

For the first phase the task of all four Canadian Divisions was similar; the capture of the craters and the forward trench system. The German garrison of this area had been instructed that they must hold whatever position was entrusted to them for defence to the last man and the last round: for the most part the order was literally obeyed, and although the suspense of awaiting an attack for days under a terrible bombardment, added to the lack of food and sleep, had worn down powers of resistance and recalled the "bloodbath" of the Somme, there was hand to hand fighting at many points along the front. The German counter-barrage, scattered and uncertain because three-quarters of their guns had been put out of action by our heavy artillery fire, passed over the heads of the attacking troops. Frequently the German supports, waiting underground for the barrage to lift, were caught by the leading infantry waves before they could answer the warning *Heraus!* and emerge from their dugouts; but a number of machine guns, protected in their concrete strongholds from the field artillery barrage, had to be disposed of by the attackers before they could proceed.

On the front of the 1st Canadian Division, which attacked with the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigades on a frontage of 1,800 yards north of the intersection of the German line with the Arras-Lens road near Ecurie, No Man's Land was a mass of shell holes, craters and churned up soil. The German front and support trenches were almost obliterated, but their course was marked by the smoke and flashes of bursting shells as the barrage rolled forward in front of the attacking waves. A few of the enemy had escaped it, and with rifles, bombs and machine guns made a desperate stand in the support line—Eisener Kreuz Weg; but they were soon overpowered in hand to hand combat and in 35 minutes the Black Line was occupied, and consolidation was begun. The advance from the Black to the Red Objective, about 700 yards, was carried out against decreasing opposition between 6.55 and 7.10 a.m. Here the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade passed through the 2nd and 3rd, and at 9.55 a.m. proceeded to the capture of the Blue Objective line 1,100 yards distant. This they accomplished by 11 a.m., and by 1 p.m. they had taken Bois Carré and Commandant's House, passed over the sky-line and down the slope to capture the Brown Objective and the batteries still in action in Farbus Wood and establish themselves at the bottom of the eastern slope of the Ridge; by 5.45 p.m., little over twelve hours since the attack began, they had reached the railway embankment south-east of Farbus, an advance of more than two and a half miles.

In the right centre of the Corps front the 2nd Canadian Division, employing the 4th and 5th Canadian Infantry Brigades, carried out their part according to plan; the Black Line was captured and consolidated, the Arras-Lens road crossed, and the line advanced to the Red Objective. Here the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade and the attached 13th British Infantry Brigade passed through. Both successfully assaulted the Zwischen Stellung, and while the former captured the fortified ruins of Thélus village the latter swept over the high ground north of it through the Bois de Goulot and Bois de Bonval, capturing the enemy batteries there, and on down the eastern slope to obtain a footing in the German second position. Moving forward again at midday, the 6th Brigade in conjunction with