



Gen. John J. Pershing.
From painting by Joseph Cummings Chase in Paris, 1919.

My Experiences in the World War By General John J. Pershing

Copyright, 1931, in all countries by the North American Newspaper Alliance. World rights reserved, including the Scandinavian. Reproduction in whole or part prohibited.

W. N. U. Service

First Seeks Better Position.
It was then decided that the First division should undertake to improve its position. The Germans on its front continued to hold the advantage of higher ground, from which they were able to inflict constant losses on our troops while suffering little damage themselves. Another reason was at this moment the morale of the allies required that American troops make their appearance in battle.

The Cantigny sector at this time was very active, with artillery fire unusually heavy, and the preparations for the attack by the First division, which had to be hastily made, were carried out under great difficulty. Many casualties occurred during the construction of jumping-off trenches, emplacements and advance command posts.

The Twenty-eighth infantry, under Col. Hanson E. Ely, designated for the assault, was reinforced by machine guns, engineers and other special units. Additional French artillery was sent to assist the artillery brigade of the division and particularly to suppress the hostile batteries attempting to interfere with the consolidation of the new position after it should be captured.

Yanks Splendid Under Fire.
On the morning of May 28, after a brief artillery preparation, the infantry advanced on a front of a mile and a quarter. The village of Cantigny and the adjacent heights were quickly taken, relatively heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy and about 300 prisoners were captured. Our troops behaved splendidly and suffered but slight loss in the actual attack.

Events developing farther east, however, were seriously to complicate the success. The German assault in force against the French along the Chemin des Dames, between Soissons and Rheims, began on the morning of the Twenty-seventh and was making dangerous headway. By the morning of the twenty-eighth the gains of the enemy were such that the French high command was compelled to relieve much of the reinforcing artillery behind the First division and transfer it to that front.

The enemy's artillery within range of Cantigny thus became superior to ours and was able to concentrate a terrific fire on the unsheltered troops in the captured position. His reaction against our troops was extremely violent and apparently he was determined at all cost to counteract the excellent effect the American success had produced upon the allies.

Under cover of heavy bombardment a series of counterattacks were made by the enemy, but our young infantrymen stood their ground and broke up every attempt to dislodge them. The regiment sustained severe casualties from the large caliber shells poured down upon it and had to be reinforced by a battalion each from the Eighteenth and Twenty-sixth regiments.

It was a matter of pride to the whole A. E. F. that the troops of this division, in their first battle, and in the unusually trying situation that followed, displayed the fortitude and courage of veterans, held their gains and denied the enemy the slightest advantage.

U. S. Troops at Chateau Thierry.
The alarming situation had caused General Petain to call on me on the 30th for American troops to be sent to the region of Chateau Thierry. The Third division (Dickman), then in training near Chaumont, being the only division within reach, besides the Second, was ordered to move north immediately. Dickman started his motorized machine-gun battalion over the road on the afternoon of May 30. The infantry and engineers entrained the same night, and the division's supply trains marched overland.

The first element to reach Chateau Thierry was the machine-gun battalion, which arrived the afternoon of May 31 and immediately went into action against the enemy, who then held the half of the town north of the Marne. By daylight on June 1 all available guns had been provided with cover and were in their positions, one company with eight guns, and another with nine guns about 500 yards to the east, guarding the approaches to the rail-

road bridge. From these positions they repulsed all attempts by the Germans to cross the Marne.

Meanwhile, as the infantry of the division came up on June 1 its battalions were put into line to reinforce the French from Chateau Thierry east to Dormans. The conduct of the machine-gun battalion in this operation was highly praised by General Petain in a citation issued later.

Stopped German Drive on Paris.

The Second division (Bundy) May 30 was near Chaumont-en-Vixen and was preparing to move northward the next day for concentration near Beauvais to relieve the First division at Cantigny. But its orders were changed late that night, and the division, moving by motor trucks, was rushed toward Maux, twenty miles northeast of Paris. Reaching there, the leading elements were hurried forward in the direction of Chateau Thierry. The roads were crowded with French troops and refugees. There was great confusion among the rapidly retreating French troops, many of them saying to our men that all was lost.

The initial deployment of the Second division was made by the Ninth infantry and the Sixth regiment of marines June 1, across the Paris highway at Lucy-le-Bocage, in front of Montreuil-aux-Lions, supposedly in support of two French divisions; but the French had orders to fall back through the American lines. In the early morning of June 2 the Twenty-third infantry, then on the left, was replaced by the French One Hundred Sixty-seventh division, and when reinforced by one battalion of the Fifth marines, the Fifth machine-gun battalion and some engineers, it was deployed to the right between the Sixth marines and the Ninth infantry, to fill a gap in the French line, and by June 5 the entire division became engaged.

Considering that this was its first experience in battle, this division made a splendid defense, repulsed all German attacks, and by its timely arrival effectively stopped the German advance on Paris.

Bring Relief to French Poilu.

