

Historical Officers Report

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News
Cables from the European War. March 1918

7th March

The Chinese press states that Japan has decided to mobilise for operation in Siberia. It is also reported that China will co-operate and intends sending four divisions away.

The advance guard of the American army is taking its first experience of the war in Lorraine.

Under heavy bombardment several stirring engagements have occurred on the Australian front. Answering artillery apparently stopped an attack east of Messines. Near Hollenbeck the South Australian outposts were heavily attacked. The garrison made a most gallant fight and prevented the enemy from entering the post.

British forces in Palestine have advanced on a frontage of 12 miles astride and westward of the Jerusalem-Nabulus Road.

Sir Douglas Haig reports that the Australians entered enemy trenches at Warneton, killing 50 Germans and taking 11 prisoners.

14th March

The northward advance astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road has been continued through most difficult country. The British progressed 3000 yards on a 12 miles front, securing high ridges overlooking the north bank of the Wadi El-Jib. Three counter attacks were repulsed.

The northward advance of the British troops in Palestine has been continued. They crossed the Wadi Auga, and captured a strong Turkish position five miles eastward of the Jordan. On either side of the Jerusalem-Nablus road they advanced on a front of 13 miles. Kefrimalik, Selwad, and Telasur to the eastward of this road were occupied.

The British repulsed three rounds of a heavy bombardment near Armentieres, north of Passchendaele. German infantry attacked on a front of 1000 yards. The enemy were everywhere repulsed with heavy losses. One hostile party entered a part south of Houthulst Forest, but the position was immediately recaptured.

The French announce the repulse of a double attack against Goose Hill and Dead Man's Hill.

An American raid in Lorraine reached the enemy's second line. The raiders returned safely.

Seven enemy aeroplane squadrons attacked Paris at 10 o'clock on Monday evening. Bombs were dropped at several points, causing casualties and damage.

Japan has grave fears for the situation in Siberia. She regards April as the most suitable month in which to begin the campaign. She will not act unless she has the full approval of the Allies.

21st March

Battle of the Somme, France



Colonel Strangman and Major Flood, who were passengers by the Matunga, which was sunk by the raider Wolf, have arrived in London. Major Flood stated that a German officer had boasted that the Wolf's seaplane flew over Sydney Harbor early one morning. "From this flight the Germans found out the disposition of shipping in the harbor."

Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig reports:—"We dropped 700 bombs on billets, dumps, and the railway at Courtrai and Denain. 'We brought 'down 19" aeroplanes and drove down five. Five of ours are missing.

The Australian and Naval squadrons have been of the greatest value during the recent fine weather.

The Australians again raided the German lines east of Messines at two places. The southern raiders penetrated the support lines. The Germans did not show resistance. The northern raiders attacked two fortified advanced farms. All the Australian divisions were never in better fighting trim.

British airmen dropped three tons of bombs on Bruges docks. On railway sidings at Mons and Baval 13 tons of bombs were dropped. Fourteen German machines were brought down and fight driven down.

Six of ours are missing seven tons, of bombs were dropped on billets between Lille and Cambrai. The Allied raid on Coblenz was attended by terrific results. Two munitions factories are reported to be burning, and vast quantities of explosives are, continually exploding.

28th March

In a naval fight off Dunkirk the British and French destroyers sank five enemy light craft.

Reports show that the British troops in Palestine have captured three additional towns.

28th March Sgt Stanley Robert McDougall VC at Dernancourt, France



German offensive on the West Front was on colossal scale. The enemy by Saturday had advanced on a 50-mile front to depths varying from a very small strip to 10 miles at one point. The average depth of the penetration is about three miles.

The Germans claim over 15,000 prisoners, 300 guns and 400 machine guns.

British correspondents say that the Germans were driven out of the village of Mory. On Saturday morning the British retired three miles east of Bapaume. They also gave up Morchios, Vaulx, and Vrancourt.

Germany is continually massing troops on both the West front and the Italian front.

The Germans shelled Paris for nine hours from a distance of about 60 miles, using 340-millimetre guns. The bombardment was made at intervals of 15 minutes.

Aeroplanes also attacked Paris on Saturday morning, inflicting several casualties.

An American gunboat seized an auxiliary schooner raider in the Pacific, which flew the German flag.

Messages from the battle front state that the British resistance throughout is solid. Sir Douglas Haig reports that the British are holding a line from the Somme River to Peronne. He says heavy fighting must be expected.

The British troops are now occupying new positions three miles east of Bapaume. The Australians and New Zealanders are not yet taking any part in the struggle.

From The Home Front

SOLDIERS' THANKS.

The Hon. Secretary of the Camden Red Cross Society is in receipt of the following letters acknowledging Christmas gifts sent from that Society:—

BASIL A. THORPE,—"I write to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of a fine parcel from you, I wish, to thank all concerned.

The contents were especially welcome, arriving as they did just at the finish up of General Allenby's whirlwind advance, there had been a long break without mails, as we had declared war and our transport was busy with munitions, supplies, etc; peaceful parcels had to wait. In any case it would have been hard to catch us at home, as we were doing our best to wheel fleet-footed Abdul over a 60 mile track. I hope this New Year is not too old when you people who have remembered us in a practical way will be able to listen to our appreciation instead of reading it."—Jan. 2, 1918.

R. J. HAWKEY.—"Please convey to the Camden Christmas Gift Society my sincere thanks for the splendid parcel received by me from them for Christmas; everything was in good order. It is needless for me to say how pleased we lads are to receive these gifts from the folk at home. Again thanking you and your Society."—Jan. 2, 1918

The Camden Show opened yesterday (Wednesday), the day being mainly devoted to the judging of indoor exhibits and the cattle section. The entries are large, exceeding past years, and there can be no question as to the quality of exhibits; everything points to a most successful show. The official opening takes place to-day (Thursday), and the ring events will be continued to-morrow (Friday).

Miss Louise Mack, the Great War lecturer, will be giving a lecture in Camden on Tuesday night of next week, and assisting the local Red Cross by donating part of the proceeds from her meeting. Miss Mack's meeting with Edith Cavell in Brussels is a most touching story, all should hear it.



Corporal Richard John Hawkey

Killed in Action, 27th March 1918, Amman, Palestine

Lance Corporal Frederick Stanley Martin Smart

Killed in Action, 28th March 1918, Messines, Belgium

Batteries out of Ammunition

If any mourn us in the workshop, say
We died because the shift kept holiday

Rudyard Kipling

Base Details

If I were fierce, and bold, and short of breath,
I'd live with scarlet Majors at the Base,
And speed glum heroes up the line of death.
You'd see me with my puffy, petulant face,
Guzzling and gulping at the best hotel,
Reading the Roll of Honour. 'Poor young chap,'
I'd say--- 'I used to know his father well;
Yes, we've lost heavily in this last scrap.'
And when the war is done and the young stone dead,
I'd toddle safely home and die--- in bed.

Siegfried Sassoon

Ray Herbert
Historical Officer