

DRIVEN TO ATROCITIES, GERMAN COMMANDER TELLS CORRESPONDENT

By E. ALEXANDER POWELL.

[By Cable to The Chicago Tribune.]

Headquarters in the field of the Ninth Imperial Army, Chateau Lafere, near Renax, Belgium.—Three weeks ago the government of Belgium requested me to place before the American people a list of specific and authenticated atrocities committed by the German armies upon Belgian non-combatants.

Today General von Boehn, commanding the Ninth Imperial field army, acting mouthpiece of the German general staff, has asked me to place before the American people the German version of the incidents in question.

So far as I am aware I am the only correspondent in the present war who has motored for an entire day through the ranks of the advancing German army, who has dined as a guest of the German army commander and his staff, and who has had the progress of the army on the march arrested in order to obtain photographs of the German troops.

This unusual experience came about in a curious and roundabout way.

Invited by General Von Boehn.

After an encounter in the streets of Ghent last Tuesday between a German military automobile and a Belgian armored car, in which two German soldiers were wounded, American Vice Consul Van Hee persuaded the burgomaster to accompany him immediately to the headquarters of General von Boehn to explain the circumstances and ask that the city should not be held responsible for the unfortunate affair.

In the course of the conversation with Mr. Van Hee General von Boehn remarked that copies of papers containing articles written by Alexander Powell criticizing the German treatment of the Belgian civil population had come to his attention and said he regretted he could not have an opportunity to talk with Powell and give him the German version.

Mr. Van Hee said by a fortunate coincidence I happened to be in Ghent, whereupon the general asked him to bring me out to dinner the following day, and issued a safe conduct through the German lines.

Though nothing was said about a photographer, I took with me Photographer Donald Thompson. As there was some doubt regarding the propriety of taking a Belgian driver into the German lines, I drove the car myself.

In Midst of Kaiser's Men.

Half a mile out of Sotthem our road debouched into the great highway which leads through Lille to Paris. We suddenly found ourselves in the midst of the German army. It was a sight never to be forgotten. Far as the eye could see stretched solid columns of marching men, pressing westward, ever westward.

The army was advancing in three mighty columns along three parallel roads. These dense masses of moving men in their elusive blue gray uniforms looked for all the world like three monstrous serpents crawling across the countryside.

American flags which fluttered from our windshield proved a passport in themselves and as we approached the close locked ranks they parted to let us through.

For five solid hours, traveling always at express train speed, we motored between the walls of the marching men. In time the constant shuffle of boots and the rhythmic swing of gray-clad arms and shoulders grew maddening and I became obsessed with the fear that I would send the car plowing into the human wedge on either side.

Miles of German Soldiers.

It seemed that the ranks never would end, and as far as we were concerned they never did, for we never saw or heard the end of that mighty column.

We passed regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade of infantry, and after them Hussars, uhlans, cuirassiers, field batteries, more infantry, more field guns, ambulances, then siege guns, each drawn by 30 horses, engineers, telephone corps, pontoon wagons, armored motor cars, more uhlans, the sunlight gleaming on their forest of lances, more infantry in spiked helmets, all sweeping by as irresistible as a mighty river, with their faces turned toward France.

This was the Ninth field army and composed the very flower of the empire, including the magnificent troops of the imperial guard. It was first and last a fighting army. The men were all young. They struck me as being keen as razors and as hard as nails. The horses were magnificent. They could not have been better. The field guns of the Imperial guard were almost twice the size of any used by our army.

Thirty-two Horses Draw Howitzer.

But the most interesting of all, of course, were the five gigantic howitzers, each drawn by 16 pairs of horses. These howitzers can tear a city to pieces at a distance of a dozen miles.

Every contingency seems to have been foreseen. Nothing was left to chance or overlooked. Maps of Belgium, with which every soldier is provided, are the finest examples of topography I have ever seen. Every path, every farm building, every clump of trees, and every twig is shown.