The sudden appearance and dramatic entrance of the Second and Third divisions into the shattered and broken fighting lines and their dash and courage in battle produced a favorable effect upon the French poilu. It must have been with a decided feeling of relief that the worn and tired French army, retreating before vastly superior numbers, caught sight of Americans arriving in trucks at Meaux and marching thence on foot, hats off, hurrying eagerly forward to battle. And the Germans, who had been filled with propaganda deprecating the American effort and the quality of their training, must have been surprised and doubtless rather disconcerted by meeting strong resistance by Americans on different portions of this active battle front, especially when our troops advanced at once to meet the attack in open combat.

This defeat of the French furnished the second striking confirmation of the wisdom of training troops for open warfare.

Replies to French Criticism.

After the success of our troops we were in no mood to listen to self-appointed critics. M. Andre Tardieu called on me upon my return to Paris and undertook to point out that our staff was inefficient and offered criticisms of our organization. As this was something he could not possibly know about, I replied that he had got an entirely erroneous impression and that our staff was second to none in either ability or efficiency.

I advised him that we had quite enough of this sort of thing from the French, either military or civilian, and suggested that if his people would cease troubling themselves so much about our affairs and attend more strictly to their own we should all get along much better.

I did not fail to appreciate M. Tardieu's ability and his helpfulness on many occasions, but this constant inclination on the part of a certain element among the French to assume a superiority that did not exist then or at any later period, added to the attempts of some of them to dictate, had reached the limit.

CHAPTER XLIII

The sixth session of the supreme war council was convened June 1, 1918. The important matter of further shipment of American troops was taken up.

As already indicated, it was my opinion that neither the character of the troops to be sent over nor their disposition was within the province of the council to decide, but that these questions should be determined according to circumstances and after discussion with the allies.

So I objected to their consideration by the council, as such, and suggested a meeting outside the council, which was approved.

Accordingly, in the late afternoon, General Foch, Lord Milner, British war minister, General Weygand and I, with Colonels Conner and Boyd, met in the premier's room. General Foch began by stating the serious condition of the allies and proposed the continued shipment from America of nothing but infantry and machine-gun units in June and July, in effect 250,000 in each month. Every one realized the gravity of the allied situation as strongly as he did, but, as previously and persistently contended by me, there were two sides to the question.

Foch Becomes Excited.

I was prepared to make some concessions and stated my views, but neither facts nor arguments seemed to make any impression. General Foch especially was very positive and

earnest, and, in fact, became quite excited, waving his hands and repeating: "The battle, the battle; nothing else counts."

With equal emphasis I urged that we must build up our organization as fast as possible to carry on the battle to the end, and that our program had been seriously interrupted by concessions already made.

I called attention to the fact that the railways all over France were on the point of breaking down for lack of efficient operators and of skilled workmen to repair rolling stock; that our ports would be hopelessly blocked unless we could improve the railways; this his plan would leave us 200,000 men short to complete combat units and fill up special organizations that were absolutely necessary in the S. O. S., and, finally, that the restriction of our shipments to infantry and machine-gun units would be a very dangerous and short-sighted policy.

To much of this he paid little or no attention and replied that all these things could be postponed.

Wanted Wilson Informed.

Graeme Thompson, British expert on transportation and supply, came into the room at this point with Mr. Lloyd George and General Sir Henry Wilson, and took part in the discussion. Mr. Lloyd George said he thought President Wilson would be deeply interested, to get General Foch's view of the situation, and added that as America had no prime minister present he thought it would be inconvenient for us to make a decision, but that this subject should be brought before the whole council.

I then called attention to a cable from Secretary of War Baker, already quoted, showing that the President had been much embarrassed by representations made to him personally by the French and British ambassadors, and had suggested that the matter might be settled by a conference between General Foch and myself. I pointed out that the cable did not mention the supreme war council, and I again stated my opposition to making the subject one of general discussion by all allied representatives and their staffs.

I did not fail to point out further that the President was trusting my judgment in this matter. As nothing was being accomplished and hoping the number of participants in the discussion might be limited, I proposed we adjourn until the following day.

Pershing Again Answers Foch.

The next afternoon when we assembled M. Clemenceau was waiting for the rest of us, and instead of there being fewer conferees the number had increased. Not unlike the situation at Abbeville a month before, everybody was keyed up, and, as we had expected, the question had to be fought all over again.

General Foch supported by M. Clemenceau and Lloyd George, wanted nothing but infantry and machine gunners in June and July, to which I was strongly opposed, again insisting that sufficient importance had not been attached to my reasons for the necessity of the auxiliary troops omitted in June.

Foch resorted to his often-repeated question whether I was willing to take the risk, to which I replied very positively that I was ready to assume any responsibility my proposal might entail, but that I must have a greater

proportion of other troops to keep the American organization from going to smash.

Men Called in May Untrained.

Other objections, which the allies apparently overlooked, were that the untrained men called out in May could not possibly be ready for service until a considerable time after arrival, and that neither the French nor the British could provide all the equipment and land transportation they would need. In accordance with my program, I was willing to agree to the shipment of fully trained infantry not needed for the instruction of new drafts, but felt that this point should be left to the judgment of the secretary of war.

