

Canadian Troops Carry Famous Vimy Ridge

Terrific Blow Dealt Germans; 5816 Prisoners Taken

BRITISH DELIVER SMASHING BLOW AGAINST THE GERMANS OVER A TWELVE-MILE FRONT

COMMANDS CANADIAN TROOPS IN FRANCE



GENERAL BYNG

GLORIOUS PART WAS PLAYED BY THE MEN FROM DOMINION IN CAPTURE OF VIMY RIDGE

Strongest Defensive Position of the Germans on the Western Front Was Cleared of the Enemy by the Canadian Troops—Were Given the Place of Honor in Great British Advance—Teutons Were Swept From the Crest While Over Two Thousand Submitted to Capture—Seven Hours After Battle Began Ridge Had Been Cleared—Terrific Artillery Fire Had Pounded the German Stronghold.

Advance From Southeast of Arras to Lens to a Depth of From Two to Three Miles—Scores of Villages and Fortified Positions Are Captured—British Troops Moved Forward With Never a Look Behind After Their Gunfire Had Demolished and Flattened the Trench Systems of the Enemy—Germans Taken by Surprise Surrendered in Thousands, the Day's Bag Numbering 6,000.

Famous Vimy Ridge the Scene of Many Gory Battles Was Stormed and Carried by Warriors from Canada

Men From the Dominion Occupied the Place of Honor in the Big Advance—Were Flanked on Either Side by the Best English and Scotch Formations—Attained the Crest of the Ridge and in Addition Took 2,000 Germans Prisoner.

WITH THE BRITISH ARMIES IN FRANCE, via London, April 9.—(From a staff correspondent of the Associated Press).—The war on the western front, which has been moving more rapidly in the last five weeks, broke into full swing today. Widening their attacks, which they have been directing against the retreating Germans in the sector of the Somme, the British struck still farther north, and in a series of assault on a broad front, with Arras more or less the pivotal point, they drove the Germans from scores of important positions, penetrated far into the German lines and inflicted heavy casualties.

A visit to corps headquarters this afternoon indicated that the number of prisoners taken in the last 12 hours exceed five thousand. The barbed wire "cages" or compounds, built to receive prisoners which were expected to be taken, were overcrowded long before noon, although the principal attack did not begin until shortly after dawn.

The heaviest fighting today developed along a line a few miles southeast of Arras, in the northly direction of the neighborhood of Lens, but the actions extended far in the direction of St. Quentin. In the territory captured today was the famous Vimy ridge, which had been fought over time and time again ever since the war was ten months old.

The French had fought desperately in an endeavor to take this vantage point, the battles costing both belligerents untold casualties. Back of the northern end of Vimy ridge lie the principal coal fields of France, which are still in German hands.

Glory for Canada. The fighting on Vimy ridge was carried out by the Canadians who retained a footing on the ridge all the winter, but always higher up was the enemy. On either side of the Canadians were English and Scotch battalions, and in today's battle, there was glory enough for all. The irrepressible "tanks" also shared in the honors of the successful assault.

One position captured to the northeast of Arras was a sort of labyrinth of trenches enmeshed in multiple bands of wire, called "The Harp," because of its shape. Prisoners had proclaimed this strong point practically unassailable but, sweeping over it today, the British took with it nearly a thousand prisoners and they captured also during the day three German battalion commanders, who compare in rank with colonels in the British army. The Canadians took 2,000 prisoners.

Germans Were Dazed. It was said everywhere along the attacking line that the Germans appeared to have been taken by surprise, and only in a few instances did they put up a strong fight. One reason for this was that they had been fairly dazed by the British artillery fire of the last ten days.

From the high ground overlooking Arras a panoramic view for many miles of the British attack was presented. The concentration of guns for this operation was probably the greatest for a given amount of front, since the war began. Almost countless guns had taken part in the bombardment since the beginning, but it was not until last night that many masked batteries joined in.

