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WEATHER—SHOWERY

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# Hun Drive For Paris!

## GERMANS STRIKE GIGANTIC BLOW BETWEEN SOISSONS AND THE CITY OF RHEIMS

"Nach Paris" the Cry of the German Hosts Who Force British and French To Retire Methodically in Rheims Sector, Enemy Reaching the Region of Pont Arcy—Ludendorff's Object Is To Try For Paris—Battle of Extreme Violence in Progress in Southernmost Sector of the War Zone—Fighting, Preceded By Heavy Gunfire, Began at Daylight.

Simultaneously Ludendorff Strikes Again in Flanders, His Onslaughts Being Made South of Ypres and Repulsed By the French, Who Have Been Given Charge of That Sector—Ludendorff Hoped To Catch Foch Unprepared and Strike in Weak Point, But Allies Not Surprised.

Special Cable To New York Tribune and St. John Standard.  
(By Arthur S. Draper).

London, May 27—Having failed to crush the British, the Germans are now trying to smash the French. At daybreak, after a night of fierce bombardment, Ludendorff struck his second gigantic blow between Soissons and Rheims along a front measuring well over thirty-five miles. The French and British retired methodically, the enemy reaching Pont Darcy. "Nach Paris" is the cry of the German hosts who are attacking over the country where Nivelle launched his powerful but undecided blow April a year ago. Simultaneously Ludendorff struck again in Flanders, his onslaughts being made south of Ypres. According to the reports of Field Marshal Haig the full force of the Flanders blow is being met by the French who are holding the line between Loere and Voormezele, a distance of nearly six miles. Thus the French are forced to withstand the initial shock on an aggregate frontage close to forty miles, which is practically a duplication of the task of the British army on March 21.

The enemy's objectives are clearly defined. In the north Ludendorff is trying to turn the Ypres positions, capture Scherpenberg and debouch to the Ypres plains with the channel ports as the ultimate goal. In the south Ludendorff figures on the element of surprise bringing him bounteous returns. He calculated that Foch was unprepared for a shift of the centre of gravity, that the bulk of allied armies is in the north and that he can drive his wedge deep before the poorer communications of Foch can bring relief.

Short Cut to Paris.

Ludendorff has selected the shortest route to Paris and he hopes to unnerve the French by turning big bertha upon the city again.

On April 17 of last year Ludendorff began his campaign; "one of the greatest battles of the world, is in progress on the Aisne."

That is the way he reported Nivelle's attack on a 25 mile front. Since then Haig has directed the battle for Ypres and Ludendorff has launched the battle of Picardy, both of which overshadowed Nivelle's great enterprise which proved so disappointing.

In the first dash Nivelle took all of the enemy's positions between Soissons and Craonne, and on the following day the action extended to Champagne between Prunay and St. Hilaire-St. Ouplet Road, while Aubertin on the extreme right was captured. Ten thousand prisoners were taken by Nivelle. On the following days much fierce fighting took place along the famous Chemin Des Dames, but that was the last great offensive operation undertaken by the French.

General Petain succeeded Nivelle in command soon after the battle of the Aisne.

Perfect Weather.

Perfect weather, a brilliant sun and little wind, the pre-requisites for artillery serial observation, marked the opening of the third phase of the great battle of 1918. Right here it should be said that the new operations are simply another phase of the struggle between Ludendorff and Foch, and the Aisne front is only another section of the battlefield. The explanation of the long pause comes today. Ludendorff used the interval to shift a large part of his army from the north to the south. He selected the Aisne front because he could use old communications, railways and roads to move up his men and supplies.

250,000 Germans.

There are now about 210 German divisions (about 2,500,000 men) on the west front, many of them, possibly 60 divisions being held in reserve for a crushing blow at the point which proves to be weakest. The present battle front may be extended

at any time to include the Somme area.

By his new drive Ludendorff has changed the nature of fighting along a front of 125 miles. Ludendorff's tactics are much like those of a quarter back of a football team. When he can hit at several points in the line he is not likely to hammer away at some place which the opposition, knowing his plans, can re-enforce by shifting players. Ludendorff's new drive means he will retain the initiative a while longer.

Military experts believe that the present fighting will continue to be violent for weeks, if not months. They think that the Germans are making their last great offensive, and if they fail to achieve success they will resign the initiative and fall back upon the defensive until peace is made.

