**Eye Witness Accounts of Negotiations**

**The Coming of the First German Emissary as Reported by the French Captain at the Outpost at Chimay**

Notice had reached me that an envoy might arrive and that fire had ceased in our sector.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon a German lieutenant appeared.  He was magnificently turned out and magnificently mounted, and had an escort of two men.

I met him about a hundred yards in front of our lines, and he wished me to go back with him to meet the plenipotentiaries.  I told him I could not leave my command; and at first he made some demur, the idea of those with him being that a French officer should accompany the plenipotentiaries from the other side of the line.

I assured him there would be no firing in the sector, that the plenipotentiaries could cross the line in safety, and that I would receive them at my post of command.

"This gentleman is an officer," he said to the men with him, "and as an officer I can accept and trust his word."

Five o'clock was the time fixed for the arrival of the delegates, but at that hour no one arrived, the mission, as is known, actually making their appearance considerably later in the evening, when they at once proceeded on their way.

Source: *Source Records of the Great War, Vol. VI,* ed. Charles F. Horne*, National Alumni 1923*

**British Eyewitness Report of Armistice Negotiations, 8 November 1918**

The roads were a mass of mud, motor-cars of all sorts were ranged by the side of the main street, and the German plenipotentiaries were temporarily halted because of a breakdown to a motor lorry in the road in front of them.

There were seven cars in all, two of them belonging to French Headquarters and five being German.  The plenipotentiaries must have halted for nearly half an hour, and certain members of the junior staff attached to them got down while the details of a fresh route to be followed were discussed by them with the French officers by whom they were being escorted.

The senior members remained in the cars, invisible in darkness.  Those we saw were of the typical officer class, clean-shaven and almost aggressively self-contained.  For the most part they were silent, but occasionally they talked in low tones.

On the pavement by the houses there was a continual movement of French soldiers.  No guard was round the cars, for any sort of guard was entirely unnecessary.

There was not a single individual among the two or three hundred men present who even moved forward to catch a glimpse of the mission.  There was no question as to any one doubting their identity, for the cars bore on their panels the crest of the Black Eagle.

The demeanour of the French soldier was typical of the high standard of courtesy set by Marshal Foch.  Both army and nation realized that with Marshal Foch in command the terms of the armistice were in absolutely safe hands, as he had abundantly shown that he had taken to the full such measures as the situation required.

He insisted, however, that every detail of the transaction should be conducted in absolute privacy, and there was not present at the historic meeting a single representative of the French or allied press.

Source: *Source Records of the Great War, Vol. VI,* ed. Charles F. Horne*, National Alumni 1923*

**German Armistice Delegate's Account of Negotiations, 5-11 November 1918**

When on November 5th we left Spa in motor-cars and reached the French lines we found enemy carriages already waiting to take us to the unknown scene of negotiations.

This motor tour with the French officers lasted ten hours, and it appears likely was intentionally prolonged in order to drive us all over the devastated province and prepare us by what we saw for what was shortly to be put before us in the way of hatred and revenge in the extremely severe armistice conditions.

Now and again a Frenchman pointed silently to heaps of ruins, or mentioned a name, "Voila St. Quentin."

In the evening, wherever it was, a train stood ready for us.  The windows of the carriages were curtained, and when we awoke next morning the train stood in the midst of a wood.

We know now that the negotiations took place in the forest of Compiegne, but a week ago we knew nothing.  Perhaps it was a measure of precaution, even for our sakes, that we were taken through no town.  Perhaps acts of violence were feared on the part of the population, for the hatred for us among them is boundless.

The wood was evidently barred by troops to all comers.  There were no houses and no tents.  On the railway line stood two trains, one occupied by Marshal Foch and his people, the other by ours.

Here for three days we lived, worked, and deliberated.  This seems to be the modern form of such negotiations.

The castles and fortresses of olden times have gone, even for such purposes.  The train with its sleeping, drawing-room, and dining cars was very comfortable, and we were provided with everything we wanted.  The officer who had charge of the train had us supplied, and the conduct of the numerous guards who stood around was beyond reproach.

But all the hostility and the fullness of hate for our country that seems now to be cherished in France came to expression in the form of the negotiations, as well as in the terrible nature of the conditions.

Those of us who were soldiers wore uniforms and the Iron Cross.  The introduction of the half-dozen French officers who conducted the negotiations with us "in plenum" and the greetings were of the coldest.

Foch, who showed himself only twice - at the opening and at the end - gave us no word of the particular politeness that in earlier times distinguished the most chivalrous nation in the world, and his officers just as little.

He received us with the words, *"Qu'est ceque vous desirez, messieurs?"* and invited us into his business car, furnished with tables and maps.

