

1918: DEFINING VICTORY

THE BLACK DAY OF THE GERMAN ARMY: AUSTRALIANS AND CANADIANS AT AMIENS, AUGUST 1918 SF Wise

From the perspective of world history, the most significant collaboration in which Australia and Canada have ever engaged began at 4:20 in the morning of 8 August 1918. It was at that hour that the Australian and Canadian Corps moved off, side by side, from their taped start lines, plunged into a heavy mist, and achieved the largest single day advance made by the Allies during the whole of the First World War—eight miles for the Canadians, seven miles for the Australians. This spectacular offensive, which was to continue through 11 August, changed the course of history and ushered in the Allied victory campaign.

Until Amiens, 1918 had been a year of unrelenting German offensive action on the Western Front. With the elimination of Tsarist Russia from the war, Germany was at last free to transfer forces from the Eastern Front, swelling its armies to over 200 divisions. The *Kaiserschlacht* (the Kaiser's battle) was launched on 21 March with Operation 'Michael', when three German armies opened a dangerous gap between the French and British forces, and sent the British Fifth Army reeling back in ignominious retreat. For the next four months, until mid-July, offensive succeeded offensive, as General Erich Ludendorff sought the formula which would bring triumph for Germany. By June, the German tide had once more reached the River Marne, as it had in 1914, and in Flanders, the hard won British gains of 1917 disappeared as German armies thrust towards Ypres. Only in mid-July did the French give a check to the German advance, throwing back a bridgehead over the Marne and forcing a slight enemy withdrawal. At this stage, however, there was no real sign that the German offensive had ended. Allied leaders, politicians and soldiers alike, assumed that the war would continue into 1919, and looked to the Allied generalissimo, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, whose appointment was a direct result of German successes, to provide the strategy for the coming year.

The Allied high command certainly did not anticipate a near-breakthrough at Amiens. Since early April, Marshal Foch had hoped to free up the Paris-Amiens railway, because German guns threatened the vital lateral communications between the British and French armies. Field Marshal Haig wrote to Foch on 17 July, suggesting 'the advancing of the Allied front east and south-east of Amiens, so as to disengage this town and the railway line'. Foch agreed, but in fact this formal exchange simply ratified an agreement reached by the two as early as 23 May 1918, and by 17 July planning for an offensive was already well advanced.¹ Nor did General Ludendorff anticipate an Allied offensive, though with great confidence he welcomed such a development should it occur. In an order of the day of 4 August, he told his troops that 'we occupy everywhere positions which have been very strongly fortified ... Henceforward, we can await every hostile attack with the greater confidence ... we should wish for nothing better than to see the enemy launch an offensive, which can but hasten the disintegration of his forces'.²

Nor were the Allies prepared to exploit the success they had won. On 9 August, neither the Australians nor the Canadians resumed the offensive until late in the morning. One has the distinct impression that their commanders, Sir John Monash and Sir Arthur Currie, had been too busy exchanging congratulations with their divisional commanders, each other, and General Sir Henry Rawlinson, commander of Fourth Army.³ But when the Dominion troops resumed the attack, their offensive was almost as impressive as it had been on the previous day. Ludendorff was plunged from the confidence of 4 August into deep despondency. As he wrote in his war memoirs:

August 8th was the black day of the German Army in the history of the war. This was the worst experience I had to go through ... early on August 8th, in a dense fog that had been rendered still thicker by artificial means, the British, mainly with Australian and Canadian divisions, attacked between Albert and Moreuil with strong squadrons of Tanks, but for the rest with no great superiority. They broke between the Somme and the Luce deep into our front. The Divisions in line allowed themselves to be completely overwhelmed ... August 8th made things clear for both Army Commands, both for the German and for that of the enemy.⁴

When he disclosed the extent of the disaster to the Kaiser on 10 August, Wilhelm declared: 'We have reached the limits of our capacity. The war must be terminated'.⁵

How did it come about that Australia and Canada were brought together on the plain of the Santerre, between the Somme and the Luce, to deal Germany this decisive blow? Had the two corps collaborated successfully on previous occasions? During the Somme battles of 1916, the Canadians had relieved the Australians in the vicinity of Pozières, but there was no real collaborative action. The only occasion on which the two corps had been intended to work closely together was not a happy one. At Passchendaele, in October 1917, and admittedly under appalling conditions, the two corps had not cooperated effectively, the Australians charging that they had been given inadequate flank protection by one of the Canadian divisions. To cap an unhappy experience, the Australians were pulled out of the line, and the operation was left to the Canadians. General John Monash, then commanding the Third Australian Division, was deeply resentful, feeling that the Army commander, General Plumer, had not allowed the Australians sufficient time for preparation. The Canadians, he believed, would simply reap the benefit of the Australian efforts, 'and the job which we were asked to do in one stage will be done in three separate stages, so that the augury is all in favour of the next attempt'.⁶ He wrote home bitterly that 'Our men are being put into the hottest fighting and are being sacrificed in hare-brained ventures, like Bullecourt and Passchendaele ... Australian interests are suffering badly, and Australia is not getting anything like the recognition it deserves'.⁷

Second Army had found the Australians difficult at Passchendaele; General Harington, Plumer's chief of staff, writing after the war, referred to them as 'very fine fighters but not too easy to deal with'.

I think we were glad to have the Canadians for the final phase. Possibly having been BG GS of the Canadian Corps, I found it easier to make arrangements with them & old Currie [was] so nice to work with.⁸

That the Canadian Corps took Passchendaele village and its ridge (at the cost of nearly 16,000 casualties) was attributed by Monash, and doubtless many of his fellow Australians, to the preparatory work of the Australian Corps.

If the British high command took any note of this unpropitious circumstance in the planning for Amiens, there is no sign of it. And once the German offensives began, the idea of employing the five Australian and four Canadian divisions together in a counter-stroke preoccupied Foch and Haig alike. As early as April 1918 Foch proposed using the Canadian Corps to launch a spoiling attack in Flanders on a ten-mile front between Festubert and Robecq, intended to disrupt Ludendorff's offensives, and found that Haig had been nursing such a notion since the winter.⁹ Known as 'Delta', and shrouded in the deepest secrecy, it was forestalled because Ludendorff's attacks provided no adequate opportunity, and the operation was suspended in early May and later cancelled. The intense preparations for it had, Currie observed, 'a most vivifying influence on the training of the Canadian Corps', and indeed in several specific ways the training for 'Delta' had direct application to the Amiens operation. It appears that either Foch or Haig suggested employing the Australians and Canadians together, if not in Operation 'Delta', then at the first feasible moment. When the German onslaught had been checked in mid-July, therefore, it was natural for Haig to propose once again that the Canadians be used, together with three or four other divisions; it was General Sir Henry Rawlinson of Fourth Army who suggested that the proposed combination with the Australians should be revived.¹⁰ As we shall see, however, this agreement was merely the formalisation of an understanding which had been reached among Foch, Haig and Rawlinson two months before.

Why, then, were the Australians and Canadians selected to spearhead an attack in which a very large British commitment in tanks, cavalry and aircraft was also being made? The conventional Australian and Canadian answer to this question is to say that, by this stage in the war, these two corps had emerged as elite forces, the shock troops *par excellence*, among all the formations within the British Expeditionary Force. No one was more assiduous in putting forward this view than the Australian official historian, CEW Bean, and his no-holds-barred debate with the British official historian, Brigadier-General JE Edmonds, on this specific question, though many years after the event, is of great significance historically. The argument was precipitated by Bean's draft text for Volume VI of the Australian official history, which Edmonds was vetting and making editorial suggestions upon, as had been their joint practice since each embarked on these national projects immediately after the war.

