

## HAIG'S STORY OF VICTORY

### Official Account of Last Days of the War

#### SPLENDID FIGHTING OF THE BRITISH

In Detailed Report Field Marshal Tells How Fifty-nine British Divisions Defeated Ninety-nine German Divisions and Brought the War to an End.

Prepared as one has been by the daily telegrams and reports from the British front of the remarkable series of victorious battles which ended in the complete defeat of the German forces on the western front, it is not possible to read without emotion Sir Douglas Haig's consecutive narrative of the events leading to this result. A grimness and bulldog tenacity in defeat, a magnificent dash and gallant endurance in victory, call forth Sir Douglas Haig's frequent expressions of gratitude and admiration for the troops under his command.

The despatch deals with the operations of the British Expeditionary force in France from the end of April to the 11th of November, 1918, on which day the troops entered Mons and the armistice was signed.

The fierce onslaught of the German armies in March and April had left the British forces gravely weakened and on the defensive everywhere. Eight divisions had to be written off the strength, two divisions were greatly reduced and five divisions had been sent to a quiet post on the French front for rest and training. There were only 46 divisions available for active service, and of these three-fourths had already been heavily engaged with the enemy and reinforced by inexperienced recruits.

All available men were being hastily sent out from England and reinforcements were arriving from other fronts. All these troops had to be acclimated and acclimated had to be written off the strength, two divisions were greatly reduced and five divisions had been sent to a quiet post on the French front for rest and training.

In fact, there was cause for grave anxiety, it being apparent that the enemy must strike again immediately in order to obtain every advantage possible while he still possessed superior forces and before the weight of the American army could be thrown into the scale. The Allies had, therefore, to contemplate acting on the defensive and on withstanding severe assaults during the next three months before they could expect to gain an equilibrium of strength.

The next two months on the British front were spent in intense activity, 200 miles of broad-gauge railway were laid and 5,000 miles of new defensive positions were dug and built. The enemy was harassed by frequent attacks and harassed by artillery fire. The strength of the British divisions was increased from 46 to 52, much artillery was added, and by the end of July the British army was reconstructed and had once more become an efficient striking force. The German High command had missed an opportunity which was never to recur to them.

**German Surprise Attack.**  
The German high command having been brought to a standstill before Amiens, altered their strategic objective, and on the 27th of May launched a surprise attack on the Aisne, between Soissons and Rheims. The five British divisions constituting the ninth army, which had been sent to that point to rest and train, thus suddenly found themselves involved in the fighting on the French right, northwest of Rheims. Despite the fact that their ranks had but lately been filled up by young drafts still inexperienced in trench warfare, they most gallantly held their own.

When the enemy broke through in the center of the line north of Amiens, the left and center of the ninth army was obliged, after fierce fighting, to swing back west of Rheims, and finally to withdraw across the river Vesle in a southeasterly direction. The fighting raged hotly until June 5, when the enemy advance was definitely stayed, and Rheims was saved. The French general under whose orders this British army fought wrote of them as follows: "They have enabled us to establish a barrier against which the hostile waves have beaten and shattered themselves. This, none of the French who witnessed it will ever forget."

"Sir Douglas Haig writes: 'The twenty-second army corps was sent at the beginning of July to the French front at the request of Marshal Foch and took part in the great counter-offensive of July 18. After 10 days' continuous fighting they took Marfaux and Montagne de Biligny and completed an advance of four miles southwest of Rheims in most difficult and trying circumstances.'

The counter-offensive proved strikingly successful, and by the end of July the American army was beginning to make itself felt and Marshal Foch arranged for plans for an offensive on all fronts from the Belgian coast to the Swiss frontier. To the British was assigned the relief of Amiens which, from the beginning of April had been under the fire of the enemy's guns, and had become "a city of the dead." The interruption of railroad traffic between Paris and Boulogne and Calais at this point had been a serious and dangerous inconvenience to the Allied forces.

