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# The Canadian Attack at Amiens, 8-11 August 1918

**Dean Chappelle**

**B**y mid-1918, the character of the First World War had changed completely from the relatively static previous three years of battle. In March, the Germans had launched their desperate gamble to win the war in a single massive offensive and had been halted, at great cost to both sides, by June. On 18 July the French, aided by American forces, launched their highly successful counter-attack at Soissons and demonstrated that the German forces were far weaker than the previous year. The opportunity was ripe to strike quickly and in force. This occurred at 4:20 a.m. on the 8th of August when the Battle of Amiens opened with the resounding crash of the combined artillery of two armies. One of the most powerful Allied forces ever assembled during the Great War, consisting of the French First (Debeney) and British Fourth (Rawlinson) Armies strengthened by the Canadian Corps and the entire British Cavalry and Tank Corps, rushed forward and fell upon the first line of generally ill-prepared and heavily outmatched Germans just east of the important railway centre at Amiens.

The attack, at least from a tactical/operational point of view, was a complete surprise.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the day, the Allies had achieved their greatest victory of the War, driving the Germans back as far as the old 1916 lines. The Canadian Corps, forming the Fourth Army's right flank, had taken their "final" objective (designated by a blue dotted line), save for the village of Le Quesnel and its surrounding area on the extreme right flank, and advanced to a maximum depth of eight

miles. On their left, the Australians had done equally well, taking all of their objectives for a maximum advance of seven miles. The French, on the Canadian right, had also conducted themselves admirably, advancing five miles.

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**"My chief anxiety [is the Canadians] as they have the most difficult job."**

General Rawlinson,  
diary entry on 5 August 1918.

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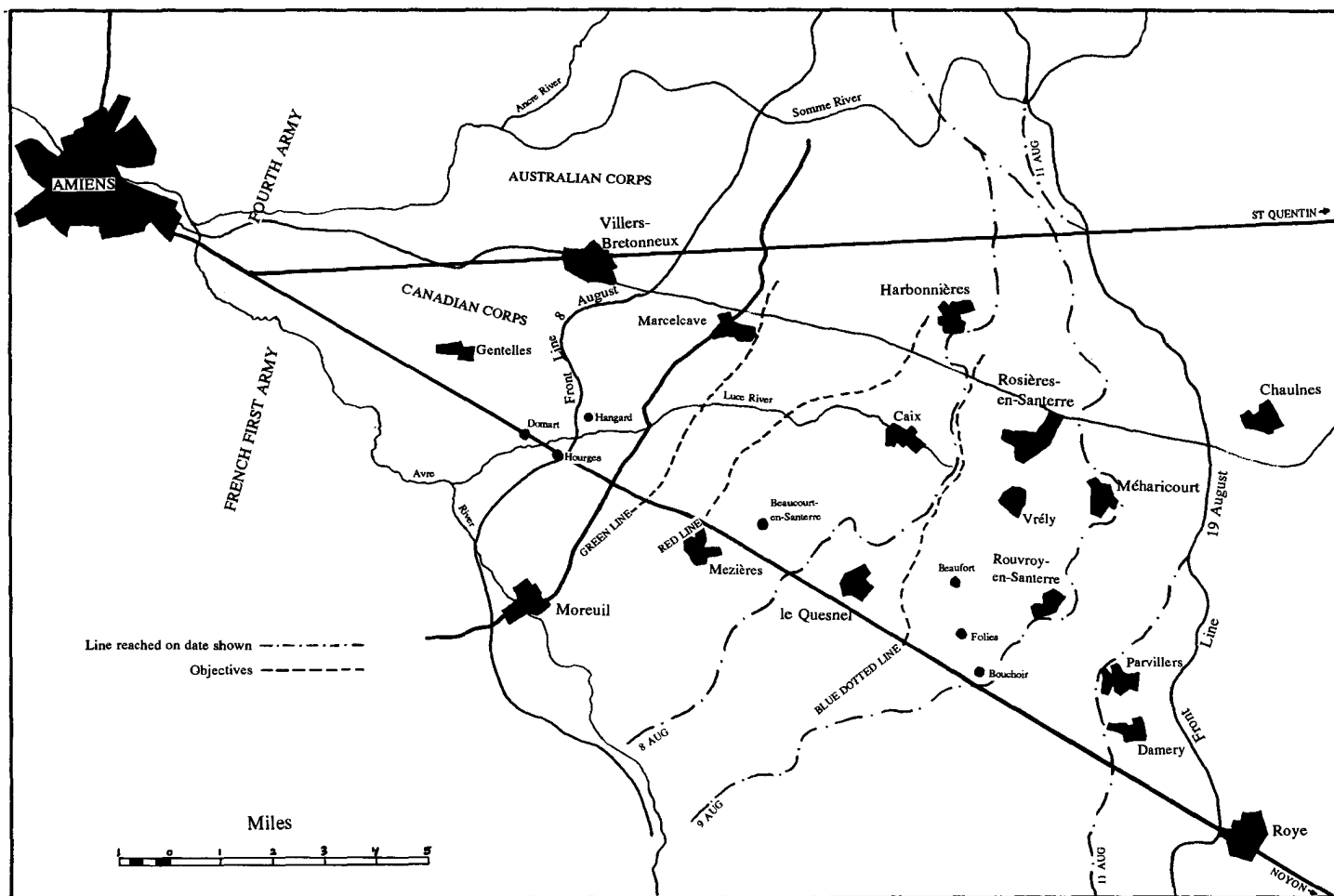
The most disappointing advance was in the extreme north, where the British Third Corps had managed only a maximum penetration of two miles, due largely to heavy German attacks on their front during the previous three days. Casualties, considering the ground gained, were extremely light. The Canadians suffered 3,868 (1,036 killed) and the Fourth Army as a whole a comparatively "mere" 8,800, excluding tank and air losses. The Germans gave their casualties as 650-700 officers and 26-27,000 other ranks. Most of these losses represented prisoners, as the Canadians alone took 5,033 for the day.<sup>2</sup>

