

WEATHER.
North and South
Carolina: Rain to-
night; Thursday fair;
warmer in interior.

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Boost Wilmington--Trade at Home

THE FALL OF PETROGRAD IS IMMINENT

GERMAN TROOPS ARE IN A FEW HOURS OF CAPITAL OF RUSSIA

Population Said to Be Passively Awaiting Coming of the Invaders

NO INDICATIONS OF DEFENDING THE CITY

Bolshevik Government is Now Safely Housed in Moscow. Germans to Control Ports. Other War News

The fall of Petrograd is imminent. German troops, probably advancing along the Baltic coast from Narva and northeast from Pskov and Dvinsk are nearing the Russian metropolis, according to a dispatch received in London.

The population is said to be awaiting the coming of the invaders passively and there are no indications that the Bolshevik authorities will attempt to oppose the Germans before giving up the city.

Evacuation of Petrograd by the Bolshevik government departments was ordered last week and all are now in Moscow which the Lenin government has declared the Russian capital. When the order to move to Moscow was given, it was said that Petrograd probably would be declared a free port.

German possession of Petrograd would give the enemy control of the Gulf of Finland and all the important ports on its coasts except those in Finland, yet in the hands of the Finnish rebels, who are being attacked by the Germans and Finnish government forces. This would cut Moscow off from the Baltic sea. On the south the Germans have been reported within 350 miles of Moscow and they virtually control the Black Sea.

Although they can advance in the East against disorganized Russia, the Germans have not yet displayed any intention to carry out their heretofore offensive in the West. Except for most intense artillery bombardments on some sectors there has been no great activity on the lengthy Western front, trench raids having decreased in number.

On the British and French fronts, the German artillery has been most active on the sectors which were bombarded last week--Ypres, Armentieres, Cambrai, the Champagne, Verdun and the Vosges. The marked aerial fighting on the British front continues and British airmen have accounted for 28 more German machines, making a total of 54 in two days, 37 of which were destroyed.

Enemy aviators have been busy bombing enemy billets and airdromes and British airmen have dropped bombs on Mannheim, Germany.

On the Toul sectors the Americans have been repaying the Germans for their lavish use of gas shells, by throwing large numbers of the same shells in the enemy lines. The bombardment is reported to have had the effect desired by the American gunners. Towns and positions behind the German lines also have been subjected to American fire, while the enemy has replied with gas shells. East of Lunenburg the big guns also have been busy and in both the Lunenburg and Toul sectors, American gunners have demolished more German gas projectors.

Secretary of War Baker visited the American trenches Tuesday and when he was returning a large German shell struck and burst dangerously near the automobile in which he and his immediate party were riding. The enemy shell caused no damage.

RUSSIAN WARSHIPS ESCAPED GERMANS

Washington, March 20.—Russian warships at Odessa escaped to Sebastopol when the Germans took Odessa, according to a dispatch to the State Department today from American Consul Summers at Moscow. Recent press dispatches quoted Berlin authorities as declaring that 15 ships were taken when the city was occupied.

GERMAN SPY RING WAS ONLY A LOVE AFFAIR

Suspicious Correspondence Turns Out to Be Merely Love Letters

Washington, March 20.—Investigation has convinced the Department of Justice that the two women and the two men claiming French citizenship recently arrested in New York on suspicion of connection with the German spy ring can only be classed as undesirable citizens, rather than as spies. On this conclusion they will be deported.

Suspicious that the quartet were a band of spies were exploded when government agents found that a love affair between one of the women and a neutral diplomat in Washington, was the real basis of the activity of the four which had brought them under the observation of the Department of Justice. The full disclosure is withheld by the government out of consideration for the neutral diplomat and his associates.

The four under arrest in New York gave their names as Madame Despina Davidovitch Storch, Madame Elizabeth Charlotte Nix, Baron Henri De Belville and Count Robert De Clairmont.