Elaborate precautions which were quite successful were taken to deceive the enemy, who was led to expect an attack on the Flanders front. Meanwhile secretly assembled and under admirable staff arrangements which left nothing to chance, the British resumed the offensive on the morning of the 8th of August on the Amiens front.

After a heavy artillery bombardment favored by a ground mist and assisted by many tanks and cavalry, this attack developed with brilliant success, and by the 12th of August the infantry had reached and occupied the old German Somme defenses of 1916. Montdidier had been recaptured by the French and Amiens was placed beyond the reach of the enemy guns.

As a result of their defeat on the Marne, and the battle of Amiens, in which 20 German divisions were heavily defeated by 13 British divisions, the cavalry divisions and an American regiment, the reaction on the German morale was decisive and immediate. Buoyed up with the promise that they were fighting their last fight for peace and that victory would come before the autumn, believing, as they were repeatedly told, that the Allies' reserves were exhausted; scouting the possibility of American intervention in time to be of any definite result, the downfall of all their hopes and desires had the long-prophesied and expected effect—the German armies were defeated from the moment they turned back from Paris and Amiens. They lost belief in their invincibility and they ceased to be invincible.

**Allies' Hour Arrives.**  
On the other hand, the Allies, fighting from vastly different motives, felt that at last their hour had come; they "moved forward from one success to another, suffering, danger, losses alike forgotten in their desire to beat the enemy and their confidence that they could do so," and they rose to the occasion with magnificent spirit. Sometimes swiftness, sometimes with dramatic slowness, the enemy was forced back.

The battle of Bapaume from the 21st of August to the 1st of September extended the line of advance northward. Delivered by the third and fourth armies, aided later by the first army, it ended with a general advance of the French and British forces between the rivers Oise and Somme and the capture of Peronne by the Australians on the 1st of September. During this offensive 23 British divisions drove 35 German divisions from the field in 10 days, retook the whole line of the old Somme battlefield with 34,000 prisoners and 270 guns. The German troops had become disorganized and constantly surrendered. This defeat in the south of the Lys salient compelled the enemy's withdrawal from that salient and the abandonment of immense quantities of ammunition.

Sir Douglas Haig describes the third phase of the advance from Aug. 26 to Sept. 3 as the battle of the Scarpe. It resulted in the defeat of 13 German divisions by 10 British divisions, the capture of 16,000 prisoners, 200 guns and great quantities of material. During this battle the celebrated Drocourt-Quenast switch was broken, an elaborate system of trenches, wire and strong points, connected with the famous Hindenburg line. This gallant feat of arms was carried out by a Canadian corps assisted by several English divisions.

The fourth stage of the advance from Sept. 12 to 18 was the battle of Havrincourt and Epehy. The battle was preparatory to an attack on the Hindenburg line, and succeeded in breaking down the old British and German lines to a depth of three miles. It resulted in the defeat of 20 German divisions by 15 British, the capture of all the British objectives, 12,000 prisoners and 100 guns.

The British were now confronted by the famous Hindenburg line, a formidable position of great strength in the building of which the Germans had employed all their powers of organization and resource. The Scheldt Canal, running in places 60 feet below the surface of the ground, formed an integral part of this great system and afforded cover for the troops from the severest bombardment. A tunnel 2,000 yards in length was taken advantage of and converted into concrete shelters and dugouts. The enemy had concealed along the top of the canal emplacements. Trench lines, barbed wire, switch trenches, etc., covered a belt of country varying from 7,000 to 10,000 yards in depth and organized into a most powerful system of defense well meriting the great reputation attached to it.