Bean's first chapter in Volume VI is entitled 'The Diggers, 1918', and it contains a statement of his fundamental beliefs about the Australian soldier, implicit since his first book, but now explicit. The natural individualism of the Australian, his rejection of the deference towards the officer class which characterised the English and European soldier, the promotion practices of the corps in which merit, not social standing, was the critical criterion, the essentially democratic outlook common to the Corps, from the greenest private to general officers like Gellibrand, the absence of a social gulf between officers and men in the ranks: Bean believed all these things to be true of the Corps, and believed too that these values made the Australian Corps the finest formation on the Allied side of the Western Front.¹¹ In making these assertions, he also argued that the colonial experience had had the same effect upon Canadians, New Zealanders and South Africans, and that the mix of freedom, egalitarianism, the physical challenge of the environment of new lands, and better educational systems for the bulk of the population, produced better soldiers than did the industrial towns and impoverished rural areas of Great Britain.¹² He therefore, throughout his text, did not hesitate to criticise British generalship and the qualities of British soldiers, British units, and British formations. Edmonds, a military intellectual, a former senior member of Haig's headquarters throughout the war, and in many ways the epitome of the old world society Bean was attacking, was remarkably restrained—for him—in his response. 'We all feel', he wrote, 'that the historian of the AIF could afford to be a little more generous in his allusions to British units and formations. You are now aware perhaps that the home troops regarded the Australians and Canadians as the spoiled children of GHQ, who were given most rest, the pick of the fighting pitches and most of the praise—not that it was grudged'.¹³

Bean's views were not products of the postwar era; in July 1918 he had had precisely the same argument with Major-General Dawnay of GHQ because of his unwillingness to write a pamphlet 'intended to show the high admiration which Australian and British troops have of each other'. 'It is useless', Bean told his diary, 'to attempt to cram into Australian troops that the English divisions beside them are as good as they ... because they know they are not'.¹⁴

Bean in fact was faithfully representing the feelings in the Australian Corps, and its members did not hesitate to express their views. The Canadian Corps had, in general, a similar outlook, priding itself on being an elite formation, and many of its members frequently expressed their disdain for the lack of fighting qualities they believed characterised a number of British divisions in 1917 and 1918. In 1917 General Currie complained to his Army Commander, General Horne, that British troops 'won't fight'; Horne confided to Haig that in his opinion Currie and his staff had become 'swollen headed', and suggested that 'the Canadian Corps is perhaps rather apt to take all the credit it can for every thing, and to consider that the BEF consists of the Canadian Corps and some other troops'.¹⁵ Currie's diary for 11 April 1918 carries the entry: 'many British troops are not fighting well. This is what I expected ... would be the case'. His expectation was based upon the British changeover to the nine battalion division, which he steadfastly opposed as a grievous tactical and organisational error; despite pressure from both the War Office and from certain ambitious members of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada HQ, he refused to alter the Canadian Corps in a similar fashion. After the Canadians captured Passchendaele, a young British staff captain named Bernard Law Montgomery wrote home that 'the Canadians are a queer crowd; they seem to think they are the best troops in France ... I was disappointed in them. At plain straightforward fighting they are magnificent, but they are narrow-minded and lack soldierly instincts'. (He meant, among other things, that they were slovenly about saluting).¹⁶

During the German offensives of 1918, to help stem the German tide, Field Marshal Haig broke up the Canadian Corps and despatched its four divisions to threatened sectors of the front, as if the corps were like any other British Army formation. It was not, of course; General Currie was responsible not only to GHQ but to the Canadian Government, and the result was that within 24 hours three of his four divisions were back under his command. Currie did permit a dismounted cavalry brigade to join Gough's beleaguered Fifth Army, sent the Canadian Cavalry Brigade (the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the Strathconas and the Fort Garry Horse) to work with the 3rd British Cavalry Brigade in the defence of Amiens, and despatched the First Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade to Villers-Bretonneux, where they fought as part of 'Carey's Force' until relieved by the Australians. Meanwhile, Currie was holding ten miles of front with two divisions. It was, Currie wrote, 'altogether too much, but owing to lack of men in the British Army, it cannot be helped. I am told we have 430,000 men in Mesopotamia. What a splendid place for a reserve!'.¹⁷ But the Germans, though they attacked to either side of the Canadian Corps, never challenged their stronghold in the Lens-Vimy area. General ELM Burns, then a Canadian staff captain, wrote that 'a joke was current among the Canadians who continued to hold the only part of the British line that had not been attacked and pierced by the Germans. The tale went that the real German strategy was to isolate us by the offensives to the north and south of our sector, and then to make a separate peace with Canada'.¹⁸

Though the Canadians may have joked, the British were furious. Haig contrasted Currie's behaviour unfavourably with that of the Australians:

He wishes to fight only as a 'Canadian Corps' and gets his Canadian representative in London to write and urge me to arrange it! As a result the Canadians are together holding a wide front near Arras, *but they have not yet been in the battle!* The Australians on the other hand have been used by Divisions and are now spread out from Albert to Amiens and one is in front of Hazebrouck.¹⁹

When Sir Edward Kemp, the Canadian Overseas Minister, reaffirmed Currie's position when visiting Haig at his headquarters, the Field Marshal observed in his diary that 'I could not help feeling that some people in Canada regard themselves rather as "allies" than fellow citizens in the Empire'.²⁰ To Haig, the Canadian Corps was simply the part of the British Expeditionary Force that happened to speak with flat North American accents; to Canadians, however, it was the country's national army. Haig would have done well to observe the advice of Lord Derby, Secretary of State for War, who told him that 'we must look upon [the Canadians and the Australians] in the light in which they wish to be looked upon rather than the light in which we would wish to do so'.²¹

If, unlike the Canadians, the Australians behaved as good Imperialists during the Ludendorff offensives, in a number of other respects they were a thorn in the side of the British high command. Not only were they even more undisciplined than the Canadians in terms of spit-and-polish soldiering, but they also had the highest desertion and crime rates of any of the Imperial formations. In 1918 8.5 Australians per 1000 members of the AIF were in military prisons, while the British rate was 1.0 per 1000, and the Canadians, New Zealanders and South Africans were all grouped at 2.0 per thousand. Antipodeans also topped the VD stakes: whereas members of the Canadian Corps had a hospital admission rate of 8.5 per 1000 per month, the New Zealand rate was 15.27 and the Australian 15.35.²² So firmly was the Australian reputation fixed that after the war, when Canadian troops rioted in Britain because of delays in shipping them home, with considerable property damage and several deaths, the British press immediately identified the rioters as Australian.

The sense of superiority projected by Dominion forces, particularly in the last year of the war, was deeply resented in the British Army, and was to be long-lasting, as the Edmonds-Bean exchange shows. This clash of feeling was to colour the historiography of that period in a marked and sometimes unexpected way. Not only was the assertion of the primacy of the Australian or the Canadian Corps taken up by popular historians in both countries in the postwar era, but among British historians of the war there was a kind of embittered acceptance of Dominion claims, and as a result, for more than a generation, a notable lack of

significant writing by British military historians on the period of the Hundred Days, a gap rooted in wartime memory, and encapsulated by the Amiens experience. A classic example of the anguish experienced by many Britons at the time of the Amiens victory was put with great eloquence and bitterness by CE Montague, a leader writer and an critic for the *Manchester Guardian*, who as a captain in the Press Section of GHQ Intelligence, had a ringside view of the battle. He and some of his colleagues climbed the high ground on the left flank of the battle in the 111 British Corps sector north of the Somme, on that August morning, and trained their binoculars to trace the advance of the British troops. Because of the fog, nothing could be seen for the first hours of the operation; they heard the sounds of it, but these gave no clue to the course of the action.

