

CHAPTER CCLXXVII.

SECOND BATTLE OF THE MARNE : JULY, 1918.

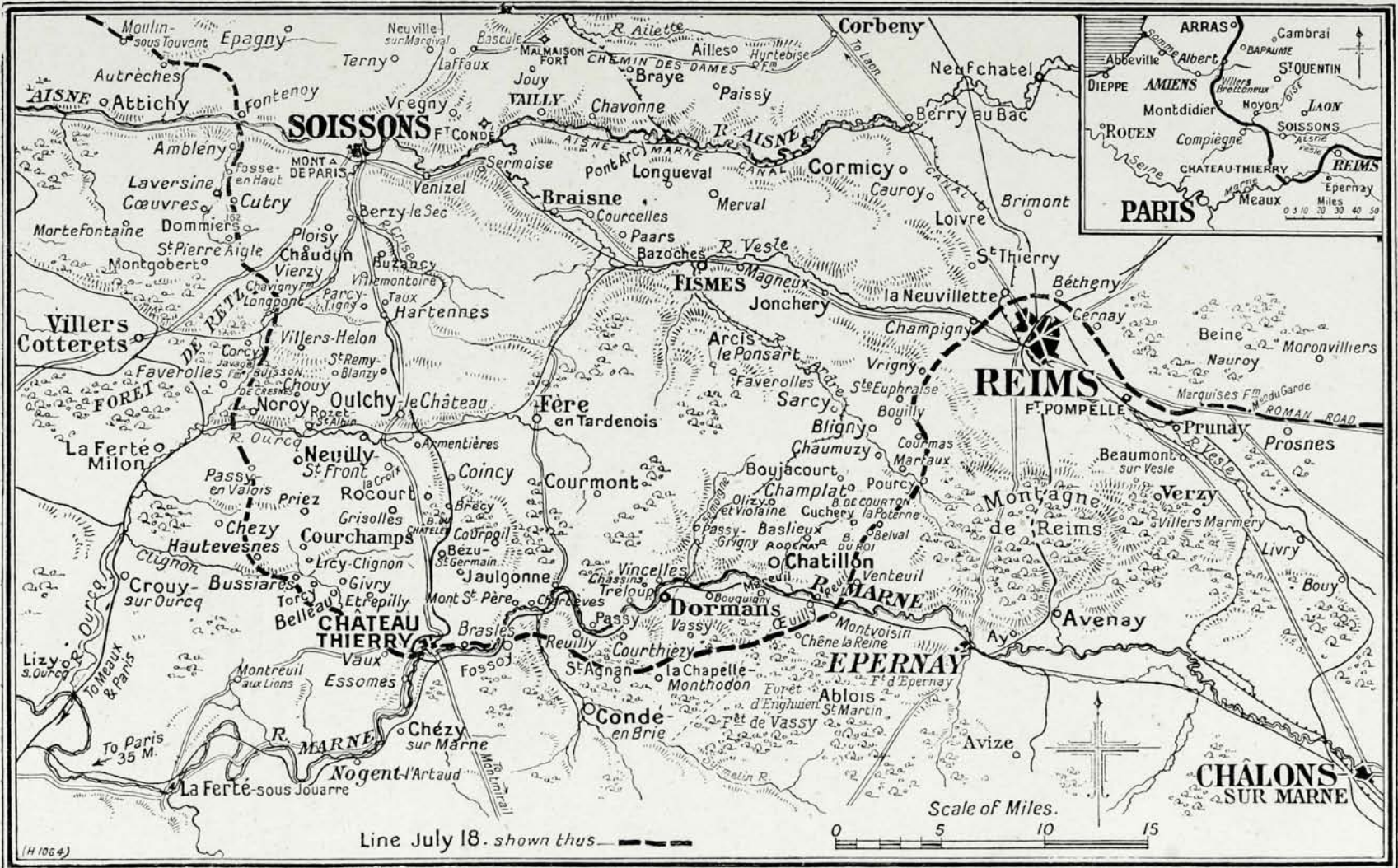
MINOR OPERATIONS AT END OF JUNE, 1918—AMERICANS AND AUSTRALIANS—SUCCESS OF THE TANKS—THE STRATEGIC SITUATION—GERMANS ATTACK EAST AND WEST OF REIMS, JULY 15—COMPLETE FAILURE IN EAST—GERMANS CROSS THE MARNE—END OF GERMAN ADVANCE, JULY 17—GERMAN COMMENT—JULY 18: FOCH STRIKES BETWEEN SOISSONS AND THE MARNE—GREAT ALLIED SUCCESS—THE GERMAN RETREAT CONTINUES—FIGHTING IN THE AIR—RAIDS INTO GERMANY—OPERATIONS ON OTHER SECTORS—THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

AFTER the events described in Chapter CCLXXIII. there was an interval of comparative rest on the Western front. The German movements appeared to be held up for a time and counter-efforts were executed by the Allies against them on a somewhat larger scale.

On June 28 the 5th Division under Major-General R. B. Stephens and the 31st Division commanded by Major-General J. Campbell, which occupied the ground between Vieux Berquin and Merville, with the little stream known as the Plate Becque about 1,500 yards in front of it covering the approach to the Nieppe Forest, attacked the Germans along a line of a little less than four miles eastward from the Forest. The troops attacked were commanded by General von Bernhardt and comprised the XV. Corps. They held a line west of the Estaires-Cassel Road. The object of the movement was to push back the Germans and occupy the line of this stream, which gave a better position to the defences protecting Hazebrouck in advance of the wooded ground which was constantly being shelled with gas; Hazebrouck, it will be remembered, was only about five miles in rear of this line. The assault was undertaken

without preliminary bombardment and was successful from the first onset. The hamlets of L'Epinette, Verte Rue and La Becque were taken. The enemy's trenches were cleared without difficulty by our troops, consisting of units from Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Northern Counties, with some southern English units coöperating. Prisoners were taken to the number of 450, including 9 officers, also 30 machine-guns and two field guns. The prisoners comprised Saxons from the 32nd Division and Prussians from the 44th. It was a successful action of considerable value, and a complete surprise to the enemy.

At the same time the Australian 1st Division captured some hostile posts west of Merris, just to the north of Vieux Berquin, taking 43 prisoners, 9 machine-guns and 2 trench-mortars. It was a curious little affair. A patrol of South Australians in No Man's Land about 6 o'clock noticed that the enemy in front of them had a distinct disinclination to fight. They therefore rushed the enemy post and captured the whole garrison. Some of the prisoners then pointed out the position of the next post, whereupon another Australian patrol captured that also! The operation was repeated, and thus in this impromptu fashion four or five other



THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE MARNE.

(H 1064)

enemy posts were taken possession of one after the other, and the position was consolidated by the capture of a strong dug-out position a little to the south of those already taken. This advanced our line west of Merris for 300 yards or more, on a front of half a mile, with hardly any loss to our men. The enemy made no attempt to recapture this ground until June 30, and was then repulsed with loss.

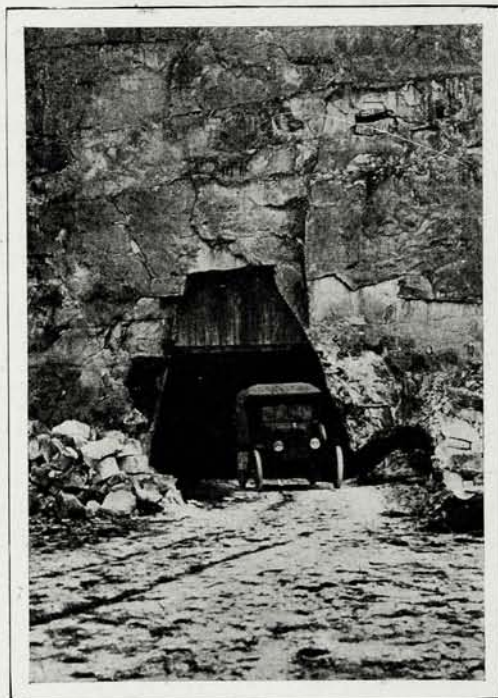
On June 29 the French made a surprise attack on the German positions between Amblény and the north side of the forest of Villers-Cotteret, which was completely successful. The advance, on a front of five miles, was begun without any special preliminary bombardment: there was merely the ordinary interchange of artillery fire. It was covered by a strong barrage. The object of the attack was to win the eastern side of the ravine through which a small stream runs past Laversine and Amblény to the Aisne. This ravine had steep banks, the eastern of which overlooked to some extent the French positions back to Mortefontaine, especially from the high plateau near Dommiers. Moreover, the quarries on the sides of the ravine afforded good shelter for German troops close up to the French lines in positions which it was impossible to reach by artillery fire. At Laversine the Germans held a post on the western side which was a good centre for observation and for patrols. The attack was directed up the gully between Laversine and Cutry and also against the high ground between Cutry and Dommiers, the troops being directed round the flanks. It was greatly aided by the action of the new light French tanks and was very successful, the German lines being penetrated to a depth of over a mile. Finally the French established themselves along the ground which ran from Fosse-en-Haut, a mile to the north of Laversine by Cutry, Hill 162 and back by St. Pierre-Aigle to Montgobert, thus transforming the re-entrant form of the trenches to a blunt salient penetrating the German lines. Over 1,300 prisoners were taken, of whom 20 were officers. The result was a great improvement of the French position, as it gave them a strong situation in the German lines, outflanking any attack to the north of it and also against the eastern side of the forest.

The same date marked an advance by the French on the south of the Ourcq between La Ferté-Milon and Passy-en-Valois; they gained ground to the extent of half a mile on a

front of rather over a mile and captured 275 prisoners.

On July 1 the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd American Division seized the village of Vaux, supported by the 4th Brigade, just west of Château-Thierry on the road to Paris. On the other side of the road they took La Roche Wood, close to the village. On this occasion the French acted on the right of the Americans. The action was thoroughly successful, the whole of the points desired being taken.

On July 3, as the result of small local operations near Autrechès and Moulin-sous-Touvent,



DUG-OUT IN A QUARRY ON THE MARNE.

the French considerably improved their position, biting into the German lines for about half a mile on a front of nearly two miles, taking 457 prisoners and 30 machine-guns. The enemy's works here had been under the usual artillery fire the three previous days, but the intensive artillery fire was only begun at 7.25 a.m. after the guns had been silent for an hour to lull the enemy. It lasted for two minutes and then the French infantry went forward covered by a barrage. In 10 minutes the first line of German trenches, some 500 yards away, was reached, and an engineer company which had accompanied the attacking troops, who were mostly Bretons, began to join up the old with the new position by a communication trench. By half-past eight the French



[French official photograph.]

LA FERTÉ MILON: REGULATING TRAFFIC ON ONE OF THE BRIDGES.

were thoroughly established, and when, three-quarters of an hour later, the Germans made a counter-attack, it was completely defeated before it could get up to the new line. In one dug-out the French captured the whole Staff of a German battalion, together with the telegraph, telephone and ambulance sections.

The Americans marked Independence Day (July 4) by aiding the Australians in a considerable success on the south side of the Somme. The American contingent consisted of four companies from their 33rd Division. The combined forces captured ground a mile and a half deep, including the village of Hamel and Vaire Wood, and took over 1,500 prisoners, more than 100 machine-guns, some 20 trench mortars and an anti-tank field-gun. The Germans also lost heavily in killed and wounded, while the total casualties on our side were under 500. The attack commenced shortly after 3 a.m. under favourable atmospheric conditions. The Australians, as we know, had been gradually progressing forward north of the Somme towards Morlancourt and had already recaptured ground to the extent of about 3 miles in front of the point to which we had fallen back at the end of March. On the south side of the river also considerable progress had been made beyond Vaire, and the object of the operation now being described was to straighten out the line on the north

and south sides of the river. Before the attack commenced the German lines were subjected to intensive fire over a much wider front than that which was actually assaulted by the infantry, and the Germans appear to have been completely surprised by the movement. Sixty tanks accompanied the advancing infantry, which was also covered by a smoke screen and the usual barrage, while in the air pilots flew over the ground to be attacked and dropped bombs on many important points. One thing which added to the surprise of the movement was that the German trenches in this part of the field had been recently treated to a considerable bombardment of gas shells, and as this was continued during the artillery preparation, the Germans appear to have thought that nothing more was intended. At any rate, when our men reached the enemy's lines, they found the Germans wearing their gas masks and not expecting an infantry attack. Our guns practically held the enemy batteries, and consequently our men suffered but little from them.