After the very successful first day, the battle continued until 11 August when, for all intents and purposes, it died down, and the offensive was officially called to a halt on 18 August to allow time to bring up fresh reserves.

The attack on 9 August saw further successes, with a maximum gain of four miles on the Canadian front. Following this, however, resistance quickly stiffened due to the increased number of German reserves, and the obvious exhaustion of the attacking troops. The Allied line had been pushed forward to a few miles short of Roye, but remained far short of Ham, the "final objective" outlined by Haig on 5 August (see below). Total British casualties were 22,202, while the French suffered 24,232. As with most German figures by 1918, an accurate assessment of their casualties is problematic, but they were estimated at 75,000, over half of these prisoners. The British and French captured some 500 enemy guns, in addition to large numbers of machine guns, mortars, vehicles, and other equipment.<sup>3</sup>

The operation, originally foreseen as merely an attack to free the Paris-Amiens railway from German long-range guns, was first discussed by Foch and Haig on 17 May 1918. It was then to involve Rawlinson's Fourth Army, Debeney's First French Army and some 200 tanks. It was, however, only one of several options considered at the time and no details were then put forth. It was not until 13 July that Rawlinson was given specific orders by GHQ to draft his plans for an attack east of Amiens. The "fox" (as Rawlinson had long been known) had in fact been contemplating such an attack since the small scale attack at Hamel on 4 July, involving the Fourth Australian Division, a battalion of the 33rd American Division, and 60 of the new Mark V tanks of the 5th Tank Brigade. The inclusion of the latter was quite significant as

### The Battle of Amiens, 8 - 18 August 1918





*A Mark V tank advances down the Amiens-Roye road and passes German prisoners being sent to the rear.*  
(NAC PA 2946)

this was the first battle test of the new model, much improved from its predecessor. The tank attack was a great success, taking all of its limited aims and managing to get all but three of the Mk Vs to their final objectives, with only one of these lost due to enemy fire.<sup>4</sup>

The Hamel operation convinced Rawlinson of the usefulness of the new machines and they figured prominently in his 17 July outline for the Amiens operation, as did the Australian Corps. In addition to his present forces (the whole of the Tank and Australian Corps), he requested his Fourth Army be reinforced with the Canadian Corps, which was to play an important role in the attack. Originally, the Australian Corps was to spearhead the main thrust of the operation, but as the plan

progressed, the Canadians became equally important and some would say most important to the operation, as they not only had the most difficult terrain in front of them, the swampy and hilly Luce River Valley, but also formed the important link with the French First Army on the Corps' right, a source of potential difficulty in co-ordination.<sup>5</sup>

