

Huns Launch a Tempest of Fire on British Front

TERRIFIC STORM OF ARTILLERY FIRE BURSTS OVER ALLIES LINE

LAUNCHING OF BATTLE YESTERDAY MAY MEAN GREATEST OF THE WAR

Its Results May Affect Destinies of Millions
HAIG'S MEN MEET SHOCK
Shells of Large and Small Caliber Rained Upon the British Lines
LASTED FOR FIVE HOURS

Then the German Infantry Stormed Out for the First Great Assault—Some Lightly Held Positions of British Line Withdrawn.

Exactly 25 months ago the Germans began the historic battle of Verdun, the thunder of their guns deepened into a tempest of fire along the British front in northern France and they began what may be the greatest battle of the war, a struggle which may lead to results which will shape the destinies of millions of people over coming centuries. The attack was made on a scale hitherto unknown during this war of major offensives. It was over a front of 50 miles. Official reports are very brief, but correspondents at the scene tell of the terrific storm of artillery fire that burst over the lines held by Field Marshal Haig's men.

The bombardment began at 5 o'clock Thursday morning, just before the early spring dawn was breaking over eastern France. Shells of large and small calibers were rained upon the lines held by the British for about five hours. Then German infantry stormed out to make the first great assault. The Germans, favored by the wind, moved forward under cover of a pall of smoke, which hid the assaulting columns from the eyes of the British holding the front lines.

No Need for Alarm.
Describing the battle, Andrew Botsar Law informed the house of commons that lightly held portions of the British line had been withdrawn, but said that there was no need for alarm on the part of the country. The Associated Press correspondent at the British front, reports that an attack there had been expected and that great preparations had been made to meet it. The Berlin official report says that the Germans have penetrated into some British positions.

Nor were the German efforts concentrated on the front held by the British. Early Thursday morning the Germans assaulted the French lines near the village of Ornes, to the northeast of Verdun, and claim to have penetrated a considerable distance. Near Rheims, too, the French were subjected to an assault, but here the artillery bore the brunt of the fighting.

The attacks at Verdun and Rheims, however, may be considered for the time being, as mere diversions to the principal attack, which has been loosed against the British. They would serve to keep French forces at Verdun and Rheims from being transferred to the British.

DIVISION OF OFFICES IN FORSYTH IS LIKELY

Democrats and Republicans Held Conferences in Effort to Eliminate Political Contests.

Winston-Salem, March 21.—For the purpose of avoiding a strenuous political campaign in Forsyth this fall, committees from the Democratic and Republican county executive committees have held two or more conferences and another one is to be held Saturday, it was learned tonight. The Republicans have asked for equal division of offices, but in view of the substantial Democratic majorities in Forsyth the last two elections this proposition was promptly turned down. It is learned that the Democrats have offered to accede one county commissioner and representative in the legislature to the opposing party. This appears to be agreeable to some of the G. O. P. leaders, while others oppose it. A preliminary hearing in the double murder case, the killing of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Hester, just east of this city, two weeks ago, will be held here tomorrow before a magistrate. Counsel for the defense have waived the presence of the defendant, Napoleon Spencer, the young negro in jail in another county, who stands charged with the crime.

Semi-Official Negotiations Are On Foot Between Germany and Entente For Peace?

London, March 21.—Semi-official negotiations are on foot between Germany and the entente in which Germany is displaying a strong inclination for peace, the Catholic newspaper Nieuwblad Van Hetzeuden says it was learned, the Central News correspondent at Amsterdam reports. This Amsterdam newspaper is quoted as adding that its information is that if no basis for official negotiations was reached by March 27, the German offensive in the west would be begun. According to reports from Petrograd, dated Wednesday, a rumor is current at Moscow that Germany has offered important concessions to the allies conditioned upon the recognition of the Brest-Litovsk treaty of peace.