At one place a huge army wagon containing a complete printing press was drawn up beside the road and a

morning edition of Deutsche Kreier Zeitung was being printed and distributed to the passing men. It contained nothing but accounts of German victories, of which I never had heard, but it seemed greatly to cheer the men.

Field kitchens with smoke pouring from their stovepipe funnels rumbled down the lines, serving steaming soup and coffee to the marching men, who held out tin cups and had them filled without once breaking step.

Covered Wagons Hide Machine Guns.

There were wagons filled with army cobbles, sitting cross-legged on the floor, who were mending soldiers' shoes just as if they were back in their little shops in the fatherland. Other wagons, to all appearances ordinary two wheeled farm carts, hid under their arched canvas covers nine machine guns which could instantly be brought into action.

The medical corps was as magnificent as businesslike. It was as perfectly equipped and as efficient as a great city hospital.

Men on bicycles with a coil of insulated wire along between them strung a field telephone from tree to tree so the general commanding could converse with any part of the 50 miles long column.

The whole army never sleeps. When half is resting the other half is advancing. The soldiers are treated as if they were valuable machines which must be speeded up to the highest possible efficiency. Therefore, they are well fed, well clothed, and worked as a negro teamster works mules.

Only men who are well cared for can march 35 miles a day week in and week out. Only once did I see a man mistreated. A sentry on duty in front of the general headquarters failed to salute an officer with sufficient promptness, whereupon the officer lashed him again and again across the face with a riding whip. Though welts rose with every blow, the soldier stood rigidly at attention and never quivered.

Finally Reaches Von Boehn.

It was considerably past midday and we were within a few miles of the French frontier when we saw a guidon, which signifies the presence of the head of the army, planted at the entrance of a splendid old chateau. As we passed through the iron gates and whirled up the stately tree-lined drive and drew up in front of the terrace a dozen officers in staff uniform came running out to meet us. For a few minutes it felt as if we were being welcomed at a country house in America instead of at the headquarters of the German army in the field. So perfect was the field telephone service that the staff had been able to keep in touch with our progress along the lines and were waiting dinner for us.

After dinner we grouped ourselves on the terrace in the self-conscious attitude people always assume when having their pictures taken, and Thompson made some photographs. They probably are the only ones of this war, at least of a German general and an American war correspondent who was not under arrest.

Then we gathered about the table, on which was spread a staff map of the war area, and got down to serious business. The general began by assuring that the stories of atrocities perpetrated on Belgian non-combatants were a tissue of lies.

"Look at these officers about you," he said. "They are gentlemen like yourself. Look at the soldiers marching past in the road out there. Most of them are fathers of families. Surely you don't believe they would do the things they have been accused of."

Explains Aerschot Crimes.

"Three days ago, general," I said, "I was in Aerschot. The whole town now is but a ghastly, blackened, blood-stained ruin."

"When we entered Aerschot the son of the burgomaster came into the room, drew a revolver, and assassinated my chief of staff," the general said. "What followed was only retribution. The townspeople only got what they deserved."

"But why wreak your vengeance on women and children?"

"None has been killed," the general asserted positively.

"I am sorry to contradict you, general," I asserted with equal positiveness, "but I have myself seen their mutilated bodies. So has Mr. Ginson, secretary of the American legation at Brussels, who was present during the destruction of Louvain."

"Of course, there always is danger of women and children being killed during street fighting," said General von Boehn, "if they insist on coming into the street. It is unfortunate, but it is war."

Data Startles General.

"But how about a woman's body I saw, with her hands and feet cut off? How about a white-haired man and his son whom I helped bury outside Sempstad, who had been killed merely because a retreating Belgian had shot a German soldier outside their house? There were 22 bayonet wounds on the old man's face. I counted them. How about the little girl two years old who was shot while in her mother's arms by a uhlans, and whose funeral I attended at Beystoppenberg? How about the old man who was hung from the rafters in his house by his hands and roasted to death by a bonfire being built under him?"

