

TANK BATTLE OF CAMBRAI

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THE TANK BATTLE OF CAMBRAI,  
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## THE QUIET FRONT BY CAMBRAI.

The Siegfried position located south of and passing Cambrai, via St. Quentin, La Fere to the Chemin des Dames, was occupied in March, 1917. Through an ingenious chesslike move, the German leadership had timely thwarted the enemy's plans of attack against the heretofore German front. The attempts of the Entente, to break through on both sides of Arras and on the Aisne as well as in the Champagne, thus met with no success in capturing this new German position through outflanking.

South of the battlefield of Arras, opposite of Cambrai and St. Quentin, British and French forces, after lengthy small combats with German patrols and outposts in front of the Siegfried position, had dug in anew. Complete quietness reigned on the British front reaching as far as Pontruist, during the month of July, 1917. On the other hand, the French kept up a lively activity. Always so it seemed, as if the latter were striving for the possession of St. Quentin. Only in August and September, 1917, did the British put forth a more lively activity at Queant, between Havrincourt and Connelieu, against Honnecourt and west of Bellicourt. This though grew calmer again, for the longer the Flanders Battle was lasting, so much more were the opposing positions manned by worn-out and rest-needy troops.

The Siegfried position west and southwest of Cambrai crossed through a generally flat country with moderate elevations, only in rear of the German front did the mighty Bournon-Massiv rise from the flat ground. The frontmost line south of the city passed into a higher elevated terrain. The ridge northwest of la Vacquerie and the high plateau with the road junction of the great road to Peronne and St. Quentin, were of the greatest tactical importance due to their dominating location.// Since the construction, the line system of the new position had undergone many changes in the sectors in front of Cambrai. During the fall of the year, the so-called outpost trench, strongly protected by wire entanglement, was located nearest to the enemy. The terrain between this trench and the first combat trench of the Siegfried position - a zone often over 1 km. wide - was protected through numerous wire-entangled resistance nests. In the first combat trench (K 1), excellent defensive works with a good field of fire and safe shelters had been dug in. About from 200 to 300 meters in rear of the first, was located the second combat trench (K 2), it was completed almost like the first and in front of it also was a deep wire entanglement. Many communication trenches insured the covered connections between these two trenches and a few also reached as far as the outpost trench. The rearward termination of this defensive zone was to be the intermediate position, only partly completed. A natural protection of Cambrai, at least to the south, was also the Schelde River and the wide Schelde Canal.

The towns located at the front as Moeuvres, Havrincourt, Ribecourt and Banteux, had almost been completely destroyed by fire during the course of the trench warfare, while in Fontaine-Notre Dame, Cantaing and also in Macqueres and Crevecoeur, the civilian inhabitants were following their usual pursuits undisturbed. Only German soldiers gave the city of Cambrai another character, and if it had not been for enemy aeroplanes which now and then sent greetings which disturbed the sleep of the people, nothing much could have been noticed of the war. The British did not fire on the city, although it lay within the range of the British heavy flat trajectory batteries.

On this "quiet front by Cambrai" German divisions were assigned which had undergone hard defensive combats with heavy losses on the soil of Flanders. Here they were to strengthen themselves for new tasks and to train the newly drafted replacements. It was not so incorrect that the front soldier used the expression: "Sanitarium for Flanders" as a special distinguishing symbol for this part of the west front. Because the combat activity was very limited here and the front trenches were so well constructed. Regiments were always assigned to rather wide defensive sectors. Of course the keeping intact of the front-most and much branched out position system, required heavy labor and in other respects also, the presence on this "quiet front" had little to offer as a "recuperation station". The companies and batteries had but little time for relaxation and for thorough training. Numerous parties and detachments had to be furnished by them. Courses to gain a better knowledge in the different arms and for special service branches were held. A further burden, in which not only the commanders and staffs were involved but which also made itself felt by the troops, was called the "Paper War" by the front fighters. Orders and more orders were received and the working hours were increased. Reconnaissances and rearward defense arrangements were carried out.

The situation of the whole and above all the lasting attacks of the British in Flanders, seldom permitted that the divisions on this quiet front remained there for a long period. The experience gained here indicated, that the frequent changes of the position troops, for the construction and maintenance of the whole lines, was a material disadvantage. To this must be added, that fixed labor troops in rear of this front sector were available only in very limited numbers. No wonder that even in the late Fall of 1917, the intermediate position mentioned contained some completed portions secured by strong wire entanglements, while on other portions the fire trenches were only indicated, frequently even their planned course could be recognized only by the outlines for the concrete dugouts. Much less could the lines under construction close in front of Cambrai - thus the Siegfried position II (west of Bourlon-Noyelles-south of Rumilly) and the Wotan position III (Sailly-Proville), lay claim to the name of a real defensive or rallying position.

Indications that the British planned a major attack on the Cambrai front were not in evidence. The British were working on their defensive trenches and in strengthening their wire entanglements. The Arras battle and the heavy, keeping up for months and not yet finished combats in Flanders, seemed to employ to a full extent their forces during this year of the war.

#### The 19th of November, 1917.

The Cambrai front belonged to the 2d Army posted on the left flank of the Army Group Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. The 2d Army command under General of Cavalry von der Marwitz, since the beginning of November reached from the roadway Cambrai-Arras to La Fere.

Lieut. Gen. von Moser, the Commander of the Group Arras (14th Reserve Corps) had at its disposal three divisions. Nearly so with its right flank on the highway from Cambrai to Arras facing the front from Guenappe to Fontaine, stood the 111th German Infantry Division. Connecting therewith the troops of the 240th German Infantry Division were posted in the trenches. The third of the three divisions, the 20th German Infantry Division with the 79th, 92d, and 77th Infantry Regiments, occupied the sector south of Queant to south of Inchy. On the right flank of the connecting Group Caudry (13th Wurttemberg Corps) commanded by General Baron von Watter, the 20th Landwehr Division covered the great road Cambrai-Bapaume. The defense line of the 54th German Infantry

Division stretched over a space of 8 kilometers from Havincourt as far as la Vasquerie. The 9th Reserve Division had pushed units over the Schelde River and the Canal by Honnecourt and Vendhuile. Finally the 183d German Infantry Division, the left flank division of the Group Caudry, defended the positions west of la Cotelet and Bellicourt.

The commanding general of the 2d Army believed (Order of October 31) that the heavy defeat of the Italians would drive the British and French forces to a more determined activity on the west front. A thrust executed by the French against the Laffaux corner, southwest of Laon, seemed to support this idea. The success thereof no doubt would encourage the enemy to seek their martial luck at other points. The headquarters of the 2d Army pointed mainly to the sector between Somme and Oise because the attitude of the enemy there had undergone a change. The Groups' attention was for this reason called to the fact that it was very important that the Headquarters of the 2d Army be lastingly and quickly informed of the intentions of the enemy. For this purpose, besides air reconnaissance and ground observation, the divisions were to endeavor to take prisoners from the enemy through patrol enterprises, to be accomplished frequently after careful preparations. Such enterprises were to be carried out three times by each division of the Cambrai front during the month of November. Of course, the necessary artillery ammunition for this purpose had to be obtained mostly through husbanding during the usual combat activity.

The commanding general of the 2d Army reported on November 16 to the Army Group Crown Prince Rupprecht, his estimate of the situation at his front, as follows:-

"The enemy's distribution of forces during the week from November 10 to 16 was cleared up through patrol-combats at many points of the army front. At places where prisoners were not taken, the enemy's divisions located on the front have been established in their hitherto sectors by our listening stations. Finally, after the various performances and with the results of the reconnaissances and other information at hand, the general impression of the activities of the enemy was stated to be as follows: 'larger hostile attacks against the Army front are not anticipated during the near future'."

The winter was about to begin and it seemed as if it would continue to be calm on the "quiet front by Cambrai."

The patrol enterprise of Infantry Regiment No. 164 (183d Division) had luck on November 18, at the Gillemont Farm, thanks to the excellent conduct of the affair of Captain Solder. More than 40 English soldiers and several machine guns were brought back. The prisoners belonged to the 55th English Division, the presence of which was thus established again. At the same time the commander of the 2d Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 84 - Capt. Soltan - had made preparations for a patrol raid. Lieut. Hegemann pushed ahead with his assault detachment with great smartness into the trenches of the enemy north of Prescourt. Together with the artillery, men of the 84th, met with a complete success. They caused heavy losses to the enemy and captured a sergeant and five men of the 1st Battalion Irish Fusiliers (36th Div.). Thus the 54th German Division also established the presence of the hitherto foe.

During the examination of the prisoners captured at the Gillemont Farm, they had no knowledge of any kind of offensive intentions against the front of the 2d German Army. More important were the statements made by the prisoners captured by the 54th Infantry Division. Namely, the sergeant and his

five men made known, that at the beginning of the next week a larger attack was planned against the town Havrincourt and that for this purpose, troops of the English 51st Division had already been relieved or were still being relieved, and that during the previous week officers of different troop formations had been seen in the frontmost trenches during reconnaissances. One of the English prisoners stated he had seen in Metz-en-Couture a concealed tank and another of these prisoners declared he had seen two of these machines in the forest of Havrincourt. Another prisoner had heard from an English artilleryman, that a several hours' lasting artillery preparation fire was to precede the attack. The officer who examined these prisoners after completion of the hearing communicated his judgment with the following words:

"The statement, that the attack will actually take place on Tuesday, November 20, is after all rather doubtful, yet all signs point to preparations for a larger attack at this point."

The 19th of November - a Monday - passed through the morning hours quietly as usual. An English soldier who had been taken from the trench northeast of Villers-Plouich with much cleverness by Vice-Sergt. Major Kunkel (4th Co. Inf. Regt. 90), gave no new intelligence during his examination. The prisoner belonged to the 4th Battalion of the Shropshire Light Infantry. It was already known that the division of this prisoner (the English 20th) was located opposite the left flank of the German 54th Infantry Division. The English artillery fire against the 240th Infantry Division increased during the afternoon. The 20th German Infantry Division reported for some time past several shots of heavy caliber against Riencourt. Isolated shots and apparently without a positive objective, fell on the positions by Havrincourt and Flesquieres. Numerous hostile aeroplanes were seen flying in low heights over the front trenches. Our Infantry and Artillery observers ascertained that on this day much movement and traffic were taken place by the English. Finally piecemeal words were overheard by listening station No. 18, in Riencourt, the English words "Tuesday Flanders," were very startling.

Group Arras considered the region Fontaine-Riencourt and Group Caudry, the region of Havrincourt, as being in danger. The latter even for the reason that the English prisoners captured on November 18, had indicated the coming attack against this town and also that new batteries had been recognized in the forest of Havrincourt.

Lieut. Gen. von Moser already had made a request to the Headquarters of the 3d Army on November 18, for the strengthening of the 240th Infantry Division, because a prisoner brought in by Regt. No. 471, had spoken, during his examination, of a rumor that an operation on a grand scale was to take place at a very early date in this region. Commencing with one o'clock a.m. of November 20, increased readiness for action was ordered by Group Arras in the zone of the 240th Infantry Division and in the connecting sectors of the 20th Infantry Division by Infantry Regiments Nos. 79 and 92, thus, from Fontaine to east of Queant. The artillery protective line which passed east of Fontaine - west of Hendecourt - north of Pronville, was to be occupied, besides the security troops, with sufficient troops for a counter-attack.

The order issued by the commander of the Arras Group at 10:25 p.m. of November 19, began as follows:-

"1. According to statements made by prisoners, an attack by the English is expected on Tuesday against Havrincourt, tanks will most likely participate. The artillery preparation may begin between 3 and 4 a.m., German time, and is to last from 4 to 5 hours.

"2. Fragments of telephone conversations of the English, heard by our listening station by Bullecourt, seems to indicate that an attack will also be made in this region on Tuesday."

The town of Havrincourt in the defensive front of the Group Caudry, formed a pronounced projecting zone. In order to attain a united command for the defense at Havrincourt, the Group commander placed the sector close to the northwest of the town, occupied by Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384, of the 20th Landwehr Division, as well as the batteries of the sub-group South - the 1st Battalion Field Artillery Regt. No. 282 - under the orders of the commander of the 54th Infantry Division. This assignment was foreseen in the fixed preparation previously outlined in case of activities against Havrincourt. Thus General von Watter, the group commander, could order this change immediately. In addition, the commanding general of the army, assigned from his weak reserve of the Group Caudry, the Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 27, the 3d battalion of which had only been relieved from the front-most line close to and south of St. Quentin, during the night from November 18 to 19.

In a report made by the 2d Army to the Headquarters of the Army Group, dated the evening of November 19, the foreboding for possible local attacks against the two points mentioned, were indicated, though without given the time when the attacks were to be launched. Attention was called in this report, that the Army, due to widely separated positions, would not be able to send notable reinforcements to the endangered sectors.

The army also assigned the 5th Battery, Field Arty. Regt. No. 108, as well as the Headquarters of the 3d Battalion and the 9th Battery of Field Arty. Regt. No. 282, to the 54th Infantry Division. For the front sector which at this time was very weakly supplied with heavy artillery, the army also advised that the Bavarian Foot (Heavy) Arty. Battalion No. 5 and the 5th Battery of Foot (Heavy) Arty. Regt. No. 18, were en route to join the 54th Infantry Division; these though did not arrive until after November 20.

From the East, coming from the Styr and Stached, the 107th Infantry Division arrived by rail during these days in the space east of Cambrai for disposition of the 2d Army. Its commander, General Havenstein, was to relieve with his troops the 20th Landwehr Division, on both sides of the road Cambrai-Bapaume in such a manner that the 20th Landwehr Division could be transferred, commencing with November 27, to the East. (According to the Group order of November 19, this relief was to begin during the night from November 25 to 26). But even before the entire 107th Infantry Division had arrived, the commanding general of the 13th Corps, issued orders that the 2d and 3d Battalions of Field Artillery Regt. No. 213 report during the night from November 19/20 to the 54th Infantry Division for active duty (the 4th guns of the batteries had been left behind in the East). The Batteries of the 2d Battalion went into position in the proximity of Graincourt, those of the 3d Battalion near Flequières, where a few heavy batteries and also the Artillery group of Major Rosendahl of the position division, were already posted. The ammunition supply of this artillery reinforcement met with considerable difficulties, above all the ammunition wagons of the third Howitzer Battalion had to be sent from one depot to another. Finally at about 4 a.m. on November 20, these batteries had a few hundred shots in their positions.

Note: The artillery of the 107th Infantry Division arrived without ammunition as ordered. According to the report of the chief of artillery of the 54th Infantry Division, scarcely 2 days' ammunition firing was available on the morning of November 19, at all field and heavy artillery batteries. The Division depot contained as a reserve about 1,000 shots field gun and 500 shots light howitzer ammunition and a few hundred rounds for various kinds for heavy guns. Up to the evening of this day, all batteries were supplied from the

(Note continued):

available ammunition with about 2½ days' ammunition firing. Further quantities were urgently requested by the Group. This request was filled by only 7220 shots field gun, 4392 light field howitzer and 500 heavy field howitzer ammunition. The light field ammunition forwarded to Marcoing though did not arrive until the morning of November 20 and then only half the quantity.

Increased readiness for action was ordered during the late evening of November 19. The 54th Infantry Division also ordered its artillery to lay destructive and harassing fire on the enemy's first and second lines. Bursts of fire were also to be laid on the forest of Havrincourt, on the region of Trecault and on the enemy's approach roads in front of the sector of the German 90th Reserve Inf. Regt.

Although the attitude of the enemy on Nov. 19, in comparison with previous days, was somewhat different, registration of the English artillery which as a rule preceded an operation, was nowhere noticed. How could the enemy venture to advance against a good defensive line with its deep wire entanglements without a strong and longer artillery preparation?

Ample defensive measures apparently were made for such a local operation in case the English actually advanced against Havrincourt as stated by the prisoners.

The measures so suddenly ordered caused quite a lively activity and movements on this usually so quiet front. Landwehr Inf. Regt. No. 384 of the 20th Landwehr Division, since the morning of Nov. 19, was tactically placed under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division. The first trench of the Siegfried-position was located in the right sector (1st Battalion) toward the west and the 3d Battalion to the east of the canal still under construction, which close to and toward the west of Havrincourt turned sharply to the north. The 2d Battalion was so divided by the regimental commander (Lt. Col. von Winterfeld), that the 5th and 7th Company were posted in the intermediate position and the second combat trench in rear of the 1st Battalion, the 8th Company in the strong points and the 6th Company in the intermediate position in rear of the 3d Battalion.

Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, of the Army reserve placed at the disposition of the 54th Infantry Division, was assigned by the latter as a counter attack regiment for the sectors of the Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384 and Infantry Regiment No. 84. Regimental headquarters and the 2d Battalion were to reach Marcoing at the beginning of darkness. Orders for the disposition of the other battalion were withheld for the time. Finally the 3d battalion remained as a group reserve in Cambrai, while the 1st battalion gave two companies and the machine company to the 84th Infantry Regiment. The other two companies remained in readiness in Fontaine-Notre Dame.

Major Hoffmeister was in temporary command during these days of Infantry Regt. No. 84, located in the position at Havrincourt. The 9th Company, of the 3d Battalion in rest billets, reinforced the 1st battalion on the right flank, the 10th and 11th Company occupied the Oetinger Riegel in the whole regimental sector which passed halfway from Havrincourt and Flesquieres, and the 12th Company moved into the intermediate position close to and south of Flesquieres. As on the evening the 1st Machine Company of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 27 arrived, Lieut. Helff placed 6 machine guns at the disposition of each of the two combat battalions. Flesquieres was designated in the

division order as the billet for the two companies (1st and 2d) of the 1st Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 27, sent ahead.

The middle sector of the 54th Infantry Division was occupied by Landwehr Infantry Regt. No. 387. Colonel Baron von Wangenheim with his regiment, which according to the order of battle belonged to the 20th Landwehr Division, had relieved the 27th Reserve Inf. Regt. ten days ago. The 3d battalion to the right was now reinforced by the 5th Company which took up a position between the 2d combat line and Ribecourt. The other companies of the 2d Battalion moved into the Intermediate position.\*

At first no change was made by the Division Commander (Lieut. General von Watter) by the 90th Reserve Infantry Regt. on the left flank of the division (the 54th). As during the course of the afternoon hostile motor-truck traffic from Metz-en-Couture toward Gouzeaucourt and other small troop movements were observed, the Division Commander ordered the 3d Battalion (up to this time group reserve), to advance to the Intermediate position.

Although the "numerous signs" indicated that the attack of the English would be launched against Havrincourt only, the commander of the 9th Reserve Division believed that the attack might involve also the sector of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 19. The probability of a hostile operation against the southern half of the left flank regiment also was given consideration, due to the heavy firing of the enemy against this flank on the 19th. For this reason, increased readiness for action beginning at 5 a.m., November 20, was ordered by Lieut. General Hildemann (commander of the 9th Res. Div.), for Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 19, which connected with Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 90, at la Vacquerie, also for the combat battalions of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 6 and for the entire artillery of the division.

#### The Surprise Attack of the Tanks on the Morning of November 20, 1917.

The night from November 19 to 20 passed restless in the German trenches, always a rushing along here and there. Orders were received and issued. Runners came and went. Attention was called to gas readiness. Late during the night an order suggested the possibility of an attack of some tanks. With only a small quantity of pointed ammunition with steel core (with which to penetrate light armor) on hand, not many cartridges could be issued to the machine guns and riflemen. Everything was quiet by the enemy.

Shortly after 6 a.m., red light balls ascended near Havrincourt; the German batteries opened fire. Soon though the barrage abated and quiet prevailed again. Infantry Regiment No. 84 reported that the light balls had been fired on the right flank of its sector, because it looked as if the English were cutting paths in his wire entanglement. Details to be reported later. The question was asked, Have the intentions of the English been baffled already, has its thrust been nipped in the bud by our artillery?

7:15 a.m. Suddenly a flashing, thunder and roar, a cracking out of a thousand mouths, and howling shots and shells racing to the German lines. The earth quivered and trembled under the force of the hits. The English were sending grenades, incendiary and smoke shells to our fronts.

The troops occupying the trenches vanished into the dugouts, for as long as the enemy hammered with its guns, his infantry, according to experience, would not attack. Sentries only remained.

The German batteries laid their protective barrage in front of the infantry. It amounted to low music in this mighty concert which the English had intimated with its superior artillery.

In the midst of this infernal uproar, buzzing noises like those of aeroplanes were heard - dense fog clouds spread over the fields again and again, torn asunder here and there by a flash of fire -- after this something dark appeared -- and nearby a black mass also was moving. The sentries could hardly trust their eyes. The deep wire entanglements cracked under the pressure of undefined colossuses like matches - Alarm!

The German Infantry crawled out of the dugouts and took up space in the trenches partly uprooted already. Rifles were now rattling and from the machine guns shot after shot raced against the attacker. Tanks! Tanks! the same cry from the left and right! Not a few of them but many! Whole lines, not of English khaki-clad infantry but armored machines were advancing; first, obscure in the artificial fog and smoke, then the colossuses in columns, increasing. Slowly but without stop they advanced. Hand grenades were thrown while the artillery fired barrage. Yet the tanks seemed to be charmed against this fire.

All the sectors of the 2d Army from Arras to north of St. Quentin received heavy fire during the early part of Nov. 20. It roared incessantly without stopping. This meant more than the preparation of a local operation!

(cont. Div.)

The 108th Infantry Brigade reported to be 54th Infantry Division in Cambrai, that the main fire of the English artillery was placed on the region of Harrincourt, Flesquieres and la Vacquerie. Lieut. Gen. von Wetter (the div. comdr.) ordered the headquarters and the 2d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 27, to advance from Marcoing and the remainder of the 1st Battalion from Fontaine-Notre Dame, to Flesquieres. As at 8 a.m. this order was received by the brigade at its command post near la Justice, a report arrived from Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90 that the enemy had invaded the position with tanks. The 54th Infantry Division now launched the headquarters of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 27 with two battalions, for a counterattack in the sector of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90, to regain the lost first-combat trench. The 108th Infantry Brigade though immediately requested a change in this order, for at this time Tanks attacks were also reported by Infantry Regiment No. 84 and Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 387. - As reinforcement for Reserve Regt. No. 90, only the 3d battalion of Infantry Regiment No. 27, which located as group reserve in Cambrai, was now assigned. The marching off order was received by the battalion in the Ludendorff-Barracks at 9 a.m. No report had thus far been received from the sector of Landwehr Regt. 384, the telephone lines to this sector having been severed.

At first the 9th Reserve Division also received only a report of the enemy's intense bombardment and a request for barrage for his own troops. Shortly after 8 a.m. though it became known that tanks were seen advancing near la Vacquerie.

The Headquarters of the 107th, 20th Landwehr and 54th Infantry Divisions had established their headquarters in Cambrai. General Havenstein (107th Div.) issued orders on the evening of Nov. 19 to the regimental and battalion commanders of the units already arrived from the East, to seek knowledge of the ground in the sector of the 20th Landwehr Division prior to taking over the sector. The possibility of an English operation against Harrincourt "at an

early date," was at the same time indicated by the Division Commander. Group Caudry ordered at 8:45 a.m. increased readiness for action for Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, and change of quarters for the other two regiments to quarters in the west, close to and southwest of the city, which were indicated for these regiments upon relieving the 20th Landwehr Division. At 9:40 a.m., the following wireless message was sent to the 107th Infantry Division: Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 227 will commence the march at once with Regimental Headquarters and two battalions via Masnieres-Herzogsveg, where it places itself under the orders of the commander of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 90, with one battalion to Crevecoeur to be placed under the orders of the 9th Reserve Division. 1st Battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, will be placed under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division and will proceed at once. Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232 moves into Cambrai as army reserve. Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52 will be placed at the disposal of the group in line of Fontaine, Cantaing, Proville.

#### Havrincourt - Dantoux.

Through the smoke and dust of the striking grenades, the natural and artificial fog, every insight was deranged. Frequently, at first, the call gas was heard. For this reason gas-masks were affixed by the 84th Infantry Regt. Renewed investigation though, indicated that the rising clouds came from English smoke bombs. The telephone connections were severed, telephone repair detachments, without result, attempted to repair the connections. Runners were despatched, it was doubtful if they could get through for the English fire now increased, was placed on and close in rear of both the combat trenches. The men of the 84th Regt. spent their ammunition without effect against the tanks, to no purpose did the men aim their well formed up machine guns, in vain were the throwing of hand grenades. Yes, if it had been men of flesh and blood, they could have been met with a different reception.

Such men though appeared only in rear of the steel-armored machines. Against tanks, one is defenseless. The machines moved cleverly from the rear against the German positions, hurried through the fire of their own guns and machine guns and into the German dugouts or halted in front of their openings which they kept under fire and waited until the following infantry came up and with hand grenades forced the troops in the galleries to surrender. The trenches of the Siegfried position did not offer an obstruction to the tanks, neither did the deeply arranged wire entanglements. The German defenders again and again attempted to down the tanks through concentrated or well aimed individual fire, but it was a useless and vain effort. Whoever dared to resist the tanks, was rolled over by them.

All this took place in rear of a thick curtain which the enemy's artillery from time to time had placed in front of the tanks as needed. It was an unequal combat, such a surprise attack with so many tanks naturally seemed hopeless to the Germans. Numerous aeroplanes also were active flying as low as possible to cooperate with the tanks. These aeroplanes fired against the Germans driven back by the tanks or who had crowded together in rear of the parapets in the trench section.

Tanks were creeping along in all directions, they moved forward without a stop.

By the 1st Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 84, the commander had direct contact with the regiment but was cut off from his companies and had lost all control of the latter. On the other hand, the remnant of the 2d Battalion assembled

around their battalion commander, who was unable to obtain telephonic connection to the rear. Without thought, many of the men rushed to the rear, overcome by the impression of the tanks. Captain Soltau, though, restrained his men and brought them back to their senses. He, the idol of the battalion, knew how, through his own conduct, he could carry away with him officers and men. Willing and confident the remnant of the 2d Battalion obeyed him.

The organizations were reformed and individual squads assigned to defend the battalion command post on the left flank of the sector in rear of the 2d combat line. A furious fire met the advancing English from the trenches where the surprised German soldiers had made a new halt. Soon though, a lack of ammunition was noticed while tanks were moving around the defenders from right and left. At this time one of the monsters was also advancing to the front of the trench.

At 8:45 a.m., the commander of the 2d Battalion sent two messages to regimental headquarters, the second shortly after the first. Grave but not without hope were the contents of these messages, giving full recognition to the brave men of the battalion. "We are holding out to the last man", such was the final sentence of the second message. These were the last reports which the headquarters of the regiment received from this battalion commander who had so well conducted himself in many battles. In combat against the enemy's superiority, Captain Soltau, his adjutant, Lieut. Elson, and the machine-gun officer, Lieut. Hinckeldeyn, found a heroic death.

The Commander of the 84th Regiment, Major Hofmeister, shortly after 8 a.m. had ordered Captain Fursen to bring up the 12th Company to the Oetinger Riegel and to fall in for a counter-attack with the 3d Battalion of the regiment already at this point. About one-half hour later the head of the 2d Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 27 coming from Marcoing, arrived at Flequiéres, to support the 84th Regiment. Having in view a similar objective, the remainder of the 1st Battalion Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 27, were being placed on motor trucks in Fontaine-Notre Dame. The regimental commander of this regiment also was ordered to Flequiéres. Before the latter reached the command post of Infantry Regt. No. 84, close to and east of the town, his 2d Battalion was already marching with its frontmost companies to the Oetinger Riegel. "Keep on fighting, hold the frontmost line," such were the orders issued by Major Hofmeister to his first battalion (84th Inf.) Captain Wille though waited in vain for the arrival of the 3d Battalion of his regiment (84th). The situation grew more and more critical. No reports were received from the companies. On the other hand, it becomes known that the connecting battalion of Soltau (2d) had been run over and that a number of machine guns were without ammunition. Sideways of the battalion command post, tanks were already moving. Regimental headquarters having been asked if due to the threatening danger of being cut off, the 1st battalion should retire, it answered in the negative. Again the 1st Battalion asked for reinforcement and the regimental commander finally replied that another counterattack was being launched by Reserve Regiment No. 27. Close to and north of Hayrincourt the commander of the 1st Battalion yearningly waited for the things to come.

Capt. Wille (1st Battalion, 84th Inf.) made the following report: "The battalion is cut off, the English tanks, for sometime past, are moving in our rear along the Oetinger Riegel. Nothing can be noticed of a counterattack. The noise and the orders of the English are clearly heard. We are waiting both for the counterattack and also for the penetration of the English. All documents and

maps are being destroyed. At this moment a tank is moving over the open space of the battalion command post which is separated from the battalion dugout by a boarded wall and a heap of earth. The tank comes to a stop and the English occupants alight in the belief that they have captured the battalion command post near which a few dead men are lying. Every few minutes the inmates of the dugout peep through a hole to see if the tank moves on, but it remains standing. To the right, English Infantry is rushing through a communication trench and to left, shrieking loudly, across an open field, hardly 20 meters away from us. Our situation is almost desperate, hardly a dozen rifles and hand grenades and wedged in a deep dugout, with no steps for firing and no defensive possibility, 10 steps in front of us the tank and on both sides English troops launching ahead. More urgent requests were made on Major Hofmeister, the regimental commander, to hurry the counterattack. There, at last a hope! A long line of steel-helmeted men are marching down the heights of Flesquieres toward us. We drew a breath of relief, the counterattack. The line drew nearer and we all were waiting for the suitable moment to attack the tank in front of us. Suddenly we saw that our men had no rifles and that they are marched off as prisoners. The counterattack has failed. The regiment has no reserve left. Now I took up, through Lieut. Bock of Field Arty. Regt. No. 108 (Battalion Artillery liaison officer), the connection with the artillery. I requested that the tank be shot down from the battalion command post, that we be freed and given an opening in a circle of 100 meters. The artillery agreed but no shot was fired. No doubt the most of the batteries had been put out of action. The tanks are now located near Flesquieres. Renewed and urgent calls were made on the artillery. The latter promised to free us thru its fire, after which we hoped to cut through the line of the enemy during the night. We waited and again called the artillery and again it promised to fire and again we waited---a long, long time! Suddenly the sentry at the entrance to the gallery called out: "The Tommies are coming"! I gave orders to follow me. In front of me on the slope of the trench a dozen of English soldiers with a dozen rifle barrels pointed against the exit of the gallery. Hand grenades are being thrown. They grasp and drag me to one side of the exit. Then, suddenly, the first shots of our artillery are whistling into the rose-garden at the battalion command post. A moment too late - everyone ran away to protect himself from the splinter effect of our shells, friend and foe all side by side. All assembled in the sunken road leading from Havrincourt to the battalion command post of the 2d Battalion, 84th Infantry Regt. We were standing surrounded by English troops, we were prisoners. "A hard lot which so many encountered on this day."

Major Stubenrauch, the commander of the 2d Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 27, arrived at 8:40 a.m. at the command post of the 84th Infantry Regt. Major Hofmeister could only inform him that the English had penetrated near Havrincourt and that his 1st battalion (84th Inf.) had urgently asked for help. Further, that the connection with the 2d Battalion was severed and that the situation by this battalion did not look good. The commander of Infantry Regt. No. 84 deemed the immediate support of his 1st battalion toward Havrincourt necessary.

A personal observation due to the fog and the mist at first to recognize what was going on. On the contrary, clouds of fog growing more and more dense moved toward the outposts. Suddenly a hissing flame, a bright reddish-yellow glare of fire flashed through the seemingly impenetrable veil---a firing tank!

The first reports received by the commander of the 18th Reserve Infantry Brigade (Colonel von Gleich), contained information of the intense bombardment by the enemy and requests for barrage fire. At 8:15 a.m. the 9th Reserve Division advised that tanks were seen advancing near la Vacquerie. The numerous reports now received by the brigade commander caused considerable confusion. Judging from these reports, the situation by Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 19 was menaced the most, while there seemed to be no immediate danger by Infantry Regt. No. 395 and by that half of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 6, on the extreme right, although their positions also lay under the heaviest hostile fire. A report was received from the southern sector of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 6, that barrage fire had been requested and that heavy machine gun fire could be heard. The Brigade Commander, Colonel von Gleich, requested shortly before 8 a.m. that the group reserve (3d Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 395) be placed at his disposition.

By the time that the request of the Brigade Commander was sanctioned, further reports received indicated that tanks had penetrated the sector of the 90th Reserve Infantry Regt. and that the main hostile fire lay against Havrincourt and la Vacquerie. The 18th Reserve Infantry Brigade, though, considered that the 54th Infantry Division, anticipating an attack of the enemy against Havrincourt, for which reason it had received reinforcements, would be able to repulse this attack. The conduct of the defense of the town of la Vacquerie located on the boundary of the sector, was also assigned to the 54th Infantry Division. The orientation supplied by the right flank regiment of the brigade and of great importance at this time, was very imperfect and frequently in contradiction with the information furnished by Division Headquarters, the artillery observers and the 395th Reserve Inf. Regt. The latter continued sending in reports of the strong artillery fire, mainly gas shells, which caused losses but that its battalions were holding their positions. The reports sent by the 6th Reserve Inf. Regt. stated that the enemy had entered the trenches of the left neighboring division (183d Inf. Div.) near the Gillemont Ferme, but that the enemy had partly been thrown out again also, that in its own sector there was no infantry activity at the time and that the enemy's artillery fire had relaxed. (English troops also entered the south sector (1st Battalion, Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 6, but were thrown out with heavy losses. The old position was regained by the German troops and numerous prisoners taken.) The brigade commander intended to employ the 3d battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 395 for a counterattack in the sector of Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 19. As an attack of the enemy against Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 6 was not excluded, the headquarters and two companies, of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 395, were ordered to proceed from Malincourt to the Ferme Montecouvez, while the two remaining companies were ordered to be ready to act as supports at Villers-Outreaux.

When during the commencement of the English artillery firing the entire telephone lines were destroyed, the commander of the right flank battalion (the 1st) of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 19, attempted to take up connection toward the front with every available means. He was unable to report until 8:35 a.m., that the frontmost line of the right flank company had been run over by hostile tanks and infantry, and that tanks were also advancing further to the north. He reported that machine-gun and infantry fire were without effect for the defense against the tanks. This report was outstripped already when it was sent, by the reports of the artillery observation posts and those received from Infantry Regt. No. 395. The other three companies of the battalion also were overpowered.

Major von Dobschutz with the officers and men of his battalion headquarters (1st), armed themselves with rifles and opened fire against the tanks and the English Infantry following them, as the latter came near to the command post of the 1st Battalion Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 19. This delayed the advance of the English infantry, though the tanks moved forward. The infantry soon discovered that only a few German defenders conducted the resistance. The English infantry launched another attack. It sealed the fate of the few defenders.

While the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 19 was attacked in the front and immediately deprived of every flank protection through the penetration of the connecting sector which occurred simultaneously, the situation by the 2d Battalion connecting to the left was more favorable. On the right flank of the latter, only the 7th and parts of the 8th Companies were caught by the main attack of the enemy and after an obstinate but fruitless resistance also were overpowered. The connecting 6th Company, supported by the 5th Company, on the other hand, could for the major part maintain themselves. It also was of the greatest importance for the left flank of the 2d Battalion, that the connecting 2d Battalion of Infantry Regt. No. 395, under command of Major Koch was not attacked. The security of the flank and rear, which by the now succeeding fighting could not be underrated, was hereby guaranteed. No doubt but that the English hoped that it would be easy to take Banteux and to capture the canal line, once they had taken possession of le Pave. Yet the remainder of the 2d Battalion, above all the 6th Company, were not spared from enemy's attacks nor from the advancing tanks. During this attack a few men of the company brought up a trench mortar. As rifle and machine gun fire was ineffective against the tanks, the company now undertook a trial with a trench mortar. Hardly more than 50 meters from a forward moving tank, the "mortar" was quickly mounted and fired. Inside of the tank it began to pop. The tank crew opened the small door and jumped out and sought cover in rear of the steel bed of the tank, but they did not escape the German fire.

The result of the fighting by Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 19, during the course of the morning was as follows: With the assistance of their tanks the English forces took the Lateau forest through an enveloping movement from the region of le Quennet. Parts of the 3d Battalion of Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 19, organized a new defence west of the canal on the road leading to Rues des Vignes. South of le Pave, guns of the 9th Battery, Reserve Field Arty. Regt. No. 9, in position on the Vogel wood, prevented a tank penetration. Other forces of the 3d Battalion Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 19, especially the 11th Company, threw back the English forces coming from the north towards Banteux, and in contact with what was left of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 19, formed a new front northwest and north of Banteux.

#### The Plan for the Attack and the Preparations of the English.

What had been done by the enemy that this serious crisis could have happened by the 2d German Army? None of the great penetration attempts by the Entente up to the Fall of 1917, conducted with a vast number of men and with large quantities of material resulted in a decisive success. With an amazing stubbornness the English were still fighting in a continuous rain on the muddy soil of Flanders for a victory and military glory. But that, which from day to day grew less assuring, was to be attempted anew at another place.

Despite the advanced season of the year, the English Commander-in-Chief planned for the month of November a new large attack within the zone of the

3d English Army, commanded by General Byng, against the Cambrai front.<sup>(1)</sup> Sir Douglas Haig believed that the Germans had weakened their other fronts in the West, especially so the sector in front of Cambrai, in order to have a sufficient resistance power during the English offensive in Flanders, which had been going on for months. It was well known at the Headquarters of the English forces, that exhausted German Divisions only were stationed in the Cambrai sector and it counted on a telling surprise in conducting a sudden attack against this quiet front.

The general plan of the operation was with the assistance of tanks to break through the German Hindenburg-line<sup>(2)</sup> between Connelieu and Havrincourt on a frontage of two corps and to open a way through the defensive system through which cavalry could advance to turn to account the success attained by the infantry. This new attack was to account for a greater gain than the one which General Petain entered upon against the angle of the German West-front near Laffaux, northeast of Soissons, to relieve the pressure against the English in Flanders. Captured orders for the execution of this operation-plan indicated this. According to the preparations made, the main defensive zone was to be penetrated in three combat sectors and the Bourlon-forest, the towns of Bourlon, Fontaine-Notre Dame, Rumilly and Crevecoeur, beyond the defensive zone, were to be captured on the first day of the attack.

The main attack of the 4th Corps was to be carried out by the 51st and 62d Divisions each with two brigades in the front line. The first objective (blue line) was the railway stretch northeast of Havrincourt-north of Ribecourt. The "brown line" (second objective) was north of Flesquieres and the third attack objective (red line) was formed by Graincourt and la Justice. From this point it was intended to launch the 154th Reserve Brigade of the 51st Division against Fontaine-Notre Dame and to occupy this town. Parts of the 36th Division had to join the 62d Division on the west flank of the latter. The 56th Division was ordered to make a feint attack against the sector Queant-Inchy. The boundary for the 3d Corps was fixed west of Ribecourt to west of the Neuf Forest. The 6th, 20th and 12th Divisions were directed to attack toward the east of this line. The quick capture of la Vacquerie and of the heights close to and northwest thereof (called by English troops "Welsh Ridge") was of great importance for the 20th Division. The 12th Division launched the 36th Brigade to win the first attack objective, after which this brigade was to be overtaken by the 35th Brigade which had to take by assault the "brown line" - the elevated plateau by le Fave. As this division also had the important task to assume the flank protection for the attack movement toward the East, the 37th Brigade was ordered to make a turn to the right from the "brown line" to occupy first of all the west bank of the canal from Banteux as far as Crevecoeur. The 29th Division acted as the reserve of the 3d Army Corps, but was to follow this corps immediately and seize at once the line Masnieres-Rumilly-Marcoing, after the capture of the second objective. (Three divisions were placed in readiness as reserves but rather far to the rear, to keep the operation secret.)

After this, the assembled cavalry was to develop the invasion of the German line into a penetration. The 2d and 5th Cavalry Divisions were to pass through the gaps formed by the tanks and infantry, to the south and east around Cambrai and the 1st Cavalry Division to the west past the city. The latter

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(1) According to Col. Fuller, "Tanks in the Great War," and W.S.Churchill, "The World Crisis," the suggestion came from the staff of the Tank Corps.  
(2) The Siegfried position line was called the Hindenburg line by the English.

division was to assist the English infantry in the capture of Gardaing and Fontaine-Notre Dame, while the main portions of the regiments of this division was to occupy Bourlon from the northeast. Finally the 1st Cavalry Division was also directed to send detachments to Sailly and Tilloy to encircle the city of Cambrai and unite with the cavalry forces to the east of the city. English and Indian cavalry troops also were to advance to the Sensee Creek, to thoroughly disorganize the German transmission of orders and the intervening connections in the whole area between the canal de l'Escaut, the Sensee Creek and the canal du Nord, also to the east and northeast of Cambrai. To divert the attention of the Germans, secondary attacks were to be made on both sides of Bullecourt by units of the 16th and 3d Divisions, while the 164th Brigade of the 55th Division was to make a similar attack near the Gillemont Ferme.

November 20th was designated on October 25th as the date on which the operation was to begin. In English orders this operation was termed the "surprise attack."

The method and procedure of the English attack were entirely new. Apparently Haig "selected the German operation in September near Riga for his model". This operation conducted by surprise, had resulted in great success. The English plan was kept strictly secret and the preparations were made with great caution. Even the French had no knowledge of the imminent attack, although their troops connected with the English front to the north of St. Quentin. Pierrefeu stated, that besides the French commander-in-chief, General Petain, no one else at the French G.H.Q. had knowledge of the attack under preparation for some lengthy period. The English command also knew how to conceal its intentions from its own troops. The necessary reconnaissances were performed under observance of special precautionary measures. [New divisions were not moved into the front line before the attack. The troops moved up for the penetration were not permitted to intermingle with each other, and as far as possible, were not to get in touch with the troops located in the front. All movements, even those in the rearward zone, were made during darkness. The attack divisions, for the most part, were to enter the jumping-off position during the last night. No new camp sites and road constructions were permitted. The augmentation of the artillery combat means was carefully concealed. A

Prior to this operation, the English attacks were always prepared in advance for days and even weeks, by artillery fire. For the attack to begin on November 20, they desisted from a lengthy and protracted artillery preparation. Haig wished to beat a path with tanks. The condition of the terrain, as a whole, was deemed favorable for the employment of the tanks. For the first time it was intended to employ the English war-machines in masses. This was to result in the greatest surprise for the Germans. 1,000 guns were assembled by the English command, their movements into position were accomplished very dexterously and unobserved. D

- . Besides 160 trench mortars, the following guns were inserted:
  - 90 - 13-pounder (7.6 cm.)
  - 480 - 18-pounder (8.38 cm.)
  - 89 - 60-pounder (12.7 cm.)
  - 126 - 4.5-inch Howitzer (11.75 cm.)
  - 140 - 6-inch Howitzer (15.24 cm.)
  - 30 - 8-inch Howitzer (20.3 cm.)
  - 28 - 9.3-inch Howitzer (23.4 cm.)

10 - 12-inch Howitzers (30.48 cm.)  
2 - 15-inch Howitzers (38.10 cm.)  
2 - 9.2-inch Guns (23.4 cm.)  
12 - 6-inch Guns (15.24 cm.)

The extensive forest of Havrincourt offered a favorable possibility for forming up. Just as the English desisted from a lengthy firing for effect, they also desisted from an accurate registration. On the other hand, their distribution of fire was carefully regulated. Commencing with a heavy cannonade, a distinct rolling barrage had to precede the attack movement of the tanks. Numerous batteries opened its fire at the same time to dominate the German artillery, their observation and command posts. Smoke bombs were used during this firing, while long range guns and howitzers were to shell the roads, towns and railway yards located in rear of the German front.

The entire Tank Corps under the command of General Eiles was assembled. It was formed into three brigades, each of three battalions. Each battalion was organized into three companies, each company into four sections. According to the table of organization, the total number of the combat tanks must have been 432, although the English command states that there were only 362 tanks used during the attack. At any rate, a number of tanks never even approximately employed heretofore in an attack. The advance of the tanks was, as already stated, to be covered by a barrage formed of high explosive and smoke shells to be laid in front of the tanks at greater intervals. The tanks were to advance ten minutes before the opening of the fire in several waves.

Note: At this time there were two different kinds of tanks. (Model "Mark IV, 1917"): Male tank with two six-pounder, rapid-fire guns and four Lewis machine guns. Female tank armed with only six Lewis machine guns. Tank crew: 1 officer and 7 men.

The Battalions were indicated by large letters, while the Companies were numbered commencing with No. 1, within the Tank Corps and the sections within the battalion.

