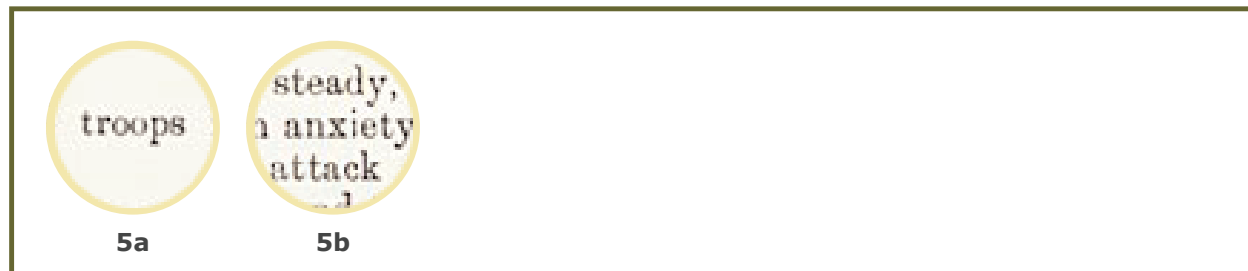




Source 5

Extracts from General Haig's summary of the Battle of the Somme, 1 August 1916
(Catalogue ref: CAB 37/153/1)



How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. It contains information that could be useful in your presentation. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- According to this source, what had been achieved at the Somme?
- Do any of the other sources in this case study support Haig's interpretation of events?
- Does this source help to explain why Haig did not call off the attack at the Somme?
- What does it reveal about Haig's views on the casualties suffered?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 5a

Summary.—The effect of the offensive on Germany may, therefore, be summed up as follows:—

- (a.) Germany has had to draw troops from the whole extent of her Western front to meet the threat.
- (b.) She has been forced to employ defensively a strength in men per yard exceeding that which she was able to employ for the offensive operations on the Verdun front.
- (c.) In spite of such reinforcements it is proved possible for the Allies to maintain a superiority of numbers and of guns in the battle.
- (d.) Owing to the battle, Germany has been unable to move troops to meet the Russian offensive in the East. Had she been able to move these troops, which calculations show would amount to 19 divisions, it is more than probable that the Russian offensive would have been unable to make progress.
- (e.) The German offensive on the Verdun front appears to have been definitely postponed, if not entirely abandoned.
- (f.) Germany has suffered losses far in excess of the proportion of drafts which she can make available for this front.
- (g.) If the battle is maintained for another 6 weeks it appears probable that the German losses will be more than she will be able to make good by the end of the year.



Source 5b

Our losses in the last month's very heavy fighting—totalling to about 120,000 more than they would have been if we had not attacked—cannot be regarded as unduly heavy, or as sufficient to justify any anxiety as to our ability to continue the offensive. Both the enemy and our Allies have borne far heavier losses than this without being turned from their purpose, and, moreover, our ranks have been filled up again and our troops are still in excellent heart.

It is my intention—

- (a.) To maintain a steady, methodical pressure, giving the enemy no rest and no respite from anxiety;
- (b.) To push my attack strongly whenever and wherever the state of my preparations and the general situation make success sufficiently probable to justify me in doing so, but not otherwise;
- (c.) To secure against counter-attack each advantage gained and prepare thoroughly for each fresh advance.

Proceeding thus I expect to be able to maintain the offensive well into the autumn and to inflict on the enemy material and moral losses which will amply recompense us for our own losses.