It is now disclosed that what were thought to be mysterious code letters found in a safe deposit box of one of those under arrest, were love epistles, couched in gentle terms with hidden meanings which hard-headed investigators at first failed to recognize.

PITTS BOYS TESTIFY IN THEIR OWN DEFENSE

Garfield on the Stand Declares He Did Not Kill Dr. Hennessee

Morganton, N. C., March 20.—Taking the stand in his own behalf today, Garfield Pitts, elder of the two brothers charged with the murder of Dr. E. A. Hennessee, said that he was at the Glen Alpine station at the time the physician was shot to death. He stated that he had gone to the station with Aaron Wiseman but that he later went back to his store. He said that he heard shots. He declared that he had no knowledge of the doctor's absence from Glen Alpine. The witness denied that he or his brother, Aaron, had fired any shots or had had anything to do with the killing of the doctor.

Pitts admitted on cross examination that he and Hennessee had been enemies for years and that he would not admit having shot the deceased if he had been concerned in it. Telling the story of the fight five years ago when his brother was killed by Hennessee, he said that he fought in self defense at that time. Acknowledging that he had been in many fights, he said that he had always fought in self defense. Garfield probably will be on the stand the rest of the day and will be followed by his brother.

NARROW ESCAPE FOR BAKER.

With the American Army in France, Tuesday, March 19.—While Secretary Baker and his party were returning today from the American front line trenches a German 105-millimeter shell burst alongside the roadside within 40 yards of the automobile. The occupants of the car were not injured nor was the car damaged.

Secretary Baker remained for an hour and a half in a front line trench on a certain sector under a brisk enemy shell fire. He also visited an advanced listening post and talked with the officers and men.

GERMAN ADVANCE IS NO SURPRISE TO WASHINGTON

Officials All Along Believed Invasion of Russia Would Continue

MAY BE PREPARING FOR A PEACE OFFER

Germany's Motive May Be to Seize All Russia Then Offer to Let France Have Alsace-Lorraine

Washington, March 20.—The continued advance of the Germans into Russia, despite the peace treaties signed at Brest-Litovsk, is no surprise to American officials, who all along fully expected the German high command to prosecute its designs in Russia to the fullest extent, regardless of any considerations of good faith with the peace agreement.

No formal information as to the motives that impel the Germans to press their advantage to Petrograd and Moscow is available here, but it is known that officials regard the situation as filled with sinister possibilities.

There have been many recent hints at another peace effort by the Germans in the near future and if these predictions are fulfilled, it is pointed out, a vast section of Russia actually in German hands, and furnishing enormous though undeveloped minerals and other resources for employment in the German war program, might well serve as a foundation upon which to erect a compromise peace proposal.

It has been suggested that with those resources in her possession, Germany might offer even to restore Alsace-Lorraine to France, hoping thereby to be left in undisturbed possession of the Eastern front.

With such a proposal could go agreement to evacuate France and Belgium, the whole constituting an alluring prospect to the war-worn peoples of France and Great Britain if they did not look deeper and see the threat their statesmen point out in the sacrifice of Russia.

Given time to develop Russian resources, many officials here believe the Germans could well afford to surrender all they hold in the West with perfect assurance of both their economic and military future.

Some officials here even expect recruitment of the Russian peasantry into the German armies. Others, however, believe the Russian people are so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the revolution that no great movement of that sort is expected.

The rapid advance of the German forces through Russia, it is admitted here, is serving to cut off a great part of the Russian population from any effective means of counteracting German propaganda. Already all representatives of Allied thought and purpose have been forced to abandon the field or be captured by the advancing Germans.

GERMANS ARE STILL SEEKING PUBLICITY

Zurich, Switzerland, March 20.—Another of the reports of an impending German blow in the West appears in the Koelnische Zeitung. It says the German headquarters staff is organizing a series of conferences to be held at Cologne, Berlin, Karlsruhe, Hanover and Leipzig, with representatives of the leading newspapers, for the purpose of preparing the German press for operations on a great scale on the Western front.