**Attack on Hindenburg Line.**  
The attack on this position was opened by the crossing of the Scheldt canal at Moeuvres on the 27th of September. This most difficult maneuver on a very narrow front was carried out with complete success. After two days' heavy and continuous bombardment the forty-sixth division stormed the western arm of the Scheldt canal at Bellelisle. The canal was crossed on mats and rafts by foot bridges, by swimming or wading, and so gallantly and rapidly was the attack carried out that the troops of this division captured 4,000 prisoners and 70 guns on one day. The second American corps took part in the action on the Hindenburg line and though heavily engaged pressed on with great gallantry. The battle raged for nine days. The enemy frequently counter-attacked in great strength. It resulted in the whole of the Hindenburg defenses passing into the hands of the British. A wide gap was driven through the enemy's rear trench system which constituted a direct and instant threat to his line of communications, for nothing but well-wooded and open country now lay between the Allies and the German great railway center at Maubeuge. In this battle for the Hindenburg line 35,000 German prisoners and 380 guns were captured, and the enemy's morale was greatly reduced.

At this time the second British army was engaged under the king of the Belgians in the battle of Flanders. Launched on the 28th of September, by the end of the first day, the British were far beyond the historic battle grounds of 1917. The British and Belgians followed up by the evening of the 1st of October they had cleared the left bank of the river Lys. On the 2nd of October the enemy began extensive withdrawals from Lens to Arras, and shortly afterward the development of operations on the Hindenburg line forced the enemy to further retreat.

The second phase of the British offensive now began in open country and consisted mainly of heavy attacks with rear-guards and delaying troops. The enemy's transport blocked the road to the east, while the armies retreated to the line of the Marais, tanks and aeroplanes did valuable work, and a great number of prisoners and many guns fell into our hands. By the 13th of October the Selle River was reached and Laon was in French hands. Ostend fell to the Belgian forces on the 17th of October and on the 20th of October the Allies reached the Dutch frontier.

On the 17th of October Douai was occupied and the enemy was given no time to evacuate stores or destroy bridges and on the 18th the British had surrounded Lille and by the 22nd had reached the Scheldt. In the battle the 24 British and 2 American divisions engaged had captured 20,000 prisoners and 475 guns from the 31 German divisions opposed to them.

**Hopeless German Situation.**  
The capitulation of Turkey and Bulgaria and the collapse of Austria had rendered Germany's situation ultimately impossible. Sir Douglas Haig now prepared a principal attack on the 30-mile front on the Somme on the 1st of November. On the 4th of November, after an intense bombardment, the troops moved forward and advanced to a depth of five miles along the whole battle front. In these operations 20 British divisions utterly defeated 32 German divisions, captured 19,000 prisoners and over 450 guns.

The enemy now fell back on the whole front. The roads packed with troops and transport provided excellent targets to our airmen. Fighting their way forward, our troops compelled a general retirement of the enemy on the whole front of the British armies and the fortress of Maubeuge was entered on Nov. 9, thus cutting the German line of communications.

On the early morning of Nov. 11 the third Canadian division captured Mons, the whole of the German defending force being killed or taken prisoner. At 11 a. m. on that day hostilities were suspended, but not before the enemy's resistance had been broken beyond the possibility of recovery.

In the three months of epic fighting the British armies in France had brought a sudden and dramatic end to the wearing-out battle of the past four years. Throughout all those years and amid the hopes and disappointments brought with them, the confidence of our troops in final victory never wavered. By the long road they trod with so much faith and with such devoted and self-sacrificing bravery we have arrived at victory and today they have their reward.

In the great series of victories won by the British forces between Aug. 8 and Nov. 11 the strongest and most vital parts of the enemy's front were attacked by the British and his best divisions fought to a standstill, this despite the fact that the attacking British troops were always numerically inferior to the German forces they defeated.

On the different battle fronts 187,000 prisoners and 2,850 guns were captured by our armies besides immense numbers of machine guns and trench mortars. These results were achieved by 69 fighting British divisions which, engaged and defeated 99 separate German divisions.

"Sir Douglas Haig concludes his dispatch by referring to all branches of the service by land, sea, and air, which have so contributed their share toward the great result achieved. He also pays a glowing tribute to the loyalty of the leaders of the various Allied forces to the ideals which they pursued in common and have so gloriously realized.