The efficacy of our artillery fire may be judged from the fact that, when the Germans commenced to put down their barrage, it fell on our first line trenches, which were then practically empty, our men having by that time reached those of the enemy; they had been so dominated by our fire as not to have noticed

our infantry advance. The main attack was four miles long, and on the north and south of it small raiding operations were also carried out; thus on the Villers-Bretonneux road a successful raid took 60 prisoners and killed many Germans. Other similar expeditions at Ville-sur-Ancre and another below Morlancourt were also successful; the former had a special object, viz., the capture of a point which made a material improvement in our line. This was successfully taken and held.

The American troops that took part in this action were new to the work, but all behaved with great gallantry. They appear to have been engaged more especially round Hamel and Vaire. There is no doubt that the success of the operation was very largely due to the able and efficient manner in which the tanks were handled. All succeeded in going over the German lines except five, and of those only one was sufficiently injured to be put out of action, being struck by a shell. When the fighting was over, they were of great utility in bringing back the wounded. As usual the front line of the Germans consisted practically of machine-gun nests only, and it was against these defences that the tanks were so useful. Moving up and down behind our barrage

they shot down the garrisons or crushed them and their weapons into the earth. Some few of the German gunners took refuge in their dug-outs, where they were trapped and compelled to give themselves up to our infantry. In one case a tank which was 200 yards in advance of the infantry disposed of a nest of six machine-guns which refused to surrender. The tank went over them like a roller, crushing all the guns and most of the crews, and shooting down others who tried to escape. Another nest of four was similarly disposed of, three being snuffed out in the first attack; then turning round on the fourth, which still kept in action, the tank passed over gun and crew alike. Many more instances might be given of this use of the weapon. On one occasion a tank destroyed a post of five machine-guns; the crews then went out, took the weapons into the tank and brought them back.

Against a point whence a good deal of fire had been coming a tank went forward to locate the exact position. It was an irregular hummock on the top of a low rise of ground, and round this the tank went. It had no sooner got behind it than some 40 Germans sprang up with their hands in the air and ran back as hard



GERMAN PRISONERS TAKEN BY THE AMERICANS AT VAUX.

Marching to a prison camp under French escort.

(American official photograph.)

as they could away from the tank to surrender to the infantry behind.

There were one or two points where tanks could not be used, and here the attack was carried out by infantry fire and bombing

typical of German ways. An officer, after having surrendered, shot an American sergeant in cold blood with his pistol; neither this officer nor other Germans who came across the Americans in this part of the field failed to suffer for this dastardly conduct.

There were small counter-attacks, but no serious effort to regain the position the Allies had captured, and on July 6 the Australians advanced once more and pushed their line another 400 yards forward to the south of Hamel and east of Vaire Wood over a front of a mile. The bold capture of this wood and the ground beyond it was a great advantage, as it commanded the ground which sloped down thence towards Warfusée. On the edge of the eastern slope there was another wood, about 250 yards wide from east to west and some 1,300 yards long from north to south. In this there was a German machine-gun post which gave some trouble to our men after they had captured Vaire Wood. It was disposed of in a very gallant manner. One man crept cautiously forward, and so imposed upon the garrison with his rifle and bombs that 12 privates and one officer surrendered to him and were brought back to our front line. In Hamel itself there were several dug-outs, and these were dealt with one after the other until all surrendered. Finally, under some considerable machine-gun fire an Australian officer climbed to the top of the most prominent ruin in the village and planted there the French tricolour.

In all these operations the British and French aviators played a prominent part; besides doing their ordinary work of observation and distant bombing, they accompanied the troops in their advance, dropped many tons of bombs on the enemy, exploded his ammunition dumps, and constantly brought machine-gun fire to bear on his troops. Our superiority was shown by the fact that we accounted for 21 German aeroplanes and one observation balloon against only four of our own machines missing. This intimate co-relation between the air and the land services had now become a matter of routine.

During the month of June we had put out of action 1,235 of the enemy's aeroplanes.

On the night of July 7-8 the Australians again advanced their line slightly, capturing several prisoners. Farther north our troops also raided the German lines south of the La Bassée Canal and also east of Hazebrouck. The



[Australian official photograph

**AUSTRALIAN INFANTRYMAN WITH
FIELD KIT.**

When the position had been captured, the tanks patrolled the front, keeping down the German machine-gun fire. From a cornfield a considerable amount of sniping took place from men whose position could not be exactly located, and against them a tank went forward; as soon as it got near, German infantry were seen bobbing up in all directions, bolting back; many of them were shot down as they went. One of these little incidents was extremely

result of the Australian advance was to cause great artillery activity on the part of the Germans, but their efforts were limited to gun-fire.

The French south of the Aisne and east of Villers-Cotterets attacked on a front of two miles and took some 370 prisoners. During the day the French also attacked the enemy's positions south of the Aisne in front of the Retz Forest, north-west of Longpont, on a front of two miles. They made good for about three-quarters of a mile, and captured Chavigny and the ground north and south of that point, taking 346 prisoners.

On the next day the French made a further advance between Montdidier and the Oise. The attack was begun at 3.30 a.m. on a front of two and a half miles to the west of Antheuil. Tanks supported the infantry attack, which carried the line forward a little over a mile, capturing the Porte Ferme and the Ferme des Loges—the Germans themselves admit this success—with 530 prisoners and 30 machine-guns. The position was held in spite of counter-efforts by the enemy. The Germans also attacked in the region of Chavigny Farm, but were driven off. There seems to have been on this day more or less activity along the whole line of the Western Front, but nothing

of any moment except what has just been noted.

On July 9 the German artillery fire in the neighbourhood of Villers-Bretonneux was more intense than usual, and it was followed by some local attacks, but all of these were driven off. We also had a successful little raid in the neighbourhood of Merris in the northern section, where, in addition to some prisoners, we captured nine machine-guns and two trench mortars.

The small attacks by which the Allies consistently and constantly gained ground continued. On July 10 the French captured the village of Corey north of the Ourcq and took 50 prisoners. The next day, once more near Merris, the 1st Australian Division gained a considerable advantage. It was of a very interesting character, extended over a front of more than 2,000 yards, and succeeded in carrying our line to within 500 yards of Merris. At first only one small patrol of ours was concerned, but it succeeded in rounding up between 30 and 40 prisoners. The enemy's line, which our men attacked, formed an awkward salient projecting into our lines, and consisted of a chain of fortified posts, but with no connected regular line immediately behind them. These seem to have been dealt with in detail, a few being



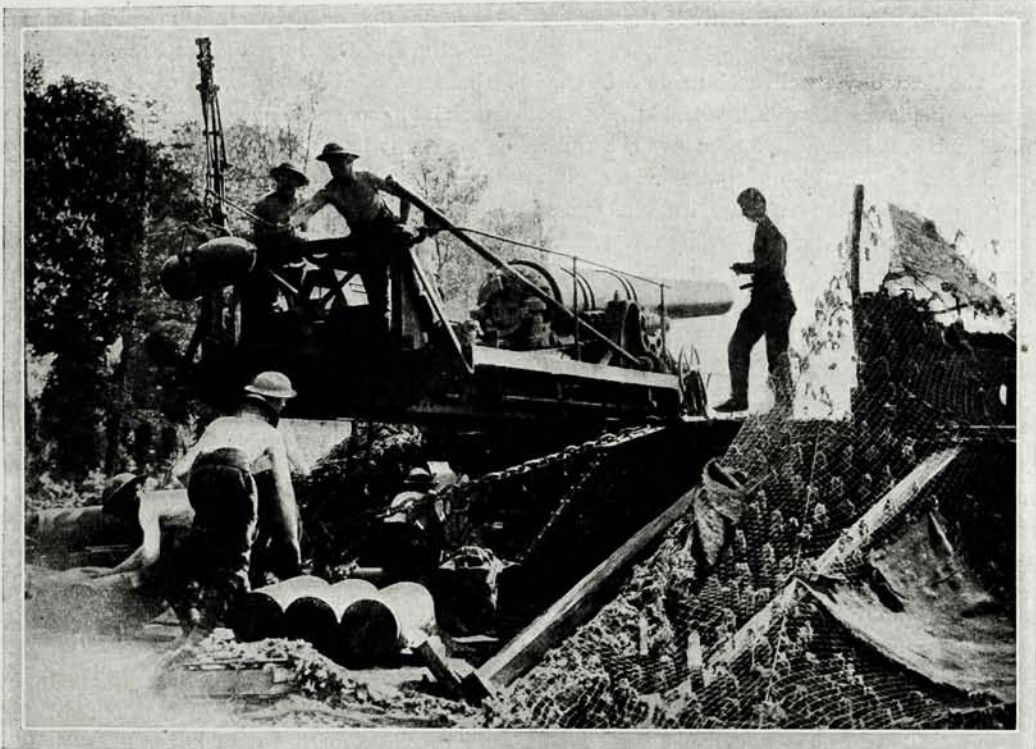
ENTRAINING FRENCH TANKS.

[French official photograph.]

captured, which involved the loss of others, and so the successes spread along the line, our original force being joined by other patrols from the 1st Australian and also the British 33rd Division. The process was continued the next day. The net result of these small operations, which were conducted in broad daylight, without any special artillery assistance, resulted in the capture of 223 prisoners and 15 machine-guns and gave us a new line of posts well in advance of our former line.

considerably strengthened their position against a further German advance against Amiens. On July 14 the British line in the north was advanced east of Dickebusch Lake over a front of 2,000 yards near Ridge Wood, and 300 prisoners were captured.

On the night of July 17/18, Australian troops made a successful advance in the neighbourhood of Villers-Bretonneux, two miles south of the Somme. They made good on a distance of some 600 yards on a front of over



LOADING "BUNTY."

[Official photograph.]

The French pressure against the German lines in front of the Forest of Villers-Cotterets was also continued. On July 12 the village of Longpont, south-west of Soissons, and Javage Farm, north-east of Faverolles, were taken. In the evening the French made a still more important gain south-east of Amiens and immediately west of the Avre. The front of attack measured three miles between Castel and north of Mailly Raineval. The village of Castel was captured, also Anchin Farm, and several strongly organized posts were captured. A considerable irruption into the enemy's lines was completed and in some points a depth of over 2,000 yards reached, in addition to which 500 prisoners were taken. This was an important rectification of the Allied line which

a mile, capturing one officer, thirty-three men, some machine-guns, and two field guns.

To the south-west of Arras, at Hébuterne, we also made a successful raid to the south of the village and drove off a hostile raiding party south of Bucquoy. During July 18 Yorkshire troops made a successful raid in the afternoon south-east of Robecq. The operation was carried on with very little resistance from the enemy. On the same date the Germans shelled the neighbourhood of Ypres and the hills towards Kemmel with considerable vigour. Prisoners taken from the enemy at this time showed great interest in the fighting on the Marne, and stated that the battle was meant to end the war. On the next night the Germans attempted to raid in the Villers-Bretonneux

and Morlancourt regions, but in each case they were driven off. On the other hand, our troops made successful attacks in the neighbourhood of Bucquoy, Willerval and Loere and captured some prisoners.

July 19 saw a successful operation carried out by the 9th Division under Major-General H. H. Tudor near Bailleul. It was directed against Meteren which stood on high ground close to the British line, and it was therefore desirable to deprive the Germans of it. This

posed of Scottish troops, with whom were South Africans, the Australians also advanced and extended the success to a front of about 4,000 yards, including a group of buildings to the south-west of Meteren. Except on the left of the attack the enemy offered but little resistance, and our objectives were quickly gained and over 350 prisoners taken, with 10 trench mortars and 50 machine-guns. Numerous raids were also undertaken which gained us slight advantages, and we



[Official photograph.]

"BUNTY" SPEAKS.

village had, indeed, seen a good deal of fighting ; both sides striving to capture and hold it. The Germans gained a footing there on the morning of July 16, but in the evening we counter-attacked and drove back the enemy ; however, it would seem that our line was still kept to the west of this point, and it was not until the operation about to be described was successful that the village was taken and held. It straightened out our line and diminished the sharpness of the salient about Bailleul. The combat was sharp but decisive, and our troops carried the line forward to an extreme depth of 1,300 yards on a front of about two miles. They captured the village of Meteren, taking over 300 prisoners, with a number of machine-guns. On the right of the 9th Division, com-

pleted a busy week by a raid upon the enemy's positions in Aveluy Wood on July 20, in the course of which they destroyed several dug-outs and strong points.

The operations in the Meteren region were completed by the capture of Merris on the night of July 28/29 by the 1st Australian Division, which greatly improved and strengthened our line.

English troops pushed forward on a front of about a mile, south of Hébuterne, on the 19th, and the operation was continued the next day (July 20). The enemy was also compelled to withdraw from the Rossignol Wood between Hébuterne and Bucquoy. This advance considerably improved our position. There was again a little fighting during the night of July 20

south-west of La Bassée and in the Merville and Dickebusch segments.

The aggregate result of all these small affairs was to improve our front considerably. Incidentally they showed that our troops were superior to the Germans in hand-to-hand fighting.

