

THE FRONT LINE

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BATTLE OF ST MIHEL - VICTORY IN SIGHT? MAJOR ALLIED BREAKTHROUGH ON GERMAN FRONT: MAY PROVIDE A FINAL ALLIED TURNING POINT!!

On Thursday 12th September, Allied forces managed to achieve a huge breakthrough in the German front line, and as of Monday the 16th of September, Saint Mihiel is once again an Allied territory.

The French town of Saint Mihiel has been held by the Central Powers since the autumn of 1914, and the Axis grasp on it greatly hindered French rail communications between Paris and the eastern segments of allied lines. It is no small feat that has been achieved by US commander General John Pershing. He has faced heavy pressure from experienced commanders over the past year to split up his forces to support the British and French forces in places where they are weakest, but Pershing has refused all attempts to separate his army,

choosing instead to bide his time until they could be used to their full potential- a method proven by his success in last week's battle.

Salients are always hard to defend, due to the fact that enemy forces can surround it on three sides, as used against our army in the Battles of Ypres, but now the tables have turned on the Axis troops. Allied forces launched a multifaceted attack last Thursday on the Salient of Saint Mihiel and took the French land back from the grasp of the enemy. Led by General Pershing, the attack took a month to plan and yet was strategically simple, relying on only 8 pages of written plan, and was mostly successful due to the brave fighting of French and British troops during the initial stages of the offense.

The German army knew of the upcoming Allied offense and took steps to protect themselves, but they did not act fast enough. They opted for a tactical retreat, but with the distraction of British and French troops fighting at other points along the front lines, the US army was able to attack whilst they were retreating and unprepared. They had no time to set up their artillery; a huge advantage for our armies, and so 10,000 Germans were captured as prisoners of war



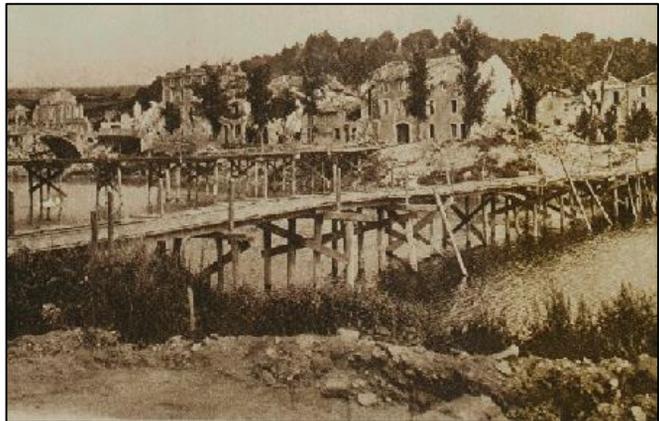
Hero of the hour: US General John J. Pershing

with a further 7,500 killed, whilst the US army suffered losses of only 7000 and also succeeded in capturing over 250 additional German guns.

This battle marks the first major usage of the US Army Air Service, and with the French and British reinforcements bringing the number of aircraft up to 1500, it was also the greatest concentration of airpower used so far in this war. Along with greater air support, the new American tactics used by Mitchell (commander of the air service) and Patton (commander of the newly formed tank assaults, modelled off of our own machines) caught the Axis troops off guard. They both fought on the front lines alongside their troops for moral, and used tactics initially used by cavalries such as sending out small patrols of tanks to meet reinforcements and to attack unprepared Axis forces.

The unprecedented success of this attack may be a turning point in this ongoing fight, as this battle is also predicted to have weakened German morale, even as it increases Allied land and communications. It is widely hoped that the US army is the key to ending this War-To-End-All-Wars, and the successes of this battle show that maybe this could be true.

Reporter: Jenni Wall



Saint Mihiel: a view from across the River Meuse. Allied victories here may mark the beginning of the end to this conflict.



THE FRONT LINE - 1918



THE FRONT LINE REMEMBERS 'LEST WE FORGET'



WILFRED LOFTS

In remembrance of Wilfred Lofts. He was a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Fusiliers RAF. He was stationed in France and died age 20 on the 8th August 1918.

