

Washington Post
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Win a 15-Day Battle: French Take Vauquois Hills After Desperate Fighting

Guns Now Sweep Valleys

Control of Argonne Vantage Points Finally Lost to Germans.

Furious Attempts of the French, Begun " on February 28, to Drive Teutons From Positions Where They Could Hold Back French Reinforcements at Last Succeed-Struggles

Reported to Be Fiercest of the War.

Paris. March 14. After fifteen days of the most desperate fighting of the war, the French tonight are in possession of the plateau of Vauquois, and part of the village, which gives their artillery control of the sweep of several valleys in the Argonne region, from which the Germans, with long range guns, had been holding back French reinforcements and supplies. The terrific fighting is described in a statement issued tonight by the war office:

"After several days desperate fighting, the French troops took possession of the plateau and half the village of Vauquois on the eastern outskirts of the Argonne, and have been able to prevent the Germans from making use of this important strategic position to their own advantage."

Had Swept the Valleys.

Vauquois lies in the high country not far from Cheppy and Montfaucon, on a height overlooking the Aire River, between the Hesse and Argonne forests. The French have been attacking it at various times for a month. The place served the Germans as a post of observation from which their guns swept the French out of the valleys.

"The Germans," says the statement issued regarding these operations, "were thus able at will to direct a hot fire in any direction against the valley roads through which our provision trains and troops were forced to travel, and the surrounding country was rendered increasingly difficult owing to the marshy ground along the Aire.

"The first assault occurred on February 28, and after the fiercest kind of street fighting—every inch of ground being disputed—the French succeeded in gaining a footing on the plateau and in occupying half the village. They were obliged, however, to evacuate the village the following night owing to strong German counterattacks.

Three Regiments in Attack

"On March 1, the French troops renewed the assault in greater strength. Three regiments participated during the course of the afternoon, and we again occupied part of the now ruined village. Fierce hand-to-hand encounters ensued and four German counter-attacks were repulsed. The enemy sustained heavy losses, and we took 200 prisoners.

"During the following day, despite every effort on the part of the enemy, the French maintained themselves in the positions they had won until March 5 when the Germans, after a heavy attack, finally abandoned hope of driving the French out of Vauquois.

Counter-Attacks Furious

"The German counter-attacks were carried out with fury, and the number of reinforcements brought up indicated the extent of the French success. German prisoners told of the havoc

wrought by the French artillery, and noncommissioned officers paid tribute to the improvement of the French infantry since the beginning of the war.”