

WEATHER FORECAST  
North Carolina—Fair, not quite so cold tonight; snow in west portion; heavy snow or rain.  
South Carolina—Probably snow or sleet tonight and Wednesday; quite so cold.

# THE WILMINGTON DISPATCH

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WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, TUESDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 11, 1917

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## GERMANS MASSING REINFORCEMENTS ON WESTERN LINE

### Evidently Preparing to Strike a Heavy Blow Against Allied Positions

### INFANTRY FIGHTING HALTS IN ITALY

### Austro-German Attempts to Break Through Again Fails—Bolsheviks Having Trouble Coping With the Revolution

German reinforcements have been massed in France, it is believed in the west, but where the expected blow will be set to be disclosed. The infantry is active on the Western front, but the most especially that of the British is very active in various places.

From the German front the Germans are heavily posted in the positions of Cambrai and east and west of Ypres, the two sectors of the front. The heavy fighting in the last few months. From the Swiss border, Paris and the enemy artillery activity on the Oise and the Aisne, in the northeast of Verdun and in the Argonne. The British and American are replying in kind from the German positions.

The heavy German artillery fire may mean that the Germans are attempting to break through at one point and draw the attention of the Russian front. The Russian front is a strong effort on a little quiet sector. Strong local attacks on the right bank of the Meuse, north of Verdun, have been reported. The French have taken prisoners.

Monday, Litzing has stopped movement of at least, on the Italian front, from Asiago to the Piave river. The Austro-German effort to break through between the Piave and the Brenta has failed with losses. The enemy attempts to break through between the Piave and the Brenta have failed. The Austro-German effort to break through between the Piave and the Brenta have failed.

### ARMY WAS SUCCESSFULLY LIFTED

### State Health Commission Orders

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—An absolute ban on the use of the State Board of Health. In a very short time the State Board of Health. In a very short time the State Board of Health. In a very short time the State Board of Health.

## THIRTEEN NEGRO SOLDIERS WERE HANGED TODAY

### Were Convicted of Complicity in Houston Riot and Mutiny

### LIFE SENTENCE FOR FORTY-ONE OTHERS

### Execution Carried Out This Morning by Soldiers and Was Kept Secret Until It Was All Over

(By Associated Press.)  
San Antonio, Texas, Dec. 11.—Thirteen of the negroes of the 24th infantry in the riot and mutiny at Houston in the riot and mutiny at Houston on August 23 were hanged on the military reservation at Fort Sam Houston at 7:17 o'clock this morning. Announcement of the carrying out of the sentence was made at headquarters of the Southern Department at 9 a. m. Only army officers and Sheriff John Tobin, of Baxter county, were present when the sentence was executed by soldiers from the post. No newspaper men or civilian spectators were allowed, the time and place of execution having been kept a secret.

Of the 63 men tried by the same court martial, 41 were sentenced to life imprisonment. One man was sentenced to dishonorable discharge from the army, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and to be confined at hard labor for two and a half years. Three were sentenced to be dishonorably discharged from the army, forfeit all pay and allowances and be confined at hard labor for two years. Five were acquitted.

The negro soldiers who paid the death penalty were: Sergeant William C. Nesbitt, Corporal Larnon J. Brown, James Wheatley, Jesse Moore and Charles W. Baltimore. Privates William Brackenridge, Thomas C. Hawkins, Carlos Snodgrass, Ira B. Davis, James Davins, Frank Johnson, Risley W. Young and Pat MacWhorter.

Following the hanging of the 13, the chief of staff of the Southern Department gave out a written statement, at the same time refusing to answer any questions. The statement merely give the findings of the court, the names of the men sentenced and stated that the men sentenced to death had been executed.

"Good bye, boys of Company C," were the last words uttered by the condemned men of the 24th United States infantry, as the traps were sprung and they dropped to their death on the scaffold.

Men of Company C, 19th infantry, have been guarding the negro prisoners since they were brought to San Antonio to stand trial before a court martial for complicity in the riot at Houston on August 23, last.

### Only Routine Affair.

Washington, Dec. 11.—The hanging of 13 negro troopers for complicity in the Houston riot was unknown to practically all officials of the War Department until it was announced at Fort Sam Houston. Doubtless the death sentence of the court martial and the preparations for the executions were known to a few high officials, but so far as can be learned, the departmental commander carried out the executions as a routine affair as he is warranted to do in time of war and only made the usual formal report.

### WAR DEPARTMENT INQUIRY ORDERED

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—A general inquiry into the operations of the War Department in arming and equipping the American forces was decided upon today in the Senate Military Affairs committee. Secretary Baker and other department heads will be called to explain various features of war activities.

## GASTON B. MEANS' WIFE TAKES STAND FOR THE DEFENSE

### Mrs. Julia P. Means Principal Witness in Concord Trial Today

### CORROBORATED HER HUSBAND'S STORY

### Mrs. Means a Good Witness—Other Witnesses Today Were Chief of Police Robinson and Means' Clerk

(By Associated Press.)  
Concord, N. C., Dec. 11.—Mrs. Julia P. Means took the stand today in defense of her husband, Gaston B. Means, on trial here for the murder of Mrs. Maude A. King. She said that since she was a little child, some five years old, she had known Mrs. King, and during the last several years had been in contact with her almost constantly.