Overwhelming Inferno. Approaching the battlefields well before dawn, the reflection of the gun flashes against the low-hanging clouds gave the inevitable impression of a continuous play of sheetlightning along the horizon. But when this wonderful night picture of modern warfare came into full view, it seemed as if suddenly one stood on the brink of an overwhelming inferno. Looking down into the valley, tongues of flame could be seen flashing from hundreds upon hundreds of guns, like so many white-hot serpents' fangs. The guns were playing upon the ridges looming up in the distance enveloped in darkness, upon which lay the German lines. There was as yet no alarm.

The Germans had become accustomed to receive daily "strafes" from the British and they were sending up only routine star shells and trench flares.

Weather Was Stormy. As dawn approached, the British batteries on one by one became strangely silent. For half an hour the stillness was almost oppressive. The hot pit flashes disappeared all at this time, however, the German star shells and flares were ascending with the same monotonous regularity which marks the German positions along the entire front.

The glorious weather of Easter Sunday had disappeared, and from menacing black clouds overhead, rain began to fall. It was driven along by a strong gale left over from the abundant storms of March. The storm delayed the coming of dawn to such an extent, that it was still quite dark when the moment set for the British attack arrived.

Burst with Volcanic Roar. Then, as if the myriad of guns had been synchronized to the tick of a watch, they broke the stillness with a volcanic roar. The earth trembled from the shock. The licking tongues of the inferno appeared now to have been multiplied a hundred-fold. The objective hills began to writhe under the torques of the screaming shells. The dark profiles of the ridges, etched against the background of the grayling skies, were now more clearly defined by the high explosive shells, which burst along the ground like flaming pots of fire. Above these, in the air, played the shrapnel barrage, breaking with giant fire-fly flashes and hurling their leader hail of death on all below. The first volley scarce had reached the German lines when up went the ever ready signals of distress and "S.O.S." calls for assistance from the supporting artillery. Most of the direct rockets burst in great showers of golden rain, others looped high in the air and broke into flaming balls of red and green. It was difficult to realize that this was not simply a stupendous, almost supernatural pyrotechnic spectacle arranged for the pleasure of the gods. It was more difficult still to realize that it was actual reality of war, and that the hundreds of flashes and quick flames playing in the dawn were funeral torches lighting the way of souls into eternity.

Earth Was Red. From the moment the great crater erupted along the horizon, the whole world seemed red. Under the glare of the exploding mines which had been dug under the enemy lines and under the shells, could be seen the British soldiers trudging across No Man's Land to a hand-to-hand encounter with the Germans. They moved closely behind the protecting shell curtain sent up by their guns.

As this barrier fire moved forward the men kept pace. It will ever be an amazing feature of this war, the absolutely cool valor with which the men go into action. Never the old shouting or the impulsive rush to victory—just a slow, deliberate trudge, not more than two or three men grouped, and each silent, with his own thoughts, until actual fighting with the hilberts unseen for begins. Then it is a quick surrender, a shot or a bayonet thrust, and the attacking wave moves on.

Through Enemy Lines. The coming of day changed the magic picture of night completely, and with almost naked suddenness. Now the horizon was dull, with accumulated

ed smoke. Shells which had burst into pillars of fire by night now appeared as black fountains springing from the earth. There was an occasional flash to the shrapnel bursts, but generally they flew in merely puff balls of smoke. The roar, however, was always the same.

The sun broke through the clouds just before noon as the British were breaking through the third and fourth German lines.

From the crater which had been organized along the scarred front and which resembled the opening made in quarrying operations, the distance to the top of the ridge ranged from 1,200 yards to a little short of a mile. Thereafter the ground falls westerly toward the great plain of Cambrai. Up the ridge, amid the shattered German trenches, our men swarmed in successive waves. On the northern end a few trees about for some other wood where the wood of La Folie had been. The troops advanced through the remains of an orchard.

