

troops, advancing on both sides of the Ypres-Roulers Railway, stormed the line of fortified farms immediately in front of their position, and, pressing on, captured Zonnebeke and Bremen Redoubts and the hamlet of Zevenkote. By 8.45 a.m. our final objectives on this front had been gained.

West Lancashire Territorial battalions found the ground south-east of St. Julien very wet and heavy after the night's rain. None the less, they made steady progress, reaching the line of their final objectives early in the afternoon. North of the Zonnebeke-Langemarck Road London and Highland Territorials gained the whole of their objectives by mid-day, though stiff fighting took place for a number of farms and strong places.

As the result of this most successful operation the whole of the high ground crossed by the Menin Road, for which such desperate fighting had taken place during our previous attacks, passed into our possession. Important positions were won also on the remainder of our front, by which the right of our attack was rendered more secure, and the way opened for the advance of our left. In the attack, as well as in the repeated counter-attacks which followed, exceedingly heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, and 3,243 prisoners, together with a number of guns, were captured by us.

COUNTER-ATTACKS.

(51) The enemy did not abandon these important positions without further severe struggles. During the afternoon and evening of the 20th September no less than eleven counter-attacks were made without success against different parts of our new front, in addition to several concentrations of hostile infantry, which were broken up by our artillery before any attack could be launched.

East of St. Julien the enemy at his third attempt succeeded in forcing back our troops to the west of Schuler Farm, but on the following day the farm was retaken by us and our line re-established. North-east of Langemarck stubborn fighting took place for the possession of the short length of trench which, as already recounted, had resisted our attacks on the 16th August. It was not till the morning of the 23rd September that the position was finally captured by us.

Fierce fighting took place also on the 21st September in the neighbourhood of Tower Hamlets. In the course of this and the following four days three powerful attacks were launched by the enemy on wide fronts between Tower Hamlets and Polygon Wood, and a fourth north-east of St. Julien. All these attacks were repulsed, except that on the 25th September parties of German infantry succeeded in entering our lines north of the Menin Road. Heavy and confused fighting took place in this area throughout the day, in which English, Scottish, and Australian troops gradually drove the enemy from the limited foothold he had gained.

The enemy's casualties in these many counter-attacks, as well as in all those subsequently delivered by him on the Ypres front, were consistently very heavy. Our constant successful resistance reflects the greatest credit on the high fighting qualities of our infantry, on the courage and devotion of our airmen, and upon the excellence of our artillery arrangements.

POLYGON WOOD AND ZONNEBEKE.

(52) All this heavy fighting was not allowed to interfere with the arrangements made for a renewal of the advance by the Second and Fifth Armies on the 26th September.

The front of our attack on that date extended from south of Tower Hamlets to north-east of St. Julien, a total distance of rather less than six miles; but on the portion of this front south of the Menin Road only a short advance was intended. North of the Menin Road, our object was to reach a position from which a direct attack could be made upon the portion of the main ridge between Noordemdhoeck and Broodseinde, traversed by the Becelaere-Passchendaele Road.

The assault was delivered at 5.50 a.m., and, after hard and prolonged fighting, in which over 1,600 prisoners were taken by us, achieved a success as striking as that of the 20th September.

Australian troops carried the remainder of Polygon Wood, together with the German trench line to the east of it, and established themselves on their objectives beyond the Becelaere-Zonnebeke Road. On the left of the Australians, English troops took Zonnebeke Village and church, and North Midland and London Territorial battalions captured a long line of hostile strong points on both sides of the Wieltje-Gravenstafel Road.

South of Polygon Wood an obstinate struggle took place for a group of fortified farms and strong points. English, Scottish, and Welsh battalions of the same Divisions that had borne the brunt of the enemy's attacks in this area on the previous day gallantly fought their way forward. In their advance they effected the relief of two companies of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who, with great courage and resolution, had held out in our forward line all night, although isolated from the rest of our troops. It was not until the evening of the 27th September, however, that the line of our objectives in this locality was completely gained.

FURTHER COUNTER-ATTACKS.

(53) As had been the case on the 20th September, our advance was at once followed by a series of powerful counter-attacks.

There is evidence that our operations had anticipated a counter-stroke which the enemy was preparing for the evening of the 26th September, and the German troops brought up for this purpose were now hurled in to recover the positions he had lost. In the course of the day at least seven attacks were delivered at points covering practically the whole front from Tower Hamlets to St. Julien. The fiercest fighting prevailed in the sector between the Reutelbeek and Polygon Wood, but here, as elsewhere, all the enemy's assaults were beaten off.

On the 30th September, when the enemy had recovered from the disorganisation caused by his defeat, he recommenced his attacks. Two attempts to advance with flammenwerfer north of the Menin Road were followed on the 1st October by five other attacks in this area, and on the same day a sixth attack was made south of the Ypres-Roulers Railway. Except for the temporary loss of the two advanced posts south-east of Polygon Wood, all these attacks were repulsed with great loss. At dawn on the 3rd October another attempt in the neighbourhood