One kept a tight hand on hope. One had hoped too often since Loos. And then the mist lifted. It rolled right up to the sky in one piece, like a theatre curtain, and revealed the vision so much longed for during four years. Beyond the river a miracle—the miracle—had begun. It was going on fast. Remember that all previous advances had gained us little more than freedom to skulk up communication trenches a mile or two further eastward, if that. But now! Across the level Santerre ... two endless columns of British guns, wagons, and troops were marching steadily east, unshelled, over the ground that the Germans had held since dawn. Nothing like it had ever been seen in the war. Above, on our cliff, we turned and stared at each other ... like Cortes' men agape on their peak.²³

Then came the moment of bitter realisation: III Corps had been checked; those distant columns were the Australians and Canadians forging ahead; and once more British arms were paying the price of the Somme and Third Ypres. Now Britain was fielding understrength divisions, composed of conscript battalions of 'colourless, stunted, half-toothless lads from hot, humid Lancashire mills, battalions of slow, staring faces', in shocking contrast to 'Dominion battalions of men startlingly taller, stronger, handsomer, prouder, firmer in nerve, better schooled, bolder ... men who had learned already to look at our men with the half-curious, half-pitying look of a higher, happier caste at a lower'.

Then, while you saw the triumphant Australians throw back a protective flank from the left of their newly won front to the English right, far in the rear, you knew bitterly what the Australians were saying once more; 'They've let us down again! ... The Canadians were all right, of course, but the Tommies! Well, we might have known'.²⁴

Recently, the Sandhurst historian Richard Holmes asked himself, in the introduction to his excellent guide to European battlefields, why it was that so little had been written by British historians about the battle of Amiens, which 'attracts far less comment than the Somme or Passchendaele, though its results were arguably greater than those of any other British offensive during the war'. He puts this down to 'a quirk of the British character'; the British prefer 'poignant defeats or hard-won victories ... to well-deserved but cheaply bought success'.²⁵ Certainly Holmes is correct in drawing attention to the relative scarcity of British analyses of 1918 battles, particularly of the Hundred Days, but it is doubtful that an explanation for this imbalance lies solely in a British character quirk. Liddell Hart, it is true, ignored almost completely the 1918 war-ending campaigns, arguing that more was to be learned from defeats than from victory. But with the notable exception of the indomitable John Terraine, most British military historians have accepted the adverse criticism of British generalship, especially that of Sir Douglas Haig, and have not felt drawn to the study of battles which appear to have been dominated by arrogant Canadians and Australians.

In recent years there had been a reaction against this situation, particularly among a group of British historians centred around Brian Bond at the University of London.²⁶ In a paper presented at the Australian War Memorial conference in 1993, Peter Simkins of the Imperial War Museum pointed out that the denigration of the supposed incompetence of the leadership and the rank and file of the BEF simply would not stand up to historical investigation. He was able to show, for example, that the operational records of a good many British divisions in 1918 merit consideration alongside the purportedly superior Dominion formations.²⁷ Curiously, much of the scholarship which is leading to the reconstruction of the reputation of the BEF is the product of Australian and Canadian historians.²⁸

The most strident voice connected with the British revival of interest is that of Paddy Griffith, whose *Battle tactics of the Western Front: the British Army's art of attack 1916-1918*,²⁹ throws down the gauntlet to everyone from Liddell Hart to the 'Teutophiles' for whom every German soldier was a tactical genius. Griffith targets, among others, the 'colonial' historians who claim for the Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders elite status, and who contrast their innovative tactics with the amateurishness of the British officer corps.

The 'colonial' critique is based upon the cultural, political and institutional separation from the mother country which allowed colonial troops to pursue slightly different patterns of organisation and tactics from those advocated by GHQ and Haig. They were a little more free to make innovations than their UK colleagues, which encouraged a certain spirit of criticism and independence. Rightly or wrongly, the colonial contingents liked to think of themselves as an elite, while the 'imperials' were seen as effete, stick-in-the-muds whose day had passed.³⁰

Griffith, while conceding the quality of the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand formations, contends that a considerable number of Regular and New Army divisions should be ranked with them, in terms of their actual performance. His book, though often quixotic, is a useful challenge to some conventional 'colonial' attitudes. It gains particular weight from the material Griffith draws from Charles Carrington's able personal memoir, *Soldier from the wars returning*, especially Carrington's evidence showing tactical innovation in the BEF even before the Somme. Curiously, however, he omits Carrington's high testimony to Dominion troops at Amiens and in the Hundred Days: at the moment of Amiens, Carrington wrote:

the ten divisions from the Dominions ... assumed a place which cannot be denied them as the best fighting troops in any army. For the last few weeks of the war the achievement of these divisions was greater in relation to their strength than that of any other formations and they must be given credit for it. In the autumn of 1918 these ten divisions constituted about one-fifth of the fighting strength of the BEF and suffered about one-third of the casualties.³¹

In part, Griffith is still fighting the old battle waged by Bean and Edmonds. His object, it would appear, is to diminish the significance of the formations he chooses to call 'colonial' by exaggeration, misstatement, and the substitution of assertion for analysis. To this end, for example, he terms the French Army's check to Ludendorff on 18 July a 'grandiose success', gives 13 lines to Amiens without mentioning either the AIF or the CEF, grossly underestimates (at six miles) the total ground gained over the four-day battle, and characterises Amiens as 'a splendid little battle', thus resuscitating the hoary British imperial practice of patronising condescension.³² Blaxland managed the remarkable feat of ignoring CEW Bean, as well as every subsequent Australian authority. Griffith provides no explanation for his description of Currie as 'eccentric'—to his staff, Currie's sole eccentricity seems to have been his phenomenal command of sulphurous language. Nor, so far as I can discover, was there anything remotely 'controversial' about Monash. Despite all this, Griffith does admit the quality of the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian contingents, and rates the 'eccentric' Currie and 'controversial' Monash highly as commanders, but his fundamental contention is that a considerable number of Regular and New Army divisions should be ranked with the 'colonials' in terms of actual performance. Assertion, however, is not a substitute for the kind of systematic evaluation being undertaken by Peter Simkins and his colleagues, and so the Griffith book lacks the persuasiveness that further research might have given it.

National priorities and preoccupations have obscured the fact that Amiens was a joint operation, directed broadly by General Rawlinson and his Fourth Army staff, but essentially dependent upon the Australian and Canadian Corps as the key actors. It is remarkable that this aspect of the battle has been given so little attention. The most succinct statement defining the nature of the battle of Amiens was made by Sir John Monash, with characteristic insight and economy. 'The Canadians', he wrote in *Australian victories in France*, 'were to operate on my right, and farther south again the First French Army was to supply a Corps to form a defensive flank for the Canadians. The Third British Corps was to carry out for me a similar function on my northern flank. Thus four corps in line were to operate, the two central

Corps carrying out the main advance, while the two outer flank Corps would be employed further to broaden the base of the great salient which the operation would create'.³³ What Monash was describing was a joint operation, in which the offensive power rested with the Australian and Canadian Corps, and support functions with III British Corps and XXXI French Corps. That was the essence of the operation, although many additional elements were superimposed upon it.

