

## **Historical Officers Report**

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News  
Cables from the European War. August 1917

### **2<sup>nd</sup> August**

It is reported from Petrograd that a battalion of women volunteers went into action during heavy fighting at Smorhan.

The *United Press* Agency correspondent at Petrograd interviewed members of "The Legion of Death"— Russian women who recently went into the firing line. The correspondent says each woman carried a quantity of cyanide of potassium, to be swallowed in case of capture one girl said, "At first it was awful to hear the girls g yelling as they charged"

Fear was forgotten when they surrounded a bunch of Germans. The latter cried, Good God! Women and surrendered A thousand girls were seen drilling in Petrograd for early service.

An unabated artillery duel continues on the Flanders front. The roar can be heard on the outskirts of London. The Germans expect a coming assault, but Sir Douglas Haig preserves a significant silence British air squadron's arc everywhere bombing German batteries, dumps, and reinforcement, and attacking air squadrons.

The Turkish navy is to be scrapped, the crews will become soldiers, and the navy guns will be used ashore.

The Paris correspondence of the "Daily Chronicle" writes "The American Army in France makes its own docks, harbour and roads and rebuilt the railway from the Port of arrival to the Training ground inland, running American locomotives upon it. The toy trains of Europe will be dwarf by the real thing. The new Army's activities surprise the Old World.

### **9<sup>th</sup> August**

Field-Marshal Sir, Douglas Haig's offensive continued, though the rain, which was falling, over the whole of the ground covered in the operations, has impeded matters somewhat. It is announced that only a small force of Australians is engaged. The British took prisoners yesterday over 5000, including 95 officers. We captured a few guns and a number of machine guns and trench mortars. So far our losses have been light, the majority of casualties being men slightly wounded. The enemy is realising the greatness of the menace.

A report from Paris pays the German casualties during the first day of the Flanders battle is estimated at 20,000. Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, in an earlier despatch stated. There has been 48 hours' incessant rain. The enemy succeeded at a great cost in gaining footholds in our advanced positions near the Ypres-Roulers railway. Our counterattack drove him out at all points, and we completely re-established our former line.



Mr, Philip Gibbs telegraphs that the weather in Flanders continues frightful. The Germans, despite repeated efforts, failed to accomplish anything. The men are living in utter discomfort in mud.

The "Journal's" correspondent states that the Germans are wearing armour composed of three plates protecting the stomach and lower Limbs, like that used by ancient Greeks.

A Pekin cable states that an Act has been passed by the Chinese Parliament declaring war on Germany.

The Hengersdorf munitions factory has been blown up. Only-meagre details are so far to hand, but it is known that this is the worst disaster of its kind that has ever happened in Germany. Three hundred persons have been killed the explosion caused enormous damage.

### **16<sup>th</sup> August**

Sir Douglas Haig report that an Attack was launched east of Ypres on a front of two miles south of the Ypres-Roulers railway. The centre and left, overcoming resistance, gained the whole of their objectives. Westhock and Westhoe Ridge were completely won. The British established themselves in Glencorse Wood, and inflicted heavy casualties. Three hundred prisoners were taken.



Westhock

On Sunday Afternoon 20 enemy aeroplanes bombed Southend killing eight men, nine women and six children, and Injuring about fifty and Margate (no casualties). The air war was swarming with British machines, and a sharp Fight ensued. The enemy was driven seawards.

Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reports increased hostile artillery south of the Arras Cambrai road and in the Nieuport sector Enemy aircraft were aggressive, but nine mere brought down and eight driven down. Seven Allied machines are missing.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> August**

Field-Marshal Haig reports.—"We attacked in the early morning on a wide-front from the north-east outskirts of Lens to Bois Hugo, north-eastward of Loos. A large number of the prisoners taken by the Canadians says Mr Philip Gibbs, are youngsters, some scarce above the school age one Canadian soldier said that he saw some boys lying dead. They looked no more than 11 years of age.