As each was to speak his own language and everything was translated, the reading of the conditions alone occupied nearly two hours.  It was moreover a discovery when Foch answered that there were to be no negotiations, and only dictated matter.

Altogether, with all his coldness, he was by no means so tactless and brusque as was General d'Esperey at Belgrade.

Then we retired to our train, which stood on the other line.  As we had been sent by the old Government, and had certainly not been authorized to sign everything without conditions, we proceeded, at the instance of Erzberger, to divide the various points under three heads, military, naval, and diplomatic, and discussed them separately with the members of the enemy commissions, which consisted only of officers.

Military Germany thus, with two civilians, stood face to face with now completely militarized France.  The enemy maintained, in the persons of all his representatives, the same objective; their coldness was mitigated by no single word that bordered upon the human, as had marked our reception by the Marshal.

The English Admiral adopted the tone of the French, and only from Foch's Chief of the General Staff, who bore the Alsatian name of Weygand, did we perhaps receive any greater politeness.

During our two days' proceedings there was really no negotiation, and we could only try to obtain concessions on various conditions.  For when the enemy demanded delivery of 160 U-boats we could only point out the technical impossibility, as we had not 160 to give.  This demand had to be changed into the formula, "all U-boats."

The chief point was that of food, and of this we were in a certain measure able to obtain assurance.

In the meantime, in this lonely wood, with its two railway trains, we were cut off from all intercourse with the outside world.  Foch himself went off twice to Paris, and couriers were able in two hours to arrive with the papers.  Thus it was possible for the enemy on Sunday, early, to hand us the Paris newspapers with the abdication of the Kaiser.

We read no laughter, no triumph, in their faces.  Immediately before the close of the second and last plenary sitting we placed before the enemy in the German language our protest against the treaty, but in the end we had to sign.

**Allied Armistice Terms, 11 November 1918**

**I. Military Clauses on Western Front**

*One* - Cessation of operations by land and in the air six hours after the signature of the armistice.

*Two* - Immediate evacuation of invaded countries: Belgium, France, Alsace-Lorraine, Luxemburg, so ordered as to be completed within fourteen days from the signature of the armistice.  German troops which have not left the above-mentioned territories within the period fixed will become prisoners of war.  Occupation by the allied and United States forces jointly will keep pace with evacuation in these areas.  All movements of evacuation and occupation will be regulated in accordance with a note annexed to the stated terms.

*Three* - Reparation beginning at once to be completed within fifteen days of all the inhabitants of the countries above enumerated (including hostages, persons under trial or convicted).

*Four* - Surrender in good condition by the German armies of the following war material: Five thousand guns (2,500 heavy, and 2,500 field), 25,000 machine guns, 3,000 minenwerfer, 1,700 airplanes (fighters, bombers - firstly, all of the D 7'S and all the night bombing machines).  The above to be delivered in situ to the allied and United States troops in accordance with the detailed conditions laid down in the note (annexure No. 1) drawn up at the moment of the signing of the armistice.

*Five* - Evacuation by the German armies of the countries on the left bank of the Rhine.  The countries on the left bank of the Rhine shall be administered by the local troops of occupation.  The occupation of these territories will be carried out by allied and United States garrisons holding the principal crossings of the Rhine (Mayence, Coblenz, Cologne), together with the bridgeheads at these points of a thirty-kilometre radius on the right bank and by garrisons similarly holding the strategic points of the regions.  A neutral zone shall be reserved on the right bank of the Rhine between the stream and a line drawn parallel to the bridgeheads and to the stream and at a distance of ten kilometres, from the frontier of Holland up to the frontier of Switzerland.  The evacuation by the enemy of the Rhine-lands (left and right bank) shall be so ordered as to be completed within a further period of sixteen days, in all, thirty-one days after the signing of the armistice.  All the movements of evacuation or occupation are regulated by the note (annexure No. 1) drawn up at the moment of the signing of the armistice.

*Six* - In all territories evacuated by the enemy there shall be no evacuation of inhabitants; no damage or harm shall be done to the persons or property of the inhabitants.  No person shall be prosecuted for offences of participation in war measures prior to the signing of the armistice.  No destruction of any kind shall be committed.  Military establishments of all kinds shall be delivered intact, as well as military stores of food, munitions, and equipment, not removed during the time fixed for evacuation.  Stores of food of all kinds for the civil population, cattle, etc., shall be left in situ.  Industrial establishments shall not be impaired in any way and their personnel shall not be removed.