Expect Austrian Drive.

In a few weeks they expect the Austrians to launch a drive. Ludendorff has as many—if not more men than he had when he began the battle of March 21. The Allies are undoubtedly stronger than they were two months back. Reinforcements from England and America and distant theatres of war have arrived in France in considerable numbers during the last sixty days.

Foch has rearranged his whole army, British and American being sandwiched in between the French in many sectors. Sunday's German communiqué told of the capture of British and American prisoners in the very region where today's offensive took place, while Haig disclosed the fact that the whole six miles front attacked today by Von Arnim's army was defended by the French.

The Allies are much stronger in the air than they were during the last week of March when the German horde swept over their Somme aerodromes. However, it is mistaken optimism to conclude that because Ludendorff selected a new battle front he has abandoned all hope of reaching his original goals. Reverting to the analogy of the football quarterback, there are times when he selects a line drive and other times when he circles the ends though the objectives are similar in both cases.

The next few days will prove whether the German machine can penetrate

consistently. The Germans realize that in Foch they have one of the brainiest, coolest generals on either side. His greatest problems are those of men and communications. Long since it has been admitted that their geographical position gave the Germans a distinct advantage in the matter of communications and during the last two months the Allies have suffered from the heavy handicap of having one of their chief lines under the observation of enemy artillery.

Ludendorff enjoys a distinct advantage over the Allies, and his selection of the Aisne front shows how highly he appreciates it. Since the battle of the Marne the Germans have held the Laon Mountains which rise to a height of six hundred feet.

The country is entirely different from the rolling plains of Picardy or the lowlands of Flanders. In the heavily wooded region behind the line of today's battle the enemy is able to hide his guns and troop movements.

Cave Defenses.

The whole country is honeycombed with cave defenses. Here and there a hamlet nestles at the foot of a hill but no inhabitants have remained within five miles of the line where today's battle began. The ruins of Rheims have been almost deserted for several weeks, the population having dwindled from 120,000 to a couple of hundred during the last four years. Its famous wine cellars remain, but above ground it is only a skeleton of its former self.

Up in the Neuport and Dinant sectors there has been lively raiding going on nightly, the Belgians being exceedingly alert, however.

Nashua, N. H., May 27—A bomb, three feet long, containing a quantity of dynamite and other high explosives was found under the Boston and Maine railroad bridge at Barrington.

## British and French Attacked in Great Strength by Enemy

London, May 27—"On the Loere-Voormezele front, the French troops repulsed the enemy with great loss." This announcement was contained in Field Marshal Haig's official report tonight.

The attack against the sector of Barry Au Bac held by the British was partially successful by reason of an intense bombardment by gas shells and the use of tanks and after heavy fighting the British on the left were pressed back to prepared positions constituting the second line.

The text of the statement reads: "At 3.30 o'clock this morning the British divisions holding a sector of the French front astride the Aisne at Berry Au Bac, between Berniercourt and Croannelle, were heavily attacked.

"At the same time hostile attacks in great strength were made against the French troops immediately on the right and French divisions on the left along the high ground traversed by the Chemin Des Dames.

"In the British sector the enemy's attack was supported by tanks and accompanied by an intense bombardment with gas shells.

"On our right our troops maintained their battle positions and are in close touch with the French. On our left the enemy succeeded, after heavy fighting, in pressing our troops back to the second line of prepared positions. Severe fighting has taken place along the front and is continuing.

"On the Lys battlefield strong attacks made by the enemy this morning on the Loere - Voormezele front have been repulsed by the French troops after fierce fighting with great loss to the enemy.

"In the neighborhood of Dickebusch Lake the enemy succeeded in penetrating for a short distance into the French position. Fighting is still taking place at this point. Other localities, in which the enemy penetrated in the first attack, have been regained by counter-attacks by the French troops, who secured a number of prisoners.

"On the remainder of the British front the situation is unchanged."

## VIOLENT BATTLE RAGING IN THE RHEIMS SECTOR

Fierce Fighting Extends From Region of Vauxaillon to the Brimont Outskirts.

GERMANS MAKE SLIGHT PROGRESS

Probable Entire Armies of Von Boehm and Von Below in Struggle.