Tanks Were Busy. Within half an hour after the first German distress rocket had been sent up, calling for barrage fire from the Teuton artillery and indicating a surprise attack, our objective was attained with slight loss.

The "tanks" which accompanied our advancing infantry up to the ridge had little to do, but were seen in action later near the crest of Vimy, on the extreme north of the line, at a point east of St. Julien, where much hard fighting took place in 1915, when thousands of men fell.

The enemy put up a stiff fight at Hill 145, which had been provided skillfully with concealed machine gun

Official Story Of Big British Triumph in West

LONDON, April 9.—An advance of from two to three miles has been made by British troops on a front extending from Rechin-sur-Coujeul, southeast of Arras, to Givenchy-en-Gohelle, a distance of about 12 miles. The official report from army headquarters in France makes this announcement tonight, and adds that the advance continues. The famous Vimy ridge was carried by Canadian troops, and many more remain to be counted. Up to 2 p.m. this afternoon, 5,816 including 419 officers passed through the receiving stations, according to the official report, many more remained to be counted.

The text of the statement reads: "The operations continue in accordance with the plan. Our troops have everywhere stormed the enemy defenses from Hennin-sur-Commin to Givenchy-en-Gohelle, to a depth of 2 to 3 miles, and our advance continues."

"The enemy's forward defenses on this front, including Vimy which was carried by the Canadian troops, were captured early in the morning. These defenses comprise a network of trenches and fortified localities, and many more remain to be counted. Of these a large number belong to the Bavarian divisions, which have suffered heavy in today's fighting."

"The captured war material includes guns and a number of trench mortars and machine guns, which have not yet been counted. In the direction of Cambrai further progress has been made in the neighborhood of Haverincourt wood. We have captured the village of Demicourt."

In the direction of St. Quentin we captured the village of Pontreux and Le Verger. "The aerial activity of the past few days has continued with great energy. Several successful bombing raids were carried out by us, our machines co-operating with our artillery with good results. Two hostile machines were destroyed and 15 others were driven down and probably crashed. Two German kite balloons were brought down in flames. Ten of our airplanes are missing."

Prof. F. M. Clement addresses Ward One Ratepayers' association, Point Grey, on "Planting and Care of a Vegetable Garden." Shaughnessy school, 8 p.m.

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Historic Achievement of Canada's Soldiers Was in Conformity With Their Past Record

Casualties Considering the Extent of the Engagement and the Success Won Are Reported to Be Light—Enemy Planned Counter-attack But His Forces Were Shattered by Heavy Artillery Fire—Spirit of Infantry Made Victory Certain.

CANADIAN HEADQUARTERS IN FRANCE, via London, April 9.—(By the Canadian overseas correspondent).—The crest of the Vimy ridge has been captured by the army of Sir Douglas Haig, and the Canadian corps had the place of honor in the great event, being strongly supported by some of the most famous of the British formations.

The attack was preceded by a bombardment which continued for several days, and in which guns of the heaviest calibre, formerly used on only the biggest battleships, took part. The results of this artillery concentration as revealed by aerial observation, were the same as in the battle of the Somme.

Aeroplanes flying could find only shapeless masses of churned earth where the enemy's first line had been. By Saturday afternoon, Thelus, the chief village held by the enemy on the ridge, and lying due east of Neuville St. Vaast, was pounded out of all recognition, with only two houses standing. Prisoners taken told of heavy enemy losses. Even in deep dug-outs, where the Germans had hoped to be reasonably safe in that rain of death, no safety was to be found anywhere.

In a desperate attempt to blind the eyes of the attacking enemy, the Germans on Saturday endeavored to destroy our observation balloons.

Awe-inspiring Sight. Saturday night our guns continued the work of devastation under conditions which made a spectacle that was majestic and awe-inspiring. A full moon in the east lit up the countryside with mellow beams on the horizon, while the flash of the guns made a continuous play like that of the northern lights in the dominions, or distant snow lightning. This was sharply thrown now and again by a column of reddish yellow flames, where on the ridge high explosives were bursting.