*Seven* - Roads and means of communication of every kind, railroads, waterways, main roads, bridges, telegraphs, telephones, shall be in no manner impaired.  All civil and military personnel at present employed on them shall remain.  Five thousand locomotives and 150,000 wagons in good working order, with all necessary spare parts and fittings, shall be delivered to the associated powers within the period fixed in annexure No. 2, and total of which shall not exceed thirty-one days.  There shall likewise be delivered 5,000 motor lorries (camion automobiles) in good order, within the period of thirty-six days.  The railways of Alsace-Lorraine shall be handed over within the period of thirty-one days, together with pre-war personnel and material.  Further, the material necessary for the working of railways in the countries on the left bank of the Rhine shall be left in situ.  All stores of coal and material for the upkeep of permanent ways, signals, and repair shops shall be left in situ.  These stores shall be maintained by Germany in so far as concerns the working of the railroads in the countries on the left bank of the Rhine.  All barges taken from the Allies shall be restored to them.  The note, annexure No. 2, regulates the details of these measures.

*Eight* - The German command shall be responsible for revealing within the period of forty-eight hours after the signing of the armistice all mines or delayed action fuses on territory evacuated by the German troops and shall assist in their discovery and destruction.  It also shall reveal all destructive measures that may have been taken (such as poisoning or polluting of springs and wells, etc.).  All under penalty of reprisals.

*Nine* - The right of requisition shall be exercised by the allied and United States armies in all occupied territories, subject to regulation of accounts with those whom it may concern.  The upkeep of the troops of occupation in the Rhineland (excluding Alsace-Lorraine) shall be charged to the German Government.

*Ten* - The immediate repatriation without reciprocity, according to detailed conditions which shall be fixed, of all allied and United States prisoners of war, including persons tinder trial or convicted.  The allied powers and the United States shall be able to dispose of them as they wish.  This condition annuls the previous conventions on the subject of the exchange of prisoners of war, including the one of July, 1918, in course of ratification.  However, the repatriation of German prisoners of war interned in Holland and in Switzerland shall continue as before.  The repatriation of German prisoners of war shall be regulated at the conclusion of the preliminaries of peace.

*Eleven* - Sick and wounded who cannot be removed from evacuated territory will be cared for by German personnel, who will be left on the spot with the medical material required.

**II. Disposition Relative to the Eastern Frontiers of Germany**

*Twelve* - All German troops at present in the territories which before belonged to Austria-Hungary, Rumania, Turkey, shall withdraw immediately within the frontiers of Germany as they existed on August First, Nineteen Fourteen.  All German troops at present in the territories which before the war belonged to Russia shall likewise withdraw within the frontiers of Germany, defined as above, as soon as the Allies, taking into account the internal situation of these territories, shall decide that the time for this has come.

*Thirteen* - Evacuation by German troops to begin at once, and all German instructors, prisoners, and civilians as well as military agents now on the territory of Russia (as defined before 1914) to be recalled.

*Fourteen* - German troops to cease at once all requisitions and seizures and any other undertaking with a view to obtaining supplies intended for Germany in Rumania and Russia (as defined on August 1, 1914).

*Fifteen* - Renunciation of the treaties of Bucharest and Brest-Litovsk and of the supplementary treaties.

*Sixteen* - The Allies shall have free access to the territories evacuated by the Germans on their eastern frontier, either through Danzig, or by the Vistula, in order to convey supplies to the populations of those territories and for the purpose of maintaining order.

**III. Clause Concerning East Africa**

*Seventeen* - Evacuation by all German forces operating in East Africa within a period to be fixed by the Allies.

**IV. General Clauses**

*Eighteen* - Repatriation, without reciprocity, within a maximum period of one month in accordance with detailed conditions hereafter to be fixed of all interned civilians, including hostages under trial or convicted, belonging to the Allied or associated powers other than those enumerated in Article Three.

*Nineteen* - The following financial conditions are required: Reparation for damage done.  While such armistice lasts no public securities shall be removed by the enemy which can serve as a pledge to the Allies for the recovery or reparation for war losses.  Immediate restitution of the cash deposit in the national bank of Belgium, and in general immediate return of all documents, specie, stocks, shares, paper money, together with plant for the issue thereof, touching public or private interests in the invaded countries.  Restitution of the Russian and Rumanian gold yielded to Germany or taken by that power.  This gold to be delivered in trust to the Allies until the signature of peace.

**V. Naval Conditions**

*Twenty* - Immediate cessation of all hostilities at sea and definite information to be given as to the location and movements of all German ships.  Notification to be given to neutrals that freedom of navigation in all territorial waters is given to the naval and mercantile marines of the allied and associated powers, all questions of neutrality being waived.

*Twenty-one* - All naval and mercantile marine prisoners of the allied and associated powers in German hands to be returned without reciprocity.