MUCH HERALDED GRAND OFFENSIVE IS LAUNCHED

Attack on the Gauche Wood Preceded by Intensive Bombardment

BRITISH BOMBARD OSTEND

British Army Headquarters in France, March 21.—(Afternoon.)—By Associated Press.—The Germans this forenoon launched a heavy attack against the British lines over a wide front in and near the Cambrai sector, and the assault bears all the earmarks of being the beginning of the enemy's much-heralded grand offensive. Hard fighting is proceeding from a point north of Lagnicourt southward to Gauche wood, just below Gouzeaucourt. The attack was preceded by a heavy bombardment from guns of all calibers, and the duel between the opposing heavy batteries has been rooking the countryside for hours. The Germans have employed gas shells freely, and a constant stream of high velocity shells has been breaking with frightful concussion far back of the British lines. The bombardment began in earnest at 5 o'clock this morning, and about five hours later the enemy forces hurled themselves on the British front line trenches north of Lagnicourt and Louvemal, the latter place lying due west of Bourisies. At the same time other German forces advanced behind a smoke barrage along the ridge running northward from Gouzeaucourt. It may be said that the attack in this region was by no means unexpected by the British and that they had made great preparations to meet the onslaught. The two vast forces have been locked in a bitter struggle over this wide front for hours. The bombardment was of a most terrific nature, and finally the infantry drove forward against numerous points in the Cambrai sector. The preliminary bombardment had extended from a point below St. Quentin, north to the river Scarpe, and at last reports sanguinary fighting was in progress as far south as the region of Hargicourt and as far north as Bullecourt. The early stages of the battle would seem to indicate that the enemy was trying to drive a wedge on both sides of the Cambrai salient and pinch it off. A keen struggle has been proceeding in the neighborhood of Bullecourt and Lagnicourt and south of the salient near Hargicourt and Rousoy. The British had been looking for this attack today. Not only have prisoners declared that yesterday or today would mark the beginning of the offensive on the front, but there were abundant signs of an enemy smash against this sector, which was the scene of the last great battle in the British theater. That the Germans were as thoroughly prepared as possible, was well known and as a consequence the British had taken extensive steps to meet the blow.

GERMANS LAUNCH INFANTRY ATTACK ON A BIG SCALE

London, March 21.—Following a heavy bombardment, the Germans launched an infantry attack on a big scale on the front north of Lagnicourt, to Gauche wood. Reuter's correspondent at British headquarters telegraphs this afternoon. "Our counter measures have not yet developed," the correspondent adds. "Therefore, it is difficult to define the position. Apparently the enemy's purpose has been to launch converging attacks upon the two flanks of the Fiesquiers salient, in the hope of cutting it off. There are unconfirmed rumors that the enemy has employed tanks."

BY EMPLOYING MASSES OF TROOPS HUNS MAKE GAINS

London, March 21.—By employing masses of troops supported by a great weight of artillery, the Germans appear to have penetrated the British front line at certain points between the Scarpe and Venduile, says Reuter's Limited, correspondent at British headquarters, telegraphing this evening.

OSTEND WAS BOMBARDED BY BRITISH MONITORS THURSDAY

London, March 21.—Ostend was bombarded by British monitors today and Heligoland was attacked by seaplanes, according to the official announcement tonight.

TRIAL OF PITTS BOYS IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE

Able Counsel Arguing the Evidence to the Burke County Jury

A VERDICT BY SATURDAY

Morganton, March 21.—With the speech of J. F. Spainhour for the defense and of Solicitor Huffman, for the state, and the charge of Judge Cline yet to be made, the jury sitting on the trial of Garfield and Aaron Pitts, charged with the murder of Dr. E. A. Hennessee, will not get the case before tomorrow noon. The jury listened today to the arguments of five able attorneys. No time limit was put on the speeches and they averaged an hour and a half each. Mose Harshaw, of Lenoir, began the argument for the state at the opening of court this morning. Mr. Harshaw is a lawyer of the old school and reviewed the evidence in a forceful and characteristic manner. One of the strongest pleas made for the prisoners at the bar of the Burke county court was that of Frank A. Linney, of Boone, formerly Republican candidate for governor, who followed Mr. Harshaw with an argument of the innocence of Garfield and Aaron Pitts and an appeal for their acquittal. Mr. Linney is a logician of convincing power and an orator of ability. Ex-Lieut. Gov. W. C. Newland, for the state, again reviewed in a masterful manner the evidence to the jury explaining it as interpreted by the prosecution as in his opinion fixing the guilt for the murder of Dr. Hennessee unmistakably upon the Pitts brothers.

