

# BRITISH RETREAT TO NEW POSITIONS

MOVE BACK TO MAKE SLAUGHTER MORE APPALLING.

## GERMANS DISREGARD LIVES

Hurl Masses of Men Directly Into the Face of Certain Death.—Foe Get Farther Away from Supply.—Paris Shelled from Afar.

London, March 26.—Fighting of a most desperate character has been continuous on the western front since the initial attack last Thursday, but so far the British have used few troops other than those which were holding the front lines. The new positions, according to latest reports, are being held intact by the British and are expected to withstand the German onslaught. British shock troops have been making as gallant a defense as was ever recorded in the annals of the British army, and as a result they have enabled the main body of the forces to fall back deliberately and without confusion and occupy positions which had been prepared long before the German offensive began.

The Germans on the other hand, operating under the eyes of the emperor and the crown prince, have been hurling vast hordes into the fray with utter disregard for lives, and have followed into the abandoned position, getting farther and farther away from their supplies and finding their communications increasingly difficult.

More than 50 German divisions have been identified by actual contact, and many of these men were stumps

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sick by the Germans more than a year ago, had set a record, and ordnance officers of the American, British and French corps freely conceded they never had dreamed of a monster gun with a range more than thirty miles.

**Confident British Will Hold Foe.**  
Reports of huge losses on both sides reaching Washington from the Cambria front fail to shake official confidence in the ability of the British to checkmate the enemy in what has developed to be the biggest battle ever staged in the history of mankind.

**Canadians Spring Great Surprise.**  
Canadian Headquarters in France, March 24.—While German and British troops were struggling far to the south in the opening clash of the spring campaign, the greatest projector gas bombardment of the war was carried out by the Canadians Thursday night against enemy positions between Lens and Hill 70.

At 11 o'clock a signal rocket was sent up. A moment later more than 5,000 drums of lethal gas, simultaneously released from projectors, were hurled into enemy territory from the outskirts of Lens to Cite St. Auguste and Boise De Dix-Huit. From his front lines and strong points favoring winds carried the poisonous clouds back upon the enemy's dugouts, supports, reserves and assembly areas.

The whole front was lit by enemy flares which could be seen through the heavy mist, while the enemy's gas alarm and cries of distress could be heard from the hostile trenches.

Nine minutes later the Canadian field artillery, supported by heavy guns and trench mortars, opened up with a slow bombardment, increasing in violence until, 40 minutes later, the enemy positions were swept with a short, intensive creeping barrage, which raked his forward and rear areas with high explosives.

Caught by the gas without a moment's notice as they were emerging from their shelters by gun fire, the Germans' casualties must have been very heavy, for the effectiveness of smaller gas operations has been emphatically proved by the evidence of prisoners, and tonight's bombardment was three times greater than anything of its kind ever attempted by the Canadians on the western front, and much greater than anything ever launched by the Germans.

**Critical Hour of War.**  
London, March 26.—The official reports represent the battle position in France as undoubtedly grave. The newspapers recognize, but do not attempt to appraise the situation or prophesy the course of events. They consider this the critical hour of the war.

The German seizure of Chauny may compel the withdrawal of the French lines, in order to preserve contact and alignment with the British. Much rests on the use of the allied "army of maneuver" organized by the Versailles conference, which may prove the decisive force of the battle.

The Daily Mail says that if Field Marshal Haig's report that the Germans broke through west of St. Quentin, uses the term "broke through" in the generally accepted military sense, it is serious, but that time alone can show the correct interpretation.

**Drive Delayed By Flyers.**  
With the French armies in the field.—During the past months when the Germans have been concentrating their troops, artillery, munitions and materials for an offensive, allied aviators have kept up an unceasing reconnaissance of every step taken and have bombarded concentration centers and communication lines to such an extent as to delay seriously the date of attack.

From December 1, 1917, to February 15, 1918, seventy-seven days covering the German's most intense preparations, French air forces alone made 22,518 flights.

French fighting planes brought down 104 German machines, of which only twenty-nine fell within the French lines, showing how the French are keeping German planes over their own lines. Ninety-three other German planes were brought down so far back of the German lines that it was impossible for their complete destruction to be confirmed.

Against this total of 197 victories in seventy-seven days, only thirty-eight French machines were brought down by the Germans.