The Tank Battalions were apportioned to the several attack divisions. The 51st Division thus disposed of Battalions D and E of the 1st Tank Brigade, the 6th Division had Battalions B and H of the 2d Tank Brigade, the 12th Division had Battalions C and F of the 3d Tank Brigade, but the 29th Division apparently had only one company of Battalion A. The number of the tanks assigned to the several waves differentiated according to the employment in which the divisions disposed of their brigades, either frontal or on the flank. For instance, the attacking battalion on the right flank of the 30th Division, had 18 tanks in the first, 12 tanks in the second and 6 tanks in the third wave. By Battalion D (153d Brigade, 51st Division), the first wave had 6 tanks, the second wave 18 tanks and the third wave 12 tanks. Individual combat-tank groups were also consolidated for particular tasks.

Special Orders No. 10, issued by the English command on November 19, partly read as follows:-

"Tomorrow the Tank Corps will have the opportunity for which it has ardently waited for many months, to operate in the midst of a battle, in vigorous fighting."

The wrong manner in which the tanks were employed heretofore and the unsuccessful German defensive measures adopted, had very much lowered the original exaggerated expectation of the performances of this new English combat weapon. On November 20, General Elles opined he would produce the evidence, what an important role the mass employment of tanks could play in a major battle. The order referred to also stated "All preparations which hard work and inventive faculty can produce, have been taken." A minute and very carefully carried out reconnaissance activity was necessary to select the assembly points, ground positions, roads and objectives. A knowledge of the terrain conditions of the combat zone, as completely as possible, had to be acquired. Among the technical contrivances, besides the preparations for so many machines, establishments for the storage of material (gas, oil and repair material), arrangements had to be devised for carrying and casting off of fascines to be used in passing over very wide German trenches.

Exercises were conducted for the joint operation of the tanks and infantry. Signals were arranged between the two arms. For instance, the commander of every tank could through a signal indicate to the infantry following the tank, whether or not the way was clear, while on the other hand the assault detachments were able to inform the tank crew when tanks were needed by the infantry.

Under the pretext of "winter training," the Tank Corps was assembled southeast of Albert. The tank battalions arrived one by one from the Ypres and Arras front and also from winter quarters. They were transported by rail from the vicinity of Albert to Gouzeaucourt whence they proceeded to their accommodation sectors under their own power.

All rail journeys as well as the movements of the tanks to the temporary accommodation sectors and finally also the assembly in the places of readiness, were performed during nights. The front combat lines were required to fire with machine guns and trench mortars to drown the noises of the tanks during their concentration. The largest assembly of tanks in rear of the attack troops took place in the forest of Havrincourt. Other tanks were concealed in smaller woodlands or in towns. Nets, covered with branches, straw or earth-colored sheets of cloths, were stretched over the tanks.

The English intelligence service functioned in a first class manner for this attack. English documents which later were found, showed that the attacker was apprised with every detail of the German troops opposing the English forces. They knew all about the construction of the defense system of the Germans, their occupation troops, the latest transfers, losses, replacements and even the names of the commanders down to the battalions. For instance, the 54th German Division was characterized in the following manner: "This division has participated in many battles and generally has fought well. The combat value must be considered as good." As to the 20th Division, it was stated: "The Division has the repute of being a very good division. But since the battle of Flanders it has received replacement of doubtful value. Its present combat value can be estimated as hardly more than good."

The English had used all conceivable means to keep the attack and the mass employment of tanks secret in order to surprise the Germans. They were also favored, especially during the last ten days in its preparations, by overcast clouds and frequent rainy November days. German aviators could not see through the fog. So the fate which threatened the weak German forces remained obscure.

The Further Progress of November 20th.

Larger hostile attacks against the Army front are not anticipated during the near future, thus read the report submitted on November 16th, by the Headquarters of the 2d Army, to the Headquarters of the Army Group, located at Mons. Four days later, at dawn of day on November 20th, the positions of the 2d Army, from Arras as far as to the north of St. Quentin lay almost without exception under a heavy fire of the English batteries.

The demonstration "with Gas, Smoke and Artillery" had hidden the true intentions of the enemy for a short period only; for the English attacked this day without a lengthy artillery preparation---an entirely new combat method.

The expected hostile operation which for its mission involved the capture of Havrincourt, thus an operation for a seemingly limited object, resulted in an attack on a wide front with strong forces. With one stroke, "the so-called quiet front", was turned into a battle field desolated by furious fighting. It was a surprise in the fullest sense of the word. Although it struck the German regiments while ready for action, they were separated from each other in disproportionate wide sectors and almost without prepared combat means against this day's most dangerous opponent---the tanks.

Thus the "land fleet" penetrated the German front blockade at numerous points from Havrincourt to close to and west of Bantoux. The strong Siegfried line within the whole sector of the 54th Infantry Division and at the flank regiment of the connecting 9th Reserve Division, was lost. The enemy commenced by rolling up the front trenches of the 20th Landwehr Division. The English 63d Division advanced from Havrincourt in the direction of Graincourt, while numerous assault columns moved from Ribécourt and via le Pavé toward the canal line south of Cambrai. The tanks remained at all times at the head of the attacks and prepared the way. The tank was the main attack weapon on this day under the protection of which, all English attack divisions were operating. The brigades of the English 51st Division were the only ones who had to stop in front of Flesquieres.

Flesquieres.

As already mentioned, the commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27 was ordered to proceed from Marcoing to Flesquieres. The Commander, Major Krebs, and his staff rode longside of the canal via Moyelles and through the Neuf Forest. A loud combat noise resounded from the front, while a heavy fire of the enemy was placed on the roads and junction points. The dense fog prohibited every kind of observation.

The ride led to the positions of the German artillery which stood strongly massed east of Flesquieres. English shells of different calibres had struck the battery positions since the early morning hours and many guns were destroyed by the heavy fire of the enemy, yet from the boxes of the still available guns, shot after shot was fired in rapid succession. The protective barrage was moved back several times. Officers and non-commissioned officers were sent forward by the sub-groups and batteries to

seek in the fog a guidance of the combat situation. (1).

Major Krebs arrived at the command post of Infantry Regiment No. 84, at about 9:00 a.m. His own 2d Battalion as we know had already advanced with its main forces to occupy the Oetinger switch trench. The enemy's artillery kept Flesquieres, as well as the whole heights under a heavy fire. The information so far received from the front line was extremely meagre. Telephone connection existed only with the staff of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 84, whose commander had called for assistance because the enemy had entered the first combat line. No information was received from the left sector. The combat noise became more and more distinct, a suspicious indication! Major Krebs assembled quickly all the available German forces. The order sent to Major Stubenrauch, not to advance for the present beyond the Intermediate position, did not reach him, but the machine gun company and parts of the 8th company, of the 2d battalion were stopped.

The half battalion (2d) of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, (Capt. Pfaehler, commanding) was moved up by motor trucks from Fontaine-Notre-Dame to the southwest of Cantaing. The 3d Company was directed to place itself in readiness in the first trench of the Intermediate position close to and east of the Park and the 4th Company connecting toward the left, had to enter in this position.

The two regimental commanders waited longingly for further reports. Despite the urgent requests of superior commanders, they could only give incomplete information of the present situation. Suddenly the first tanks appeared and again they tried to screen their coming by artificial smoke. Next they sent an infernal fire from their guns and machine guns. Major Hoffmeister, a giant figure was badly wounded on the head while standing in the trench. (2). Major Krebs also wounded, now assumed the command. Energetically and quickly he took the necessary measures, knowing that everything depended on the question of maintaining the position on the heights of Flesquieres.

The English also understood that the winning of Flesquieres was of the greatest importance for them. They sought to gain this objective through the employment of strong forces. More and more tanks showed up in front of the Intermediate position. The 1st and 2d Company of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, sheltered during the past night in the pits and galleries of Flesquieres, received orders from Major Hoffmeister at about 8:50 a.m., to move into the Intermediate position and one-half hour later,

(1) For the extensive sector of the 54th German Infantry Division, between Havrincourt and la Vacquerie, without the artillery reinforcement of 14 batteries mentioned on page 5, (Artillery Command No. 55, Colonel Lauer, with light Artillery Group under Major Vossfeldt and the heavy Artillery Group under Captain Crell.

(2) The German tried to take Major Hoffmeister to the main dressing station at Noyelles. As the carriers did not know that the English had gotten so far forward, the former were attacked by machine gun fire which resulted in losses and they had to leave the dying Major in the hands of the enemy.

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to fall in for a counter-attack in the direction of the command post of the 1st battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 84. This last portion of the order was transmitted only to parts of the 1st company, due to which the remainder of the half battalion also remained to defend the position on the heights. Against the advancing tanks and the English assault troops following the former, which in front of the westerly half of the town, had already crossed the trenches of the Intermediate position and were also threatening to envelope Flesquieres, Warrant Officer Reinsch, immediately occupied the southwest and west exit of the town, with his platoon of the 1st Company, with men of the 2d battalion and a few groups of Pioneer Company No. 108, the command of which Lieut. Möring assumed soon afterwards. The 2d Company established itself for the defence in the trench patches located in the ruins of the eastern portion of the town of Flesquieres, to protect the Pioneer Park and ammunition depots. An effective assistance for the defence conducted by the 3d and 4th company, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, was rendered by the machine guns of the 2d battalion of the regiment and also by the trench mortars of the 1st battalion. A small detachment of about 25 men, mainly of the 3d company, who had not been moved up by motor trucks, took a position at the north edge of the park. The 2d line of the Intermediate position to the rear of the 3d company, was guarded by Lieut. Helff with a company formed of stragglers and portions of the 2d battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27. The left flank was protected by members of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 387, in strength of a platoon; later on noncommissioned officers and men of the 1st trench mortar section (Subdivision of a trench mortar company), who due to a lack of ammunition could no longer serve their trench mortars, also assembled on this flank. The commander of the 3d battalion Infantry Regiment No. 84, who had assembled all the stragglers within reach at the sugar-refinery to the northeast of Flesquieres, reported to Major Krebs who in turn ordered this officer (Captain Färsen), to assume command of the remnants of the 84th Infantry Regiment, about 50 men. /

The commanding officer of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, knew that toward the east a large gap existed in the defensive front. Information had reached him that the battalions of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 387, had been subdued by the English forces.

If one considers the small number of the defenders congregated around Major Krebs, who on the heights of Flesquieres opposed the English tanks, and the English numerically superior infantry, it seems inconceivable that the enemy was not successful in routing the German forces, about 600 men, at the first assault.

The enemy again and again drive its attacks against Flesquieres. The fog had lifted and it was seen that tanks were standing or were moving forward everywhere. But only in the centre and in the eastern portion of the town did the English attain a transitory success. Lieut. Höfer conducting a counter-attack with the 2d company Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, drove the English out of the east portion of the town, while the small detachment of the 84th Regiment expelled the enemy from the Park. The English also had to yield the centre of the town. Corporal Richtes halted a tank with hand grenades and through well directed machine gun fire annihilated the English assault detachment following the tank. The precious ammunition depot in the Pioneer Park was saved to the German defenders

through the possession of the town. Close to and east of Flesquieres and as far as to the junction of the Ribecourt switch trench, the 3d and 4th companies of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, maintained their positions. Their machine guns fired against the observation slit of the tanks. Courageous men frequently jumped out of the trench and threw timed charges in front of the caterpillars; yes, they even drew unwounded English men out of one of the damaged tanks.

At 10:00 a.m., Major Krebs asked Brigade Headquarters for reinforcements and at 12:50 p.m. repeated this request giving at the same time a correct outline of the situation. He stated "The spirit of the defenders at Flesquieres is just superb. Men and their leaders are animated with one thought only--- to hold the positions---and the firm will to do so, means much."

The Artillery had a praiseworthy share in the defence against the English.

Among the artillery group which with Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384 (of the 20th Landwehr Division), was placed under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division for the defence at Havrincourt, was the 3d Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 282. The latter, located close to and west of Flesquieres, was commanded by Lieut. Finndorf. The second gun of this battery had been destroyed during the early morning by a direct hit, but the rest of the battery defended itself against the tanks and formed a valuable flank protection for the fighters of Major Krebs regiment. During a very short period this battery downed five tanks. The Pioneer platoons (of the 2d depot company, Pioneer Regiment No. 24) and the Pioneer Trench Mortar Company No. 281, joined the battery and assisted in its defence of the battery position. Pioneer soldiers removed the still serviceable machine guns from the damaged tanks and used them against the enemy until all the ammunition found in the damaged tanks was fired. The guns of the German 2d Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 108 (located south of the sugar refinery), were removed from the carefully prepared emplacements with much labor. Against the tanks the artillery needed an unencumbered mobility in every direction. A speaking example of the manner in which the English artillery fire covered the German batteries, is indicated by the fate of the 3d battery of Field Artillery Regiment No. 108, located at Flesquieres: This battery entered the battle with only three guns. Immediately afterwards, the lower carriage of one of the guns was badly damaged by a heavy shell, after that English shells frequently caused the explosion of German ammunition dumps. Only one of the three field guns remained in action at 9:00 a.m., but a direct hit destroyed this gun and its entire crew shortly afterwards. The battery, from an artillery viewpoint, was now put out of action. What remained of the personnel of this battery, placed itself at the disposition of the 2d Battery.

Where the direct firing against the enemy's tanks found its mark, the losses were heavy. Southeast of Flesquieres, the batteries of the 5d battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, were firing. It had a rather difficult task, for the terrain, as well as the conditions on the western front, were unknown. Its first entry on the western front took place on a major battle day and at that with a deficiency of ammunition. The following comparison gives a clear picture of the ammunition shortage: The 2d Battery,

Field Artillery Regiment No. 108, at the commencement of the English attack had in its position 2,010 shots and in addition 933 gas shells and 35 case shots. Major von Uslar (3d battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213), reported that his three batteries, after fruitless attempts to obtain ammunition, moved into their assigned artillery positions without ammunition, leaving the artillery wagons in Marcoing until howitzer ammunition was brought up to that place between 2 and 3 a.m., by motor cars. Here 240 shots were received for each battery. Further replacements were to be hauled directly to the batteries, but only 260 shots were actually received by the 9th battery at 6:00 a.m., and they were unserviceable because these shots had no fuze nipples.

What the German artillery accomplished under these difficult circumstances can be seen from the work of the English Historical Section, Committee of Imperial Defence which reads: "Many of the hits against our tanks near Flesquieres were produced by a German Artillery Officer, who being the only living person left by his battery, served a field gun with his own hands until he also was killed serving his gun. The great bravery of this officer excited the admiration of every military grade from the highest to the lowest."

Several attempts were made to ascertain the name of the officer but even inquiries made in England have failed. The search for the number of the battery as well as that of the regiment also have been without result. According to the text of the report it could only refer to a field battery. The inaccurate designation "by Flesquieres" did not permit to ascertain more particulars, for tanks advanced from the south, west and southeast, against this town."

But the fame of this unknown German Artillery Officer cannot be detracted from, when the tribute which the commander of the army pays the deed of one, is expressed for all the German batteries which stood at Flesquieres. Officers, noncommissioned officers and gunners all rendered valorous service at this place.

The few combat intervals which set in at Flesquieres were employed by the Germans in establishing order within their ranks and in reforming the confused and much inter-mixed units, in replenishing the ammunition supply which had become precariously scanty, also the supply of hand-grenades, the latter being hauled from the Pioneer Park located at the south-east exit of Flesquieres. Repeated attempts of hostile forces to outflank the right German wing at this town were repulsed from the northwest edge of the town. Assembled men of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27 and Infantry Regiment No. 84, Pioneers and even stragglers of Field and Heavy Artillery, some of whom belonged to batteries which had lost their guns, participated in these defences. By noon no enemy was able to get nearer to the defence front at any place. The second line of the Intermediate position at the south edge, east of the town and even the first trench of this position were maintained against all attacks. Yet Major Krebs waited impatiently for the reinforcements which shortly after 1:00 p.m., had been promised him by the 54th Infantry Division through the medium of a luminous signal message. The previous successes did not deceive his estimate of the gravity of the situation.

During the early afternoon hours it became known, that the English were assembling Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery to the south of Flesquieres, it looked as if the enemy was about to execute a new and powerful stroke. The latter though was directed toward Marcoing. All attempts of Major Krebs, to take up connection to his right and left were without result. Stretcher bearers returning from the rear soon afterwards, reported that Marcoing and even Hoyelles were taken by the enemy. Observations made from Flesquieres indicated that English Infantry and Cavalry were also moving in rear of advancing tanks toward Graincourt. There was no doubt that the danger, of being completely invested and cut off at Flesquieres, increased with every minute.

In the meantime (1:50 p.m.), Major Krebs had sent the Orderly Officer of the 84th Infantry Regiment, Lieut. Bertheau, to the rear to report the conditions. Nothing could yet be seen of the approach of the reinforcements promised by the 54th Division.

#### Graincourt

After the German defender (1st Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 84) of Havrincourt, had been overwhelmed by the English superiority, the latter's 62d Division advanced in the direction of Graincourt. Its tanks hit against the now open flank of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384 and then rolled along the trenches of the Siegfried position and soon showed up in front of the Intermediate position. The English 36th Division now attacked from the south on both sides of the canal under construction, and first of all rolled up the out-posts of the 3d Battalion and later the front most companies of the 1st Battalion of the 384th Landwehr Infantry Regiment.

The companies of the 384th Regiment resisted in the communication trenches and in the strong points with trench mortars, machine guns and hand grenades to stop the tanks, but natural and artificial fog as well as smoke clouds of the shells, increased the difficulties of the fighting. The tanks came up surprisingly in the flank and rear of the defenders. One sector after another was lost and numerous groups were cut off from the retreat. Smaller groups of the 3d Battalion assembled at the 5th and 6th company in the Intermediate position southwest of Graincourt and tried to continue the defence. This position though could be maintained for a short time only, because there was a shortage of ammunition and reinforcements did not arrive. The regiment (384th) was dispersed, small groups of the regiment were conducted to Cantaing. (Note: The war diary of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384, gives the following losses, 3 dead, 37 wounded, 1,135 missing).

The two batteries of the 1st Battalion Field Artillery Regiment No. 282 as well as the 2d Battalion Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, located in and close to the southwest of Graincourt, took up the combat against the advancing tanks at once. The less mobile heavy batteries (mostly captured guns, so the 6th battery, Landwehr Foot Artillery Regiment No. 61, 3d Battery, Landwehr Foot Artillery Regiment No. 37 and 6th Battery, Landwehr Foot Artillery Regiment No. 32) expended their very meagre supply of ammunition against the advancing English Infantry. But the heavy artillery fire of the enemy already had destroyed many guns, thus for instance the 6th battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, lost early all of its three guns. Two

field guns of the 1st Battery of Field Artillery Regiment No. 282 also were smothered by earth and badly damaged. The frontmost battery of the 2d Battalion Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, achieved good results against the tanks moving in the direction of Flesquieres. As the last firing gun of the 4th battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, could not be moved by human strength to the steep slope in front of the battery, to fire against the now appearing tanks close to and sideways of the gun, the position already under the fire of hostile machine guns and Infantry, had to be given up. (Note: The 2d Battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, during the night from the 19th to the 20th could only fill their gun limbers and wagons with ammunition). The connecting 1st Battery, Landwehr Foot Artillery Regiment No. 37, also was obliged to quit their heavy howitzers. The gun crews of the 1st and 2d battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 282 in Graincourt, stuck to their guns as late as the afternoon hours until the last shell was fired. The 5th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, located about 500 metres southwest of Graincourt, expended all its ammunition by 3:00 p.m.

The English also attempted to extend the penetration in a northerly direction toward the road Cambrai-Bapaume. In the sector to the right of the Division (20th Landwehr), at Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 386, everything was quiet on the front line since 8:30 a.m., after enduring a heavy artillery fire. An uneasy quietness! Only to the left could they hear the combat noise out of the fog. Toward noon another heavy fire was placed on the positions. Patrols of the 5th and 8th company and stragglers of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384, reported that English forces had entered the connecting sector to the left and were now threatening the flank and soon also the rear of Infantry Regiment No. 386. Major Vollerthun the artillery commander of the 20th Landwehr Division, in the meantime ordered each of the 4th and 5th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment, No. 282, to push one gun ahead out of the position. These guns gave an excellent account against the tanks and the English Infantry, from the sugar refinery, northwest of Graincourt. (Note: The gun of the 5th Battery was pushed ahead by hands and after it had expended all its ammunition, was carried back by the gunners during the afternoon to its old position west of Bourlon). On the other hand, the attempts of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 386, to maintain itself south of the Bapaume road was in vain. The enemy's tanks and Infantry, through constant outflanking, forced the 2d Battalion as well as the 3d Battalion of the regiment, the latter having hurried hither to assist the 2d Battalion, to fall back. These two battalions, in contact with the 1st Battalion south of Moeuvres, established themselves in the first line of the Intermediate position. The 3d Battalion extended the front from about the point where the position bends sharply to the south, toward the east in the direction of Cap of Anneut, hastily collected men being used for this purpose. To the left though, connections could not be established for the present by the patrols sent out for this purpose.

The enemy also laid his intense bombardment against the trenches of the 20th Infantry Division, connecting to the right with the 20th Landwehr Division. The commanding general of the former received information at about 8:25 a.m., that tanks and skirmisher lines were advancing toward Qudant. Field Artillery Regiment No. 46 and the heavy batteries placed

their fire at once against these hostile forces. Accurate observation though proved, that the tanks and skirmisher lines were nothing but snares and decoy-targets. The English 56th Division made use of this strange stratagem in order to accomplish its mission---"demonstration." On this front it soon became quiet again. The reports and orientation received at noon from the Group Areas, however indicated that the flank of the 20th Infantry Division was endangered. So the 2d Battalion Infantry Regiment No. 92, was directed to take up a position from the front line up to and including the canal east of Inchy, to cover the left flank. The 20th Infantry Division also received from the Army Reserve, the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 77 and the 3d Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 46, Colonel Eggors, the commander of the 40th Infantry Brigade, was ordered to seek a suitable position to the west of the Bourlon-forest for his battalion and he was also directed by the division commander (Lieut. General Wellmann), to cover the division against hostile attacks out of the line Moeuvres-Craincourt.

#### In front of the Gate-ways of Cambrai.

The troops of the 107th Infantry Division hoped to spend a few days of rest in their accommodations prior to relieving the 20th Landwehr Divisions. Thus, the orders to be "Ready for Action" and to change accommodations came as a complete surprise. Those orders were quickly changed again, for at 9:40 a.m., Group Caudry sent new instructions for the regiments of the division (see pages 8 and 9).

Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, quickly called its companies from the training grounds and gas chambers, as at about 9:00 a.m., Division Headquarters ordered "Ready to move." Shortly before 10:00 a.m., the commanding officer of the 215th Infantry Brigade, directed the 227th Reserve Infantry Regiment to move off at once to support Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90 and the 9th Reserve Division generally. The Headquarters of the 227th Reserve Infantry Regiment hurried ahead of the regiment from Cambrai to the Headquarters of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90, located in the spinning-mill at Masnières.

Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232, detrained during the late evening of November 19th, and during the early morning hours of November 20th, at Risoux, but the 3d Battalion of this regiment did not arrive in the railway yard of Cambrai, until 7:00 a.m., of November 20th. At about 9:00 a.m., the regiment received a Brigade order to march at once with the 1st Battalion, to Bourlon and with the 2d Battalion to Fontaine-Notre Dame. The order added that both towns lay under hostile fire. The 3d Battalion was ordered by the Brigade Commander directly, to take up alarm quarters in the northwest portion of Cambrai. The companies in Risoux and Cagnoncles made arrangements to march off at once. In order to seek accurate information of the situation, the regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel von Bartenwerfer, wished to ride by the Brigade Headquarters in Cambrai. Through a mistake, he arrived at the Headquarters of the Division, where General Havenstein gave him orders to occupy the southern second position from Anneux via Cantaing to Moyelles and as far as Rully, stating that in the meantime the employment of the regiments were changed. An automobile

was furnished the regimental commander, that he might meet the onmarching battalions and give them the latest orders.

A grave disaster occurred during the rail journey of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52. Not far from Hirson the troop train of the 2d Battalion collided with another train. 5 officers were killed and 6 officers and 23 men seriously injured, 100 were also slightly injured. This was not a good omen for the new theater of war! On the morning of November 20th, the companies were training in the vicinity of their quarters at Carnières, Bousières and Bevillers (east of Cambrai). From here they were ordered to the south and west of Cambrai to serve as the Group Reserve. While on the march to these points the order was changed again. The regiment now was placed under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division and directed to take possession again of Flesquieres and the intermediate position Flesquieres-Ribecourt. The regimental commander, Major Frühling, had in mind to solve this mission with the 1st and 3d Battalions. To hurry the approach, auto's of the motor transport column of the 107th Infantry Division were assigned. The headquarters and two companies and two companies of the frontmost 1st Battalions were loaded on the auto's between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m., in the eastern portion of Cambrai, the remainder kept up the march. The regimental commander rode to Cantaing ahead of his command.

During this crisis-like situation, orders had to be constantly changed. The picture which the commanders and their staffs gleaned from the information coming from the front changed continuously. Officers in automobiles, Dragoons, Hussars and Lancers mounted on horses, bringing reports or transmitting orders, had great difficulties in passing the trucks and vehicles on the roads. Baggage and ration wagons, saddle horses and field kitchens were returning from the battlefield. Limbers of the artillery did their utmost to get to the battery positions. The battalions of the 107th Infantry Division encountered these movements and found the roads completely blocked. It resulted in a constant to and fro, in overtaking and intercrossing movements. No marvel that such an entanglement produced terrorizing rumors which soon spread. Terrible things were said about the tanks. More than likely that the narrators never saw one but just for that, their portrayal was all the more horrible. The number of the tanks grew from mouth to mouth. What the first said about it, the next considers too little and the third even raised the number given by the second.

Group Candry, at 10:50 a.m., gave the following instructions to the 54th and 107th Infantry Divisions: "The main point is, that the lines in our possession at present must absolutely be maintained. The counter-attacks now under way will be carried out but new ones will be omitted." The instructions also advised the changes, already stated, for the employment of Reserve Infantry Regiments No. 52 and 232 (Subordination to the 54th Infantry Division and occupation of the southern second position, as group reserve). But at this time the hostile attack movement was still in perfect flux, Flesquieres excepted. Of the maintenance of a longer and connecting line, with the still remaining parts of the troops in the sector of the 54th Infantry Division, could not be thought of. It was extremely questionable under such a situation, if the regiments of the 107th Infantry Division, after some of the long approach marches, would

be able to timely and effectively engage and stop the forward movement of the powerful English attack. Further reports received from the front, of the advance and expansion of the hostile attack could only strengthen this doubt. If a catastrophe was to be prevented, further forces had to be employed in the centre of the attack.

An order from Headquarters of the 2d Army on the early afternoon gave news of the coming of new divisions and several rest-battalions; a few batteries of neighboring groups also were indicated as enroute. But even the arrival of reinforcements from the 6th Army connecting to the right, or from the Groups Quentin and Oise, could not be counted upon until the late evening hours. Of the divisions enroute, the 214th Infantry Division of the 4th Army was to join Group Arras, the 30th Infantry Division of the 7th Army, Group Caudry, and the 119th Infantry Division was to form the army group reserve. But would these divisions arrive in opportune time? General Ludendorff in his War Memories, referring to the movement of the divisions for Cambrai, states: "The order to an organization to move by rail does not signify its arrival. It has to march to the railway yards where trains are assembled. The trains can move only over the several lines under timely designated intervals to which must be added the running time. Thus it took mostly from two to three days and even more, before a division reached its destination with about 30 trains, it was seldom that they could arrive more quickly. The first train hauling reinforcements could not arrive in Cambrai until early on the morning of November 21st. Not until November 23d could ample forces be assembled to face the English attack. The lack here of motorized columns to transport the troops, was sensitively perceived."

When the reports sounded more and more threatening, the position divisions assembled all the, in some degree, combatable forces which could anywhere be reached. The 54th Infantry Division ordered the field recruit depot to move up at 12:50 p.m. by rail and motor trucks from St. Aubert and the assault detachment to move at 11:55 a.m., from Caucoir. The commandant of the division headquarters with about 30 men was sent to the canal as a covering party. Even the 9th Reserve Division ordered a part of its recruit depot to march to Crèvecoeur.

During the first hours of the afternoon, the Headquarters of the 9th Reserve Division informed the commander of the 18th Reserve Infantry Brigade that it was seriously considering to evacuate everything on the left side of the Schelde river and to blow up the canal bridges. Colonel von Gleich, the Brigade Commander, energetically opposed this. Further inquiry made to the commander of Infantry Regiment No. 395, also resulted that he also was firmly convinced, that not only Banteux but also the piquets and at least the town defensive works of Honnecourt would be able to repulse a stronger attack. The Brigade Commander again and urgently recommended against the evacuation. While these discussions were taking place, the commander of Infantry Regiment No. 395, Major von Kuizkowski, reported that the counter-attack of his 2d Battalion had started.

This battalion coming from the Ferme Montecouvez arrived in Banteux at about 1:00 p.m. Its attack took place in a west-north-westerly direction, the 8th company of Infantry Regiment No. 395 joining the battalion.

At first, the attack developed favorably. Various trench patches were taken from the English. Soon though several tanks blocked the way of the right flank and caused heavy losses. A strong counter move of the enemy then stopped the advance of the other portions of the battalion. At any rate, a strong resistance line had now been formed around Banteux. Although the enemy continued its attacks during the next afternoon hours, against the strong point of Banteux, he was unable to attain notable advantages.

Through the assembling of small groups, the 9th Reserve Division formed a new front on the west bank of the canal from Banteux as far as Crèvecoeur during the afternoon. Although these forces were weak, reinforcements were on the march. It also appeared as if a certain conclusion of the fighting had reached this sector.

(NOTE: The evacuation of the bridge points were given up due to the objections raised. An Army order of November 21st, directed also that the Schelde crossings be maintained. The 9th Reserve Division was able to maintain the important portions on the west bank which for the intended German counter-attack were of decisive signification. At 4:00 p.m., the Chief of Pioneers of the 9th Reserve Division issued orders to the 1st Reserve Pioneer Company Regiment No. 18, to blow up at once the permanent road bridges between Crèvecoeur and Banteux. The bridge Banteux-Bantouzell was thus demolished. Shortly afterward the order was revoked and new instructions given: Only to prepare the bridges for destruction.)

The barrage of the artillery could now be regulated again. The information received from the 54th Infantry Division and the reports of the detachment of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 19, located close to and west of Crèvecoeur though left no doubt, that the right flank of the division was completely isolated at this time.

Before the English forces attacked the canal crossings near Masnières, its 6th Division attacked toward Marcoing and against the battery positions to the west of this town. Here there were posted from the artillery sub-group Lorenzen, the 1st and 5th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 108, and close to them, were the fire positions of the 8th and 4th Battery of the same regiment and the 9th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 282, of the sub-group Rosendahl. A heavy fire lay on all the positions. Upon receipt of information that tanks had penetrated, several guns were hauled out of the positions for direct firing against the tanks. The observation posts located at the frontmost projection soon reported the coming of the enemy's tanks toward Flesquieres and also from Ribecourt. A field gun was moved ahead a few hundred metres by the 1st Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 108, to enfilade the hollow toward Ribecourt. Without Infantry protection, for that portion of the 2d Battalion, Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 387, located on the height to the west of Marcoing could no longer hold its ground, the batteries were fighting the tanks. Huge, fiery red columns ascended when a successful shot caused the explosion of the gas reservoir of a tank. A horrible sight! The losses increased at all the batteries. The English Infantry came up and continued the fire with its machine guns. The ammunition at the few still active guns of the defenders grew more and more scanty, for the long lasting barrage had caused a heavy expenditure of ammunition. The tanks moved forward and supported by their assault detachments sought to envelope the German battery group. The positions could no longer hold out. The group commander ordered the evacuation of the positions.

After a short rapid fire, Lieut. von Köller conducts the remnants of the gunners toward Cantaing. The neighboring 5th Battery of Field Artillery Regiment No. 108, was notified just in time of the threatening enveloping movement. The shells of the 5th Battery, Landwehr Foot Artillery Regiment No. 57, located a few hundred metres in rear to the left, had all been expended by 10:00 a.m., since which time the battery fired with time fuse shrapnel. By the time that the enemy approached the Neuf Forest, the battery had expended all its ammunition. At first the gunners of the battery defended themselves aside of their former fire position with carbines. Soon afterwards their fate also were sealed. The gunners of the 4th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 108, having been prevented to serve their howitzers on account of the strong English machine gun fire, prepared to meet the enemy through Infantry combat. The 8th Battery of this regiment, now commanded by a corporal, fired their last shells against the advancing enemy. The 9th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 282, had no ammunition left and quickly made their guns unserviceable, after which its gunners also took up the defence with carbines. The remnant of the battery, posted in rear of an earth-hill, kept up the fighting with the enemy for some time.

Finally, shortly after the noon hour Lieutenant von Köller assembled in Cantaing all the gunners who had reached the town as well as all the dispersed Infantrymen and prepared for the defence at the south edge of the town. Ammunition was found in the houses of the town which had been the quarters of the recuperation battalion of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384. But what could this weakly command have done, had the enemy recognized the conditions correctly? The town could not have been held against an energetic attack, for at this time no German defender was posted within many kilometres in the direction of Flesquieres or toward Graincourt.

The town of Marcoing was taken by the English in the meantime. The commandant of the town, acting officer Bergmann, of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, with only a few men, assumed the defence against the tanks moving against the town. The 3d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, left Cambrai at 9:30 a.m. and by marching reached the Flot-Ferme at about 11:00 a.m. It was informed by a wounded man of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90, that tanks and English Infantry were within a few hundred metres from Marcoing. The battalion commander, Captain Schrader, deployed his battalion immediately between the Neuf Forest and Marcoing, to prevent above all the further advance of the enemy against the canal. The 9th Company of this battalion met the detachment of Bergmann at the church of Marcoing, the detachment having been forced by the tanks to retire to the church. Close to and north of the town, the 11th and 10th Companies of this battalion, during their advance also received fire from the tanks. The danger of being surrounded, especially from the right, became more and more acute for the 3d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, defending itself on a wide front. Parts of the 10th and 11th company were made prisoners. The attempt to stop the much superior enemy was in vain. The companies were slowly pushed back. The English now entered the town of Noyelles with their tanks upon which the Schelde bridge near the church was demolished by German pioneers. Lieutenant Greiff of Infantry Regiment No. 84, was able to form a new defensive line with a few groups of men near the sugar refinery. Connecting with this line to the left, the remnants

of the 3d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, occupied the east bank of the canal as far as the Plot-Ferme. (The losses of this battalion on November 20th, were 4 dead, 31 wounded, 216 missing).

The first English tanks crossed the canal from the direction of Marcoing.

The preparations for blowing up the numerous bridges across the canal and the Shelde River, were not contrived to meet such a surprise as occurred on November 20th. The charges and detonators of course were on hand, but for such an event they should have been placed in readiness for firing at the points where the explosions were to be accomplished as also at the crossings. The orders for the posting of demolition detachments reached Pioneer Company No. 107, only, after certain parts of the company had marched off to act as emergency occupation troops of the Intermediate position in the sector of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 387. Thus the commander of the Pioneer Company no longer disposed of the necessary force to furnish the 14th detachments for the crossings located to the south of Cambrai, starting from the lock of the canal close to and west of Crevecoeur. So it happened that through the efforts of fatal circumstances, just the most important and permanent bridges, came in the possession of the enemy in a wholly useful or only partly damaged condition. The English Artillery fire also prevented the fixing of explosive material on the large railway bridge in Marcoing by the German security detachment of the town. The road bridge in Masnieres the demolishing of which succeeded only in a minor manner, was due to a mishap, probably to unreliable ammunition.

What signification there was attached to the fact, that the English won the crossings near Marcoing in an intact condition, was soon to be manifested.

When the enemy close to noon approached critically near to the regimental command post of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90, the telephone connection of the latter to Masnieres was still intact. The commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, who happened to be in the town was advised of the situation through this connection. Before his two battalions, at this time on the march to Masnieres, could be launched for a counter-attack, some time must intervene.

The Regimental headquarters of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227 at Masnieres, could observe the tanks and English Infantry advancing from the heights against the town. The machine gun officer of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90, was very active in gathering all the available men of his regiment, but only smaller groups of men of this regiment were able to reach the canal to defend the crossings.

The regimental commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, betook himself to the 2d line position, close southwest of Rumilly, to await the arrival of his 1st and 2d battalion, which, first of all, were to supply themselves with ammunition and hand grenades at the Pioneer Park at Rumilly. With some trouble and after a long search, this was accomplished. The regimental commander (Major Buchholtz) now launched his two battalions, the first Battalion to advance on both sides of the road to Masnieres and

the second battalion to the right of it. The spirited attack of the 1st battalion threw the enemy, which in the meantime had crossed the canal, out of Masnieres and maintained the north bank against several attacks of the English. A tank attempted to cross the not completely demolished bridge, but the latter broke down under the weight of the tank. This crossing now became impassible for tanks. Another tank did not risk to run over the intact wooden bridge over the canal close to the west and it limited its action by keeping the north bank under its fire. The 2d battalion also won with its left flank the canal, but while advancing received a heavy fire from the right flank from the enemy's machine guns and infantry. Thus, while the two battalions had occupied the north edge of the canal by Masnieres, it lacked every connection toward the right and left.

The commander of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, whose mission was to march to Crevecoeur, to support the 9th Reserve Division was able to briefly advise the situation to the 213 Infantry Brigade, yet during the advance to Rumilly, the battalion commander saw that the orientation so far known to him, had for some time been outstripped by the events. Dispersed, wounded and train soldiers coming from the fronts conveyed the wildest rumors. At first the battalion assembled ready for action in a hollow to the north of Rumilly, patrols being dispatched to reconnoitre. The observation made by the battalion yielded the information that the 2d Battalion was fighting severely at and near Masnieres. A patrol pushed ahead toward the Flot-Ferme, reported shortly afterwards that the enemy was obstinately pressing the left flank of the 3d Battalion of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27 and that a quick support at that place was necessary. The battalion commander caused his battalion to march at once to assist the units of the 27th Regiment. While en route he received an order of the 108th Infantry Brigade, directing that Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, should under all conditions hold the Flot-Ferme and the Siegfried 2d line position located in front of the Ferme and then passing to the southeast. The battalion commander also believed that he could readily omit the task originally assigned him, because the main pressure of the enemy was clearly directed against the line Flot-Ferme-Rumilly and not against Crevecoeur.

Thus it was lucky that here now, the 3d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, went into action and filled the existing gap.

(Note: At 2:00 p.m., the 13th Corps Headquarters ordered as follows:

The following will be held by the troops indicated -

1st) 20th Landwehr Division---Line Corps boundary to Moeuvres-Siegfried second line position as far as intersection point National road northeast of Anneux.

2nd) 54th Infantry Division---Connecting with 1st, Siegfried second line position as far as Crevecoeur the latter excluded.

107th Infantry Division is placed under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division.

3rd) 9th Reserve Division connects with the line Crevecoeur and as far as Bantouzelle, thence to the old position).

(The 54th Division after receipt of the above instructions, ordered the 108th Infantry Brigade to defend with Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, field recruit depot and the assault detachment,

the sector from the canal as far as Crevecoeur (exclusive of the latter). As the foreground zone at least the line Marceing-Canal must be held).

The commander of the 2d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, had put in his last reserves to extend the front, in order to protect his right flank against the enemy attacking with tanks, but was then obliged, with consent of the regimental commander, to withdraw nearly his whole battalion to the extremely imperfect Siegfried 2d line position. From this position the trench mortars of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227, now fired against the tanks. These mortars had no flat trajectory gun carriages so they were obliged to use high-angle fire. The situation in the town (Masnieres) grew more and more difficult for the 1st Battalion and those units of the 2d Battalion, as well as the remnants of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90, which in junction with the 1st Battalion (Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227) had remained in the town.

Heavy infantry firing was heard from time to time in the rear zone. A large gap lay toward the east and patrols were unable to establish connection in direction of Crevecoeur.

(NOTE: The 1st Battalion of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227 with its 6 companies, and the assault detachment of the 54th Infantry Division which had arrived during the first afternoon hours, were withdrawn during darkness to the Siegfried 2d line position).

From Rumilly and close to and east of the town, English tanks and infantry were fired upon by the 2d and 3d Batteries, Field Artillery, No. 213. In a train accident while passing through Berlin, the 1st battery of this regiment had lost all its guns and ammunition wagons and it was not furnished with replacement material until the afternoon of this day.

The commander of the 108th Infantry Brigade had fixed his command post, since noon, in the town of Rumilly. At 2:30 p.m. he was advised by the brigade observation post, located at the south edge of the town, that strong hostile Cavalry had assembled on both sides of the road, Masnieres-le Pavé. Apparently the enemy, after the initial successes near Marceing, believed that the moment was instantly approaching, when he could advance with his 2d and 5th Cavalry Divisions to the northeast and east. At 4:30 p.m., English Cavalry suddenly appeared on the height northeast of Masnieres. A troop of the Fort Garry Horse Regiment of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade (5th Cavalry Division), had the luck of crossing unnoticed the canal over an emergency bridge east of the town.

(NOTE: Between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., a troop of the Secunderabad Brigade (5th Cav. Div) crossed the canal near Marceing, but found the front between Flot-Ferme and Masnieres occupied. It dismounted and took part in the fighting which followed).

Its next objective was the battery position of the 2d Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213. A few shots could still be fired against the Cavalry, then though the enemy entered the battery position, the gunners defended themselves with revolvers. But the major portion of the riders galloped ahead, because they believed that the end of the German trench and wire entanglement system had now been reached. Suddenly the field recruit

depot of the 54th Infantry Division on the march to occupy the line Rumilly-Crevecœur arrived on the battlefield and quickly opened fire against the riders. The daring cavalry men met with heavy losses and scattered. The gunners of the 2d and 3d battery now returned to their position. German infantry and artillery soldiers being marched off as prisoners by the hostile cavalry, were liberated again. The cavalry men who escaped, still harassed the German troops on the evening of this day and even during the next. For instance, seven of these riders were made prisoners in the north section of the town of Rumilly on November 21st. Lightly wounded riders were taken from their hiding places on the road from Rumilly to Cambrai, by men of the German Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 90.

The spirited feat of arms of the Canadian cavalry men of course was without notable consequence, for their strength was not sufficient, but a brief panic did result through the sudden attack of the enemy's cavalry east of Rumilly. Further to the rear, this event had a much greater effect because there the actual strength of the suddenly appearing cavalry at the very doors of Cambria, was unknown. There also the wild rumors of the situation found a new dissemination of fantastic hallucinations.

The gap between Flot-Ferme and Masnieres was closed just at the right time through the action of Reserve Infantry Regiment 227, of the 107th Infantry Division. The slim Infantry line with the few guns in rear of it, was able to repulse an attempted penetration of that portion of the enemy which had crossed the canal with tanks near Marcoing, yes, it even prevented that a complete and combat-effective fresh English Division reached its first objective---the Siegfried 2d line position---and the northern bank of the canal near Masnieres.

The following statement occurs in the report of the English Commander-in-Chief:

The Cavalry column had not a sufficient strength in crossing the canal, because the German resistance and the demolition of the bridge in Masnieres through one of our own tanks, prevented such an operation. Thus, the enemy did not know, that between Masnieres and Crevecoeur, in the left sector of the 54th Infantry Division, the canal line for a distance of more than 2 km., was not at all occupied for many hours. From the German standpoint it is difficult to understand, why the huge English superiority was not able to overwhelm the weak German defensive lines, the last of which in front of Cambrai. This was very lucky for the German defence, because the arrival of reinforcements could not be reckoned with before evening.

Similar tactical phenomena also happened to the west of the canal.

It has been pointed out already, that in Cantaing a weak security detachment was formed with German artillery men and that to the west of the town a large gap existed in the defence front. Protected by tanks, the enemy had captured Marcoing and Noyelles. More than 30 tanks were assembled at about noon close to and southwest of Marcoing. The commander of the 2d Tank Brigade has made a statement, that at about 1:30 p.m., "These tanks very fully ready and awaited only the arrival of the Brigade at the head of the 1st Cavalry Division with which the further attack against

Cantaing and Fontaine was to be executed under cooperation of the tanks". "The Cavalry did not arrive." The possibility of utilizing the tanks and infantry for this extremely favorable affair was left undone by the English, through which, time was given the German to close the gap between the great road south of Bourlon to the canal. The two remaining regiments of the 107th Infantry Division were approaching hurriedly from their accommodations east of Cambrai.

The commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232, had launched his 2d Battalion for the occupation of the Siegfried 2d line position from Anneux to forward of Noyelles and the 1st Battalion, connecting with the 2d, as far as Rumilly. Due to the extensive sector and the indistinct situation, the regimental commander, intended to post the 3d battalion in rear of the centre near Proville. The 5th and 6th companies of the regiment marched via Petit Fontaine toward Anneux and Cantaing, the other portion of the 2d Battalion marched over the road leading via Proville. The battalion commander gained at least some knowledge of the magnitude of the enemy's penetration while at the bridge of the mill de Cantigneul. Without stopping the march was kept up to Cantaing, where the 6th Company arrived soon afterwards. It proved to be an elongated town. The men of the 232d Reserve Infantry Regiment now saw the tanks with their own eyes, of which so much was told while on the march. Two guns of Antiaircraft Battery No. 7, engaged these tanks at the Neuf Forest.

Upon arrival in Cantaing, Major Fruhling, the commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52, who had no detailed map of the area, sought information as to the orientation, from the defender of the town. He was advised, that the battery positions to the west of Marcoing were lost, that Flesquieres had partly been taken by the English while German companies were still defending the easterly half of the town also, that the enemy had already entered Noyelles. Lieutenant Colonel von Winterfeld, the commander of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 384, who happened to be in the town, was unable to advise on the situation to the west of Flesquieres. He was just ready to march with about 100 men to Cambrai to assemble the remnants of his regiment thereat. Major Fruhling now sought to supplement the information received through personal observation. He gained the impression, that a connecting hostile line extended from the heights to the east of Flesquieres to Noyelles. Enemy's skirmishers already appeared about 1,000 metres to the south and southeast of Cantaing and tanks also were driving about, while artillery was moving into the line. The enemy's preparations seemed to indicate a continuation of the attack against Cantaing. As the tactical situation found by the battalion commander would not permit the execution of the mission given him---to take possession of Flesquieres and the Intermediate position Flesquieres-Ribécourt---especially since the two other battalions of the regiment could arrive only by degrees, he ordered the commander of his 1st Battalion, arrived on trucks and by marching, to occupy the heights to the south and southwest of Cantaing and to hold them. An attempt was also to be made to establish connections with the German fighters in Flesquieres, through patrols. The regimental commander now rode off with his staff to meet his approaching 3d battalion, to personally launch the battalion against the enemy. In the centre of the town, he met a portion of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232, whose adjutant reported to him the mission of and the

measures taken by the battalion. The head of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52 (partly moved up on trucks), received fire from the south, when it reached the floodgate bridge west of la Marlière. Soon after this, at about 4:30 p.m., several troops of the enemy's Cavalry came out of the bushes to the north of Noyelles and attacking on a wide front, passed the northeast edge of Cantaing and rode in general direction toward Fontaine-Notre Dame. Thus, the English 1st Cavalry Division did not attack until now when the favorable moment for it had past. The attack should have been made to the west of Marcoing, to capture the batteries thereat.

(NOTE: Defective reconnaissance or the rigid execution of the orders, to ride east of the Neuf Forest via Noyelles-Cantaing-Fontaine, apparently was the cause that the attack was made to the east instead to the west of the town through the gap Anneux-Cantaing).

The frontal, mainly through the enfilading fire of a part of the 2d Battalion of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232, a company of the 1st Battalion of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52 and of the riflemen of the town security detachment, forced the cavalry troops to face about with heavy losses. The riders which appeared to the southeast of the town also met with the same fate. Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52, had heavy losses in its commanders during this action. The commander of the 3d Battalion who rode on ahead of his battalion was captured. Through shots fired out of Cantaing after the English riders racing to the rear, Major Fruhling, the regimental commander, was seriously wounded and the regimental adjutant killed. Major Steinkopff now assumed command of the 52d Reserve Regiment.

English cavalymen were driven out of the wooded patch of la Folie, by the most advanced companies of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52. East of the canal opposite of Noyelles, the 1st Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232, arrived during this time and took up junction with the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 227 at the Flot Ferme. A junction with the 2d Battalion which dug in south of Cantaing, could not be located at first.

While the events described above were under way in the region of Cantaing, instructions for the execution of the mission issued by the 107th Infantry Division, in compliance with the orders of the 54th Infantry Division received at about 4:00 p.m., were being transmitted: "107th Infantry is placed under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division; it will occupy the Siegfried 2d line position from its junction point with the National Road, northeast of Anneux as far as to the junction point of the canal, maintaining junction to the right with 20th Landwehr Division and to the left with 108th Infantry Brigade. The south edge of Anneux to la Justice-Marcoing at least will be held as the foreground zone by the troops still located in this sector. This foreground zone, where it has been lost, will be retaken again through counter-attacks." The command over the now again subordinated regiments, Reserve Infantry No. 52, to the right and Reserve Infantry No. 232, to the left, will be assumed by General Pohlman. The Pioneer Company of the 107th Infantry Division will be directed to conduct the completion of the rearward

positions; labor troops for this purpose will be placed at its disposal. Major Steinkopff now assigned the 3d and 1st Battalions, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52, to the Siegfried 2d line position east of Anneux-Cantaing. The 2d Battalion which arrived last, was on the evening assigned as a reserve and ordered to Fontaine-Notre-Dame. In junction with the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 52, the 2d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 232, established itself for the defence.

Thus, after the attack of the English cavalry was repulsed a new defensive line was formed also to the west of the canal, by battalions of the 107th Infantry Division. This new line was located in rear of the completely penetrated front. In front of this new line, Major Krebs with his small group of men and a few batteries located near Flesquieres, still held the ground.

The commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, tried in every possible way to inform the superior command of the defense at Flesquieres. The destruction of the battery group located to the west of Marcoing, which up to about noon on this day served not only as a helpmate in the fighting against the tanks, but also in protecting the left flank, did not involve further prejudicial consequences. The action during this operation relaxed at darkness. Due to the scarcity of ammunition the hostile machine gun fire was answered only weakly by the German troops. The latter, in order to delude the enemy of the German strength, frequently fired light balls at their various positions. Shortly after 9:00 p.m., Major Krebs was informed by a corporal of Pioneer Company No. 108, that units of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 52, were located at the south edge of Cantaing. Runners sent immediately to that point returned with a copy of the order, directing the 107th Infantry Division to hold the Siegfried 2d line position from Anneux via Cantaing, it also indicated the already mentioned foreground zone. The commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27 (Maj. Krebs), concluded from this, that the superior command did not intend, that his troops should continue to hold the position occupied by them at this time. Preparations were now made to disengage from the enemy and to begin the withdrawal into the line of the 107th Infantry Division. For the present the officers only received knowledge of this resolve. The English command did not utilize the afternoon and darkness, to completely envelope at least the German forces which still endured in this line. The English 51st Division apparently believed that it had taken every initiative from the defence and the effectiveness of the German Artillery. This is the only way to explain the action of the enemy, for on the evening of this day the German batteries (2d battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 108 and 3d battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213) were able to bring their guns back without being molested.

Lieutenant Brookes, the orderly officer, who had been sent during the late afternoon of November 20th, to Cambrai, returned at about 3:00 a.m., on November 21st, and confirmed the assumption of Major Krebs, that he could not count on reinforcements at Flesquieres. The 107th Infantry Division also advised of this fact, made known that it was unable to send reinforcements to that point.

Major Krebs now ordered the departure. He discussed all the details with his subordinate commanders and convinced himself that the artillery had moved off and that all material which could not be moved must be destroyed. The road to Cantain, still free from the enemy, was selected for

the withdrawal. Every officer was given a task. Besides the 1st Battalion and units of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, and Infantry Regiment No. 84, there were men of Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 387, of Pioneer Company No. 108, and some artillery men, among the defenders of Flesquieres. Men with Machine guns, bomb-throwers and trench mortars followed. The disengagement from the enemy was carried out gradually and the enemy never noticed the withdrawal. Rain and a heavy wind of course favored the march off. The troops arrived at Cantaing at 6:00 a.m., November 21st. Orders from the Headquarters of the 54th Infantry Division directed the continuation of the march to Cambrai.

(Note: According to information furnished by the commander of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 27, 32 officers and 514 officers and men (without Pioneer Company No. 108) marched back. Of these, 18 officers and 421 men belonged to the 27th Reserve Infantry Regiment. The losses of the latter were 52 men killed, 170 wounded and 705 missing. Of its officers 3 were killed, 2 wounded and 21 missing).

General Ludendorff states in his book: "It was not until noon that I obtained a clear idea of the extent of the enemy's penetration. It made me very anxious. Everything possible, however, was already being done. So here also I had to leave things to take their course."

General von Kuhl says: "To the entirely new and suprisingly executed employment of the tanks en masse, the English command owes its success on the first day of the battle. Through this, above all else, a serious crisis arose which was perceived with great apprehension by the German commands as high up as G.H.Q. The danger of a extensive strategic penetration hovered before us all."

What would the night and what the next day hold in store? Would the English command understand that with the immediate continuation of the attack, through a planned conduct and the insertion of their reserves, it could exploit the extremely critical situation of the Germans? In such a case, was the German command at all able, to stop this threatening complete penetration with the available forces at the front and with the reinforcements still coming up by rail?

For the time being the German command was unable to form a clear picture of the course of the front line on the evening of November 20th. The situation along the large road south of the Bouillon Forest, east of Cantaing and west of Crevecoeur especially, remained unknown for a long time.

Quietness reigned over the battlefield after the beginning of darkness, English troops did not pursue or press ahead. The commanders of the German combat front went to work with all energy to regulate their organizations and to systematize the defence. Their care was especially directed in subsisting the troops under their command and to amply supply them with ammunition. All available vehicles were brought up to correct the great deficiency of ammunition, even motor cars hauling personnel, were loaded with small arms ammunition.

The evening of November 20, passed by and only seldom could one hear a rifle shot. Isolated artillery shots fired by the enemy fell on the trenches now undergoing construction and into the rear area. Tired and cold, German sentries kept up the watch during the windy and rainy weather. Reports and sketches were sent to the rear. The new command posts were connected with telephone wires. Gradually the line of the front troops could be noted on the maps on the commands and staffs in Cambrai, Beauvois and Caudry.

November 21st, 1917.

The morning reports stated, that no further attack activities took place. A "somewhat colorful composed" infantry line maintained the front Moeuvres - Anneux - Cantaing - Rumilly - Revelon Chau - west of Baucelles - Banteux.

The 1st Battalion Landwehr Infantry Rgt. 386 was located in its former trench, the front line curving close to and southeast of Moeuvres into the Intermediate position, where the 1st Company Landwehr Pioneers of the 9th Army Corps and companies of the 2d and 3d Battalion of Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 386 were located. From here, nearly so, where the mentioned line passed to the south, small units of Landwehr Infantry Rgt. No. 384 and of the 3d Battalion, Landwehr Infantry Rgt. No. 386, under command of Captain Erlinghagen, connected with the former. Three additional companies of the 3d Battalion Infantry Rgt. No. 77, were moved forward during the night, the 10th company with its right flank up to the angle of the Intermediate position and the left flank of the 9th company to about the road to the north of Anneux. For the closing of the gap between the 20th Landwehr Division and the 107th Infantry Division, the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 175, was designated. This battalion was sent on motor trucks by Group Quentin and it moved into the gap during the early morning hours, close to the northwest and to the west of the Anneux ridge. Its 2d company gained junction with the 3d Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 77, the 4th company gained junction with the 12th company, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, near Anneux. A patrol of the 3d Battalion Infantry Rgt. No. 77, as well as one of Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 386, sent forward as far as Graincourt, did not meet with the enemy. On the other hand a platoon of the 2d Company, Infantry Rgt. No. 175, at a later hour, had a hand to hand fight with English soldiers at the sugar refinery and at the north edge of Graincourt. The Siegfried 2d line position, east of Anneux as far as Cantaing, was occupied by the 3d and 1st Battalions, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, Anneux itself being held by the 12th company of this battalion. Sentry posts were established at la Justice and at the roadway junction southwest of Cantaing. Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232, was posted in front of Cantaing and on the east bank of the canal. The gap between the 2d and 1st Battalion of this regiment was closed by the 8th Company. These two battalions now had touch with each other at the intersection point between the Schelde river and canal, southwest of la Marliere. The 3d Battalion of this regiment was posted, ready for action, in rear of the left flank of the 2d Battalion.

The security of the sector east of Noyelles as far as Crevecoeur was assigned to the 108th Infantry Brigade (later, this sector of the 9th Reserve Division was enlarged to east of Rumilly). The 3d Battalion, 1st Guard Reserve Infy. Rgt., the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 98 and the 3d Battalion of the 13th Bavarian Infy. Rgt., which coming from the 6th German Army and arrived in the combat on the late afternoon of November 20, 1917, was organized into one command under Major von Brederlow. This command relieved Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, during the night and the early morning hours (November 21) in the Siegfried 2d line position west of Flat Ferme to the south of Rumilly, but the 3d Battalion of Reserve Infy.

Rgt. No. 227, immediately afterwards had to take up a position again between the southeast edge of Rumilly and Mon Plaisir Ferme. To the north of this Ferme a part of the field recruit depot of the 54th Infantry Division dug in. Junction was also established during the late evening with the right flank of the 9th Reserve Division. These forces were now compensated by the 12th company of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227.

The commander of the 9th Reserve Division (Lieut. Genl. Hildemann) ordered the reinforcement battalions placed at his disposition, 1st Battalion Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 261 and 1st Battln. Infantry Rgt. No. 128, both under the command of the Division Pioneer Officer, Major Faber, to advance via Seranvillers toward Rumilly - Grevecoeur. The detachment of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 19, located to the west of Grevecoeur, relieved during the first morning hours of November 21, the battalion of Captain Baron Grote. Between his command, 1st Battalion Infy. Rgt. No. 128 and the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, the 4th company of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 261, was moved into the line, while the remainder of this battalion (1st) arrived in Rumilly at about 8:00 a. m., November 21st. The third battalion of Major Faber's command (2d Battalion Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 82) remained in Seranvillers, ready for action. The defence front south of Grevecoeur was divided into two sectors by Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 19, one of them to the north close to and west of Revelon Chau, under command of Captain Bartsch, the other to the south on the west edge of les Rues des Vignes was under command of Captain Pescheck. No particular change was made in the occupation of the front to the west of the canal. The bridge head near Vaucelles was assigned to Infantry Rgt. No. 395, by the commander of the 18th Reserve Brigade. The commandant of Cambrai (Local town command No. 31), was directed by the commanding general of Group Coudry (13th Wurttemberg Army Corps), on the afternoon of November 20, to barricade and guard the south exits of the city. For this purpose he had available the 1st Company of Lansturm Infantry Battalion Leipzig, men of the convalescent depot and later on also two companies of Landsturm Infantry Battalion Landau.

That it was possible at all to form a new, even though not a very resistance - capable defensive line, in rear of the penetrated front, was alone due to the regiments of the 107th Infantry Division and to the few reinforcement battalions which had arrived in the meantime.

In rear of the right flank and of the centre of this line only 8 field and 3 heavy batteries were posted. The left flank of the penetrated front was sufficiently supported by artillery.

In estimating the situation on the morning of November 21st, General von Watter reported: "It can not be denied that if the enemy continues the tank attack before the arrival of strong German artillery reinforcements, a further penetration and thus perhaps a real breakthrough, can not be prevented. Even with the surmounting of this crisis, the situation remains grave."

Only one-third of the 20th German Landwehr Division was combat fit. Almost the entire artillery of the 54th Infantry Division was missing, its Infantry Regiments consisted only of fragments.

(Note: According to a report of November 21st, the strength of the 54th Infantry Division consisted of the following: 84th Infy. Rgt. - 7 officers, 1 surgeon, 181 men, 90th Reserve Infy. Rgt. - 4 officers, 229 men.

The losses of the division, reported at 11:00 a. m., November 23, from November 19 to the evening of November 21, were as follows: 526 dead, 846 wounded, 3,785 missing.

The report of the division to the 2d Army, made on November 25th, gives the following losses: Dead 72, wounded 859, missing 3,360).

The 107th Infantry Division also reported the loss of batteries. Only one regiment of the 9th Reserve Division, had suffered losses.

Because Group Caudry was of opinion, that the actually fighting-capable 107th Infantry Division, after a lengthy employment on the Eastern front, was not equal to the extremely difficult combat conditions on the Western front, and the few separate battalions assigned, had no replacement value for the situation confronting the army, a situation which required solid organized units, it requested that the troops located between Mesuvres and Crèvecoeur, be relieved by three fresh divisions. Also, that the artillery be reinforced and that from two to three counter-attack divisions be assembled in rear. The Group also opined, not only from a moral but also from a tactical standpoint, that the recapture of the former Intermediate position was urgently desired, especially so, because the positions to the south of Cambrai were for the most part entirely open-lying, front sloping positions.

During the same kind of weather and almost at the same hour as yesterday, a strong hostile artillery fire was laid on the sectors of Groups Arras and Caudry. The expected heavy attack though failed to appear for the present.

X

The 54th Infantry Division directed the 107th Infantry Division on the evening of November 20, "because trustworthy information received indicated that a junction from Cantaing to Flat Ferme did not exist and that English cavalry had attacked the German troops in Cantaing, from the forest north-east of the town," that a junction be established immediately without a gap, and that a bridgehead be formed at the canal bridge of Moyelles, which would provide security for an attack on November 21st, beyond Moyelles in the direction of Flesquieres. The accomplishment of this order was entrusted to the commander of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232 and the 2d battalion of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 was placed at his disposition for the additional task assigned him at the same time: To clear the forest around la Folié. But the latter mentioned battalion, as we have seen (page 100), was already on the march to Fontaine--Notre Dame. The forest, after the repulse of the English cavalry, was already clear from enemy forces. When during the noon hour, the commander of the 54th Infantry Division ordered, that the attack against Moyelles must positively be carried out during the night from the east and north, Lieut. Colonel von Bartenwerfer (commanding the 232d Reserve Infy. Rgt.), reported that the

junction between his battalions had already been established on the evening. He also mentioned the difficulties of a nightly attack, with the deficiency in ammunition and close-range weapons as well as with no artillery support of any kind. Finally the enterprise was delayed to the following morning. But the final attack order had not yet arrived the battalion commanders, when at 7:25 a. m., a telephone message was received that the attack was not to take place. The 8th company, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232 and the 7th company of the regiment connecting to the right, pushed ahead during the night from Containg toward Noyelles. When the enemy recognized this new German line at dawn of day, it opened fire with its artillery. The 8th Company suffered considerable losses ~~kk~~ through this fire, and a longer stay would have caused further heavy losses. Lieut. Blady, the company commander resolved to make an assault against the town. The order that the attack be omitted had not reached the company. The assault succeeded! The town was traversed at 8:45 a. m. during the heavy fighting. But there was no connection either to the right and left. A strong flank fire soon forced the 8th company to retire to the southwest edge of Noyelles, where it could establish connection with the 7th company. The left flank though remained completely isolated, because the 1st battalion had received the order to omit the attack. In the meantime the 12th company had come up to relieve the 8th, in its former position as previously directed. The report of the success of the 8th company and its relief arrived at the regimental headquarters at about 11:45 a. m. The regimental commander ordered the 1st battalion to establish junction with the victorious troops in Noyelles, through a thrust from the east. The 3d battalion also was to advance units against the town.

X

Attempts of English troops to construct bridges near Masnieres during the early morning were prevented through the heedfulness and the fire of the patrols of the consolidated Brederlow regiment. A hostile thrust was made at about 7:30 a. m., against the angle of the canal southwest of Crévecoeur. Incensed street fighting took place in les Rues des Vignes, during which the commander of the 2d Company, Field Recruit Depot of the 9th Reserve Division, First Lieut. Himmercks, conspicuously distinguished himself. English forces who had entered the town were thrown out, only a few houses on the northwest edge of the town remained for the time in the hands of the enemy. The enemy's attack against the detachment Bartsch was repulsed with an effective infantry and machine gun fire. Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 19, reported at 11:00 a. m., that so far, 13 prisoners of the 20th English Division were delivered at regimental headquarters. Soon afterwards the fighting stopped in the sector of this regiment.

X

The reports received during the afternoon at the German command posts, indicated that a huge attack would soon be executed by the enemy. The general situation though had improved somewhat on the German side through the inactivity of the enemy. Strong units of the 214th Infantry Division had already arrived and the German 119th Infantry Division was also en route. The 30th German Infantry Division detrained at noon its

first arriving troops, Infantry Regiment No. 99 and the 3d Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 84, which were posted near Esnes as a counter-attack line.

The English command launched its divisions at about noon for a new attack. Tanks again, just as on the previous day, made a pathway for the infantry.

(Note: In his report, General Haig states, that on the morning of November 21st, the attack against Flesquieres was continued and that the town was surrounded from the northwest and captured. The truth is that the enemy occupied the trenches which were abandoned several hours ago by Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 27. The impression which the German defense made upon the English forces is best seen from the description which General Haig adds to this "capture": "Thus the obstruction, which more than anything else, infringed upon the successes of November 20, was now eliminated." Certainly these words imply a well deserved acknowledgment of the German defence, but do not excuse errors made by the German subordinate commanders).

The fighting which developed from these attacks will now be narrated.

Judging from the operation order which was picked up later, the English 62d Division was primarily to take the Bourlon forest and town on November 21st. After accomplishment of this mission, the 109th English Brigade (36th Division), was to attack from the large roadway as far as Moeuvres and occupy the latter. It was further intended, that the 107th and 108th English Brigades would follow the 62d Division from their assembly area southwest of Graincourt, and would then attack from the west of Bourlon in a general direction toward Inchy.

Despite the rain and fog the English aviators were very active. The enemy's artillery at about 10:00 a. m., increased the volume of its fire against the trenches, approach roads and the Bourlon forest. About one hour afterward the tanks began to approach from the region of Graincourt toward the Anneux ridge and also moved via the sugar refinery toward the northeast, all being masked in artificial fog as on yesterday. Attack groups followed the tanks and these groups again were followed by strong waves of riflemen. At many places the latter were closely massed forming a solid group.

Against this English attack, Colonel von Buttlar-Brandenfels, commander of the 9th Depot Infantry Brigade (20th Landwehr Division), divided his defensive front into two sub-sectors. The right sub-sector was assigned to the commander of Landwehr Infantry Rgt. No. 336--Colonel Ridel--, while the command of the left sub-sector was assigned to Major Weiniig, the commander of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 175. This last command consisted of the battalion mentioned and of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 77. New barrage areas were assigned to the Batteries - (4th and 6th Battery, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 282, 3d Battery, Field Arty.

Rgt. No. 46, 4th Battery Landwehr Foot Artillery Rgt. No. 32, in positions between Bourlon and Sairre-les-Marguion; the 5th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 282, to the west of Fontaine-Notre-Dame).

It was mainly the weak command of Major Weinlig which barred the advance of the enemy. The effectiveness of the machine guns also was very low against the tanks on this day, but little pointed ammunition with steel core being available. On the other hand the English Infantry suffered heavy losses from the German defence fire. Tanks though penetrated the front line on the left flank of Landwehr Infantry Rgt. No. 386 and by the 9th, 10th and 11th Companies, Infantry Rgt. No. 77. The 2d and 3d Company of Infantry Rgt. No. 175, also had to retreat in a northwesterly direction. The few available German guns could not supply an effective support in this battle. The commander of the 3d Battalion Infy. Rgt. No. 77, attempted in vain to fill the gap which originated here with the 12th Company of his battalion. A lack of ammunition occurred and the hand grenades were soon expended.

As the frontmost counter attack line of the 214th Infantry Division, Infantry Rgt. No. 50, with the 3d Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 44, assembled near Bourlon.

(Note: The 214th Division at first was the counter attack Division of the Group Arras. At 12:30 p. m., 2/3 of this division was placed at the disposition of Group Arras, by the army commander. It was assigned on the right flank of the group and subject to the orders of the 20th Landwehr Division).

The 1st Battalion of Infy. Rgt. No. 50, had posted an observation picket at the southwest edge of Bourlon. At 12:15, the battalion received the following report from this picket: "Enemy is attacking with tanks in direction of Bourlon." The battalion commander ordered the 1st and 2d Companies, reinforced by a few machine guns, to occupy the southwest edge of Bourlon. Together with the 77th Infantry Rgt., the 2d and parts of the 1st Company, Infantry Rgt. No. 50, soon fell in for the counter attack, but a new hostile attack with tanks executed shortly after 4:30 p. m., hurled the German counter attack back. The enemy though did not know how to utilize its success. The weak German forces, much confused and intermingled, were able to gradually form a new front on the road from Bourlon to Moeuvres, close to and south of Bourlon and at the west edge of the forest.

The commander of the 50th Infantry Rgt. - Colonel von Paczynski, in the meantime directed his 3d Battalion to protect the south edge of the Bourlon forest. Because he was unable to obtain a clear insight of the situation at Fontaine-Notre-Dame, he also ordered this battalion to occupy the southeast edge of the forest; parts of the 2d Battalion of this regiment were sent ahead to serve as a support to the 3d Battalion. The enemy though failed to launch attacks against this covering line on the late afternoon.

From 11:00 a. m., Moeuvres and the positions of the 1st Battalion, Landwehr Infantry Rgt. No. 386, lay under a galling fire. Repeated hostile attacks from the south as well as from the west were thwarted. Shortly after 12:30 p. m., the commander of the 20th Landwehr Division received a report, that English forces were attacking the right flank of his division and had entered the frontmost line. The division commander, now sent the 2d counter attack group of the 214th Infantry Division - the 363d Infantry Rgt. with the 2d Battalion, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 44 - to execute a counter attack against the enemy who had penetrated near Moeuvres. The commander of the 363d Infy. Rgt. - Colonel Hay - had only two battalions at his disposition. This 2d counter attack group had marched at noon from their point of assembly around Sauchy-Lestrée, to Sains-lez-Marquion. Complying with the instructions transmitted by the commander of the 214th Infantry Brigade - General Maercker - Colonel Hay ordered the attack on both sides of the canal and to take possession of the town of Moeuvres and the line from the south exit of this town to the sugar refinery. The 2d Battalion of the 363d Infy. Rgt., to its surprise marched unmolested through Moeuvres and on the south edge of the ruins of the town, met the companies of the 1st Battalion of Landwehr Infantry Rgt. No. 386. The 2d Battalion of the 363d Infy. Rgt. now pushed itself into the line of the former battalion. The 8th Company of the 386th Rgt. also found the 11th Company of Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 386, in the Intermediate position to the east of Moeuvres. The 3d Battalion of Infantry Rgt. No. 363, posted its 9th, 11th and 12th companies in the front line. The 9th and 11th companies gained the first trench of the Intermediate position, between the canal and close to and east of the road from Sains-lez-Marquion to Havrincourt, in which trench, parts of the 10th and 6th companies of Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 386 were still defending themselves. A tank attacked with hand grenades withdrew in front of the 11th company. The 12th company, connecting with the 11th, reached the Intermediate position, its rightmost platoon tried in vain to get further ahead to the south, over the angle of the Intermediate position, but English troops had firmly established themselves with several machine guns at this point. The 10th company of the 3d Battalion, Inf. Rgt. No. 363 followed as a support in rear of the left flank. It was just crossing the road leading from Moeuvres to Bourlon, when the 2d company, Infantry Rgt. No. 50, the 77th Infantry Regt. and also men of Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 386, retreated to that point before the new tank attack (see page 117). In junction with the rearward deflected flank of the 12th company, platoons of the 10th company swarmed into the front and thus formed a complete line toward Bourlon. This line extended in the first instance to the south and then followed the road. Of course, the command posts had no knowledge of this occupation nor of the precise situation and only received this information later.

The 3d Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 44, took up a position northwest of Bourlon, the 2d Battln. of this regiment supporting the advance of Infantry Rgt. No. 363. The 5th Battery of this battalion as also the 8th of the 3d battalion, were able to engage the tanks successfully. Finally, the regimental commander also assigned the 1st battalion of this regiment to positions southeast of Marquion.

At first, the conduct of the artillery combat in the sector of the 20th Landwehr Division was assigned to the Artillery Commander of the 214th Infantry Division - Lieut. Colonel Baeusch - but as the lateral connections to the Division headquarters at Cambrai became more and more difficult despite the care and attention of Telephone Detachment No. 520, the entire conduct was placed on the commander of the 214th Infantry Division, by the superior command.

Finally, army headquarters at 6:30 a. m., on November 22, also assigned the troops employed between Moeuvres and the west edge of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, to the Group Arras (14th Reserve Corps).

The order for the tanks to attack with the 154th English Brigade of the 51st English Division in the front line east of Anneux-Cantaing toward Fontaine-Notre-Dame, in junction with the English 62d Division, did not arrive at the command post of the commander of the 2d Tank Brigade - Colonel Courage - located in the Bois Dessart, close to and northeast of Fins, until about 6:30 a. m. Battalion H, received instructions sometime between 9:00 and 10:00 a. m., to advance with 12 tanks against Fontaine and Battalion B, also with 12 tanks, against Cantaing.

(Note: Whether or not the Battalions (D and E) of the 1st Tank Brigade, attached to the 51st English Division on November 21st, participated in this attack could not be ascertained with certainty).

Both battalions, at this time, were located between Havrincourt and Ribecourt and, according to English reports, had to cover more than 3200 metres, ere they could reach the positions from which the infantry was to launch the attack.

Stronger English Infantry patrols felt their way toward Anneux, at about 11:00 a. m., but the platoons of the 12th company of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, supported by four machine guns, repulsed the patrols with heavy losses. When through this action, the English command received knowledge of the occupation of this town, it started a strong artillery preparation. Tanks came up followed by several waves of infantry. The 12th company of Res. Infy. Rgt. No. 52 defended itself in its advanced position. A few tanks moved forward passing to the south of Anneux and soon appeared in front of the Siegfried 2d position, where they were greeted by the machine guns of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. 52. At first the commander of the 10th company of this battalion took up the defence with his marksmen equipped with telescopic sights, but when a tank turned and displayed one of his long sides, it was engaged by several groups. But in the main, this company as well as the 9th and 11th, confined themselves in engaging the infantry which followed the tanks.

"We all were of good cheer in assuming that our artillery would soon destroy these large targets even with the poor sight. We saw something flashing close to the tanks and at first took this to be the hits of our artillery. Soon though we found out that it was the fire of the tanks."

Yet what could the few batteries accomplish - in rear of the right flank and of the centre of Group Caundry, there were only eleven batteries, for the enemy also attacked at the same time to the east of Marcoing! Thus, it is very clear why on this day the infantry complained about the absence of artillery supports. When yesterday already, the number of guns were insufficient for the defence of the attack, much less so could the infantry on this day - after the heavy artillery losses on the previous day - notice a marked assistance during its struggle with the tanks. The targets of the 5th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 282, lay mainly in the vicinity of Anneux. Due to the great distance from his group, the battery commander had to rely on his own initiative. One request after another was received for artillery support by the 1st Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 213, located to the north of Cantaing and it had to adjust its guns alternately to the south and west.

(Note: The 2d and 3d Batteries, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 213, took up a position on the early afternoon, east of Fontaine-Notre-Dame. The field artillery group Borchert (the commander of Field Arty. Rgt. 213, and at the same time the artillery commander of the 107th Infy. Division) was reinforced afterwards by the joining of the following artillery:

1st Battery, Landwehr Field Arty. Rgt. No. 13,  
8th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 62,  
both under command of Captain Wolff with the staff of the 2d Battalion, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 213.

The other arriving batteries during the course of the day were:

9th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 36,  
7th Battery, Reserve Field Artillery Rgt. No. 63,  
3d and 6th Battery, Guard Field Arty. Rgt. were mostly inserted close to and south of Cambrai.

The 2d Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 84, was assigned to the defence of Cambrai.

At first Captain Crell was assigned to the command of the heavy artillery in the sector of the reinforced 54th Infantry Division.

The Bavarian Foot Arty. Battalion No. 5 and the 5th Battery, Foot Artillery No. 18, came up on the evening of November 20th, and the 1st and 2d Batteries Bavarian Foot Artillery Battalion No. 20, arrived during the course of November 21st.)

The front line of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 175, on both sides of the Anneux ridge was severed in two parts by the attack. Whilst the 2d and 3d companies were pressed back against the Bourlon forest, the 1st and 4th companies gave way toward the Siegfried 2d position. The enemy entered Anneux. The 9th company of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, located on the right flank of the 3d Battalion, reported the threatening situation and urgently requested ammunition and hand grenades. The same requests also were soon afterwards received from the other fronts of this regiment. The commander of the Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, sent a part of the 2d Battalion to reinforce the 3d Battalion and the 5th company of the regiment was ordered by the Brigade Commander to march to Cantaing.

Enemy's patrols also appeared in front of the 1st Battalion of this regiment at about the same time that the 3d Battalion was attacked. English artillery kept Cantaing under fire and aviators frequently flew low over the houses. Movements were observed everywhere by the enemy, cavalry were seen at the Neuf forest and infantry assembled on the road from Graincourt-Marcouing.

It seemed impossible to hear music during a battle? But so it was - bag-pipes! The Highland Division was advancing, marching in company columns. The commander on horseback could easily be recognized with a telescope. Apparently the enemy was sure of victory, and all these excellent targets not fired on. It seemed incredible that the artillery observers should not notice the enemy. The English Division deployed and advanced its companies and when within 700 metres were met by the rapid fire of the men of the German 52d Reserve and 232d regiments. "A regular rifleman's sport and we were firing free-handed and standing", thus the commanding officer of the 1st company telephoned his battalion commander. The English advance faltered and its numerous lines sought cover.

Here and there small grayish black dots were seen and as they moved forward became larger and more clear - Tanks! Machine guns rattled incessantly, then rifle and grenade fire. Just as the regiments did yesterday so too, Reserve Regiments 52 and 232, on this day came to recognize that all the toil and struggle were to no purpose against the tanks. They could not be downed. Quietly the tanks advanced not being bound to any road. The Germans saw how the wire entanglements were crushed down by the tanks and that hedges and even garden walls could not stop their movements. The Germans sacrificed their ammunition in a useless defence.

The southwest exit of Cantaing was the objective of the tanks. The 1st platoon of the 1st company, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, was able to withdraw to the right but the second platoon was cut off. The enemy's machine gun fire caused heavy losses. The few hand grenades were quickly expended without result, for no one knew the vulnerable spots of the tanks. The third company, in reserve, had taken up the fighting long ago, but was unable to again reach the position of the 1st company at the southwest exit, so it dug in close to and north of Cantaing. The 5th company which came up from Fontaine and adjoined the 3d, was launched against la Folie. The tanks entered Cantaing at about 1:30 p. m. After they had opened the way, English Infantry marched into the town. The 2d Company of the German Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, located to the northwest of the town and strengthened by officers and men of the 1st company, held its ground.

Tanks now stood in the rear of the 6th company, Reserve Infy. Regt. No. 232, located in front of Cantaing, the small quantity of armored ammunition was expended long ago against the tanks advancing from the southwest. The commander of the company tried to withdraw through the town when he noticed that tanks were moving through the streets. The commander of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232 - Captain Bernhardt, was about to launch his 5th Company for a counter attack, but

its commander soon saw that nothing could be accomplished against such a superiority. The 5th and 6th companies withdrew fighting and then dug in west of la Folie, whilst forces of the 3d Battalion were defending the south edge of the wooded copse. The 1st Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 213, in the meantime, had finished the change in its position, a gun advanced by the 2d Battery of this regiment now opened the fire. Tanks which appeared at the northeast exit of Cantaing being effectively covered by the fire of the artillery and machine guns, faced about again. According to English reports, the B - Battalion here lost three tanks through direct hits.

While this was going on, incensed fighting was taking place in Noyelles. The enemy had brought up several tanks. The 3d and 4th Company, Reserve Infantry Rgt. 232, advanced at noon from the east against Noyelles. Due to the progressing tank attack against Cantaing, the situation by the companies fighting in and near Noyelles became more and more untenable. English troops also attacked the Flat Ferme (see page 142). For this reason, Lieut. Colonel von Bartenwerfer (C. O. Res. Inf. Rgt. 232), ordered the 3d and 4th companies of his regiment, to withdraw again to the east bank of the canal. The 7th, 8th, 12th and a part of the 9th company of the regiment withdrew slowly toward la Folie.

Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 reported at about 3:00 p. m. to the 213th Infantry Brigade, that portions of the Siegfried 2d line position east and southeast of Anneux were still being held, but that the front line was now located from the north of Cantaing to the west edge of la Folie. The 10th and 11th Company of this regiment also defended its position for several hours with success. The English also acknowledged this defence. The commander of the 2d Tank Brigade wrote in his report of the battle as follows: "During the whole action of November 21st, the enemy rendered a much greater resistance than he did on the previous day." The ammunition supply by the German troops became more and more serious and the danger of being outflanked and surrounded did not improve. The commanding officer of the 9th company of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 52, was forced to retire with 60 men in a northerly direction, while the enemy was pushing one half of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. 175, back along the main road causing the loss of every kind of junction to the right. At this time, tanks also penetrated the front of the units of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 still located in the Siegfried 2d line position. The 10th, 11th, 4th, 2d and forces of the 1st company, of this regiment, though split into many parts by the tanks, fought with faces to the front against strong English infantry who renewed their attacks. These units attempted at the same time - though with completely inadequate means - to keep the tanks, threatening the flank and rear, at a distance. The helplessness against the tanks which scattered fire in every direction, grew more positive with every passing minute. New tanks also appeared now near la Justice.

The commander of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, could not fail to see, that his much reduced battalions could no longer maintain themselves under such a condition. The Brigade Commander had already indicated that if it became impossible to hold the Siegfried 2d line position, the

troops were to retire to the Siegfried 2d line Intermediate position (Southedge Fontaine-Notre-Dame - Northeast exit of Cantaing. Pioneer Company No. 213 had commenced to dig the trenches in this line. Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, retired to this position. The commander of the 1st company in his report states: "The way to this position was a positive torture. We had to retire over a gentle slope without any kind of cover in the face of a galling fire from revolver-guns and machine guns of from ten to twelve tanks, which were reinforced by low-flying infantry aeroplanes. As some of us still wore overcoats, the running was difficult, for these coats were stiff with clay up to the hips."

General Havenstein, the commander of the 107th Infantry Division, had no reserves at his disposition after the major portion of the 2d Reserve Infy. Regt. No. 52, already much reduced by the railway accident mentioned, was launched into the combat. The 54th Infantry Division to whose command the 107th Infantry Division belonged, had kept the two detached battalions of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, ready for action in Pronville. At 2:30 p. m., the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. 227, was ordered to enter the Wotan, 3d line position from Petit Fontaine as far as the angle of the canal to the west of Proville. The companies had to dig in, for very little was noticeable to indicate this line in this terrain. The battalions of Infantry Rgt. No. 58 of the 119th Infantry Division, detrained during the morning, were designated by the commander of the 54th Infantry Division, to protect all the accesses of Cambrai. The 2d Battalion, as well as the forces of the town commander, were placed under the orders of the 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 58. The order of the 54th Infantry read: "The commander of the battalion (Captain Mattersdorf), is responsible, that no English soldier will enter the city." As late as 3:00 p. m., the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, was attached to the 20th Landwehr Division and soon afterward to the 107th Infantry Division. This battalion arrived after 6:00 p. m. near Petit Fontaine.

Favorable reports were at first received by the 107th Infantry Division of the fighting at la Folie. The commander of the division warned especially that the position must be held under all circumstances. Reserve Infantry Rgt. 232 of the 213th Infantry Brigade reported at 4:15 p. m., that the forest of la Folie lay under a heavy fire and that parts of the companies thereat, were retreating. Tanks, Infantry and even Cavalry (troops of the 1st Cavalry Division), did not desist in their attacks and advanced from the west and south. The commander of this regiment then reported at 5:50 p. m., that his 1st Battalion was located on the east bank of the canal as on the previous evening and that his 2d and 3d battalions, intermixed and suffering from heavy losses, also were located east of the canal and that the bridges were blown up by the 4th company, Pioneer Rgt. No. 21.

Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, also had to retreat, for the reason that its left flank had been outflanked and that no contact existed with its right neighbor. An observer of Air Service Unit No. 210 (German) had been able as late as 4:00 p. m., to fix German skirmisher lines to the west of the road Fontaine-Notre-Dame to the northeast exit of Cantaing.

Major Steinkopff (Commanding the 52d Res. Infy. Rgt.), ordered the commander of his 2d Battalion, to cover the retreat to the Wotan 3d line position east of Fontaine-Notre-Dame. The 6th Company acting as a rearguard defended with 9 machine guns, for some lengthy time, the west edge of Fontaine-Notre-Dame. Tanks of Battalion H, entered the town at about 5:30 p. m.

Would the enemy now attempt to penetrate the last barrier which protected the westerly accesses of Cambrai? But the English command abstained on the late afternoon of November 21st, to launch its troops against Cambrai from Fontaine-Notre-Dame. The 107th Infantry Division, whose commander proceeded to Petit Fontaine, had the general impression, and even went so far as to opine, that only weak infantry followed the last tank attack and that, despite of darkness and with only the weak available forces, it would be possible to retake Fontaine-Notre-Dame. Thus, the 1st Battalion Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, was directed at 6:20 p. m., to work ahead against the forest of la Folie, the 3d Battalion of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232, also was directed to reconnoitre and ascertain the strength of the English in this forest. The division also received knowledge of the position occupied by the left flank of the 214th Infantry Division on the southeast edge of the Bourlon forest. At 9:00 p. m., orders were issued by the 107th German Division as follows: "In order to win the line forest of Bourlon-South edge Fontaine-Notre-Dame-la Folie-bridge over the canal, troops will form at 10:00 p. m."

The 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, advanced on both sides of the railway embankment, but the battalion did not reach the north and east edge of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, every junction being lost during darkness. Furthermore, the town was defended by numerous machine guns of the enemy. The losses were very small. The 2d Battalion Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 and the 2d and 4th companies as well, worked adjoiningly a bit forward. The 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, won the forest of la Folie and took up junction with the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232, at the bridge point west of la Marliere. Patrols sent ahead received out of Fontaine and from the height close to and south of the town a heavy fire. General Pohlman, seeing that it was impossible to regain during the night, through a surprise attack, the town of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, ordered the troops be returned to the Wotan 3d position and to seek junction to the north near Raillencourt and prepare this line for a lasting defence. The Division Commander approved the recommendation of his Brigade Commander and the latter issued his orders at 3:00 a. m. on November 22d, to break off the operation. The commander of the 52d Reserve Infy. Rgt. ordered the 1st and 2d Battalion of his regiment and the Pioneer Company No. 213, to occupy the front line to the north of the Bapaume highway. The 2d Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 58, also under his command, was ordered to extend the line of the 2d Battalion Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, toward Raillencourt. The 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, was to occupy its former sector to the south of the great road and connect with the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 232, at the angle of the canal to the west of Provville.

The commander of the 107th Division now contemplated to advance the

battalions of Infantry Rgt. No. 46 of the 119th Infantry Division coming up by rail, to Raillencourt and to close with these battalions on the morning of November 22d, the gap toward the Bourlon forest. The Group Commander assigned the 107th Division to an independent sector which to the east stretched out to the canal. Up to the time that it was relieved by the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 105 (30th Infy. Div.) on November 23d, the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 232, remained under the orders of the 54th Infantry Division.

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The English command omitted on the afternoon of November 21st, to continue its attack against Cambrai and it failed to recognize and to utilize the possibility of enlarging its achieved success by advancing in a northerly direction through the gap existing to the east of the Bourlon forest. It did not even employ its cavalry and its reconnoitering patrols also did not appear.

Of course, measures had been taken by the Arras Group to protect the easterly group area from possible penetrating hostile cavalry, but the covering line was only located in the Senece sector from Arleux to Bouchain and was formed by men of recruit depots.

Group Arras on November 21st, assigned several recruit companies from the depots located in the rearward zone, to the 20th Infantry Division.

At this time it may be of interest to point out the precautions devised by this division commander for the protection of its left flank during the events on the Bourlon front and at Fontaine-Notre-Dame.

As the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 77 was attached to the 20th Landwehr Division, the 40th Infantry Brigade disposed of only weak forces for the flank protection. The 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 92, under command of Major Tilemann, stationed in the vicinity of Duchy also served as a support for Infantry Rgt. No. 77. The 2d Company, Pioneer Rgt. No. 10, was sent forward to Sains-les-Marquion and two recruit companies to Laissy. At the latter place 1/3 of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 76, was also posted as a support. After being advised of the progressing English attack against Bourlon, the division commander also sent the 3d Company of Pioneer Rgt. No. 10, to the east exit of Marquion to support the command of Colonel Eggers.