She told of having signed a note jointly with her husband for a loan of \$25,000 made the defendant by Mrs. King. Her husband desired her to sign the note so that in the event of his incompetency, Mrs. King could collect the money.

Mrs. Means, during the direct examination, appeared remarkably calm and perfectly at ease. Her answers to questions were clear cut and straight forward. Her face bore evidence of seriousness, such as never was shown by the defendant while he was on the stand. Now and then when she caught the eye of her husband, a slight smile flitted across her countenance. She wore a blue skirt, white shirt waist and street hat.

Mrs. Means testified that she never observed any evidence that her husband sought to restrain Mrs. King's liberty or dominate her.

She corroborated the defendant's testimony at various points, including his explanation of the "mysterious" reference in letters to her by her husband while she was at Asheville with Mrs. King and he in New York last July.

Introduction of evidence in the trial of Gaston B. Means appeared to be nearing its end today, although the defense remained silent as to how many more witnesses it would offer before resting its case. The State also was expected to offer several witnesses in rebuttal.

### MEANS' STORY OF HIS FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

Mrs. Means' story of his financial transactions for Mrs. Maude A. King, for whose alleged murder he is on trial, was finished yesterday after he had reiterated his story of her death near here last August, which he attributed to accidental discharge of a pistol in her hands. He had been on the stand the better part of four days. The defense then put on a number of witnesses to testify to minor points in its case. Among them were Means' two sisters, who declared that on the night of Mrs. King's death they found him with his head bowed in his face and tears steaming down his cheeks.

### STREET FIGHTING OCCURS IN MOSCOW

(By Associated Press.)  
London, Dec. 11.—Street fighting has occurred in Moscow and the Swedish consul there has advised all Swedes to leave the city, according to advices received in Haparanda and forwarded by the Stockholm correspondent of The Morning Post. It is added that starvation seems to threaten in Moscow. Most of the Swedes there are said to have taken the consul's advice.

## ALPINI FOUGHT UNTIL THE LAST MAN WAS DEAD

### Encircled by Teutons, They Charged Until None Was Left to Charge

### HEROIC SACRIFICES BY THE ITALIANS

### No Braver Resistance Chronicled in World's History than that Put Up in Defense of Italy

(By Associated Press.)  
Italian Headquarters in Northern Italy, Monday, Dec. 10.—A visit today to the headquarters of a Major General commanding a division of heroic Alpini and Bersaglieri disclosed the story of the manner in which this division held the heights back of the Asiago plateau until it was cut to pieces, and the remnant was compelled to fall back to its present new line. The General is now engaged in reforming his shattered forces which were seen in long lines along the roads, preparing to go back into the fight.

A Major of the General's staff, who toward the close of the fight collected the remainder of the men of the division and led them in the final charges until the order for retirement came, gave a first-hand description of the struggle.

He said there were three Bersaglieri regiments, some Alpini battalions and one infantry regiment in the division, in addition to the usual quota of batteries of field and middle calibre guns. These were ranged back of Asiago when the enemy's drive reached its maximum intensity last Wednesday. For 24 hours one Bersaglieri regiment had held Monte Tonduccio until its platoons had been reduced from 30 men to 6. It was then that the battalions of Alpini were sent to their relief.

The Alpini fought their way up the hill, gaining the summit against heavy odds, only to find their comrades cut to pieces. Most of them were lying dead from stab wounds. Now the Alpini are at the center of a concentration of enemy forces which gradually encircled them. Some of the battalions maneuvered and were carried back and forth in the fury of the fighting along the slopes. Others remained on the summit with the enemy surrounding them.

At 9 o'clock on Wednesday morning, the Colonel of these battalions sent his last report to the General.

### MCCORMACK GIVES \$100,000 TO RED CROSS

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—A gift of \$100,000 to the Red Cross from John McCormack, the tenor, was announced today. Paying his own expenses Mr. McCormack will make a patriotic concert tour from the Atlantic to the Pacific, opening in Washington, December 18, with a concert which the President and Mrs. Wilson have announced they will attend.

### A Shortage Incurred.

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—Inquiry by a Senate committee into the cause of the shortage of coal and sugar with a view of recommending legislation to improve the situation was ordered by the Senate today on motion of Senator Lodge.

### Austro-Germans Repulsed.

(By Associated Press.)  
Vienna, Dec. 11.—Powerful attempts made by the Austro-Germans to retake the Agenzia and Zuliani positions in the Capo Silla region of the lower Piave river, were sanguinarily repulsed yesterday by the Italians it was announced today by the war office.

## GREATEST BATTLE OF WAR EXPECTED TO BEGIN EARLY

### Unusually Active Artillery and Aerial Operations Are Reported

### BOTH SIDES SEEM TO BE PREPARING

### GERMANS MASSING TROOPS, AND BRITISH ARE GETTING READY FOR ANOTHER RUSH—IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS AWAITED

(By Associated Press.)  
London, Dec. 11.—Unusually active artillery fighting and aerial operations on the Western front yesterday are reported in today's official communication. This activity was particularly noteworthy on the Ypres and Arras fronts.