The general seemed somewhat

in a zigzag course to a spot near Soissons.

"He saw the German hosts not merely in retreat but in flight."

"It was a wonderful sight," the airman said, "to look down upon those hundreds and thousands of moving military columns, the long gray lines of the Kaiser's picked troops, some marching in a northerly, others in a northeasterly direction, and all moving with tremendous rapidity."

"The retreat, the aviator declared, was not confined to the highways, but

taken aback by the amount and exactness of my data.

"Such things are horrible, if true," he said. "Of course, our soldiers, like soldiers of all armies, sometimes get out of hand and do things which we would never tolerate if we knew it. At Louvain, for example, I sentenced two soldiers to 12 years' penal servitude for assaulting a woman."

Louvain Library Incident.

"Apropos of Louvain," I remarked, "why did you destroy the library? It was one of the literary storehouses of the world."

"We regretted that as much as any one else," answered the general. "It caught fire from burning houses and we could not save it."

"But why did you burn Louvain at all?" I asked.

"Because the townspeople fired on our troops. We actually found machine guns in some of the houses." And smashing his fist down on the table, he continued: "Whenever civilians fire upon our troops we will teach them a lasting lesson. If women and children insist on getting in the way of bullets, so much the worse for the women and children."

"How do you explain the bombardment of Antwerp by Zeppelins?" I queried.

Explains Zeppelin Bombs.

"Zeppelins have orders to drop their bombs only on fortifications and soldiers," he answered.

"As a matter of fact," I remarked, "they only destroyed private houses and civilians, several of them women. If one of those bombs had dropped 200 yards nearer my hotel I wouldn't be smoking one of your excellent cigars today."

"This is a calamity which I think God didn't happen."

"If you feel for my safety as deeply as that, general," I said earnestly, "you can make quite sure of my coming to no harm by sending no more Zeppelins."

"Well," he said, laughing, "we will think about it." He continued gravely:

"I trust you will tell the American people through your paper what I have told you today. Let them hear our side of this atrocity business. It is only justice that they should be made familiar with both sides of the question."

I have quoted my conversation with the general as nearly verbatim as I can remember it. I have no comments to make. I will leave it to my readers to decide for themselves just how convincing are the answers of the German general staff to the Belgian accusations.

Photographs German Army.

Before we began our conversation I asked the general if Mr. Thompson might be permitted to take photographs of the great army passing. Five minutes later Thompson was whirled away in a military motor car escorted by an army officer who had attended the army school at Fort Riley. It seems they stopped the car beside the road in a place where the light was good, and when Thompson saw approaching a regiment or battery of which he wished a picture he would tell the officer, whereupon the officer would blow his whistle, and the whole column would halt.

"Just wait a few minutes until the dust settles," Thompson would remark, nonchalantly lighting a cigarette, and the Ninth Imperial army, whose columns stretched over the countryside as far as the eye could see would stand in its tracks until the air was sufficiently clear to get a picture.

Thus far the only one who has succeeded in halting the German army is this little photographer from Kansas.

Show Thompson Gunner.

As a field battery of the Imperial guard rumbled past, Thompson made some remark about the accuracy of the American gunners at Vera Cruz.

"Let us show you what our gunners can do," said the officer, and gave an order. There were more orders, a perfect volley of them, a bugle shrilled harshly, the eight horses strained against their collars, the drivers cracked their whips, and the gun left the road, bounded across a ditch, and swung into position in an adjacent field.

On a knoll three miles away an ancient windmill was beating the air with its huge wings. The shell hit the windmill fair and square and tore it into splinters.

"Good work," Thompson observed critically: "if those fellows of yours keep on they'll be able to get a job in the American navy after the war."

In all the annals of modern war I do not believe there is a parallel to this American war photographer halting the advancing army, leisurely photographing regiment after regiment, and then having a field gun of the Imperial guard go into action solely to gratify his curiosity.