With the exception of these minor operations, the front had been without German enterprise for nearly a month, and what energy was displayed was entirely on the side of the Allies, but it was known that concentrations were taking place which pointed to a further effort as soon as circumstances were favourable to the enemy. The weather at this time was bad, and that possibly postponed his attack. It is said also that the ravages of influenza had something to do with the delay. It was ascertained at the beginning of July that the group of reserve divisions about Douai and Valenciennes was still intact, but there were also indications which led the French General Headquarters to believe that a further attack would be made in strength east and west of Reims, and might even be continued still farther to the east, thus involving a wide length of the French positions. The object of an advance in

this direction was plainly to intercept the main line of communications between Nancy and Paris by Vitry. Were it successful, it would much facilitate the advance by Château-Thierry on Paris, and would cut the eastern French forces, from Verdun to Nancy and downwards, from those which were facing directly north.

Moreover, if the attack were extended to the Argonne, as at one time seemed probable, and if it were possible to push down to Vitry-le-François, Lorraine would have been cut off; while if the attack could have been pushed down east of the Argonne to the salient of St. Mihiel, Verdun would have been isolated. It is evident, therefore, that such an attack offered great possibilities.

It was really a reversion to the same strategical plan that had dictated the double attempt to turn the Allied flanks in 1914, both on the left and on the right. The latter has been alluded to recently in Chapter CCLIV, pp. 207-8. The attacks on Verdun were all made in pursuance of this idea, and just as the far wider effort of the early part of the war had been narrowed down to an attack on Verdun, now this was still more to be shortened by the attempt to advance from Reims. Huge as were



[French official photograph.]

A BATTERY OF 75mm. GUNS ON THE MARNE.



REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVING BETWEEN DORMANS AND REIMS, HEADED BY PIPERS.

the German forces employed in the war, their grandiose plan of campaign had always been in excess of their available strength, and they had come down to much more concentrated and less ambitious efforts than those which had formed the general idea of the 1914 offensive.

In no one of the four attacks which he had undertaken had Ludendorff been really successful. The advance on Amiens had been held up. He had managed to widen the wedge he had then made to the south of the Oise, and he had added on to this by the offensive on the western side of Reims to Soissons, but the whole of this advance was indeterminate, and, although offering possibilities, had nothing decisive about it. In the north, too, the German advance had been definitely held, and an advance in this direction offered but little prospect of any striking success. It was natural, therefore, that any further attempt should be made more in connexion with the bigger irruption in the neighbourhood of Amiens, an extension of which offered greater possibilities of a striking result.

Marshal Foch thoroughly understood this, and his view was confirmed by the knowledge that the Germans were concentrating in great strength round Reims. At the beginning of July, to meet the coming attack, he transferred the whole of the French forces, amounting to eight divisions, from Flanders to the south, to the threatened French front. He also asked Sir Douglas Haig for four British divisions, two

to be placed in areas south of the Somme and two in position astride that river, to ensure the connexion between the French and British Armies about Amiens, and to enable him to remove four more French divisions from this portion of the theatre of war to a more eastward position to strengthen the French right flank. Sir Douglas Haig agreed to this proposal. Thus, in addition to the troops he had already in reserve, Foch had now available 12 further divisions to meet the coming attack.

On July 14, he requested that the four British divisions might be placed unreservedly at his disposition, and that four others might be detailed to take their place. This request was also agreed to, and the XXII. Corps, under Lieut.-General Sir A. Godley, consisting of the 15th, 34th, 51st and 62nd British Divisions, was accordingly sent down to the French front. The Allies were then prepared to meet the German offensive in the neighbourhood of Reims.

On July 7, General Gouraud, whose troops were stationed on the eastern side of the town, issued the following order:—

“To the French and American soldiers of the Fourth Army. We may be attacked at any moment. You must all feel that never was a defensive battle entered on under more favourable conditions. We are warned and we are ready. We have been powerfully reinforced in infantry and artillery.

"You will fight on ground which your leaders have made into a redoubtable fortress, which will be unconquerable if the approaches are well held. The enemy's bombardment will be terrible, but you will sustain it without yielding. The attack will be vigorous, through a cloud of smoke, dust and gas, but your position and your arms are formidable.

"In your breasts beat the strong and brave hearts of free men. There must be no thought of recoiling. You must be animated but by one thought—kill as many of them as you can until they have had enough of it. Feeling you will do so, your General tells you that you will crush the assault and that it will be a great day when you do it."

It was a prophetic utterance, and it is a proof that, from the Commander-in-Chief downwards, the whole Army felt the confidence due to adequate preparations to meet the situation.

On July 15, the expected attack was begun



GENERAL VON MUDRA.

Commanded a German Army operating east of Reims.

both on the east and west of Reims. The attack was made on a front of 50 miles, and was divided into two parts by the town of Reims, which the assault of June 18 had failed to take.

South and east of Reims was the forest-covered height known as the Montagne de Reims, difficult to take, but south of it the country down towards the camp of Châlons was for the most part flat, and the Suipe and the Vesle were the only natural defences north of the Marne. The defects of the ground had

been made good by elaborate defensive preparations and it had been turned into a veritable fortress with lines of great depth so that to break through them all would have been a costly undertaking and one which would have required great time. Moreover, it must be



GENERAL VON EINEM.

Commanded the German Third Army.

remembered that so long as the Montagne de Reims was uncaptured it formed a dangerous position on the flank of any German irruption on one or other side of the town.

The First German Army under General von Boehn operated on the west of Reims, while on the east, the German Third Army, under General von Einem, formerly Prussian Minister of War, was strengthened by a new army under General von Mudra, consisting of troops brought up from Lorraine, and the whole force was nominally (though of course not really) under the command of the German Crown Prince.

The Allied troops opposed to these forces were the Fourth Army east of Reims, under General Gouraud, immediately south and south-west of the town to the Marne, the Fifth Army under General Berthelot, and the Seventh Army, commanded by General de Mitry, which extended the line from Venteuil to Fossoy. With this force was the 3rd American Division between Fossoy and Château-Thierry, while English and Italian troops were near the Ardre river. North of the American troops about Château-Thierry was Degoutte's army up to the Ourcq, and north

of it in front of the Retz Forest was Mangin with the Tenth Army. General Pétain was in general command of the whole front.

Mangin, who appeared for the second time in this part of the country, had been criticized for his conduct in the April offensive of 1917,



GENERAL DEGOUTTE.

Commanded the French Army between Marne and Ourcq.

but the result of the enquiry exonerated him, and General Foch appointed him to the command of the army he now held. Like General Gouraud, he had had considerable experience in Colonial warfare; he was appointed to the command of a brigade in 1913 and at the outbreak of war he was at the head of the 8th Brigade in the region of Dinant. During the first battle of the Marne he commanded a division and greatly contributed by his personal efforts to the success of the fighting. At the end of March, 1916, he was at Verdun, and recaptured Douaumont and afterwards Vaux.

The Allied plan of defence was to hold their defence line, in accordance with their latest practice, by a series of small infantry groups armed with machine-guns, and it was expected that these should give notice to the defences farther back the moment the real infantry attack of the Germans commenced. These posts formed indeed a series of forlorn hopes, and the men who occupied them knew it. But

at no point along the whole line did they fail in their desperate task. Behind these posts, and separated from them by a cleared space, there were a number of strong points powerfully armed and protected by strong zones of barbed wire. It was the duty of these defences to hold and break up the assaulting waves of the enemy. Throughout the period of waiting constant little pin-pricks of raids had been carried on against the German lines to prevent them localizing the defensive distributions, while at the same time every necessary step had been taken to strengthen the position. Ranges had been measured with the greatest care and with a minimum expenditure of shell-fire so as not to attract attention.

German troops had been brought up in large numbers and on July 13 there was a large in-



GENERAL MANGIN.

Commanded the Tenth French Army.

crease of traffic on the narrow ways from the Suipe towards Epoye. The roads to the north from the Suipe were also full of wagons marching from the north towards the south, and on the morning of July 14 these were seen returning, which showed that the previous night there had been a large provision of ammunition taken up. The aviators had constantly brought in news of the German concentration. The numerous little raids had taught the soldiers

that this was occurring. As early as July 6 it became plain that the attack was about to commence. On July 10 it was known that it would take place on July 14 or 15, and that the front would affect the Fourth Army from



[French official photograph.]

PHOTOGRAPHING THE ENEMY'S POSITIONS FROM A TRENCH.

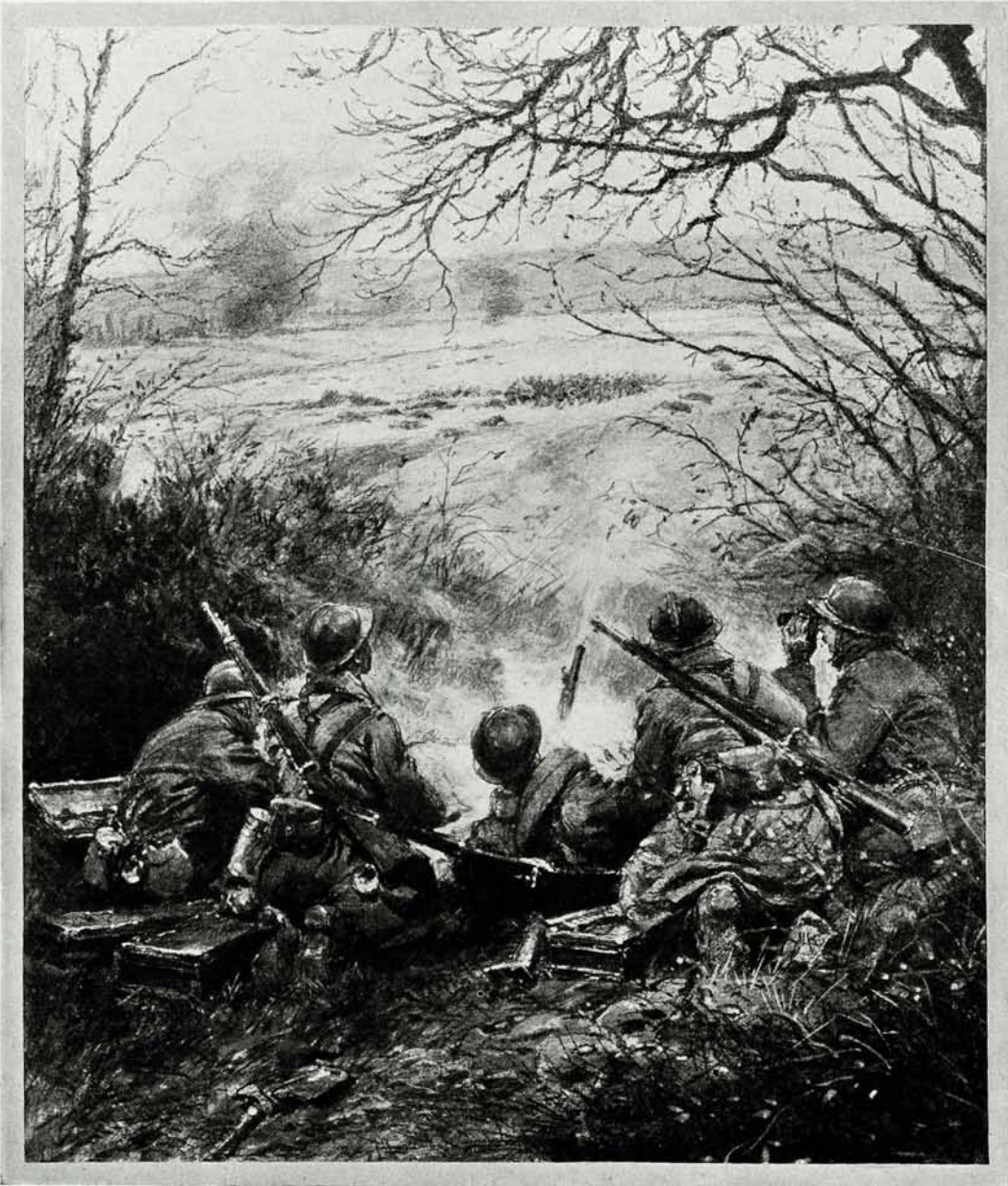
Mont Téton to the east. The evidence went on accumulating during July 11, 12 and 13. On July 14 a raid, successfully carried out, showed that it was only a question of hours, and it was known that the artillery preparation would commence at 12.10 a.m., and at 4.15 a.m. the infantry would move to the assault, covered by a moving barrage.

The front line of the German attack consisted of some 15 divisions with 10 others in support. These, it is true, over-ran the advanced defences, but made very little further progress and never reached the French main line, which ran from Prunay in front of Prosnès-Souain-Perthes and Massiges, where it joined the French line as it was before the attack of June 9.