AWARD THE FIRST OF NEW AMERICAN MILITARY CROSSES

Lieutenant and Two Sergeants Selected for Receiving the Honor

ALREADY RECEIVED FRENCH DECORATIONS

The Three Men Were Decorated Recently by Premier Clemenceau—Pershing Approves

With the American Army in France, Tuesday, March 19.—General Pershing, the American commander-in-chief, has approved the awarding of the first new American military crosses for extraordinary heroism. The recipients are Lieutenant John O. Green, Sergeant William Norton, and Sergeant Patrick Walsh.

The crosses were awarded for "extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy."

Lieutenant Green probably will stand on the records as the first to receive the honor, for his name is first on the list of three approved by the commander-in-chief. The exploits of these men are described by the general commanding their division as follows:

"I recommend that the Distinguished Service Cross be awarded to the officer and men named hereafter who distinguished themselves by acts of extraordinary heroism.

"Lieutenant Green, while in a dugout having been wounded by an enemy hand grenade, was summoned to surrender. He refused to do so. Returning the fire of the enemy, he wounded one and pursued the hostile party.

"Sergeant Norton, finding himself in a dugout surrounded by the enemy into which a grenade had just been thrown, refused to surrender and made a bold dash outside, killing one of his assailants. By so doing he saved the company's logbook.

"Sergeant Walsh followed his company commander to the first lines in spite of a severe barrage. The captain being killed, he assumed command of the group and attacked a superior force of the enemy, inflicting severe losses upon them. Though of advanced age, he refused to leave the front."

To these recommendations, General Pershing appended the following: "The commander-in-chief approves the recommendations for awards of distinguished service crosses. They are not on hand at present, but will be forwarded when received and will be presented by you in the names of the commander-in-chief with suitable ceremony."

Lieutenant Green and Sergeants Norton and Walsh all have received the French war cross, Norton and Walsh being decorated personally by Premier Clemenceau on March 3. Lieutenant Green, an artillery officer, was wounded by shell fire early in March. Sergeant Norton, a veteran in service, formerly resided in Arkansas. He was decorated by Premier Clemenceau for his act in killing a German lieutenant and two German soldiers. He was challenged by the lieutenant to leave his dugout and led out his men fighting.

Sergeant Walsh, formerly of Chicago, also is a Regular Army veteran. His French decoration was received for heroism in the Toul sector. He took command of a detachment in front of the American wire entanglements when his captain was killed and continued the fight. Sergeant Walsh was selected by General Pershing to act as orderly to Secretary of War Baker during his visit to the American army in France.

Kores Goes to Louisville. Louisville, Ky., March 20.—Arthur Kores, third baseman, has been secured by the Louisville American Association Club from Nashville of the Southern Association, according to an announcement here today.

Another Aviator Killed. San Antonio, Texas, March 20.—First Lieutenant Walter J. Johnson, 22 years old, of Belleville, Ill., was instantly killed today when the airplane in which he was flying, fell 1,500 feet at Kelly Field.

MOSCOW GIVING THE BOLSHEVIKI MUCH CONCERN

German Advance Alarms the Newly Designated Russian Capital

GOVERNMENT MAY AGAIN BE MOVED

While No Effort is Being Made to Defend Petrograd, Situation of Moscow Causes Uneasiness

Russian advices indicate that the Bolsheviks, while preparing to give up Petrograd without a struggle, are seriously concerned over Moscow, fearing they may have to evacuate the ancient capital as well as the more modern one. The movements of Teutonic troops eastward is considered so menacing as to threaten the isolation of Moscow where the Bolshevik government has been established, and talk is heard of moving the government anew, possibly to Nizhni Novgorod, or even to Saratoff, more than 400 miles to the southeast.