The objectives of the operation were problematic almost from the beginning, due largely to the fact that Fourth Army and GHQ had differing conceptions about how the attack should progress. Rawlinson and his staff, who preferred strictly limited attacks, at least in terms of distance, doubted that all of the Amiens outer defences could be reached on the first day, particularly on the Canadian front

where they were as much as 14,000 yards from the jumping-off line and the terrain was so difficult. This line was thus designated by a dotted blue line on the Corps' front denoting, undoubtedly, an objective of opportunity only, as Fourth Army planners considered it "unlikely" that the Canadians would reach this point by the end of the first day.<sup>6</sup> This strongly differed with GHQ's and particularly Haig's conception of the attack. On 5 August, Haig greatly complicated matters by insisting that Fourth Army's plans be amended to push the attack, ". . . in the general direction . . . [of] Ham," several miles beyond the outer Amiens defences (not on this map, but several miles east of Roye), noting that the Fourth Army plans were too limited in scope.<sup>7</sup> Thus there was some confusion over just what the objectives of the operation were to be, reflected clearly in the immediate pre-battle orders at every level. This situation was, in fact, very similar to that which existed prior to the Somme attack in 1916, where few were sure of exact objectives, and where Rawlinson favoured more limited objectives than the more ambitious ones put forth by Haig. Fortunately, weapons, training, and tactical and operational command had generally improved in the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) by 1918 but, as evidenced by this situation, strategic command still possessed many of the old problems.

Despite such discrepancies in planning, 8 August was the most singularly successful Allied day of the First World War. In the British case it was seen as the supreme example of how Great War battles could and should have been conducted. Glowing narratives of the operation are included in most histories of the War, particularly those of the Canadian and Australian forces. However, it was not the "sand table" exercise presented by most historians and many aspects of the battle did not go according to plan. Although it is of course true that very few battles come off exactly as conceived, nearly all histories have ignored the failings and problems of the Amiens operation, particularly in the Canadian case. In the end, the Canadian Corps had improved significantly, even from its impressive attack at Vimy Ridge sixteen months before, but still retained several imperfections and inconsistencies. The Corps was, in essence, a

near-perfected "traditional" force which had developed extremely effective methods of coordinating infantry-artillery attacks but was largely unable to add the third piece of the puzzle, tanks, due largely to inexperience and lack of training with the machines.<sup>8</sup> Most of these difficulties were representative of those which existed in the BEF at the time. As is often the case with the Great War, some contextualization of the events is necessary.

Essentially, the first two phases of the Canadian attack were relatively easy, mostly due to the close support provided by the artillery. It was in the third phase, the advance and consolidation of the so-called blue dotted line, that most of the difficulties surfaced. As one report put it, "Beyond the Red line, the aspect of the battle changed altogether."<sup>9</sup> The problem most evident was the relative lack of tank-infantry cooperation. As Fourth Army and Tank Corps planners had feared before the battle, the Canadians' lack of experience with the machines resulted in a general misunderstanding of their use. There were two basic difficulties in this respect. The first, and most apparent, was a marked over-dependence on the machines by the infantry. A typical report commented that:

Considering the ragged state of the defence [past the red line] our advance was not rapid enough. Too often, rather than manoeuvre out of a position held by a few machine gunners, our troops waited for tanks.<sup>10</sup>

A similar commentary pointed out the tendency of the infantry to halt if the tank attacking with them was knocked out.<sup>11</sup> That is not to say that this was universally the case, but this was certainly a relatively common problem, as the frequency of its mention attests. There was also a failure, in many cases, of the infantry to protect the flanks of the machines from anti-tank fire. The Mk V tank, although by far the most able heavy tank of the Great War, was still relatively "blind" and required infantry to constantly seek out and destroy guns which, if left to fire over open sights, could be extremely effective versus armour. As one battle summary noted, "Infantry must always remember that they can assist tanks to get their objective."<sup>12</sup> There seemed to be a slight degree of resentment on both sides that the other arm was acting on



A 60-pounder in action at Amiens.

(NAC PA 2999)

its own and not coordinating its efforts. A post-battle meeting at Canadian Corps HQ, for example, noted that although the infantry must remember to carry out their duty of reconnaissance for the machines: “There has been a tendency on the part of the tanks to act as an arm independent of the other arms, and to forget that their action must be auxiliary to that of the infantry.”<sup>13</sup>

The major causes of the Canadians’ difficulty in integrating armour into their system were simple lack of experience and training with the new weapon. They had no battle experience whatsoever with the new Mark V tank, which again had been introduced into combat only one month before at Hamel, and in previous battles had only worked with (and in most cases little more than seen) earlier models in very small numbers. They did undergo some training with tanks during May and June of 1918, but due to the very intensive nature of these exercises, armour was given only a

cursorious role, and it is not clear that they even trained with the Mk V, probably not surprising considering the then “secret” nature of the as yet untried machine. In the one or two exercises involving tanks, the other arms seemed confused as to how to integrate the machines into their already highly developed methods. As William Rawling pointed out, in these exercises the Canadians basically, “. . . learned enough not to get run over by the beasts.”<sup>14</sup> Both Fourth Army and the Tank Corps realised this problem before the battle and urged that steps be taken to correct this deficiency as soon as possible.<sup>15</sup> Due to constraints of time, however, there was little opportunity to improve this situation before 8 August. Thus, as previously noted, the Canadian Corps remained an essentially “traditional” (i.e. non-mechanized) force, albeit a very effective one.