So certain was General Gouraud of the impending attack that at 11 p.m. on July 14 he ordered the commencement of the counter-battery fire—*i.e.*, 70 minutes before the German artillery preparation commenced. Except for the artillery, the French troops sat quiet in their positions of readiness. As soon as the first lines of German infantry were seen to be

coming on rockets were sent up from the French advanced posts notifying that the attack had commenced, and the artillery barrage was at once put down against the attack. All went like clockwork. The resistance put up by the French advanced posts was an extremely tenacious one. As happens on all such occasions, posts were surrounded here and there, but still went on fighting. This front line held up the Germans for at least three hours, and even then, when parties of them tried to slip through the intervals, many still held on, fighting desperately. One instance may be quoted as showing an interesting development. A post kept up its resistance till six in the evening, when it appears to have been relieved, and it was able all the time to send back information by means of wireless telephony, giving most important information as to the progress of the battle. Eventually, when their ammunition was exhausted, the men were relieved and made their way back through to the French line behind. But although the enemy had these few successes, on the whole they made no great progress. It is curious to note that, in accordance with the usual practice of a distinct time-table laying down exactly what the artillery was to do, the German gun-fire was directed totally without regard to the progress made by the infantry; thus, the second line of infantry came on though the first had not done its task, and behind them advanced artillery batteries and ammunition columns. These were all seen by the French artillery, for the day was fine, and they suffered terribly. The hecatombs of slain, the mounds of dismounted guns and destroyed wagons, bore terrible testimony to the fire of the French artillerymen. There is little doubt that the progress the German front line made over the French advanced posts deceived them as to the amount of resistance they were likely to meet with, but they received a rude awakening when they came across the line of works which formed **the real main line of works of the French position.**

An amusing story is told with regard to this. An officer commanding five German tanks was writing a report at 5 a.m., which ran as follows: "The five tanks have all crossed the first line of the enemy and are continuing to advance towards the Wardberg, where the enemy has a number of machine-gun nests. I am going to Somme-Suippe to continue the



AN ISOLATED FRENCH MACHINE-GUN POST.

Holding up an enemy attack.

pursuit of the enemy and I shall return immediately." Unfortunately, just as he finished this dispatch, which he was writing on the hill of Tahure, he was captured, and conducted back to the point which he had determined on as his immediate objective, where he was presented to the General Headquarters.

At 7 o'clock, the position was as follows: The French still held their line of strong posts. In the centre the enemy had progressed somewhat beyond it. On the left the pressure was severe between the Marquises Farm and the Maison du Garde. To the south-east of Prunay the

Germans had gained the Roman road which runs from Reims to the Argonne, and the wood; but by noon the attack was dying down. At Prosnes and at Perthes-les-Hurlus they gained a momentary footing, but were at once turned out.

The result of the day's fighting was that on the east of Reims no progress of any moment had been made and the Germans suffered very heavy losses. Nor was their success much greater on the west of the town. The most violent fighting here took place between Dormans and Fossoy on a

front of about seven miles. The Germans made many desperate efforts to cross the Marne between these points, especially directing their attacks towards Condé-en-Brie. Strenuous efforts were also made at Château-Thierry, where the Americans held the ground. At 6 a.m. a vigorous attempt was made on Vaux, but it was quickly repelled by the Americans, who captured the German officer in charge of the operations. On the eastern side of Château-Thierry, covered by smoke clouds, the Germans crossed the Marne by means of pontoon bridges at 13 points under the cover of severe artillery fire. The first troops crossed in canvas boats, each of which held about 30 men, and when a footing had been established on the southern bank they proceeded to lay down pontoon bridges. At first the Americans fell back and poured a hail of shell and machine-gun fire, under the effect of which bridges were swept away and boats sunk. The right bank of the river was somewhat higher than the left, and thus the Allied troops had little cover from the ground, and it was found difficult to bring up reserve ammunition, of which a good deal was necessary owing to the enormous expenditure of shells in withstanding the attack. The number of bridges thrown by the enemy was

six in all. Two of these were destroyed by the French bombing squadrons. Low clouds somewhat interfered with their work, but, when they could not see the river itself, they bombed the masses of infantry concentrated in the woods north of Dormans and Fossoy and inflicted heavy casualties. So heavy were the losses that a message taken from one of the enemy's carrier pigeons which fell into our hands described the passage of the river as "worse than hell." However, they did succeed in crossing and drove our advanced posts a little back, but later in the day a counter-attack of the Americans drove them in turn on to the river bank and in many places back over it.

To the south of Dormans the fighting was particularly severe round the villages of Reuilly, Courthiézy, and Vassy, and also north of the river from Chatillon-sur-Marne to Bouilly. Here were stationed some of the Italians fighting with the Allies, and these, with the French immediately on their right on the western slopes of the Montagne-de-Reims, on a front running from Bouilly to Marfaux and then west to Cuchery, to which they had withdrawn from the front line of posts, held firmly to this line.



THE MARKET-PLACE, EPERNAY.

French official photog. aph.

The extreme points reached south of the river were St. Agnan and La Chapelle-Monthodon on the road which runs on to Condé, but no further progress was made beyond these points. More to the east, on the north side of the Marne near Châtillon, the enemy got no farther than the forest of Rodemat.

It will thus be seen that west of Reims the advance had produced no great results and was indeed limited to a point in the direction of Condé, and the bridge-head (the river here was about 80 yards broad) thus gained was not extended enough to cover any large number of troops, nor to allow them to deploy from it to capture more ground on the left bank of the river. On the east the success was even smaller, for, with the exception of the capture of the heights round Moronvilliers, that old point of contest, the Germans had gained nothing of moment.

Fourteen German divisions appear to have been engaged on the west side of Reims and about the same number in reserve. Documents captured show that the enemy had meant to reach the line Epernay-Montmirail on the first day, and on the second day Châlons.

The airmen played a considerable part in this battle. They kept up a constant supply of information as to the points at which the enemy were trying to cross the Marne, in spite of the clouds of smoke with which the Germans tried to conceal their movements, and they helped greatly by bombing collections of troops and spraying them with machine-gun fire.

The German report of the fighting does not differ much from that given by our own side. They claim to have taken 13,000 prisoners, but that was a gross exaggeration. Naturally where they overran the advanced machine-gun posts they captured some, but nothing like the number they claim; nor did they take many weapons; east of Reims, General Gouraud's men did not lose a single gun. During the night the fighting was intermittent, and in some places of extraordinary violence, the enemy attempting to push on south of Dormans, but they only succeeded in reaching the southern edge of the forest at Bouquigny, and the French maintained their hold on Mareuil on the high ground behind it.

On the second day of the battle General Gouraud issued the following Order to his Army:—

“During the 15th you have broken the efforts of 15 German divisions, supported by 10 others.

According to their orders they should have reached the Marne by the evening, but you stopped them dead in the position from which we had determined to give battle, and we have gained it. You have the right to be proud, infantry and machine-gunners of the advanced posts, and you aviators, who flew over the



ON THE CHEMIN DES DAMES: A FRENCH TELEPHONE STATION.

enemy, battalions and batteries which have crushed them, and the staff which prepared with such care the field of battle. It is a hard blow for the enemy and a great day for France. I know you will always do the same, every time that the enemy dares to attack you. As a soldier I thank you from my heart.”

On July 16 the fighting was uneventful. The Germans made several attempts but made scarcely any gain. On the eastern side of Reims, five separate attacks were made on Gouraud's army. Between the Vesle and the Suippe, the first assault was delivered at 10 a.m. and a second at 1.15 p.m.; both were repulsed with loss. To the east and the south they attacked three times, and on each occasion were repulsed in disorder. During the morning, after an intensive artillery preparation, an

important attack was made to the south of Maisons-de-Champagne, but only succeeded in getting through the outpost position at a few points. West of Reims the French regained ground in the hills south of Dormans.

The Germans, however, managed to push forward a little farther in the direction of Epernay, reaching the villages of Montvoisin and Chêne-la-Reine, but were driven out by counter-attacks. Later in the day they came



FRENCH AND ITALIAN GUARDS ON A MARNE BRIDGE.

on again and took the first-named point. They also made strenuous efforts to drive back the French from the crest of the hills north of St. Agnan and la Chapelle Monthodon, but made but little progress, the Allied main line being firmly held.

During the night of July 16-17 a German attack towards Beaumont-sur-Vesle, south of Prunay, was beaten back.

On July 17, on a six-mile front towards the Montagne de Reims in the wooded country between Reims and the Marne, the Germans once more attacked, and, after severe fighting, forced their way forward as far as the villages of Nante and Pourey, but from the latter point they were driven back into the Ardre valley by the Italians stationed at this part of the line.

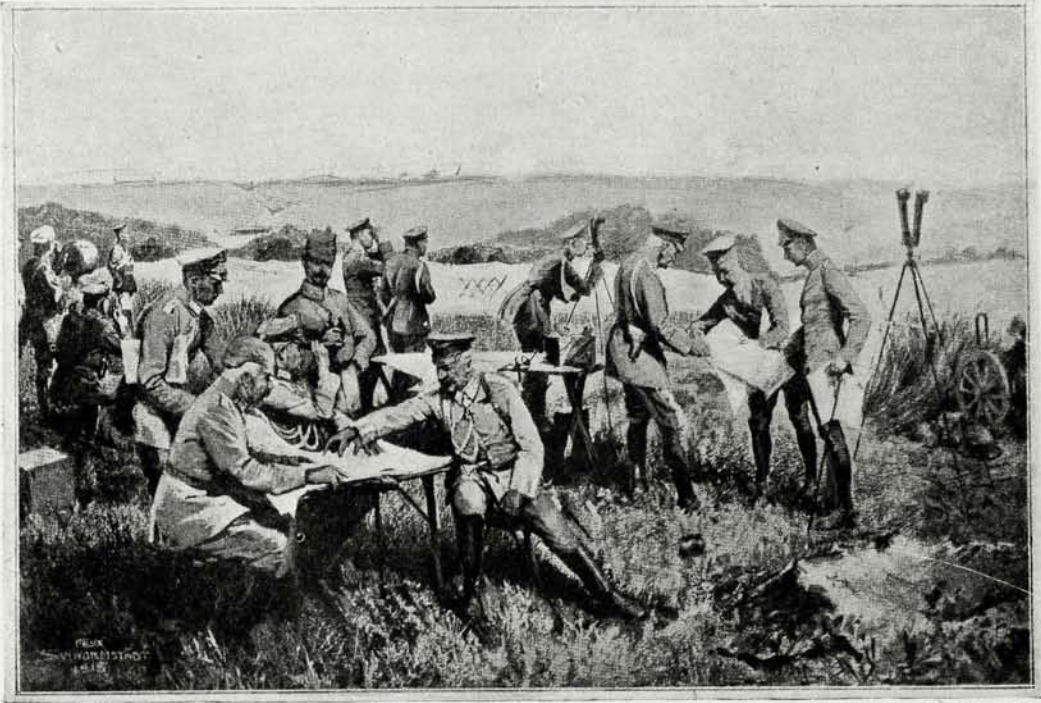
On the whole the day was favourable to the Allies. The German attacks were no longer made in force, and consisted of half-hearted local

attempts. An important point was that they had been unable to bring up their artillery across the river in any strength to aid a further advance, and the guns were still firing from the positions they had held before the attack commenced. It was evident that the offensive spirit of the Germans was dying out. The flood of the German irruption tide had been reached.

The fact that over 50 German divisions should have been used with the usual vigour, not to say recklessness, should have been brought up and their progress stopped in 48 hours, demands some consideration. How was it that on this occasion not even the initial success which had been obtained in March, April, May and June was in any way equalled? The troops were as good; they consisted very largely of the special "storm" organizations, carefully trained and wrought up to a high pitch of enthusiasm; they had been informed that it was the "Peace" assault (*Friedenssturm*). Even the German papers looked on the coming battle as the beginning of the end, if not the end itself. Thus the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of July 14, remarking on the coming battle, said "the only doubt on the subject is whether the necessary strategical preparations have been brought to such a point that the next attack will be the main blow or whether further preparatory battles are necessary for the final success of the campaign." The Kaiser himself had come up to witness the victory (as indeed he had on many previous occasions). Writing from the battlefield north-east of Reims on July 17, the well-known correspondent Karl Rosner reported:

The Kaiser, who desired to participate in the battle from its very beginning, in the midst of his fighting troops, went on the night of July 14 to the region of the impending fighting and spent the night in an advanced observation post. There he listened to the terrible music of our surprise fire attack and watched the unparalleled picture of projectiles raging over the enemy positions. A few minutes after our bombardment, which burst forth at 4.50 a.m., he had in his hands the first reports of the good progress made. From then on till nightfall, denying himself even a moment's rest, he remained with his troops, and again all day to-day he stopped on the battlefield, facing the contested ground, and received the news of the fresh and fine successes on the Marne and to the south-west of Reims.