The strain reached its highest point at the headquarters of the 20th Division located in Blécourt during the first hours of the afternoon. In addition to all other reports of the successes of the enemy, it received information (which proved to be incorrect) of the successful English penetration near Rocuvree. Due to faulty lateral connections, only scanty reports of the fighting on its front were received by the 20th Landwehr Division. The telephone lines leading to the neighboring divisions and to the corps were frequently entirely interrupted. The question was, would the thus far arrived units of the 214th Infantry Division be sufficient to

repulse the threatening enclosure of the 20th Infantry Division, which appeared to become more and more acute? General Wellmann, the commander of the 20th Infantry Division made the following notation in his diary: "For us, the afternoon hours to-day were at least as alarming as the worst hours on the Somme, on the Aisne and in Flanders." As a matter of fact, the English command actually intended to advance against the rear of the 20th Infantry Division from the direction of Bourlon. This objective could not be attained by the English 62d Division. The reports received by the 20th German Division, advising the insertion into the battle of the regiments of the 214th German Infantry Division and also the information that Moeuvres had not been taken by the enemy, gradually released the strain at Division headquarters. A new danger though made its appearance, for a clear insight of the situation at and by Fontaine-Notre-Dame could not be obtained. 1/2 of the 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 79 and the 3d Company, Pioneer Rgt. No. 10, were hurriedly ordered to proceed to Saily-Railleucourt at about 4:00 p. m. This detachment arrived at the town after darkness had set in and immediately sent out patrols. The reconnaissance of Lieut. Berkes was especially gratifying. Accordingly, the left flank of the 214th German Infy. Division was located at the Southeast edge of the Bourlon forest. Another patrol received fire out of Fontaine. Finally, a report was received between 7:00 and 8:00 a. m., by the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 79, from the 5th company of Infantry Rgt. No. 58, indicating that the Wotan 3d line position to the south of Railleucourt was occupied.

It will be seen from the above, that the gap in the front to the east of the Bourlon forest remained open during the entire night from November 21st to 22d. As the patrols of the two companies of the 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 79, did not encounter an enemy on their march to the forest and to Fontaine, and the 3d Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 50, also reported no hostile infantry activity, it seemed as if the English command was content with the occupation of Fontaine-Notre-Dame.

ii

Besides the attacks against Bourlon and against the line Anneux-Cantaigne, the enemy also, at about the same time, launched a strong attack to the east of Harcoing.

Of the temporary consolidated regiment Brederlow, the right flank of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 98, was located close to and west of the Plot Perme. Two platoons of the 5th, 6th and 7th company remaining as a reserve. One half of the machine guns were distributed among the companies and the other half was dug in to the rear. The sector of the 3d Battalion, 1st Guard Reserve Infy. Rgt. began at the point where the railway crossed the Siegfried 2d line position. The 10th company of this battalion, acting as the reserve, had to be shoved into the line on the early morning, so that the companies in this front were now posted in the following sequence, 11th, 12th, 10th and 9th. The 3d Battalion of the Bavarian 13th Infantry Rgt. came next, the right flank (10th company) was located on the highway Rumilly-Musnieres, the 12th company southeast of Rumilly with junction on the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No.

227, the 9th company was posted as a support. The 1st line of the thus occupied Siegfried 2d line position, was only outlined and merely had a few dug outs, the wire entanglement being unfinished, wire was stretched only on but few of the sectors. The most places of this line were indicated only by stakes. The 2d line was found to be somewhat better finished, though it also had insufficient cover. For this reason, Major Brederlow, the regimental commander ordered that besides extensive reconnoitering activities, his battalions were at once to begin to dig in. The regimental command post was set up at the intersection point of the railway and road to the north of Rumilly.

Of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 261, (9th Res. Div.), ordered to proceed toward Rumilly, the first company to arrive, the 4th, was posted on the left flank of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, at about 3:30 a. m. Brightness having set in, the relief of the latter battalion by the former was not carried out. The commanding officer of the 1st Battalion Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 261, now arranged his three companies to be ready for a counter attack in Rumilly as directed by the commander of the 108th Infantry Brigade (see page 108).

The command over the field artillery in the sector of the 54th Infantry Division east of the canal was assigned to the commanding officer of Field Arty. Rgt. No. 108. The 3d Battalion of Field Arty. Rgt. 213, which had saved its guns from being captured under the greatest difficulties, went into position close to and southwest of Fbg. de Paris. Tank defence guns were moved to the front. The commander of this battalion was also directed to locate suitable positions for the reinforcement batteries which had been promised - 3d and 6th Batteries, of the Guard Field Artillery Rgt. and 7th Battery, Reserve Field Artillery, No. 63. The three field guns of the 1st Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 108 which had been repaired again, did not come into action south of Cambrai until about 3:30 p. m. Inasmuch as the hostile attack to the east of the canal also began at about noon and favorable targets had to be engaged at the same time to the west of this line, the artillery support for this sector with the few guns, could only be extremely weak.

Regiment Brederlow reported to the 108th Infantry Brigade at 11:00 a. m., that enemy forces were marching over the bridge at Marcoing but that it was of opinion that they were merely large patrols feeling their way. The reports though assumed a much graver tone one hour afterwards - numerous targets were indicated for the artillery and ammunition for machine guns was also requested - finally the opinion of the situation was that "a hostile attack was imminent, that it seemed possible this attack would be executed after but a short preparatory bombardment."

The English artillery had swept the positions mainly with shrapnels - between 11:00 a. m. and 12:00 noon, after which the fire became heavier. Numerous tanks moved up at about 1:00 p. m. from the low ground at the railway depot of Marcoing longside of the railway embankment. Four of them moved over the embankment to the Plot Forme, three came to a halt and opened fire and finally three more tanks moved more toward the south and against the south exit of Rumilly.

Here again the English command had first of all placed its hopes on the tanks. The 10th Company, 1st Guard Reserve Infantry Rgt. reported at 1:40 p. m., that it had to retire before three tanks which penetrated between the 10th and 12th companies, but that the enemy's infantry could be seen only at great distance. Concentrated machine gun and rifle fire though succeeded in forcing these three tanks to face about and retire, after which the old position was again occupied by the 3d Battalion, 1st Guard Reserve Regiment. About 20 minutes later, the tanks advanced again and others joined these three, followed closely by English riflemen. The enemy's lines were very dense and offered a splendid target. The 3d and 4th companies of the German 232d Reserve Infantry Rgt. on the right flank near Flot Perme, was attacked by five tanks and had to be withdrawn temporarily. The centre and left flank of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 98, as well as the 11th Company of the 1st Guard Reserve Rgt. defended themselves successfully. But the main attack of the English was apparently directed further to the left. The 12th and 10th Companies of the 1st Guard Reserve Rgt. were penetrated by numerous tanks which then moved ahead to the great road while firing on the 9th Company of the battalion, from the rear. The right flank company of the 3d Battalion, Bavarian 13th Infy. Rgt. also was attacked by tanks and the two last mentioned companies also had to give way soon afterward. The 11th Company of the Guards and the 11th Company of the Bavarian Battalion turned their interior flanks back to the point of the penetration so as to protect the flank.

The deep formation of the machine guns, which now were able (mostly from the sides) to engage the tanks advancing over the front line, stood the test. The lack of ammunition soon became perceptible. The complaints heard by the regiments of the 107th Infantry Division also were heard here. Above all there was a deficiency of belted machine gun ammunition.

The tanks moved forward on and to both sides of the highway in a northerly direction. The one furthest advanced, reached a point within 400 metres to the south of the command post of the provisional regiment Broderlow, where the artillery, called for several time, was awaited with great anxiety. The situation was extremely critical.

As the 7th Battery of Reserve Field Artillery Rgt. No. 63 marched through the southern part of Cambrai, the battery commander was hailed with "Gallop, tanks are coming on this road." He galloped with the first section over the highway lying under a hostile fire and hardly arriving at height 96, infantry pointed out the tanks. The frontmost gun fired and the fourth shot hit directly in front of a tank on the road. The fifth shot struck the tank which moved a short stretch ahead and then came to a stop smoke pouring from it. The 2d gun of the battery also came up and a gun of the 7th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 213 also opened its fire. Several tanks were put out of action and the others began to face about.

The commander of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 261 was advised by the Bavarian battalion of the penetration by the tanks, before he received the order issued by Major von Broderlow for the counter attack. Immediately he sent the 1st Company with a few machine guns forward

and soon thereafter ordered the 3d Company with more machine guns to follow the first. The 1st company fought at first successfully close to and west of Rumilly, but it also had to give way soon. The 3d company engaged the tanks on the road and one platoon tried to obstruct the way of the tanks by forming a blockade with vehicles.

When the tanks after the losses through the effect of the German artillery, commenced to withdraw in the face of the machine gun and trench mortar fire, Major Broderlow ordered to follow them at once and to recover the old position. The enemy had dug in already in the second line where the tanks penetrated, so when the Germans attacked it resulted at many places in hand to hand and hand grenade fighting. The English infantry did not hold their ground very long after their tanks withdrew. The Siegfried second line position in the Broderlow sector was generally recovered again by 3:30 p. m.; 14 prisoners of the English 29th Division were taken to the rear.

(Note: During the evacuation of Rumilly by the civil population on the evening of November 23d, the 3d Battalion, Bavarian Infantry Rgt. No. 13, took as prisoners the escaped crew of a tank. The losses on the German side were as follows: 3d Battln. 1st Guard Reserve Infy. Rgt. - 2 killed, 26 wounded, 1 missing, 2d Battln. Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 98 - 7 killed, 30 wounded, 1st Battln. Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 261 - 5 killed, 22 wounded, 4 missing.)

At the same time that the 1st Battln. Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, was placed at the disposition of the 107th Infantry Division by the 54th Infy. Division, the 2d battalion, under Captain Schilling, had to fall in at Froville, and march to support the endangered front east of the canal. But the latter did not have to assist in a combat and the order issued to Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 27, to march toward Rumilly also was revoked. Another crisis occurred suddenly. At about 4:10 p. m., information was received by the 108th Infantry Brigade, that the enemy had crossed over the canal by Noyelles. The first general staff officer at this time also brought the Division order, "to launch all the available forces against this enemy." Should this information prove true, the just attained success of the defence to the east of the canal, would have been in vain. The Brigade designated Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 384 and the remnants of the regiments of the 54th Infantry Division for this mission, and the Orderly Officer of the Brigade was sent to the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227 to turn as quickly as possible against this new enemy. Cyclist and Hussar patrols soon reported however, that no English soldier had crossed the canal near Noyelles.

The heavy fire against Rumilly relaxed gradually. Attempts of the Canadian Brigade (5th Cavy. Division) to ride from Masnières against the German front was without success. Tanks which appeared on the other side of the canal in front of the sector of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, vanished again. Further to the east English forces advanced in vain against the front of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 128.\*

\*For note, see next page.

A renewed attack on the afternoon made with several tanks against Revelon Chau and the intention of the English to capture afterwards the bridges at and near Crèvecoeur, drove back the assembled forces of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 19. Here it almost looked as if this time the enemy would attain the goal sought for. But by evening the enemy was also repulsed here.

(Note: Losses of the 18th Reserve Infy. Brigade (9th Reserve Div.), from November 20th to 25th - Officers, Killed 5, wounded 11, missing 13, gassed 1. Noncommissioned Officers and Men, Killed 106, wounded 360, missing 634, gassed 36).

All the other units of the 9th Reserve Division maintained themselves against the attacks of the enemy on November 21st and the latter did not gain a foot of ground on this front. The artillery in particular played a major part in this defense. An English intelligence note captured by the Germans mentioned the excellent effect of the German batteries from the east and southeast.

The combats south of Cambrai came to an end at the beginning of darkness. The brederlow Provisional Regiment much weakened through the wet weather and the heavy struggle could be supplied with subsistence after seven p. m. It was their first warm meal since the morning of November 20th. Where field kitchens were not available, Brigade headquarters sent those of other organizations to the regiment. Orders reached the regiment at 10:00 p. m. directing its relief by units of the 30th Infy. Division. The Brederlow regiment was relieved by Infy. Rgt. No. 99 and the 3d Battalion Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, by the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 143. The 4th Company, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 261 and the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 128, was relieved by the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 143. The west edge of Crèvecoeur was now designated as the boundary between the 54th Infantry Division and the 9th Reserve Infy. Division, but the 2d Battalion of Landwehr Infy. Rgt. No. 82 remained under the orders of the 9th Reserve Division. The commander of the 30th Infantry Division - Major General Count von Lambdorff - assumed on November 23, the command in the sector east of Hoyelles - Crèvecoeur.

(Note: Distribution of the Artillery on November 23d: Field Artillery Group: Major Vossfeldt, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 108, commanding. Sub-group, commanded by Captain Kleemann, 1, 3, 7, 8 and 9 Batteries Field Arty. Rgt. No. 84. Sub-group, commanded by Captain Merres, 2d and 6th Batteries, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 108, 9th Battery, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 36, 7th Battery, Reserve Field Arty. Rgt. No. 63, 3d and 6th Battery, Guard Field Arty. Rgt. Sub-group, commanded by Major Rosendahl, 5th and 6th Batteries, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 108, 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9th Batteries, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 20. Sub-group, commanded by Captain Bohmer, 4, 5 and 6th Batteries, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 84. Inside of Cambrai, 2d Battery, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 84. Mobile Reserve, 2d Battalion, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 20.

Note from preceding page: At 2 p.m., Major Faber was relieved by Major Roosen of the command of the Reinforcement Battalions attached to the 9th Reserve Div. (Maj. Roosen - Comdr. of the 93d Res. Infy. Rgt. had just arrived from the Oise). The 1st Bn. Inf. Rgt. 128, lost here 3 killed, 12 wounded.

Heavy Artillery Group: Captain Groll, commanding, with Group Julius (Bavarian Foot Arty. Battln. No. 20) 1st Battery, Foot Arty. Battln. No. 20, 3d Battery, Bavarian Foot Arty. No. 5, 5th Battery, Foot Arty. No. 18).

ii

The events of November 21st did not confirm the oppressive apprehension under which the headquarters of the 2d Army (German) labored, yet the situation remained very intense. Of the reinforcements, nearly all the combat troops of the 214th and 30th Infantry Divisions had arrived by evening of this day (November 21st). Certain units of the 119th Infy. Division though were still on the rails. The 3d Guard Infantry Division was assembling to the north of Cambrai and the 34th Infy. Div., southeast of the city. The front units of the 5th Guard Infantry Division were under orders to advance on November 22d as far as the region of Villers-Outreaux. Several field artillery regiments and Foot Artillery Battalions, designed to reinforce the fronts, very weakly provided with artillery, reported their probable time of arrival. The most of these reinforcements came from the 4th German Army for there, the most of the divisions, army artillery, air service units and other formations had been assembled after coming from the battle in Flanders.

The reinforcements were moved by rail as no motor transport columns were available. Thanks to the efficient work of the railway authorities, the troop trains arriving at close intervals were quickly detrained and the ration and ammunition trains inserted between the troop trains, also were unloaded in a short time with but very little confusion. It was lucky that during the first two days of the battle the enemy did not lay their artillery against Cambrai. Not until the afternoon of the 22d did they fire at irregular intervals on the railway station; soon thereafter their shells also fell in the interior of the city.

(Note: In order to place the defence of Cambrai in a firm hand, Group Gaudry appointed on November 22d, Colonel Treusch von Buttlar-Brandenfels, the commander of the 9th Depot Infantry Brigade, as the first commandant of the city of Cambrai).

The lack of ammunition remained extremely disadvantageous. Despite repeated requests, Group Gaudry received on the morning of November 21, only few heavy field howitzer and no 10 cm. ammunition. For this reason a part of the arriving heavy artillery could not be employed. Due to general instructions of G. H. Q. artillery organizations were to move by rail without a single shot of ammunition. As the ammunition supplied was hardly sufficient to cover the large expenditure by the guns located in the positions, newly arriving field batteries could frequently not be employed in the combat front, yet an ample artillery ammunition supply was needed and actually indispensable in a fight against tanks. Even with the scanty defensive means and the weak forces available, the English did not succeed in penetrating the German front decisively on the second

battle day. The Commanding General of the 2d Army counted on the continuation of the enemy's attack on November 23d. According to the statements made by English prisoners, the employment of the English Guard Division was expected shortly. The German command on the other hand did not intend to limit its activity to the defence. In accordance with orders received from the Headquarters of the Army group, the Commanding General of the 2d Army on November 21st, advised the various groups of its command, that preparations were being made, for "regular counter attacks for the regaining of the lost terrain," and it was also emphasized, that it was primarily intended "to prevent an extension of the penetration on the flanks by Moeuvres-Bourlon and Banteux," also, that "the crossings over the Schelde-Canal on the stretch Crovecoeur-Banteux-Vendhuile" be held. In order to ease the arrangements for the attack, new orders issued later on this day stated, that new corps commands were to be formed. In conformity with the latter, the 18th Army Corps (Lieut. General Albrecht) received under the name of Group Lewarde, the former northern portion of Group Arras (111th and 240th Infantry Divisions), the 23d Reserve Corps (General von Kathon) under the name of Group Busigny (9th Reserve and 123d Infantry Divisions) had to shove in between Groups Caudry and Quentin.

The 21st of November also proved to be of decisive importance to the English command, for the attacks made on the whole front on this day, had resulted favorably only to the southwest of Cambrai.

(Note: According to an English Intelligence report the following German prisoners were brought in between November 19th and 6:00 p. m. of November 21st - 139 officers and 7,316 men of which 19 officers and 893 men were wounded).

The success attained so far was received with great joy in England. The exultation of "Byng's Boys" had no limits. "The most famed defensive line has been penetrated; we have often humiliated the Germans, but from the standpoint of the positive strategy, this has been the most degrading of all beatings. The consciousness of the British victory between Arras and St. Quentin is as magnificent as the results are glorious. The victory attained in front of Cambrai elevates the repute of the English army and hastens the liberation of our ground." Such articles were found in the newspapers in England and France every day. Though the flush of victory rose ever so high, the English commander in chief had to recognize toward the evening of the second battle day, that he had not gained his mission. "The 48 hours, after which it had been calculated that the German reserves would begin to arrive had actually expired and the high ground at the Bourlon Village and wood, still remained in possession of the Germans." A few important tactical positions to the east and west of the wood also remained in German hands. "It now became necessary to decide whether to take up a defensive attitude and rest content with what had been attained." But was it really possible to assume the defensive in the attained line? In his report of the events, General Haig enters into lengthy contemplations of the situation which his troops had contrived on November 21st, for in the wedge-shaped positions in which his troops were situated on the evening of this date, they could not remain. The heights in front of Bourlon, the objective of the first

attack day, commanded the English positions. "Unless this elevated ground was gained it was impossible to hold the positions of the English forces except at foolish excessive losses."

A decision had to be made at once but it could be found only in the continuation of the offensive or in the withdrawal to a suitable defensive line. But could the English commander dare to withdraw his front to the high ridge of Flesquières at the moment when his own people and the confederated Allies followed the events at Cambrai with the utmost strain, on the victory of which they fastened the greatest hopes? Would not a plainly to be recognized and successful blow at this front again raise the respect for the British arms at the very end of a year so rich in failures? Would it not remove the unfavorable impression caused by the unsuccessful battle in Flanders?

Of course these psychological motives are not mentioned by General Haig in the reasons for his "Decision to Go On." He alluded to the importance of the Bourlon ridge in the following manner: "On the other hand, the enemy showed certain signs of an intention to withdraw. Craters had been formed at road junctions and troops could be seen ready to withdraw toward the east." Finally he also mentioned as a very important argument the situation in Italy, "due to which a continuance of the pressure on the Cambrai front was a necessity." If the views mentioned, above all the indications for a probable German retreat, called for the continuance of a further advance, it is incomprehensible why the English Commander in Chief did not order his forces to renew the attack immediately. The events of November 22d, though fails to indicate such energetic measures. Contrary! This day was employed by the enemy, to establish their troops in the terrain gained, in relieving certain organizations and in giving rest to the troops.

General Haig gives no detailed information about his reserves except that two divisions, originally intended for Italy, were to be placed at his disposition on November 21st. But we know from other sources, that at the beginning of the battle, three divisions were assembled. The French detachment of Degoutte also was located at Péronne but it received no orders to participate.

(Note: The writer of the article "Cambrai" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, sees as the fundamental weakness of the plan, the lack of a large general reserve).

It looks as if the deliberations and discussions of the exhausted state of the English troops on the evening of November 21st, served only to conceal the actual reason for the failure - which must after all be sought in the complete misunderstanding of the favorable English situation. At the end of his report General Haig even states: "I am of opinion that on the 20th and 21st of November we went very near to attain a sufficiently large success to bring the realisation of our full programme within our power." Thus, Kœltz (in *La Bataille de France*), is fully warranted in passing judgment when he says: "If the English had been more audacious and skilled, they would have moved their reserves closer to the front. If this had been done, it would have been possible to break through with their

cavalry and attack in rear of the German front, which was wholly free from reserves."

The events of November 21st adduced proof to the English Commander, that his operation begun with the greatest of expectation, had been wrecked. Now it became necessary to get out of the present situation; a decision must be made at once. According to Haig's report he found this in the continuation of the attack against the heights of Bourlon, through which he hoped to force the Germans to "abandon their carefully prepared defence systems for a considerable distance to the north thereof."

Although the combats south of Cambrai did not stop during the next days, the centre of the attack from now on lay to the northwest of the Bapaume road.

### Fontaine-Notre-Dame.

November 22d and 23d.

The exclusive command in the sector on both sides of the Bapaume road was assigned at 6:00 a. m., on November 22d, to Major General Havenstein. The 119th Infantry Division arriving northeast of Cambrai, was placed under the orders of the 107th Infantry Division by the commanding general of Group Gaudry. The two battalions of Infantry Rgt. No. 46, of the 119th Division, quartered east of Cambrai, were ordered to march quickly to Raillencourt and thence turn to the south and occupy a switch trench between Bourlon and the right flank of the already occupied Fotan third line. The artillery commander was directed to positively block the gap toward the 214th Infantry Division and at day-break to lay a heavy fire against Fontaine-Notre-Dame.

The 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, had hardly occupied the accommodations assigned to it in Boussières, when orders from the 107th Infantry Division directed it to return to Cambrai. The night rest of the 2d Battalion did not last much longer. The senior Battalion Commander of the two battalions - Major Hubert Richert - received from the commander of the 107th Infantry Division at 7:30 a. m., the order covering the task assigned to the two battalions. He also received at the same time a brief outline of the situation.

"Alarms, assault kit to be packed, every man to be supplied with two extra bandoliers. Fall in." The two battalions assembled after a short rest in the yards of the Guirassier and Marwitz barracks in the west portion of Cambrai. Major Richert ordered the 2d Battalion to proceed from Raillencourt with its left flank alongside of the road toward Fontaine and to seek junction with the 214th Infantry Division. His own 1st Battalion, was to advance to the east of the road mentioned. As the two battalions were marching on the Arras highway at 10:00 a. m., the headquarters of the 48th Infantry Rgt. arrived and Lieut. Colonel Zunchmer now assumed the command.

Although the nightly surprise attack against Fontaine-Notre-Dame was a failure, the 107th Infantry Division did not lose hope to recapture

this village. It also recognized the importance of the high ridge of Bourlon, but believed that this important position could only be maintained by the neighboring division, if Fontaine-Notre-Dame was in possession of the Germans. Shortly after 9:00 a. m., a message was received from an aviator who during his low flight was sure to have seen German soldiers in Fontaine. Although this information provoked considerable doubts and rightly so, the 213th Infantry Division was immediately directed, to send out patrols toward the village to ascertain the facts. The 107th Infantry Division at 10:10 a. m. ordered that as soon as patrols found Fontaine unoccupied or with only a weak garrison, that the village be occupied and that with firm connections toward Bourlon, the line Bourlon-Fontaine-la Folie-Min. de Cantignoul, be occupied and held. In order to execute this intention with as far as possible fresh troops, the following tactical measures were taken at the same time: 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58 to be inserted at once and connecting with the 2d Battalion on the north flank of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, was to relieve corresponding portions of this regiment. The commander of Infantry Rgt. No. 58 was then to assume command of this sector. The command of the remaining companies of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, and of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, was assigned to Major Eüchholz (the commander of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227).

The regrouping of the forces was not to be accomplished completely. The 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, with all its four companies and the 1st Battalion with the 1st and 3d company in the front line, had wheeled from Raillencourt in a general southerly direction. The commander of the 7th company, Lieut. Gabler, wrote that "the companies marched slowly ahead, passing through wet and feet-high grass and sedge, everywhere a surprising calmness." Now and then a hostile artillery shot was heard and only when English aeroplanes appeared and fired with their machine guns and throw bombs, did the officers of the headquarters and company commanders dismount, sending their horses to the rear.

As contradicting reports were received of the activity of the 46th Infantry Rgt. by the 107th Infantry Division, the Second General Staff Officer of the division was sent by automobile to the regimental commander. He instructed the latter on the spot of the importance of the occupation of Fontaine-Notre-Dame. Lieut. Col. Zuehner, the regimental commander, after receiving these instructions, as well as on the basis of his own observations and the information furnished by Major Niemann of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 79, and from the report made in person by Major Richert concluded, that the situation could be taken advantage of successfully, through the immediate and surprise-like advance of his fresh battalions. At 12:30 he issued to the 2nd Battalion the following written order, after he had verbally instructed the 1st Battalion: "The regiment will advance against Fontaine-Notre-Dame and if found occupied will take the village if possible. The 1st Battalion is already advancing and the 2d Battalion will establish junction with its left flank on the 1st Battalion, to the right it will establish junction with Infantry Rgt. No. 50 (southeast edge of Bois de Bourlon)." That this decision corresponded also with the wishes of the officers and men will be shown directly.

(Note: At about the same time (sent at 12:15 and received at 2:10 p.m.), the commander of the 5th company, Infy. Rgt. No. 46, wrote his report at the east edge of the Bourlon wood, that junction had been established by him at that point, with the 5th company, Infy. Rgt. No. 50. The 2d Battln. of the latter regiment was inserted during the morning along the east edge of the wood connecting with the 9th Company).

Major Richert reported that "an attack during a maneuver could not have been carried forward in a more orderly and spirited manner than this one." It was a military picture as one could hardly have hoped for toward the end of 1917, it was an evidence of the excellent spirit of our troops." The war diary of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 79, also contains the following: "The battalion commander was able to observe from the castle of Raillencourt, how the attack against the village of Fontaine was carried forward with great dash." The formation of the terrain was of great advantage for the deployment and development of the battalions, the enemy's front line, which apparently had not been moved over the railway embankment, could not clearly observe the advance of the Germans. The English aeroplanes apparently had been deceived through several clever movements of the battalions during their deployment, so that the aviators flew off without recognizing the correct direction of the development. A strong infantry and machine gun fire of the enemy met the German battalions only after they had fully ascended the gradual slope of the hill. The English artillery now entered the battle with its power but despite this resistance, the companies of the German Battalions advanced with great dash, crossed over the railway embankment and attacked against the village. No junction having been established at first toward the left, the commander of the 1st Battalion had to insert the 4th company. The houses in the village were obstinately defended by the English, but the impetuous advance of the Germans could not be stopped for a lengthy period. The fighting in the vicinity of the church was especially severe. House after house here had to be captured with the bayonet, spade and hand grenades.

After 2:15 p.m., regimental headquarters (46th Infy. Rgt.), received reports indicating the progressive and favorable process of the fighting in the village. The German artillery recognized the advance of the English reinforcements at the proper time and layed an effective fire on them. The 2d Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 237 (119th Infy. Division), had for the most part been equipped with teams and held in readiness for a possible tank defence. Major Richert of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, reported at 3:40 p. m., that the whole village was captured and that his troops were located on height 49, south of Fontaine-Notre-Dame. A great and quick success was attained by the two battalions of the 46th Infantry Rgt., although under severe losses. The losses on this day amounted to: Officers - killed 2, wounded 4; Noncommissioned officers and men - killed 23, wounded 109, missing 19. The enemy, apparently the 7th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland and 4th Battalion, Seaforth-Highlanders, reinforced by the 154th Machine Gun Company (154th Brigade, 51st Division), withdrew, leaving behind many dead and wounded.

The Commander of Infantry Regiment No. 58, located at the command post at Ste. Ollie, was advised by the 2d General Staff Officer of the 107th Infantry Division, of the intended further attack of Infantry Rgt. No. 46 against Fontaine. The regimental commander of the 58th Rgt. immediately ordered his 2d Battalion to join in the attack of the 46th Rgt. He also ordered his 3d Battalion to move during its advance in rear of the right flank of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, in order to support the latter if necessary. The relief of the latter (see page 159) was to be accomplished later on.

The 2d Battalion of Infantry Rgt. No. 58, began the advance with three companies in the front line at about 1:00 p. m., but the fourth company also had to be inserted soon afterwards in order to assure the junction with the neighboring Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52. This attack came to a halt between the railway embankment and the highway, because the companies encountered some English machine guns which caused heavy losses in their ranks. But not long; soon the battalion advanced again; the houses in the most eastern part of Fontaine were cleared of the enemy by an assault detachment of the battalion. The losses of the 2d Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 58, were: 58 killed, 95 wounded and ten missing. The losses of the forces participating to the east of the attack were not so large. Of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, the second battalion mainly shared in this fighting. The Battalion Commander, Captain Meibauer, employed all his companies. The 1st Battalion of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, advancing under the command of Major Buchholz, did not meet an enemy at the northerly half of the forest of la Folle. Soon though a heavy grenade and machine gun fire confronted this battalion from the direction of Ganteing. Thus, the 107th Infantry Division attained south of the Bapaume road a position, which stretched rectilinearly from height 49 as far as the crossing point to west of Min. de Cantignoul.

The most important task now was to regulate some of the organizations which had become badly intermixed, to secure the connections between the troops, replace ammunition and close-range weapons and to arrange for the defence. Beginning with the late afternoon the enemy laid a very heavy artillery fire on Fontaine. The Commanding Officer of the 46th Infantry Rgt. sent the 12th company of his regiment to reinforce the 2d Battalion and the 11th and Machine Gun Company to reinforce the 1st Battalion. A firm connection was established toward evening with the 314th Infantry Division. The 3d Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 50, held the south and south-east edge of the Bourlon forest and the 2d Battalion advanced along the east edge of this forest toward Fontaine. Counter attacks against this newly established front though were not executed by the enemy.

The 107th Infantry Division now ordered the following distribution of the sectors which were to be accomplished during the night: Connecting with Infantry Rgt. No. 46, the 2d and 3d Battalions, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, were inserted on the southwest and south edge of the wood of la Folle and the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, in the front line. Major General Berger, the commander of the 119th Infy. Division, assumed the command on the morning of November 23d. Of the 107th Infantry Division, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 213 and the machine guns and trench mortars of

the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 52, remained in the position and parts of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232 and the 4th Company, Pioneer Rgt. No. 21, also had to be placed under the command of the 119th Infantry Division.

(Note: The 3d Battln. Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 232 remained on the canal; the 1st Battalion of this Rgt. which was relieved by the 2d Battln., Infy. Rgt. No. 105 (30th Infy. Div.) on November 22, had on the evening of November 23d to again take up its old position on both sides of the canal bridge of Moyelles, because the sector of the 119th Infy. Division was extended to the road junction east of Moyelles. The 4th Company of Pioneer Rgt. No. 21, was constructing new crossings east of la Folie).

According to further orders issued during the forenoon of November 23, by the commander of the 107th Infantry Division, upon directions given by the commanding general of Group Caudry, Reserve Infantry Regiment 227 and the Pioneer Company No. 213, were assigned to the town commandant of Cambrai. Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 and two battalions of Field Artillery Rgt. No. 61, all under the command of Major Steinkopff, at first designated as the assault reserve, was now directed to assemble, to form a counter attack group of the command in Cambrai.

X

On November 23d, the English command wished to install its troops in the terrain gained so far, to carry out reliefs and in resting the troops. As already mentioned, November 23d was indicated as the day on which the attack was to be continued, the main objective being the German Bourlon position which was to be taken by assault. Through the loss of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, the orders already issued had to be enlarged so as to include the recapture of the latter mentioned town. This mission was assigned by the 51st Division (English) to its 152d Brigade. The battalions of this Brigade assembled in the neighborhood of la Justice. Here also assembled the tanks attached to the Brigade, 12 each of the Band II battalions of the 2d Tank Brigade. The time of the attack was fixed at 11:30 a. m.

The night from November 22 to 23, was passed quietly in the sector of the 119th Infantry Division and the early morning hours of November 23, brought no essential changes. But between 10 and 11 a. m. the English artillery fire increased considerably and finally intensified to a heavy bombardment. Fontaine-Notre-Dame especially was the objective of their shells. The village, in which civilian inhabitants were still living in the cellars, was soon veiled in a mighty smoke cloud. The German batteries at first answered with barrage.

(Note: The German batteries, Field Artillery Rgt. 213 (107th Div.) were located near Petit-Fontaine and to the east of Proville, where the

8th Battery of Field Arty. Rgt. No. 52 and 1st Battery of Landwehr Field Arty. Rgt. No. 13, also was located. Of the Field Arty. Rgt. No. 237, the 1st Battalion stood to the north of Raillencourt, the 3d Battalion to the east of Pbg. de Paris; parts of the 2d Battalion in equipped with teams, were held in readiness. The 2d Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 61, also had taken up positions near Raillencourt during the night. Tank guns were shoved forward by numerous batteries. The 119th Infantry Division also disposed of the 1st and 2d Batteries Bavarian Foot Artillery Rgt. No. 5 and the 2d Battery, Bavarian Foot Artillery No. 20. (Foot Arty.-Heavy Arty.).

The first reports from the observation points and from the front most line were soon received by the commander of the 237th Infantry Brigade, advising that tanks were seen advancing along the great road and from the direction of Cantaing.

The battle started anew. Just as a mighty struggle was taking place on land on the front from Moeuvres to la Folie, so also a furious battle was fought in the air during a weather which was clearing after a turbid and rainy morning. Captain von Richthafen won his sixty second air victory, Lieutenant von Richthofen (of Air Service Unit No. 11) won his 25th, Lieutenant Kùppers and Vice Sergeant Major Kùmocke each reported the bringing down of one aeroplane and Vice Sergeant Major Rumoy even forced two opponents to fall. Anti-aircraft guns also participated and in addition were able to obtain numerous hits against the attacking tanks.

The description of the English main attack against Bourlon will be reserved for a later chapter (see page ). Here the fighting for Fontaine-Notre Dame only will be recounted.

The 46th Infantry Rgt. was acquainted with tanks from the Ypres front, although the regiment did not come in direct touch with them. The tanks met with great difficulties in the swampy terrain in Flanders, but the firm ground in front of Cambrai was much more favorable for them. The companies of this regiment had been trained in the defence against tank attacks. This training required that the frontmost line was to seek cover or if necessary, to yield to the flanks, thus practically opening the door to the tanks, leaving the fighting with the tanks to the rearward detachments. After permitting the tanks to pass through, the firing line was to be closed again. The hostile infantry, believing that their tanks had cut a clear path for the infantry and that the enemy and its machine guns were crushed could, through such a tactic, be placed before a surprising situation, for which, according to experiences, the English troops were not equal. What the 46th Infy. Regiment had learned in this respect, it was to demonstrate during the sternness of the battle on November 23d.

At about the same time at which on November 22d, the 46th Infantry Rgt. took one house after another from the English troops, a much more difficult task confronted the regiment on November 23, namely - to maintain

the village which had been taken during strenuous fighting and in addition to defend itself against the evil-boding machines. Despite the barrage of the German batteries, the tanks advanced again as they did on November 20th, veiled in an artificial smoke, against Fontaine. The fire-spitting tanks gliding over the wire entanglements and shell holes advanced against the front of the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 46th Infantry Rgt. A hard struggle ensued which lasted until evening. The front line followed the basic principles of the tank defence and permitted the tanks to pass through and then faced the riflemen of the enemy.

The English infantry mostly followed their tanks at a considerable distance, often even rather hesitatingly. Where the English infantry had not already been shot down by the artillery, rifle and machine gun fire, the men of the 46th Infantry Rgt. prevented their entry into Fontaine with the bayonet and hand grenades. In the meantime the tanks had entered the village and moved along the streets. Now though it was to be shown, that tanks can win terrain but that they cannot hold it, if they are left to their own resources. The tanks lacked the field of fire in the narrow streets and they were hemmed in their movements from every direction. The maiming fright which the tanks produced heretofore vanished quickly, for the weakness of this new combat weapon was recognized and the German troops understood how to profit by it. Not a man of the 46th Infantry showed his face when a tank appeared. Hardly had it passed, when things became lively around the tanks and in the houses. Rifle and machine gun fire soon were discharged from every corner. As single hand grenade thrown on the cover and on the flanks of the tanks were without effect, then several were tied together and thrown under the tanks where they exploded.

Besides the large letters and the numbers on each tank, they frequently also had a special name such as Red Hand, Hilda, Brigand and Conqueror. Warrant Officer Holzhausen with two squads of his 1st Company went after the tank with the proud name of "Conqueror" who besides this name had painted on one side a German soldier with arms stretched high; a signal of surrender. The tank succeeded for some time to avoid his pursuers, it broke through the wall of the church yard and knocked down several trees, but finally was captured. Another tank rolled into the village-pond as it attempted a quick turnabout to escape. The commander of the 2d Battalion reported as follows: "During the course of this battle, I also had an opportunity to inspect several tanks, among which one damaged by an anti-tank defence gun. The interior of this tank presented a gruesome sight. The entire crew - 1 officer and 7 men only made up a bloody shapeless mass." Parts of other German regiments also participated besides the 46th Infantry in this contest. The shout of joy ran high every time when through their own power or through anti-tank defence guns, one of these tanks was downed and if the latter did not burn out, the richly stored food supplies, chocolate especially and cigarettes contained in tin canisters, made up a spoil not to be disdained.

It was impossible for the German batteries to participate in this street fighting without endangering its own infantry. Besides the single

guns already advanced, the mobile sections of the 2d Battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 237, in readiness south of Raillencourt, were now employed in the fighting at the railway depot of Fontaine and southwest of Petit Fontaine.

The situation of the 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 46, during the course of the battle was especially critical, because the English were making progress toward the Bourlon forest. The danger of being rolled up from the right was very great at times. Units of the 3d Battalion so far kept in reserve, were now employed as a flank protection and in extending the right flank already curved back. The 1st Battalion of the Regiment also had lost junction with the 2d Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 58, located to the left.

At the outset the situation in the middle sector of the 119th Infantry Division appeared to be much more critical.

Lieut. Colonel Harkstadt, commanding the 58th Infy. Regiment, sent the 11th company of his regiment to reinforce the 2d Battalion of the regiment. Of the 3d Battalion the 10th and 12th company was located in the front line. As the 3d Machine Gun company of this regiment had not arrived, eight machine guns and four light trench mortars of Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 52, remained in the position. The enemy laid a heavy fire, intermixed with smoke bombs, on the sector of the two battalions of Infantry Regt. No. 58, before the tanks advanced. The German barrage and the defensive fire of the machine guns and trench mortars could not delay the advance of the tanks. The attack of the latter was directed mainly against the right flank of the 2d Battalion. Soon the tanks appeared in the rear of the 58th Regiment. The front line of the entire sector of the regiment gave way; at first only a few men gave ground, then whole sections. The rearward movement of the front line also involved the reserves. The companies retreated in a northeasterly direction, parts also got to Fontaine.

This advance of the tanks from the direction of Cantaing toward Fontaine, which was not followed by hostile infantry, was seen by the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 46, despite the fact that the enemy had laid smoke bombs on the forest of Folie. Upon receipt of a report, that the tanks had pressed back the front of Infantry Regt. No. 58, the commander of the 1st Battln. Reserve Infy. Regt. No. 46, posted the 4th company and all the available men of his staff, to form a flank protection at the west edge of the forest.

(Note: A captured English report stated that the infantry following the tanks were held up by the flank fire of the German machine guns from the wood at Folie. In compliance with orders, the German machine gun company and trench mortar section of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 227, remained for twenty-four hours in the sector of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 46).

Before the penetration of the tanks in the middle sector of the 119th Infantry Division could disadvantageously effect the 46th Infantry Regt. in Fontaine and the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Regt. 46, around la Folie,

Major Steinkopff attacked with his 52d Reserve Infantry Rgt.

As at first ordered, Reserve Infy. Rgt. 52, acting as an attack reserve, was posted northeast of Fontaine in rear of the railway embankment, in defiles and in the Wotan 3d position. The order to march to Cambrai was not executed because the signs of an approaching attack became more and more glaring. The battalions of the regiment had been separated much farther during the heavy artillery fire of the enemy. Patrols sent out reported the successes attained by the tanks in the sector of the 58th Infantry Rgt. and the entry of the tanks in Fontaine. Major Steinkopff ordered his regiment (52d Infy.), to assume the counter attack immediately. The 2d Battalion with all its four companies attacked via the southeast part of Fontaine, where four machine guns of the 2d Machine gun company of Infantry Rgt. No. 58, at first conducted the defence with considerable success, but finally had to retire before newly approaching tanks and because of lack of steel pointed ammunition. The battalion soon received a very furious fire from the village. While the other companies continued in the southwesterly attack direction, the 5th company turned toward the west. The commander of this company in his report states: "The battalion would have been lost if the first tank had come out of Fontaine, for it was bound to succumb on an open field from the flank fire of the tanks. For this reason I turned with twenty men to the right and stalked hurriedly along in the communication trench to reach the first house, before the tank could do so. My men carrying the full pack and with heavy clay-clods on their boots ran behind me. Not one remained behind for we all were conscious of the task before us. After reaching the first house, we saw a tank nearly 100 metres from us advancing at a good speed keeping at the same time the whole village street under its fire. First of all we tried to throw hand grenades under the chains of the tank and it proved successful. But the single hand grenades were too weak in their explosive force. We brought up empty sand-sacks in each of which we placed four hand grenades, one of which was so fastened to the sack, that the firing device only was exposed. While this was being done, the tank which had come to a stop was kept under rifle fire the latter being directed especially against the observation windows. Now came the favorable moment. Two men sprang toward the firing tank and at the length of the throw, throw two bundles of loads under the chain. A detonation, the chain of the left side of the tank flew in the air and the tank came to a halt. The small detachment gave a shout of hurrah. Of course we were unable to get to the tank because it kept everything under its fire. This had taken only a few minutes when a second tank came up, equipped with a gun which fired through the lower wall of the house with steel piercing shells, so that we had to leave the house and flee to the yard. Despite this act, we again resumed the firing. We were frightened to see that the second tank put out of action on the right side by us, moves toward us. As we could no longer fire on the opposite side of the tank we could not harm the machine although it was only 10 meters from us. The second tank took up the crew of the first and ran off firing."

The 5th company was not the only one of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 52 which fought the tanks.

The 3d Battalion of this regiment (only counting 220 rifles and formed into three companies), had been ordered to follow the left flank of the battalion as a reserve. The commander of this battalion noticing that the counter attack to the southeast of the village was progressing, while in the eastern portion of Fontaine tanks were running about, and that it looked as if a gap had resulted there, he deployed the main forces of his battalion in that direction. Despite the fire from the tanks, the 9th and 10th company pushed their way toward the tanks and took them under fire with pointed steel ammunition in such way, that they actually halted their advance. These units of the Battalion also advanced further into Fontaine and there engaged the tanks repeatedly. Finally, the 2d Company of the 52d Reserve Infantry Rgt., came up and attacked the tanks which had advanced as far as the middle of the westerly half of Fontaine. This company was amply supplied with steel ammunition and hand grenades. The 1st Battalion of this regiment had been ordered by the regimental commander to advance further to the west to about the railway depot Fontaine, so that in case occasion should arise, a counter attack could be conducted through the town.

Units of the 58th Infantry Rgt., which for the most part retreated toward la Folie, joined at once in the advance to again occupy their old defence line, as the 52d Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 moved forward.

(Note: Those units of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, including portions of the 9th Company, which reached Fontaine, also found repeated opportunities to enter the fight against tanks).

Lieut. Marguardt with one gun of the 8th Battery, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 213, engaged successfully from the northwest edge of the woods, those tanks which broke through. After firing all his howitzer ammunition, he proceeded with his men to a field gun located toward the west which had been abandoned by its crew during the tank attack. Lieut. Schmidt of the 9th company and Lieut. Simmat of the 10th company, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, in the meantime had reached this position and endeavored to repair a gun damaged by a tank. When the artillery finally reached the position they took hold of this work by replacing the striker in the breech mechanism. Ammunition was brought up and firing against the tanks assumed again.

During the time that the regimental commander of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, was unable to obtain connections with his 1st Battalion, the telephone leading to the 2d Battalion of his regiment forming the reserve and located in the Wotan 3d position, remained in working order. In this manner he was also advised of the events on the front of Infantry Rgt. No. 58. As Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 was already engaged in the attempt to restore the situation, the commander of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, ordered his 2d battalion, forming the security troops of the Wotan 3d position, to extend their line further to the north. Shortly afterwards (1:00 p. m.) a Brigade order was received by the commander of this battalion, "to fall in at once for the counter attack with right flank southeast edge of Fontaine, left flank la Folie

woods." During the advance, the 2d Battalion of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, had only very small losses from the hostile artillery fire but they increased, especially on the right flank which met with tanks in Fontaine.