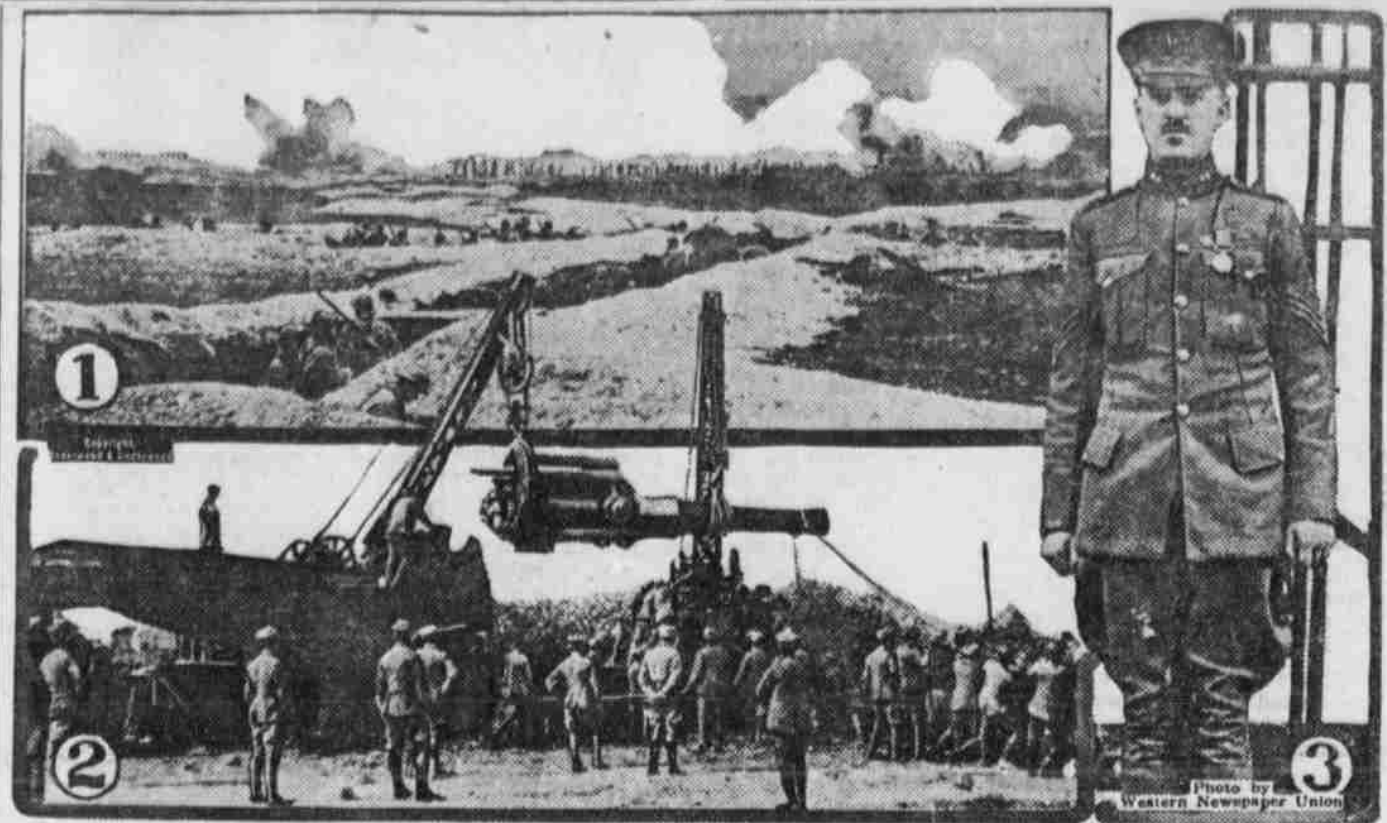
French observation planes made 1,300 flights over the German lines. In these flights 21,382 photographs were taken.

Meantime bombing squadrons, flying night and day, rained 200 tons of explosives on centers of concentration, lines of communication and munitions depots.

Among the points bombarded with exceptional frequency were the famous German chemical works at Ludwigshaven, mineral bases at Briey, the Sarre and many railway stations.

more than half by the war, as shown in statistics read to the Hungarian chamber of deputies recently. In 1914 705,000 children were born. In 1917 the number was 328,000.

**Many Killed in Munition Explosion.**  
London, March 26.—Thirty German soldiers were killed and more than 100 others injured and 500 munition wagons were blown up by an explosion at Mervignies station near Mons, Belgium, according to an Exchange Telegram dispatch from Amsterdam.



1—British troops advancing to a grenade attack under cover of a heavy barrage fire. 2—Italians moving a heavy gun up to position for the expected spring offensive. 3—Sergt. Maj. A. W. James of the Canadian forces, who was decorated in the presence of a huge crowd at Madison Square Garden, New York, for bravery in action after being badly wounded.

## NEWS REVIEW OF THE PAST WEEK

Germans Open Great Attack on the British Front North of St. Quentin.