Find English Leaders.

According to a dispatch from a Daily Mail correspondent at Rouen the Germans have been able, with seemingly uncanny precision, to locate the headquarters of the British general staff, no matter where it moves.

Throughout ten days, beginning when the fighting was about Mons, the invaders poured shells close to the meeting point of the king's generals.

It was the same thing when headquarters were at Donai and Landreies, whereupon Sir John French withdrew his position to Le Cateau. There it was the target of a terrific bombardment, which set fire to the town and burned it. The next move was to St. Quentin, where again the British headquarters were a mark for the German fire.

Miss Josie Lahoda, while operating a mangle at the Plattsmouth Steam Laundry, allowed one of her hands to get caught in the mangle, and it was badly crushed. The surgeon thinks that the hand can be saved.

Burglars broke into the furniture and hardware store of Victor Anderson & Co. of Polk and attempted to blow the safe. Failing there, they went to the hardware store of Sundberg & Son, where they made their entrance through a window. They found the safe closed, but not locked and they secured about \$75 in cash and an equal amount in checks.

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NEBRASKA IN BRIEF.

The enrollment at the Peru Normal has passed the 500 mark and promises to equal or exceed that of last year.

The county commissioners of Cass county accepted the new jail which has just been completed at Plattsmouth.

Electric lights will be installed at Elmwood in the near future, a franchise having been granted to the Elmwood Mill and Elevator company.

The public schools and two parochial schools at West Point show an enrollment of almost 60. The high school enrollment is ninety-three.

Officers are searching for two young men who broke into the Waller jewelry store at Dorchester. The burglars secured goods valued at \$1,000.

John Petrow, a Fremont merchant, was married in Tamaqua, Pa., to Miss Vatsika Petropoulon, according to a message received by his brother in Fremont.

O. G. Wynn, 43, Union Pacific conductor, was almost instantly killed at Kearney when a switch engine attached to a string of cars backed down upon him.

While Aviator L. E. Norman was trying his aeroplane on the fair ground at Broken Bow, he was thrown to the ground on his head, sustaining serious injuries.

Two persons were injured in a head-on collision between accommodation train No. 173 and a work train on the Omaha road, two and one-half miles east of Ponca.

An automobile accident occurred north of Albion in which Mrs. John Peters received a crushed elbow and her grandson, John Thompson, severe bruises about the head.

Carl H. Brinkmann, formerly of Beemer, will be cashier of the new Nebraska state bank at Ohiowa. Work is starting on a new brick building which will house the new bank.

Amandus J. Krause, the victim of the bullet of Joseph E. Vance, died at the home of his mother in West Point. He never rallied. Vance is in jail awaiting his preliminary hearing.

The Missouri hypographical conference, now in its preliminary session at Omaha has ruled that no two men from the same state can hold office in the conference during the same year.

Charles and William Karbach of Omaha were hurled to the pavement uninjured when the automobile in which they were riding was caught between two street cars and demolished.

Militarism in all forms, from the boy scout movement to the standing army and the national guard, was vigorously assailed in resolutions passed at the state labor federation at Lincoln.

Paul Martin, aged 10, little son of Mr. and Mrs. Abner Martin of Fremont, was fatally shot through the abdomen in a shotgun discharge. The gun was in the hands of his brother, Alfred, aged 16.

Louis Disbrow, holder of seventeen world's automobile speed records, narrowly escaped death when his Disbrow special overturned at a turn in the Norfolk automobile speedway. The car was demolished.

The forty-seventh annual meeting of the Blue river Baptist association is being held at Beatrice. Rev. E. M. Alden of Tobias has been elected moderator, Rev. W. H. Hoge of Wynome secretary and Roy Hulbert of Fairbury treasurer.