Following Mr. Newland the plea for the defendants was taken up by L. T. Avery, of the local bar, in a splendid effort to convince the jury that the circumstantial evidence in the case by no means showed the guilt of Garfield and Aaron Pitts. S. J. Irvin, of Morganton, made the last speech of the day, doing so with force and favor making a special point of what punishment in this case meant toward the enforcement of law and order in Burke county. The state's attorneys have been basing their argument mainly upon the facts of the known enmity which existed between the Pitts and Hennessee families; upon the evidence of Sam Byrd, Flaggman Laughter and Miss Eller Trexler, that two men were seen to run to the Pitts' store immediately after the shooting; upon Walter Patton's testimony as to seeing Garfield Pitts in the store with a bright pistol in his hand when he ran to the store after being told that men who did the shooting had run in that direction; and upon Sam Byrd's statement also that he was willing to swear positively as to the identity of Garfield Pitts as the man who passed nearest him and that he had no doubt whatever, but that the two men who ran after he saw Dr. Hennessee shot down by them were Garfield and Aaron Pitts.

On the other hand the defense has made a splendid point of the fact that Sam Byrd did not tell before the coroner's jury and to others with whom he talked that he thought the men were the Pitts brothers, but that he had said it was so dark he could not tell who did the shooting. J. M. Ramsey's evidence is featured in an argument that it might have been one man of different description from the defendants. The defendants' attorneys contend that whoever might have been the assassin the blame would have been put on the Pitts. The general opinion now is that a verdict will hardly be returned before Saturday.

ALL PASSENGERS ON BOARD THE STEAMER AMAZON SAVED

Buenos Aires, March 21.—Advices received here today seem to confirm the reports current yesterday that the Royal Mail Steam Packet company steamer, Amazon, a 10,000-ton vessel, had been torpedoed. The only notice received from the London office of the company, was one stating that the sailing of the Amazon for this side of the Atlantic from Liverpool had been cancelled. A cable message from a passenger, however, says that all on board had been saved but that the cargo was lost.

STATEMENT OF GEDDES IS MADE TO APPEASE A DEMAND FOR FACTS

British Tonnage Production Was Far Too Low in January

LABOR TROUBLES CAUSE

Rate of Destruction of Submarines Almost Equal to Their Production by Enemy

EXACT TRUTH IS WANTED

Dutch Tonnage Will Tide Allies Over Spring Months; After That a Big Decrease in the Effectiveness of the U-Boats Is Anticipated.

Daily News Bureau and Telegraph Office The Riggs Building (By Leased Wire) (By DAVID LAWRENCE)

Washington, March 21.—Explanations made by Sir Eric Geddes, first lord of the British admiralty, as to the status of allied tonnage losses brought very little satisfaction here, for what is mostly desired now is some data on the exact amount of shipbuilding being done in British yards. From the beginning the tendency has been to expect America's tremendous resources would save the situation, but while temporary expedients are being resorted to, such as the seizure of the Dutch ships and the requisitioning of private vessels right and left, together with a curtailment of imports and exports of non-essentials, the outstanding fact is that during the month of January the production in England was far below what it should have been.

Labor troubles are largely responsible and although Washington is far away from London such men as are informed about events abroad do not feel that sufficiently stern measures are being adopted to deal with the situation. By constantly depending upon America, the urgency of the tonnage situation is not brought home to the workers abroad. Bases of Optimism. There are certain facts, however, which permit of an optimistic view of the future though unfortunately they can not be taken as a basis for complete confidence because the tactics of the enemy are constantly changing. But such as they are, they afford comfort in a situation in which obviously the whole success of our ocean transportation program depends.

In the first place, it can be stated definitely that the rate of destruction of submarines is almost equal to the production of under-sea craft. The British very properly suppress the number of German submarines sunk because a great many are lost through accidental causes. German crews go out and never return, and the morale of those being enlisted for submarine service has been steadily weakened by the British policy. But from such statistics as are available it is true that irrespective of the losses by accident, the American and British destroyer fleets are steadily bagging the U-boats.

To beat the submarines which are continuing their depredations on allied shipping, there must, nevertheless, be an upward curve in production. In America the program is moving along fairly well with the prospect of continued improvement in the spring and summer. But while the United States has been going forward, Great Britain has been going backward. Shipbuilders in England are outspokenly critical in their comment on the British government's labor policy, but this is of course a matter in which no official on this side of the water would care to be quoted.

May Call For Explicit Statement.