Let us look at the troops opposed to General Gouraud from Prunay to Massiges. There were the 15th Bavarians, the 3rd Guards, the 26th Division, the Ersatz Division of the Guard, the 199th Division, the 239th Division, the 1st Division, the Dismounted Guard Cavalry Division, the 2nd Bavarian, the 88th, the 7th



[From "Illustrirte Zeitung,"]

THE KAISER ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

He is in the act of instructing Hindenburg and Ludendorff where they should attack.
From a painting by Felix Schwormstädt, German official artist.

Division and the 33rd Reserve Division, with others in reserve, amounting to 25 in all. They had not against them in the front line much more than half these numbers, and it was the first line troops only of the French that were engaged. Reserve corps which were ready if needed were not employed, and yet the German troops were so cut up that they were perfectly incapable of going on beyond the line they occupied at the end of the first 24 hours. The French, on the other hand, suffered but little. A number of their advanced posts were overrun. A certain number of men were taken prisoners and a certain number of machine-guns captured, but there was little else to show for the enormous losses the Germans had sustained, and *not one single gun was captured*, showing that they never penetrated any depth into the French position. The real reasons for the failure were that the French positions were scientifically defended, and their troops better handled and more enthusiastic.

Numerous stories are told of the enormous losses sustained—up to 60 per cent. of many of the units. It was not overcrowding which produced these losses, for the front of attack of each division appears to have been from a mile and a half to two miles. Nor were dense formations used, for the units were arranged

in line after line in depth, and all those who led the attack had only been brought on to the front either the night just before the attack or at the most 24 hours earlier. It is quite true that the French fought splendidly, and so did the Americans who were associated with them towards the left flank of Gouraud's army. The plan of attack of the Germans was most carefully thought out. The right flank of the enemy consisted of two groups under Lindequist and Gontard, each having three specially trained divisions in the front line intended to push forward obliquely to the south-west across the Vesle, reach the Marne and envelop Epernay. In conjunction with the Germans operating west of Reims, it would cut off from Dormans the Montagne-de-Reims. In the centre Ilse's group, consisting of the XII. Corps and the I. Bavarian Corps, pushed straight down on Châlons, while on the left, the 88th and 7th Divisions with the 33rd Reserve Division were to move obliquely down on St. Menehould and cut the railway line. Judging from various Orders which were captured, the object of the first day was to reach the south of Verzy, Villers Marmery-Livry-sur-Vesle, Bouy, Vasle-nay, Cuperly, la Cheppe, Bussy-le-Château-La Croix-en-Champagne, Somme, Bionne, Hans,

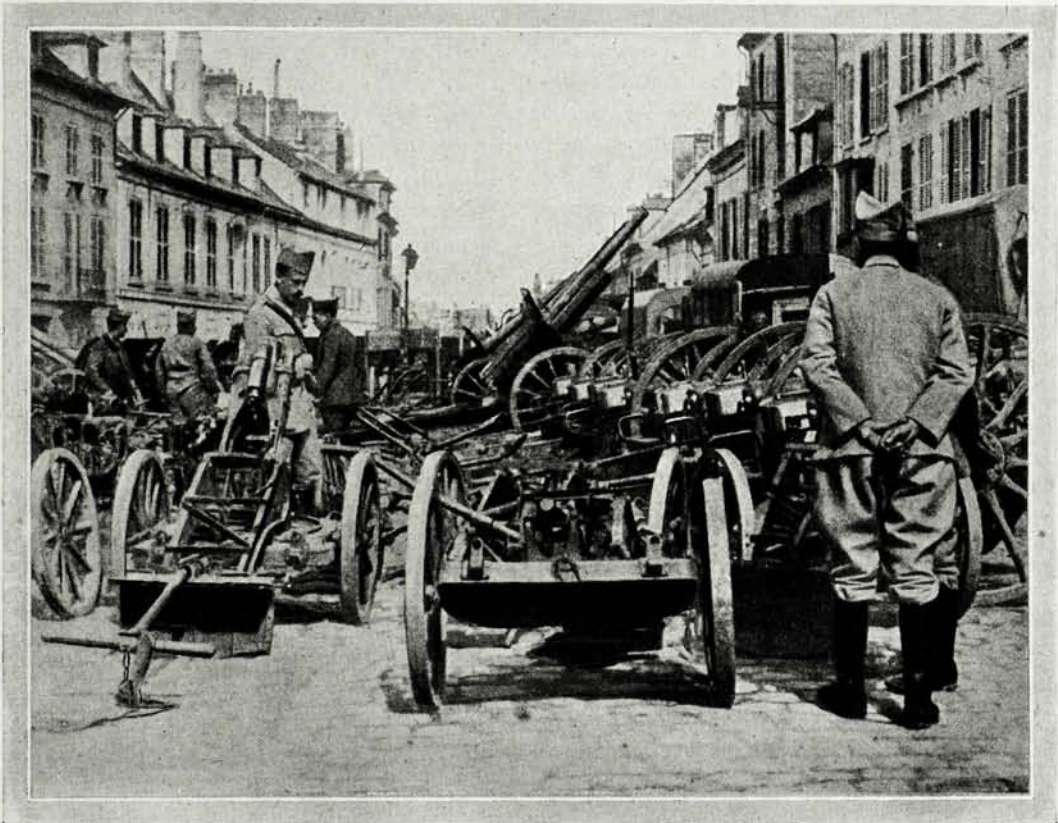
Dommartin. The second day Reims, Epernay, Chalons were to be captured. It is plain that the idea was to intercept the remaining straight line of railway to Lorraine and to advance the German line until it straightened out due east from Château-Thierry to Châlons—*i.e.*, to capture the whole of the Marne river line.

The most meticulous arrangements had been made for carrying out the advance. Thus, when various localities were captured, the troops were not to occupy them, but to proceed forward, only guarding the issues, and administrative officers were then to arrange for carrying off the booty captured. No individual pillage was to be permitted. The supply of magazines which was known to exist at Châlons was to be taken over as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately this scheme, carefully organized as it was, failed in the most important point. It did not obtain even the smallest success. In face of the splendid French resistance it failed, and it was the bravery and resolution of our Ally which brought it to nought.

The situation, then, on the evening of July 17 was that on the east of Reims Gouraud had beaten off the army of von Einem and was holding a line roughly that of the Roman road.

To the west of Reims, General Berthelot, with whom were some Italian troops, had stopped the advance of Mudra (who about this time seems to have replaced von Blow) and held a line from Pourcy through the Bois de Courton and the Bois du Roi back to the Marne at Reuil. On his left, on the south side of the Marne, General de Mitry, with his newly formed army, carried on the line to the American troops round Château-Thierry. It will be remembered that in front of the forest of Retz the French held a line from the Aisne in front of Villers-Cotterets (Retz Forest) down to the Marne. From the Aisne to the Ourcq was Mangin's army, while Degoutte's army held the line from the Ourcq down to Clignon, where he joined on to the Americans, who continued it to Château-Thierry. Thus there was a re-entrant line formed by Gouraud, Berthelot and de Mitry on the south side of the angle, Degoutte and Mangin on the side which ran from it towards the north. Into these pincers the German General Staff had pushed its forces, and they were now about to reap the consequences. No such favourable opportunity had occurred to the French since September, 1914, when Maunoury, on the flank of Kluck's army,



SOME OF THE BOOTY ASSEMBLED AT VILLERS-COTTERETS.



GENERAL GOURAUD.

Commanded the French Fourth Army, to which Americans were attached.

combined with the frontal attack on the Marne, drove back the Germans to the Aisne. The second battle of the Marne, then, reproduced the main feature of the first, and was destined to bring about the same consequences. Foch was ready, and had waited until the situation developed as he hoped. Now he saw his opportunity and proceeded to take full advantage of it. On the night of July 17-18 the orders were issued for the counter-attack.

The German General Staff had of course

understood that an attack might come from the west against their exposed flank, and they had thrown up works which extended from Soissons to the south, but although they had done this, they seem not to have believed that Foch had troops sufficient for any important movement from this direction, nor do they seem to have anticipated the attack at the time it was made.

It was impossible, however, for the Germans not to admit that their own attack had been



[French official photograph.]

A LONG COLUMN OF GERMAN PRISONERS ON THE MARNE.

held up. The war correspondent of the *Vorwärts* on July 17 wrote with regard to the operation :

Two things are conspicuous here : first, American infantry are supporting the French troops in their defence ; secondly, the French are adopting a new method of defence. While in the March, April, and May offensives they stoutly defended their first positions, yesterday they evacuated the ground between their first and second positions almost without a blow or opposition, and then defended their second line stubbornly. This naturally weakened the effect of the German artillery. These defensive tactics, which the French learned from Hindenburg and which Foch tried in the recent battles near Compiègne, will naturally have the result that a new method of attack must be applied, which will not be long delayed.

There is no doubt it was a somewhat rude awakening to the hopes once more raised of a decisive battle. Von Ardenne in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, on July 18, said :

It will only be possible to perceive the strategic intentions of the German Army Command from the further course and extension of the battle. . . The victory is as yet no complete one, but the Homeland has the right to hope that it will become so.

The *Cologne Gazette* of the same date was of the opinion that

The Entente, by its immense propaganda, can keep the entire Continent under the impression that the Entente is victorious. Germany's only antidote is deeds. On this idea rests the decision to start again a fresh, big attack to compel the Entente finally to admit that Germany is invincible, and that the con-

tinuation of the fighting can have no other issue for the Entente than the further loss of land, money, and men.

Of course, there were the usual attempts to discount the possibility of an Allied victory. The *Vossische Zeitung* stated : "The new attack was, as a matter of fact, a complete and entire surprise for the enemy. He had taken some steps to deal with it, but he had not established a strong position, nor had he believed that the blow was about to fall, and it came with startling suddenness on him." As a matter of fact, the attack was fully expected by the French, and was not in the least a surprise.

Possibly one reason why the Germans thought this was the bad weather. It had been for some little time uncertain. There was rain on July 14, but the next day, when the German attack began, was fine at first, though later a thunderstorm of great severity swept over the north of France. July 16 was again bad weather, and on the night of July 17-18 there was once more severe rain.

The counter-stroke of the French was delivered first of all by their left wing on a line some 27 miles running from north to south from Fontenoy, north of the Aisne, some six miles west of Soissons, to Belleau, five miles north-west of Château-Thierry. A severe

thunderstorm and furious rain favoured the operations, for a large number of tanks were employed in it, and the noise of the thunder completely covered their movement to the points of concentration before the advance. There was no preliminary bombardment. The surprise was not on the French side, but on the German. Especially would it seem that Mangin's concentration had not been observed.

Let us now examine the object of the French attack in the direction in which it was delivered. As we have seen, the original idea of the Germans in going down to the Marne was to enlarge the salient they had already made and give themselves more ample space for manœuvre in the direction of Paris. They seem to have thought that there was no fear of an offensive return from the French, which is merely a tribute to the intelligence which Foch had displayed in carrying out his combinations. A reference to the map shows that as long as Reims held out and thus prevented a flattening forward of the Germans' line, the western front of the salient they created by their advanced movement was always open to attack, and that an attack

coming in a very dangerous direction, for it struck right across the lines of supply down to the Marne and also threatened two main lines of railroad—the one from Oulchy back through Bazoches, while an advance beyond Soissons struck at the junction of railways just east of that town which led up to the north and also to the east. If successful, the Germans were bound to retreat behind the Aisne, because the advance eastwards past Soissons threatened the whole of the roads used for supply from the north towards the south, and, in addition, endangered the railroads which, gathering together near Soissons, formed the main supply lines of the Germans.

It seems incredible that the German Supreme Command should have run the great risk they did in such a light-hearted fashion, and it would be entirely incredible had it not been a fact that they had committed precisely the same error in the autumn of 1914.

The country over which the advance took place can be considered in two parts: that to the north of the Ourcq, and that to the south of that river. North of the Ourcq the ground is comparatively clear of wood, and with only gentle undulations: it was country extremely well suited for the action of tanks. South of



French official photograph.

FEEDING A GROUP OF GERMAN PRISONERS.

the Ourcq the ground is much more cut up by small streams, big roads and railroads. The Aisne itself runs through a steepish valley, and is a difficult river to cross except at permanent bridges owing to the steepness of its banks. It was on this fact that Napoleon depended so much in 1814, and the defection of Moreau, who yielded up Soissons without an effort, enabled Blücher to escape across the river and join on to the Russians coming down through Belgium. Near Soissons, about a couple of miles to the south-west, is a hill known as the Montagne de Paris, which not only dominates the town, but also enables artillery fire to be brought upon the railway junction to the east of it. These considerations show that the first effort of the French would evidently be directed along the ground immediately close to Soissons—that is to say, at the northern extremity of the attack; and it is striking proof not only of generalship, but also of the fighting capacity of the French soldiers, that at the outset of the battle this position was carried almost at a rush.

