



April 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, the Australians' night.

The counter attack could only be prepared for the evening. The plan was that two Australian Brigades together with three British battalions would encircle the town and attack simultaneously. To the south of Villers from Monument wood to Hangard wood, three other Battalions of the 54<sup>th</sup> Brigade should advance towards the east to protect the Australians' right side.

*To the south of Villers:*

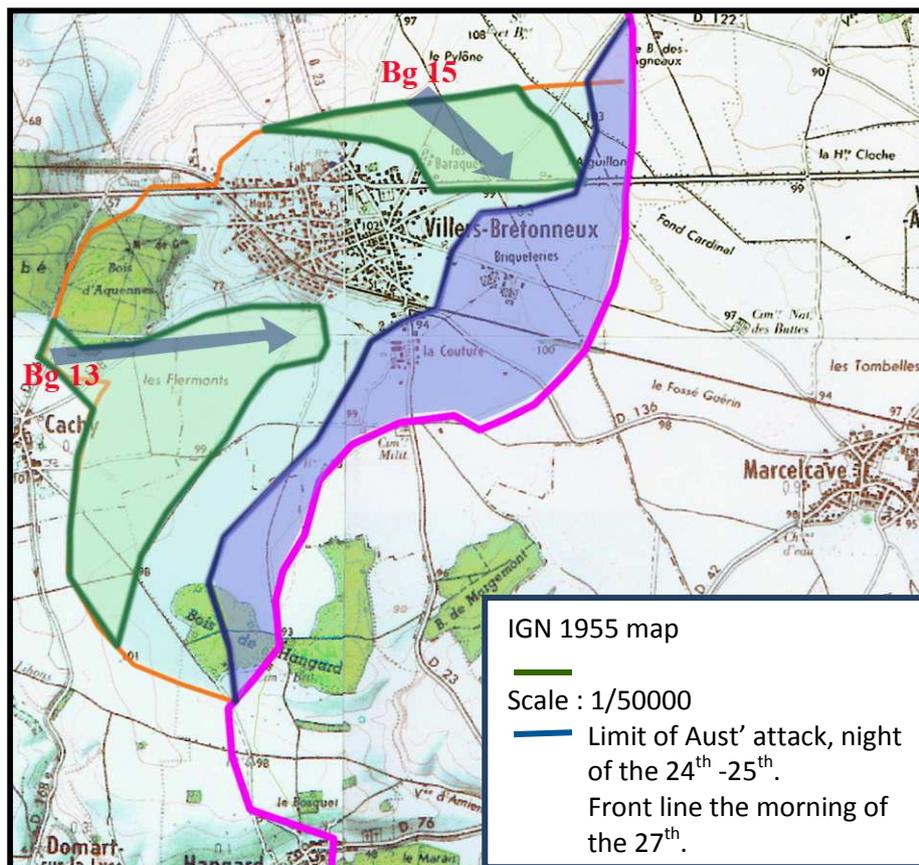
General Glasgow's Australian Brigade (Bg. 13) began their attack at 10.00pm. They advanced from the south of the Aquenne woods to the south of Villers, under very difficult conditions, against very pugnacious Germans. At 2.00am after a very substantial advance they strengthened their position on the Villers-Hangard road. The British brigade didn't manage to create the line originally planned.

*To the north of Villers:*

General Elliot's Australian Brigade (bg.15) began their advance at 11.00pm to the north of Villers. After ferocious combat the Germans were pushed back towards the south to the Villers-Warfusée road. The progress was regarded as a great feat of arms.

*The assault on the town gave no result:*

The first few hours in the beginning of the night were considered by the Australians as the most important feat of their short military history.



### April 25<sup>th</sup>, the recapture of Villers.

At dawn the Germans started to move back from the Aquenne woods towards the town and continued throughout the morning. At 6.00am to the north of the town an Australian battalion and two British battalions started a very difficult advance reaching the road to Amiens at 9.00am. The sunken rail tracks, used by the Germans to surge back towards the east were reached at 12.00pm after an attack from the south by a British battalion. The train station was finally taken at the end of the afternoon. In the evening the two Australian brigades joined up establishing the end of the German presence in Villers.

### April 26<sup>th</sup>, the tragic end of the fight of Villers.

The night of April 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> left a very patchy front line between Monument wood and Hangard wood held by a very tired 54<sup>th</sup> British Brigade. In the evening of April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Moroccan Division, one of the best divisions of the French Army, relieved the British and on April 26<sup>th</sup> at dawn, attacked to the east to clear the south of Villers. The time given was too short, so the operation was much improvised; in consequence the British and French had much difficulty in cooperating. The four French regiments began their attack as planned on April 26<sup>th</sup> at 6.00am on the Domart-Villers road. Immediately it became a crisis. The artillery barrage didn't work well; the men were pinned to the ground by the enemy's cross-fire. They continued to advance despite great loss. Three thousand of the ten thousand enlisted were injured or killed... A wasteful blood bath.

### Conclusion:

At the end of the three days the front line returned approximately to the same position as at the beginning of the attack. The enemy's means weren't sufficient to create a break through as important as it was expected on the first day. The gallant Australians inspired the retreat of the second day and the Germans lose of heart. Villers wasn't a great battle in the war, but it was a very decisive one. The furious mêlée which lasted for three days put an end to the Germans hopes of taking Amiens separating French and British Armies. Human loss was very big; it is difficult to estimate these loses. It is believed around 10,600 Germans and 12,000 Allies. Nearly a century later the many local cemeteries are the witness of this tormented era and proves the violence of this combat at the end of April 1918.