

thereby cutting the communications of the German forces in the Lassigny and Montdidier areas. If all went well, French troops would be in readiness to co-operate by pressing the enemy south-east of Montdidier.

Preliminary instructions to prepare to attack east of Amiens at an early date had been given to the Fourth Army Commander, General Rawlinson, on the 13th July, and on the 28th July the French First Army, under command of General Debeney, was placed by Marshal Foch under my orders for this operation. Further to strengthen my attack, I decided to reinforce the British Fourth Army with the Canadian Corps, and also with the two British Divisions which were then held in readiness astride the Somme.

In order to deceive the enemy and to ensure the maximum effect of a surprise attack, elaborate precautions were taken to mislead him as to our intentions and to conceal our real purpose.

Instructions of a detailed character were issued to the formations concerned, calculated to make it appear that a British attack in Flanders was imminent. Canadian battalions were put into line on the Kemmel front, where they were identified by the enemy. Corps headquarters were prepared, and casualty clearing stations were erected in conspicuous positions in this area. Great activity was maintained also by our wireless stations on the First Army front, and arrangements were made to give the impression that a great concentration of Tanks was taking place in the St. Pol area. Training operations, in which infantry and Tanks co-operated, were carried out in this neighbourhood on days on which the enemy's long-distance reconnaissance and photographic machines were likely to be at work behind our lines.

The rumour that the British were about to undertake a large and important operation on the northern front quickly spread. In the course of our subsequent advances convincing evidence was obtained that these different measures had had the desired effect, and that the enemy was momentarily expecting to be attacked in strength in Flanders.

Meanwhile, the final details for the combined British and French attack had been arranged early in August, and the date for the assault fixed for the morning of the 8th. The front held by the Australian Corps on the right of the British line was extended southwards to include the Amiens-Roye road, and the Canadian Corps was moved into position by night behind this front. The assembly of Tanks and of the Cavalry Corps was postponed until the last moment and carried out as secretly as possible.

Partly as the result of successful minor operations of the Allies, and partly in consequence of the change in the general situation, the enemy during the first days of August withdrew from the positions still held by him west of the Avre and Ancre rivers. These movements did not affect our plans, but, on the other hand, a strong local attack launched by the enemy on the 6th August south of Morlancourt led to severe fighting, and undoubtedly rendered the task of the III. Corps more difficult.

#### (16) *The Troops Employed.*

The front of attack of General Rawlinson's

Fourth Army extended for a distance of over eleven miles from just south of the Amiens-Roye road to Morlancourt exclusive. The troops employed were: On the right the Canadian Corps, under command of Lieut.-General Sir A. W. Currie, with the 3rd, 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions in line, and the 4th Canadian Division in close support; in the centre the Australian Corps, under command of Lieut. General Sir J. Monash, with the 2nd and 3rd Australian Divisions in line and the 5th and 4th Australian Divisions in support; on the left, north of the Somme, the III. Corps, under the command of Lieut.-General Sir R. H. K. Butler, with the 58th and 18th Divisions in line and the 12th Division in support.

The attack of the French First Army, under General Debeney, was timed to take place about an hour later than the opening of the British assault, and was delivered on a front of between four and five miles between Moreuil inclusive and the British right. As the Allied troops made progress, the right of the French attack was to be gradually extended southwards until the southern flank of the Allied battle front rested on Braches.

Behind the British front the British Cavalry Corps, consisting of three Cavalry Divisions under command of Lieut.-General Sir C. T. McM. Kavanagh, was concentrated at zero hour east of Amiens. A special mobile force of two motor machine gun brigades and a Canadian cyclist battalion, under command of Brig.-General Brutinel, had orders to exploit success along the lines of the Amiens-Roye road.

#### (17) *The Battle Opened.*

At 4.20 a.m. on the 8th August our massed artillery opened intense fire on the whole front of attack, completely crushing the enemy's batteries, some of which never succeeded in coming into action. Simultaneously British infantry and Tanks advanced to the assault. The enemy was taken completely by surprise and under cover of a heavy ground mist our first objectives, on the line Demuin, Marcelcave, Cerisy, south of Morlancourt, were gained rapidly.

After a halt of two hours on this line by the leading troops, infantry, cavalry and light Tanks passed through and continued the advance, the different arms working in co-operation in the most admirable manner. At the close of the day's operations our troops had completed an advance of between six and seven miles. The Amiens outer defence line, including the villages of Caix, Harbonnières and Morcourt, had been gained on the whole front of attack, except at Le Quesnel itself. Cavalry and armoured cars were in action well to the east of this line, and before dawn on the 9th August Le Quesnel also had been taken. North of the Somme the enemy was more alert as the result of the recent engagements in this sector, and succeeded by heavy fighting in maintaining himself for the time being in the village of Chipilly.

East of the line of our advance the enemy at nightfall was blowing up dumps in all directions, while his transport and limbers were streaming eastwards towards the Somme, affording excellent targets to our airmen, who made full use of their opportunities. Over 13,000 prisoners, between 300 and 400 guns, and vast quantities of ammunition and stores of all kinds remained in our possession.