The Nebraska state bank is the name of a new bank corporation of Ohiowa and the manager and cashier will be Carl H. Brinkmann, formerly of the Beemer State bank of Beemer. The corporation will erect a modern building of brick.

A rifle ball which Andrew Masters fired at an iron post in the north part of Hastings, rebounded, struck him in the right arm and severed an artery. With presence of mind he shut off the flow of blood until a physician could attend the injury.

Miss Lucile Pettygrove of Oxford was severely burned as the result of the ignition of gasoline used for cleaning a dress. It is supposed that the vapor took fire from the friction caused by rubbing the folds of the woolen goods together.

Offices of the National Security Fire Insurance company will be opened at Omaha the first of the year. President Walter George and Secretary Oscar Danielson, both at present employed by the state, will move to the metropolis to take care of the business.

President Wilson's appeal for a day of prayer for peace in Europe will be answered by the Weeping Water Congregational church. A feature in connection with the services will be an invitation to sixty families from the country to attend and to be guests of families in town for dinner.

A stray bullet from the gun of a hunter took the life of Earl Johnson of Kearney, while the young lad was riding in a spring wagon. The bullet entered his side and passed through the intestines. The bullet is believed to have been from the rifle of small boys hunting in the neighborhood.

Adams county will have the largest acreage of winter wheat in its history next year, according to Hastings grain men who say the ground has been put into the best condition by thorough cultivation and by recent rains.

Lieutenant Samuel M. Parker, new commandant of cadets at the University of Nebraska, has arrived in Lincoln to relieve Commandant Bowman. Lieutenant Parker belongs to the Thirtieth United States infantry. He was stationed in Alaska before being assigned to be commandant of the university cadets.

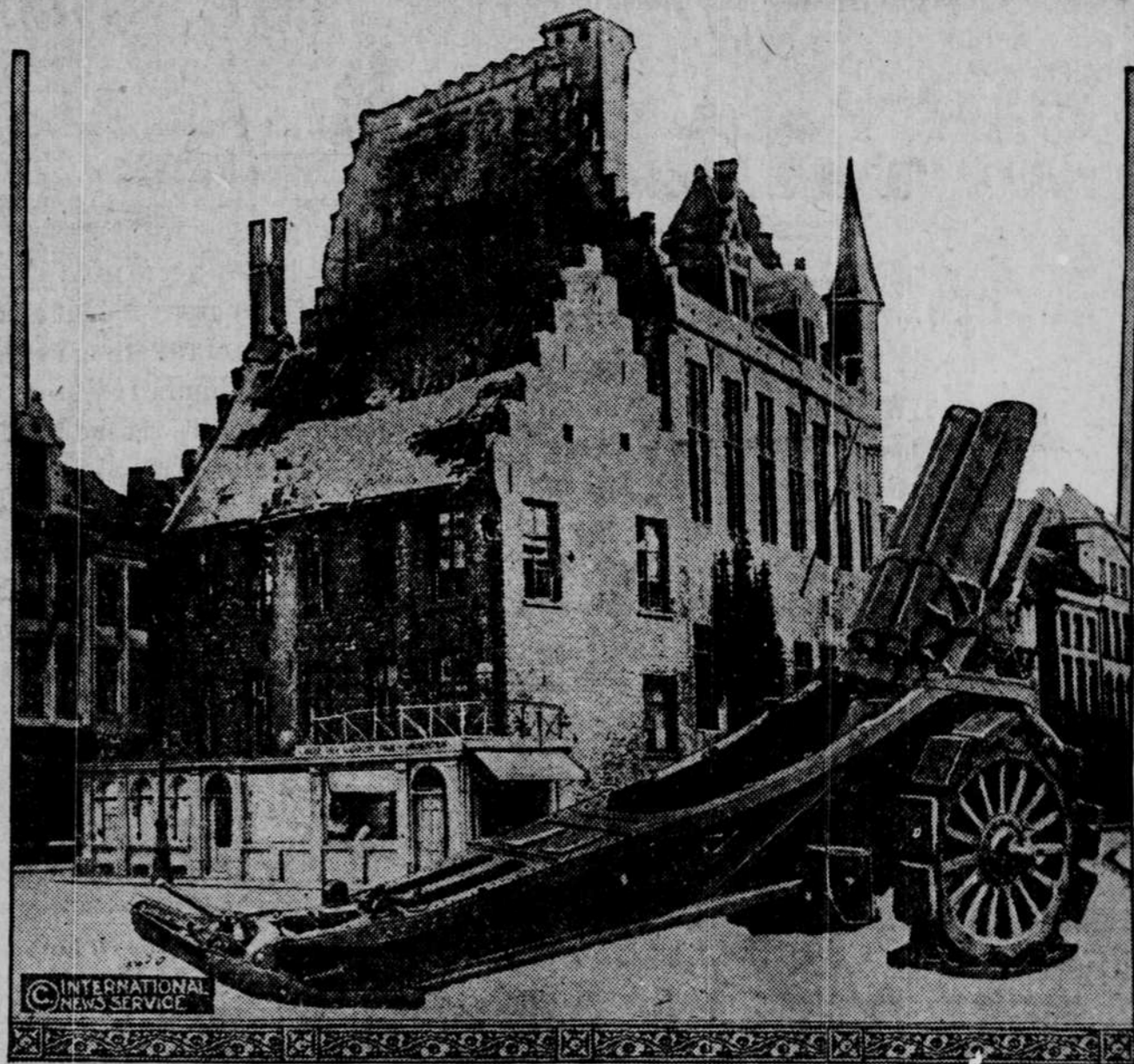
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WHAT THE ZEPPELIN BOMBS DID TO ANTWERP