Sir Douglas Haig reports an Allied attack on a front of nine miles northward of the Ypres Menin road. The British centre rapidly carried its first objectives, and carried Langemarek with heavy fighting. The soldiers advanced half a mile beyond the town, and established themselves in the German trench system. Eighteen hundred prisoners from this attack have already been brought in. Eight hundred and ninety six men were taken around Loos in two days.

### **30<sup>th</sup> August**

Forts attacked by the British tanks, consisted mainly farm buildings, strengthened with concrete 8ft. thick were no match for the tanks.

Sir Douglas Haig states that all the British positions in the Flanders battle area were maintained. Since August 20 the French have taken 7640 prisoners at Verdun, including 180 officers and 600 wounded.

An Amsterdam message states that British warships bombarded Zeeburgge on Wednesday; the roar of the guns was heard at Flushing.

The British steamship Harrington Head reported that a British warship sank the German raider Sea Adler in the Atlantic; the Sea Adler went down fighting.

Sir Douglas Haig reports the capture of German trenches west and north - west of Lens.

Mr Phillip Gibbs, describing the Canadians' wonderful against heavy odds at Lens, states that the six Guards' divisions which attacked had been shattered, and portions, of other divisions were engaged. The Germans used over 50 battalions. Their losses are estimated at between 12,000 and 15,000. After ten days, furious attack and counterattacks the Canadians seized Green Crazier. The enemy came back in strength and thrust them back from the; crest but the Canadians still cling to the western side.

It is mostly hand to hand, with every weapon the shellfire is indescribable Men coming out of the inferno seem to be stricken with nightmare.

## **From the Home Front**

### **Unveiling Roll of Honour.**

At the conclusion of the business portion of the Menangle School of Arts meeting the chairman called upon Colonel Onslow, M.L.A., to unveil two photographic Rolls of Honour which had been prepared by the School of Arts as a lasting memorial in honour of the men who had enlisted from the locality. The frames are hanging in the Menangle Hall.

### **Third Anniversary of the War.**

His worship the Mayor of Camden, Alderman W. Peters, presided over a public meeting of citizens at the Camden School of Arts on Saturday at noon, in commemoration of the third anniversary of the declaration of war between Great Britain and Germany.

Mr. A. S. Tindal, of the Camden Savings Bank, has received word that his brother, Stanley, has gained his commission on the "Field." The promotion is merited, as this soldier is one of the original "Anzacs," having left Sydney with the first Expeditionary Force. He was at the landing and evacuation of Gallipoli and since then has been in Belgium and France. Mr. Tindal has two brothers with the forces abroad.

Mrs James Toovey, of Upper Burragorang, has received information through the information bureau of the Red Cross Society that her son, Corporal Fred Toovey, who was reported missing in November last, was last seen lying in a trench with his leg broken. The Germans unexpectedly counter-attacked and drove the Australians back, and it is probable that the missing soldier is now a prisoner in Germany. Corporal Toovey went through the Gallipoli campaign, and took part in the Celebrated Lone Pine charge.

### **Foot note**

**Frederick Toovey was killed in Action on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 1916.**

### **TROPHY FROM THE WAR.**

Mr Frank Dengate, junior, of Camden, has just receive a belt from his brother, Gunner Arthur Dengate, serving with the Australian Artillery, at the Front (somewhere in France)

Certainly a most valuable collection of soldiers' emblem to be correct Regimental Badges and is unique as it is valuable, so seldom is such seen by Australians. Almost every English Regiment's emblems or badges is shown on this most Interesting memento of these now fighting for the ultimate benefit of the world at large, and should undoubtedly be highly treasured by the recipient. The collection is vastly instructive to private citizens as well as to soldiers, the whole is such that is seldom seen and so well set out on the belt that has been actually worn in the service.

We were more than pleased to examine the emblems, which was the first in so comprehensive manner so received in Australia.

A study of our fighting men and their glorious honours won in every part of the world; almost a history of all regiments of note, and what is more money could not purchase them.

Ray Herbert  
Historical Officer