## REDUCE THE ACREAGE.

### Governor Cooper Issues Proclamation to Cotton Farmers.

Governor Cooper has issued a proclamation in which he designates Saturday, February 25, "Cotton Acreage Reduction Day." A cut of one-third of the average cotton crop is urged and a reduction in the quantity of fertilizer used.

The governor calls on the farmers to assemble in each county that day to discuss and agree upon plans looking to the holding of the present crop, to the protection of this cotton against damage incident to exposure to the weather, to the curtailment of the yield of the 1919 crop, and to sign the reduction pledges presented. "Unless this be done, we may expect poverty while others enjoy wealth," the governor warns. The full proclamation reads:

Whereas, an extraordinary situation exists in the cotton growing states, due to the low price cotton is bringing, which situation threatens dire financial distress and suffering to these states, because the existing market prices do not allow any margin of profit to the producers of cotton; and

Whereas, this situation is caused by the fact that the available supply of raw cotton is in excess of the demand, which condition will continue until the 1919 crop should be large and abundant; and

Whereas, the only plausible solution for the situation that presents itself is a reduction of the 1919 cotton crop; Now, therefore, I, Robert A. Cooper, governor of South Carolina, do declare Saturday, February 25, 1919, to be Cotton Acreage Reduction Day, and do call upon the cotton planters of South Carolina to pledge themselves upon that day to reduce the acreage ordinarily planted in cotton by one-third and to curtail the use of commercial fertilizers.

Cotton growers today have on hand more than one-third of the 1918 crop, which they cannot sell at prevailing prices without sustaining a great loss. It is a matter of common knowledge that the ratio of supply to demand determines price, and should the supply of raw cotton, already too large, be greatly augmented by a large crop in 1919, the result would be tremendously disastrous to the individuals of the states, and to the south at large.

The prudent merchant who is overstocked with a line of wares does not procure more of that line before he has sold what he has on hand, and has paid for. Southern cotton growers must operate on this same principle. Unity of purpose and concert of action will save us from calamity, and give to our just share of the prosperity which other sections of the nation are enjoying.

Therefore, as governor of South Carolina, and as one to whom the happiness of this state is of first import, I call upon the farmers to assemble in each county of the state on Cotton Acreage Reduction Day, to discuss and agree upon plans for the holding of present cotton on hand, for the proper protection of this cotton from depletions of weather, and for the curtailment of the 1919 crop so that it will not exceed two-thirds of the average yield. I call upon the farmers to sign the cotton reduction pledges which will be presented to them on that day, and to create a public sentiment which will not permit individuals to violate the reduction programme. Unless this be done we may expect poverty while others enjoy wealth.

During the world war our people responded nobly to every call of patriotism. This movement to prevent the financial collapse of the south should appeal to the patriotism of every citizen, and no one should desire a personal gain to the injury of the whole people. I, therefore, most earnestly urge that the bankers, merchants, business and professional men, co-operate with the farmer in this movement, and that the farmers co-operate with each other.

**RED FLAG MUST GO.**  
Congress Considering Strong Prohibitory Law.

The red flag must go. Legislation has been planned to prevent its use in parades or at public meetings. Circulation of literature advocating use of the red flag as a symbol of violence, or overthrow of government, will be forbidden.

The new bill in a modified form has been approved by the senate judiciary committee and a favorable report ordered. A sub-committee, comprising Senators Walsh, King and Brandegee, was instructed to prepare an amendment excluding from the mails and prohibiting the carrying in interstate commerce of the printed matter declared by the bill to be unlawful. It is reported to be added to the bill before it is reported.

The bill as approved by the judiciary committee, follows: "Section 1. That the display, or exhibition, at any meeting, gathering or parade, public or private, of any flag, banner, or emblem, symbolizing or intended by the person or persons displaying or exhibiting the same, to force a purpose to overthrow, by force or violence, or by physical injury to personal property, or by the general cessation of industry, the government of the United States or all governments, is hereby declared to be unlawful.

