

instruction, and rehearsal, none was more active than the precise and energetic Corps Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Julian Byng; by his direction a full scale plan of the battlefield was laid out in the rear area, with broad white tapes to mark the trenches and flags of different colours to mark boundaries and strong points in the enemy defences as discerned by observers or discovered by examination of aeroplane photographs. On this full-scale tracing the troops participating were repeatedly exercised, so that every man would know where he was to go and what he was to do on the day of battle. These rehearsals, carried out by battalions, by brigades and finally by divisions, and supplemented by instruction and discussion over smaller models and maps, were a new departure in battle-training which raised to sublimity the confidence of the troops in the plan, in their leaders, and in their own capacity to capture and hold the Ridge.

Co-ordination and Co-operation.—The vital necessity of closely concerted action across the whole front is worthy of special notice; failure at any point would have jeopardized success. The advance of the 1st Canadian Division (Major-General A. W. Currie) was dependent upon the occupation of Thélus by the 2nd Canadian Division, (Major-General H. E. Burstall), which could not take and hold that village unless the commanding ground to the north was cleared, an operation only possible if La Folie Farm were in the hands of the 3rd Canadian Division (Major-General L. J. Lipsett) which in turn could not advance unless the commanding trenches about Hill 145 were occupied by the 4th Canadian Division (Major-General D. Watson) and that occupation must be secured by a solid flank opposite Givenchy-en-Gohelle. In case the assault should be seriously held up at any of these points, there were four fresh brigades available in reserve: two of the attached 5th British Division, and the 9th and 10th Canadian Infantry Brigades.

No less essential was the smooth interaction of the Arms and Services. The artillery preparation and support, directed by Br.-General E. W. B. Morrison, must be thorough and precise to synchronize with the successive stages of the infantry advance. The interruption of the enemy's rearward communications and the silencing of his batteries—the special tasks of the Counter Battery Staff Officer—must be effective in reducing resistance and in forestalling counter-attacks at least until the infantry and machine gunners could consolidate a defensive line. Intelligence as to the progress of the attack must be accurate and quickly transmitted: the Air Forces, with aeroplanes and balloons, must continue their close observation of enemy activity, and the Signal Corps must reduce to the absolute minimum every possible interruption in communications. The Army Service Corps must see that rations, forage and other supplies for every horse and man arrive as and when required; the Medical Corps must minister quickly and efficiently to the wounded.

Capture of the Ridge.—At half-past five on the morning of Easter Monday, 9th April 1917, the 983 guns and mortars supporting the Canadian attack opened with a concerted and deafening roar. The assaulting troops, some lying in saps and shell-holes close to the enemy line, others in the tunnels and trenches further back, moved forward in the cold north-west wind and chilling sleet which swept the countryside on that momentous day.