent Red Cross officers arriving in Paris from Switzerland. Recently, after indirect negotiations with Austria, several trainloads of haggard, emaciated Italians, most of them suffering from tuberculosis, were permitted to leave Austria for Switzerland. Their condition was such that they could be given only light soup, and several who were surreptitiously given solid food by women who yielded to their pleading immediately died.

Abandon Luncheon for Boys One thousand members of the Fathers' Association of the Frankford High School last night decided to forgo the usual luncheon and smoker at the monthly meetings in order that they may apply the money saved to the purchase of tobacco for the men with the colors.

Store Opens 10—Closes 4:30 STORE ORDERS ACCEPTED Hirsch's 923 MARKET STREET Buy War-Savings Stamps In Honor of General Pershing's Birthday Tomorrow

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