MAY BE THE SPRING DRIVE

Allied Commanders Confident Their Lines Cannot Be Broken Seriously—Teutonic Penetration of Russia Continues—Shipping Question Most Serious—Dutch Vessels Are Seized.

By E. W. PICKARD.

"We are at the decisive moment of the war and one of the greatest moments in German history," telegraphed the kaiser to the Rhenish provincial council, and thereupon, Thursday morning, his forces began a tremendous bombardment of a wide stretch of the British front north of St. Quentin. This was followed by attacks by large masses of infantry which were hurled against the British front in desperate efforts to break through. The assaults were extremely costly to the enemy and up to the time of writing had been of little avail, for though at some points the British advanced lines had been penetrated, Field Marshal Haig reported that on no part of the long front of attack had the Germans attained their objective.

Apparently Von Hindenburg was trying to drive in a wedge on each side of the Cambria salient, and at the same time his troops made vicious assaults on the French northeast of Verdun and near Reims, though these were considered as diversions rather than parts of the main attack. The lines held by the Americans in the Lorraine and Toul sectors had not been assailed.

The British were in no way surprised by the attack of Thursday, and their commanders met it with supreme confidence. In every possible way they were prepared to meet the assault, of which they had had ample warning. Whether this smash was really the opening of the threatened great spring drive of the kaiser or not was uncertain, but American military experts doubted it. If it were, said they, it was the most hopeful sign of the war so far, for its defeat was certain. And such a defeat, they felt, would bring much closer the ultimate triumph of the cause of the allies.

Intense aerial activity characterized the operations all along the west front last week. There were numerous combats, in which the allies generally had the best of it, and the British and French aviators made many raids on towns and military establishments back of the German lines. Mannheim especially was hard hit by the British. The American flyers also were very busy and won praise by their skill and daring.

These developments lend backing to the statement of one war correspondent that land fighting in France is temporarily in abeyance and that the allies expect to win the war there in the air, having already undoubted supremacy in that element. He asserts that if the Germans make their great drive it must be made blindly, and the allies will promptly send their immense armies of the air across and destroy the Hun's lines of communications, depots and factories and his entire organization of supplies and re-enforcements. If this is the plan, there is the greater need for the United States to speed up its lagging production of battleplanes. The Providence Journal, heretofore remarkably well informed, asserts that in this respect the American aircraft program for 1918 is an absolute failure.

While the kaiser delayed his big attack on the west front, the world has waited in considerable suspense to know what the plan of the allies may be. This rests with the supreme council at Versailles—in which Amer-

ica is still unrepresented—and there is reason to believe that it will decide to take the offensive without waiting for the Germans to strike, as was intimated in these columns some weeks ago. It is believed that the council has at its disposal an immense army made up of reserves of the various allied forces, and some wise observers think the first great attack will be made in Italy, though there will be enough doing in France and Belgium to keep the Germans busy and uncertain. Intense activity by both the Germans and French in the Verdun region, and certain movements in the American section toward Metz indicate coming operations of magnitude on those parts of the line. The French made some remarkably swift and successful raids, destroying enemy blockhouses and shelters that had taken three years to construct.

On the Toul front the Americans were subjected to continuous shelling and the enemy also sent over airplanes that dropped large rubber balls filled with liquid mustard gas—a new form of attack. The American artillery maintained its record for accurate fire, driving the enemy from several strong positions and at times attacking the Germans heavily with gas shells. Secretary Baker in the course of his visit to General Pershing's forces was under fire in the front line trenches, and one big shell exploded close to his automobile, but he escaped injury.

On Tuesday General Pershing approved the awarding of the first of the new American military crosses for bravery, the recipients being Lieut. John O. Green and Sergts. William Norton and Patrick Walsh. All of them previously had been decorated with the French war cross.

In Russia, despite the acceptance of the peace treaty by the bolsheviks, the German armies have been steadily pressing forward, occupying town after town in the south, moving up toward Moscow and also approaching so close to Petrograd that the seizure of the capital city was said to be a matter of days or hours. All the allied diplomats left Petrograd, most of them retiring to Volodga, 350 miles east. American Ambassador Francis from there issued an address to the Russian people, warning them that if they submitted to the peace imposed by the central powers Russia eventually would become a German province, and pledging the support of the American government to any government in Russia that would resist the German penetration. Mr. Francis acted without specific instructions from Washington, but his utterance received the full approval of the administration.