At 2:15 p. m., the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, was able to report that the 6th, 7th and 8th companies were located in the old position. The commander of the regiment also received a message from his 1st battalion, which also was favorable: "The village will be maintained." In the defence of the sector of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 46 (Major Richert, commanding), the 11th Company and the 3d Machine Gun Company also participated. The commander of Infantry Brigade No. 237, received confirmation at 3:30 p. m., that in the middle sector, the old front line had been completely regained, above all that some machine guns and a few trench mortars left on the left flank of the line were found intact despite the tank invasion. So far as the tanks were not put out of action they sought to escape, followed by the flank fire of the German batteries on the east side of the canal.

The enemy did not give up hope to win Fontaine-Notre-Dame. He renewed the attack. The air service forces, in much greater strength, supported the advance of the tanks and infantry at about noon. The very low flying aeroplanes were engaged by the German infantry and machine guns with good results. A troublesome aeroplane was brought down by a corporal and a private of the staff attached to the 2d Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 46. The hostile attack conducted at about 5:00 p. m. was directed mainly against the northwest and west portion of Fontaine. Units of the 46th and 52d Reserve Infantry Regiments pushed themselves in the fighting front near the village and toward the left thereof. Considerable intermixing also took place in the sector of Infantry Rgt. No. 58. Against the advancing English forces in the northwest portion of the village, the commander of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52, ordered his battalion to deploy into the front of the right flank, where the 4th and 3d companies of the 46th Infantry Regiment were already installed. Finally the 1st company of the latter regiment had to extend the front line. Despite the difficult conditions for the conduct of the battle, the enemy was unable to capture the much coveted village. Although tanks did pass over the frontmost skirmisher lines during the late afternoon hours, the success was only temporary. Insofar as these tanks were not downed by the rearward located reserve and assault detachments, the tanks still remaining fit to move, withdrew during the approaching darkness. In the meantime, the English infantry was repulsed everywhere with heavy losses. Thus the hostile attack was beaten back after one hour's fighting. On the evening of November 23d, the 119th German Infantry Division held the positions it occupied on the morning, though with strongly intermixed formations.

Additional assigned forces, partly still from the Group Caudry (13th Wurttemberg Army Corps), were not needed by Major General Berger (Commanding General, 119th Infy. Division) for the defence. The 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, was placed at the disposition of the 46th Infy. Rgt.

The former advanced, at about 2:00 p. m., from Raillencourt, on a wide front against Fontaine. An order stopped it on the railway line Bourlon-Fontaine. The Commandant of Cambrai was ordered to give up the 1st Battalion Infantry Rgt. No. 58, but it was not to depart until relieved by Reserve Infy. Regiment No. 227. Soon after receipt of this order (shortly after 2:00 p. m.), a counter order was received for the battalion to depart at once. Before all the sentries could be withdrawn, some time must elapse. At about 5:30 p. m., all the companies of the battalion had assembled at the west edge of Petit Fontaine. During this time though, Group Headquarters had assigned at first one and then a second battalion of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, to the 109th Infantry Division, to act as a reserve.

General Haig published the results of the renewed attack against Fontaine on November 23, with the following words: "We did not succeed, however, in clearing the village, and at the end of the day no progress was made on this part of our front." The commander of the 2d Tank Brigade reported, that 11 tanks received direct hits during the fighting, that many Lewis machine guns were put out of action and that the losses of our tank-crews were heavy. "The most remarkable event during the fighting," he stated, was "that the German resistance had increased considerably," that on November 23d, "the impression of the first surprise had passed, the Germans having brought up every conceivable tank defensive means."

The recapture of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, which the English commander believed "would not be so difficult," was frustrated.

(Note: Losses: Infy. Rgt. No. 46 - killed 2 officers, 45 men, wounded 117, missing 67.

Infy. Rgt. No. 58 - killed 7, wounded 48 missing 3.

Reserve Infy. Rgt. 46 - killed 9, wounded 62, missing 11.

Total losses 107 Infy. Div. from November 20 to 24, inclusive:

Reserve Infy. Rgt. 52 - killed 31, wounded 185, missing 672, but the list of losses in killed, contained in the regimental history gives 70.

Reserve Infy. Rgt. 227 - killed 43, wounded 214, missing 210.

Reserve Infy. Rgt. 232 - killed 44, wounded 176, missing 117.)

#### The English Attack against Fontaine-Notre-Dame on November 27th.

Just as the possession of Fontaine formed the pillar of the Bourlon-crest for the German defence and thus was of decisive importance, so on the other hand the enemy had to aspire to capture the village and the heights of the shoulder above Fontaine-Notre-Dame, after he had firmly established himself in the forest after hard fighting, the result of which changed from one adversary to the other. For this reason, General Haig wished to make another attempt, which was not to be made until November 27. For this purpose the English Guard Division was to relieve the exhausted 51st Division.

Although the weather became clear at some time; it had remained unsatisfactory for air reconnaissance ever since November 23d. The 25th of November brought a storm from the northwest accompanied by rain and hail. On the 26th and 27th, rain and snow showers fell from time to time. The nights were very cold. No wonder then, that with such a wet-cold weather and the absence of shelter, the health of the troops suffered and that the number of bowel trouble and heavy cold cases increased at a great rate.

Group Caudry (13th Wurttemberg Army Corps), had received information, through an intercepted wireless message, of the relief of the 51st Division by the English Guard Division in the region of Fontaine and it counted on another attack from the early morning of November 26th. However, the enemy's infantry remained surprisingly quiet on this day. The English artillery fire against the frontmost German line facing the Bourlon forest and as far as la Folie, became very active at about 7:30 p. m. on this day, but slackened again as soon as the German batteries answered. No infantry attack was made.

On the German side the 45th Infantry Rgt. was relieved by the 46th Reserve Infantry Rgt., in the right sector of the 119th Infantry Division, during the night from November 26th to 27th. Several changes were also made in various Battalion boundaries. The 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46 (12th, 10th, 11th and 9th company) forming the reserve in the ravine of the road leading to Raillencourt), extended its right flank as far as the sand-pit close to and northwest of Raillencourt. The new left flank of the 2d Battalion (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th company, located in the catacombs of the church acting as a reserve) now defined the road leading from Fontaine to Cantaing. The 46th Infantry Rgt. took shelter with its 1st Battalion in Cambrai, and with the 2d Battalion in Ste. Olle. The 3d Battalion remained at the disposition of the 237th Infantry Brigade to protect the flank, its 10th and 12th company were posted along the railway embankment to the west of the road leading to Raillencourt, while the rest of the battalion was kept in readiness in hollows and defiles to the north of Fontaine. Due to the displacement of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, the 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 58, had to extend the defensive front of the 4th company toward the right. The 11th company of the 3d Battalion formed junction with the 2d company, as formerly. Pioneer companies 237 and 273, after November 23, had worked energetically in completing the trenches and in establishing obstacles at Infantry Regiments No. 46 and 58. The 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, had withdrawn on November 25th, to the Wotan 3d position on both sides of the road Cambrai-Dupaume. The 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46 at the southwest and south edge of the woods of la Folie was now placed under the direct command of the Brigade. During the night, Brigade headquarters was able to acquire additional reserves through the transfer of the left company sector (3d company) to the 12th company of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 232. This was due to the fact that the 107th Infantry Division was put into the front again. On November 27th, it had taken over a newly formed sector between the 119th and 30th Infantry Division, with its right flank resting on les Vallées. Changes were also to take place in the distribution of the artillery. The artillery commander of the 119th Infantry Division (Lieut. Col. Krulle)

had at his disposal besides the 237th Field Arty. Rgt. (its 1st battalion to the north of and close to the south of Saily, its 2d battalion around Ste. Olie and its 3d battalion at Fbg. de Paris), the 2d and 3d Battalion Field Arty. Rgt. No. 61, at Haynecourt (1st Battalion formed the Group Reserve), also the 1st Battery, Bavarian Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 5 and the 2d Battery, Bavarian Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 20, located south of Tilloy.

(Note: Artillery Commander of the 107th Infantry Division, had the following artillery at his disposal:

Field Arty. Rgt. No. 213 (sub-group Linsenbarth, at Petit Fontaine. Sub-group Wolff and von Uslar at Ste. Olie and Pronville); Field Artillery Rgt. No. 65 (Major Triebig) in the space of Hambaix-Saranvillers-Niergnies.

3d Battalion, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 84 (30th Infy. Div.) at Fbg. de Paris.

2d Battery, Bavarian Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 5; the 5th, 6th and 10th Battery, Reserve Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 20, to the southeast of Pronville.

The Army also had organized a special flat trajectory group of the heaviest guns under the command of Major Eichler, consisting of: Sub-group North (Captain Neu) 3d Battery, Bavarian Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 5; 3d Battery, Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 74; 3d Battery, Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 101; 2d and 4th Battery, Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 40; 8th Battery, Bavarian Foot Arty. Rgt. No. 2. These were by the Group Caudry for flank firing of hostile attacks against the line Cambrai-Moeuvres and Crevecoeur-Banteux).

A strong intense bombardment of the enemy began at 7:15 a. m. on November 27th, and after 1/2 to 3/4 of an hour, its infantry also attacked. This attack though seemed to be directed against the neighboring division, the 5d Guard Infantry Division of Group Arras. The enemy befoged the terrain around Fontaine to a large extent, so that accurate observation was very difficult. The first information received at the command post of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, in Ste. Olie, confirmed the impression of the direction of the attack. The neighboring regiment (Grenadier Rgt. No. 9), gave way toward the railway embankment and the right flank, 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, had to be curved back. Due to this a report was sent to the Brigade at 8:30 a. m., as follows: "Regiment is holding the sector. Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, has withdrawn to the railway embankment, reserves urgently necessary for the right flank." The commander of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, did not know until 10:00 a. m. that the enemy had entered Fontaine.

The English Guards under command of Major General Faillderig connecting with the 62d Division, had attacked against Fontaine at the same time. The village had been the objective of the 2d Guard Brigade (from the west to the east, 2d Battalion, Irish Guards, 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards, in the front line. Several tanks advancing in two waves preceded each battalion. The tanks came up along the great road and also opened the way for the battalions connecting toward the north. Apparently the main attack was directed between the forest and Fontaine where the penetration succeeded quickly. While after this a part of the tanks advanced against

the flank and rear of Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, the other rolled against the front of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46 and entered the northwest portion of the village, being closely followed by English infantry.

The frontmost resistance line on the right flank of the 119th Infantry Division was soon changed to the railway embankment, to which point the units of the 46th Reserve Infantry Rgt. also withdrew, so far as they were not cut off by the English forces. The commander of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, at 8:30 a. m. ordered his 9th company to march to the command post of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, located at the ravine road Raillencourt-Fontaine, about 300 meters to the north of the railway line. He reinforced the right flank of his battalion by two platoons of the 11th company and Lieut. Remus brought his trench mortars into position in rear of the 10th company. Of the 3d Machine Gun Company, quickly brought from Raillencourt, three guns were distributed as flank security in the west sector of the 10th company while other machine guns were placed at the disposition of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46. This position, the right flank at about where the foot-path Cambai-Bourlon cuts the railway line, thus reaching considerably beyond its own division sector, was for the time held by the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, supported by units of the 3d Guard Infantry Division and their reinforcements. Only by the weak 12th company (counting about 80 rifles), located furthest to the left, whose front besides was extended too far, it could not be prevented, during the general pell-mell rearward movement, that the English enemy succeeded in crossing the railway embankment. A new front, however, was formed in the ravine road leading to Raillencourt and on both sides of the command post, by the 9th company of Infantry Rgt. No. 46 and 9th company of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46. A tank which advanced from Fontaine to the command post, was forced to turn about. Corporal Lehmann of the 12th company, 46th Infy. Rgt., distinguished himself, especially so during the hand to hand fighting in this defile.

The commander of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, received from his 5th company the first report of the threatening situation, after which the company commander withdrew the company to the west edge of the village. Tanks though had already entered the town of Fontaine. When the enemy commenced firing, the 8th company of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46 acting as a reserve, situated in the deeply lying catacomb under the church, made ready to rush out. As no orders were received the company commander sent out two runners. "While in the act of getting ready the runners returned from the front and reported the penetration of the tanks. At the same time almost, one of the tanks approached and we had no other choice but to retire again to the catacomb to escape the fire of the tank. A tank crew under command of an officer, had in the meantime left the tank (no doubt this was an English Infy. assault detachment) and made themselves known in front of the place of entrance through signs. We shot down two of the men, the rest escaping around the corner from which point they threw hand grenades down the stairway." The company prepared for the defence, knapsacks were emptied and filled

with rubbish and earth and then used to set up barricades at the entrances. Plenty food was available and the catacomb had ample ventilation, so the company commander could hope to hold out for some time.

Meanwhile a furious combat ensued in the streets of the village. British prisoners stated later on that the losses of their troops through the German machine gun fire was exceptionally large. More and more tanks and units of the English Guards entered Fontaine. The Anti-Tank section of the 6th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 237, halting near the church fell completely into the hands of the English after the guns had fired their last ammunition. Officers and men of the staff of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, were able to halt a tank and the English infantry following it, in front of the command post of the battalion about 300 metres to the northeast of the railway depot. The English captured the headquarters of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, in its command post, which was occupied during the previous night in the vicinity of the railway station. English troops in hand to hand fighting entered the advanced observation post of the 1st Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 237, located longside the railway embankment.

The German batteries defended themselves with all their strength during the English intense bombardment. Being advised of the penetration of the enemy into and northwest of Fontaine, the artillery commander of the 119th German Infantry Division ordered that the fire be laid on the southeast portion of the Bourlon forest and Fontaine be blocked. Additional tank guns were now moved forward. The one of the 3d Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 213, was put out of action during this movement. Colonel Heuck, the commander of the 237th German Brigade, after receiving the report of the Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, of the retreat of Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, placed the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, located in Raillencourt, at the disposition of the Major Guischart (commander of Res. Infy. Rgt. No. 46), for his endangered right flank.

The English artillery fire also increased against the other division sectors of Group Caudry, above all on the trenches to the west of Ruzilly and the line Vaucelles-Banteux, which was answered by German annihilating fire. This firing abated already at 8:00 a. m., due to which the Group Commander was able to assign from his reserve the two other battalions of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, to the 119th Infantry Division. Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 52 was ordered to assemble in the suburb Cantimpre and the 1st Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 61, to remain in its quarters and be ready to march. As a replacement for these troops, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 55 and the 1st Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 51 of the 220th Infantry Division, were ordered to Cambrai. With exception of the 1st Battalion, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 61, which during the early afternoon went into position temporarily not far from Raillencourt, no other units of the reserves participated in the fighting.

The situation on the group boundary was rather quickly restored again. The 7th company of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46 on the most extreme left

flank of the 2d Battalion of this regiment, close to and west of the road leading to Cantaing, and the connecting companies of the 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 58, had maintained themselves in their trenches and repulsed the English infantry. The other front of Infantry Rgt. No. 58 (left flank of the 1st and 3d Battalions), as well as the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, were kept only under the fire of the English artillery. Contrary to the action on November 23d, during which the English troops also advanced from the direction of Cantaing against the south edge of Fontaine with tanks, on this day they limited themselves in extending the attack movement only to a small area across the great road toward the south. As the frontmost line in the sector remained firmly in possession of the German troops, the commander of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, whose command post was located near the south east houses of Fontaine, could employ his reserves against the enemy in the village. The assault detachment of the battalion (4 groups) under Corporal Hoevel and the 1st company fell in for the attack at about 9:45 a. m.

The commander of the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58, located in the Wotan 3d position, firstly, during the heavy English artillery fire, ordered "readiness for action." Patrols sent out early, advised the battalion commander of the details of the situation in Fontaine. Without waiting for orders he decided to launch his companies for the counter-attack in general direction toward the village. The 7th company, as the right flank was launched along the great highway, a half hour elapsed before the other three companies advancing in a northerly direction could establish connection with the 7th company. After surmounting the hostile barrage, the 7th company reached the northeast exit of the village. After a short fire combat the English troops gave way. The other part of the battalion did not get forward so quickly. On the road leading to Saily, the tank still stood in front of the command post of the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, and the houses close to and south of the railway station also were strongly occupied by the enemy with machine guns. The 3th company reinforced by two machine guns firstly attacked this group of houses. The tank left the field. Now the other main forces of the 2d Battalion of Infy. Rgt. 58, also entered Fontaine. Meanwhile the 7th company established connection with the main forces of the battalion and during the house to house fighting advanced toward the church.

This attack from the east, to recapture Fontaine, was to be supported through counter attacks via and beyond the north-edge of the village. At first the 1st Battalion of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, was designated for this purpose. Afterwards at about 11:00 a. m., the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, in Ste. Olle, received orders from the 237th Infy. Brigade as follows: "1st Fontaine in English possession. 2d Counter attacks under way, (a) from the north, by 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 227, (b) from the east, by 2d Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 58. 3d 46th Infy. Rgt. also will fall in for the attack." Capt. Lindow with the 8th and 6th company in the foremost line, advanced on both sides of the field road from Saily against Fontaine. To replace this battalion the 119th Infy. Division directed the 1st Battalion, Infy. Rgt. No. 46, to march from Cambrai to St. Olle.

During these events at and by Fontaine-Notre-Dame, measures for restoring the situation on its left flank were also taken by Group Arras. Of the counter attack division (221st Infy. Division), assigned to the group by the Army Commander, units of the 3d Guard Infantry Division were already placed at the disposition of the group, on November 25th. (See page ). In addition two battalions of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 60, under command of the regimental commander, marched to Saille-Raillencourt to act as a support to the 3d Guard Infantry Division. This counter attack detachment reinforced by the 3d Battalion, Field Arty. Rgt. No. 273, received orders at 9:40 a. m. to counter attack. But when it became known to the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade, that Fontaine and a portion of the railway embankment was in possession of the English, Major Commichau was directed not to advance his regiment around Fontaine as directed, but to also attack the town. The two battalions assembled south of Raillencourt and at 11:40 a. m. advanced with the 2d Battalion on the road Raillencourt-Fontaine on a frontage of 400 metres. The 1st Battalion, keeping contact, advanced to the left on a frontage of 300 metres. The first objective was the railway embankment. Connections were also established with the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 227, attacking further to the east.

The enemy who had crossed the railway embankment was quickly thrown. The 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, sent at 12:30 p. m. a written report to its regimental headquarters as follows: "Railway embankment completely in our hands again." The units of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46, now joined the two battalions of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 60, which after a brief breathing-pause stormed against the village. Through the pressure from the north and east the enemy retreated out of Fontaine with considerable losses. Two tanks were put out of action and five others were forced to retire. The 4th Company of Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 60, liberated the 3th Company, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, invested in the catacomb of the church. The tank guns of the 6th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 237, as well as those of the 4th Battery, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 213, standing in the west portion of the village, were found to be intact. When the first lines of the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, reached the north edge of the village, Fontaine was already in possession of the Germans.

But the intention of the 119th Infantry Division to follow the enemy in junction with the counter attack directed by the neighboring sector, in order to seize the southeast edge of the Bourlon forest, was not to be realized.

Soon after crossing the railway embankment, the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 60, during its turn to the right, while passing through the northern portion of the village, found the strongly occupation of the edge of the forest by English infantry and machine guns very unpleasant. Numerous German machine guns directed their fire from the sand-pit against this enemy. Major Commichau also brought up the 3d Battalion, Field Artillery Rgt. No. 273, against this enemy. The English artillery adapted itself quickly in the new situation by laying a very rapid fire against Fontaine and on the former German positions in the sector of the 119th Infy. Div.,

completely seized again by the 2d and 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 60 intermixed with companies of the 3d and 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46 and also by units of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 227 and the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58.

In order to establish a united conduct, the senior officer in Fontaine was given command of all the troops of the 119th Infantry Division, present in the village, with instructions to follow the enemy. Captain Lindow (commanding the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46) betook himself at once to the command post of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, where he learned that Captain Rissmann, had already made the necessary arrangements. At 2:15 p. m. he sent an order to the 6th and 8th company, Infantry Rgt. No. 46, to join in this forward movement. But it was not known what German forces were located in the foremost line. That besides this 2d Battalion also the 1st Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, participated in the successful assault against Fontaine and that now the latter was also occupying with the 2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46, the latter's former sector, that remained unknown to the two battalion commanders, whose troops were to follow the enemy. The orders sent to the companies of the 119th Infantry Division, intermixed with Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 60 as mentioned above, did not reach them. Major Comnichau (commanding Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 60) had indicated as the objective of his battalion only the recapture of Fontaine. Orders for these battalions to advance were received only after the battalions of Infantry Rgt. No. 46 were already engaged with the enemy on the edges of the forest. The delivery of the orders to the companies, while the enemy laid a heavy bombardment on the village, took considerable time. With the indicated intermixing of the formations, the difficulties of transmitting the orders and the strong defence of the enemy, the German attack never developed. Another counter attack to be launched by the battalions of the 46th Infantry Rgt., at 5:45 p. m., was countermanded. The counter attack in the neighboring sector could gain only little ground to the west of the railway embankment. At this place the 10th and 11th company of Infantry Rgt. No. 46, pushed into the foremost line. (The 9th and 12th company of this regiment remained at the railway embankment).

The commander of the 237th Infantry Brigade in the meantime consolidated the 1st and 4th company of Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 227, as well as the 5th and 7th Company of Infantry Rgt. No. 46, under the command of First Lieutenant Deutschmann, so as to have a reserve for the sector of Infantry Rgt. No. 58, for, at 3:30 p. m. it was ascertained that stronger forces of the enemy were assembling between Anneux and Cantaing. All available German batteries now fired against the new objectives, but a hostile infantry attack did not take place.

The 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 58 at first received orders at about 5:30 p. m. to assemble and to march to the Wotan 3d position, but upon directions of Brigade Headquarters transmitted by telephone, the assembly was changed so as to be executed in Fontaine. The 3d Battalion, Reserve Infy. Rgt. No. 46 not being sufficiently combat fit, the 2d Battalion, Infantry Rgt. No. 46 was to assume charge of the sector to the

north of the highway. An order of the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade was received at 6:50 p. m., directing Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 60, to take over the left sector of the 3d Guard Infantry Division. The reorganization of the interior flanks of the Groups Arras and Caudry was carried out under great difficulties due to the intermixed condition of the organizations, by the early morning of November 28th.

The German losses on November 27th were as follows:

3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46 - 15 killed, 41 wounded, 221 missing.

2d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 46 - 11 killed, 31 wounded, 55 missing.

Infantry Rgt. No. 58 - 17 killed, 42 wounded, 32 missing, of these, 4 killed, 9 wounded and 3 missing, belonged to the 2d Battalion.

Infantry Rgt. No. 46 - 9 killed, 36 wounded, 54 missing.

Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 60 - 13 killed, 76 wounded.

The losses of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. 227, can not be given in numbers, but the regimental diary gives the losses of the regiment from November 22 to 27, inclusive, as 8 killed, 38 wounded, 2 missing.

What the Brigades of the English 51st Division could not attain, the fresh Battalions of the English 2d Guard Brigade also could not accomplish. It is true that the English with the support of their tanks entered Fontaine on November 21, 23 and 27, but this success was only temporary. The German counter attacks were never repulsed nor could the enemy maintain itself in Fontaine-Notre-Dame. The objective of the enemy was Fontaine on the first day of the attack and on November 27, this village still lay in rear of the foremost German line. The numerous battered and combat unfit tanks remaining in the streets of the village gave testimony of the hard fighting which took place between the ruins of the houses.

### Combats on Both Sides of Moeuvres.

Under the command of the Group Arras, the 214th Infantry Division took over the defensive front of the 20th Landwehr Division in the boundaries Road Inchy-Boursies and West Edge Fontaine-Notre Dame, on the evening of November 21. To the west of Moeuvres, at the south and southeast edge of the village as far as the canal, the 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363 intermingled with the 1st Battalion, Landwehr Infantry Regt. No. 386 were posted. To the east of this canal in the trenches of the Intermediate position with the left flank curved to the rear and toward the north, the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363 was located. Nearly so, following the road to Bourlon, on the West and South edge of the forest, the 1st and 3d Battalions, Infantry Regt. No. 50 were situated, the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 77 and one-half of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 175, also were posted here (see page 44).

The thrust made during the night by the 1st and 2d Battalions, Infantry Regt. No. 358, under command of Major Hahn, to gain the line sugar-refinery northwest of Graincourt-Anneux Cap, did not attain the objective sought, but here and there the middle front of the 214th Infantry Division was advanced to beyond the high ridge to the west of the forest.

The German command counted on the possibility that the enemy's attack against the line Moeuvres-Bourlon might also involve the 20th Infantry Division. For this reason, Group Arras, upon its request, was assigned the 3d Guard Infantry Division. On account of the great width of the southern sector, Lieut. General von Moser (Group Commander) proposed to employ the division on the left flank near Bourlon. The 21st Reserve Division was arriving by rail to act as the counterattack division.

On November 22, thus on the day which the English wished to employ, "to establish themselves in the captured terrain, to make certain reliefs and to grant a necessary rest to the other troops," larger attacks did not take place on the south front of Group Arras. Patrol fighting though developed at noon near Moeuvres. During the fighting the English 56th Division was able to take the Inchy forest called by the English "Tadpole Copse" and the foremost defensive line to the west of Moeuvres, now became the first trench of the German Intermediate position. The English 36th Division entered Moeuvres but was thrown out again by a counterattack conducted by three companies of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363 and by the 2d Battalion of Infantry Regt. No. 92 of the 20th Infantry Division.

The orders issued by Group Arras on the evening of November 22, and on the early morning of November 23, called attention that a close cooperation of the 20th and 214th Infantry Divisions was absolutely necessary "for the maintenance of Moeuvres and the Intermediate Position to the west and east." Colonel Hay (Commander of Inf. Regt. 363) took over the conduct of the Moeuvres sector, but had no reserves at his disposition.

(Note: The 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, arrived in Sains-les-Marquion, only at 2:30 p.m. Its 6th and 7th companies were employed with the 3d Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 363, the remainder of the battalion stood west of Moeuvres. Landwehr Inf. Regt. No. 386 was withdrawn on the evening of the 22d and on the morning of the 23d. Losses since Nov. 20 - killed 27, wounded 80, missing 381).

The 21st Reserve Division had to seek shelter with one-third of its forces to the west and with the other two-thirds to the east of the Agache, and to get quickly acquainted with its going into action on the left flank of the 20th Division (Inf. Regt. No. 77) and also in the command zone of the 21st Infantry Division (commanded by General von Brauchitsch). The forces located to the east of the creek could then be considered as available for a support of the Moeuvres front. Besides the Hellor recruit company and the 2d Company, Pioneer Regt. No. 10, the Commander of the 20th Division now also attached to the 77th Infantry Regt., the detachment under the command of Major Niemann, consisting of one-half of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 79, and the 3d Company, Pioneer Regt. No. 10, which had just been withdrawn from Raillencourt.

During November 23, the English 36th Division made four heavy attacks against Moeuvres. Supported by the 2d and 3d Company, Infantry Regt. No. 79, the 2d and 3d Company, Pioneer Regt. No. 10, and the Recruit Company, the 1st and 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363, as well as the 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 92, always rendered a successful defense. Only sluice No. 2, to the east of the town, fell into English hands.

(Note: The forces designated as a support for Infantry Regt. No. 77, were started on the march from Inshy, due to information submitted at 5:55 a.m., by the 40th Inf. Brigade, that Moeuvres was being attacked. The troops were thrown into the combat by degrees. The sector of the 20th Inf. Div. was extended on November 24, as far as halfway on the lime-tree avenue and to Moeuvres).

The English command which on this day undertook a new blow against the German front from Moeuvres-Fontaine-Notre Dame, launched tanks against the sector of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363 reinforced by the 4th Company of the Regiment, to the east of the canal. At first four tanks moved forward and turning to the west got into the rear of the defenders at the sluice No. 2. At about 1 p.m., additional tanks moved forward on both sides of the road leading from Havrincourt, followed by strong infantry. The German Batteries, in as far as they were not engaging the four tanks toward the east, directed their fire on the tanks in front of the position of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363. Lieut. Kirschbaum of the 2d Battalion, Field Artillery Regt. No. 44, had a splendid view from his advanced observation post to the north of Moeuvres. Under his fire control and that of Lieut. Balle, two tanks of the westerly group were hit. The other stronger tank group also met with losses. Lieut. Borkwitz with anti-aircraft gun No. 92, also participated. It was lucky that the tanks were effectively fired on during their advance, for the ammunition at the batteries of the Field Artillery was very scanty.

Of the first mentioned tank group, two uninjured tanks ran ahead and traversed the 1st trench of the Intermediate position in the sector of the right flank company (9th company). At this critical moment, Capt. Setzermann was wounded as he personally encouraged his men to resist in the trench. Favorable circumstances though prevented that this tank penetration became effective. One of the two tanks overturned in the second trench; its crew was destroyed with hand grenades. This event took place shortly after 2 p.m., for Lieut. Kirschbaum reported at 2:30 p.m., that an uninjured tank was halting in the Intermediate position, and that it could not

be engaged as all ammunition had been expended. This tank soon afterwards became fixed, but all attempts of the men of the 363d Regiment to get to the tank were unavailing due to the rapid fire which spurted from it in every direction. The tank was able to extricate itself after one hour, but while running back met with disaster. Meanwhile the English infantry was kept at distance through the defensive fire of the companies. Finally the much-longed-for ammunition arrived at the battery positions. When the enemy renewed the attack at 3:40 p.m. against the front of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 363, he was repulsed with heavy losses.

Just as in the first days of the battle, the main danger for the 20th Infantry Division, according to reports received of the progress of the English attack against the town of Bourlon, again seemed the paving of the way for an embracement from the direction of the left flank. Hence the Group Commander at 3:50 p.m. placed at the disposition of Lieut. General Wellmann (commanding 20th Inf.Div.), the counter attack group Stolz of the 21st Reserve Division (Reserve Inf.Regt. No. 98 with the 3d Battalion, Reserve Field Arty. Regt. No. 21), with which to hold the German positions on both sides of Moeuvres and for forming a defensive flank against Bourlon. Almost at the same time, at 4 p.m., another report was received by the 20th Infantry Division, containing the information that the English had penetrated to the southwest of Inchy, thus in the sector of the 20th Infantry Division.

Even as early as 8:30 a.m., the enemy launched an attack against the 2d Company of Infantry Regt. No. 77, covering the left flank and connecting with the forest of Inf.Regt. No. 363, located in the intermediate position, close to and east of the road, the so-called lime-tree avenue, leading to Boursies. The infantry of the enemy though was repulsed. After an artillery preparation, a new attack was made by the enemy at about noon. The latter launched a powerful attack against the front and around the left flank of the 2d Company, Infantry Regt. No. 77 and threw the company back, then rolled up the first and second trench of the Siegfried position to the west of the lime-tree avenue to far beyond the front of the company, and worked its way down the slope toward Inchy.

The Commander of the 20th Infantry Division ordered Colonel Stolz to move a battalion ahead to the east of Sains-lez-Marquion and form with another battalion of defensive flank in the vicinity of the quarry and forest with front to the east, and for the 3d Battalion, Field Arty.Regt.No.21, to take up a position to the south of Baralle from which to fire effectively against the line Moeuvres-Bourlon. The last of the three battalions (Res.Inf.Regt.98), was attached to the 77th Inf.Regt. to participate in the counterattack.

The 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 88, arrived in Inchy shortly after 5 p.m. The English who had gotten close to the town were driven back through a furious attack of the battalion mentioned, assisted by the 7th Company, of Infantry Regt. No. 77, sent by the commander of the 2d Battalion of the Regiment. These troops also cleared the support trench to the west of the lime-tree avenue from the enemy. To the east of the road the left flank of the battalion could advance only a short distance beyond the first line of the intermediate position. Forestalling the events at this point, it may be stated that the fighting for regaining the trenches of the Siegfried position on both sides of the lime-tree avenue, lasted for several days and that the 20th Inf.Division did not get in full possession of the trenches until December 5th.

For the possession of Moeuvres, severe fighting took place until darkness on November 23. Although details could not be obtained at first of the progress made by the troops who badly intermixed, conducted the defense in and to the west and east of the town, Colonel May was able to report on the evening that the Moeuvres front had braved all the attacks of the enemy. As a continuation of the English attacks was anticipated for November 24, and the 1st and 2d Battalions of Infantry Regt. No. 363 were much weakened through losses, the forces of the 20th Infantry Division had to be left in this sector.

The enemy did not renew the attack against Moeuvres on November 24. The 1st and 2d Battalions, Infantry Regt. No. 87, under command of Colonel Bering, relieved the troops in this sector during the night.

(Note: Inf. Regt. 363 took up alarm quarters in Marquion and Sains-les-Marquion. Losses of the regiment from November 21 to 23 - killed 53, wounded 208, missing 118.)

Losses of the 2d Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 92 (20th Inf. Div.) from Nov. 22 to 24 - Killed, 9; wounded, 64; missing 8.)

The 21st Reserve Division had made another distribution of their sectors, due to which the 3d Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 363 located to the east of the canal, was replaced by the 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 80.

While Reserve Infantry Regt. No. 87 had by no means moved into a quiet position, the enemy did not launch heavy attacks during the following days against Moeuvres, which formed the westerly corner-pillar of the German Bourlon front.

#### The Struggle for Bourlon. November 23, 24 & 25.

The English attacks against the Bourlon ridge were repulsed on Nov. 21. The important parts of this position, Bourlon town and forest---the objectives of the first day of the battle---remained in possession of the defenders. Reasons were pointed out why the English located in the unfavorable wedge-shaped position, must continue the battle and in what direction the "decision for the further advance" arising from the enforced situation, must lead.

The combats for the corner-pillar of the dominating Bourlon ridge, for Fontaine-Notre Dame and Moeuvres, have been described in the previous chapters, but the main force of the attacks of the enemy during this period was directed against the center of this German position - The "Struggle for Bourlon began on November 23."

Infantry Regt. No. 50, occupied the village and the rim of the Bourlon forest since noon on Nov. 21. Nov. 22 passed without important combat activities and the regiment could regulate its units. The lost junction with the 24th Infantry Division was established again by the right flank of Group Coudry, through the recapture of Fontaine-Notre Dame.

Group Arvas intended to shove the 3d Guard Infantry Division on its left flank at Bourlon. In accordance with verbal instructions, the relief was to begin during the night from Nov. 22 to 23. The 1st and 3d Battalions of the Instructional Inf. Regt. were alarmed in their quarters at about 4 p.m. The headquarters of the Battalions proceeded by motor cars in advance of the units, to the command post of Infantry Regt. No. 50, at the railway

depot in Bourlon. But the combat battalions of Infantry Regt. No. 50 were not relieved to the west of and close to and toward the south of the village of Bourlon, nor at the west and south rim of the forest, because the commander of the sector did not deem it possible to assign the incoming troops in this difficult terrain during darkness. Besides, Colonel Baesynski had received no final orders for the relief. When the two battalions of the Instructional Infantry Regt. arrived at 10 p.m., the 1st and 2d Company were designated to push into the foremost line between the 1st and 12th Company of Infantry Regt. No. 50, to the south of the village. The remainder of the 1st Battalion had to seek similar shelters for the support of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, in Bourlon. The 3d Battalion of the Instructional Regt. was to relieve the 2d Battalion of Infantry Regt. No. 50. The companies of the latter battalion though remained in their former positions during the night at the east rim of the Bourlon forest.

The forenoon of November 23 began rather quiet on the left flank of Group Arras, English aviators only showed themselves to be strikingly active. The general staff officer of the 3d Guard Infantry Division informed the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade at about midnight that this sector counted on an English attack not before the evening of November 23d, or on the morning of Nov. 24th. A conference of the commanders, under the direction of the commander of the 214th Infantry Brigade, took place at 9 a.m., at the command post of Infantry Regt. No. 50. General Maercker ordered the march-off of the 2d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, to support Infantry Regt. No. 363 at Moeuvres. The 3d Battalion of the Instructional Regt. was to relieve the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50 at once, at the rim of the Bourlon forest.

In the meantime the commander of the 2d Company had carried out a careful reconnaissance and reported the accurate location of the left flank (4th Company of the 358th Inf. Regt) at about 900 meters to the southwest of the south edge of the Manor Park. He called attention, that with his weak company of seven squads and two light machine guns, he could not completely cover the gap, several hundred meters wide, to the west rim of the forest, where the right flank of the 12th Company, Infantry Regt. No. 50 joined. This report sent at 9:40 a.m., apparently failed to induce the issuance of orders that the lines of the 2d Company of Infantry Regt. No. 50, the 1st Company, Instructional Infantry Regt. and the 1st Company, Infantry Regt. No. 50, be moved ahead from the road of Bourlon to Moeuvres and from the southwest edge of the town to the heights held by the 4th Company of Infantry Regt. No. 358. The fact that to the south of Bourlon, between Infantry Regt. No. 358 and the 50th Infantry Regt., a firmly locked front was not established, was to revenge itself bitterly.

Beginning at about 10 a.m., the enemy's fire grew more and more rapid against the forest and village of Bourlon. Could it be possible that the attack of the English would take place earlier than anticipated?

The English 40th Division relieved the 62d Division in the sector in front of Bourlon during the night from November 22d to 23d. English sources state that the 40th Division was specially trained for forest combat. The time of the attack, to be supported by 30 tanks, was set at 11:30 a.m. (A tank crew of the 13th Company of Battalion E, was captured by the Germans). The 119th English Brigade had the most difficult task. In its attack zone lay the dense forest which steeply ascended from the Bapaume road. As far as possible, the tanks were to move against Bourlon over the forest roads.

The 119th English Brigade placed in its foremost line the 19th Welsh Fusiliers to the east and the 12th South Wales Borderers to the west. The 17th Welsh followed these battalions as a support and the 18th Welsh marched in rear as a reserve.

The thrust of the 119th English Brigade was directed against the companies of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 50. The battalion commander, Captain Heithner, who participated in the conference of the commanders, had just returned to his command post in the forest, when he recognized with anxiety how the English artillery fire was increasing to a violent magnitude. Soon afterwards the 10th Company reported that the enemy had attacked with tanks and strong forces and penetrated the position of the company. A few moments after this, Lieut. Liebert of the 9th Company called into the dug-outs: "Get out everybody; the English are coming up on the ridge of the forest." The battalion commander immediately directed the three machine guns, kept in reserve, to take up a position. He, with his staff, rendered resistance to a tank which arrived near to the command post. But the embracement through the numerical superiority of the enemy became more acute and the small group had to retire unless it would share in the lot of the companies. The major part of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, was cut off by the English and made prisoners.

When the 3d Battalion of the Instructional Inf. Regt. received the order to relieve the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, it sent out advance parties at once. When they arrived, the English batteries were already laying a heavy fire on the Bourlon forest while hostile aeroplanes were flying low, over the sector. The conditions of the terrain made it impossible for the Germans to secure observation, but the battalion commander concluded from the dense barrage which slowly advanced toward Bourlon, that the English had succeeded in breaking into the forest. He now ordered the 9th Company (at the northeast edge), to fall in for a counterattack to the southwest and the 12th Company (at the east edge) to counterattack to the west. The 11th Company was to hold its position under all circumstances at the north edge. The order for the 9th Company was transmitted through the orderly officer of the battalion; he found the company engaged with the enemy and reduced in strength through losses, so that it could not obey the order to counterattack. The 12th as well as the 10th Company which were posted further back in the forest, had on their own initiative gone into action in the severe and difficult forest battle.

The enemy worked its way further forward in the forest. It was very difficult for the German batteries to support the infantry because the observation posts at the front were lost. Soon the first extended order lines of the enemy appeared at the north edge of the Bourlon forest and entered the command post of the 3d Battalion of the Instructional Infantry Regt. at the east exit of the village and captured the personnel of the subordinate staff. Capt. Potel, the battalion commander, left shortly before this incident, to visit the 11th company of his battalion at which he extended the defensive line on the left flank toward the chapel. The attack of the enemy was halted at this point. But no junction existed either to the right or left. The enemy now attempted to roll up the weak resistance line with a tank which moved against the right flank security of the small body of men. The commander of the 11th Company held his men closely together and repulsed the hostile forces which during the next hours attacked several times either frontal or outflankingly against the right flank.

English aviators with their machine-gun fire and bombs also attempted to drive off the rest of the 3d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt., but had no success.

Simultaneously with the 119th English Brigade, the English 121st Brigade also fell in for the attack toward the west of the former Brigade. The division line between the two attacking brigades of the English 40th Division passed through the west edge of the Bourlon forest.

(Note: In the front line of the 121st English Brigade were:

The 13th Battalion, Yorkshire Regt., the 20th Battalion, Middlesex Regt. The support was formed by the 21st Battalion, Middlesex Regt. and the reserve by the 12th Battalion, Suffolk Regt.).

English aviators threw bombs several times during the forenoon on the positions held by Infantry Regt. No. 353, in the middle sector of the 214th German Infantry Division. Through the employment of the weak 2d Company, Instructional Inf. Regt., a somewhat improved junction was established by the 4th Company of Infantry Regt. No. 353 with the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, on the edge of the forest, although this junction was in no way a safe one. It is evident that Infantry Regt. No. 353 never ascertained that one-half of the 1st Battalion of Infantry Regt. No. 50 and since the night even reinforced by the 1st Company, Instructional Infantry Regt., were located on the road leading to Moeuvres, thus partly in rear of the left flank and close to and south of the Manor Park. The attack of the enemy quickly followed the action of its artillery.

Veiled in artificial fog, the tanks firstly moved against the lines occupied by the 1st and 2d Battalions, Infantry Regt. No. 353. Lieut. Strache, the commander of the 5th Company, reported: "No one ever saw such machines before. At first several men left the frontmost lines, after that whole squads ran to the rear. The confusion increased more and more. Besides other officers, the adjutant of the 2d Battalion, through personal dash and with an incredible display of his voice, was able to halt the yielding men." Major von Fuchs (commander of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 353), also reported that much was gained in overcoming the panic, when the messaw that a tank which had been hit by the German artillery went up in flames and smoke. The companies took new courage and reoccupied the positions relinquished by them.

Bombs were also thrown during the early morning hours by enemy aviators, on the battery positions of the 3d Battery, Field Arty. Regt. No. 44. The battery commander reported "The stereo-telescope had hardly been set up in the new observation post, when a large box seen on the height to the west of the forest. The box moved. A tank! In rear of the tank large groups of English infantry were following. The telephone connection was shot to pieces. A chain of sentries was posted through which the battery passed in gallop. Suddenly the impact of the shells---but too far. Next they found the target and the English---two groups---were running. The hostile infantry had vanished and the tank was concealed by a thicket. We fired into the thicket and the tank came to a halt but did not burn as the one set afire by our neighboring battery." The tanks in front of Infantry Regt. 353 were also covered by the German antiaircraft gun No. 92, the excellent effectiveness of which has already been mentioned during the description of the action in the connecting sector of the 3d Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 363. The numerous objectives, from the west of Moeuvres as far

as Fontaine-Notre Dame---enemy skirmisher lines, compact columns, batteries going into position---and from the canal to beyond Fontaine---tanks--- were so many that the German artillery could not place all under its fire at the same time. Much more depressing though the observers of the field and heavy artillery were affected when under such conditions they were informed "Battery has only a few shots left," or "ammunition expended." Such reports though were frequently received during the early afternoon.

Frequent attacks were launched by the English infantry against the front of the two battalions of Infantry Regt. No. 358, while tanks penetrated several times the front lines of the battalions. But the fear which the tanks originally bestowed, had passed. First of all, the troops would give way to the side and then attack the tanks with bundles of handgrenades. The three machine-gun companies, which during the defense of the attacks were placed under the combined command of Lieut. Doobert, performed a splendid service. Where positions were lost they were retaken through counter-attacks. Enemy defensive craters already established were cleared through hand grenade combat. During such an enterprise, the commander of the 7th Company captured two light machine guns. In the meantime, reinforcements were sent forward by the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 358, forming the reserve.

The open left flank though was the cause of great concern to the commander of the 1st Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 358. While the 4th Company had maintained its position on the crest hardly one km. to the south and southwest of Bourlon, against all the attacks, new tanks were moving along the edge of the forest and in and alongside of the sunken road, which in parts could not be looked into. English infantry were marching uninterruptedly forward against the town of Bourlon despite the well-directed flank fire of the 4th Company which caused heavy losses in the rank of the enemy. The danger of being outflanked became more and more acute. Yet the Battalion Commander knew that in case he should now seek a junction with the neighboring regiment to his left by withdrawing to the rear, this measure would bring to a head the most difficult issue for the other front of the division. Having full confidence in his battalion and knowing its splendid courage over since 1915, he left the companies in their positions.