At 4.35 a.m. on July 18 all was ready for the advance, and the artillery fire opened. It was a complete surprise to the enemy—in fact, the most complete surprise that had happened in the whole course of the war. The Germans were quietly resting in fancied security

when the assault fell on them like a whirlwind. A heavy moving barrage was put down; behind it came the tanks, and on their heels the infantry, and at first there was hardly any opposition. Village after village was captured. In the neighbourhood of Soissons the hill ground which dominated the town was occupied, including the Montagne de Paris. Berzy-le-Sec was captured by cavalry; and the horse-men even got across the Soissons-Château-Thierry road, making it impossible for the enemy to use it. In this fighting one French regiment with colours flying charged the enemy with the bayonet, singing the "Chant du Départ," and east of Dommiers a mixed regiment of Zouaves and Tirailleurs Indigènes swept on through the German positions, captured 1,500 prisoners, and, going on, met and defeated a column of German supports, drove it before them and reached Chaudun, having penetrated to a distance of five miles. Chaudun, Vierzy, Villers-Hélon, Noroy-sur-Ourcq, Chouy were taken. Behind Chouy, the wood called Buisson-de-Cresnes, on the edge of the Villers-Cotterets forest, which was strongly held by machine-gun detachments, held out after the general line of battle had passed on beyond it. About 10 a.m. a unit of American infantry was brought up to clear it out. They did this and killed and wounded the whole



IN TORCY.

[French official photograph.]



[French official photograph.]

OULCHY-LE-CHÂTEAU.

garrison except 29, whom they brought in as prisoners. On the south of the river by 9 o'clock the line was pushed forward to Hautevesnes-Bussiares-Courchamps; all along the line of the French attack many prisoners were taken. The Americans, too, made rapid progress. The attack commencing about 5 a.m., Torcy was taken in 15 minutes, Belleau fell at 8.20 and Givry was also captured, and the advance continued. The point of junction of the French and American troops appears to have been Courchamps, and here 18 guns were captured. In some cases prisoners were surprised when resting asleep in their dug-outs, and men were caught setting out to harvest the rye crops. The cavalry also took a part in the advance, for the opportunity was a favourable one, the Germans falling back without offering much resistance. By 7 o'clock in the morning the weather cleared up, and this enabled the French heavy guns to bring a good deal of fire to bear on the rear areas of the German positions, carrying confusion among the German reserves and their supply and ammunition trains.

While this severe counter-stroke was being delivered against the German flank, the direct advance of the Allied troops from Château-Thierry was not neglected, and the pressure thus exercised, combined with the more active attack, sufficed to reverse the whole German position. Instead of advancing, they now began to retreat. Von Mudra fell back from the wood of Courton and on the Ardre, where

the mill fell to the Italians. Von Boehn, who, it will be remembered, had part of his troops on the south of the Marne, abandoned Montvoisin and retired to the borders of Oeuilly, probably with a view to covering the bridge over the re-entrant angle of the Marne there.

Higher up, the Allies attacked near La Poterne and Pourcy and forced the Germans back for over 1,000 yards. Here the Italians fought with the French, and between them they took nearly 500 prisoners and captured some guns.

During the night the Germans made an attempt at a counter-stroke, chiefly in the region of Oulchy-le-Château, bringing up for the purpose numerous reserves, but very little success was gained, and, generally speaking, the French held the line they had captured.

All along the line the progress was extremely rapid, so much so that in many cases guns were taken before the gunners appreciated that the French were on them. When night fell, the advance of the French left averaged over five miles and on the south over one. Soissons was dominated, the lines of rail leading from it were under French artillery fire, and far away to the rear the roads by which food and ammunition were being brought up to the advanced German troops were under such fire as to render those near the front of the French left wing almost useless. It is not to be wondered at that the Germans at once began their retreat to the Aisne.

July 19 saw a continuance of the victorious movement. The Germans brought up supports

to stop Mangin's progress, but in vain. They were thrown back, and the French left consolidated its position in the neighbourhood of Soissons, while Mangin's right moved forward a mile and a half east of the line Villers-Hélon-Noroy. More to the south Licy-Clignon was captured, while in the centre Neuilly-St. Front was taken and a considerable advance made



CHÂTEAU-THIERRY: LA GRANDE RUE.

from Oulchy-le-Château and towards Fère-en-Tardenois.

The enemy's retreat still went on, and along the whole 80 miles of battle-front from the Aisne to Massiges they were being pressed by the Allies. They were driven back on the west of Reims, while General Gouraud on the right riveted their troops to the ground they held. General Degoutte reached the line Neuilly-St. Front-Courchamps.

To the north-east of Baisieux in the direction of Reims British troops of the 51st and 62nd Divisions* of the XXII. Corps were employed on both sides of the Ardre in conjunction with French divisions on the left and right of them. The position here was occupied in great strength by the Germans, as it was necessary to hold it to guard the left flank of their retreat from the Marne to give time for their troops in the centre to retire. The ground near the river was open, with steep wooded slopes at the sides. Numerous villages and hamlets, for the most part intact, gave excellent cover to the enemy.

The British arrived on July 19, expecting at first to be on the defensive, but the general

* The other two divisions of the XXII. Corps were with Mangin's force on the left.

attack of the French changed the situation, and it was necessary to press onward against the left flank of the retreating enemy. They took up for the evening a position in the woods on the west slope of the Montagne-de-Reims behind the Italian division holding the Allied line at this point. The next day they advanced to the attack. The 51st Division made good progress and reached the western edge of the Courton Wood south of Nappes, the 62nd Division being on their right. The resistance offered was very vigorous, and they were unable to advance beyond a line some 500 yards short of Marfaux between the Courton and Reims woods. On the other side, the right half of the latter division took Courmas and also Bouilly, a little more to the north, capturing 500 prisoners. The advance was continued on **July 21**, when the 51st Division captured Nappes and the Yorkshiremen occupied Bouilly.

The progress on this day was somewhat slowed down, as the Germans were receiving reinforcements and were fighting hard to cover the retreat of their troops from the Marne, but still some advance was made, and in the evening the general line was advanced as far as Ploisy-Parcy-Tigny-St. Remy-Blanzy-Rozet-St. Albin-Priez, north-east of Courchamps. On the right of Degoutte, the Americans had won the higher ground of Etrépilly north of Château-Thierry, and thus dominated the line of retreat of the Germans from this point. This position forced the enemy to abandon this town during the night of July 20-21. Berthelot also made progress between Reims and the Marne, and by this date over 20,000 prisoners had been taken, with more than 400 guns. Eight German divisions had been compelled to retreat behind the Marne, and a much larger force in reserve had been driven back on an average depth of between five and six miles along a front of more than 20 miles. Large quantities of stores had been captured and very heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy.

A good proportion of these was due to the fact that the Germans experienced great difficulty in retiring across the river. The temporary bridges which they constructed were constantly shot away, and, practically, the troops on the left bank of the river had nothing but mountain artillery to support them, for the wheeled guns had been unable to cross to help them. The retreat of the enemy retiring from Dormans in the direction of Reims was not only menaced by the French and American;

following them up directly, but the position of the British divisions on the left flank of the German force threatened them with further disaster

When the Germans retreated from Château-Thierry they completely sacked the town; such inhabitants as were in it who were not hidden in cellars were forced into the church and kept there during the night, and when they emerged later on, they saw the wagons laden with the spoils of their houses being taken back by the enemy. But this was not all. The town had been in possession of the Germans

for some weeks; when they saw they were about to be turned out, they proceeded to carry out their usual vile practices, carting off all they could, destroying all they could not. In the larger houses and mansions everything was destroyed. Tapestries were hacked to pieces, pictures slit from corner to corner, the leather and other chair coverings ripped from their frames, all the delicate marqueterie and the irreplaceable examples of the craftsmanship of past centuries smashed. Legs were torn off tables and used to further the work of destruction. There was not a mirror which



THE FATAL MARNE: THE SECOND DISASTROUS CROSSING BY THE GERMANS.

had not been broken; the glass and china flung at them were lying in pieces on the floor beneath them. Statues and statuettes in marble and ivory were dismembered with hammers, and a pickaxe was used to destroy a wonderful grand piano, which must have cost hundreds of pounds. In one house a valuable collection of books was torn to pieces or their bindings ripped off.

Vengeful fury had been carried even to the extent of smashing the nurseries and dolls' houses. The dolls were trampled on and torn to pieces, a rocking-horse was cleft with an axe, cradles were flung out of the windows, and all drawers and cupboards were ransacked and their contents ripped up, burned, or besmirched in a manner worthy of loathsome lunatics.* The retreating troops were followed up by French cavalry and armoured cars.

The rapid retreat of the Germans was due to the fact that they had placed themselves in a position in which the slightest interruption of a victorious offensive brought them within measurable distance of disaster. General Foch had brought about the great object of strategy, concentration of superior numbers at the

* Taken chiefly from Reuter's telegram published in the *Morning Post* of July 29, 1918.

decisive point. General Gouraud's determined defence on the eastern side of Reims had stopped the German advance there. This had reduced their forward movement on the western side of Reims to a comparatively feeble effort with no great vitality in it. The line of the Marne, if not completely held, had at any rate afforded so much resistance as to take the "go" out of the German forces, and exactly at the moment when this object was attained the counter-attack was delivered by Mangin and Degoutte in the most favourable direction, parallel to the German lines of advance, which ran north and south from the Aisne to the Marne along the roads. The railways ran east and west, and their utility for the forward movement was therefore very limited.

Some portion of the success was doubtless due to the free use of tanks, to which the nature of the ground over which Mangin's force especially advanced, was very suitable; particularly was the part played by the new light French tanks of great importance. The French, like ourselves, had found that a lighter and more rapid machine was a desideratum, and the Renault car was the outcome (see fig.). It differed materially from our light tank inasmuch as it only contained one weapon, either a



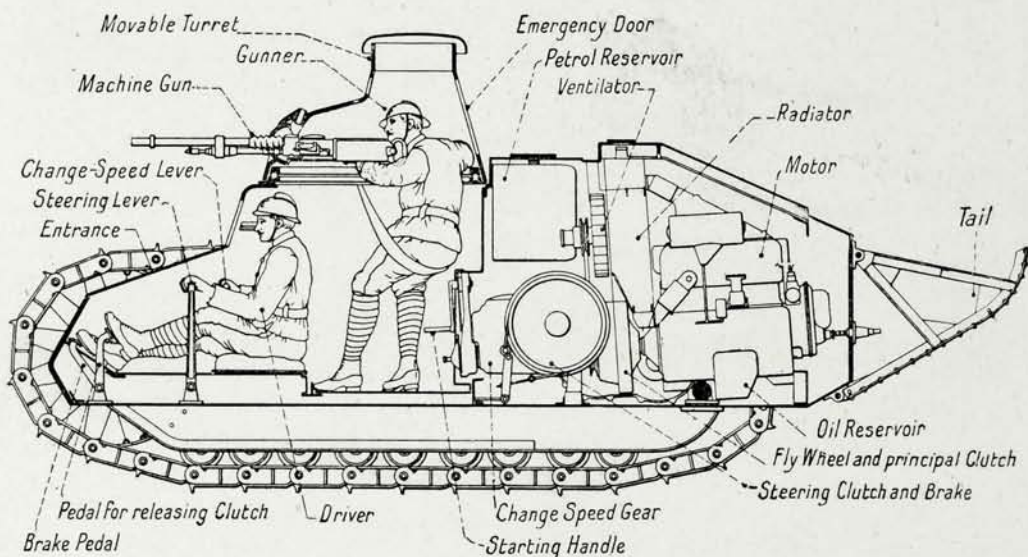
[French official photograph.]

A GERMAN BARRICADE IN THE RUE CARNOT, CHATEAU-THIERRY.

machine-gun or one of the automatic 37 mm., or occasionally a 75.* The car itself had the form of a long and narrow box, from which rose a species of turret. This, in the case of the cars armed with the machine-gun or 37 mm., was capable of revolution. When the armament was of the field-gun type, it was fixed. The car or tank was about 13 feet long and 5 feet 6 inches wide and about 6 feet 8 inches high, constructed of a special resisting steel which varied in

hollow or trench. The tank manœuvred with great facility and was capable of revolving on its own centre. Its total weight was about 7 tons and on level ground it attained a speed of 6½ miles. It could climb up a slope of 50 degrees and run through 2 feet 6 inches of water. It was capable of flattening out wire entanglement, and could beat its way through a 15-inch brick wall.