The bolshevik government has been hurriedly moving to Moscow. Trotzky is there and says he will act as minister of war if there is to be more fighting. The new volunteer army is being organized rapidly, with renewed discipline, and the press and people, already somewhat disillusioned, cry out against the predatory ruthlessness of the Germans. The Transcaucasian assembly at Tiflis refused to ratify the peace treaty and demanded immediate war on Germany. The attitude of all the allies toward the bolshevik soviet is becoming more sympathetic, but the hope of effective resistance is rather faint.

The hand of the conqueror falls more and more heavily on Roumania, which is now required to give up to the central powers not only all of her own war munitions, but also those left in Roumania by the allies. If she yields to this demand the representatives of the allies will leave Jassy.

The supreme war council of the allies at Versailles issued a statement denouncing Germany's political crimes against Russia and Roumania and refusing to recognize the peace treaties with them. "We are fighting, and men to continue fighting, in order to finish once for all with this policy of plunder," said the council. In reply Chancellor von Hertling asserted Germany had no intention of robbing or dishonoring Russia and accused the allies of hypocrisy, untruthfulness and brutality.

There was no material change in the situation in the far East, but the opposition to Japan's plan to occupy Vladivostok seemed to increase because of the persistent distrust of the allies.

pire's good faith. Trotzky warned the world that Germany and Japan had agreed to divide Russia between them, but Trotzky's opinions are no longer entitled to very serious consideration.

Early Thursday morning two British and three French destroyers engaged a force of German destroyers off Dunkerque, and when the fight was over four enemy vessels had been sunk. One British destroyer was damaged, but the allied casualties were slight.

The same day Ostend was heavily bombarded by British monitors and Helgoland was attacked by airplanes.

Eloquent argument having failed to bring the Teutonic rulers to their senses or the Teutonic peoples to a realization of the truth, and encouragement and sympathy having met with no response from the Russians, President Wilson seems to have decided that action, quick and forcible, is the only thing that will bring the war to a close. He cheered up the country immensely by calling into conference the heads of the various war boards, who had been named as advisers to the chairman of the war industries board in establishing co-ordination. He impressed upon these men again the need of harmonizing their work in order to hurry up shipbuilding, increase shipping facilities and provide materials for the production of munitions. The shipbuilding question is the most pressing one, and the government is somewhat disturbed by the uncertain labor situation. It intends to adopt a definite labor policy, as did England, but this has not yet been formulated.

The matter of ships also came to the front again in England, and in response to public demand Sir Eric Geddes, first lord of the admiralty, gave out figures on the results of the submarine warfare. Total losses to the allies and neutral nations since the beginning of the war, he said, were 6,000,000 tons, and he admitted the monthly losses are 120,000 tons greater than the new ships built. To correct this, Sir John Jellicoe is to devote himself to combating the submarine. Lord Pirrie has been made governor general of merchant ship building and all available men in the country will be put to building ships. Premier Lloyd-George said that by special effort the deficiency could be made good in British shipyards alone.

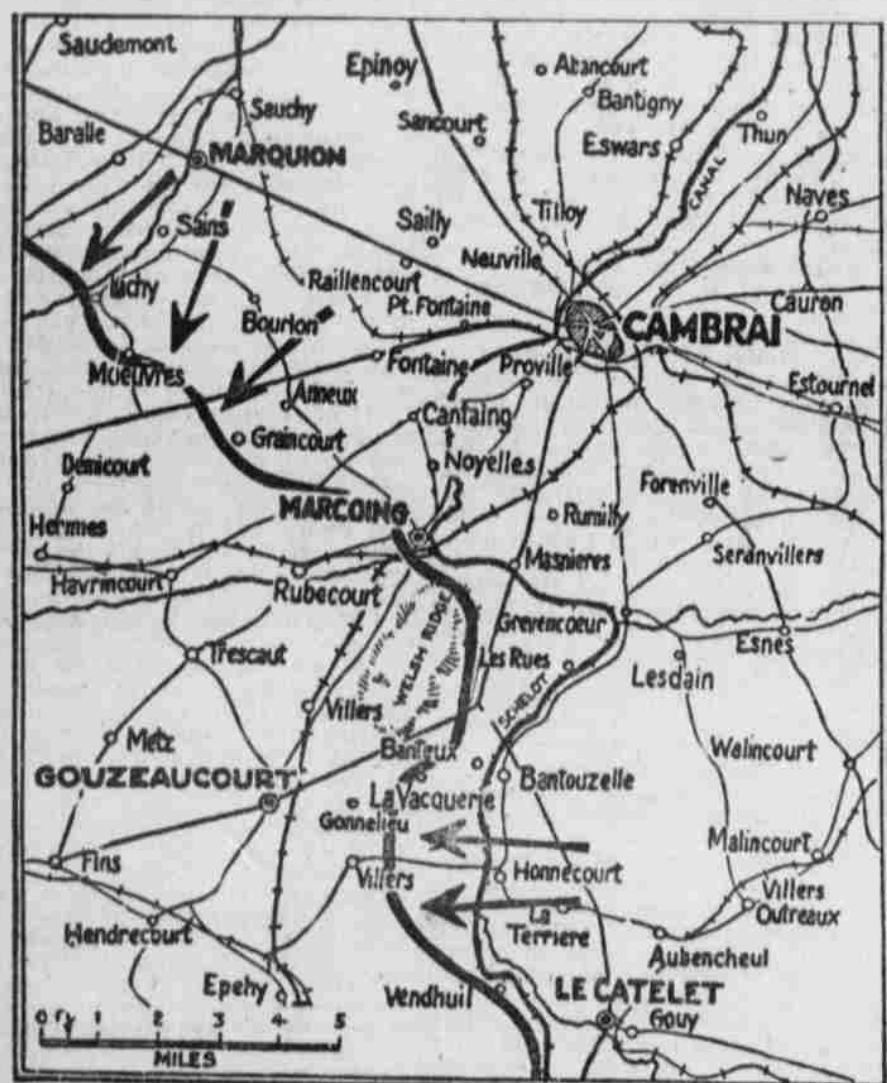
A great help in solving this transport problem is the seizure of about a million tons of Dutch shipping by the United States and England. This was accomplished on Wednesday after the Netherlands government had refused to put into effect its voluntary agreement to restore its merchant marine to normal activity. Most of the vessels taken will be used in carrying food from America to Europe, and President Wilson says Holland will receive ample supplies of foodstuffs, in accordance with the original pact. Germany, of course, has warned the Dutch that their ships now will be sunk, but it never has shown much regard for the rights of neutral ships outside the prescribed zone.