Yet if the tonnage losses as announced by Sir Eric Geddes continue without a marked increase in new shipping, the necessity for a frank statement of just what America is doing will be developed, and it will command a similarly explicit set of figures from the British government. The speech of Sir Eric Geddes had to be made to appease a general demand for facts. Some inkling of the widespread confusion about tonnage losses and dissatisfaction with the British shipbuilding program had reached here before the first lord of the admiralty came out in the open with figures. Fear that the enemy might get comfort out of delays and handicaps has been responsible for the policy of secrecy, but the time has approached when the maximum effort will be obtained only by a statement of the truth. Not infrequently optimistic surveys of the American shipbuilding program are used to refute the idea of any crisis. Yet, as viewed from Washington, there should not be any reliance on any one factor, but a general drive on all sides to produce tonnage and regardless of what another nation may be doing. Unquestionably the addition of Dutch tonnage is going to tide the allies over for the spring months when, indeed, they expect to have anti-submarine devices working so well that heavy gains in tonnage will result through an appreciable diminution in the effectiveness of the U-boat. So while there is really no special cause for gloom either from the facts disclosed by Sir Eric Geddes or the facts available here, nevertheless it proves that by greater and more consistent efforts at production will the final victory over the submarine be accomplished.

Late Dr. E. A. Hennessee For Whose Murder Garfield and Aaron Pitts Are Now Being Tried



HEGE SLAYER OF DEADERICK WILL PLEAD UNWRITTEN LAW

Hege, in Jail at Lexington, Admits That He Shot to Kill—E. E. Raper, Counsel For Hege, Says "It's the Old, Old Story, When a Married Man Has Improper Relations With Another Man's Wife He Does So at His Peril."

(By C. M. WAYNICK.)
Lexington, March 21.—J. Graham Hege will plead the "unwritten law" plus when he faces a jury for the killing of J. Franklin Deaderick. What the "plus" will be remains to be revealed when the defense opens its case. Chief of Hege's counsel wouldn't say what it is to be and Hege, at the jail, gave little intimation that there would be much else to his defense than the plea that he shot in resentment of the invasion of his home.

There is no shadow of question about the killing and no coroner's inquest was necessary. The body of "Frank" Deaderick remains in the little home, but not awaiting the sitting of a jury. It will be buried when the family assembles, but where was not definitely settled. Perhaps in Arkansas, the home state of Mrs. Deaderick. Hege admits that he fired the full round of the revolver and he said today that he shot "to kill." He was asked the question specifically, after he had stated that he intended to remain silent about the circumstances immediately preceding the shot.

He Shot to Kill.

"Mr. Hege, when you shot Mr. Deaderick did you fire with intention to kill," he was asked. The prisoner hesitated momentarily. "Yes," he replied, "he was my best friend, but there was nothing else to do." "I will tell everything when the time comes," he said to the representative of the Daily News, facing him through the bars. "I have nothing to conceal. My counsel advised me to say nothing about the killing itself but that will all come out on the day of the trial, and I feel absolutely confident that the story I will tell will free me."

Two Others Killed in Accident in France and Nine Died of Disease

Washington, March 21.—Six enlisted men killed in action and 11 missing, are reported in today's casualty list, issued by the war department. Two men were killed in accident; nine died of disease, two were severely wounded in action and 13 slightly wounded.

FIFTEEN ARE WOUNDED

Killed in action—Stanley Dobley, Ernest B. Fulkerson, Robert H. Hogg, William J. McKay, Lloyd L. Morrill, William B. Shepard. Died of accident—Private William J. Hayes and Burrell W. Wade. Died of disease—Corporal George E. Eklund, pneumonia; Privates Sidney J. Anderson, meningitis; Fay Briner, appendicitis; Wm. M. Dubry, pneumonia; Paul J. Farnum, pneumonia; Erwin A. McArthur, meningitis; Daniel E. McCarthy, embolism; Francis Sullivan, agna iodovici; and Joseph Moran, pneumonia. Missing in action—Sergeant John A. Sheehan; Privates Harry E. Birney, Eugene F. Curtis, Albert M. Kennedy, Grover C. Leithusser, William F. Marvin, James Moran, Dennis E. O'Connor, William F. O'Connor, Joseph Reid, Carl Schultz. Wounded severely—Privates Orla O. Arley and Albert R. Tibbetts. Wounded slightly—Corporals Carl G. Dyvad and Alex. Smeltzer; Privates John Bowler, Stephen Derrig, James Dougherty, Robert W. Gregg, Vernon Johnson, Frederick P. King, Michael Molelek, Roy Montgomery Ogle, Stephen J. Navin, Eugene J. Swenshard and Atticus H. Thomas.