One solution which may have avoided some of these problems, as suggested by many of the reports, was unified command. At Amiens, the

tanks were not directly under the orders of the formation with which they attacked, but instead acted on their own. In short, the tanks and the infantry conducted two separate attacks aimed at the same objectives. This problem could have been solved, noted the post-battle assessments, if the tanks allotted to an infantry formation came directly under that formation's orders, as was the case for artillery.<sup>16</sup> Although this may seem an obvious step, it did not seem to have occurred to the planners before Amiens, perhaps due to the resistance to such an idea by the Tank Corps, or to mere oversight.

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**“I do not know how long Haig thought it would take us to reach [the outer Amiens defences], but I do know that neither he nor anyone else expected us to reach it as we did by the night of August 8th.”**

General Sir Arthur Currie,  
from H.M. Urquart. *Arthur Currie.*

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As the Canadian attack showed, there were several other armour-related problems, concerning the design and use of the machines themselves. The first concerned the use of the old Mk IV type machines as supply tanks. They simply could not keep up to the rapid advance of the infantry and Mk Vs.<sup>17</sup> The transportation of vital supplies, particularly fuel and ammunition for the tanks, to the forward positions was often delayed at crucial points, because the heavily burdened Mk IVs could only manage about 1 mph over the rough ground of the Luce River Valley. One engineer's report characterized the supply tanks as, “completely useless.”<sup>18</sup>

The most severe difficulty in the area of armoured design at Amiens was the complete failure of the Mk V\* troop carrying tank. The concept of the machine was a good one on paper: assault troops were carried in the tanks to assist in taking the final objective, and thus spared the exhaustion and hazards of marching up on foot. It was, of course, a concept applied successfully in the Second War and ever since.

Unfortunately, the Mk V\* was far from an ideal vehicle for this use. The design was a lengthened Mk V, intended to carry up to twenty troops, in addition to its crew of eight. The problem was that the Mk Vs were very poorly ventilated. Tank crews became somewhat accustomed to the heat and fumes, although as will be seen, even they had difficulty with prolonged exposure. For an infantryman who had never been in a tank in his life, to be put into a hot and suffocating metal box for several hours was more than most could handle. By the time the tank-borne infantry reached their objectives, they were of little fighting value, as most became sick with the heat and fumes. In fact, many had to be removed before the final objective was reached, to march alongside the machine.<sup>19</sup> One Canadian infantryman described his journey in a Mk V\* as, “. . . a sort of pocket hell.”<sup>20</sup> The Mk V\* battalion attacking with the Australians had similar experiences. The unfortunate aspect, at least as far as future development of armoured infantry carriers, was the conclusion about the experiment, as one report advanced: “It is considered that tanks should not in [the] future be employed in this way.”<sup>21</sup> In hindsight, it is unfortunate that the Mk V\* was not employed as a supply tank at Amiens as it was well suited for such a use, much more so than the refitted Mk IVs used for this purpose.

Even the regular crews of the Mk Vs experienced difficulties with prolonged exposure to the machine's heat and fumes. They were no doubt more resistant than the infantry, but they too could only bear the hardships for so long. This was a problem which could have been lessened and perhaps eliminated all together by the simple provision of replacement crews, a lesson which came out of the Cambrai operation. Several reports pointed out the discernible decrease in the efficiency of the crews after even one full day of combat in the tanks, “. . . no crew can be expected to go into action and do itself justice for more than two days running.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the large number of tank casualties on the second and third days could perhaps have been reduced, if on the night of 8 August, fresh crews had been rushed up to replace the exhausted men who had spent twelve plus hours in the unpleasant machines.<sup>23</sup>