The snipers, with tireless energy, continued the cannonade throughout Easter Sunday.

The Supreme Moment. On Monday morning came the supreme moment, when our infantry was called upon to go out and reap the fruit of months of preparation. They had endured, unwaveringly, the answering fire of the enemy, which however, was not comparable to ours. Some, impatient to be at the foe, had gone out on small wars of their own, and as for Thelus, which had been strongly held before, our guns hammered it to pieces. It did not long hold out.

By 12:30 o'clock—seven hours after the battle began, no organized body of the enemy remained on Vimy ridge except the most concealed of the machine guns on Hill 145.

Casualties Light. Of the casualties it only can be said that they are surprisingly light, especially in view of the importance of the ground won. The prisoners taken in the Canadian advance alone probably amount close to 2,600. The British troops in the adjacent sector captured over 2,000.

Swarmed Up the Ridge. From the crater which had been organized along the scarred front and which resembled the opening made in quarrying operations, the distance to the top of the ridge ranged from 1,200 yards to a little short of a mile. Thereafter the ground falls westerly toward the great plain of Cambrai. Up the ridge, amid the shattered German trenches, our men swarmed in successive waves. On the northern end a few trees about for some other wood where the wood of La Folie had been. The troops advanced through the remains of an orchard.

Tanks Were Busy. Within half an hour after the first German distress rocket had been sent up, calling for barrage fire from the Teuton artillery and indicating a surprise attack, our objective was attained with slight loss.

Our men were splendid, and are proud that they were counted worthy to furnish a striking force in so important an operation as the recapture of Vimy ridge.

Dear to Canadians. No ground in all France is more dear to the hearts of the French people than the front in which the Canadians set out to drive the enemy from his position on the ridge of Vimy. The chapel of Notre Dame De Lorette; Fouchez and the sugar refinery there, to conquer the crumbling ruins of which men during the war had died in thousands; the Cabaret Rouge, Neuville St. Vaast, the Labyrinth—these are names that will be forever glorious for the Canadian memory in France.

In the spring of 1915, before the tremendous drams of Verdun and the Somme had been conceived, the army of France made the first great attempt to drive the entrenched enemy from his positions here. The progress made, reckoned in miles, was almost negligible, but the French learned on the ridges and in the long shelterless slopes of this difficult ground the lessons that enabled them and their allies to win at Verdun and the Somme.

MONTREAL CITIZEN DEAD. MONTREAL, April 9.—The death occurred today, after a long illness, of Louis Pierre Paul Cardin, former member of the legislative council of Quebec for the county of Richelieu. He was born on May 21, 1841, near Sorel.

STEAMER REPORTED. NEW YORK, April 9.—The Associated Press announces that the Canadian Line steamer Ausonia arrived here tonight from a British port with passengers and mail.

GERMAN SOCIALISTS TRYING TO MAKE PEACE WITH SLAVS

COPENHAGEN, via London, April 9.—In the midst of the interest in America's own preparation for participation in the war and the impending German and allied offensives in the west, it would be wise not to lose sight of the fact that the Germans, particularly the Socialists, are working industriously toward peace with Russia and have not lost hope of success, despite the discouraging pronouncements of a war to a victorious end coming from Petrograd.

On Secret Mission. It is announced in Berlin that the Socialist leader, Philipp Scheidemann, head of the majority Socialists in the Reichstag and a politician close to the chancellor, has left Germany on "a mission." The nature of this mission is not specified, but there is reason to assume that as a well known Russo-German Socialist, known by the pen name of Parvia, who also came abroad just after the conference of the majority Socialists, which was called to consider the possibilities of the Russian situation, Herr Scheidemann's mission involves an attempt to open communication with the Russian Socialists and Social Revolutionists of the extreme school who favor an immediate peace.