The village of Bourlon was placed under a very heavy fire by the English and the mixing of the fire with smoke shells impaired the view more and more. Several tanks had advanced in the artificial fog, mainly over the sunken road leading from the Bapaume road to Bourlon, the English infantry following over the same route. While the dense forest aggravated the advance and the men of the German 353th Regiment overcame the brief crisis and held their grounds, the enemy here got well forward despite the German barrage. The enemy's companies expanded quickly in the weakly occupied gap and supported by the tanks, threw the 1st Company, Infantry Regt. No. 50 and the 2d Company, Instructional Infantry Regt., into the town. The commander of the 1st Company, Instructional Infantry Regt., recognizing the threatening danger, moved his company at once to the left. Though the enemy reached the Manor Park, this company for the time, blocked the further advance of the English in the direction of Sains-les-Marquion. The quickly alarmed companies (3d and 4th Companies, Inf. Regt. No. 50 and 3d and 4th Companies, Instructional Inf. Regt.), in the meantime threw themselves against the enemy entering Bourlon, and a stiff struggle ensued.

At 1:20 p.m. reports were sent via different routes by the commander of Infantry Regt. No. 50, to the Brigade as well as directly to the Division, to the following: "Enemy penetrating with tanks through the forest of Bourlon. Our troops in retreat." The counter measures taken were stated to be as follows: One-half of the 1st Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 175, to occupy the railway embankment and the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 50, was ordered to hold the edge of the village and to make a counterattack in a southeasterly direction with the reserve companies of his battalion and those of the 1st Battalion, Instructional Inf. Regt. Col. von Paczynski, the regimental commander, now received a report from the commander of his 3d Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 50, that English forces had already passed through the forest.

But the fighting in the greater part of the village ended with a German success. Through German counterattacks and all the available forces, the English troops were slowly pushed back into the forest. Little by little, some details of the fighting reached the rear. The commanding officer of the 3d Company, Instructional Inf. Regt., sent a message at 3:45 p.m., stating he was located to the southeast of the Manor House but without junction of any kind and that judging from the machine-gun fire, the enemy must be standing in his rear.

(Note: As no officer remained with the 2d and 4th Company, of Instructional Inf. Regt., the commanding officer of the 3d Company (Lieut. Holzer) also assumed command of the remnants of these companies).

At 4:35 p.m. a report was received from Vice-Sergeant Major Kirsch stating that his platoon of the 4th Company and men of the 3d Company, Infantry Regt. No. 50, were holding the southeast edge of the village. A sketch sent in by Major Weinlig, transmitted at 4:30 p.m., indicated that the 2d and 3d Company of Inf. Regt. 175 had penetrated about 200 meters into the forest and that to the right of these companies, Pioneers of the 2d Company, Reserve Pioneer Regt. No. 23, were located. It also showed that a tank standing sideways to the left, prevented a further advance. Vice-Sergeant Major Klein, who since noon had assumed command of the 3d Company of Inf. Regt. No. 50, about 60 men strong, reported that the enemy was continuously repeating its attempt to push back the weak German forces toward Bourlon, with infantry, tanks and even aeroplanes. All the commanders of the foremost lines urgently requested reinforcements, ammunition and hand grenades. At 2 a.m., Nov. 23, the 3d Guard Division was designated to occupy the new sector to be formed on the left flank of Group Arras, the Guard Fusilier Regiment to the right and the Instructional Inf. Regt. to the left. During the night from Nov. 23 to 24, the 1st and 3d Bns., Guard Fusilier Regt., was to relieve the forces of the 356th Infantry Regt. located to the east of the line northwest of the sugar refinery to the northwest edge of the village of Bourlon, while the 2d Bn. of this regiment was to march to Bourlon to serve as a support. The 3d Regiment of the 3d Guard Division (Grenadier Regt. No. 9) was directed at the same time to act, together with a section of the 5th Guard Field Arty. Regt., as the army reserve, and by 3 p.m. to take up quarters in Sancourt, Blecourt and Abancourt.

At 3:25 p.m. the Guard Inf. Division in Bouchain received the following order from Group Arras: "The enemy apparently has 10 tanks in Bourlon which advanced through the forest of Bourlon, infantry following the tanks. The 214th Infantry Division has occupied with some units the railway embankment northeast of Bourlon and Group Gaudry, the railway embankment to

the north of Bourlon with one battalion. The 214th Infantry Division is directed to prevent, with artillery, the tanks from leaving Bourlon towards the north, west and south, and to take possession again of the Bourlon forest. For this purpose the following troops are placed under the orders of the 214th Division - Grenadier Regt. 9 and a section of Field Artillery of the 3d Guard Division, assembled at Sancourt, Blescourt and Abancourt." The Commander of Grenadier Regt. No. 9, who received this order directly from the Group Commander and from the 6th Guard Brigade, alarmed his command and under direction of the 214th Infantry Division, marched first of all to Sully-Railencourt. Major von Seelharst proceeded to the headquarters of the 214th Infantry Brigade, where at 6 p.m. General Maercker could advise him that the village of Bourlon had for the greater part been retaken, that Fontaine-Notre Dame was held by the 119th Division, but that the situation in the Bourlon forest was still unknown; That English tanks had entered it, yet it was possible that smaller German units were still maintaining themselves in the forest. The 9th Grenadiers now received orders to retake the forest and to occupy its southwest and southern rim. The fire of the German artillery being consolidated against the south portion of the wooded terrain, the batteries were now directed to lay a barrage in front of the Bourlon forest. Major Seelhorst instructed his battalion commanders of the situation and intention at 7:20 p.m. The 1st Battalion, 5th Guard Field Artillery Regt., had to reconnoiter the positions to the south of Railencourt, and at dawn of day was to find the range in front of the southwest and south edge of the forest.

In the same order which assigned the 9th Grenadier Regt. to the 214th Infantry Division for the recapture of the Bourlon forest, Group Arras also attached one of the two counterattack groups of the 21st Reserve Division to the 20th Division. Group Stols (see page 82) was to be employed to hold the positions on both sides of Meuvres and to form a defensive flank against Bourlon. If it was true that English tanks were actually present in Bourlon, the situation of the left flank of this division was extremely endangered. Due to this, the counterattack group under command of Col. Bering (Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 87 with 1st Battalion, Reserve Field Arty. Regt. No. 21), soon afterwards was also attached to the 20th Infantry Division, with instructions to advance this group to Marquion.

The following troops quickly took up positions during the afternoon, to prevent the tanks from leaving the town of Bourlon: 2d Bn. Bavarian Field Arty. Regt. No. 11, to the north of la Maison Neuve, the 3d Bn., 5th Guard Field Arty. Regt., with subordinated 2d Battalion, to the northeast and east of the farm of la Maison Neuve and finally the 2d and 3d Bns., Field Arty. Regt. No. 63, consolidated under the command of Captain Hermann.

The ammunition available for these battalions was but scanty. Each battery of the 3d Battalion, 5th Guard Field Arty. Regt. had only 264 rounds. Group Arras also stopped at 4:45 p.m. the Guard Fusilier Regt. which was marching toward Bourlon and ordered it to march to Haynecourt and Sully-Railencourt, as a support of the left flank of the 214th Infantry Division.

The commander of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 175, sent at 5:45 p.m., a report to the commander of the 50th Inf. Regt. of the situation in the forest. Units of the 1st Battalion, Instructional Inf. Regt. and Pioneers of the 2d Reserve Company Pioneer Regt. No. 23 and men of the 50th Infantry Regt. especially of the 3d and 4th Company and one-half of the 1st

Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 175, had in success-changing fighting, pushed the enemy back to over 300 meters in the forest. Lieut. Hartwig of the Pioneers also reported that his pioneers and the remainder of the 1st Battalion, Industrial Infantry Regt., had been unable to find a junction to the right. A tank in front of this sector had been set on fire by the artillery. The detonation of the ammunition stored in this tank lasted until the late night. Through and between the left flank of the 2d Company, Infantry Regt. 175, and the units of the 3d Battalion, Instructional Inf. Regt., close to and east of Bourlon, where the gap was located, the English launched another attack shortly after 6 p.m. and threw back the left flank of the one-half of the 1st Battalion, Inf. Regt. No. 175. The commander of the 50th Inf. Regt. made a direct request at 7:20 p.m., to the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade, for assistance, giving the railway depot Bourlon as the march objective. The Brigade placed the 2d Battalion of Instructional Inf. Regt. at the disposition of the commander of the 50th Inf. Regt., The main forces of this battalion arrived at the railway depot at about 11 pm.

To clear the village of Bourlon from the enemy, assembled men of the 50th Inf. Regt., under command of Lieut. Meurer of the 3d Company, and Lieut. Liebert of the 9th Company, advanced at 4 p.m., from the railway embankment. Lieut. Wonniger with a few pioneers also joined this detachment. These troops forced their way as far as the manor house, but were unable to drive the furiously fighting enemy from the position.

Due to the fact that the enemy was holding the manor house and the southwest portion of the village, the 3d Company of Instructional Inf. Regt., commanded by Lieut. Holzer, had not been able to gain junction from the forest to the right, although attempts to do so were repeatedly made. Lieut. Krummel in command of the 1st company, Instructional Inf. Regt., and small groups of the 1st and 2d company, Infantry Regt. No. 50, located to the southwest of the manor park with front to the northeast, also was unable to gain touch.

Between 7 and 8 p.m., Col. von Paczynski made known that Grenadier Regt. No. 9 of the 3d Guard Infantry Division, would launch an attack from Raillencourt on this evening, to recapture the Bourlon forest. He ordered, "that in the sector of village Bourlon, everything gained be maintained during the night, that the enemy in the manor house be isolated, that compact detachments be assembled under leaders and all roads leading to the enemy, especially to the manor house, be blocked by sentries." He also placed the west half of the sector as far as the railway depot, under the command of Capt. von Schonfeldt of the 1st Battalion Inf. Regt. No. 50, and the east portion of the sector under command of Capt. Miethner of the 3d Battalion of Inf. Regt. No. 50.

Grenadier Regt. No. 9, formed up with its 1st, 3d and 2d Battalions, side by side, each on a front of about 700 meters, on the highway Cambrai-Arras with the left flank on the road Raillencourt-Fontaine. The three battalions, each with 3 companies in the front line, began the advance at 9 pm. The enemy's barrage of medium and light caliber lay over the terrain to the northwest of Fontaine. The German line moved silently forward; the leather equipment creaked and the steps of the men resounded from the clayey ground, even a command given in an undertone was seldom heard. The grenadiers were getting nearer and nearer to the Bourlon forest which on this moon-lit November night, showed upon the horizon like a dim black lump.

The edge of the forest was reached at 10:30 p.m. The enemy rendered an obstinate resistance against the 1st Battalion, but quietness prevailed temporarily before the front of the Fusilier (3d) and the 2d Battalion. Major von Dotten of the 1st Battalion, at 12:15 sent the following report to the regimental commander: "Furious rifle firing in the forest, large patches of swamps frequently interwoven by house-deep gorges in the forest, passing through them extremely difficult." The commander of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regt. No. 9, received a report at 3:25 a.m., sent by the commanding officer of the 2d Company (Capt. Trentepohl) at 1:30 a.m., that two platoons of his company in junction with the 3d company, had reached the south edge of the forest and that the 2d and 3d platoon on the right flank had been turned to the rear because the company thereat was exposed. Reinforcement to the right to extend the flank absolutely necessary, danger of outflanking by the enemy very great. The latter is continuously firing against this flank with machine guns and small arms. Losses so far, two killed. In transmitting this report to the regimental commander, the battalion commander stated that no reports were received from the other companies (1st and 3d) also located in the foremost line.

The 9th company of the Fusilier (3d) battalion which attacked to the left of the 1st company, reached the east edge of the forest without a single loss. The platoon of Acting-Officer Hohenstein immediately afterward captured an English listening post, the two men of which stated that the English frontmost line was located about 50 meters deeper in the forest. The company commander passed word through the lines of his men to advance further and as silently as possible. The men worked their way through dense blackberrybrambles and brushwood, in the face of a hostile fire which grew stronger. The company in turn used their light machine guns in a dexterous manner. The losses increased. At 1 a.m., Lieut. Manthey, commanding the 9th company, reported that the company, in touch with the 3d company, had advanced to about 150 meters of the south edge of the forest, that of the 10th company, connecting to the left, only three squads were in the front and that further to the left was a wide gap. The adjoining (2d) battalion of the regiment of the 9th Grenadiers had posted itself too far to the left from the very beginning. The 11th company of the regiment remained in close touch with the 8th company which advanced with the right flank of the 2d Battalion, thus it came about that to the right toward the 10th company, the connection was severed completely. The 11th company and the 2d Battalion, never reached the forest, they remained close to and northwest and west of Fontaine. The regimental commander ordered at 4:30 a.m. that the attack be continued at 7 a.m., "the south edge of the forest must be reached at daylight and will be maintained."

The fact that the enemy's artillery fired but little against the forest and only moderately into the village of Bourlon, indicated that the English commanders possessed but little information of the location of their own position.

Through the employment of Grenadier Regt. No. 9, the distribution of the sectors ordered by the 3d Guard Division, early on Nov. 23d, became unsound. The Instructional Inf. Regt. was now designated to occupy the westerly half.

(Note: Besides the 5th Guard Field Arty. Regt., the following artillery was attached to the 3d Guard Infantry Division by the army group: Field Arty. Regt. No. 63. As soon as this regiment arrived completely, the 2d Battalion, 11th Bavarian Field Arty. Regt.

was to report to the 214th Inf. Division. Regimental headquarters of Foot Arty. Regt. No. 14, Bavarian Reserve Foot Arty. Regt. No. 6, 2d Battalion, Reserve Foot Arty. No. 16.

Of the teamed Anti-Tank Defense Sections, 2 guns each, of the 4th Battery, 11th Bavarian Field Arty. Regt. and of the 5th Battery, Guard Regt. and 8th Battery, Field Arty. Regt. No. 63, stood in readiness on November 24th).

The Guard Fusilier Regiment again placed under the orders of the Guard Division by the army group commander, was to remain in its present place of readiness as a reserve. The commander of the artillery of the Guard, Col. von Aulock, was directed to move up a few sections of the Field Artillery; to as close as possible in rear of the infantry, to engage the tanks. The changes in commands had to take place during the forenoon of Nov. 24, but just as Maj. Herold, the commander of the Instructional Infantry Regt. was being instructed in his duties, a telephonic order was received directing that Col. von Paczynski was to continue in command of the sector Bourlon village.

On the basis of the report of its 2d company, Grenadier Regt. No. 9, had asked the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade for assistance for its right flank. The brigade transmitted this request to the 214th Infantry Brigade. Major von Esebeck received orders at 7 a.m., from the commander of the 50th Inf. Regt. to advance his 2d Battalion, Instructional Inf. Regt. right flank at the railway depot Bourlon, in a southwesterly direction. The attack movement began at the railway embankment.

(Note: The 2d Battalion, Instructional Inf. Regt. also had assembled at the railway embankment in strength of about 100 rifles. Its losses Nov. 23d were: Killed 9, wounded 53, missing 126. Its combat strength on Nov. 20th was 25 officers, and 881 noncommissioned officers and men.)

The 5th and 7th Company pushed ahead to the northmost point of the road-triangle, during which the assault detachment of Corporal Hatje cleared an isolated post occupied by English soldiers in hand grenade fighting and captured six Lewis machine guns. The losses through the machine-gun fire of the enemy were considerable during the advance of the companies in the steeply ascending forest. In this attack of the 1/2 of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt., the following troops, located to the southeast of the village, also joined: The remnants of the 1st Battalion (less 1st Company) of the same regiment, 2d Company Pioneer Reserve Regt. No. 23, the 3d and 4th Company, Infantry Regt. No. 50. These weak forces were able to advance as far as the heights close to and to the west of the west edge of the road-triangle, but the further advance was stopped by the English machine-gun and artillery fire.

In the meantime, the English resistance in and near the manor house of Bourlon, was broken by men of the 50th Inf. Regt., commanded by Lieut. Liebert, reinforced by men of the 4th company, Inf. Regt. No. 175. Three officers and 46 men of the 13th Yorkshire and 20th Middlesex Regiments were made prisoners.

The line gained at the west edge of the road-triangle had to be given up twice, due to the strong counter action of the enemy, but when our own artillery layed its fire also on this point, the line was given up for good. The companies again reduced by losses, now occupied the road at the southeast edge of the village, but here also they found no connection toward the right where the 3d Bn., Reserve Inf. Regt. No. 88, was to have moved into the line.

(Note: The 3d Battalion, Reserve Inf.Regt.No. 88 (21st Res.Div.), was on the early morning placed at the disposition of the 214th Inf.Div., to close the gap to the south of the village. The battalion had formed a junction with Inf.Regt.No.358, but it had extended its left flank only as far as the road-crossings to the southwest of the manor park).

Lieut. Holzer of the 3d company, Instructional Infantry Regt., betook himself to his sector commander to render a personal report of the critical situation.

The right flank of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Inf.Regt., remained in close touch with these much intermixed defenders, but the left (the 7th) company had not yet been able to connect with the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regt. No. 9. For this reason, the battalion commander ordered the 6th Company to fill the gap. To do so, it had to move over the road leading along and in a southerly direction through the center of the forest, with front to the west.

In the darkness and with the pathless condition in the Bourlon forest, the units of Grenadier Regt. No. 9 had become badly intermixed. Although the regimental order issued at 4:30 a.m. stated that 2/3 of the forest had been taken possession of by the Grenadiers during the first attack, this was by no means correct. The enemy who was surprised during the night was now wide awake and repeatedly undertook counterattacks. The forest with its dense brushwood made the fighting extremely difficult. Advantages worth while to mention, could not be achieved by the 9th Grenadier Regt. even on Nov. 24th. On the contrary, every semblance indicated that the English forces were gaining ground in the center of the forest. The 4th company on the right flank of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regt. No. 9, had to be inserted to strengthen the flank security against the enemy located on the slopes of the deep hollow at and south of the road-triangle.

(Note: According to the war diary of the 6th Guard Inf.Brig., Grenadier Regt.No.9, reported at 4:30 pm. as follows: "4th Company, Gren.Regt. No.9 with 6th and 7th Company, Instructional Inf.Regt. have reached the south edge of the Bourlon forest. South and west edge now in our possession. Thus, the whole of the forest except southeast edge, occupied by us."

According to the war diary of the Hdqrs. of the 9th Grenadier Regt., the 1st Battalion reported at 4:50 pm. as follows: "South edge of Bourlon forest occupied by 4th Company which has touch with 6th and 7th Company, Instructional Inf.Regt., these companies though are very open and aligned severely to the right." Foundations for these two reports could not be found and no accurate data, especially of the position of the 1st Battalion, are available. The war diary of the 1st Battalion makes no reference that the 4th Company reached the southern edge of the forest. The war diary of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Inf.Regt. does not show that parts of the 6th and 7th Company did advance, from the line gained, along the north-south road with front to the west. The edge of the forest was attained only in a very small dimension toward the south. The greater part of the forest, the whole west half (after the withdrawal, to the west edge of the road-triangle, of the 1st Bn., Instructional Inf.Regt., 2d Company, Reserve Pioneer Regt.No. 23 and 3d and 4th Company, Inf.Regt.No.50), the southeasterly part and the whole east edge, remained in possession of the English. Hence, the message sent at 4:30 p.m., by Grenadier Regt.No.9, to the Brigade, must be considered as untenable.")

The left flank of the 1st Battalion, as well as the 9th and 10th companies, lay with front to the southeast. In the gap toward the 11th Company, a platoon of the 12th Company was inserted, but touch with the 2d battalion was not established thereby. This latter battalion moved a piece forward on the early morning, toward the east edge of the forest, after which it had to withdraw again to the jumping-off position to the west of Fontaine. As the reserve company (the 6th) had assumed charge of the sector of the 11th Company, it attempted to drive the enemy from the northerly portion of the east corner of the forest. While the platoon of Vice Sergeant Major Nau, which had wheeled around the forest edge, maintained itself in close touch with a platoon of the 12th Company which had moved into the line to the left of the 10th Company, the main forces of the 11th Company withdrew, parts even reaching the railway embankment. The command of the two noncommissioned officers and 20 men with a light machine gun, holding the corner of the forest to the southeast, to the right of the 6th Company, was assumed at first by the cautious and energetic Corporal Klinghoff. The gap at the northerly and at the two easterly corners of the forest could not be closed during the day, but on the other hand, the enemy also did not try to attack from his elevated position. The 9th Grenadier Regt. purposed to drive the enemy on the evening from the southeast portion of the Bourlon forest. To this end, the 5th and 7th Company were to be relieved to the west of Fontaine, by Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 46 of the 119th Infantry Division, and were then to form up in rear of the 9th and 10th Company to launch an attack at 9 p.m. The 1st Battalion, with all available means, was directed to clear the English position at the southwest edge of the forest.

The 3d Guard Infantry Division, at 1:20 p.m., on November 24, placed the 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regt. at the disposition of the Brigade and ordered it to march at once to Bourlon. The Brigade Commander, General Weidner, placed the battalion under the orders of the commander of the 9th Grenadier Regt., which the latter was to employ for establishing a line to be distributed in depth in the forest. Soon afterwards the Guard Division also gave up the 1st Battalion of Guard Fusilier Regt., which the Brigade Commander kept in readiness along the railway embankment northeast of Bourlon, this because, further information were received in the meantime, which looked as if the enemy was about to launch another attack. Marching columns of the enemy were observed already during the forenoon of November 24, on the road of Bapaume in direction of Cambrai. The 214th Infantry Brigade issued information at 1:15 p.m., "that in the space Graincourt-Anneux and road leading to Cambrai, 30 tanks and strong cavalry forces of the enemy were present. To engage these tanks, Captain Baron von Richthofen ascended with thirty attack planes.

(Note: According to a report of the Group commander for anti-aircraft, 155 hostile aeroplanes were sighted on November 24th, 39 of which were engaged.)

The 6th Guard Infantry Brigade received a report from Colonel von Paczynski, at 4:30 p.m., to the following: "Heavy hostile artillery fire laid against Bourlon and the terrain in rear to the west. South edge of Bourlon occupied by weak forces---remnants of Infantry Regt. No. 50 and 1st Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt., so that for the holding of the position no guarantee can be promised." A quarter of an hour later, Major Horn, commander of the 5th Guard Field Arty. Regt., reported that

Bourlon was being surrounded by the enemy and that a strong English artillery and machine-gun fire was being placed on the village. The Guard Brigade commander now placed the 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regt. at the disposition of the commander of the right sector, in case the enemy should attack the village, and the 1st Battalion of this regiment was now assigned to Grenadier Regt. No. 9. Shortly before 5 p.m. the commander of Infantry Regt. No. 50, telephoned that the enemy was advancing under protection of the fog. Grenadier Regt. No. 9 soon thereafter reported that the command post of his 1st Battalion at Moulin Coupez was being fired upon with machine guns out of Bourlon. A wounded corporal of the 3d Machine Gun Company of the Guard Fusilier Regt., stated that he had met with English troops at the railway embankment on the northeast edge of Bourlon. At 7:25 p.m. General Maercker advised the 214th Division, that at about 6 p.m. he had received information that the enemy had entered into the befogged village of Bourlon. Finally at 7:50 p.m., Colonel von Paczynski reported to the 6th Guard Brigade that the enemy had actually occupied the village.

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The leading article of The London Times announced as early as on Nov. 23 the following: "At this moment, the operation on the left flank of our combat front attracts the greatest attention---the battle has not ended yet, its entire harvest has yet to be gathered. Should the further and justifiable expectations be realized, they can actually change the whole situation on the west front."

In fact, the events of Nov. 23 sustained the confidence which the British people placed on the further favorable development of the glorious Cambrai battle. Field Marshal Douglas Haig issued a special order on Nov. 24, which began with the following sentence: "The capture yesterday of the important Bourlon position crowns the extraordinary successful operation and opens a way for the greater utilization of the advantages already attained."

The subject matter which followed, only referred to the first half of the first sentence. Really, this order expressed in the main his thanks to the commanders and the troops of all arms for the gallant performances rendered during the past battle days. The capture of the Bourlon forest and the entrance of the English forces into the village, gave cause for the issue of this order. Did this special order had in mind the termination of the battle which began on Nov. 20? The contents permits this question to be answered in the affirmative, for the thanks given General Byng and his subordinate staffs, closed with these words: "I congratulate you on the skill with which you prepared and executed this operation and the splendid results which they achieved." Of an appeal or encouragement not to relax in the performances, or to continue the fighting, no mention is made at all. Here also it looks like a confirmation of what has been previously stated (see pages 59 & 60). While in England great things were hoped from this battle, the English commander-in-chief apparently did no longer countenance the realization of his wide-reaching plans. The deciding day was Nov. 21. The progress on this day, brought the English command to the knowledge that the offensive initiated with great expectancies, had been thwarted.

At least pieces of the important Bourlon position were taken on Nov. 23, without the possession of which, the situation of the English was extremely difficult if not impossible, yet before this order of commendation of the commander-in-chief was received by the troops, a part of the Bourlon forest was taken from the English and as far as the village of Bourlon was concerned, only a small group maintained itself at and in the manor house up to noon, being cut off completely from their own troops. When darkness set in on Nov. 23, the forest belonged to the English troops and on the

evening of Nov. 24, the entire village was in their possession. But just as the English were not long to remain in the forest, so also only a short period was to elapse before the enemy was dislodged from the village.

It was the intention of the English 40th Division (Lt. Gen. Fensonby, commanding) to retake the Bourlon position on Nov. 24. Dismounted units of the 1st Cav. Division were attached to the division to support this action. Successes worth while to be mentioned were not accomplished in the forest. Forces of the 131st Brigade, especially the 12th Battalion Suffolk, reinforced by the 14th Battalion, Highland Light Infantry of the 120th Brigade, assembled to advance through the northwesterly part of the forest and through the village, to win a German trench position northeast of the village which the enemy considered to be very strong. This advance which was ordered to take place during the forenoon, never developed outside the forest due to the German artillery fire. After a heavy firing, including smoke shelling and under the protection of tanks, English companies, at darkness, quickly gained the hollow to the south of the village, mainly by passing through the most easterly one of the two sunken roads. The gap in the German front here, was never closed.

(Note: It has not been possible to ascertain why the 3d Bn., Res. Inf. Regt. No. 88 did not close the gap, by extending its left flank through the insertion of its 9th Company, which formed the reserve, and why those portions of the 1st and 3d Company, Inf. Regt. No. 50 and of the 1st Company, Instructional Inf. Regt., located to the west of the manor park, were not brought up for this purpose. When Lt. Holzer reported in person the missing junction toward the right, a promise was made that a battalion of the Guard Fusilier Regt. would cover the gap. In order to strengthen the weak line on the southeast edge of the village, six guns of the machine-gun sharpshooter detachment No. 50, was ordered to proceed to that point at 3:50 p.m., but they did not arrive at the destination. Finally at 6:20 p.m., Col. von Paczynski gave orders to the 3d Bn., Res. Inf. Regt. No. 88, to block the sunken roads, and this only, after the company commander of the 4th Company, Res. Inf. Regt. 175, had reported the entry of the enemy into the manor house.)

The weak German forces at the south-east edge of the village, defended themselves for sometime with success, but at last they also were attacked from the flank and rear. Under the leadership of Lt. Holzer (3d Co., Instructional Inf. Regt.) and Vice-Sergt. Major Kirsch (4th Co., Inf. Regt. No. 50), the remnants retreated to the railway station, while Lt. Hartwig, with 4 noncommissioned officers and 15 Pioneers of the 2d Co., Res. Pioneer Regt. No. 23, withdrew to the east exit of the village. Even while the German fire lay on the manor house, the enemy entered the latter from the center of the village. The 4th Co. of the 175th Inf. Regt. acting as the sector reserve, was present at this place. Its company commander reported at 6 p.m., that the major part of his men were surprised in the cellars. Just as on the previous day, the enemy pushed ahead from the west exit of the village and caught the 1st Co., Instructional Inf. Regt. in the flank. Sergt. Westphal quickly engaged the enemy with hand grenades while the company commander entered two light machine guns on the endangered flank. Further to the south with front against the southwest portion of the manor park, men of the 2d Co., Inf. Regt. No. 50, also participated in the fighting. Of the 3d Bn., Res. Inf. Regt. No. 88, only the most extremely left flank was affected by this attack, the machine guns dug in by the 12th Co. and obtained good results against the tanks. Tank "I 56" was destroyed. But the encircling of the 1st Co., Instructional Inf. Regt., became more and

more threatening and the ammunition more scarce. Due to darkness, it could not be ascertained if stronger forces had advanced further in the direction of Sains-les-Marquion or against the rear of the neighboring troops posted with front to the south. For this reason the company commander sent out a patrol. When after several hours this patrol failed to return, Vice-Sergeant Major Geschke with Private Rosner, volunteered to deliver the report of the critical situation. The sector commander, Captain Schonfeldt, also sent out a patrol to establish contact. The latter proceeded from the railway embankment around the north edge of the village as far as the abandoned command post of the 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 50, close to and to the south of the road Bourlon-Sains-les-Marquion, where it met with a food-carrying party of the 1st Company, Instructional Infantry Regt., who reported that some of the men of their party had been captured by English soldiers, at the west exit of the village. The patrol, upon its return at 7:40 p.m., reported that judging from light ball signals, German troops were located to the west of the manor-park.

While English forces established themselves at the west and northwest exit of the village, the 14th Battalion Highland Light Infantry, pushed forward in direction of the railway depot.

When the 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regt., was placed under the orders of the commander of Infantry Regt. No. 50, the battalion commander moved his battalion to the command post of the latter regiment, as directed. This command post was now set up about 1,200 meters to the northwest of the railway depot, near the railway embankment. The movement to the right was accomplished at 6:15 p.m. The 3d Machine Gun Company marched along the embankment and while passing the battered railway depot building, was caught by the fire of the English machine guns discharged at close range. During an attempt to capture the hostile machine guns by assault, the German machine gun commander, Lieutenant Haberland, was killed. Four machine guns arrived at the battalion by 8 p.m., the other guns held the railway line to the northwest of the depot.

(Note: Men of the 50th and 1st Battalion, Infantry Regt. No. 175, were assembled at Moulin Coupez and posted to block the road leading to Haynecourt. In place of the remainder of the 3d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt., Lieutenant Ystrom with a detachment, assumed the security against the railway depot. The 1st Battalion Infantry Regt. No. 175, was ordered on the evening of November 24, to march back to the 36th Infantry Division.

Losses: 11 killed, 29 wounded, 116 missing.)

In the meantime, Colonel von Paczynski had issued orders to recapture the village of Bourlon. To this end, the 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regt., sent out three patrols at 6:45 p.m., to reconnoiter the roads leading to the village from the west and north. The patrols of the 11th and 12th Companies met with a strong enemy on the westerly north entrance of the village. The party of the 10th Company, advancing on the easterly one of the two roads to the north, got into an English marching column in the village and with the exception of one man, was captured. This man got back to his battalion and reported what had happened. At 8:15 p.m., Colonel von Paczynski transmitted the following order of the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade: "The 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment will enter Bourlon from the north without firing and will take the village with the bayonet. The 1st Battalion of this regiment will enter the village from the east in a like manner." It was about one hour after this, that the 3d Battalion launched its attack. A heavy task seemed to confront it.

The 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regt., assembled at about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Kms. to the northeast of Bourlon and soon after 4 p.m. received orders from the commander of Grenadier Regt. No. 9, to move up two companies in rear of the front of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt. The battalion commander, Major von Delius, designated the 2d and 4th Company and placed both under command of Lieutenant Klotz, the commander of the 4th Company. The latter informed the companies that the foremost line of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt. extended from the northmost point of the road-triangle along the road to Bourlon. Shortly before the receipt of this information, the battalion commander was directed by the commanding officer of Grenadier Regt. No. 9, to occupy the east edge of the village commencing from the railway depot, and from this position to send out patrols to clear up the situation in Bourlon, it being rumored that the English had entered the town again. He was also advised that orders would issue later for the battalion to attack, jointly with the Fusilier Battalion, the enemy located in the village and then to occupy the south edge of the village. At 8:10 p.m., Major von Delius ordered Lieutenant Klotz to ascertain the point at which the foremost line of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regt., would leave the forest to the southeast of Bourlon and then to occupy the east edge of the village from that point, on a front of about 800 meters. The 1st Company of the battalion was to march to the railway depot and with its left flank seek to gain contact with the 2d and 4th company. Soon after this a Brigade order arrived directing Major von Delius to assume command of the 3d and 1st Battalions, Guard Fusilier Regt., and with these two battalions to take possession of Bourlon. Major Delius at 8:45 p.m. sent the necessary details for the assembly to the 3d Battalion, but the time for the attack was to be ordered later on. However, this order only reached the battalion when it was already advancing.

Upon being informed of the loss of the village and of the intention to retake it during the night, Major Horn caused his field artillery groups to black the south edge of the town and the west edge of the forest. Colonel von Hulock directed the heavy artillery to place its fire on the surmounting road crossing to the northwest of Anneux and against the church at Anneux, also to place harassing fire at irregular periods against the batteries at Graincourt. The 6<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Brigade ordered the commander of the Guard Fusilier Rgt. to keep his 2d Battalion in readiness for a counter attack, in case the enemy should break through toward the north and east, for this purpose the two pioneer companies were also attached to the battalion. For the further employment of the battalion, the Brigade also added the following: "Should the attack of the 5d and 1st Battalion fail, Colonel Count von Schullenburg will assume the command of his regiment (Guard Fusiliers) and retake Bourlon as planned." The 21st Reserve Division had to place the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Rgt. No. 68, at the disposal of the 5<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Division. It received the mission to prevent the penetration of the enemy to the north and west. At 10:25 p m, the division advised the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade, that two battalions of Reserve Depot Infantry Rgt. No. 1, of the 221<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, coming up by rail, would arrive during the night in Sully-Railleucourt.

The 12th, 11th and 10th companies of the Guard Fusilier Rgt. advanced over the same roads as their patrols at 9:25 pm, on November 24. The enemy's outposts were surprised. The 10th company encountered an English march column in the town. "As ordered, not a shot was fired, the bayonet alone did the work." Quicker than it could be imagined, the battalion accomplished its task. The surprise succeeded. Our assault detachments were somewhat protected against flank actions by the narrow streets edged by walls and they pushed ahead over the church-square toward the other side of the village boundary, driving the frightened enemy before them. Battalion headquarters arrived with the center company at the church-square and remained thereat. Darkness and shot-riddled empty ruins and houses, resounded from the striking shots which no one could tell from whence they were fired. The nearest houses were examined and the streets occupied by sentries. A somewhat closed in court was quickly arranged for a command post. Two machine guns and a portion of the 9th company were moved up to act as a reserve. Long minutes elapsed in uncertainty - they seemed like eternity. No combat-noise could be heard from the direction of the assailing companies. The first reports arrived slowly from the front and made up the following picture: The left flank seemed isolated while two companies had reached the other side of the village. Junction with the right flank company not established, and no report received from it. Runners and patrols sent to the 1st Battalion and to the rear mostly returned without having accomplished their object. They were sure that the rearward connections were cut off by the enemy. The night was uncommonly dark. A wet snow was slowly falling. Lights of every kind were carefully shunned and no loud words spoken. The exotic situation was increased through the complete ignorance of the configuration of the village. The lay of the streets which during the previous evening was obtained with much trouble from a map, was concealed by the shattered houses and their open doorways. The outlines of the destroyed church gleamed gloomy in the twilight of the disconsolate and damp-frigid November rain, while in the background towered the ruins of the manor house.

In the direction where the enemy was located, the tops of the Bourlon forest, which had become so famous and was saturated so much with blood, could be seen indistinctly. The situation cleared up slowly. A somewhat locked front had been established in the sector, but a group of houses near the railway station occupied by the English commanding the village, threatened disaster. From this point, patrols of the enemy kept up a continuous action. The fire activity increased with the dawning of the new day. The headquarters of the 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt., marched with the 1st and 3d company to the railway depot at about 9 pm, to establish contact with the 2d and 4th company. While on the way, the battalion commander heard that the 3d Battalion was attacking. At the same time he received a report from Lieut. Klotz, that the 2d and 4th company had already reached a point to the north of the cut in the road at the south edge of the forest, where the forest road leads directly in a southeasterly direction and that at this point the right flank of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infy. Rgt. was exposed to the enemy. That now it was necessary to establish the limit of the attack sector to the right and thereupon to quickly carry the attack forward. Major von Delius sent orders to the 3d Battalion, designating as its dividing line, Railway depot Bourlon-Church-exit of the town via the street leading east of the Church to the south. The different companies were launched for the attack by the battalion commander in person; it was his intention to attain the south edge of the town through a flank movement wherewith to cut off the enemy from its connections. The 1st and 3d companies received orders first of all to clear the blocks of houses in the east portion of the village, while the 4th and 2d companies were at attack immediately on the road along the southeast edge of the village and establish a firm connection between the 3d Battalion of the Guard Fusilier Rgt. and the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infy. Rgt. The 1st company kept up the march toward the railway depot and soon encountered a stubborn resistance close to and southwest of the railway depot building. The 4th and 2d company attained their sectors after fighting with hand grenades and at times with the use of the bayonet, but the enemy's defense here was only indifferent. The 1st Battalion received a message already at midnight from the 4th company, that it had established direct contact with the 10" company. The line at the southeast edge of the village seemed too thin, so the 3d company was moved into the line between the 2d company and the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Rgt., after the 3d company had cleared the houses in the east portion of the village. While this was taking place, the 1st company had been unable to break the resistance of the enemy. For this reason the company commander wished to wait for daylight in order to ascertain the accurate position and strength of the enemy.

While day was breaking on November 25", the 3d and 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt., both now placed under the command of the commanding officer of the 50th Infantry Rgt., were located at the south and southeast edge of the village. The losses, especially by the 1st Battalion, during the daring nightly operation were extremely small. The gap made by the enemy was now closed again through the well designated attack. The strength of the English, located in the town in rear of the front, had yet to be ascertained.

Before the day reached brightness, two battalions of the English 120<sup>th</sup> Brigade (the 13<sup>th</sup> East Surrey and 12<sup>th</sup> Royal Lancaster) supported by the 2<sup>d</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards and 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars, launched an attack. They succeeded in breaking through the front in the sector Bourlon village only on the right flank of the 3<sup>d</sup> Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt. The enemy again entered into Bourlon. The 9<sup>th</sup> Company of the 5<sup>d</sup> Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt, made a counter attack and restored the situation. But the enemy had received reinforcements in the town. Special detachments of the German forces were detailed to clear the houses and the manor park. The English troops made a stubborn resistance. Even during these actions, the sentry at the command post of the 3<sup>d</sup> Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt. (close to and to the northeast of the village church), reported that an English column coming from the north, was drawing near to the church square. The staff of the battalion armed itself with rifles and Corporal Freigang opened fire with his machine gun. "The shower of the shots hit exterminatingly into the ranks of the enemy, who stopped short and after a brief confusion on the street, broke off to gain the open field, to continue the attack toward the right. The Germans brought up another machine gun quickly." All what was left of the enemy, only two officers and fifty men of which ten not wounded, were made prisoners by the Germans. According to a statement of the English commander, this column was a detachment of 300 men which fiercely attacked by German troops at the railway station, attempted to cut their way through to the south, to join their main English forces.

Two German officers who fought with the staff against this English column, made the following common remark in their report of this action: "We both were sorry of the captivity fate of this brave foe and cared for their early departure to the rear. How easily might not this have been our own fate! Without the two machine guns and without the extraordinary favorably located command post, selected during the night by chance, this English detachment would have attacked the rear of the 9<sup>th</sup> company, which was just launching its counter attack."

During this time, the 1<sup>st</sup> company, with the assistance of trench mortar and machine gun fire, had broken the resistance at the railway station, where 30 men and 11 machine guns were captured. About 50 were killed and the remainder, all being wounded, withdrew without arms to the west through a communication trench, here they were captured by the 3<sup>d</sup> battalion of the Guard Fusiliers.

The village of Bourlon was now completely in German possession again, but despite every effort, the enemy could not be dislodged from the forest. The extreme difficult combat conditions were described by Aspirant Officer von Horn of the 2<sup>d</sup> Company, Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, in the following manner:

"The men are very nervous and often act as if they see and hear ghosts. No wonder! The heavy and dense undergrowth permits a view of only a few metres....The slightest rustle ahead would cause a panic - like firing without regard of our own sentries or patrols at the front."

The advance on the evening of November 24<sup>th</sup>, against the enemy in the south-east portion of the forest had met with no improvements of our front. Only

in a few places of the northerly and the two easterly tips of the forest were the English pushed back slowly toward the road Bourlon-Fontaine. Then on the early morning of November 25<sup>th</sup>, simultaneously with the English attack against the village, the enemy also renewed his attacks in the woods, which however were repulsed by the defenders. But the enemy did gain ground against the inner falanks of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infy. Rgt. and the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Rgt. No. 9. The fixing of the front in the Bourlon forest was subjected to the greatest difficulties.

(Note: Even as late as the evening of November 26<sup>th</sup>, the Headqrs. of the 5<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Division, called attention that during the former fighting, the foremost line in the forest was not positively established. The Division demanded that more officers than formerly, be sent out to reconnoitre.)

Today also, in comparing all the reports received from the infantry, the special scout-detachments and the patrols of the artillery, the course of the line in the forest could not be marked accurately. However it could be clearly indicated that on November 25<sup>th</sup>, neither the west, south nor the southeast portion of the forest was held by German troops. According to the reconnaissance reports received at the Headquarters of the 5th Guard Infantry Brigade, at noon on November 25<sup>th</sup>, the foremost line diverged at the most northerly point of the road-triangle in a southeasterly direction embracing the highest elevation, then prolonged sharply in a northeasterly direction in the forest.

In order to strengthen the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infy. Rgt., and, if possible, to advance its line, the 2d German Fusilier Rgt. was ordered to march shortly after the noon hour to the sunken road to the east of Bourlon. Due to the inaccurate advice of the course of the foremost line, the battalion started on the march with a wrong front. While crossing the road Bourlon-Fontaine, the left flank of the battalion received a strong flank fire from the left, which caused heavy losses. In the meantime, at 5 pm, the commander of the 5th Guard Brigade ordered: "The 2d Battalion, Guard Fusiliers, advancing on the right flank of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infy. Rgt., is placed under the orders of Major von Delius. The latter, with the 1st and 2d Battalions, Guard Fusilier Rgt., will take possession of the west edge of the Bourlon forest. Grenadier Rgt. No. 9 with the subordinated 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Rgt., will join in this advance. Special attention is called that junction must be maintained by the group Delius with Grenadier Rgt. No. 9 and relatively with the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Rgt." This attack which began at 9:50 pm, only accounted for an advance of the front by about 200 metres on the left flank of the 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt., the 2d Battalion of this regiment and the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Rgt., had to relinquish again the gains made by them, because the companies of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, encountered a strongly consolidated machine gun nest. The commander of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt., Captain Tams, employed the early morning of November 26<sup>th</sup>, in personally establishing the course of the front line. The result of this, was reported at about noon, a correct sketch of which accompanied the report. Accordingly, the left flank of the 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Rgt. was situated with front directly to the west. Nearly so, on the road indicated in the sketch, which

leading from the south exit of Bourlon ran to a point close to and north-west of the road-junction, the 8th and 5th company, Guard Fusilier Rgt. was posted with front to the south. Further on in an easterly direction the front now progressed close to the south of the northerly point of and passing the road-triangle, and then turned back to the southeast to the east of the road Bourlon-Pontaine. Of the enemy he also gave the following information: "There is nothing to the reported machine-gun nest, the entire English front is strongly occupied with machine guns, the position of which is changed from time to time.

(Note: The report begins by stating: "All other reports, especially those of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, are wrong. Major von Detten has been advised by me."

Apparently this refers to a report of the 1st Battln., Grenadier Rgt. No. 9, submitted at 8:45 a., on Nov. 26", according to which the front line was as follows: 4th company at the joining of the north and south roads on the circular-road with front to the west. The 2", 3" and 1st companies, longside of the circular-road. An arrow-stroke then indicated the contact at the southeast portion of the forest. This sketch is filed in the appendix of the diary of the regiment and is marked in red with a large question mark with a notation, "corrected later." The map appended in the diary indicating the line at noon of November 26" - shows the location of the 1st Battln. to be to the south of the road-triangle on both sides of the hollow; the 2d Battln. Guard Fusilier Rgt. is not inserted on this map at all.)

November 26th and 27th.

The Commander of the Guard Fusilier Regiment, relieved Colonel von Paczynski of the command of that part of the 3d Guard Infantry Division, located in the west portion of its sector on the evening of November 25th. Infantry Regiment No. 50, rejoined the 214th Infantry Division and took up quarters in Epinoy, Fressies and Fechain.

(NOTE: The losses of Infantry Regiment No. 50, were as follows:

1st Battalion---Killed 31, wounded 103, missing 49.