The final difficulty with armour at Amiens concerned the Whippet or Medium "A" tank, a new weapon which first saw action on the 8th. These new "medium" tanks, based on similar French designs, were faster than their heavier predecessors, armed only with machine guns, and designed to attack with the cavalry. The marriage of armour and cavalry, however, was not a happy one. The Whippets could not keep up to the cavalry and even if they did, the cavalry could not aid the machines against the enemy's main defence — well placed machine gun nests. A better use for the Whippets, as suggested by some post battle reports, would have been to employ them with the Mk Vs and infantry. One suggested the following, ". . . to break through as far as possible with the heavy tanks and to follow them up with the Whippets and armoured cars, so as to keep the enemy on the move."<sup>24</sup> Although this was a step in the right direction, it is odd that none of the reports suggested a use for the machines which would

seem natural — to protect the flanks of the heavy tanks using their superior mobility. To be fair, this was the first battle test of the Whippet and most observers remained enthusiastic about its future use, but it was obvious to all that the employment of the weapon with cavalry was a waste.

The cavalry operation which was launched with the Whippets was the last large scale employment of this former "arme blanche" in British history. Such an action was not only outdated, it actually impeded operations. The cavalry did get to a lot of its objectives on the blue dotted line, but was unable to hold them without the infantry and tanks. It also appears that the cavalry was largely responsible for the failure to take Le Quesnel, the only part of the dotted blue line not taken on 8 August, as this was a primary objective on their front. The cavalry was ordered, once the infantry had reached the blue dotted line, to push

*A Mark V tank passing the 8th Field Ambulance at Hangard, France.*

(NAC PA 2888)





immediately on to Roye, but were unable to advance much past their positions on that line, and completely unable to hold any position past that point.<sup>25</sup> One of the major problems was that the cavalry were very ineffective against MGs and groups of enemy who had taken up positions in wooded areas. The enemy positions on the blue dotted line, and particularly past

problem arose when telephone wires, laid by engineering and signal troops following the infantry, were destroyed by the cavalry moving up to the attack, which disrupted the already problematic communications.<sup>27</sup>

Despite all of these difficulties Amiens was the most successful Allied operation of the



*A Canadian-commanded tank having its war crest painted on before the Battle of Amiens.*

(NAC PA 3667)

this point, consisted largely of such defences. In such terrain the cavalry were also a detriment to operations, due to the poor visibility. As one report noted, “. . . we could have dealt with certain situations with artillery and trench mortar fire, but were in doubt to the location of the cavalry. Their charges at many times . . . were exceedingly gallant, but futile.”<sup>26</sup> Another

Great War, and as the Canadians penetrated furthest in that operation, some aspects of the attack must have worked well. Foremost among these was the artillery. The quick and relatively easy capture of the green and red lines was largely facilitated by the effectiveness of gunnery in the BEF by 1918. The initial barrage, which covered the advance to the green line, was

especially devastating to the enemy defences. Most impressive was the counter-battery work performed by the Corps' gunners, under the able guidance of Andrew McNaughton, which silenced the enemy batteries quickly and without which the attack would have ground rapidly to a halt: "The enemy barrage at the opening of the attack was fairly heavy, but was quickly smothered by our [counterbattery] work and [soon] the enemy shelling decreased almost to zero."<sup>28</sup> The work of the artillery was even more impressive when it is remembered that they had less than a week to prepare for the attack, due to the highly rapid and secretive nature of the operation. The only real problems experienced by the artillery on 8 August occurred when the infantry had passed the red line and were out of the range of field artillery and out of the effective range of the heavy artillery. Thus the guns, particularly the field artillery, had to be rushed forward. Due to the novelty of semi-open warfare, a faster advance than anticipated, and the aforementioned problems in communication, the guns had great difficulty in keeping pace. One account noted that the guns were usually only able to offer support past the red line where the advance was temporarily checked, allowing a lag time for the field pieces to catch up. This problem aside, the artillery was unquestionably the most effective weapon on the Corps' front. Provisions had also been made for the employment of captured guns, and 26 of these were put into action on 8 August by specially trained gunners, who fired over 1,500 rounds from them at the retreating enemy. This was an idea toyed with in the past, but first used with great success at Amiens.<sup>29</sup> By this time artillery was the "arme blanche" of the Corps and of the BEF in general, due largely to the experience of the previous two years and the fact that the Canadian Corps was the only permanent corps in the BEF, giving the gunners and infantry ample time to develop a good working relationship.<sup>30</sup> Even the Fourth Army recognized this fact, and noted, ". . . the



*Top: German prisoners wearing gas masks march to rear carrying wounded while British tanks advance to the front.* (NAC PA 2951)