In fact, however, the battle has never been treated as a joint operation, not even by historians in Australia or Canada. The reason can be deduced from the maps used to illustrate it. Monash's own account has an excellent map, which shows in great detail that segment of the advance which was accomplished by the Australians, and leaves the Canadians and the British to the left and right margins. Bean supplied no battle map, but only tiny illustrations of tactical situations encountered by elements of the Australian Corps. The latest Australian account was published in 1995, in David Horner's history of Australian artillery; his map of Amiens is simply a segment of the totality of Australian operations until their withdrawal in the first week of October. The Canadian record is even more lamentable. No official history of the Canadian Corps to match those of Britain and Australia was ever published; Colonel J Fortescue Duguid published a single volume in 1938, after 18 years' labour, which carried the story to 1915 and Second Ypres. An entire generation of Canadians, not to speak of the surviving members of the CEF, was deprived of an official account of Canada's role on the Western Front. Not until 1962 was a one-volume official history published, by Colonel GWL Nicholson, and though a sound account, balanced and judicious, and bearing no relation to Paddy Griffith's blustering depiction of colonial exaggerations, only a chapter could be devoted to the Battle of Amiens. The excellent map depicting the battle, like that of Monash, is a segment, but in this case of the Canadian slice of the battle, with the Australians and the French huddled along its edges.³⁴

In both Nicholson and in Prior and Wilson, there are good outline maps showing the Allied deployment north and south of the Somme, and the distribution of German forces along the whole length of the front. But even these black and white maps, though giving some indication of the scale of the operation, do not come to grips with an essential element of the battle zone, which, despite all the factors working in favour of the Allies, played an important part in the course of operations over the several days of the battle: that is, the highly varied terrain of a very large battlefield. It may be that the differentiated terrain has defeated the resources of skilled cartographers, and that there is a case, if not for Bean's microsketches, at least for a more intensive mapping approach. But to walk or drive this ground is to understand more clearly the problems encountered by each of the forces involved in carrying out their divergent tasks.

Facing III British Corps on the north side of the Somme were the truly formidable features of the Chipilly and Etinghem spurs, descending sharply to villages on the river's edge, but with sharp and rugged gradients, some of which could only be described as cliffs. III Corps had the misfortune to be the recipients of what turned out to be a spoiling attack on the eve of the battle, an attack which disrupted the deployment of a formation which had suffered heavy casualties during the German offensives, had been inadequately reinforced by scarcely trained conscripts, was not well led, had inadequate tank resources, and in any event was required to fight over ground not suitable for tank operations. Small wonder that on 8 August this corps failed to take Chipilly Spur, which meant in turn that the Australian left came under accurate German artillery fire from the environs of Chipilly village. This check necessitated a change in corps boundaries, so that the Australians had first to refuse their left flank, and then to take over responsibility for part of the north bank of the Somme in order to get on.

Facing the Australian and Canadian Corps was the inviting prospect of the Plaine de Santerre, a fertile, prosperous farming area that was one of the gems of Picardy. Here grew vast fields of wheat, barley and oats, interspersed with orchards and brick-walled villages, many of them today in a state of rural decay and others having grown into one another, but all reflecting what was then a high degree of agricultural prosperity. This was ideal ground, if it could be gained, for tank and infantry collaboration, but to do so meant overcoming not only German resistance, chiefly from well-hidden and dispersed machine gun emplacements, but

also real natural obstacles. The Australians had to overcome a series of ridges running down to the Somme and its marshy banks, much gentler than those on the north side (and of course dominated by them) but significant military obstacles nevertheless. Without the help of the guns and the tanks, it would have been difficult for the Corps to surmount this rolling ground and gain the Santerre plateau. Perhaps most challenging of all was the open plain before the village of Lihons, faced by the Corps on 9 and 10 August, with less artillery and tank support than its units had enjoyed on the 8th. The plain rises gently to Lihons village—one of the less prepossessing communities in the region—and was swept by German fire from its crest. It reminded me of the gradient at Vimy, and even more, of the killing ground at Malvern Hill in the 1862 Peninsular campaign of the American Civil War, when Confederate infantry faced massed Union artillery.

The operations narrative of the Australian Corps is characteristically restrained in describing the action around Lihons, but the importance of the terrain and the relative weakness of supporting arms is clear. The 1st Australian Division on the 9th had the help of the 2nd, 8th and 15th Tank Battalions, 'but with very reduced numbers owing to casualties suffered on the 8th August'. The narrative continues:

Considerable opposition was met with from the LIHONS ridge both from close range field guns and from machine guns. Direct fire was responsible for considerable casualties among the Tanks supporting the 1st Australian Division.

On 10 August, some help was received by the advance of the 2nd Canadian Division on the Australian right, as the narrative notes:

The advance towards LIHONS was continued by the 1st Australian Division on the 10th instant in conjunction with the advance of the Canadian Corps south of the railway. Very considerable opposition was encountered, and heavy fighting took place in the old entrenched country on the western slopes of the LIHONS Ridge. The 1st Australian Infantry Brigade was counter-attacked very heavily and the battle swayed to and fro during the day. As the result of the day's operations our line was advanced to the western outskirts of the village of LIHONS. LIHONS is sited on a low hill which rises in a glacial slope for a considerable distance on all sides. The country is particularly open and is admirably adapted for defence. The capture of this strong position under conditions of open warfare was not an ordinary feat of arms.³⁵

Like the Australians, the Canadian Corps' objective was the attainment of the Santerre plateau, but the barrier facing them was quite different. Their sector was set off from the Australian sector by the Amiens-Nesle railway, a still-existing line along which both corps operated in collaborative fashion. The southern boundary of the Canadian zone was the Amiens-Roye highroad, dividing them from the French First Army. The main feature which inhibited the initial advance was the Luce River, running diagonally across the Canadian front. The Luce is not an impressive stream, at least to those accustomed to rivers like the Murray, the Ottawa, the Mackenzie or the St Lawrence, and at several points along its meandering course I was able to leap across it, no difficult feat even for a person who will not see 70 again. But the Luce is a real obstacle, for all of that. As the narrative of 3rd Canadian Division notes:

The ground to be taken ... consisted mainly of a plateau intersected by some deep ravines which ran down to the LUCE river. The LUCE River protected the plateau, and was an unfordable obstacle, very marshy, the marsh being as much as 200 yards in places. We had only a small bridgehead on the enemy's side of the river at HOURGES, and this was completely dominated from the enemy trenches on the forward slopes of the plateau ... The difficulty was to assemble troops and tanks in this small bridgehead and to deploy them outwards from that cramped assembly position.³⁶

The 3rd Division found the going after zero hour 'very wet and marshy', but the mist cut down casualties, the German artillery response 'rather wild and not extraordinarily heavy' (though Domart Bridge got attention), and its units were soon across the Luce and pushing bewildered German troops out of heavy woods. Emerging from them, 3rd Division units attacked towards Hangard on the Luce; its bridge 'was found to have an 18-foot gap in it and could not be mended before 11.00 am. The Engineers, however, concentrated on this bridge, and by that time both HANGARD and DEMUIN bridges were passable for field artillery'. Coping with the Luce bedevilled the Corps' operations on 8 August, and continued into the 9th, since its valley was bordered by ridges and dense woods which provided cover for German artillery and machine guns. The Luce and its valley were challenges the Canadian engineers met efficiently, though their road building and bridge mending under fire brought severe casualties.³⁷

Beyond the Amiens-Roye highway was the zone of the French First Army, its left formation being XXXI Corps. Its sector was dominated by rolling grassy uplands and long ridges, topped by thick woods running down close to Moreuil. Though the French were initially slow off the mark, collaboration between them and the neighbouring Canadian troops was frequent and effective, particularly because of the patrolling of the Canadian Independent Force, a large body of armoured cars and trucks carrying heavy machine guns and trench mortars, and commanded by Brigadier-General Raymond Brutinel. An illustration of how well-trained infantry tackled the difficult ground along the zone between the French and Canadian forces, and of the close collaboration between these forces, can be found in the narrative of the 43rd Battalion (Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, a unit of the 9th Brigade of 3rd Canadian Division). Their objective was Dodo Wood, close to the boundary with the French. One company of the 43rd attacked frontally, another swung across the Amiens-Roye highway and launched a flank attack, and the other two companies swung farther to the right 'up a pronounced draw on the flank of the hill' and attacked due south, breaking in 'on the enemy's right flank of his main defences and proceed to roll them up together with the strong points on the high ground'. Since the French were also anxious about this feature,

an international platoon was formed composed of a platoon of the 94th Regiment of [French] Infantry and No 5 platoon of the 43rd Canadian Bn. This international platoon swept up the hill on the right carrying the small wood in front of DODO WOOD, the Southern end of DODO WOOD and HOLLAN WOOD ... The other three companies were hampered in their operations by the thick mist but continued to press on and ultimately got to the top of the hill where they were reorganized and proceeded to the objectives allotted to each company, incidentally capturing intact a battery of four 5.9's and a 4.1 gun. Touch was maintained with the French on the Right.³⁸

