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FAIR AND MILD

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## ENEMY TAKES SOISSONS!

### THE SEVERITY OF GERMAN LOSSES MAY FORCE HALT IN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS

**The Germans Advance at all Points in Their Great Aisne Salient, Capturing Soissons on the West, Making Gain Yesterday of Seven Miles in Centre and Half Circling City of Rheims on the East—Their Total Gain in Three Days' Fighting Has Maximum Depth of Twenty Miles—Ludendorff Attacks With Redoubled Force on All Sides of Wedge He Has Driven Into Allied Line.**

**The French Before Soissons Forced To Give Ground Rapidly in Face of Terrific Attacks of Enemy—Out-numbered Ten to One in Places Allies Withdraw To Save Being Annihilated—German Losses Tremendous, But Allies' Casualties Reported Light, Although Many Prisoners and Much War Material Lost—Berlin Claims 25,000 Prisoners—War Value of Captured Towns Slight.**

Special Cable to New York Tribune and St. John Standard.

London, May 29—The Germans today advanced at all points in their great Aisne salient, capturing Soissons on the west, making a gain of seven miles in the center, and half encircling Rheims on the east. Their total gain in three days' fighting has a maximum depth of twenty miles. Ludendorff attacked with redoubled force on all sides of the wedge he had driven into the allied line.

The French before Soissons were forced to give ground rapidly in the face of the terrific attacks of the enemy. In places, observers report, they were outnumbered ten to one, and little by little they withdrew to give Foch's reserves time to come up. Last night the French were clinging tenaciously to the west outskirts of Soissons.

On the west side of the salient the Germans pushed forward to a line running south from Soissons through Belleu, Septmonts, Ambrief and Chaerise. On the south they reached Loupeigne, and northwest of Rheims the force of the enemy's drive forced the Anglo-French troops to withdraw across the Aisne-Marne Canal, along a line running through Brouillet, Savagny and Thillois.

Instead of slackening its pace, Ludendorff's drive continued today with renewed energy. The allied troops were forced to evacuate more territory than was lost in the first two days of the drive. Berlin claimed the capture of a total of 25,000 prisoners.

Despite the severe loss of territory, a spirit of confidence marked the reports from the battlefield. Although many prisoners were lost and some war material had to be abandoned in the rapid withdrawal, observers report that tremendous losses have been inflicted on the attacking masses, while the allied casualties have been low. Foch is gaining in this race with Ludendorff. Observers report that the severity of the German losses will force a halt within forty-eight hours.

#### Huns Cut Railroads.

General Meistre commanded the 6th army which, with the British, had the task of holding this front. The cutting of the railroad line between Soissons and Rheims was one of the tactical advantages obtained by the enemy. This part of the front is supplied by railroads running through Compiègne, Villers Cotterets and Meux. From Soissons to Paris is 65 miles by rail but only 51 as the crow flies. Mont Notre Dame is approximately 50 miles from Paris.

If this is a diversion, then it furnishes a useful illustration of what may be expected of the main effort. Frankly we have entered upon another exceedingly grave period, but except for the loss of ground, there is no reason for depression.

The enemy is much stronger than is generally supposed. He has benefited greatly by the lessons he learned earlier in the war. The Allies are still suffering from the blow he struck in March and April. But Foch has not played his last card. He still has a trick or two left and Ludendorff is a long way from a decision.

The Germans were strongly reinforced by the arrival of fresh divisions, and the terrific pressure which they brought to bear on the wings made it necessary to give ground or be annihilated. Confidence is expressed both in Paris and in London that the Allied reserves who are rapidly coming to the battle front will halt the Crown Prince's advances. The whole German plan of attack now is based on bring-

ing pressure to bear on the wings thus forcing the fall of Rheims and Soissons.

**Rheims in Danger.**  
The fall of St. Thierry, pulling the Allied line back to the heights south and southeast of that town, brings the German lines about Rheims on three sides. Any further push on the Allied right flank threatens the city. The war has changed values.

Rheims has been a place surrounded with a great mysterious veil of sentiment ever since its bombardment by the Germans. Its sentimental value to the world is great, but its military value is negligible. Its fall will not mean that the Allied cause is defeated. This is a war in which man power and supplies, not ground, are to be the deciding factors, and should Ypres, Rheims, Verdun, Nancy or other large towns behind the lines fall into the hands of the enemy, it does not mean that they are of great military value.

#### The Reserves.

The Allied reserves which are now being brought up to the scene of operations should be of sufficient force to hold the German drive.