*Bottom: Canadians wearing gas masks bring in a wounded comrade.* (NAC PA 2863)

advantages of the permanent Corps system . . . [resulted] in a clearly defined artillery policy and plan of action in the Corps."<sup>31</sup>

Another formation of the Corps was also instrumental in aiding the advance, particularly in the early phases — the engineers. These troops played their most vital role on the 3rd Division's front, where the Luce flowed most heavily across the Canadian area of attack. At one point the river and accompanying wet marshy ground was more than 200 yards wide. The attacking troops held off the enemy while the engineers constructed footbridges across the river for the infantry. In several other areas where the Luce cut the front the engineers proved to be of equal value and thus made the crossing of this very difficult obstacle look relatively easy.<sup>32</sup>

*A Canadian armoured car, part of the Canadian Independent Force, going into action at Amiens.*

(NAC PA 3015)



On the Corps right flank, the big success story concerned the Canadian Independent Force, commanded by the able and innovative Raymond Brutinel. This was the first battle in which the CIF fought in its entirety and it certainly proved itself. This force, composed largely of machine guns mounted on armoured cars as well as signal and cyclist units, had the difficult task of coordinating its actions with the attacking infantry, tanks and cavalry, while securing the Amiens-Roye road and maintaining contact with the French, to ensure that the Canadian and French attacks did not diverge. In addition to this, the CIF acted as a reconnaissance unit, and in doing so harassed the enemy, particularly past the blue dotted line. The force's mobility was certainly a great factor in its success. It penetrated some distance past the blue dotted line and thus played a valuable role in reconnaissance. Unlike the infantry, a post-battle report of the CIF noted that: "The training and lessons learnt on recent open warfare manoeuvres were of the greatest value, as all ranks understood the role they had to play."<sup>33</sup> Among the most successful weapons of the force was the employment of 6" Newton mortars mounted on armoured cars. These were essentially an early version of a self-propelled gun and acted as an independent unit. They engaged several enemy batteries with a good deal of success, and provided the CIF with responsive, indirect fire support. Even Fourth Army HQ realized the value of this experimental weapon and recommended a great increase in their use. Finally, the CIF also aided the French on several occasions, especially in outflanking strong points, as well as sending back many useful reports from its main task of reconnaissance.<sup>34</sup> That is not to suggest that the force did not encounter problems, as it would have been extremely odd if a new formation of such an experimental nature did not encounter difficulties in its first attack. There was some lack of co-ordination between the armoured cars and problems in using these vehicles for frontal attacks. The latter difficulty was no doubt caused by a desire to keep the vehicles on the road, as they were ill-equipped for off-road use. They were also relatively vulnerable to enemy gun fire, due to their high profile, which had to be compensated for with speed.<sup>35</sup>



*Germans captured by the Canadians at Amiens. The capture of so many prisoners was unprecedented on the Western Front.* (NAC PA 2858)

The Canadian Corps possessed infantry of a very high calibre, and although there remained problems in integrating new methods into the existing system, Canadian infantrymen stood up to their reputation at Amiens, demonstrating a great deal of bravery and skill, as the advance and the four Victoria Crosses awarded to their ranks on 8 August attest.<sup>36</sup> The large number of prisoners and guns captured for the day also attested to the infantry's skill, as tanks, cavalry and artillery units were not tasked or equipped for the capture and holding of prisoners. The advance, in all phases, depended on an infantry willing to push on often under very difficult circumstances. The troops were certainly given extra drive by their great advance, as several first hand accounts spoke of the elation felt by all at such an advance after so many years of static warfare.<sup>37</sup> The valour of the infantry was especially evident in the advance from the red to blue dotted lines, where they played a vital role in securing the latter objective, when

planners believed that they would be unable to be of much use in capturing such a distant and well defended objective on the first day. Doyle put it best when he noted that: "The Canadians were on top of their form that day, and their magnificent condition gave promise of the splendid work which they were to do from that hour until almost the last day of the war."<sup>38</sup>

The Mk V tanks working with the Canadian Corps also performed generally quite well, despite the aforementioned problems. The Germans captured in the battle were much impressed by the new machine and realised that it constituted a great improvement over past models. The machines played an important role, particularly in the advance from red to blue dotted lines where they were useful in attacking enemy MG nests. There are problems with suggesting that the machines played the decisive role in the victory of 8 August, as some authors have done. While this holds some

truth as far as the attack on the Australian front, as demonstrated here they were far from the decisive element on the Canadian.