Like the Australians on their left, who were held up by the failure at Chipilly Spur, the only setback the Canadians had on 8 August was on the right, when the unexpected presence of German reinforcements at Le Quesnel, beyond the range of Canadian artillery, and a delay in the advance of XXXI French Corps, meant that their objective on the first day was not fully attained. Le Quesnel fell by 6:45 am on 9 August to an enterprising group consisting of elements of the Canadian Independent Force including motorcyclists, the 75th (Mississauga) Battalion CEF of the 4th Canadian Division, and on the right troops identified by the CEF narrative as 'the French'.³⁹ In all the cases cited in the Canadian zone for 8 August, terrain was a major factor; at Le Quesnel there was an intelligence failure as well.

Not only does the cartography of Amiens fail to bring out the importance of terrain, and additionally, the mutually supporting operations of forces in parallel, but the textual treatment of the battle has failed to contribute to an understanding of the nature of the battle.⁴⁰ Despite Monash's magisterial statement, his account scarcely mentions the Canadians, once the battle was launched. Bean has a few fleeting references to the parallel advances of the Canadian Corps; for example, he mentions in his narrative of the advance of 8 August the Canadian capture of Marcelcave on the Australian right, with the 19th Battalion CEF emerging from that village as if it were on parade—a touch I much appreciated, since the 19th (Central

Ontario Regiment) was my father's battalion. But his concentration, as befits the official historian, is upon his own national army, not someone else's, and the chief non-Australian elements have to do with the consequences of the failure of British, III Corps on the Australian left, and the doings of some scattered American units working with the Australian Corps. Edmonds, in the British official history, presents very fairly a summary of Australian and Canadian operations, but in separate segments, essentially an abandonment of the operational unity of the battle. Nicholson, in the Canadian official history, justly states the nature of the operation, but his treatment is as one-sided as those of Bean and Monash, while the operations of the French XXXI Corps on the Canadian right remain, in his account, a virtual mystery. The French official account is notable only for its superb indifference to such tribal distinctions as 'Canadian' and 'Australian'.⁴¹

To state the obvious, the success of the operation depended upon two related considerations: first, the mutual support provided each other by the two attacking corps, and second, the effective prosecution of limited roles by the French and British corps to the right and left of the central operation. To what extent, then, was Amiens not only joint but collaborative? What was the role of Haig, and of Rawlinson, in ensuring, so far as such things can be ensured in war, that the two key players were appropriately synchronised? What steps did the two corps commanders take to bring the operations of their forces into harmony? The answers to most of these questions, and to others to which they give rise, are not, on the whole, to be found in the literature. Monash himself, for example, omits in his account any mention of pre-battle joint planning or collaboration; he merely says that 'At no time did any mention of the security of my right flank furnish me with any cause for anxiety. The prowess of the Canadian Corps was well known to all Australians, and I knew that, to use his own expressive vernacular, it was General Currie's invariable habit to "deliver the goods"'.⁴² This tells us less than nothing. In fact, the answers to such questions can only be determined by research in the operational records of divisions, corps and armies, and my own research is by no means complete. My sense of the scenario, which follows, is in part conjectural.

The impressive thing about Amiens is how rapidly it was put together. The initiative lay with Foch and Haig, and they determined the composition of the forces to be employed. From the beginning, the decision to use the Canadians and to unite the Australian Corps by bringing the First Division down from Flanders dictated not only an enormous transport problem, but the imposition of the tightest security so that tactical and strategic surprise could be obtained. It is a testimony to the high competence of the formations and staffs concerned that these crucial operations were carried out with great efficiency. Amiens was in fact one of the most successful security operations carried out by the Allies during the whole of the war on the Western Front, and on a scale without precedent. Intelligence reports, and interrogation of German prisoners, indicate that the operation was a total surprise to the German army, whether at the command level or to front line troops. The measures of deception to hide the movement of the huge Canadian Corps from the Lens-Vimy front to Amiens, or the use of heavy bombers to drown the engine noise of 530 tanks moving into position, are well known. What is harder to establish is the degree to which German intelligence was taken in.

There are two pieces of evidence pointing to the complete success of the security operation, one amusing, and one perhaps decisive. The first is that the redoubtable Bean, a first-class sleuth in ferreting out prospective operations, was completely taken in. In his diary, he notes that on 28 July, outside Australian Corps headquarters, he was introduced to two Canadian general officers by Brigadier-General Thomas Blamey, Monash's chief of staff. He concluded, from a brief conversation, that one of them was Blamey's Canadian opposite number, namely, Brigadier General N (Jumbo) Webber, Currie's chief of staff. From further remarks, he gathered that the other general officer was the CRA of the Canadian Corps, in other words, Major-General EWB 'Dinky' Morrison. 'And if that is so, it looks very much as if they were down here to inspect the line before taking over'; that is, he had concluded that the Australians were about to be relieved by the Canadians, which in fact was one of the cover stories being assiduously circulated within Fourth Army.⁴³ He therefore departed quite happily to visit the First Division AIF in Flanders, only to find them gone, and returned to the Amiens sector a few days later to discover that both the Canadians and the First Australian Division had preceded him.

The other piece of evidence is more conclusive: the situation map for the front of the German Army Group commanded by Crown Prince Rupprecht (*Heeresgruppe Kronprinz Rupprecht*) for 8 August at 8 am shows the four Canadian divisions clustered to the west of Arras in the Vimy-Lens area; that is, in the strong defensive position they had occupied since returning from Passchendaele in November 1917.⁴⁴ This map, a copy of which is in the Bean Papers at the Australian War Memorial, would appear to indicate that the security operation had been successful in deceiving German intelligence. Total surprise was a major element in the Amiens victory.

The battle plan itself originated with the staff of Fourth Army, Rawlinson having been directed by Haig on 23 May to prepare for an offensive operation, in consultation with General Debeney, commander of French First Army. In a visit to Australian Headquarters in mid-May, Haig had already asked General Birdwood to prepare, in secret, plans for such an operation.⁴⁵ Thus, as Rawlinson's diary makes clear, the initial planning was done by the Australian Corps, and specifically by General Brudenell White, General Birdwood's chief of staff. On 24 May Rawlinson recorded the following:

I visited the [Australian] Corps and discussed with Birdie and White the plans for the Somme offensive which Foch is very keen about. Birdie is not much good at making plans but White is excellent and I have told him to write a paper on the basis of employing 5 or 6 Divns ... I understand I am to have Currie and three Canadian Divns for the attack unless they are used up in the line somewhere before it comes off. With both the Canadians and Australians we ought to be able to make a good show of it.⁴⁶

The details were worked out in a series of conferences which involved Haig, Rawlinson and the relevant corps commanders in late July and the first couple of days of August.⁴⁷ These officers included not only Monash and Currie, but the commanders of the British tank and cavalry corps and General Salmond of the Royal Air Force, plus members of their staffs.

