

By 1600 hours the battle slowed to a stop due to the failing light. Up to that time the British had captured 10,000 prisoners, 200 field guns and numerous machine guns. A front of six miles had been penetrated at, what was then, minimal casualties. It was as if the Somme attack a year earlier had achieved a similar objective with about one tenth of the killed and wounded.

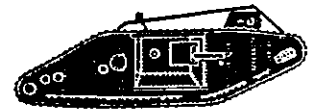
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The day was proclaimed a victory although the objective of Cambrai still had not been captured. The church bells in England were ordered to be rung for the first time in the Great War. All seemed well until the sobering of reality of the staff became clear. There were no reserves for the follow up.

Many tanks had broken down, were damaged or had been destroyed outright. For the 21st November there would be no mass of tanks to renew the attack. Nor were there reserves of infantry, for these had been squandered at the ill conceived Flanders campaign. The battle which had begun so well, would continue for another seven days. By then the gains made on the 20th would be largely lost to the Germans.

Next - The Remaining Days

Note, the map is from "Cambrai. The First Great Tank Battle 1917" by A.J. Smithers



UK: MK.IV (Male) 57mm 28