"Sec. 2. It shall be unlawful for any person to advocate or incite or to write or with intent to forward such purpose to print, publish, sell or distribute any document, book, circular, journal or other written or printed communication in or by which there is advocated or incited the overthrow by force or violence, or by physical injury to personal property, or by general cessation of industry, of the government of the United States or all governments.

"Sec. 3. That any person or persons convicted of violating any section of this act shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned for not more than five years or both."

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## "COHORT OF THE DAMNED"

### Remarkable Body of French Air Fighters

Where Men Became Too Wild to Regard Discipline, They Were Sent to a Special Organization, the Members of Which Were Allowed to be as Reckless as They Wanted to Be.

This picturesque name was given by the French to a group of their aviators formed of men whose minds had become somewhat unbalanced in their work. These fliers were totally unable to maintain discipline, but were brave to the point of recklessness, and instead of transferring them to another branch of the service, as was done by the British in similar cases, the French military authorities grouped them, isolated the group, and allowed its members to fight in their own way, with rather picturesque results, as narrated by Douglas Reid, in Popular Mechanics (Chicago, January). Now that the war is over, Mr. Reid tells us, it is proposed that this unique cohort shall be used to police the Algerian deserts. The peculiarities that led to its formation were first noticed among French fliers, he says, when French aviators, following the example of the Germans, began to fly in squadrons, or "circuses." He writes:

"As soon as the French began to send up these circuses they discovered trouble. A certain number of the airmen refused to fly in formation. Either from impatience or a mistaken sense of the dramatic, they would break away from the squadron, disregard the orders of the flight commander, and dart away erratically to do battle on their own account. Others, seized with a strange eccentricity, would persist in doing stunts in formation, causing accidents in collision, breaking up the carefully planned battle-line, and ruining the attack of the squadron. Punishment for these irresponsible fliers did not cure them. So the French air-service sent psychologists and trained nerve specialists to study the offenders.

"These specialists discovered that the insubordinates were slightly unbalanced mentally, that their daily labors under extreme nerve tension and constant excitement had carried them beyond complete sanity. Slavish and monotonous employment in desperate air-fights, the daily absorption in this strange new occupation, had combined with the peculiar effect of swiftly changing air pressure on their nerves, to make them abnormally reckless.

"The Machine" was too much for their strength of mind. "At approximately the same time the British Royal Flying Corps began to study its own men of this type. It followed the practice of discharging such 'unmanageables' from the service, sending them into the infantry or upon destroyers in the Grand Fleet. Its technical name for them was 'wild men.'

"The French, however, always a race with more understanding of genius and temperament than the Anglo-Saxon peoples, forebore to cashier these fliers. It realized that they were, man for man better than their German opponents; that individually they were the best of all in an air-duel, for their very disregard of rules and regulations, their very carelessness of death, made them terrible foes. So it organized a special corps, called 'The Cohort of the Damned,' filling it entirely with these untrustworthy pilots, placed it apart from all organized squadrons, and forbade its members to approach the regular branches of the service; isolated it entirely at a point near the front-line trenches; furnished it with the best equipment, and turned it free to fight at its own sweet will.

"Lonely and tragic, this band fought for the rest of the war, its members dying rapidly out of the air, but a constant flood of new fliers coming to take their place, as the nerves of pilots here and there among the disciplined squadrons gave way and made their own fliers fit only for this reckless company.

"The execution these half-mad men were accomplishing in German ranks was astounding, but no records could be kept of the number they shot down, on account of their lack of organization, and the irresponsibility of their testimony. Captured Germans, however, are known to have reported that their own fliers swore fervently and wrote their wills when ordered to occupy that part of the line opposite the 'Cohort.'

"The statement is made that France at one time had three of these strange groups, but there is definite information only upon the one and original band. This, on one occasion, had over one hundred members, but the figure is not of great value, since the lifetime of the flier was particularly short.