From Fourth Army, therefore, came the decisions with respect to the frontage allotted to each of the formations involved, the distribution and handling of the tank forces, the timing of possible cavalry operations, the layout of tank and cavalry tracks, and the objectives for the first and ensuing days, the latter consideration dictating the mode of 'leapfrogging' divisions or brigades, so that the momentum of attack could be maintained with fresh troops. Once decisions on these questions had been made, and corps commanders were aware of their objectives, detailed tactical planning was left by Haig and Rawlinson to each corps to work out in conjunction with all their internal hierarchies. On the corps level, and down through divisions to brigades and battalions, this meant the development of the artillery fire plan, its relationship to established objectives, its coordination with the movement of the infantry and tanks, and cavalry as well, and the mode of communication between the RAF and ground forces. Since the plan assumed an advance which would run beyond the fire cover of the artillery, provision had to be made for the forward movement not only of field artillery but of the heavy artillery as well. Additionally, corps and divisional staffs had to prepare traffic priorities, rear area policing, provision of transport services, signals and communications planning, especially the burying of cable so that contact could be maintained with the moving edge of battle, provision for medical and sanitary services, the laying on of engineering services for road building and repair, bridging, the piping of potable water, and thousands of further details. The levels of planning and operational complexity at Amiens were far removed from the comparatively simple and unsophisticated methods of 1915-16; what is instructive, too, is the degree to which both Haig and Rawlinson could make assumptions about the procedures to be carried out at the corps, division, brigade and battalion level.

Does this mean that the Australian and Canadian Corps were as alike as peas in a pod? Far from it. As both Prior and Wilson, in *Command on the Western Front*, and Bill Rawling in *Surviving Trench Warfare* point out, there had been a steady improvement throughout the British Army both in the general effectiveness of its artillery and in the armament and tactics of its infantry since 1916. Recognition of the vital role of artillery in the infantry battle, the development of new techniques for locating and registering enemy batteries (flash spotting, sound ranging, aerial observation and photography), improvements in gun laying by adjusting

for atmospheric conditions, precise survey of battery locations and hostile targets, so that firing by the map became much more accurate—these and other innovations had spread throughout the BEF through a flow of pamphlets, instructions and intelligence information.⁴⁸

Standardisation of gunnery practice throughout the BEF had been, at least to a degree, paralleled by increasing sophistication of infantry tactics and infantry armament. In an important study, Bill Rawling traces this development in the Canadian Corps, but is at pains to emphasise the extent to which changes in Canadian weapons and tactics derived in part from information circulated by Haig's headquarters and by the instructional and research networks of the British Army. This finding meshes with those of British historians like Simkins and Griffith; at the same time, however, Rawling demonstrates convincingly how much of Canadian tactical evolution arose from the battle experience of the troops themselves, and the transmission of this hard-won knowledge throughout the Corps structure. As was the case with the Australian Corps, and indeed for most formations throughout the British Army, the key tactical unit evolved over time from the battalion to the company, then to the platoon, and finally to the section, as infantrymen acquired enhanced firepower and mobility through the acquisition of light machine guns, hand grenades, portable mortars to add to the basic rifle component, and learned not only to work effectively with artillery, but then with tanks and aircraft. The end result was that infantry recovered the power of manoeuvre, just as German infantry did during the great offensives of 1918, and just as important, re-established the traditional infantry role of seizing and holding ground and consolidating gains.⁴⁹

The best short account of the battle itself is the chapter by Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson in *Command on the Western Front*. For them, as for Bean, the Australian victory at Hamel on 4 July 1918 was a test run on a smaller scale for the Amiens operation, since both a large artillery component and more than 50 tanks were employed together with Australian infantry.⁵⁰ Amiens was Hamel writ large. It was the biggest tank operation of the war, more than 500 being employed, not only to spearhead the advancing infantry and dispose of the well-hidden and dispersed German machine-gun positions, but also to carry ammunition supplies, water, and even infantry. More than 2000 guns were assembled, including more than 600 pieces of heavy artillery. There was no preliminary bombardment, but after the first crashing salvo a creeping barrage provided a curtain of fire ahead of advancing tanks and infantry. Counter-battery fire was so extraordinarily effective that there was almost no German artillery response to the attack. In addition to the artillery, tanks and infantry were also supported by more than 2000 RAF and French aircraft, giving absolute air command to the Allies. Squadrons carried out tactical bombing, low level strafing of German troops, machine gun nests and anti-tank batteries, engaged in ammunition drops, and flew a large number of sorties to bomb bridges over the Somme in order to seal off the battle zone from German reinforcements.⁵¹

Amiens, with its sophisticated weaponry and tactics, its successful combination of all available arms, its instant conversion to open and mobile warfare, and its relatively low casualties compared to those suffered in trench warfare, has a distinctly modern character, and was in fact much studied between the wars by German, French and British soldiers alike. Towards the conclusion of their analysis of the first day's action at Amiens, Prior and Wilson—whose findings I have to a great extent followed—make an important statement about the troops of the two corps carrying the burden of the attack:

 this success was evidence of the quality of the infantry carrying out the attack. The Australian and Canadian divisions were relatively fresh and made up in the main of battle-hardened veterans. There was no lack of determination on their part to get to grips with the enemy. Yet too much should not be made of this aspect. At the battle of the Somme in 1916 the attacking infantry were not wanting in courage or enthusiasm. It availed them little as long as they lacked weapons and tactics appropriate to deal with their opponents. At Amiens in 1918 the weapons and a serviceable plan, were to hand. Certainly the Australians and Canadians employed both skilfully. But without these implements, and in the absence of the technical expertise of the artillerymen, progress, as in 1916, would have been meagre and would have been dearly bought.⁵²

This summation puts the battle, and the role of the infantry, into proper proportion, and at the same time offers some propitiation to those who would argue that a number of British divisions would have done quite as well. But is it quite the whole story? What cannot be emphasised too strongly, is that both the Australian and Canadian Corps were national armies, with histories of combat distinction and much pride in their accomplishments. Moreover, they were corps—formed bodies of divisions, units and staffs who had served together and knew each other well, the Canadians even more than the Australians. Each had developed its own character and approach to battle; each had, in other words, its own battle culture, and though they shared with many British formations the same arms and the same basic tactics, each was distinctive. The mark of the Australian Corps was tactical brilliance and high administrative efficiency; that of the Canadian Corps was a disciplined thoroughness, a reliance on mass and tactical drive, and overwhelming firepower. Though sharing a common colonial heritage, the histories of their countries were quite different, and each, therefore, was an authentic projection of its own society's outlook and values.⁵³

There is one aspect of the Canadian Corps which virtually every commentator has missed, including, surprisingly enough, Prior and Wilson. It is the immense size of the organisation, and in a sense this is the 'untold story' of Amiens. Facing each other on the morning of 8 August, the Germans of Second and Eighteenth Army, and the forces of Fourth British Army, each comprised 11 divisions. There were in addition at least five French divisions on the Allied right. The Allies therefore enjoyed a substantial numerical superiority, which increases further when actual divisional strengths are examined. Prior and Wilson use figures which presumably represent rifle strength; that is, infantry per division, and estimate German divisions at no more than 4000 rifles, giving a total of about 37,000 German troops in the battle zone. Fourth Army divisions are calculated at 7000 (French divisions were certainly smaller, and likely comparable to the Germans), giving a total infantry strength of about 75,000.⁵⁴ Underlying this figure must be the assumption that the infantry component of the four Canadian divisions was roughly at the same level as that calculated for the rest of Fourth Army, but that was emphatically not the case. Even if one accepts Bean's figure of 12,000 rifles to a Canadian division, that gives a total of 48,000 infantry for the Corps, and even that figure is an underestimate. On 3 August 1918 the effective strength of the Canadian Corps, by division, was as follows:

**Effective Strength of Divisions of the Canadian Corps.
3 August 1918⁵⁵**

<i>Division</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Other Ranks</i>	<i>Total</i>
First	918	19,811	20,729
Second	924	19,909	20,833
Third	929	20,013	20,942
Fourth	900	19,618	20,518

The same source provides the exact total of the infantry component of the Corps on 3 August, namely 2542 officers and 57,797 other ranks, or a total of 60,339. If it is calculated that two per cent of Canadian infantry were left out of battle on 8 August (practice in the BEF at the time was to leave out of battle a 'nucleus' of from ten to 20 percent of effectives) that would still give a minimum total of 48,000 committed to the attack. As Desmond Morton has remarked: 'Only the American Expeditionary Force had more abundant manpower by war-weary 1918'.⁵⁶ An American division of this period averaged a total strength of just over 21,000, slightly larger than the Canadian average. Nor was this owing to conscription. Though the *Military Service Act* had passed the Canadian Parliament at the end of 1917, soldiers called up under its provisions were still in the training stream, and so far as I know, there were no Canadian conscripts at Amiens.