It should not seem surprising that some Canadian historians, such as Dancocks and Nicholson, have seen Amiens as a whole as a victory of artillery and infantry, while viewing tanks as minimal factors in the success. These authors, examining the Canadian attack only and depending almost exclusively on Canadian sources, have drawn the right conclusion as far as the Canadian attack was concerned. The problem, of course, arises when the whole battle is characterized in this manner. But the problem with Dancocks' conclusion that the conception of Amiens as a great tank victory is a myth, and Nicholson's similar comments, are that tanks played a very effective role in the Australian attack.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, Tim Travers has suggested that the tanks played a great role in the victory at Amiens, and uses Australian accounts to prove his point.<sup>40</sup> Both assessments are correct, depending on which sector is examined in the most detail. The battle was thus neither a complete break from previous attacks, nor the logical conclusion of earlier operations, but rather a somewhat confused mix of the two, which reflected the somewhat haphazard "trial and error" manner in which the BEF developed during the Great War.<sup>41</sup>

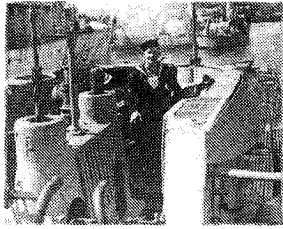
## NOTES

1. It is clear from the statements of German prisoners captured on August 8th that the attack came as a complete surprise. Some noted that they expected an attack in the near future, but never as soon as 8 August and it was never anticipated that the Allies were capable of assembling such a powerful force in secret.
2. G.W.L. Nicholson. *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919*. (Ottawa, 1962). p.407.
3. J.F.C. Fuller. *Decisive Battles of the Western World, 1792-1944*. ed. John Terraine. (London, 1954). pp.381-84.
4. "Operations of the Australian Corps against Hamel, Bois de Hamel, and Bois de Vaire," July 1918. 2-16. MG 30, E300, v.23, Odlum Papers, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa (hence NAC). For a description of the improvements of the Mk V tank over the Mk IV, see below footnote 17.
5. It is clear from Rawlinson's initial memo that he intended the Australians to be the main thrust of his attack, which should not seem surprising as he had worked with the force for the better part of four months and had developed a good working relationship with them, particularly the Corps commander, Monash. By contrast, he had never worked directly with the Canadian Corps. See General Sir Henry Rawlinson, "Memo to GHQ," 17/7/18, Rawlinson Papers, v.49, Imperial War Museum, London (hence IWM). Ben Greenhouse pointed out, quite correctly, that by 8 August the Canadian front had assumed equal and even primary importance. See Brereton Greenhouse. "It was Chiefly a Canadian Battle: The Decision at Amiens, 8-11 August, 1918." *Canadian Defence Quarterly*. v.18, no.2. (Ottawa, 1988). p.74.
6. Similar objectives on the Australian front, not as far away, were designated by a solid blue line, while on both fronts green and red lines designated the 1st and 2nd objectives. As illustrated by the Somme and his initial memo for Amiens, Rawlinson favoured two phase assaults. See "Conference at Fourth Army HQ," 29/7/18, Rawlinson Papers, v.49, IWM.
7. "Haig Diaries, 1-15 August, 1918," WO 256/34. Public Records Office, Kew (hence PRO). The full story of this discrepancy is noted in S.F. Wise. *Canadian Airmen in the First World War*. (Toronto, 1980). pp.518-20, and also discussed in Greenhouse, "It was Chiefly a Canadian Battle," p.74, and in Dean Chappelle. "The Most Brilliant of Successes: The Planning and Implementation of the Battle of Amiens, 8-11 August, 1918." unpublished MA thesis, UNB, (Fredericton, 1992). pp.91-97.
8. The concept of "traditional" elements within the BEF (ie those elements who de-emphasized or failed to understand the usage of armour in the attack), originates with Tim Travers' seminal work, *The Killing Ground*. (London, 1987) and several subsequent articles.
9. "Notes on Recent Operations, GHQ," August 1918, RG 9, III, v. 4022, folder 51, file 3, NAC.
10. *Ibid.*
11. "Notes and Some Lessons Learned from the Experiences Gained During the Operations, August 8 to 12 on the Somme," Tank Corps, 15/8/18, RG 9, III, v.3859, folder 85, file 71, NAC.
12. *Ibid.*
13. "Lessons Learned from Recent Fighting Referred to by the Army Commander at a Conference held at Canadian Corps HQ, 30 August, 1918". 31/8/18, RG 9, III, v.3859, folder 85, file 7, NAC.
14. William Rawling, letter to the author, 25/11/91.
15. "Conference at Fourth Army HQ," 21/7/18, and "Memo from Tank Corps C.O.," 23/7/18, Rawlinson Papers, v.49, IWM.
16. *Ibid.* See also, "1 CID, Report on Amiens Operations," August 1918, MG 30, E117, Parsons Papers, v.1, section 6, 4, NAC.
17. The Mark IV had a top speed of 3.7 m.p.h., compared to the Mark Vs 4.6 m.p.h. This difference may not seem significant, but when it is also taken into account that the Mk IV required four men simply to drive the vehicle (compared to the Mk Vs one), the new model was a great improvement over its predecessor. See Fuller, *Decisive Battles*, p.374.
18. "1 CID Report on Administration at Amiens," August, 1918, RG 9, III, v.4809, folder 193, 49, NAC; "4th Tank