"In the last year of the war, too, the number which the government was forced to consign to this isolation grew less and less, due to the greater knowledge of fliers' air temperament obtained by the special corps of scientific men attached to the hangars. Psychologists learned how to treat the dementia when it made its first appearance, and it was found that frequent vacations spent far in the south of France, in complete rest, would, in the majority of cases, ally the nerve strain and keep the men tractable and efficient.

"The Cohort of the Damned" at present, it is understood, is to be kept in service after the mustering out of the other French forces. It is deemed impossible to return the men to civil life, as their hunger for excitement and craving for thrill would immediately cause them to be disturbers of the peace. Still 'wild men' peevish for their pursuits would have no avocation for their satisfaction, and they would be the criminals from sheer force of nerve strain, or at the least, they would be speed-crazy chauffeurs.

"Consequently the French army will send them across into Algeria to be used in policing the desert wastes, holding the native tribes in check. One of them, using an airplane to traverse the parched and dangerous deserts will be worth more than a regiment of cavalry, the branch that garrisoned the province before the war.

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Where Men Became Too Wild to Regard Discipline, They Were Sent to a Special Organization, the Members of Which Were Allowed to be as Reckless as They Wanted to Be.

This picturesque name was given by the French to a group of their aviators formed of men whose minds had become somewhat unbalanced in their work. These fliers were totally unable to maintain discipline, but were brave to the point of recklessness, and instead of transferring them to another branch of the service, as was done by the British in similar cases, the French military authorities grouped them, isolated the group, and allowed its members to fight in their own way, with rather picturesque results, as narrated by Douglas Reid, in Popular Mechanics (Chicago, January). Now that the war is over, Mr. Reid tells us, it is proposed that this unique cohort shall be used to police the Algerian deserts. The peculiarities that led to its formation were first noticed among French fliers, he says, when French aviators, following the example of the Germans, began to fly in squadrons, or "circuses." He writes:

"As soon as the French began to send up these circuses they discovered trouble. A certain number of the airmen refused to fly in formation. Either from impatience or a mistaken sense of the dramatic, they would break away from the squadron, disregard the orders of the flight commander, and dart away erratically to do battle on their own account. Others, seized with a strange eccentricity, would persist in doing stunts in formation, causing accidents in collision, breaking up the carefully planned battle-line, and ruining the attack of the squadron. Punishment for these irresponsible fliers did not cure them. So the French air-service sent psychologists and trained nerve specialists to study the offenders.

"These specialists discovered that the insubordinates were slightly unbalanced mentally, that their daily labors under extreme nerve tension and constant excitement had carried them beyond complete sanity. Slavish and monotonous employment in desperate air-fights, the daily absorption in this strange new occupation, had combined with the peculiar effect of swiftly changing air pressure on their nerves, to make them abnormally reckless.

"The Machine" was too much for their strength of mind. "At approximately the same time the British Royal Flying Corps began to study its own men of this type. It followed the practice of discharging such 'unmanageables' from the service, sending them into the infantry or upon destroyers in the Grand Fleet. Its technical name for them was 'wild men.'

"The French, however, always a race with more understanding of genius and temperament than the Anglo-Saxon peoples, forebore to cashier these fliers. It realized that they were, man for man better than their German opponents; that individually they were the best of all in an air-duel, for their very disregard of rules and regulations, their very carelessness of death, made them terrible foes. So it organized a special corps, called 'The Cohort of the Damned,' filling it entirely with these untrustworthy pilots, placed it apart from all organized squadrons, and forbade its members to approach the regular branches of the service; isolated it entirely at a point near the front-line trenches; furnished it with the best equipment, and turned it free to fight at its own sweet will.

"Lonely and tragic, this band fought for the rest of the war, its members dying rapidly out of the air, but a constant flood of new fliers coming to take their place, as the nerves of pilots here and there among the disciplined squadrons gave way and made their own fliers fit only for this reckless company.