Paris, May 27.—A battle of extreme violence was engaged from the region of Vauxaillon to the outskirts of Brimont (Rheims sector) says the official report from the war office tonight. The enemy, at the end of the day, had reached the region of Pont-Arcy. The Franco-British troops retired methodically and in perfect liaison, making the enemy pay dearly for his futile success.

A Most Violent Attack. On the French front in France, May 27.—(By The Associated Press)—The uncanny silence along the entire battle front in the past few days was

merely a prelude to a most violent attack today by the Germans along an extended front stretching from Pinon almost to Rheims. While there are no specific indications it is most probable that the entire armies of General Von Boehm and General Franz Von Below, under the supreme control of the Imperial Crown Prince, have been thrown into the engagement.

Recall Fierce Fighting.

As pointed out in previous despatches, the Germans are well served with railroads in this region, enabling them to transport quickly large masses of troops from one point to another.

Throughout last year the territory where the fighting has been in progress since early this morning was the scene of exceedingly fierce fighting which reached its climax in the battle of Malmeson.

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## THE ITALIANS TAKE IMPORTANT PLACES FROM THE ENEMY

King Victor Emmanuel's Army Launches Important Attack, Capturing Town of Presena, Monticello Pass and Mountain Spur East of the Pass—Severe Losses Inflicted Upon the Austrians in the Tonale District.

Vienna Admits That Part of the Austrian Lines Were Pressed Back—Italians Capture 870 Prisoners, Including Fourteen Officers, Twelve Cannon and Twenty-Five Machine Guns—The War Summary.

Rome, May 27—The Italians have launched an important attack, capturing several mountain positions, the war office announces. They have taken 800 prisoners.

The summit of Monte Zigolon, the town of Presena, Monticello Pass and the mountain spur east of the pass have been wrested from the enemy.

Paris, May 27—Severe losses have been inflicted upon the Austrians in the Tonale district by the Italians, according to special despatches from Rome. Among the 870 prisoners taken by the Italians, are fourteen officers. Twelve cannon and twenty-five machine guns have remained in the hands of the Italians.

Vienna, via London, May 27—The official report from Austrian headquarters today says:

"The Italians yesterday attacked our positions south of Tonale Pass. A small section of our lines was pressed back. A further enemy advance was frustrated."

(The Italian attack is being carried out in a difficult part of the country near the western end of the front. The points mentioned by the Italian war office are northwest of Trent, near the Austro-Italian frontier.)

Germany's great offensive on the western front has been resumed. With only brief artillery preparation, two blows have been struck by the Teuton armies, which have been re-organized since disastrous losses were inflicted on them by the French and British during the Picardy and Flanders battles in March and April. One attack was on the line from Voormezele to Loere, southwest of Ypres; the other on a thirty-five mile front from Pinon, north of Soissons, to Rheims. This is known as the Aisne sector.

In Flanders the Germans have gained virtually nothing, but further south the Berlin official statement claims that the German Crown Prince's troops have carried the whole ridge of the Chemin Des Dames and are now fighting on the Aisne River.

The German attack in Flanders is against positions taken by the French on May 20, when they recaptured Brussele and Loere and strengthened their line on each side of Hill 44, which they had retaken a few days before.

On the Aisne front the present battle recalls the fearful fighting of last summer along the Chemin Des Dames, where for weeks the German Crown Prince hurled his men against the French positions only to see them crushed and beaten. Last year seventy-five divisions were engaged in the German attacks along this line alone.

The attack here is really in the nature of a line-straightening operation. It is being launched from Laon as a centre and is aimed at the elbow in the line formed during the fighting in Picardy in March and April. Here, however, the Germans must face permanent works which have been occupied by the French for long periods and which can be defended quite easily.

The long range bombardment of Paris has been resumed after an interval during which it was believed that the big German guns had been silenced.

It is officially reported from Washington that American positions in the Picardy sector near Cantigny and Montdidier have been subjected to attack and at places the Germans penetrated them. The enemy, however, was driven out by the Americans.

Almost coincident with the new German assault, the Italians launched a blow at the Austrian lines in the mountain region to the northwest of Lake Garda. According to reports they have carried Monticello Pass, the village of Presena, Mont Zigolon and the mountain spur to the east. Before them lie parallel streams leading down into the Lagarina Valley and if they successfully carry their attack there it is possible for them to outflank the entire Austrian position in the north of Italy.

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