*Twenty-two* - Surrender to the Allies and United States of all submarines (including submarine cruisers and all mine-laying submarines) now existing, with their complete armament and equipment, in ports which shall be specified by the Allies and United States.  Those which cannot take the sea shall be disarmed of the personnel and material and shall remain under the supervision of the Allies and the United States.  The submarines which are ready for the sea shall be prepared to leave the German ports as soon as orders shall be received by wireless for their voyage to the port designated for their delivery, and the remainder at the earliest possible moment.  The conditions of this article shall be carried into effect within the period of fourteen days after the signing of the armistice.

*Twenty-three* - German surface warships which shall be designated by the Allies and the United States shall be immediately disarmed and thereafter interned in neutral ports or in default of them in allied ports to be designated by the Allies and the United States.  They will there remain under the supervision of the Allies and of the United States, only caretakers being left on board.  The following warships are designated by the Allies: Six battle cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruisers (including two mine layers), fifty destroyers of the most modern types.  All other surface warships (including river craft) are to be concentrated in German naval bases to be designated by the Allies and the United States and are to be completely disarmed and classed under the supervision of the Allies and the United States.  The military armament of all ships of the auxiliary fleet shall be put on shore.  All vessels designated to be interned shall be ready to leave the German ports seven days after the signing of the armistice.  Directions for the voyage will be given by wireless.

*Twenty-four* - The Allies and the United States of America shall have the right to sweep up all mine fields and obstructions laid by Germany outside German territorial waters, and the positions of these are to be indicated.

*Twenty-five* - Freedom of access to and from the Baltic to be given to the naval and mercantile marines of the allied and associated powers.  To secure this the Allies and the United States of America shall be empowered to occupy all German forts, fortifications, batteries, and defence works of all kinds in all the entrances from the Cattegat into the Baltic, and to sweep up all mines and obstructions within and without German territorial waters, without any question of neutrality being raised, and the positions of all such mines and obstructions are to be indicated.

*Twenty-six* - The existing blockade conditions set up by the allied and associated powers are to remain unchanged, and all German merchant ships found at sea are to remain liable to capture.  The Allies and the United States should give consideration to the provisioning of Germany during the armistice to the extent recognized as necessary.

*Twenty-seven* - All naval aircraft are to be concentrated and immobilized in German bases to be specified by the Allies and the United States of America.

*Twenty-eight* - In evacuating the Belgian coast and ports Germany shall abandon in situ and in fact all port and river navigation material, all merchant ships, tugs, lighters, all naval aeronautic apparatus, material and supplies, and all arms, apparatus, and supplies of every kind.

*Twenty-nine*- All Black Sea ports are to be evacuated by Germany; all Russian war vessels of all descriptions seized by Germany in the Black Sea are to be handed over to the Allies and the United States of America; all neutral merchant vessels seized are to be released; all warlike and other materials of all kinds seized in those ports are to be returned and German materials as specified in Clause Twenty-eight are to be abandoned.

*Thirty* - All merchant vessels in German hands belonging to the allied and associated powers are to be restored in ports to be specified by the Allies and the United States of America without reciprocity.

*Thirty-one* - No destruction of ships or of materials to be permitted before evacuation, surrender, or restoration.

*Thirty-two* - The German Government will notify the neutral Governments of the world, and particularly the Governments of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, that all restrictions placed on the trading of their vessels with the allied and associated countries, whether by the German Government or by private German interests, and whether in return for specific concessions, such as the export of shipbuilding materials, or not, are immediately cancelled.

*Thirty-three* - No transfers of German merchant shipping of any description to any neutral flag are to take place after signature of the armistice.

**VI. Duration of Armistice**

*Thirty-four* - The duration of the armistice is to be thirty days, with option to extend.  During this period if its clauses are not carried into execution the armistice may be denounced by one of the contracting parties, which must give warning forty-eight hours in advance.  It is understood that the execution of Articles 3 and 18 shall not warrant the denunciation of the armistice on the ground of insufficient execution within a period fixed, except in the case of bad faith in carrying them into execution.  In order to assure the execution of this convention under the best conditions, the principle of a permanent international armistice commission is admitted.  This commission will act under the authority of the allied military and naval Commanders in Chief.

**VII. The Limit for Reply**

*Thirty-five* - This armistice to be accepted or refused by Germany within seventy-two hours of notification.

This armistice has been signed the Eleventh of November, Nineteen Eighteen, at 5 o'clock French time.

F. FOCH.  
R. E. WEMYSS.  
ERZBERGER.  
A. OBERNDORFF.  
WINTERFELDT.  
VON SALOW.