What factors account for the abundance of manpower in the Canadian Corps? Canadian casualties in 1917 had been heavy, at Vimy, Lens (Hill 70) and Passchendaele, but the Corps, unlike the Australians, had had what amounted to a long vacation from heavy fighting in 1918, while the Australians had been almost constantly in action from their first operations at Villers-Bretonneux at the beginning of the German offensives and then on through the

spring and summer. And 'peaceful penetration' was not a bloodless exercise. It is clear that the Australian Corps was facing a manpower problem in the summer of 1918, one that was to cause its withdrawal from operations during the Hundred Days. So far as the bulk of the BEF was concerned, the drain of Third Ypres had been very heavy, and even before the immense casualties British divisions experienced during the German offensives of 1918, the BEF had been forced to change from the 12-battalion division to a nine-battalion division. Thus III Corps, on the left at Amiens, had borne heavy casualties during 1918, and its divisions, especially the 18th and 12th Divisions, had been reinforced by incompletely trained conscripts.

The second factor explaining the strength of the Canadian Corps was its reorganisation by General Currie during the spring of 1918. The story is a complex one, but the basic facts are simple. Currie refused to have anything to do with a nine-battalion division, though urged by the War Office, the CIGS and Canadian Overseas Headquarters in London to do so. The scheme proposed was to bring over the Fifth Canadian Division, long held in Britain by political considerations, and to create a Sixth Division by the reduction to nine battalions. Currie, convinced that the 12-battalion division had far more offensive power than the smaller formation, and hostile to the creation of a second Corps Headquarters as a form of overhead the Canadians did not need, persuaded the Overseas Minister to support him. Instead, therefore, he broke up the Fifth Division, added one hundred trained infantrymen from it to each of the battalions of the four divisions of the Corps, established a strong reinforcement pool at the depot in France, and proceeded to create a new signals organization, a new (and armed) engineer organisation which relieved Canadian infantry from field labour, and the already mentioned Canadian Independent Force. All these new formations were organised as corps troops, directly under his hand, which meant that on 3 August Canadian corps troops consisted of 1263 officers and 30,238 other ranks. All told, it is likely that total Canadian numbers at Amiens were close to 100,000.⁵⁷

In any event, it was the Australian and Canadian Corps who fought the main battle, not the hypothetical divisions of Griffith or the undoubtedly competent British divisions identified by Peter Simkins and his colleagues. For a few days in August, 80 years ago, they shared the world stage. Robert Asprey, in an American assessment of their accomplishment, tempers his praise; the battle, he writes, had 'a satisfactory result, but it would not have rated more than a page or two in an official history of the war, except for one thing: the effect it exercised on the German high command'.⁵⁸ Precisely. They had struck a crippling blow at the will of the enemy, surely the chief object of strategy.⁵⁹

Endnotes

1. Marshal Ferdinand Foch, *Memoirs* (London: Heinemann, 1919), 433-4; WO 158, Public Record Office, Kew. Various files in WO 158 contain the correspondence between Foch and Haig, beginning in April, as well as letters from General Pétain, General Weygand and Lieutenant-General John DuCane, Haig's representative on Foch's staff.
2. General JE Edmonds, *Military operations. France and Belgium 1918. Vol IV* (London: HMSO, 1947), 38 Ludendorff's circular to his divisional commanders is also quoted in Robert B Asprey, *The German High Command at War: Hindenburg and Ludendorff and the First World War* (London: Warner Books, 1994), 445. Asprey includes the sentence 'we should be pleased if the enemy does attack, since he will expend his strength all the quicker by doing so'.
3. At Fourth Army Headquarters, Rawlinson's chief of staff observed, everyone was 'so busy congratulating everyone else on their share of the victory that valuable time was lost'. General AA Montgomery, quoted in P A Pedersen, *Monash as military commander* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1985), 251.
4. Erich Ludendorff, *My war memories*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1929). II: 679, 684.
5. *Ibid*, 684.
6. FM Cutlack (ed), *War letters of General Monash* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1935), 15 October 1917, 199-201.
7. *Ibid*, 18 October 1917, 202.
8. Bean Papers, 3DRL 7953 Series 4: Item 34, Harington to Edmonds, 15 December 1932, AWM.
9. See the Foch-Haig correspondence of April-May 1918 in WO 158/28, PRO.
10. CEW Bean, *The Australian Imperial Force in France during the Allied Offensive, 1918* (Vol VI of *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*) (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942), 463-5.
11. *Ibid*, 4-24.
12. It is remarkable how closely Bean's contentions echo the arguments of nineteenth century American popular historians, who contrasted the superiority of the free, democratic, well-fed and well-schooled American citizen-soldier with the oppressed soldiery of Britain's class society during the War of 1812. See 'The War of 1812 in popular memory', in SF Wise, *God's peculiar peoples: essays in nineteenth century Canadian political culture* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994).
13. Bean Papers, 3DRL 7953, Series 4 I, Edmonds to Bean, 2 September 1932; Bean to Edmonds, 11 October 1932; Edmonds to Bean, 14 November 1932, AWM.
14. 3DRL 606 Bean Papers, Diary 116, entries for 14 July, 19 July, pp 26-27, AWM.
15. Tim Travers, 'Commentary', in RJQ Adams (ed), *The Great War: essays on the military, political and social history of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 133; AMJ Hyatt, *Sir Arthur Currie: a military biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press with Canadian War Museum, 1987), 104-5.
16. Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: the making of a general, 1887-1942* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981), 129.
17. GWL Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919 (Official History of the Canadian Army in the first World War)* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), 382, Nicholson deals with the breakup and subsequent reconstitution of the Corps on pp 379-82. See also Hyatt, Currie, 103-5.
18. For the Canadian Corps in the March-July 1918 period, see Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919*, chapter XII, 'The German offensives of 1918', 369ff; Desmond Morton, 'The Canadian military experience in the First World War', in Adams (ed), *The Great War*, 70-89; ELM Burns, *General Mud: memoirs of two world wars* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1970), 66.
19. Haig Diary, 18 April 1918, PRO.
20. *Ibid*, 5 May 1918.
21. See Robert Blake (ed), *The private papers of Douglas Haig, 1914-1919* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1952), 266.
22. Christopher Pugsley, *On the fringe of hell: New Zealanders and military discipline in the First World War* (London: Auckland and Sydney; Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 7, 65-6, 132. On the subject of Australian discipline, Pugsley quotes from Beans diary: 'The British officer does not generally like us. The Australian does not salute him as a general rule, also he is jealous of the praise we get as soldiers: and he probably quite honestly fails to understand our discipline' (p 65). Haig's diary has a number of entries having to do with the indiscipline of Australians. For example, in the entry for 3 March 1918, he notes that 9 Australians per 1000 were jailed, as compared with 1.6 Canadians and New Zealanders and 1.0 British. 'That is', he wrote, 'nearly one Australian in every hundred men is in prison. This is greatly due to the fact that Australia refuses to allow Capital punishment to be awarded to any Australian': Haig Diary, XXVI: 7, PRO.
23. CE Montague, *Disenchantment* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), 126-7. The first edition was published in London by Chatto & Windus in 1922
24. *Ibid*, 116, 128. Curiously, Montague, an Irishman, had a view of English society similar to that of CEW Bean. His biographer, a close friend, described him as 'at heart something of a foreigner alien to our great caste system and to our public schools ... a gentleman, democratic by instinct, caring for the man in the street and the Tommy in the trenches and predisposed against any kind of mandarin, political, military or educational'. Perhaps he regarded criticism of the English as an Irish privilege not to be extended to colonials. Another Irishman, George Bernard Shaw, said of him that 'He had something of the Tolstoyan bitterness and disillusion that war produces at close quarters, less by its horrors,