Unwritten Law.

There is no mystery here as to what will be the theory of the defense. It is conceded generally that Hege's counsel will undertake to show that justified jealousy was the cause, that an irreparable wrong to the honor of the prisoner was his motive for shooting the man he described as his best friend. Shrewd, clear-witted, combative, slight E. E. Raper is at present chief of counsel for Hege. "It is the old, old story," said he. "When a married man—or single man for that matter, has improper relations with another man's wife, he does so at his peril."

MAJ. GEO. L. PETERSON GIVEN HIS FREEDOM BY JURY IN WAKE COUNTY

Acquittal Was Popular Surprise in Raleigh

JURY WAS OUT 30 MINUTES

Major Peterson Was Charged With Embezzling \$7,600; Admitted the Shortage

HE HAD PAID IT BACK

Peterson Will Return Immediately to Camp Sevier Where He Is in the Federal Service—Small to Have Opposition.

Raleigh, March 21.—Major George L. Peterson today confounded his foes with his new freedom and in 30 minutes after the jury took a case which the populace thought doubtful against him, he was adjudged worthy of neither death nor bonds. It was one of the greatest popular surprises that ever came to Raleigh. The jurors rejected by the defense had with uniform and significant expression declared their belief that he was guilty of the \$7,600 embezzlement alleged against him in the bill of indictment. There must have been 20 ruled out of the jury for their positive opinions. Yet 10 of the 12 today voted for immediate acquittal and the remaining two had been converted almost before another ballot was taken.

The jury was manifestly a Peterson body throughout the trial. It could be seen that the state had not impressed it with the gravity of the offense charged against Peterson nor had the state made a good showing as to intent in the alleged defalcation. The common judgment was that the state had put on too much testimony. It might have ended its case with the evidence of Judge R. H. Sykes who declared that Major Peterson admitted working the adding machine to cover up alleged discrepancies, thus allowing the state to argue that the falsification of a record was prima facie evidence of the felonious intent.

Due to Cross Examination. The circumstance that must have worked most in behalf of Major Peterson was the defense's skillful cross-examination of Adjutant General Young in which the business methods of the adjutant general's office got an airing that will hardly be forgotten soon. In that grill the defense brought out the fact that the national guard had been quarantined with state funds Governor Craig when the chief executive was at Morehead; that \$300 of the fund had been expended in motoring on the launches down there, and the suggestion that the governor and some of his staff went to the football game in Richmond at state expense was deftly thrown into the box though the actual truth about it was not brought out. The defense developed the fact that officers of the national guard including General Young had ridden across the country with their families and that the state had paid these fares without reimbursement to date. This method of gathering detail must have pleased the jury that wasn't so much interested in whether the bull-dozing of the adding machine was done to cover up actual shortages through bad stewardship or shortage due to baby business methods in all departments. The jury had no difficulty in reaching an agreement.

Henry Grady representing Major Peterson made a fierce attack on General Young and declared that the governor should make General Young resign. W. B. Jones (closing for the defense today burst often into the basis of the trouble, as it appeared to the lawyer. "The trouble is," shouted Jones, "that Major Peterson is a good man."

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MR. MADDOO WILL ALSO SPEAK IN WILMINGTON

Secretary of Treasury Will Speak in Raleigh on April 9 and Leave at Once For Wilmington.

Washington, March 21.—At the eleventh hour William Gibbs McAdoo, secretary of the treasury, decided today that he would change his itinerary and make two speeches in North Carolina instead of one. On the morning of April 9 Mr. McAdoo will make an address at Raleigh. He will leave the capital city about noon for Wilmington, reaching the North Carolina port town about 7 o'clock. The original itinerary of Mr. McAdoo called for only one speech in North Carolina. Important developments of Wilmington as a port of entry, however, made it necessary for him to make an additional stop in the old North State. It is conceded by all that Wilmington will be made a port of entry. For this reason Mr. McAdoo will stop at Wilmington and make a speech on April 9 and at the same time investigate the facilities of Wilmington as a port of entry.