Mr. Lloyd George then concluded that as a consequence July would be a blank, and in a rather dejected tone he said the allies were in a sense in the hands of the United States. He spoke of the generous and chivalrous attitude of President Wilson, and said all they could do was to acquaint him with their needs and call upon him to come to their aid, more particularly to the aid of France at the period of the most terrible extremity that she had yet encountered.

CHAPTER XLIV

Further conversation at the session of the supreme war council showed the uncertainty in the minds of the allies. Prime Minister Lloyd George, reverting to losses, said that before the great German attack in May he had been informed positively the Germans had only 400,000 replacements left, and that now, after the most violent fighting, in which it was reported the Germans had suffered very heavy losses, they still had more than 800,000 replacements.

The allies also had 800,000, but it was now contended, he said, that the British army was on the decline while that of the enemy was not.

Mr. Lloyd George asked if that could be cleared up, to which General Foch replied that it was because the enemy managed better, and he went on to say that Germany, with a population of 68,000,000 could maintain 204 divisions, while Great Britain, with 46,000,000 inhabitants, could keep up only 43. It had been stated that the British counted on keeping up 53 divisions, but that ten of them would be practically American.

Then, in response to a further question by Mr. Lloyd George, General Foch said he could not pretend to say where Germany procured her replacements; possibly it might be from prisoners returned from Russia.

Three Map Program.

After further argument on discrepancies of various figures, and insistence by General Foch that the number of divisions be maintained, the consideration of the transportation of American troops in June and July was resumed. The discussion having reached an impasse, it was suggested that Lord Milner, British war minister, General Foch and I should undertake to draw up a program.

In the consideration of the question by us the point of my contention was won when General Weygand, who was Foch's principal adviser, remarked that it would be as well to leave the new drafts to be trained at home a month or so longer.

Although my arguments had failed to make any impression on General Foch, he at once approved Weygand's suggestion.

Agreement on U. S. Troops.

With this out of the way we soon drew up the agreement embodied in the following cablegram sent to Washington June 2:

"(a) For June: First, absolute priority shall be given the transportation of 170,000 combatant troops (viz., six divisions without artillery, ammunition trains or supply trains, amounting to 126,000 men and 44,000 replacements for combat troops); second, 25,400 men for the service of railway, of which 13,400 have been asked by the French minister of transportation; third, the balance to be troops of categories to be determined by the commander in chief, American expeditionary forces.

"(b) For July: First, absolute priority for the shipment of 140,000 combatant troops of the nature defined above, four divisions minus artillery, etc., amounting to 84,000 men plus 56,000 replacements; second, the balance of the 250,000 to consist of troops to be designated by the commander in chief, American expeditionary forces.

"(c) It is agreed that if available tonnage in either month allows the transportation of a larger number of men than 250,000 the excess tonnage will be employed in the transportation of combat troops as defined above.

"(d) We recognize that the combatant troops to be dispatched in July may have to include troops with insufficient training, but we consider the present emergency to justify a temporary and exceptional departure by the United States from sound principles of training, especially as a similar course is being followed by France and Great Britain. (Signed)

"FOCH, MILNER, PERSHING."

The prime ministers cabled President Wilson expressing their thanks for the promptness of American aid in the present emergency.

Yanks at Chateau Thierry.

The Second and Third divisions, facing the Germans near Chateau Thierry, had made their places in line, secure, giving heart to the French, who were trying to stabilize their own positions around the newly formed salient. We shall hear more of these two divisions later. Although fully taken for granted by all of us, it was none the less gratifying to see these divisions, for the first time in the line, acquit themselves so well.

En route to Chaumont we motored eastward through Montmirail, passing long columns of French refugees fleeing from their homes, many on foot, men and women with bundles on their backs, leading the smaller children, driving their stock before them and hauling in various types of conveyance the few remaining worldly goods they were able to take with them. Almost indescribable were many similar scenes as reported by our troops as they came up to reinforce the retiring French.

It seemed to me then that if this picture of civilization engaged in the persecution of innocent and unarmed noncombatants, mostly women and children, could be brought home to all peoples, reason would be forced upon rulers and governments where too often their passions and ambitions assume control.

As a result of the German successes against the French something akin to a panic prevailed in Paris. Probably a million people left the city during the spring.

(Continued on page 6)

When in trouble
with your car

call

Frank Harter
Fernbrook, Pa.

Telephone 324

...LAST DAYS...

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

\$40,000 SALE AT

Greenwald's

46-48 South Main Street, LUZERNE, PENNA.

HARDWARE :: PAINTS :: SUPPLIES

Everything must go... Carpenter Supplies... Plumbing Supplies... Household... Hardware... Paints... Varnishes... Screen Doors... Garden Tools... Sporting Goods... Bathing Suits... All Seasonable Goods.

14-In. Steel Stilson Wrench 79c
Disston Saw \$2.89
American Beauty Ele. Iron \$5.89
50-Ft. Garden Hose.....\$3.49
Alarm Clocks 89c
\$3.50 Gal. Paint for.....\$2.89

4 Hour Enamel for.....\$1.39
4-Ft. Step Ladders..... 89c
Clothes Baskets 89c
Iron Boards 99c
100 Lb. Flour Tin.....\$1.59
Bottle Cappers \$1.29