### Operations of the nature and extent indicated by the official British communication almost invariably precede a great attack. The preliminary bombardment, designed to break down the opposing defenses and clear the way for the infantry advance, may continue for a week or more while efforts are made to clear the air of opposing aviators to conceal the bringing up of troops and other preparations for the attack.

Yesterday's French and British statements also spoke of heavy artillery fighting at many points. Recent reports that the Germans, reinforced by troops withdrawn from the Russian front, were about to undertake in the West the great offensive campaign of the war derived added significance from Secretary Baker's references yesterday in his weekly war review, to the massing of German troops on the Western front and the expected attempt of the enemy to break the Allied line.

### MAY TAKE OVER AND HOLD RAILROADS

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—At the opening of the hearing today by the joint Congressional committee investigating transportation problems, Chairman Adams declared that President Wilson probably would have to take over the railroads during the war and hold them after the war until Congress can provide some plan for proper management and efficient operation in peace and war.

### ZERO WEATHER AND A COAL SHORTAGE

(By Associated Press.)  
Columbus, O., Dec. 11.—With below zero weather prevailing the coal shortage was so acute in Ohio today that Governor Cox telegraphed Fuel Administrator Garfield that unless Ohio people get immediately relief they "will lose confidence in the government."

### REGISTER MEN AS THEY BECOME OF AGE

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—Registration for army of duty of all young men as they become of age is proposed in a bill introduced today by Senator Wadsworth. Those who became of age since the draft law was passed would register at once and the others would come in at six months intervals.

### Artillery Activity Reported.

(By Associated Press.)  
Berlin, Dec. 11.—(via London).—On the Flanders front in France there was a lively artillery duel, the German official statement issued today says. On the Italian front there was active gunfire on both sides of the Brenta river and along the lower Piave.

### PROHIBITION TO COME UP NEXT

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—By unanimous consent today the House agreed to consent today the House agreed to amendment for nation-wide prohibition which already has been passed by the Senate.

### House Agrees to Begin Considering Amendment Next Monday

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—The Judiciary Committee today favorably reported the amendment. As passed by the Senate, the resolution provides that the necessary three-fourths of the States must act on the amendment within six years from the time of its passage in Congress. The Judiciary Committee extended the time to seven years and would make the amendment effective one year from the time.

## FREEZE HAMPERS WORK OF CLEARING UP HALIFAX RUINS

### However, All Activities Are Now Conducted on a Systematic Basis

### LAST NIGHT WAS SPENT PEACEFULLY

### Fears of Another Possible Explosion Allayed by the Sinking of the Only Other Ammunition Ship

(By Associated Press.)  
Halifax, N. S., Dec. 11.—The snow storm which hampered the relief workers yesterday was of short duration and last night was clear and cold. As the snow which fell was not enough to rain to be well saturated, a hard crust had formed today, further interfering with traffic problems and with the work of clearing away the ruins of wrecked buildings.

All activities, however, are now on a systematic basis and Halifax men joined today with men from other parts of Canada and from cities in the United States in seeking to restore more normal conditions. The refusal to admit curiosity seekers already has resulted in a noticeable lessening of the congestion which was threatening serious impediment.

Hundreds of men were busy today about the less badly damaged buildings. The chief task was to replace broken windows and doors and to repair roofs. The supplies of window glass sent from other cities proved particularly useful and a party of skilled glaziers from Boston assisted in re-placing the thousands of shattered panes.

Last night was the most restful since the explosion. The sinking of the munitions steamer Picton yesterday with the subsequent official assurance that there were no explosive laden vessels in the harbor, drove away fears of further possible disaster and permitted residents and relief workers to sleep in peace.

### NEW RECORD FOR FARM PRODUCTS

Value of the Nation's Crops Unofficially Placed at \$21,000,000,000

(By Associated Press.)  
Washington, Dec. 11.—Many crops this year exceed the production of other years, while the value of the country's farm products, with a total estimated unofficially at \$21,000,000,000 far exceeds any other year in history. Final estimates of production of the principal crops were announced today by the Department of Agriculture.

The production estimates are:  
Corn 3,159,494,000 bushels; winter wheat 418,070,000; spring wheat 252,758,000; all wheat 670,828,000; oats 1,587,288,000; barley 208,975,000; rye 60,145,000; buckwheat 17,460,000.  
Flaxseed 8,473,000 bushels; rice 36,773,000; potatoes 442,526,000; sweet potatoes 87,141,000; hay, tame, 79,528,000; hay, wild, 15,402,000; tobacco 1,196,451,000 pounds; sugar beets 6,237,209 tons.  
Beans 15,791,000 bushels; kafirs 75,866,000; onions 13,544,000 bushels; cabbage 502,790 tons; hops 27,778,000 pounds; cranberries 245,000 barrels; apples 58,203,000 barrels; peaches 45,086,000 bushels; pears 13,281,000 bushels; oranges 2,832,000 boxes.