It was believed at the beginning of operations that the thrust in the Aisne was only a feint to draw the Allied reserves from the center when a movement against Amiens and Albert would be undertaken by the enemy.

The Germans profited by the element of surprise. Their attack has proved to be more than a feint, and it is developing into one of the biggest

operations of the war.

**May Attack Aims.**  
What Foch is doing with his reserves is a mystery. Some are being rushed to hold the line on the Aisne, that is certain, but it is feared that if too many are sent from the Amiens sector, the Germans will shift the weight of their attack to that front.

The value of the drive between Rheims and Soissons is of two fold to the Germans, one the capture of Soissons and Rheims and, two, the straightening of their lines preparatory to a big offensive on the Somme. These cities have little military value as stated. The only value attached to their possession lies in the bolstering of the spirits of the German people.

#### Italian Statement

Rome, via 29—"At Capo Sile Monday night two hostile attacks were broken up in front of our new positions says the official report from headquarters today. In the Frosena Valley we captured a patrol of thirteen. Other prisoners were taken in Col Caprille area."

"Enemy detachments were repulsed at Mont Como and Mont Asalone."

#### GEN. VON KESSEL DEAD.

Amsterdam, May 29—General Von Kessel, military commander of Berlin, died suddenly at his home yesterday, according to advices from Berlin.

### After a Desperate Battle the French Evacuate Soissons

Paris, May 29—After desperate resistance and fighting in the streets, lasting several hours, the French have evacuated Soissons, which the Germans occupied, according to the official announcement from the war office tonight.

The text of the statement reads: "The troops covering Rheims have withdrawn behind the Aisne Canal northwest of the town."

"The battle took on particular violence on our left wing. In the region of Soissons, after stubborn resistance and fighting in the streets, which held back the enemy for several hours, our troops evacuated the town, the western outskirts of which we occupy."

"Southeast of Soissons the battle extended to the plateau marked by Belleu, Septmonts, Ambrief and Chaerise."

"In the centre, under the pressure of the enemy we gave ground in the region of Loupeigne, north of Fere-En-Tardenois. The Franco-British troops further to the east maintained their positions on the line of Brouillet, Sevigny and Tilley."

"On the right the troops which are covering Rheims have withdrawn behind the Aisne Canal, northwest of the town."

Soissons is a city in the department of the Aisne, situated on the River Aisne, fifty-one miles northeast of Paris. It had a population of about 12,000 in normal times, but had less civilians during the past year or two than usual. The city is a fortress of the second rank and has some old and interesting buildings, including a splendid cathedral, erected in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, old churches, remains of an old abbey, etc.

Soissons was the scene of a battle in 486, when Clovis defeated the Romans and established the Frankish power in Gaul. The Germans captured the city in the war of 1870-71.

## BRITISH OFFICERS SACRIFICE LIVES

**Heroically Destroy Bridges in Retreating Across Aisne River—Terrific Teuton Torrent Almost Submerges British and French—Allies Confident That Present Unfavorable Situation Only Temporary.**

With the French army in France, May 29—(By the Associated Press)—The Germans advanced against the French lines again today after throwing further masses of troops into the battle. Both of the battle lines were the scene of very heavy fighting by inferior numbers against superior, with the result that the Allies were obliged again to cede ground at several points.

Besides Von Boehm's and Von Below's armies, many divisions of Von Hutler's troops were engaged. These especially trained units had participated in the first rush on March 21 and had since then been reconstructed. An enormous number of light machine guns were employed by the Germans as well as a large fleet of tanks and much heavy and light artillery, while the German aviators were extremely active.

**Germans Use Tanks.**  
From the plain toward Juvincourt, Ville-Aux-Bois, Pontavert and Berry-An-Bac, numerous tanks came into action. For a considerable time the thin allied line held out, but as the enemy debouched, wave after wave, the French and British almost submerged, fell back slowly, getting across the river. Several British officers afterwards sacrificed their lives in destroying the bridges.

Almost simultaneously overpowering enemy forces made their road, in the neighborhood of Chavignon and Malmanson, and the troops holding these points were obliged to recede. The allied movements to the rear was executed with the greatest pre-

cision; there was no disorder and all the units kept in constant liaison.

#### Re-adjustment of Lines.

Further east other British divisions amalgamated with French colonial troops, held fast and are still firmly sticking to their positions, although they have been compelled to rearrange part of their front in order to keep alignment with their retreating comrades.

In the direction of Soissons a re-adjustment of the front line also became necessary, in consequence of the falling back of the center where the Germans were pushing hardest.