- perhaps, than by its wastes and futilities'. See Oliver Alton, *CE Montague: a memoir* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929), 5-6, 164.
25. Richard Holmes, *Fatal avenue: a traveller's history of the battlefields of northern France and Flanders, 1346-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1993), 158.
26. See the valuable collection of essays in Brian Bond (ed), *The First World War and British military history* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
27. Peter Simkins, 'Co-stars or supporting cast? British divisions in the "Hundred Days", 1918', in *1918 and beyond, Papers from the Australian War Memorial History Conference*, Canberra, 1993, 1-9.
28. Among the Canadians are Bill Rawling, *Surviving trench warfare: technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Tim Travers, *How the war was won: command and technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918* (London: Routledge, 1992), and by the same author, *The killing ground: the British Army, the Western Front and the emergence of modern warfare* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987). Two Australians, Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, have collaborated on two important books, *Command on the Western Front: The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson 1914-1918* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), and *Passchendaele: the untold story* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
29. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
30. Griffith, *Battle tactics of the Western Front*, 8.
31. CE Carrington, *Soldier from the war returning* (London: Hutchinson, 1965), 233. Carrington added the New Zealand Division to the five Australian and four Canadian divisions.
32. Griffith, *Battle tactics*, 92-3, 271. In his bibliography, Griffith describes Gregory Blaxland's *Amiens 1918* (London: Muller, 1981) as providing 'good general coverage of a splendid little battle'. The book is in fact of little value, being based entirely upon secondary sources. Blaxland's only Australian sources are General Monash's *The Australian victories in France in 1918*, published in London by Hutchinson in 1920, and F M Cutlack, *The Australians: their final campaign, 1918* (London: Sampson Low and Marston, 1918).
33. John Monash, *Australian victories in France in 1918* (London: Hutchinson, 1920), 73.
34. For the battle maps, see Monash, *Australian victories*, and David Horner, *The gunners: a history of Australian artillery* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 172; Nicholson, *CEF*, map facing p 418.
35. 3DRL 2316, Report on Operations of Australian Corps, Phase 'B', 9-15 August 1918, Australian Corps HQ, 26 October 1918, AWM.
36. RG 9, v 4148, 3rd Canadian Division Narrative of Operations 8-16 August 1918, NAC.
37. *Ibid.*, 5. A good example of Canadian engineering work on 8 August can be found in K Weatherbe, *From the Rideau to the Rhine and back: the 6th Field Company and Battalion, Canadian Engineers in the Great War* (Toronto: Hunter-Rose Co, 1928), 362-72.
38. RG 9, v 4189, 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade Operation Reports, 8-17 August 1918, NAC.
39. Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, 324; RG 9, v 3942, Canadian Independent Force. Summary of Operations, 8-10 August 1918, 5-6, NAC.
40. The exception is Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, chapters 26-8, not because it treats the bank as a joint operation, but because its concentration upon weapons systems contributes to a unified overview.
41. See, for example, French First Army's report on the Amiens operation, entitled 'Bataille de Mondidier-Roye, 4 au 29 août', in AWM 26 476/1. In this summary, the Canadians with whom XXXI French Corps cooperated so effectively are identified merely as 'L'armée anglaise'.
42. Monash, *Australian victories*, 75.
43. Bean Papers, 3 DRL 606, Item 116 Diary 28 July 1918, 38, AWM; RG 9, v 3854. First Army to Canadian Corps, 25 July 1918, NAC, provides examples of other cover stories being circulated to explain the Canadian presence.
44. The situation map is to be found with the Herbertson material at the Australian War Memorial. Herbertson, a British officer, had served as an intelligence officer with the Australian Corps, where he and Bean became friends. While Herbertson was serving with the British Army of the Rhine after the war, he was hired by Bean to obtain from the Reichsarchiv in Potsdam materials bearing on Australian operations.
45. Bean, *The AIF in France during the Allied Offensive 1918*, 463-5.
46. Rawlinson Diary, 24 May 1918, Archives of Churchill College, Cambridge.
47. The planning correspondence is in PRO WO 95/436, and opens with Haig's direction to Rawlinson of 23 May to 'draw up a plan and make all the necessary preparations, in consultation with General Debeney, for a combined attack on the enemy south of the River SOMME'. Rawlinson's outline plan for Amiens, using the Australian and Canadian Corps as the major assaulting forces, was sent to Haig on 6 June 1918.
48. Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, 293-5; GWL Nicholson, *The Gunners of Canada: The History of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery*, 2 vols (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), I: 264-6, 277-9, 312; AGL McNaughton, 'The development of artillery in the Great War', *Canadian Defence Quarterly* VI (January 1929): 160-71.
49. Rawling, *Surviving trench warfare*, *passim*.
50. Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, 296.

51. For the air plan and air operations, see SF Wise, *Canadian airmen and the First World War* (Volume I of the Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), Chapter 17, 'Amiens', 518-41.
52. Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, 323.
53. Cyril Falls, in *The Great War* (New York: Capricorn, 1961), 372-3, compared what I have termed the 'battle culture' of the two Dominion corps, terming the Canadians 'this magnificent body of troops', and the Australians 'equally good troops of a rather different pattern, perhaps even better tactically but at lower levels apt to be less careful of detail'. Both Desmond Morton, in 'The Canadian military experience in the First World War' in Adams (ed), *The Great War*, and Dean Oliver, 'The Canadians at Passchendaele', in Peter H Liddle (ed), *Passchendaele in perspective: the Third Battle of Ypres* (London: Leo Cooper, 1997), are valuable attempts to define the character of the Corps. At Amiens, the overwhelming firepower of the Corps derived in part from its deployment (in addition to the field and heavy artillery of each of its four divisions) of the heavy and field artillery of the Fifth Canadian Division, which had been left intact after the infantry units had been broken up.
54. Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, 316.
55. RG 9, III C 3, v3757 (Canadian Record Office), Return of effective strength by branch of service, 3 August 1918, NAC.
56. Desmond Morton, 'The Canadian military experience in the First World War, 1914- 1918', 90-1.
57. The best outline of the Currie policy and is to be found in Hyatt, *Currie*, 88-103. Corps Troops statistics are in RG reorganisation 9, v3757, Return of Effective Strength 3 August 1918, NAC.
58. Asprey, *The German High Command at war*, 448.
59. Professor Prior, in his conference paper, remarked that Ludendorff's Black Day of the German Army was really only 'greyish', and that he overemphasised the defeat. What matters, however, is the *moral* effect of that defeat upon General Ludendorff, and his subsequent behaviour, not the diagnosis at 80 years remove of what he ought to have thought.