2nd Battalion---Killed 11, wounded 35, missing 12.

3rd Battalion---Killed 15, wounded 56, missing 407).

Besides his own regiment (Guard Fusiliers) Colonel Count v.d. Schulenburg, had under his command also the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 88, and its sector to the southwest of the village of Bourlon, and as a reserve, the 1st Battalion of this regiment. Of this latter battalion, a company was inserted on the inner flanks of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88 and 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment, instead of the 1st Company, Instructional Infantry Regiment. To block the south exit of the village, through which the English tanks passed on November 23d, two guns of the 5th Battery, Guard Field Artillery Regiment No. 5, were dug in, in the vicinity of the manor park. The 1st Company, Pioneer Regiment No. 28, was employed to prepare defensive works for the village and to construct tank traps.

As soon as the situation would permit, the Instructional Infantry Regiment was to be withdrawn by the commander of the Guard Infantry Brigade. The commander of this regiment was to form from the combatable parts of his regiment one battalion and to assemble the remainder in Saily-Railencourt. The 1st Battalion formed one company under the command of Lieutenant Marienthal, it was assigned (150 rifles strong) to the 3d Battalion to reinforce the rearward line along the railway embankment to the east of Bourlon. Of the 2d Battalion, only the 6th and 8th company arrived at the assembly place indicated, and then only during the night from November 26th to 27th. The rest remained in the sector of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment.

(NOTE: Losses of the Instructional Infantry Regiment from November 23d to 26th:

1st Battalion---Killed 23, wounded 85, missing 52.

2nd Battalion---Killed 28, wounded 100, missing 8.

3rd Battalion---Killed 11, wounded 78, missing 126.

The casualty lists for November 27, contained the following numbers:

1st Battalion---Killed 0, wounded 14, missing 1.

2nd Battalion---Killed 3, wounded 14, missing 10.

3rd Battalion---Killed 1, wounded 30, missing 9.)

Shortly after midnight, early on November 26, the 3d Guard Infantry Division made known, that according to statements made by prisoners, the 40th English Division was exhausted and that presumably it would be relieved by the English Guard Division during this night. "It seems probable, that a great number of tanks observed on November 25th, at Graincourt, (40 in all), may be brought forward during darkness to attack at dawn of day with the newly assigned Guard Division against the German front." Due to this, the two battalions of the Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, were directed to arrive by 5:00 a.m. in the vicinity of the

railway station. Bourlon and place themselves at the disposal of the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade.

The statements made by the English prisoners were correct in so far as they referred to the relief of troops, for during the night from November 25/26, the changes were made in front of the 3d Guard Infantry Division. The repeated assaults against the village and the forest of Boulon caused heavy losses to the 40th English Division. According to Doyle "The British Campaign in France and Flanders 1917", this division during the short period of its fighting, lost 172 officers and over 3,000 men. But the division was relieved by the 62nd English Division, the troops of which had only spent a few rest days near Havrincourt, partly in the forest in tents and sheds. The German Group Caudry, ascertained through an intercepted wireless message, that the English Guard Division had relieved the 51st English Division in the region of Fontaine. Of course there was every indication that for the support of the 40th English Division, a few battalions of the English Guard Division were inserted in the Bourlon Forest, already on November 25th.

We know already from the portrayal of the fighting at Fontaine-Notre-Dame, that the English command wished to make another attempt to capture Fontaine and Bourlon village and to take possession of the whole Bourlon ridge on November 27th. Thus the attack anticipated on November 26th, against Bourlon, just as the one against Fontaine, did not materialize. The forenoon especially, after the nightly fighting ceased on the left and also on the right flanks of the Fusilier and 9th Grenadier Regiments, remained unusually quiet. Due to the instructions to withdraw all the battalions of the 21st Reserve Division and the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regiment, as well as the change made in the sector boundaries, Colonel v.d. Schulenburg, ordered that on the evening the 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment should expand further to the left, the 2d Battalion, after relief, was to replace the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88, southwest of Bourlon. Of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, the 1st battalion had to occupy a part of the positions held by the inter-mixed 2d Battalion Guard Fusilier and 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regiments. Guarding against too great an expansion of the 1st Battalion, the 2d Fusilier Battalion had to take over the flank of the 1st Battalion. This regrouping however was still under way, when at 7:30 p.m., the enemy's patrols endeavored to establish contact at numerous points. Barrage and destructive fire were asked for. During a short period, the artillery combat became very intense. A large, but only temporary advantage was obtained by the enemy in the sector of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment; the cause of this to a great extent was due to the fact, that the German artillery fired too short at different points in front of the sector. The front line withdrew here from 200 to 300 metres. Yet before the reserve company could participate in the combat, the old line was occupied again.

According to the reports which at first arrived at Brigade Headquarters the enemy's advance had effected a much greater success.

(NOTE: The incorrect information sent by the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade to Major Horn, the commander of the Field Artillery Group, that the 1st and 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment were retiring at 7:58 p.m., and the report of Lieut. Muller of the 1st company, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, at 8:20 p.m., located in the firing position of the 2d Battery, 5th Guard Field Artillery Regiment, that a part of the infantry was captured and that the enemy had penetrated, seems to have been the cause for laying the barrage too short).

Due to this success of the enemy, counter-attacks were started by Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, (including also the 1st Battalion at Raillencourt). Besides, two battalions of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, were sent by the quickly alarmed 21st Infantry Division, to Saily-Raillencourt. When the battalions of the Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, fell in for the counter-attack, they ascertained that the situation was already restored. As further hostile attacks were anticipated, the commander of the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade, ordered: "2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment will not be relieved. For the relief of the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88, the 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, is placed at the disposal of the Guard Fusilier Regiment." The change in the two battalions was made shortly after midnight without difficulties. The 7th company of the 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment assumed contact with the 9th company, Guard Fusilier Regiment, so that the 1st company of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88, could rejoin its battalion, which then was relieved to join the 21st Reserve Division.

Thus, during this night, the last regiment of the 21st Infantry Division was relieved and with it the change between the 21st Infantry and the 21st Reserve Division was actually consummated which, according to the instructions of Group Arras, should have been accomplished 24 hours earlier.

(NOTE: Field Artillery Regiment No. 44, as well as the reinforcement Artillery, remained in their positions. Instead, Reserve Field Artillery Regiment No. 21, was attached to the counter-attack division (21st). It formed up as follows on November 28th: 1st Battalion, in observation position to the east of Marquion (a section each of the 2d and 3d Battery, horse-drawn for combat against tanks), the 2d Battalion, in observation position to the south of Baralle, the 3d Battalion, in Abancourt).

Infantry Regiment 358, reported its losses from November 21st to 27th, as follows: Officers, killed 3, wounded 2, missing 1; Noncommissioned officers and men, killed 65, wounded 204, missing 55.

The left boundary of the 3d Regimental sector (Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88) of the 21st Reserve Division, was now located where the road leading from the Anneux chapel through the sunken road joins towards Mouvres and crosses over the ridge. From this point the line in the sector of the Guard Fusilier Regiment passed to the northeast towards the south edge of the manor park and then stretched with but little deviations in a general easterly direction through the village and forest, directly to the south of the northmost point of and passing by the road-triangle. Close to the east of this road-web, the command zone of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, commenced. The 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, had

kept in reserve the 6th company in rear of the left flank, the 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment, its 12th company in the manor park, the 1st Battalion of the regiment, its 1st company at the east exit of the village and the 2d Battalion of the regiment, its 7th company close to and north of the forest.

(NOTE: At the railway embankment, 1 km., to the east of the railway station Bourlon, stood Captain Fotel with the remainder of the 3d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regiment, reinforced by the company commanded by Lieut. Marienthal).

The 3d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, was directed by the commander of the Guard Fusilier Regiment to place itself in readiness at the railway embankment to the north of the village and to the west of the church, in the same way as the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88. For the protection and blocking of the streets in Bourlon, the 3d Company, Machine Gun Marksman Battalion, No. 12, was designated. The nine guns of the 2d company of this battalion, were after arrival to be employed in rear of the front of Grenadier Regiment No. 9.

The 1st Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, located at the railway embankment to the north of the forest, served as a reserve for Grenadier Regiment No. 9. Due to the advance of the enemy's patrols on the late evening of November 26th and the regrouping of the German forces, going on at that time, some considerable confusion occurred on the right flank of Grenadier Regiment No. 9. In their morning reports, the 1st and 3d Batteries, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, made the statement, though without giving the details, that the situation and contacts had been restored. The 5th and 7th companies were inserted on the left flank of the 1st Battalion, which for its own part had to assume charge of a portion of the position of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment (6th company, Instructional Infantry Regiment). Because Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 46 of the 119th Infantry Division had expanded as far as the sand pit, as directed, and that therefore the 8th company could replace the 6th company northwest of Fontaine, the latter entered the northeast portion of the forest. But a connection with the 11th company at the east edge of the forest was established only through sentries and patrols by the 8th company, which fact was reported by its company commander. Of the course of the foremost line of the Grenadier Regiment in the forest, positive information could not be obtained, not even through the reports which arrived during the night from November 26th to 27th. But it could be assumed with considerable likelihood, that the main forces were now located on a general southwesterly front in rear of and close to the road leading from Bourlon to Fontaine. The left flank then turned back to along the east edge of the forest.

(NOTE: The commanding officer, 2d Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, upon orders of the Regimental commander, received at 9:00 p.m., thus after receipt of information of the English advances, directed his 5th and 7th company, to march at first in rear of the right flank of the 1st Battalion and to participate in any counter-attack to be launched. In the written order the right flank of the 1st Battalion Grenadier Regiment No. 9, was stated to be "somewhat south of number 100, to the east of Bourlon." According to a report of

Lieut. Keiper from the northeast edge of the forest, the two companies were located at this time in rear of the 9th company, about 150 metres to the right and ahead of the 6th company. The commander of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment through personal reconnoitering on November 26th (See page 260), established the location of the right flank of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9 (4th company), as having connections with the 6th company, Instructional Infantry Regiment to the southeast of the northmost point of the road triangle, but to the east of the road Bourlon-Fontaine. The 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, also reported at 2:30 p.m., that it had contact to the right with the 6th company, Instructional Infantry Regiment. According to a report of Major von Eisebeck, the latter mentioned company was relieved at 3:30 a.m., on November 27th, by a company of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9. These reports confirm the assumption mentioned regarding the location of the front line, at least on the right flank. The statements in the text and the marks on the situation map in the war diary of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, though oppose this assumption. The events on the evening of November 26th, are supplemented by the following postscript: "Our heavy artillery in laying its barrage, just as it did on November 24th, fired this day into the 1st Battalion of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, and those parts of the regiment located in the curve towards the south, causing heavy losses." Yet the total losses of the 1st Battalion on November 26th, consisted only of 7 men wounded and 3 missing, while the 3d Battalion had 3 killed and 5 wounded (and two wounded during the attack on the evening). The reports of the two battalions contain no facts which would help to form proofs. The 3d Battalion even emphasized, that the barrage, requested through flare signals, was very well placed. The situation map of the early morning of November 27, gives the following picture: Adjoining Instructional Infantry Regiment to the south of Bourlon (thus from 300 to 500 metres in front of the 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment), the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, with right flank still to the south of the westerly point of the road triangle; left flank somewhat near the northern south road and further on the 5th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 12th and 11th companies in an easterly direction, then bending back to the northeast, at the edge of the forest, where the road leading from Bourlon to Fontaine comes out of the forest. Judging from these marks, the connections with the neighboring regiment must have been very imperfect. The Guard Fusilier Regiment is not posted on the map at all. The location of the line as established by Captain Thomas and which, according to his statement, he advised Major von Detten, apparently remained unknown at the Headquarters of the 9th Grenadier Regiment, located at Saily-Raillencourt. At this time, only two companies of the Instructional Infantry Regiment were posted in the front line and at that in the sector of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment. If the situation map is correct, then the whole of the 1st Battalion and the 5th and 7th companies of the 9th Grenadiers, must have been posted about from 400 to 500 metres in front of the left flank of the 1st and of the whole sector of

the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment. Finally two artillery groups placed barrage on the westerly half of the line defined by the map mentioned. The sub-artillery group Mackensen, also had been specially directed to lay its fire in the wide hollow, through which, as alleged, the foremost line of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, passed.)

The regiments of the 3d Guard Infantry Division were ordered to submit a brief report on the evening of November 26th, of the combat value of the organizations. After consolidating these reports the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade reported the results as follows: "By the Guard Fusilier and 9th Grenadier Regiments, despite of the fatigue and exertion of the men, the combat value and frame of mind are good due to the successes attained. The combat value of the Instructional Infantry Regiment, due to lengthy employment and heavy losses, is much lower." The 3d Guard Infantry Division, prior to its employment in the fighting around Cambrai, had twice been brought into action in Flanders and had enjoyed only a few rest days. Experienced company commanders and noncommissioned officers, either were killed or wounded and their absence proved very detrimental. The replacements received by these regiments shortly after the second Flanders action, to cover the heavy losses, was very poorly trained. The training of these replacements within the regiments was prevented by the employment of the Division at Bourlon. Of course the successes attained by these regiments and especially acknowledged by superior authority in "Day Orders", had enlivened the spirit of the men, but there could be no doubt that the constant cold and damp weather was diminishing this spirit and the performances of the men in a greater measure. Thus, the commanding officer of the Guard Fusilier Regiment (Colonel Count von der Schulenburg) called attention in his report that the regiment was suffering extremely, due to the lack of sleep and protection from the weather and that the general average trench strength of the battalions of his regiment, was reduced to 316 men, inclusive of noncommissioned officers. The strength of the battalions of the 9th Grenadier Regiment at this time was greater by about 50 men.

(NOTE: The combat strengths on November 21st were as follows:

- 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment, 13 officers, 747 men.
- 3d Battalion, same regiment, 14 officers, 548 men.
- 2d Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, 25 officers, 691 men.
- 3d Battalion, same regiment, 22 officers, 709 men.)

Because the enemy also seemed poorly informed of the location of their foremost line in the Bourlon Forest, its artillery fire against the position of the 9th Grenadiers was kept up only moderately, at any rate it was less by far during other major combats. Thus the losses, despite the thrusts made by the German troops and the defensive actions against the counter-attacks of the enemy, were not so heavy. But the two following messages indicate, that the weather conditions and their consequences caused the weakening and abatement of the mental and bodily resistance power to a greater extent, than the difficult forest fighting which made heavy demands on the nerves. Lieutenant Wendlandt reported early on November 27th as follows: "Losses during last twenty four hours none, sick 4 men. With the present weather conditions the company must soon be valued as exhausted, even without sustaining bloody losses. The men are being soaked through by snow and rain almost every night, after which they must squat in their dugouts during the whole day where in their wet clothing

they almost turn into ice. If we are to remain much longer in this position, I urgently request that at least a little more brandy be furnished the men." This 6th company had fought under very favorable circumstances, since it came into the front line it had only 4 men wounded. Thus the conditions by the main forces, which since the evening of November 23d, had fought almost continuously in the forest, were not alike. The message which the commander of the 7th company sent at 5:45 a.m., on November 27, to the Headquarters of the 2d Battalion, therefore was well founded, when Lieut. Keise wrote: "As the senior officer of the front line at this time, I consider it my duty, upon the request of all concerned as well as my own conviction, to report as follows: Some of the companies of the regiment, have suffered badly and are in very poor shape. The 1st, 5th and 7th companies and the companies of the 3d Battalion, 9th Grenadiers, so far have attacked every night and also at noon on the day before yesterday, or have repulsed the attacks of the enemy. Through this and especially through the bad shelter and weather conditions, the leaders and their men are so exhausted that if they are not relieved by this evening, I cannot be responsible for my own company, although they are all present except the wounded. The men have not slept for four nights while their nerves and strain have been placed under the utmost demands. The company had to change its position and dig in anew every night. The men are in such a bodily and moral state as I have never experienced heretofore. I know very well, what the regimental commander thinks of such a report, but I am fully conscious of my responsibility in submitting this report. But as the honor of the regiment will be involved in case of a terrain loss, I feel it my duty to make this report.

(NOTE: This report reached battalion headquarters at 6:35 a.m., the one of the 8th company at 6:45 a.m. The commander of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, expressed the combat value of his men as very good in his report to Brigade Headquarters; although he did state that the straining power of the men would soon slacken, due to the uninterrupted fighting and the lack of proper shelter and the constant cold weather. For this reason, Major Seelhorst also deemed it necessary to recommend the early relief of the regiment).

But before the regiments were withdrawn they had to undergo another major combat day. The attack of the English 62d and Guard Divisions was directed against the front Bourlon-Fontaine, both divisions being supported by numerous tanks. The enemy selected the same hour for the beginning of the preparation as he did on the first day of the battle, November 20th. The attack was anticipated by the German command. The headquarters and the two battalions of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, were ordered to be in readiness commencing with 7:00 a.m. Under instruction of Group Arras, the whole artillery was to fire several annihilating fire waves at 7:15 a.m. (As the artillery adviser, since November 25th, Lieutenant Colonel von Betzheim, Bavarian Artillery Commander No. 13, was now on duty at Corps (Group) Headquarters.

Our fire had hardly opened when the enemy's artillery preparation started. It was very strong but only of short duration. The German batteries answered with a heavy harassing fire on the barrage area and soon afterwards, upon request, changed to the barrage. The Bourlon forest was befogged by the English, and their shells dropped deeply into the rear

area. The position of the 5th Battery, Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment No. 16, located at the west exit of Saily received gas. The placing out of action of guns at the batteries equipped with field guns 16 was very hurtful. On this subject, Lieutenant Vogelsang of the 9th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 63, wrote as follows: "I observed from the tower of the church at Ste. Oile. Soon after the firing opened, a report was received that two guns were placed out of action. Shortly afterwards the two other guns were no longer fit for firing. By all these guns, the compensating gear of the striker in the breech mechanism had sprung out. The spare parts were used up. I had four new perfect guns in the position and the gunners were anxious to fire with them, now though, these gunners were doomed to stand longside of their guns as mute spectators. Our competent artificer did everything possible to repair the damage but <sup>to</sup> no purpose. In my opinion, shared by the artificer and gun commanders, the new ammunition replacement was at fault, apparently the powder charge was too strong." So far as this was possible, the artillery commander tried to cover the barrage area of all the batteries whose guns were so placed out of action, through the artillery of the second line.

After  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour, English tanks and infantry attacked. The first report received at the headquarters of the 3th Guard Infantry Brigade, from the front, came from Major von Delius (1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment), stating that the enemy had penetrated at the left flank company of his 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment, and that German troops had been seen running out of the forest. Brigade headquarters, at 9:10 a.m., sent the following orientation to Division Headquarters: "Large forces retreating out of Fontaine toward Saily-Railencourt. Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, ordered to launch counter-attack with two battalions. Colonel Schulenburg at 9:00 a.m., observed rearward movements of Infantry out of the Bourlon forest towards Saily-Railencourt which, halted by Major von Delius, advanced again and are now preparing the railway embankment for the defence. Apparently, the Bourlon Forest has not been lost completely, English artillery is still firing on it. Rearward movements from Fontaine and to the west thereof". There was no doubt of the seriousness of the situation at the superior command. It looked very much as if the enemy would succeed in breaking through on this day. The commander of the 9th Grenadier Regiment at 8:20 a.m. received information from its 3d and 1st Battalion, that his troops were retreating out of the northeast edge of the Bourlon Forest. Ten minutes later he ordered the 1st Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, to counter-attack immediately in a southerly direction with left flank at the east edge of the forest and to again advance all the retreating German units. This battalion though had already seen the yielding of the foremost German line and placed its fire on the English troops which appeared in the hollow at the northern edge of the forest.

The companies of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, were able to repulse the first frontal thrust of the enemy, but the main pressure of the English attack lay outside of the Bourlon forest, where the tanks found a more favorable terrain. Besides, there was a possibility to envelope in this manner the German forces in the wooded terrain. Numerous tanks followed closely by English Guard battalions, quickly penetrated the German front between the forest and Fontaine in which space there was a gap. Strong

detachments turned quickly to the west and attacked the main forces of the Grenadier Regiment in the flank and rear. The 8th company, just as the right flank of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 46, was unable to hold its ground against the enemy's superiority and outflanking movement, it arranged itself for the defence along the railway embankment and, when through the general pell-mell, a portion of this embankment close to and northwest of Fontaine, was lost, it arranged itself for the defence in the sunken road leading to Railloncourt. The crew of the anti-tank gun of the 8th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 63, commanded by Corporal Bauscher, stationed in Fontaine, defended itself bravely, but the gun had to be abandoned, and the one of the 119th Infantry Division also. Soon after this, the other gun of the 8th Battery, located at the northwest exit of the village also fell into the hand of the enemy.

The Grenadiers located in the Bourlon Forest fought with all available means against the enemy who now appeared in the flank and rear. The 6th company wheeled to the east. The 10th company defended itself successfully for some time at the exit of the road out of the forest leading from Bourlon to Fontaine, despite the ever stronger growing danger from the rear. The company did not give up its position until the tanks had forced their way over this road toward Bourlon. The resistance power of the Grenadiers was exhausted and the companies retreated in the direction of the railway embankment. Due to the wooded condition of the terrain and of the fog, large bodies were able to escape capture. Yet, individual platoons and smaller groups were frequently surrounded by the enemy, an escape seemed impossible despite the most stubborn resistance. Several determined leaders though did not lose hope and they forced the enemy's ring with the bayonet. Corporal Dummer of the 3d Machine Gun Company succeeded in breaking through with his machine gun, and a few detachments even brought English prisoners to the rear. On the other hand, the commanders of the 11th and 12th company and a portion of their companies, were surrounded by the enemy and marched off as prisoners. As there was hope, that our line connecting to the right might still be intact, these prisoner groups marched toward the right without being molested by the accompanying English soldier who apparently was not familiar with the terrain. Lieutenant Schierholt snatched the rifle from a corporal who was coming out of the forest and shot down the escorting English soldier. On the way to the railway embankment the commander of the 12th company was slightly wounded. Lieutenant Bolling of the 11th company also was able to escape. What was left of the 9th Grenadiers arranged themselves again for the defence along the railway line.

(NOTE: Losses of the 1st Battalion:

On November 23d - Killed 9, wounded 8.

On November 24th- Killed 6, wounded 12.

On November 25th- Killed 7, wounded 36.

On November 26th- -- --, wounded 7, missing 3.

On November 27th- Killed 1, wounded 14, missing 6.

The 2d Battalion lost from November 23d to 27th:

Killed 13, wounded 33, missing 156. Of these on the 27th-

Killed 4, wounded 28, missing 151.

The 3d Battalion lost from November 23d - 30th:

Killed 38, wounded 78, missing 123. Of these on the 27th so far as known -

Killed 4, wounded 6, missing 96.)

But it was only a small force, which reinforced the 1st Battalion. Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, and parts of the 3d Battalion of Infantry Regiment No. 46 (119th Infantry Division). Many men, mostly without arms, were assembled in Saily-Raillencourt and even further to the rear. Thus, Lieutenant Kulcke reported: "4th company was outflanked this morning during the attack and also attacked from the rear. I was able to cut through with a few men. 15 men, partly without equipment and arms have been assembled by me in Sancourt. I request orders what to do."

According to a report of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment No. 9, sent at 9:15 a.m., to the Headquarters of the regiment, English troops were entrenching at that time at the elevated northeast edge of the forest. This information was derived from Captain Potel, the commander of the 3d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regiment who at 9:20 a.m., reported in detail to the commander of the 9th Grenadier Regiment. From this report and the accompanying sketch, the latter also learned that the enemy occupied the north edge of the Bourlon forest and that a tank was halting in front of the east exit of the village. Portions of the 3d Battalion, of the Instructional Infantry Regiment were noted on the sketch as located in the sunken road, but in the main they were noted as along the railway embankment to the left, rearward.

Forces of the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment, especially of the 7th Company, under Lieutenant Troppenz and the commander of the 8th Company, Lieutenant Pohlmann, also arranged themselves for the defence in this sunken road to the east of Bourlon, while the rest of the troops which occupied the sector of the battalion, withdrew to the railway embankment.

Just as Grenadier Regiment No. 9, so too the 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment with the two companies of the 2d Battalion, Instructional Infantry Regiment repulsed the first attack of the enemy. After this affair, tanks moved to the front over the forest roads. An unsuccessful attempt was made to put these tanks out of action with rifle and machine gun fire. The tanks in fact broke through and scattered the front line. In this left flank, strong hostile detachments also appeared very quickly. Due to the invisibility in the forest and the artificial fog, as well as the fire from the flank, the men became more and more confused and ran to the rear. In addition, the battalion was very short of officers. But in the sector held by Captain Farms, numerous groups under competent leaders defended themselves against the enemy who popped up from every direction. Resistance squads especially, massed around the machine guns. In the meantime, the left flank of the 1st Battalion was also penetrated. While the major part of the 2d company, connecting with the 4th company, held their grounds, the 3d company gave way slowly and retreated to the railway embankment. The 1st company which launched a counter-attack immediately, was unable to reach the lost position. English forces dug in, in the east portion of the village and settled down in the large brick works, located thereat. Major Commichau, stationed in Saily-Raillencourt, advised the headquarters of the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade, that he believed that the participation of his detachment in this battle (Regimental Headquarters, 1st and 2d Battalions, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, and 3d Battalion, Field Artillery Regiment No. 273), would be of the greatest consequence for the situation as a whole, but that such participation of his forces

for the restoration of the situation, be left to him. Thus, the Brigade commander, after receiving the report, that the railway embankment to the northwest of Fontaine and to the north of the forest was still being held by German forces, ordered at 9:25 a.m., that the detachment of Major Commichau should fall in for a counter-attack toward the southwest with its left flank against the west edge of Fontaine. But when Brigade headquarters received information of the loss of the village of Fontaine and portions of the railway embankment, Major Commichau was quickly directed not to move the left flank of his regiment past and beyond Fontaine, but to launch the attack on the village proper.

To replace this, counter-attack group, placed at the disposal of the 3d Guard Infantry Division, the Group command sought to assemble immediately the remainder of the 221st Infantry Division, located in the villages to the west of Iwuy. The reports of the advance of the enemy out of the Bourlon Forest and from Fontaine sounded more and more threatening. Due to this, Major General von La Chevallerie ordered at 9:50 a.m., the march off of Infantry Regiment No. 41, and the Headquarters and the 1st and 2d Battalions, Field Artillery Regiment No. 273, to Sailly. Colonel Rodig, the commander of the 1st Depot Reserve Infantry Brigade, was to hold these forces in readiness as a group reserve, at that place.

(NOTE: The 3d Battalion Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, located in Tilloy, ready to march, did not receive orders from Regimental Headquarters to march to Sailly, until 2:15 p.m. Why this battalion was not placed on the march earlier could not be ascertained. Thus, for the time being, only a battalion of Infantry Regiment No. 41, was assigned as a reserve to the Commanding Officer, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60; this however did not participate. 1st Battalion Field Artillery Regiment No. 273, took up observation positions in the park of Sancourt, while the 2d Battalion was placed on the evening under the orders of the Guard Artillery Commander No. 3. The two Pioneer companies of the 221st Division were assigned to the 3d Guard Infantry Division for construction of defences, since the evening of November 26th. The 2d Company, Reserve Pioneer Regiment No. 22, assembled on November 27, at the command post of the Guard Fusilier Regiment and at 3:00 p.m. marched to Bourlon and together with the 1st Company, Pioneer Regiment No. 28, constructed tank-traps. 1st Company, Pioneer Regiment No. 25, was placed under the command of the Commanding Officer, Pioneer Company No. 274; both were assigned to the reserve of Grenadier Regiment No. 9; at first they marched at about 11:00 a.m., into the sunken road to the southwest of Sailly-Raillencourt to the north of the railway embankment).

But orders had been despatched to the 214th Infantry Division, by telephone, at about 10:00 a.m., to hold the counter-attack units located in Sains-lez-Marquion and Marquion and the main body of the division, located in Epinoy, Sancourt, Bantigny, Abancourt and Fressies, in readiness to participate in the battle.

The Commander of the 3d Guard Infantry Division knew from the first message received from the front, from Major von Delius, that the English attack was also directed against the Guard Fusilier Regiment. Major von Delius also continued to keep the superior commands informed of the latest events. Shortly after 10:00 a.m., the 6th Guard Infantry Brigade was advised, that the 4th and 2d Company, was still posted at the southeast edge of the village and that the railway embankment east of the railway station of Bourlon was occupied by the rest of the 1st Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment. In this same report, Major von Delius stated: "The 3d Battalion of the regiment holds its position at the front." Soon afterwards this was confirmed by a report of the 3d Battalion.

Before advancing its tanks, the English command had consolidated the fire of numerous batteries against Bourlon. "It was still twilight, it and especially the fog and rain obstructed the sight. In the sunken road at the upper part of the cape, (southwest of Bourlon) a hump was sighted which grew constantly higher. It was the first of the advancing hostile tanks. Soon others followed. These tanks moved down from the heights against the village of Bourlon." Thus read the report of Lieutenant Menden, who with a platoon of the 1st Battery, Field Artillery Regiment No. 44, took up a position about 300 metres to the west of Bourlon, to the south of the road leading to Sains-lez-Marquion. He assigned Vice-Sergeant Major Brockhaus to the command of the gun to the left. Even the first shots hit their targets. The officers of the anti-tank guns of the 7th Battery of the same regiment also recognized the tanks which were moving from the ridge to the west of the forest and placed them under fire. Excellent results were also obtained by a platoon of the 5th Battery, 5th Guard Field Artillery Regiment from the southwest part of the village. The German losses through the strong hostile artillery fire though were also heavy and men of the Guard Fusiliers had to assist the gunners in serving the guns.

The most of the tanks were downed before the front, through the excellent firing with the field guns. The 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, and the Fusiliers also greeted the tanks with rifle and gun fire, while the companies of the 1st Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 88, placed the tanks under a flanking fire. Only a few tanks moved over the front line.

(NOTE: The number of the tanks placed out of action cannot be given correctly on account of the many contradictions. The accounts of the number of tanks which went into action in this sector also were reported differently. The 3d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment reported "about ten tanks.")

Guard Fusiliers of the 10th company as well as of the 4th company climbed on the tanks and tried in vain to put them out of action with hand grenades. Anti-tank guns which were forced to stop firing so as not to endanger its own German troops, had to open fire again at certain places. Road blockades also stopped the forward movement of the tanks. Two tanks were put out of action by two noncommissioned officers of the 9th company with tamped charges. Thus, the foremost line in this sector did not withdraw and now caused considerable losses to the assault detachments of the English 62nd Division, which attacked in dense lines. According to an English description

the effect of the German barrage "was frightful." The English infantry was repulsed and retired. Weak English forces only entered the village through the gaps made by the tanks. A sergeant major of the 2d Battalion, 5th York and Lancaster Regiment of the 187th Brigade, who participated in this fight and who later during the attack battle was made a prisoner stated during his examination: "Our men got into a real infernal fire, machine gun fire from every direction and hand grenades from the windows. The worst of it was that not a single German could be seen. A house from which we were fired upon, was taken by assault several times but always found empty." The Guard Fusiliers and the machine guns of the marksman detachment No. 12, took heavy tolls from the enemy. Counter attacks, including the one made by the 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, drove the scanty remnants back. (The casualties of the 2d Battalion Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, on November 27th, were 24 killed and 39 wounded). "Soon a sinister rumor spread through the front, that ham, rum and other provisions were stored in the tanks. These, white bread, corned beef and other things were quickly seized after which they disappeared in the hungry stomachs of the Fusiliers. The fighting, which took place during a heavy rain, slackened at about 11:00 a.m. Places in the foremost line which had thinned in the fighting, were filled by the 12th company of the Guard Fusilier Regiment, by orders of Captain von Werthern.

At 11:40 a.m., another message was received by Major von Delius, that the 4th company had held its former position. He ordered a counter-attack of the 1st and 3d company, to cover the gap formed between the 2d company and the rest of the 2d Battalion in the sunken road. The attack succeeded, the brick-works at the east exit of Bourlon now remained the only place occupied by English forces. During this time, the enemy made no further attacks against German troops in the sunken road. Three tanks on the other hand ran back into the forest due to the rapid fire of these weak German forces. The 2d Battalion, Guard Fusilier Regiment reported at 10:15 a.m., that it believed that for the present, the English forces were satisfied in possessing the forest.

The hostile attack toward the west had not extended very much beyond the point where the 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, was located having junction with the Guard Fusilier Regiment. In front of the left Regimental sector of the neighboring division, weak attacks of the enemy were quickly repulsed. But the 21st Reserve Division was informed at about 10:00 a.m., that the enemy had entered the village of Bourlon with tanks. Thereupon it ordered its 41st Reserve Brigade to bring up reserves from Sains-les-Marquion and with them to protect the left flank. These measures though soon proved to be unnecessary.

The Artillery Groups of the 3d Guard Infantry Division, besides the Artillery Liaison Officer present by the battalions in the sector Bourlon village, also sent forward special officers patrols, hence the patrols were quickly advised of the successful defence of the village. The artillery liaison officers in the sector of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, also made every effort to send reports to the rear. But the English forces made no earnest attempts to enlarge the points of penetration to the north of the forest and at Fontaine. The forest of Bourlon lay under the concentrated fire of the German artillery. Lieutenant Schmitz of the 6th Battery, 5th Guard Field Artillery Regiment had reconnoitered a good observation post,

and he was able with his battery to lay fire on the English Machine Gun nests at the northeasterly forest point and afterwards also to fire his heavy batteries against these targets.

(NOTE: Headquarters of the 2d Battalion and 5th Battery, Guard Field Artillery Regiment served as the ammunition supply group; in its place a specially set up command and staff under Captain Grimm assumed the command of the artillery sub-group. Ammunition expenditure on November 27th, by the 2d Battalion was 3,360 shots; by the 1st Battalion, 3,919 shots. The 2d Battalion, Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment No. 16, engaged during the afternoon the Battery position by Graincourt. It was noticed that several English batteries tried to withdraw from the German fire through an artificial fog.)

An effective engagement against the hostile occupation of the border of the forest was of great importance for the German counter-attacks already under way.

Major Commichau advanced his two battalions of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, from their points of assembly to the south of Raillencourt, at 11:40 a.m. In the chapter "Fontaine-Notre-Dame, it was pointed out, that through this counter-attack as well as the measures in the sector of the 119th Infantry Division, the enemy firstly was thrown over the railway embankment and then driven out of Fontaine with heavy losses. The commander of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, issued orders, that all units in his sector, with the exception of the two Pioneer companies (Pioneer company No. 274 of the 3d Guard Infantry Division and the 1st Company, Reserve Pioneer Regiment No. 25 of the 21st Reserve Division), should participate in this attack movement. To the northwest of Fontaine, only a very small piece of ground could be recovered beyond the railway line toward the Bourlon forest. Here, in the foremost line, was located mainly the 1st Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, while on the right flank of this battalion, a portion of the 3d Battalion, Infantry Regiment No. 46, participated in the attack. The enemy rendered a stubborn resistance. Numerous machine guns were set up in the line by the enemy and its artillery answered the German counter-attacks with a heavy fire. Next, the 6th Guard Brigade ordered the commanders of all the sectors, that in the further attack, the line 1 km., southwest of Bourlon to south edge of the Bourlon forest must be reached.

But a general forward movement in the command zone of the 3d Guard Infantry Division, did not take place. On the other hand, with the exception of a weak thrust made by the English at 3:00 p.m., against the 2d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, which was quickly repulsed, the enemy made no efforts, to repeat the attack against the village of Bourlon, or retake Fontaine which it had just lost.

Attention has already been called to the severe intermixture of the German units at Fontaine and the difficulties in transmitting orders, these and the enemy's counter action prevented the further advance. The objective of the two battalions, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, as ordered, was only the re-gaining of Fontaine, which was accomplished.

Thus, the attack had actually halted before the instructions for its prosecution were received. So it came about that the enemy found time to strengthen its line. The German forces located to the northwest of Fontaine, were far too weak to undertake an attack through the difficult wooded terrain and there was besides no connection to the right. When it became known that there was still a gap between the position in the sunken road and the right flank of the 1st Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, the commanding officer of Grenadier Regiment No. 9, ordered Captain Paulisch to close this gap with the two Pioneer companies (No. 274, and 1st Company, Reserve Pioneers No. 24). Shortly before 4:00 p.m., the 3d Battalion, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, arrived in Saily-Railencourt. Major Cosmichau's intention was to launch this battalion at once against the northeast edge of the forest to give the attack a new impetus. He personally advised the Battalion Commander of the situation, but the march-off of the 3d Battalion was delayed considerably through the impediments in the issue and receipt of hand grenades in Saily. Intense darkness had set in when the companies of the battalion marched out of the assembly point on the road to the west of Railencourt. For this reason the attack was not executed.

The war diary of the 1st company, Pioneer Regiment No. 28, gives the following brief description of the general view of the village of Bourlon on the afternoon of November 27th. "The town looks terrible. All the houses are in ruins. Numerous dead English soldiers cover the ground. A few destroyed tanks also are lying about."

The enemy kept the village and the foremost lines of the Guard Fusilier Regiment under a lively harassing fire during the whole afternoon. As the attack ordered could in no wise be noticed in the neighboring sector, the battalions of the Guard Fusilier Regiment remained in their positions. However, the commander of the 1st Guard Fusilier Regiment, to ease the advance, asked his regimental commander for two companies of the 3d Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1. These companies were to clear the brick works at the east exit of the village, of the enemy. These two companies found the buildings of the brick works empty and returned with four English machine guns. Further to the right, the 4th company, Guard Fusilier Regiment, after preparatory machine gun fire, cleaned out an isolated position of the enemy close before its front and captured four prisoners and three machine guns.

(NOTE: The Guard Fusilier Regiment during the fighting for the village of Bourlon, from November 24th to 29th, accounted for the following losses:

1st Battalion - killed 23, wounded 111, missing 6.  
 2nd Battalion - killed 20, wounded 35, missing 40.  
 3rd Battalion - killed 28, wounded 86, missing 38.)

Orders for the new distribution of the front, issued by the 6th Guard Infantry Division, was published at 5:40 p.m. Colonel Count von der Schulenburg, remained in command of the right sector. Besides his own Guard Fusilier Regiment, he also had under his command, the 2d and 3d Battalions, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, the 10th and 12th Companies, Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 80, and the 1st Battalion of this regiment. (\*). The command zone of Major Cosmichau commenced at the east exit of Bourlon, who besides his own three battalions of Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, had attached to his command, the 1st Battalion, Depot Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 1, the 1st Company Reserve Pioneer Regiment No. 25, and Pioneer Company No. 274.

Those parts of the Instructional Infantry Regiment and of the 9th Grenadier Regiment No. 9, still located in the front or along the railway embankment, were ordered to withdraw and to assemble in Saily-Railencourt. The severe and bloody struggle for Bourlon came to an end on November 27th. During the last combat day of the "tank battle", the English had been successful in winning the whole of the forest, but their attack against the village on this day also was unavailing. The presence in the captured Bourlon forest though was soon to change into an infernal region for the English.

(\*) = The 80th Reserve Infantry Regiment was a part of the 21st Reserve Division.

### The Offensive Battle.

While the enemy on the forenoon of November 27th, again supported by numerous tanks, attacked against the village of Bourlon, and the attack through the Bourlon Forest and Montains-Notre-Dame, against the inner flank of Groups Arras and Gaudry, made more and more progress, so that it seemed as if this day would accomplish the endeavored penetration of the German front, an important conference took place at the headquarters of the 2d German Army. General Ludendorff with some officers of the operation section had arrived in Le Cateau. Present also were the commander-in-chief of the Army Group, Field-Marshal Crownprince Rupprecht of Bavaria and his chief of staff, Lieutenant General von Kuhl, as well as the chief of staff of the neighboring army group German Crownprince, Colonel Count von der Schulenburg. The conference was held to plan a German counterattack. "A swift and vigorous assumption of the offensive - the flashing sword of vengeance - is the most brilliant point in the defensive." (Glancovits).

In the former defensive battles on the west front, the German conduct, with exception of smaller counterattacks, always had limited itself to the defense and thus to the disadvantages incident thereto. Now for the first time, the enemy was to be attacked with strong forces by a defensive battle. The English wedge-shaped position almost enticed an outflanking counterattack. In his War Memories, General Ludendorff makes the following statement of the intended counterattack: "In theory, a decision of that kind is easy to make; but in practice, its execution was immensely difficult in the West. The assembling of the troops, their disposal for attack and the bringing up of large quantities of ammunition requires costly time. In the meantime, the defense itself consumes manpower."

The 2d Army Group had issued the following orders already on November 21. "The positions lost on yesterday will be retaken through counterattack. For this purpose the reinforcements, already brought up and those yet to be sent will so far as possible be launched outflankingly from the north and east and will be so moved up." Three days later, further detailed instructions were issued by the army. While all the available forces were yet employed for the interception and defense of the English attacks and the command gave its full attention to the defense, preparations were under way for a major offensive.

We have seen that November 21st was a very momentous day for the English Commander in Chief. The result of this day brought the knowledge to him that the comprehensive objectives planned could not be accomplished. Of course this fact could not be recognized on the German side. The Headquarters of the 2d Army even believed that it must reckon with a further continuation of hostile attacks, especially against the flanks of the point of penetration near Moenvres and Banteux and also perhaps farther to the south. It issued the following directive: "It must also be reckoned with, that sudden and strong attacks will be directed against other sectors of the army front. In particular the right army flank and the region of St. Quentin are concerned." The German command deemed a great operation of the enemy at St. Quentin as most

likely and took measures accordingly. The Commanding General of the 2d Army, General von der Marwitz, issued the following order on the evening of November 25th. "The increasing signs point to the fact that the expected attack against St. Quentin is near at hand. No doubt the attack will be accompanied by tanks and cavalry also seems to have been assembled." However neither English nor French troops undertook "something big" against the connecting fronts. Even the positively anticipated, earnest attempts of the enemy to capture the bridgeheads on the west bank of the Scholde did not take place. The English continued their attacks only against the inner flank of the groups Arras and Caudry, from Bourlon to Fontaine. These attacks gave the impression that the enemy designed to press the German front further back to the north and even to roll it up.

(Note: After recital of the events on November 27th, the English Commander in Chief indicated his further intentions: "As a result of five days of constant fighting, we held a strong position on the Bourlon hill and in the forest, but had not yet succeeded in gaining all the ground required for the security of this important feature. The two following days passed comparatively quietly, while the troops engaged were relieved and stops were undertaken to prepare for a deliberate attack which might give us the tactical points we sought." Apparently the enemy wished to undertake this deliberate attack only later or without tanks, for on November 28th Group Caudry observed from 12 to 4:30 p.m., 75 tanks moving in a southerly direction on the roads leading from Harcourt to Villers-Bouchard and Ribecourt to Deucamp. On the other hand, General Haig speaks in his report of an expected German attack at Bourlon and that he had taken defensive measures at that point - such as the relief of troops).

We also had to fear that the English command would bring up further reinforcements, to correct the error it had made at the beginning of the tank battle, in not having a sufficient reserve in readiness. For this reason quick action through counterattack was an urgent necessity. Hence, not through a planned increase of the forces, but through a surprise attack and the quick utilization of the tactical situation, was the success of the German attack to be attained. The time for the surprise attack was to be especially safeguarded through the renunciation of the customary registration of the artillery. The German Groups charged with the execution of the attack - Group Arras (Lieut. General von Moser), Group Caudry (General von Watter), and Busigny (General von Kather), were allowed only a few days to perform the necessary preparations.

(Note: The code names adopted for these attacks were for Group Arras "Elet", for Caudry "Gottterdammerung", for Busigny "Winter").

Due to the continuation of the battle in Flanders, the 2d German Army was equipped only with the necessities. Now though this sector became the center of the attack on the west front, which in a short period had, besides the means for the defense, also to be supplied with the means for the attack. Thanks to the splendid performances of the Railway authorities and troops, divisions, light and heavy batteries, guns, ammunition and subsistence supplies, were being transported since

November 30, without much friction.

(Note: "In a letter of December 4, the Commanding General of the Army Group transmitted his thanks to the Chief of the Railway Service. Field Marshal von Hindenburg on December 3, called special attention to the distinguished services rendered. The representative General Staff Officer of the Railway Service on duty at the Army Group was Captain Kuhne and Major Foelpe was the Commandant of the Military Railway Directorate No. 1. During the period from November 20 to 29, 13 Infantry Divisions and over 600 single formations (inclusive of those assembled for the attack on November 30) were transported to the 2d Army, 750 trains in 9 days. In addition transports were furnished for the increased supply and equipment requirements and for the supply and transfers within the army zone).