After being assailed in vain by the Republicans, the administration bill to establish a war finance corporation was passed by the house Thursday with only two opposing votes. On the same day the president signed the bill which brings the railroads under government operation and control until 21 months after the end of the war.

Agricultural interests were relieved of anxiety by an order of the war department permitting men engaged in planting or cultivating crops to continue their work until finished, although their draft numbers are reached. This does not apply to dairy workers.

Wisconsin, smarting under the imputations of disloyalty caused by La Follette and his doling and sayings, undertook to redeem herself in the senatorial primaries, and succeeded in a measure. Joseph E. Davies, backed by the national administration, easily won the Democratic nomination, but Congressman Lenroot had a hard task defeating James Thompson, the La Follette candidate, for the Republican choice. The Socialist vote, unexpectedly heavy, was cast for Victor Berger, who is under indictment for violating the espionage act.

## WHERE GERMANS OPENED GREAT ATTACK



This map shows that part of the British lines in the region of Cambrai, where the Germans made their fiercest attacks in opening their new offensive. Their apparent intention was to drive wedges on both sides of the Cambrai salient.

given two days' iron rations and sent over the top into the frightful maelstrom made by the allied artillery, machine guns and rifles. The slaughter of the enemy infantry as it advanced in close formation over the open has been appalling.

The British losses have been within the bounds expected, due to the tactics of the commanders. The allies have lost a considerable number of men in prisoners and a certain number of guns. But very few pieces of artillery have been taken by the Germans since the first day. In fact, the whole withdrawal has been executed in a masterly manner, showing how thoroughly the British had planned for the very events which have occurred.

It is permitted to say now what some have known for a long time namely, that the British never intended to try to hold the forward positions in this region if the Germans attacked in the force expected.

There is every reason to believe

losses at 200,000 men. While nothing official has come from the front throwing a definite light on the British losses, they are estimated at approximately half those of the Germans.

One of the mysteries of the offensive which has now been solved is that the shelling of Paris is being done by a long range German gun. This statement is contained in the Berlin official communication, and a Paris dispatch says that one of the guns has been located near Laon about 75 miles from the center of Paris. Throughout Sunday morning and into the mid-afternoon shells were dropped in Paris at intervals of from 12 to 20 minutes.

**Washington Officials Dumbfounded.**  
Washington, D. C., March 26.—The long-range bombardment of Paris by a German gun, presumably seventy-four miles away, announced as a fact in the French capital, dumbfounded American ordnance officers. The twenty-two-mile bombardment of Dun-

ish armies. The attack has shown no new strategy, but appears to be simply a colossal blow with masses of guns and men hitherto never used. There is no surprise that the British line has been forced back. Lines of defense have bent before all great offenses in this war. What the British people look to the army for is that break.

**Birth Rate Cut in Half.**  
Washington, D. C., March 26.—The birth rate in Hungary has been cut