By this time, too, the French had their new



DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION OF A FRENCH LIGHT (OR "MOSQUITO") TANK.

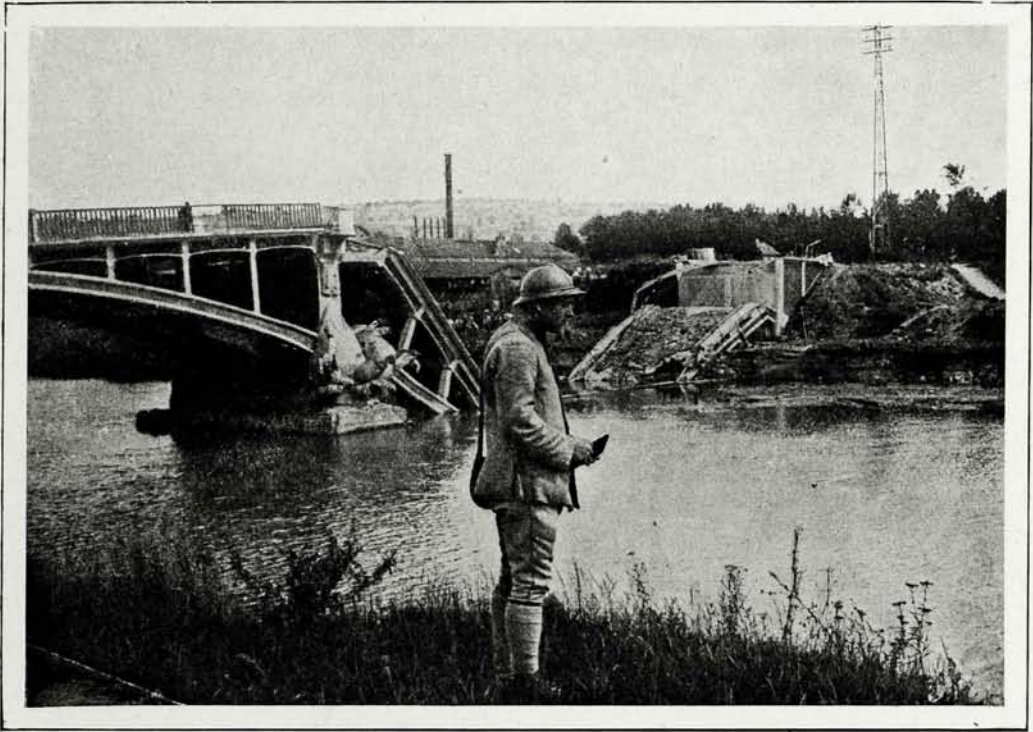
thickness from about one-quarter to six-tenths of an inch, sufficient to stop bullets and splinters of shells of small calibre. The turret itself was originally formed in the same manner, but in the latest patterns was made of a special cast steel. The crew consisted of two men, one sitting in the front part of the tank, guiding it, while behind him was the gunner who sat on a higher level. The gun projected out of the turret over that portion of the tank where the steerer sat. The motor was in the rear part of the tank, and was divided from the front part by a partition. The driving method used was two caterpillar chains, one on either side of the car, which could be independently driven for steering purposes. The tanks were rested on the caterpillar chain by two bogies. The system of movement was analogous to that which the Germans employed in their large tanks described in Vol. XVIII, pp. 47 and 49. To facilitate the passage over ditches or trenches, there was a tail in the shape of a broad flat spade attached to the rear part, so that the end of the tank would not drop down when crossing over a

*The 37 mm. a shell weighed about 1 lb., the '75, 16 lbs.

arrangement of *artillerie d'accompagnement*—i.e., artillery specially told off to accompany the infantry attack—which was composed of automatic 37 mm. guns or the new Joulandeau-Deslandre, a lighter weapon which fired a similar shell to the 37 mm.

But the great point in the success was strategical, for so soon as the road from Soissons to Château-Thierry was dominated an important line of communications was interrupted by the Allies, and roads farther back had to be made use of by the Germans. Thus the westernmost troops of the enemy were, as the French advanced, perpetually threatened with being cut off. The failure to beat Gouraud made the German advance insecure.

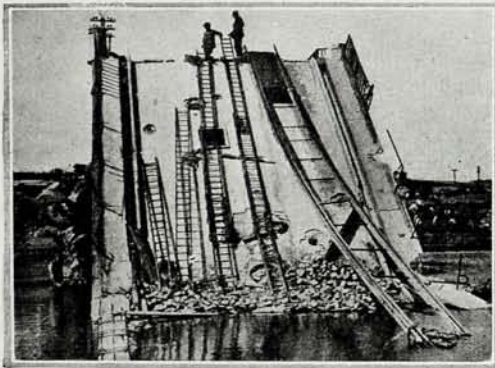
They made desperate efforts during July 19 and 20 by counter-attacks to hold back the steady forward movement of Mangin and Degoutte with his Americans, but the position was getting every moment more difficult because, from July 20, when Château-Thierry was taken, the retreat from the Marne became necessary, while on the right flank the British troops, acting in conjunction with Berthelot's

*(French official photograph.)*

BRIDGE AT CHATEAU - THIERRY DESTROYED BY THE GERMANS IN THEIR RETREAT.

army, struck towards the left rear of the German forces engaged in the Marne attack.

On July 21 further progress was made, and by the evening the Allied line ran from north-west to south-east beyond La Croix-Grissolles-Bezu-St. Germain down to the Marne at Mont St. Père east of Château-Thierry. Opposed to



HOW THE FRENCH SCALED THE BROKEN BRIDGE.

them were the rearguards of von Boehn and von Below, their object being to stave off the French attack and give time for the withdrawal of the artillery and supplies beyond the Vesle. Mangin's left was somewhat behind; he held Belleu and Buzancy, but his centre was at Hartin and Taux, so that the Soissons-

Château-Thierry road was held down to this point, and his troops were also at Le Plessier-Huleu. Degoutte, south of the Oureq, was on the Château-Thierry road in front of La Croix and Grissolles, while the two American Divisions held Bezu-St. Germain-Epieds down to Chartèves on the Marne.

Berthelot's army, which had followed up over the Aisne, and was in a position roughly from Châtillon by Baslieux to the forest of Courton with the Italian Division and Godley's force on the Ardre was attacked in great force, Berthelot held his own, and Godley made some progress up the Ardre, taking St. Euphraise with his right and part of the Bois de Reims with his centre, but on the left the British were held up about Marfaux. Later in the day they completed the capture of the Bois de Reims and, as already narrated, took Bouilly and advanced in the valley of the Ardre towards Bligny and Chaumuzy.* The Germans were now clearing out as fast as they could from the too-advanced positions into which they had been thrust, losing heavily in prisoners, guns and munitions.

* According to Field-Marshal Haig's dispatch Marfaux was not taken until the 23rd. Apparently, therefore, the British Divisions advanced on the north-east side of the Pourey-Chambucy road. There was probably nothing but a small rearguard force of Germans in Marfaux, which was neglected.

On July 22 the advance was continued. Mangin's right wing pushed on as far as Montgru on the Ourcq; while, south of the river, Degoutte captured the Châtelet wood and arrived at Brécy, while on the south the Americans captured Jaulgonne. But there was still a good deal of resisting power in the Germans opposite Degoutte's centre, and, late in the afternoon, they re-captured from him Epieds. On the right of the Allied attack, the French, Italians and British pressed forward about three-quarters of a mile in the Vrigny direction, thus still more threatening the retreat of the Germans.

The French also crossed the Marne at Chassins and Passy, near Dormans, and on the east of Reims General Gouraud moved forward and re-occupied all his old positions between the Suippe and Massiges.

It is interesting to note the German view of the last few days' fighting. Their official report runs as follows: "Between the Aisne and the Marne the battle continues with undiminished violence; in spite of his heavy defeat on July 20, the enemy, bringing into action fresh divisions and tanks, again advanced and violently attacked our lines. His assaults broke down. Prisoners confirm the enemy's heavy losses. Yesterday's fighting [*i.e.*, July 21] again resulted in a complete success for the German arms. Between the Aisne and the south-west of Hartennes, in the early morning, the strongest drum-fire preceded infantry attacks by the enemy. South-west of Soissons and of Hartennes they broke down in front of our lines. North of Villemontoire some of the enemy pushed forward temporarily over the Soissons-Château-Thierry road. Our counter-attack completely threw them back again. Villemontoire and Tigny were also foci of the battle, which our counter-attacks brought to a favourable conclusion. In the evening renewed enemy attacks south-west of Soissons were checked at their starting point—where they were carried forward they broke down with heavy losses. On both sides of the Ourcq, in the forenoon, the enemy in vain frequently advanced against our lines. After bringing up fresh forces, he returned to the attack in the afternoon. After heavy fighting the enemy's assault on both sides of Oulchyle-Château was defeated by counter-attacks. North and north-east of Château-Thierry our detachments which had been left in the fore-field hindered the approach of the enemy to

our new lines. It was not till the evening that he succeeded in launching strong attacks here, which broke down with heavy losses." A more complete travesty of what actually occurred it would be impossible to write. If the German account were correct, no Allied gains had been made at all, whereas we know they had been very considerable.

The position of the enemy on the main field of battle was now a dangerous one. On their



GENERAL BERTHELOT.
Commanded the Fifth French Army.

right flank they had the armies of Mangin and Degoutte. On their left were French, British and Italian divisions. They were being followed up straight by de Mitry's and Berthelot's men, while on the eastern side of Reims they were held by Gouraud. They were bringing up reserves to help to stay the retreat, but did not succeed in doing more than slow down the rate of progress of their opponents.

Up to this date the Allies had taken over 20,000 prisoners and 400 guns.

On July 23, Degoutte, south of the Ourcq, reached Brécy and American troops north of Jaulgonne took Epieds and entered the forest. De Mitry's troops, crossing the Marne, were moving up north. Beyond these movements there was little to record on this date. The enemy's counter-attacks, which he had delivered the day before, seemed to have exhausted him; the weather was very hot; all the troops on both sides had now been fighting without



[Official photograph.]

MACHINE-GUN DRILL, IN GAS MASKS. BEHIND THE LINES.

cessation for six days. Still the Germans continued to hang on to Oulchy, which was an important point on the railroad back to Fère-en-Tardenois.

On July 24 the Allies continued to press the retreating enemy. During the previous night there was considerable artillery activity in the Courton and Roi woods, and about 9 o'clock in the evening the Germans made a counter-attack in the neighbourhood of Vrigny, but this was easily beaten off, and the French held their positions. Between the Ourcq and near to the first-named river, the French renewed their attacks, which were successful throughout the day. South of Armentières, Brécy and the Châtelet Wood were captured.

The French and American troops advanced some two miles in the region of Epieds and Trugny, and Epieds, which had been recaptured by the Germans in the evening of July 23, fell once more into American hands. The advance was continued beyond Courpoil. To the south of this considerable progress was made in the forest of Fère north of Chartèves and Jaulgonne, while ground was gained in front of Tréloup and Dormans and the southern corner of the forest of Ris was taken by de Mitry's troops. Considerable booty was also captured, including five 15 cm. guns, about

50 machine-guns and a considerable amount of material. Between the Marne and Reims there was not much more than artillery action nor was any progress made beyond the points reached the day before. In the north despite the vigorous resistance of the Germans, who felt how vital it was to hold back the French advancing along the south bank of the Aisne, Mangin's troops carried the village of Ville-montoire, and Oulchy was also captured. Thus the road down from Soissons to Château-Thierry was completely in the hands of the French.

By the 21st the development of the situation had forced the German Press to change its tone somewhat. The *Vorwärts* stated:—

There is no doubt that we are approaching new and energetic attempts on the part of the Entente to regain the initiative, possibly on other fronts also. Even on this occasion, Foch's ultimate aim was not gain of ground but the disturbance of German plans as a whole. It must remain our main aim not to allow the initiative to be wrested from us and not to sacrifice troops uselessly, but to keep in view with strong nerves the military aim once it is recognised as right. Unless all signs are deceptive, the decisive phase of the world war, which both adversaries are seeking with all the means at their disposal, is beginning.

The victories hitherto attained in attack and defence justify the German people in further strong hopes. On the other hand, these days and weeks which the Western front is now passing through are well calculated to bring to reason those who pictured the German summer campaign of 1918 as a grandiose military

promenade, at the end of which was the uninterrupted annihilation of the enemy. Despite all her victories, Germany is still as ever fighting against material and numerical superiority. Therefore, the military initiative must every day be fought for and obtained anew, and the hydra heads of the Entente reserves daily struck off. All our victories are the victories of a defender.

This is a somewhat different view to that which had brought the Kaiser down to see the victorious onswep of his troops towards their goal.