He attended WBGs from 1905 – 1914.

CHARLES E. WYKES

In remembrance of Charles Edgar Wykes. He was a Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force. He was stationed in France. He died, age 31, on 13th August 1918.

He attended WBGs from 1900 – 1901.

LEONARD P. SQUIRE

In remembrance of Leonard Percy Squire. He was a Flight Cadet in the Royal Air Force. He died in an Air Training accident on 23rd August 1918, age 19.

He attended WBGs from 1911 – 1916.

CYRIL A. TOMPKINS

In remembrance of Cyril Alfred Tompkins. He was a Lewis Gunner in the Bedfordshire Regiment. He was stationed in Italy and France, and died on 23rd August 1918, age 19.

He attended WBGs from 1910 – 1913.

WILLIAM N. WATSON

In remembrance of William Neville Watson. He was a Private in the Civil Service Rifles in Picardy. He died on 26th August 1918, age 19.

He attended WBGs from 1911 – 1915.

CYRIL S. M. VALE

In remembrance of Cyril Sidney M. Vale. He was a Private in the Hertfordshire Regiment in France. He died on 27th August 1918, age 19.

He attended WBGs from 1907 – 1914.

JOHN C. GOADBY

In remembrance of John Clifton Goadby. He was a Second Lieutenant in the 13th London Regiment. He died on 28th August 1918, age 19, and was recommended for a Military Cross,...

He attended WBGs from 1906 – 1911.

BERTAM PREWETT

In remembrance of Bertram Prewett. He was a Rifleman in the London Irish Regiment. He was killed at the end of the last German Offensive on 31st August 1918, age 39.

He attended WBGs from 1886 – 1894.

FREDERICK E. FRANKLIN

In remembrance of Frederick Edward Franklin. He was a Private in the Royal West Kent Regiment. He died on 30th September 1918, age 19.

He attended WBGs from 1912 – 1913.



Bulgarian Armistice: Is The End Near?

The Armistice of Salonica has been signed between Bulgaria and the Allied Powers in Thessaloniki, on the 29th of September 1918, thus ending Bulgaria's involvement in The Great War on the side of the Central Powers (consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire). The Front Line is pleased to report that it will come into effect on the Bulgarian front at noon on the 30th of September.

The reason behind Bulgaria's withdrawal from the war is the breakdown of their military in the Balkans due to the Allied attack launched on the 15th of September, which assaulted the defences around Lake Doiran and resulted in the Bulgarians executing a retreat to Bulgaria itself. On the 25th of September British and French troops began to enter the country which presented potential challenge to the Bulgarians. Thus, the Bulgarian government decided to seek an armistice and plead ceasefire, and a delegation was despatched to the front line. We hope that this could mark the beginning of the collapse of the Central Powers in this war.

The terms of this armistice are as follows: the immediate demobilisation and disarmament of the Bulgarian armed forces; the evacuation of Bulgarian-occupied Greek and Siberian

territories; the return of German and Austrian-Hungarian troops from Bulgaria within 4 weeks; Bulgaria and especially Sofia were not to be occupied, however the Allies have the right to temporarily occupy some strategic points, use transport facilities and transfer troops over Bulgarian territory; and Allied prisoners should be handed over immediately.

The signatories were the French General Louis Franchet d'Espérey and the commission appointed by the Bulgarian government, which consisted of General Ivan Lukov, Andrey Lyapchev and Simeon Radev.

Reporter: Nazish Bibi



Bulgarian delegates accepting defeat at the hand of the Allies: Major General Ivan Lukov, Andrey Lyapchev and Simeon Radev

Turks on verge of collapse in Palestine?

On 20th September, British forces based in Palestine captured the main communications hub at Afulah, and Beisan on the plain's eastern edge near the Jordan River. This victory occurred during the Battle of Sharon, a part of their offensive against the Turkish lines north of Jerusalem. The Battle of Sharon had initiated due to the attack on Nazareth, made possible by the British Empire infantry attack. It was led by regional commander General Edmund Allenby, after his triumphant campaign in successfully capturing Jerusalem last December. On the 19th September, Palestinian based British troops went on attack up the Jordan Valley as a diversion, switching the offensive to the West and then up the coast. They managed to block off the Turks from discovering their movement of their cavalry and other surrounding troops via aerial superiority of the RAF. This appears to have been as significant success for Allied Forces in the Middle East.