Meanwhile the advices also seem to indicate that the Bolsheviks are leaning more strongly toward the Entente and particularly upon America for support. Their foreign minister has declared that the relations of Russia with the Entente are considered to be unchanged and other of their leaders are taking pains to deny that the Bolsheviks have been arming German prisoners in Siberia or elsewhere and are reported as welcoming the reported American intention to investigate this question in Siberia.

First awards of the new American military cross for meritorious service by American soldiers are announced by General Pershing. The men honored are a lieutenant and two sergeants who receive the decoration for extraordinary heroism in action.

The Germans seem to have found a new method of inflicting suffering in warfare by the use of rubber balls, a foot and a half in diameter, containing liquid mustard gas, dropped by airplanes. Several such were projected from the air upon American troops in the sector northwest of Toul by German machines Monday night and Tuesday morning. No serious effects resulted.

NO CONSISTORY DURING THE WAR

Rome, March 20.—"There will be no consistory until the war is over," Pope Benedict said today upon hearing that the report had been published that he intended to call a consistory shortly.

The last consistory was held since the war began, but before Italy's participation in the conflict, and at a time when the election of a German cardinal was possible.

Now, however, despite the efforts of the Italian government to carry out the spirit as well as the letter of the law, guaranteeing the papal status, it is considered that the holding of a consistory might prove an embarrassment, especially as the pontiff feels that he must announce in the next consistory the creation of two cardinals, one of whom is a German and the other an Austrian.

Neither of these could very well come to Rome to receive the red hat nor would it be an easy matter to send them the insignia by papal delegates.

UPRISING REPORTED FROM BELUCHISTAN

London, March 20.—Uprisings on the part of natives in Beluchistan recently resulted in fighting in which many casualties were inflicted, the India office announces. The attackers attacked British posts and were repulsed completely. Punitive measures are being undertaken.

ON SLOW MAN GASED.

Ottawa, Ont., March 20.—P. G. Grant, of Sneads Ferry, N. C., serving with the Canadian overseas forces, has been gassed, according to today's casualty list.

COTTON PRODUCED LAST SEASON WAS 11,285,999 BALES

Last Report Shows an Excess of the Estimate of December

NEARLY AS LARGE AS THE CROP OF 1916

Production the Previous Year Was 11,449,930 Bales. October Frost Reduced Million Bales

Washington, March 20.—Cotton production from last season's crop was 11,285,999 equivalent 500-pound bales, exclusive of lint, the Census Bureau today announced in its final report of the season's ginnings. Lint produced to March 1 amounted to \$29,019 equivalent 500-pound bales.

In December the Department of Agriculture estimated the production at 10,949,000 equivalent 500-pound bales. Early indications were that a crop of more than 12,000,000 bales would be produced, but a heavy killing frost about the middle of October resulted in damage estimated to have reduced the crop by a million bales.

Production of the 1916 season was 11,449,930 equivalent 500-pound bales, and for the 1915 season 11,191,820 bales.

Including in last season's figures are 158,943 bales which ginneries estimated would be turned out after the March canvass. Round bales included are 159,069, compared with 192,339 for 1916 and 111,716 for 1915. Sea Island included are 92,501 bales, compared with 117,559 for 1916 and 91,844 for 1915.

The average gross weight of bale for the crop, counting round as half bales and excluding lint, is 502.2 pounds compared with 503.8 for 1916 and 505.6 for 1915.

The number of ginneries operated for the 1917 crop was 20,304, compared with 21,824 for 1916.

Ginnings by States are:

Alabama	617,279	Arizona	20,899
Arkansas	973,399	California	55,705
Florida	37,820	Georgia	1,881,503
Louisiana	638,388	Mississippi	903,237
Missouri	60,668	North Carolina	616,875
Oklahoma	957,676	South Carolina	1,235,735
Tennessee	239,677	Texas	3,124,185
Virginia	18,583	All other States	4,642

Ginnings of Sea Islands by States: Florida, 37,600; Georgia, 47,868; and South Carolina, 7,813.