The egregious von Ardenne indulged in some of his cryptic and platitudinous utterances:—

That commander will ultimately win the game who still has the best trumps finally in hand. Both Army Commands will, therefore, endeavour

confidentially communicated its intention beforehand. The object which the forcing of the Marne had in view was attained, and, therefore, it did not appear dangerous to retreat locally in order to save losses which seemed unnecessary.

It does not explain what had been the object of crossing the river; apparently it was to advance at a great cost and be beaten back at greater.

It is impossible not to contrast these very much quieter lucubrations with the arrogant ardour which characterized the German utterances during the earlier period of the great offensive. The detailed history of the recent



French official photograph.

FRENCH ENGINEERS REPAIRING A MINED ROAD.

to concentrate as many troops and guns as possible on the decisive point, which momentarily remains between the Aisne and the Marne. The German Army Command, therefore, has resolved on a step which cannot have been easy for it. It has voluntarily given up the territory south of the Marne, so bravely fought for and so toughly held from July 15 to 19, and in the night of July 20 withdrew the troops there, unmolested by the enemy, to the northern bank. The enemy will jubilate about this and reverence the Marne even more than hitherto as their "sacred river." The strategic move of the German Army Command has, however, its full justification, and its effect will soon make itself felt.

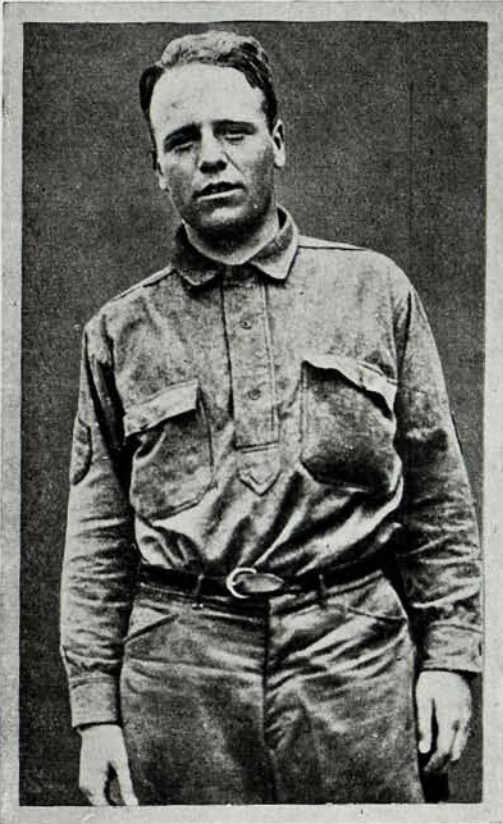
The *Cologne Gazette* of July 21 informed its readers:—

The withdrawal of our troops to the northern bank of the Marne came as no surprise to well-informed circles, because the Supreme Army Command had

fighting shows a distinct falling off in the moral of the German troops and a less decided handling by their leaders, whereas with the Allied troops there was a complete confidence which the rude trials of the previous month had in no wise diminished. A not unimportant item among the factors which led to this mental condition was the ever-increasing supremacy of the Allied airmen. The long-distance raids into Germany were beginning to tell, and the fact that both on the battlefield and in the areas immediately behind it our aviators were constantly harassing the German troops on the march and in bivouac, constantly

bombing troops marching to the front and the columns of supply for their maintenance. The tide was indeed beginning to turn.

The mastery obtained by our aviators enabled the air forces to carry on their work of observation and photographing in a way which was quite impossible for the enemy to equal, and enormously added to the efficacy of our artillery fire. Numerically we were far superior in the air, and the number of machines



FLIGHT-LIEUT. QUENTIN ROOSEVELT
Killed in aerial combat, July 17, 1918.

employed, the number of raids made and the amount of bombs dropped was far in excess of the German performance. The most striking point of all was perhaps that the fighting in the air was habitually carried on behind the German lines, which meant that the German aviators did not care to advance beyond the security afforded by their anti-aircraft service.

On the night of July 11/12, and again in daylight on July 12, successful distant raids were made against enemy aerodromes, and on the last date the railway sidings at Saarburg were attacked, all our machines returning in safety. Then came a few days of bad weather, which prevented the distant work, and espe-

cially damped down the ardour of the enemy. On July 14 we accounted for 16 of the enemy's machines with a loss of only three to ourselves; we also dropped 19 tons of bombs on back areas. In the next two days Offenbourg and Thionville were successfully bombed and good bursts were observed on each occasion, while all our machines came back without injury.

On July 16/17 our aviation service played a brilliant part in the battle, attacking without cessation the Marne bridges, dropping five tons of explosives, and thus hampering the passage of the German troops. The latter, attacked by machine-gun fire and bombs when they were on the northern and southern banks of the river, were constantly compelled to scatter to seek safety. A bridge thrown over the river at Dormans was destroyed, and the waggons which were crossing by it sank in the river. Twenty-one tons of explosives were dropped in these operations, and a further 14 tons during the night. Violent explosions and fires were caused at the station of Maison Bleue, at Coucy, Les Etapes and Bazoches. Our aviators also accounted for 29 German machines and five captive balloons.

During the night of July 16/17 more raids were made into Germany, and works at Hagen-dingen north of Metz and the Burbach works near Saarbrücken were bombed, and also a German aerodrome. During the day on July 17 our machines successfully attacked the railway sidings at Thionville, in all cases without loss. On this day Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt, the youngest son of Colonel Roosevelt, was brought down in an aerial combat. He was an able and successful aviator, and his loss was much deplored.

The Germans did not do very much in the way of retaliation for our aviators' exploits, but they succeeded in bombing a camp of German prisoners, 30 miles from the front near Troyes, killing 94 and wounding 74, besides two French guards.

The Benz Chemical Works at Mannheim were again the object of attack during the night of July 18/19, as also the station at Heidelberg and the blast furnaces at Burbach and Wad-gassen, near Saarbrücken, in all cases with considerable effect; also two trains were hit by bombs, brought to a standstill, and then subjected to machine-gun fire. The powder factory at Oberndorf, 40 miles south-east of Strassburg, was also attacked, and bursts were observed on various buildings. This was the first time that

this place and Heidelberg had been the objectives of British airmen. About eight tons of bombs were dropped on the Mons-Valenciennes railroad and six more on the railways at Courtrai, Seclin and Lille. The weather was very bad on this occasion, and two of our machines failed to return.

The activity of our air service was continued during July 19 and 20 in the immediate area of fighting on the Marne. British and French bombing machines paid special attention to the crossings over the river; in many cases they hindered progress considerably, and in some completely stopped the enemy's supply service, while they attacked with vigour both with machine-guns and bombs the concentration of troops which the enemy was preparing for his counter-attacks in the endeavour to stop the advance of the Allies' flank attack. At Oulchy-le-Château, Fère-en-Tardenois, Fismes, Bazoches, and indeed along the whole rear zone of the battle, 24 tons of bombs were dropped during the day and another 28 tons during the night, thus harassing enormously the enemy's lines of communication and the movements of both troops and convoys. A violent fire broke out at Vouziers, and fires were also seen at Fère, at Fismes, and explosions were

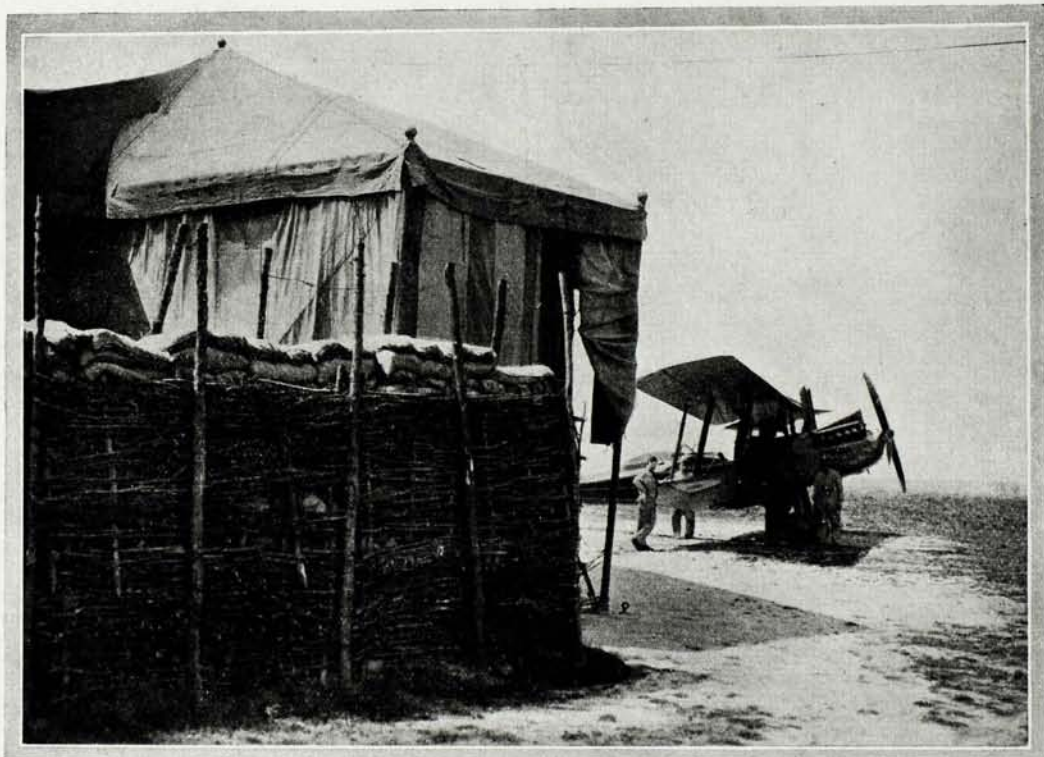
noted at Laon railway station. Besides all this, British and French low-flying planes fought in close combination with the infantry.

On the night of July 21/22 distant attacks were again carried out by the Independent Air Force. The railway sidings at Lunes, south-east of Mezières, were treated to a ton of bombs. Mannheim was again attacked, and the Badische Anilin und Soda Factory was also attacked, as was a factory south-east of Zweibrücken. Low-flying aeroplanes attacked and hit five trains, bringing them to a standstill, while the anti-aircraft defences of searchlights and guns were also attacked and great damage done to them, and this without any loss to our own men.

On July 22 the very important powder factory at Rottweil, on the Neckar, was attacked and a severe explosion caused, a fire breaking out which could be seen 60 miles away, and this without any loss to our own men.

This brief account of the aeroplane work will show what a large part it now played in the operations. The air service was becoming more and more an integral portion of the fighting services.

The successful counter-stroke of the French was a hard nut for the Germans to crack, but



SAND-BAG PROTECTION FOR AEROPLANES.

Official photograph.

they did their best to explain it away. Thus, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* said :

The place and time of Foch's counter-offensive were prescribed for him by the measures of the German Army Command. The time and place must have appeared so far favourable to Foch in that his counter-offensive was conducted here against the right flank of the German attack on the Marne at the moment when he might believe that the German reserves were held south of the Marne by his strong counter-attack there immediately before. His attack, which was again carried out with the aid of a very strong squadron of tanks, had the preliminary success which a strong massed offensive thrust usually obtains. Even if the attack had been expected by the German Command, the momentary surprise necessarily succeeded locally to a certain extent, so that in some places penetration was possible. But the penetration never amounted to a break-through, this being prevented by the tough resistance of the German troops in the line, and also by the intervention of our reserves, which were not, as Foch perhaps believed, employed on the Marne, but remained at the disposal of the command on this front. . . . The next few days will show whether Foch will continue his counter-offensive or whether it is a passing episode, leaving no great traces behind.

Another excuse, made in a Berlin telegram to the same newspaper, was that the Germans were betrayed by their own troops.

We have, now that we know it positively, no ground for concealing the fact that in the ranks of the German troops there were deserters to the enemy who utilized their knowledge of our plans for base treachery to

the Fatherland and their comrades in arms. They informed the enemy of the German plans, and the French in consequence naturally had a certain advantage.

It was also, seeing what had occurred, necessary to look upon the great march on Paris as no longer a certainty.

It cannot be the object of every military operation in all circumstances to attain definite ends. The victorious military operations of the third week of July aroused various presumptions among the population not warranted by the actual conditions, not to speak of those who on July 16 were absolutely certain that Hindenburg would carry out an attack on Paris. Our military command is prudent enough, in every case acting after consideration of the actual conditions to attain its decisions.

It adds :

West of Reims our attack on the southern bank of the Marne had quite a definite object. It was to extend our battle front. The attack succeeded, although the enemy was forewarned. But from all parts of the neighbouring Western front the French Commander drew troops upon troops to undertake an attack on a grand scale on the German positions. He thereby compelled the German troops to make a partial retirement.

No one can study the record of the war during the month of August without seeing that all along the line from the Yser to the Somme the situation was becoming more and more favourable to the Allies.