Reporter: Saarah Ahmed



TURKISH SUCCESSES FURTHER EAST BATTLE OF BAKU: An Ottoman Victory?

British troops have evacuated Baku, following a nineteen-day battle for the Caucasian city. Our small army comprising just two British battalions and supported by disorganised Armenian troops were significantly underprepared to defend against the Turkish-Azerbaijani forces, prompting the war office to agree to a full withdrawal from the region.

With valuable oilfields and a strategic location along the shores of the Caspian Sea, Baku is a desirable city to hold. Yet in recent years, there have been ethnic tensions amongst the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian populations. This was further exacerbated by the political struggle between the Bolsheviks supported by the Armenian Dashnaks, and the Azerbaijani Musavat Party. Alienated, the Azerbaijanis gave their support to the approaching Ottoman troops. The Turkish possession of Baku was a detestable prospect for both the Centro-Caspian Dictorate in Baku - which replaced the Baku Soviet in July - and the British stationed in the Caucasus, who joined forces to protect the city from Turkish invasion.

Despite some losses, the Ottoman forces captured the surrounding locations of Binagadi Hill and Diga in late August, and their main offense began on the night of the 13th September. Overwhelmed, Dunsterville knew the futility of the situation and led our troops out, in the hope of preventing unnecessary losses. Prospects of the Armenian troops defeating the Ottoman-Azerbaijani forces alone are bleak. Now questions remain about how harshly the Armenians will be treated, and what Ottoman possession of such a valuable city will mean for Britain and her allies in Asia.

Reporter: Anisha Mehta



Shortly before the Ottoman attack: Russian and Armenian soldiers near the front line.

One of those Millions

Part 21 – The Penultimate Chapter!

Paul's regiment now found itself in continuous action, without prospect of relief. On 17 July 1918 he snatched time for a brief note. 'Our battalion still has to fill the gap that has occurred in our neighbouring regiment. The usual resting days seem to have fallen by the wayside completely and Tommy's getting increasingly angry. I don't know who long this can continue. Time and again we suffer losses in surprise raids, shelling and gas attacks. The Spanish flu has seized me, too, but because lieutenant Bosch is on leave, I've had to stay out here despite a very high fever.'

On 25 July, Paul found a few moments to send birthday greetings to his father, 'I cannot shake your hand firmly this time, as German men usually do, but the telepathy that knows no boundaries should therefore be all the more effective. Look after your health and may God bless you. That builds a bridge across anything, no matter how unpleasant. I wish you such a bridge, firm and without breaks, to carry you safely over all ravines, and the rocky and hard places that the way of life leads through.

'How often do I think back to my wedding leave. A full month has already passed since then. Five more months still lie ahead before my next leave – and I'm already longing for it. Last week I was rested in Carnoy. The Spanish flu that I caught so badly in the trenches is now gone. After three very long and painful days, I drove the subsequent diarrhoea away with five tanalbin pills that I took in one go... this resolute approach had quite an impact!'

On 1 August Paul wrote to his parents, 'Tonight, we'll leave the Ancre area for good. The bridgehead that we won in battle this March will be evacuated and left to the enemy. Our position in a valley with the enemy occupying the heights has been a hazard for so long now – constantly under fire and suffering losses again and again – that we have decided to give up the ground. It will be interesting to see how the enemy deals with this, and whether we profit from it a little. But what a waste of all the work we've done; all the shelters we dug, the cellars and lodgings, will all be blown up. We've already spent the last few days removing ammunition, tools and anything else that could be of use to the enemy. In the last few days, by day at least, the fighting has been relatively light, but during the night Tommy fires like there's no tomorrow. Every night I fear for my food carriers who have to cross the area under fire to fetch our rations.'

Contributor: Mr P. Hinsley