DUTCH CONDITIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE

Reply to the United States Was Put on the Cables Today

Washington, March 20.—Holland's reply in the shipping negotiations is on the cables, the government was advised today, and is expected to arrive before night.

Unacceptable Conditions. London, March 20.—The conditions laid down by the Dutch foreign minister for the acceptance of the demands of the associated governments as regards the taking over of Dutch shipping are not likely to be acceptable to those governments, according to a Reuter dispatch from The Hague, filed yesterday. It adds, however, that a concession may be made to the extent that the arming of Dutch vessels may not be insisted upon.

DENIED OWNERSHIP.

Property Recovered by Police Not Aken from Gribbin Home.

The property recovered from Moses Sharpless and a negro named Johnson by Officer Coleman, of the plain clothes squad, and believed to have been a part of that removed from the closed residence of Rev. and Mrs. P. E. Gribbin, after viewing the various articles recovered, denying ownership. The police are still of the opinion that the property was stolen and Johnson and Sharpless are being held.

AMERICANS RAIN GAS SHELLS ON GERMAN WORKS

Four Different and Effective Attacks Launched on Enemy

PATROLS SEEK OUT PATROLS OF ENEMY

Artillery Duels Are Frequent on the American Sector. Considerable Damage to the Germans

With the American Army in France, Tuesday, March 19.—American artillery on the Toul front has heavily attacked the Germans with gas shells during the past day or so, it is now permitted to announce. Four different attacks were launched and from the manner in which the enemy was silenced it is evident that they had the desired effect.

During one period when the gas shells were flying over the enemy lines last night a German airplane with a red tail light appeared over the American lines and dropped a red rocket, for what purpose it is not known. However shrapnel from American anti-aircraft batteries burst so near the German immediately afterward that he was forced to fly for his own lines in a hurry.

Last night the enemy observation towers and position on Montsec were shelled heavily and a heavy fire was directed against the enemy lines this morning.

At noon today the enemy opened a lively fire from one of the American positions with 37-millimeter guns from the cemetery at Richcourt. The American guns of the same calibre came into action and after they had fired 50 shells the Germans ran from the position and took their guns with them. The American guns then shelled the village of Lahayville, where two heavy explosions, apparently of munition stores, were caused.

The German artillery directed most of its attention to dropping a few shells into one or two towns within the American lines and shelling a cross roads known as Death's Corner during the day and night.

Last night American patrols entered the German front lines at two points, but did not see a single enemy soldier, although they hunted for some time. Another patrol remained in the enemy wire entanglements all night hoping to ambush an expected enemy party, but it did not appear. A third patrol party was discovered by the Germans who hurled hand grenades and forced the Americans to withdraw. Still another established contact with an enemy patrol and a few shots were exchanged. The Americans came through unscathed, but it is not known what happened to the Germans.

Many airplanes were up until it began to rain at noon. One airplane from the rear of the American line drove off two Bochs machines after a thrilling battle in and out of the clouds. Another airplane was engaged against a German when a second German joined in the fight. A second friendly airman came up to assist, but it was too late, for the airplane the Americans hoped would be victorious fell to the ground within the enemy lines.

On the sector east of Lunenburg the artillery continued active and a few American patrols have reached the enemy line. One party encountered an enemy patrol and forced the Germans to withdraw after a sharp skirmish.

A certain Irish regiment was bombarded heavily today with big shells. Reports from both the Lunenburg and Toul sectors say that more German gas projectile batteries have been discovered and blown to bits by the American gunners.

SENATOR BROUSSARD IS CRITICALLY ILL

New Iberia, La., March 20.—United States Senator Robert F. Broussard was reported critically ill at his home here today. Two specialists from New Orleans and local physicians early this week performed an operation on Senator Broussard for infusion of blood, which they said was successful, but other complications developed bringing on a serious condition, according to the physicians. Senator Broussard is 54 years old.