The commander of the army issued orders on November 29th, for the approaching combats and gave the following directives: "The attack will be launched as far as possible in a westerly direction, from the two inner flanks of Groups Caudry and Busigny by the 28th and 34th Infantry Divisions which must cohere closely. The flanks of this attack will be secured, also through attack, in the south by the 208th and 195d Infantry Divisions of the Group Busigny, in the north by the 280th and 30th Divisions of Group Caudry while the 9th Reserve Division will follow. After these attacks become effective, a strong group will launch an attack from the north out of Group Arras toward the south in the direction of Havraincourt - Flesquières. The enemy is to be cut off and annihilated in this manner." (185th Inf. Division and 9th Bavarian Reserve Division served as Army Group Reserves).

(Note: G.H.Q. ordered on the evening of November 27th, "that the attack of Group Arras be launched "well timed after the main attack of the East Group becomes effective." It was also added, "so far as the attack after the development of the situation is at all possible." This restriction was due to the fact that the main forces of the Group had just undergone several days of heavy defensive combats.)

The Group (Corps) and Division Commanders were instructed at the same time, to verbally transmit to the lower commands, the general outlines of the range of the ideas of the Army Commander. The main attack from the east aimed to be carried in a general direction of Mets-en-Couture. It was of decisive importance for Group Caudry to capture the hilly terrain near Deuucamp and Froccault. This was the attack objective of the 9th Reserve Division, which was to be put into the line between the 30th and 280th Infantry Division. The 30th Infantry Division was to advance via Ribecourt. Group Busigny was, as far as practicable, to advance around the villages of Councilica and Villers - Guislain and with strong forces to attempt a penetration between Gouzeaucourt and Villers-Guislain in direction of Fins. A union with the troops advancing to the south of Honnecourt was to be found to the west of Villers-Guislain. For

the security of the southern flank, the heights to the northeast of Ephy had to be taken possession of. The attack of Group Arras had then to follow to the west of the Bourlon forest. The intention was to advance the 49th Reserve Division and the 314th and 221th Infantry Division beyond the position (line) of the 21st Reserve Division, which in turn, after the capture of the old German trenches at Moeuvres and according to the extent of the progress of the attack of the 49th Reserve Division, was to follow and occupy the original first German line, as far as the road leading from Cambrai to Bapaume. The mission of the 5d Guard Infantry Division was to isolate the Bourlon front and to prevent the English from breaking out from the wooded zone. The 119th Infantry Division (Group Arras) and the 107th Infantry Division (Group Gaudry) adjoining about as far as Fumilly, were assigned a limited attack objective. This consisted first of all, in preventing, with artillery and with quickly brought up infantry, the English forces to timely withdraw to the rear or in turning with certain units against the neighboring troops. Special measures were taken to deceive the enemy, so for instance the 20th Infantry Division and the 5th Guard Infantry Division, posted to the south of the 185d Infantry Division and west of Le Cotelet and Bellicourt, were to divert the enemy's attention through enterprises.

The attack-infantry and the major portion of the attack-artillery were ready early on November 30th. The arrival of all the columns and ammunition as well as many special formations could not be awaited.

As a prelude of the attack, the Bourlon forest was heavily gassed commencing with the afternoon of November 29th. A short but powerful artillery fire introduced the offensive battle at 7:30 a.m. on November 30th. Trench mortars joined in at 8:40 a.m. while the assault lines of the Infantry advanced from the east at 8:50 a.m.

It has been alleged that the increased movements in rear of the German front were recognized by the English command during the last November days, but that nothing was done to interfere with the German preparations. General Haig's dispatches contain the following: "The massing of the enemy's infantry, however, his obvious anxiety concerning the security of his defenses south of the Senece River, the tactical importance of the high ground about Bourlon, and the fact that we were still only in partial possession of it, all pointed to the principal attack being delivered in the Bourlon sector."

(Note: In another place of General Haig's Despatches, a statement appears, "that the main attack of the Germans was launched in the northern area.")

The English command, after November 27th, had relieved its troops by fresh divisions and General Haig says "that he felt confident that the defense of this sector could be considered as secure.

(Note: "On November 30", the following English troops were located in the line from south of Inchy to south-west of Homécourt, 26<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup> Divisions. (Bourlon-forest), 59<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> Divisions. (Southwest of Grévoceour), 12<sup>th</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup> Divisions. Of reserves available were: Guard Division (forest of Harrincourt), 2d Cavalry Division, (Fins), which were posted in the region of Gouzeaucourt. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Divisions (Athies and Monchy-Lagache), arrived during the early afternoon in the vicinity of Epéhy and were thrown at once into the fight. The 62<sup>nd</sup> Division was placed in readiness to the southwest of Moeuvres. In addition it seems that the 51<sup>st</sup> Division was also brought up again from Barastre, to reinforce the front on the National Road. The fresh 61<sup>st</sup> Division was located to the southeast of Bapaume, it was employed later to the northeast of Villers-Plouich. The 1st Cavalry Division located in Péronne, relieved during the night from December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, the disposed Brigades of the 4th and 5th Cavalry Division, to the northeast of Epéhy. The tanks of the 2d Brigade were ready to be entrained in railway cars close to the east of Fins, on December 30<sup>th</sup>. 22 tanks of Battalion B, left shortly before 2 pm., and soon afterwards 14 tanks of Battalion A, left the tank station, with the mission to attack Gouzeaucourt. 20 tanks of Battalion H, left the station at about 3 pm., to support the Guard Division. Tanks of the 1st Tank Brigade were also employed by the Guard Division on December 1st.

In the south of the battlefield, the German attack was a complete surprise to the enemy, notwithstanding that this fact is strongly denied in English reports.

The English Infantry kept down in the trenches by a heavy artillery and trench mortar fire, was over-run. The German attack troops worked their way quickly to the west. Group Arras which was to begin the attack only at 11:50 am, struck against a foe whose attention had been attracted by the German attack from the east. Despite the most impetuous pressure, it was unable to gain the road Cambria to Bapaume. The enemy made a stubborn resistance and during the next day changed to strong counter attacks and stubborn fighting took place. Cavalry was thrown by the English into the front line and tanks were also brought up.

(Note: The French Commander in Chief, placed French troops within reach of employment in case of need, at the unrestrained disposal of the English 3d Army Commander, and according to General Haig, part of the artillery of this force actually came into action.)

The right flank of the English position, still projecting toward Bourlon, was critically menaced by the successful thrust of the German East Group. Apparently the English Commander did not think during the following combat days, that there was a possibility to liberate his flank from this situation through an attack toward the front. During the night from December 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, the enemy withdrew from the "infernal regions" of the Bourlon forest. A terrain 10 km. long and 4 km. in depth was recaptured by December 6th, and the German front, now running from the southwest of Moeuvres and passing to the north and east of Flesquies and then beyond la Vacquerie, Gouvelier,

Villers-Guislain to Vendhuile, was considerably shortened. Thus, a part of the terrain lost during the tank battle, was retaken from the enemy, while in the south even new terrain was attained. The English victory, which fourteen days ago, was acclaimed with great rejoicing, both on the English Isle and by the confederated powers, had changed to the contrary. The bells of the St. Paul Cathedral in London had tolled too soon. Of course the result, did not fully fulfill the German anticipation, the pincers from the north and east could not be closed. That the result of the "offensive battle at Cambrai" was not larger, that the penetration in the south of the main field did not lead to a rolling up of the enemy's lines to the north, must be assigned, besides the unpreparedness for the final hurried preparations, to the insufficient strength of the attack troops and the inadequate organization of the supply system. The assault power of the divisions was quickly consumed because nearly all the divisions had previously endured great exertions, besides which, they were not trained for an attack. The absence of a second attack line lamed the operation before the final objective was attained.

The booty of the fighting since November 20<sup>th</sup>, amounted to more than 9000 prisoners of which 203 officers, 148 guns, 716 machine guns and over 100 tanks. Against these, the English commander in chief stated, that by the end of November, the number of the German prisoners taken, exceeded 10,500, and that 142 guns and 350 machine guns were captured.

(Note: The English losses (partly, according to information contained in the Historical Section, Committee of Imperial Defence):

3d Corps - From noon, November 19 to noon, November 29<sup>th</sup>:

Officers - killed 65, wounded 202, missing 6.

Other grades - killed 650, wounded 5687, missing 825.

4th Corps - From November 20<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>:

Officers - 636. Other grades 15,625 (Details not given).

Cavalry - From November 20<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>:

Officers - killed 11, wounded 25, missing 1.

Other grades - killed 84, wounded 495, missing 97.

Tank Corps - on November 20<sup>th</sup>:

Officers - killed 25, wounded 91, missing 4.

Other grades - killed 65, wounded 432, missing 55.

2d Tank Brigade - (Battalions A, B and H) from November 20<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup>:

Officers - killed 11, wounded 43, missing 9.

Other grades - killed 24, wounded 280, missing 56.

None of the penetration attempts, no matter how great the array of men and material employed at the different places on the West-front in 1917, brought the success desired by the Entente. In no case was the objective sought for attained. The French General Palat has designated the year of 1917 as the "Apprehensive Year", this also with regard to the moral crisis in France after the wrecked April-Offensive, the collapse of Russia and the severe defeat of the Italians. The wild, with brutal force conducted assaults of the English and French, were shattered in the face of the defensive tenacity of the German troops. The hope of the English command, to finish the ill-fated year with a mighty blow, after the months-long, heavy in losses and leading to no result, Flanders

battle, was not realized. As during the middle of December, in the "Bend of Cambrai" as well as on the entire Westfront, the great battle-tumult grew silent, and for us also, the hard and difficult defensive year began to wane, the German command and troops, had the proud consciousness, that the year had ended with an offensive battle. For the first time since Verdun (1916), a German offensive battle in France could be recorded. The impression which this event produced on the Westfront, has been described by Field marshal von Hindenburg in his memories with the following words: "The first considerable attack on our side in the West since the conduct of operations was entrusted to me, had come to a victorious conclusion. Its effect on me personally was as strong and invigorating as on our troops and their leaders. I felt it as a release from a burden which our defensive strategy on the western front had placed on my shoulders."

The fighting about Cambrai, from November 20<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> have been consolidated under one name, to indicate the arm which have the fighting a special character - "The Tank Battle."

The designation "Tank", was originally a code name, and had now been adopted instead of the old name Kampfwagen (combat car). Its origination grew out of the effort to surmount the enemy's trenches and obstacles under armored protection, during the trench warfare and to open the way to the infantry which followed. The first time that the Germans became acquainted with these machines was at the Somme on Sept. 15, 1916, at Flers south of Bapaume. Of 40 English Tanks, 52 actually got to our lines. From this day on, tanks - sometimes English and sometimes French, participated in all the major attacks of the Entente, thus also on April 9, 1917, at Arras and a few days later near Furincourt. The service rendered by the tanks during the Flanders battle was not conspicuous, due mainly to the slimy subsoil. Tanks were also employed during the attack of the French against the Laffaux-angle. Their numbers increased from one attack to another.

After the Somme Battle, the commanding general of the 1st Army, made the following report: "With the further improvement in the construction, the tanks will without doubt become a very noticeable fighting instrument. I recommend that attempts be made to construct such tanks." The tank was a machine, which increased the force of the attack. But not only this, it saved human life. "In case of the hostile infantry, the strength of the men had been greatly increased by their war machine; we, on the other hand, had still to rely chiefly on our men." (Ludendorff).

It is not the wish here to go into details in regard to the question, whether or not the failure to equip the German combat troops with tanks was not a serious omission. It is sufficient to cite here the following opinion expressed by General von Kuhl (during the investigation of the committee appointed by the German Reichstag): All in all it can be stated, that the importance of the tanks was not sufficiently recognised by the German G.H.Q., as it should have been. The experiences gained later proved this fact. When finally we began the construction of tanks, the

work was not so practically organized nor so speedily carried out, that a greater number of tanks should have been available in 1918. The German industry was able to accomplish the construction. On the other hand, the great difficulties in supplying the necessary material and labor must not be under-estimated. As a whole, a more timely recognition of the needs of tanks, together with a firm will, would have accomplished more, even though the lead of the enemy in this direction could in no-wise have been overtaken. Yet, front-servicable tanks could hardly been made available by us, before 1918."

In order to estimate the importance of the "Tank Battle around Cambrai", in its full extent, it is necessary to reach beyond the events during the fall of 1917, and to consider it in connection with the further process of the whole war.

Contemplated purely from a superficial standpoint, there can be no doubt that neither the general war situation nor the one on the West Front, were changed through this battle in any particular way. The tactical fronts were brought back almost to the relative positions heretofore occupied by the fighting parties through the German counter attack. Yet the phenomenon of this struggle during the late fall of 1917, was extremely momentous for the continuation of the war.

Once more let us consider the changing peculiarities of this battle, to clearly see the new problems, the solution of which faced the German command and troops.

Amplifying the former use of the present tank, by Cambrai it concerned the enemy's mass employment of this combat arm. The attacker succeeded in assembling these masses opposite the appointed penetration front, fully unknown to the defenders, and in launching these tanks surprisingly in the decision. The secret was maintained until the moment of the actual advance. A lengthy artillery preparation for the attack was unnecessary. Through a short and blow-like burst of fire, the observation of the defenders was reduced from time to time and his line befogged. These modern combat cars showed their technical and tactical advantages best, during the advance. Flay-like the tanks rolled down the former customary and almost undamaged obstacles and not only forced a way for themselves, but also for the following assault infantry with a thoroughness, hardly ever accomplished heretofore by the strongest artillery preparation. Not only did the tanks create an open road for their attack lines and columns, but they also imparted a great moral strength. They formed the centralization points of the fighting and an effective tactical support. The tanks opened the front fighting line of the defense in numerous places and separated the formations of the defender, partly even of their smallest units; they destroyed the connections to the rear and stopped the reserves which were coming up. Only where combat experienced and heroic leaders were able to collect determined men around them a complete break down of the resistance was averted after the first surprise. Then though, the brave tenacity would soon bleed to death from the

action of the fire-sputtering steel walls when the improvised destructive means failed to down these new assault machines, or if the latter could not be smashed by the shells of advanced field guns.

Of course, some of the commands recognized that the fire from the moving tanks was more of an imaginary than a real danger, but this moral emotion of the assailed also was accompanied by an injurious force, when the tanks coming to a halt, cleared whole trench sections, or, at least held down the defensive forces in the trenches, with their guns and machine guns. For the first time the attacker had been able to establish a firm system in the cooperation between the tanks and the infantry which followed the first. Due to the recent origin of the practical use of the tanks, serious derangements were bound to happen and here and there they might even fail entirely, yet there could be no doubt but that the system installed, would make further productive developments in the mode of attacks. One may, for "moral reason", have misgivings of such a "mechanisation" of the attack, but the fact cannot be denied, that its material advantages were significant.

But by no means was the action of the tank-masses so ideal as the enemy had fancied. It almost requires an incomprehensible optimism of the English leadership, which after all was endowed with abundant experiences, when it indulged in the hope that it could so thoroughly crush the German resistance, that English cavalry formations could advance over the battlefield and beyond into the rear of the defense. This idea was thoroughly refuted by the German troops. Although badly shot up and broken down the German divisions arriving from the Flanders battle still maintained a sufficient fighting power - and what was most decisive - a sufficient fighting will, to defeat such calculations of the enemy.

At all places where the cooperation between the tanks and the following infantry did not succeed, or where this cooperation was torn apart by the German troops, the success of the tanks was limited to short periods. Once isolated, the tanks were downed unless they were able to retreat. The destruction of tanks effected the enemy just as much, as it did our own infantry which frequently perhaps placed too great a confidence on the invulnerableness of the new machines and believed in their trustworthy performance. To this must be added, that the witnessing of the destruction of a tank caused a gloomy horror, because the occupants as a rule suffered a horrible death by being consumed by fire.

The German troops at Cambrai also justified the proud confidence of their commanders. But did not this very fact serve to conceal the dangers which lay in the correct employment of the new combat means? Had the German command a clear idea of the fact, that in November 1917, it barely escaped a catastrophe which threatened to befall the Germans with an uncanny swiftness? Even if a system had been adopted in the tanks defense, should we not at the same time have taken into account, that the enemy might recognize its mistakes at Cambrai and work to improve their method, and conjointly make use of a combat means on a much greater scale, a means which seemed actually ideal for

the winning of one of the most valuable combat elements, namely, the surprise? Through this though, the passive defense burden was increased to such a degree that finally the German troops also were overburdened. What, during the past, had the defender not to bear patiently? Now the enemy came along with his infernal iron cars! With what means could this new danger be obviated.

The minds were of different opinion on this subject. Naturally so - because the judgment of the tactical value of the tanks was divergent. Despite warning voices which opined that the troops, with the natural decline of their fighting value, would grow more and more apprehensible against new technical attack means and that new counter means were urgently needed, other minds were of the firm opinion that the further mechanisation of the fighting would not increase the physical value of the troops, but would act depressingly. We believed that the accuracy of these opinions could be gained from individual manifestations of the English, during the tank battle by Cambrai. We considered that the training of the divisions in the tank defense, especially with light artillery, would result in a sufficient security and hoped for a diminishment in the moral effect which the tanks bestowed on our troops, if the latter were schooled in the conviction that the "tank fight" was more of a bugbear than a real force.

Was this really so? The question could not be solved theoretically without objections. An answer free of doubts, could only be attained from the rude reality of further battles.

As a matter of fact, such a battle was soon to present itself.

It has been asserted, that the German counter-attack by Cambrai, because it was successful, added essentially to the fact, that manifestations full of significance during this battle, was not appraised from every standpoint. If this assertion is correct, then a deep tragic is linked with the attack battle, which while not fully accomplished, on the surface was brilliant.

ORDER OF BATTLE

German Forces

Each Infantry Regiment averaged 36 machine guns,  
38 light machine guns  
12 light trench mortars  
24 "stick" bomb-throwers  
(The 107th Infantry Division, upon arrival from the East  
front received only light machine guns.

Each Trench Mortar Company had 4 heavy and 8 medium trench  
mortars.

Order of Battle

Army Group Crownprince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

Commander: Field Marshall Crownprince Rupprecht of Bavaria.  
Chief of Staff: Lieutenant General von Kuhl.

2nd German Army.

Commander: General of Cavalry von der Marwitz.  
Chief of Staff: Major Stapff.  
a. Engaged on the front on November 20, 1917.  
Group Arras. (14<sup>th</sup> Reserve Corps).  
Commander: Lieutenant General von Moser.  
Chief of Staff: Major von Miaskowski.  
Telephone Section No. 714.

111<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Major General von Busse.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain von Wedel.  
221<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade - Fusilier Regiment 73, Infantry  
Regiments 76 and 164.  
Headquarters and 4th Troop, Dragon Regiment No. 22.  
Artillery Command No. 111 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 94.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battln. No. 111 - Pioneer Companies 221  
and 262 - Trench Mortar Company No. 111.  
Telephone Section 111.  
Medical Company 111, Field Hospitals 370 and 371.  
Motorized Column 596.  
Veterinary Hospital 111.

240 Infantry Division.

Commander: Lieutenant General Müller.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain Count of Dohna - Schlobitten.  
240<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments Nos. 469, 470, 471.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Troop, Dragon Regiment No. 13.  
Artillery Command No. 240 - Field Artillery, Regiment No. 271.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battln. No. 240 - Pioneer Companies 371  
and 372.  
Trench Mortar Company No. 440.  
Telephone Section 240.  
Medical Company 252, Field Hospitals 204 and 205.  
Motorized Column 650.  
Veterinary Hospital 240. ✓

20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Lieutenant General Wellmann.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain von Beneckendorff and von

Hindenberg.

40th Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments Nos. 77, 79 and 92.  
Headquarters and 5<sup>th</sup> Troop, Hussar Regiment No. 17.  
Artillery Command No. 20 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 46.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 10 - 2d and 3d Companies  
Pioneer Regiment No. 10, Trench Mortar Company No. 20.  
Searchlight Platoon No. 296.  
Telephone Section No. 20.  
Medical Company 24, Field Hospitals 93 and 100.  
Motorized Columns 553.  
Veterinary Hospital 20.

Group Gaudry (13<sup>th</sup> Württemberg Army Corps).

Commander: General Of Infantry, Baron von Watter.  
Chief of Staff: Major Müller - Lqebnitz.  
Telephone Section 613 (Württemberg)

20<sup>th</sup> Landwehr Division.

Commander: Lieutenant General Baron von Hanstein.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain von Kleinschmidt.  
9th Ersitz (Depot) Brigade - Landwehr Infantry Regiments  
384, 386, 387.  
3d Troop, Hussar Regiment No. 4.  
Field Artillery Regiment No. 282.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 420 - Depot Pioneer Com-  
pany 24.  
Landwehr Pioneer Company 9th Army Corps, Trench Mortar Com-  
pany No. 320.  
Telephone Section No. 520 with Lamp Signalling Section.  
Medical Company 227, Field Hospitals 88 and 183.  
Motorized Column 789.  
Veterinary Hospital 520.

54<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Lieutenant General Baron von Watter.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain Gadeke.  
108<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiment 84, Reserve In-  
fantry Regiments 27, 90.  
1st Troop Hussar Regiment No. 17.  
Artillery Command No. 55 - Field Artillery Regiment 108.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 138 - Pioneer Companies  
107, 108.  
Trench Mortar Company 54.  
Searchlight Platoon No. 107.  
Telephone Section No. 54.  
Medical Company 54, Field Hospitals 345, 348.  
Motorized Column 578.  
Veterinary Hospital 54.

9th Reserve Division.

Commander: Lieutenant General Hildemann.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Baron von Wangelheim.

13<sup>th</sup> Reserve Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiment 395, Reserve Infantry Regiments 6 and 19.

5<sup>th</sup> Troop, Dragon Regiment No. 3.

Artillery Command No. 97 - Reserve Field Artillery Regiment No. 9.

Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 309 - 4th Company Pioneer Regiment 5, 1st Company, Reserve Pioneer Regiment No. 18, Trench Mortar Company No. 209.

Searchlight Platoon No. 331.

Telephone Section 409.

Medical Company 519, Reserve Field Hospitals 13 and 25.

Motorized Column 409.

Veterinary Hospital 409.

185d Infantry Division.

Commander: Lieutenant General von Schüssler.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Gintzel.

53d Reserve Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments 184 and 418.

Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 440.

4<sup>th</sup> Troop, Hussar Regiment No. 10.

Artillery Command No. 183 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 183.

Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 183 - 1st Company Reserve Pioneer Regiment 20, 3<sup>rd</sup> Company Reserve Pioneer Regiment 16, Trench Mortar Company No. 401.

Searchlight Platoon No. 183.

Telephone Section, (Saxon) No. 183.

Medical Company 575, Field Hospitals 42 and 344.

Motorized Column 603.

Veterinary Hospital 228.

b. Reinforcements which during the Tank-battle were employed on the front.

Group Lewarde (18th Army Corps). Assumed command of the sector of the 111<sup>th</sup> and 240<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at 10 a.m., November 24<sup>th</sup>.

Commander: Lieutenant General Albrecht.

Chief of Staff: Major Schmiewindt.

Telephone Section No. 618.

Group Busieny (23d Army Corps). Assumed command at 8 p.m., November 25<sup>th</sup>.

Commander: General of Infantry von Rathen.

Chief of Staff: Colonel von Eschischwitz.

Telephone Section No. 723.

107<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Major General Havenstein.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Glodre.

213<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Reserve Infantry Regiments Nos. 52, 227 and 232.

5<sup>th</sup> Troop Lancer Regiment No. 1.

Artillery Command No. 157 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 213.

Headquarters Battalion No. 107 - 4th Pioneer Company, Regiment No. 21. 213<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Company, Trench Mortar Company No. 107.

Searchlight Platoon No. 213.

Telephone Section No. 107.

Medical Company No. 107, Field Hospital No. 366 and Reserve Field Hospital No. 97.

Motorized Column No. 593.

Veterinary Hospital No. 166.

214<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Major General von Brauchitsch.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Perluhn.

214<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments 50, 358 and 363.

3<sup>rd</sup> Troop, Heavy Cavalry Regiment No. 1 (Bavarian).

Artillery Command No. 214 - Pioneer Company No. 641, 2nd Company, Pioneer Regiment No. 23, Trench Mortar Company 424.

Telephone Section 214.

Medical Company No. 224, Field Hospitals 25 and 274.

Motorized Column No. 624.

Veterinary Hospital No. 514.

30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Major General Baron von der Wenge Count von Lambsdorff.

1st General Staff Officer: Major von Bulow.

60<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments 99 and 143 and Saxon Infantry Regiment No. 105.

2d Troop, Reserve Hussar Regiment No. 8.

Artillery Command No. 30 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 84.

Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 15 - 1st and 5th Company Pioneer Regiment No. 15, Trench Mortar Company No. 30.

Telephones Section No. 30.

Medical Company No. 39, Field Hospitals 275 and 276.

Motorized Column 563.

Veterinary Hospital 30.

119<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Commander: Major General Berger.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain von Reicheman.

237<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments No. 46 and 58 and Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 46.

221st Infantry Division.

Commander: Major General von La Chevalleri.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Osswald.

1st Reserve Depot Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiment No. 41,  
Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 60, Reserve Depot Infantry Regiment No. 1.

1st Troop, Reserve Lancer Regiment No. 2.

Artillery Command No. 221 - 2d Company, Pioneer Regiment No.  
21, 1st Company, Reserve Pioneer Regiment No. 25, Trench Mortar Company No.  
451.

Telephone Section No. 221.

Medical Company No. 223, Field Hospitals 161 and 163.

Motorized Column 631.

Veterinary Hospital 321.

23th Infantry Division. (The assembly of this division began during  
the night of November 24/25<sup>th</sup>, to the north  
of Santeux. The command of the sector was  
assumed at 9 a.m., on November 28.

Commander: Major General Langer.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Schmidt.

55<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Fusilier Regiment No. 40, Body Grenadier  
Regiment No. 109, Grenadier Regiment No. 110.

2d Troop, Horse Jäger Regiment No. 5.  
Artillery Command No. 28 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 14.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 14 - 2d and 3d Companies,  
Pioneer Regiment No. 14, Trench Mortar Company 28.  
Searchlight Platoon 297.  
Telephone Section 28.  
Medical Company No. 35, Field Hospitals Nos. 261, 262.  
Motorized Column 561.  
Veterinary Hospital 28.

34th Infantry Division. (This division went into the sector Banterre-Assus during the night of November 23/24).

Commander: Major General Teetsmann.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain Schroth.  
68th Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments 50, 67 and 145.  
5th Troop Horse Jäger Regiment No. 12.  
Artillery Command No. 34 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 70.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 132 - 2d and 3d Companies,  
Pioneer Regiment No. 16, Trench Mortar Company No. 34.  
Telephone Section No. 34.  
Medical Company No. 41, Field Hospitals 281 and 283.  
Motorized Column No. 567.  
Veterinary Hospital No. 34.

220th Infantry Division. (It began to arrive south of Crevecœur, in the night from November 23/24. The command of the sector was assumed on November 23.).

Commander: Major General von Bassewitz.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain Lindemann.  
4th Guard Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiment 190, Reserve Infantry Regiments 55 and 99.  
4th Troop Lancer Regiment No. 14.  
Artillery Command No. 220 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 51.  
Headquarters Pioneer Battalion No. 220 - 2d Company, Reserve Guard Pioneer Regiment, Reserve Pioneer Company No. 88, Trench Mortar Company No. 417.  
Telephone Section No. 220.  
Medical Company No. 40, Field Hospitals, Reserve 55 and 74.  
Motorized Column No. 630.  
Veterinary Hospital No. 276.

5th Guard Infantry Division. (It began to arrive in the sector Le Catelet-Bellicourt, in the night from November 23/24).

Commander: Major General von der Osten.  
1st General Staff Officer: Captain Bräuer.  
2d Guard Infantry Brigade & 3d Guard Foot Regiment, Guard Grenadier Regiment No. 5, Infantry Regiment No. 20.  
1st Troop, 2d Guard Lancer Regiment.

Guard Artillery Command No. 5 - 4th Guard Field Artillery Regiment.

Headquarters, 1st Battalion Pioneer Regiment No. 51 - 1st and 2d Companies, Pioneer Regiment No. 51, 9th Guard Trench Mortar Company.

Guard Telephone Section No. 5.

Medical Company No. 5, Field Hospitals, Reserve 8 and 9.

Motorized Column No. 520.

Veterinary Hospital, Guard No. 5.

208<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. (1/3 of this division was employed by Honnecourt, on November 27<sup>th</sup>).

Commander: Major General von Graddeck.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Groth.

185<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade - Infantry Regiments Nos. 25 and 185 and Reserve Infantry Regiment No. 65.

1st Troop, Reserve Dragon Regiment No. 6.

Artillery Command No. 208 - Field Artillery Regiment No. 267.

Headquarters, Pioneer Battalion No. 208 - Pioneer Companies 252 and 338, Trench Mortar Company No. 18.

Telephone Section No. 208.

Medical Company No. 115, Field Hospitals Nos. 78 and 300.

Motorized Column No. 318.

Veterinary Hospital No. 308.

49<sup>th</sup> Reserve Division. (Parts of the division were employed in the sector of the 340 Infantry Division, on the evening of November 25<sup>th</sup>).

Commander: Lieutenant General von Unger.

1st General Staff Officer: Captain Count von Galen.

97<sup>th</sup> Reserve Infantry Brigade - Reserve Infantry Regiments 225, 226 and 228.

2d Troop, Guard Dragon Regiment No. 2.

Artillery Command No. 49 - Reserve Field Artillery Regiment No. 49.

Headquarters, Pioneer Battalion No. 349 - Reserve Pioneer Company 49 and 2d Company Landwehr Pioneers, 4th Army Corps, Trench Mortar Company No. 349.

Telephone Section No. 449.

Medical Company No 531, Field Hospitals, Reserve Nos. 85 and 85.

Motorized Column No. 736.

Veterinary Hospital No. 155.

ARMY TROOPS  
As of date November 25"

<u>Troops, etc.</u>	<u>Group</u> <u>Lewarde</u>	<u>Group</u> <u>Arras</u>	<u>Group</u> <u>Caudry</u>	<u>Group</u> <u>Buisery</u>
<u>Machare (Gun-Rifle-</u> <u>men Sections.</u>		2d, 12th, 50th	15th, 51st	
<u>Field Artillery (4</u> <u>guns to each btry)</u>	1st Bn. Bava- rian Fd Arty Rgt No. 11	2d & 3d Bns. Bavarian Fd Arty Rgt No.11 Fd Arty Rgts Nos. 63 & 107	Fd Arty Rgts Nos. 61 & 65	Fd Arty Rgt No.289. 2d Bn Fd Arty Rgt No. 502
<u>Foot (Heavy) Artil-</u> <u>lery</u> <sup>co</sup> Chiefs of Artillery with staff		Bavarian Arty Commander No.15	Arty Com- mander No. 10	Arty Commander No. 11
Headquarters of Regi- ments(Heavy Arty)	Reserve No.2	No.14 & Reserve No.12	Reserve No. 10	Reserve No.20
Headquarters of Bat- talions(Heavy Arty)		Bavarian Re- serve No. 6 3d Bn., 12 <sup>th</sup> Rgt 2d Bn., each of Rgts 16, 36, 58, 60	1st Bn. 2d Rgt 2d Bn. 3d Rgt., 1st Bn., Reserve Rgt No.4 of No. 5 <sup>th</sup> Bavarian Bn. 3d Bn. each of Rgts 20, 63, 101 of Bavarian Bn No.20	3d Bn Bavarian Reserve Rgt. No 1. 1st Bn. Rgt No.3. 5th Bn Reserve Rgt. No.7. 2d Bn. Rgt No.11. 3d Bn Reserve Rgt No.12. 2d Bn each of Re- serve Rgts. Nos 19 and 50.
10 cm Batteries (4 guns each <sup>o</sup> )	5 <sup>th</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Btry, Landwehr No.34	3 <sup>rd</sup> Btry, Bava- rian Reserve Rgt No.6. 1 <sup>st</sup> Btry Rgt No.58	8 <sup>th</sup> Btry Re- serve Rgt 3 <sup>rd</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> Btry Bava- rian Rgt No.5 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Btry Rgt No.2. 6 & 10 Btrys. Re- serve Rgt No. 20. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Btry Rgt No.101. 93 Btry Rgt No.63.	6 <sup>th</sup> Btry Bava- rian Reserve Rgt No.1. 8 <sup>th</sup> Btry Bava- rian Rgt No.8. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Btry Rgt No 50.
12 cm Batteries (3 guns each <sup>o</sup> )	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Btry, Landwehr No.65			

Troops, etc.	Group Lewarde	Group Arras	Group Gandry	Group Busigny
15 & 17 cm Guns (2 guns each*) Batteries	3", 4", 5" & 6" Landwehr No. 65	6" of 8th Rgt 5" of 6th Rgt 3" Marine (Naval) 17 cm	3" of 74th Rgt 10" & 13" Marine (Naval) 17 cm	
Heavy Field How- itzer Batteries (4 Howitzers each*)	1", 2", 4" Bava- rian Rgt No. 1	2" & 3" Btry Rgt No. 58. 1", 2" & 3" Btry Rgt No. 36. 1" & 2" Btry Bava- rian Res Rgt No. 6. 5", 6", 7". Btry Res Rgt No. 16. 10" Btry 1" Guard Rgt.	5" & 6" Btry Rgt No. 3 1" & 2" Btry Bavarian Rgt No. 5. 5" Btry Res Rgt No. 20. 1" & 2 Btry Rgt No 101. 1" & 2" Btry Rgt 63. 3" & 4" Btry Res Rgt No. 4	Res 1" & 2" Bns; Rgt. 50 5", 6", 7" Bns; Res Rgt. No. 19 1" Btry Bava- rian Res Rgt No. 3. 5", 6" & 7" Btry, Rgt No. 11. 2", 3" & 4" Btry Rgt No. 3. 5" & 6" Btry Bavarian Res Rgt No. 1
Mortar Batteries (3 mortars each, as a rule 27 cm*)	1" & 2" Btry Landwehr No. 34 11" Btry, Rgt No. 18. 5" & 6" Btry Saxon No. 12	10" Btry Saxon No. 12. 7", 8" & 9" Btry Rgt No. 12. 3" & 4" Btry Rgt No. 60	5" Btry Rgt No. 18. 1" & 2" Btry Ba- varian Rgt No. 20	1", 3" & 9" Btry Res Rgt No. 7 7", 8", 9" Btry Res Rgt No. 12
Captured Guns (Russian) Bat- teries. (10 cm (4 guns each*))	5" & 6" Btry Landwehr No. 34			
Flash Ranging Sec- tions.	Nos. 4 & 35.	No. 121	Nos. 1, 2, & 3.	No. 5
Sound Ranging Sec- tions.				No. 17
* Translators notes.				
** The Army, in addition had at its disposal Batteries No. 790 and 1025 (of the heaviest flat trajectory).				
<u>Pioneer.</u>	Landsturm Pio- neer Co., Bava- rian No. 8 Company No. 1, 1/3 Landsturm- Pioneer Wagon Train No. 13	Staff Officer of Saxon Pio- neer Rgt No. 162 Hq. & 2", 3" & 4" & 5" Cos. Pio- neer Rgt No. 18. Mine Co. No. 293. 1/3 Land- sturm Pioneer Wagon Train No. 13. One Flame- thrower Co.	Staff Officer of Pioneer Rgt No. 54. Land- sturm-Pioneer Company No. 3 of 7th Army Corps. Land- sturm-pioneer Wagon Train No. 21.	Stf Officer of Pioneer Rgt No. 56. Hq. & 3 Cos. Bavarian Pio- neer Rgt. No. 4 (14", 15", 18" Cos). Trench Mortar Bns Nos. 3 & 10.

Troops, etc.	Group Lewarde	Group Arras	Group Candry	Group Busigny
<u>Anti-Aircraft Formations.</u>				
Anti-Aircraft Group Commands	No. 5	No. 25	No. 3	No. 4
Horse-drawn Anti Aircraft Batteries (each of 4 guns*) (77, 9 or 10 cm)		No. 505, and Res No. 573	No. 709 and Res No. 533	Nos. 572, 576, 710, (at disposal of Army-No 333 & Res No. 533).
Horse-Drawn Anti Aircraft Sections (one gun each*)	Nos. 27, 90 & 111			(At disposal of the Army-Nos 138, 424 & 425).
Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun Detachments.		No. 910	No. 803 and 909.	
Automatic Anti-Aircraft Sections (one gun each*)	Autom. #68		Autom. #38	Autom. #4
Motorized Anti-Aircraft Batteries (each of 3 or 4 guns*)	$\frac{1}{2}$ of 5th Btry and No. 158		No. 7 and 115	$\frac{1}{2}$ of 4th Btry
Motorized Anti-Aircraft Guns (Mobile guns)*	No. 55	Nos. 2, 46, 92 and 106.	Nos. 29, 70, 94	Nos. 47, 50, 79, 82 and 63.
Searchlights	No. 206	No. 9	Anti-Aircraft Searchlight No. 239	Anti-Aircraft Searchlight No. 404, motorized, at disposal of Saxon No. 301 and Bavarian Army No. 665.
<u>Air Units</u>				
Air Units Group Commands		No. 2	No. 3	No. 4
Reconnaissance Flights (6 planes each*)	Attack 240th	8th Attack 233 & 263.	40th Attack 210 and 259.	Attack 203 and 217. (at disposal of Army 23d & 32d, and Bombardment Group No. 7).

Troops, etc.	Group Lewarde	Group Arras	Group Caudry	Group Busigny
Pursuit Flights	(At disposal of the Army: Pursuit Flight #1 (Flights 4, 6, 10, 11) and (Nos 8, 17 and 33). 12th			
		29th	5th	Bavarian 35th.
Protective Flights	Bavarian 24th	27th & 1st	12th, 17th, 19th	10th & Bavarian 25th
<u>Lighter-than-Air</u>				
Field Air-ship Det.	No. 34	No. 8	No. 2	No. 5
Balloon Sections	Bavarian Nos. 201 & 202.	Nos. 28, 30 & 209.	Nos. 2, 50, 56 & 137.	Nos. 14 & Bavarian No. 210
Front Line Weather Stations.	No. 252	No. 251	Nos. 211-213	No. 214
<u>Communication</u>				
<u>Troops</u>				
Air Line Sections	No. 994	No. 924	No. 943, Saxon No. 947 & 992.	
Maintenance Sections.	No. 1016	No. 1047	(At disposal of G.H.Q.-Saxon 1017, 1019, 1026; Wurttemberg 1028; Bavarian 1040, 1045, 1068).	
Headquarters Sections.	No. 1101	No. 1129	No. 1119	Nos. 1131, 1182.
Blinker Sections	No. 2		Saxon No. 50	No. 46
Carrier Pigeon Lofts	Nos. 42 & 43; Bavarian No. 237	No. 64, Wurttemberg Nos. 70 & 72. Bavarian No. 225 & 226	Wurttemberg Nos. 61, 62, 66, 71, 75 & 87.	No. 63 & Wurttemberg Nos. 69, 78 & 79 (at disposal of the Army-Nos 65, 77 & 84).
Divisional Wireless Sections.	No. 19	Nos. 65 & 90 Bavarian No. 105.	Nos. 64, 66, 92	Nos. 54, 80
Group Wireless Sections		No. 503	No. 512	No. 531
<u>Columns and Trains</u>				
Army Motor Transport Columns (see note).	Wurttemberg No 88 & 324	Nos. 1 & 48 Bavarian Nos. 175 & 307	Nos. 7, 28, 64, Bavarian 281	Nos. 4, 256 (At disposal of the Army Nos. 53, 72, 78 & 135).

Troops, etc.	Group Levarde	Group Arras	Group Caudry	Group Busigny
Commanders and Staff of Ammunition Columns and Trains	No. 30	No. 17		
Commanders and Staff of Wagon Trains. (Ammunition)	Nos. 33, 41	Nos. 42, 43 & 246	Württemberg No 64 Saxon Nos 257 & 258	Bavarian No. 11 & 63
Light Ammunition Columns	No. 34(Heavy) Nos. 702, 713, 844 & 923	Nos. 2, 134, 136 (Heavy) Nos. 705, 820, 820, 921 & 936.	No. 17(Heavy) Bavarian Nos. 17, 33, 85 & 116 Saxon Nos 283, 717, 719, 737, 754, 842 & 902. Württemberg 926 & 935.	No. 106, Bavarian Nos. 111, 376, 727 & 841.
Ammunition Columns	Bavarian No.13 & 26. Saxon 85 & 476.	No. 317	Nos. 207, 309. Bavarian 315.	No. 242
Army Ammunition Columns	2d & 9 <sup>th</sup> Corps Reserve No.4, Württemberg.	No.4 of 56 <sup>th</sup> Division, 6th of Guard Reserve Corps. No. 8 of Saxon 12th Corps. Bavarian No. 151	Saxon No. 2 of 58 <sup>th</sup> Division. 4th of Guard Reserve Corps(Heavy). 47th Res (Heavy)	9th of 18 Corps. 10th of Württemberg 13th Corps(Heavy)
Provision(Ration) Columns		Nos. 42 & 146		No. 3, Saxon No. 72 & 119.
Wagon Trains	Nos. 57 & 118.	Nos. 58, 658, 742 & 786. Depot Wagon Trains Nos 547 & $\frac{1}{2}$ of No. 591. Line of Communication Wagon Train No. 60.	Bavarian No. 30 Saxon Nos. 676, 780 & 782, also 865. Württemberg Nos. 681 & 784. Depot Wagon Train No. 449.	Nos. 658 & 714. Depot Wagon Train No. 465.
Field Bakeries	Nos. 132, 144	Nos. 2, 30. Line of Communication No. 16.	Nos. 48, 49, 121. Württemberg No. 152.	Nos. 125 & 136.

Troops, etc.	Group Lewarde	Group Arras	Group Caudry	Group Busigny
Field Butcher Detachment		Nos. 72, 73, 75, 78 & 79.	Saxon Nos. 242, 243 & 244.	No. 65. Württemberg Nos 274 & 275.
Division Bridge Trains	No. 18	Bavarian No. 5	Württemberg No. 26. Saxon Re- serve 24.	Bavarian Reserve 5.
<u>Medical Companies.</u>	No. 601	No. 604		
<u>Field Hospitals.</u>	No. 125	Reserve No. 63	Reserve No. 53	No. 109.
<u>Horse Depots.</u> (see note)		No. 305	Württemberg No. 15	
<u>Veterinary Depots.</u>		No. 352	Württemberg Nos. 350, 351.	
<u>Labor Battalions.</u>	3d Company of Saxon No. 85 & 4th Company of Saxon No. 86. 1st Company of Württemberg No. 143 & 1st Comp- any of Würtem- berg No. 148.	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. of 7 <sup>th</sup> Bn. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Co. of 31 Bn. 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Co of 38 <sup>th</sup> Bn. Bn. Hq. & 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Co. 148 <sup>th</sup> Bn.	Bn. Hq. & 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Co. 10 <sup>th</sup> Bn. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Co. 31 <sup>st</sup> Bn. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Co. 33 <sup>rd</sup> " 3 <sup>rd</sup> Co. 38 <sup>th</sup> " 3 <sup>rd</sup> Co. 64 <sup>th</sup> " Hq. 110 <sup>th</sup> Bn & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Co. Hq. 122 <sup>nd</sup> Bn & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Co. Bn. Hq., 131 <sup>st</sup> Bn.	Bn. Hq. & 1st Co. 31 <sup>st</sup> Bn. 1st Co. 32 <sup>nd</sup> Bn. 1st Co. 93 <sup>rd</sup> " Bn. Hq. & 1st Co. 95 <sup>th</sup> Bn. & 4th Co. 110 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
<u>Road Construction Companies.</u>		No. 15	No. 3	
<u>Landsturm Battali- ons.</u>			Bn. Landau Bn. Hq. & 4 Cos. 1st Co. of Bn. Leipzig.	1st Bn. of 19th Army Corps. Hq. & 4 Cos. 2d Bn. Bavarian Landsturm No. 5.

Notes: The Army Command also had at its disposal:  
 Motor Transport Columns Nos. 53, 72 and 125.  
 Medical Motorized Train Section No. 2.  
 Horse Depots Nos. 1, 18 and 20.  
 Motorcycle Detachment No. 2.

DATE DUE (DA Pam 28-30)

FEB 11 1994		IL(27)
NOV 18 1989	AUG 17 2006	
FEB 23 1994	NOV 02 2006	
<del>FEB 11 1994</del>	NOV 13 2006	
MAR 10 1999		
OCT 20 1998		
NOV 10 1996		
OCT 20 1998		
NOV 02 2006		
IL(15)		
MAR 23 2009		
MAR 23 2009		
APR 20 2009		
FEB 09 2009		
MAY 12 2009		