These photographs give some idea of the effects of the dropping of bombs in Antwerp from German Zeppelins an action that aroused indignant protest from the allies and other people.

TURCOS WHO ARE FIGHTING IN THE FRENCH ARMY



Hardy fighters of the Nineteenth corps of the Algerian contingent in the French army. Their fearless, fierce attacks on the enemy seem to utterly demoralize the German gunners.

RUSSIAN RED CROSS NURSES IN THE FIELD



CHARGE OF THE KAISER'S INFANTRY



GEN. PAU, DRAMATIC FIGURE IN THE WAR

Paris.—Perhaps the most dramatic figure in the great European war up to now is Gen. Paul Pau, the aged French veteran of the war of 1870, who is now leading a part of the French army against the Germans over the same territory where he was a commander and lost one arm 44 years ago.

During the war of 1870 General Pau was a general even then—was not involved in any of the disastrous

GENERAL VON MARNITZ



General von Marnitz has been in command of the German cavalry on the extreme right of the Kaiser's army in France and covered the advance of Von Kluck's futile turning movement. Von Marnitz's cavalry penetrated even to the southwest of Paris and astonished the world by its speed.

army, should he survive the war and should France be victorious, what a dramatic triumph it would be. Fiction does not contain a parallel for such an achievement. That a commander who was defeated and himself maimed in a war should live to retrieve that defeat 44 years later, would perhaps be the most remarkable and stirring achievement in the military history of the world. Certainly no novelist or dramatist ever had the imagination to portray such an occurrence.

GERMAN RETREAT AS SEEN FROM THE SKY

London.—The following dispatch comes from the Standard's correspondent in Paris:

"The best view of the retreating German armies was obtained by a French military aviator, who, ascending from a point near Vitry, flew northward across the Marne and then eastward by way of Reims down to the region of Verdun and back again

in a zigzag course to a spot near Soissons. "He saw the German hosts not merely in retreat but in flight."

"It was a wonderful sight," the airman said, "to look down upon those hundreds and thousands of moving military columns, the long gray lines of the Kaiser's picked troops, some marching in a northerly, others in a northeasterly direction, and all moving with tremendous rapidity."

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