The fighting has been continuous for three days, through a country composed of a series of chalky plateaus, with winding valleys, whose slopes are half clothed with trees and containing many caverns. Along the top of one of the principal ridges runs the famous Chemin Des Dames from which valleys spread angularly towards the Aisne. The allied possession of this ridge compromised the security of the German southern flank.

#### Terrific Teuton Torrent.

The enemy's torrent of divisions, rolling forward, found only the thinnest line of Allied troops facing the advance. These fell back before the irresistible pressure, retiring, but struggling valiantly. The torrent as it moved forward became even stronger, for the Germans added new forces to it. Given the Aisne did not stay its rush. The Germans followed the Allies across the river and at the same time spread along the sides.

(Continued on page 2)

### RHEIMS IN DANGER, FOCH WITHDRAWS TROOPS NEAR CITY

**In Their Violent Attack on Thirty Mile Front Running From Soissons Eastward to Region Northwest of Rheims, German Armies Are Continuing to Drive the French and British Forces Before Them on Nearly Every Sector.**

**Fortified City of Soissons, Fifty-One Miles Northeast of Paris, Occupied By the Enemy, Although the French Are Still Holding Tenaciously To Its Western Environs, Through Which Emerge Railway Lines To Capital.**

In their violent attacks on the thirty-mile battlefield running from Soissons eastward to the region northwest of Rheims, the German armies are continuing to drive the French and British forces before them on nearly every sector.

The fortified city of Soissons, fifty-one miles northeast of Paris, the extreme left flank of the allied battle line, has been occupied by the enemy, although the French are still holding tenaciously to its environs through which emerge the railway lines leading to Paris and Compeigne.

According to the German official communication 25,000 prisoners, among them a French and British general, have been taken and numerous additional towns and vantag points all along the front have been captured.

Seemingly Rheims, like Soissons, also is doomed to fall into the hands of the enemy, as the French war office reports, that the troops covering the famous cathedral city, which almost daily for several years has been the target for shells of hate from the German guns, have been withdrawn from behind the Aisne Canal northwest of the town.

#### Fifteen Mile Gain.

"On the sector directly to the southeast of Soissons the Germans now are fighting relatively twelve miles from where they started their drive Monday from Vauxaillon, while further east, near Loupeigne, and in the centre in the vicinity of the Savigny, wedges have been driven into a depth of approximately fifteen miles."

"The Germans continually are throwing fresh divisions into the battle, but the British and French troops are keeping up their tactics of giving ground only when it is impossible longer to hold positions under the tremendous pressure of the enemy. Heavy casualties are being suffered by the army of the German Crown Prince, while the losses of men to the allied forces are described as relatively light."

#### Counter-Attacks.

Although unofficial attacks have mentioned the pushing up of reinforcements from the south, there has as yet been no official statement that General Foch is sending in his reserves.

"Numerous counter-attacks have been launched against the Americans holding Cantigny and the outlying positions, but all of them have met with the same result—failure and the loss of many killed or wounded."

"Evidently the Americans have pre-

pared to dispute to the last degree their occupancy of the high ground they have won overlooking the plateau to the east of Cantigny."

#### Americans Praised.

Unstinted praise has been showered upon the Americans by military officers for the dash and daring they showed when they left their trenches and started out in quest of their objectives.

"Still another defeat has been inflicted on the enemy by the Americans—this time far to the east in the Foug sector. Here the Germans let loose large quantities of gas near Stremeni and delivered an attack, which the Americans shot to pieces with much gas. Later, on another sector, under a heavy barrage fire, fourteen Germans managed to invade an American trench. None of them returned. In hand-to-hand fighting nine of the Germans were killed outright and one died later from his wounds. The other four were made captives."

"In Picardy the Germans are heavily bombarding French and British positions on various sectors and raiding operations are being carried out by both sides. No big battle has been begun."

"The British transport Leasowe Castle has been sunk by a submarine in the Mediterranean with the loss of 101 persons drowned."

## Ninety-Two Lost On A British Transport

London, May 29—The Transport Ship Leasowe Castle has been sunk by an enemy submarine, the British Admiralty announced tonight, one hundred and one persons were drowned.

The Leasowe Castle which was of 9,737 tons gross, was sunk in the Mediterranean on May 26. Among those who lost their lives were 13 military officers and 79 soldiers of other ranks.

The Leasowe Castle was built in 1917 at Birkenhead and was owned by the Union Castle Mail Steamship Company of London.

The text of the British Admiralty statement reads: "The transport Leasowe Castle was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine, May 26 in the Mediterranean. "Thirteen military officers and seventy nine other ranks, and of the ship's company the captain, two wireless operators and six other ratings were drowned."