- Brigade Report on Operations, 8-11 August, 1918," 24/8/18, RG 9, III, v.4798, folder 102, 8, NAC; "1st Bde C.E. - Narrative of Operations, 2-12 August," August 1918, RG 9, III, folder 30, file 8, 5, NAC.
19. "4 CID - Comments and Lessons:", 10/9/18," RG 9, III, v.4809, folder 189, 19-20, NAC; "12 CIB, Report of L.C. Operation, 8-13 August," August 1918, RG 9, III, folder 21, file 5, 13, NAC.
  20. As quoted in A.J. Smithers. *A New Excalibur* (London, 1988). p.197.
  21. "4 CID - Comments and Lessons," p.20.
  22. "4th Tank Bde - Report on Operations, 8-11 August," p.8.
  23. Of the 580 machines which began the Operation only 145 were available on 9 August, by 12 August only 6 remained.
  24. "Notes and Some Lessons....," Tank Corps, 2. See also, "3rd Tank Bde, Report on Operations, 8-12 August 1918," 8/9/18, RG 9, III, v.4798, folder 108, 14-15, NAC; and "4 CID - Comments and Lessons," 20.
  25. "Narrative of Operations - Cavalry Corps, August 6-12, 1918," RG 9, III, v.4798, folder 102, 2, NAC.
  26. "4 CID - Comments and Lessons," 16-17.
  27. "1 CID - Lessons Learned from Recent Fighting," September 1918, RG 9, III, v.4016, folder 33, file 13, NAC.
  28. "Artillery, Amiens - Canadian Corps," August 1918, RG 9, III, v.4807, folder 175, 3, NAC. See also, "WD, of RA Canadian Corps, August to November 1918," MG 30, E66, Cruikshank Papers, v.31, file 85, NAC.
  29. "2nd Canadian Divisional Artillery, Report of Operations, 8-10 August," August 1918, RG 9, III, v.4257, folder 29, file 3, NAC; "The Story of the 4th Canadian Division," MG 30, E34, Bradley Papers, 15, NAC; "Artillery Notes on Attack by Canadian Corps, 8 August, 1918," 24/8/18, file # unknown, Directorate of History, Ottawa.
  30. In the First World War, division was the highest level in the BEF at which formations were permanent, with the exception of the Canadian Corps. Most British Corps consisted of different divisions at different times, as these were routinely rotated in and out of the Corps' command. By contrast, the Canadian Corps from the battle of Vimy Ridge (April 1917) onward, retained the same four divisions in attack, often due to the Corps commander's (Currie) insistence over British attempts to reinforce other units using Canadian divisions, particularly during the German attacks of March-April 1918. The Canadian Corps was thus able to develop an efficient system of operation, based on continuity. Currie even resisted the reduction in size of divisions (at battalion level) carried out by the rest of the BEF in February-March of 1918, as he insisted that the Corps would lose efficiency. Thus, by August 1918, the Canadian Corps was not only the only permanent Corps in the BEF, but the largest. For the best account of this, see William Stewart. "Attack Doctrine of the Canadian Corps, 1916-18." MA thesis (Draft Copy), the University of New Brunswick, (Fredericton, 1982).
  31. "Fourth Army Artillery in the Battle of Amiens," August 1918, RG 9, v.3911, folder 38, file 1, 13, NAC.
  32. "Summary of Operations - 1918, Canadian Engineers," 8 August, RG 9, III, v.3964, folder 30, file 14, NAC; "1st Bde CE, Narrative of Operations, 2-12 August," 8 August, RG 9, III, v.4015, folder 30, file 8, NAC; Daniel Dancocks. *Spearhead to Victory*. (Edmonton, 1987). p.48.
  33. "1 CMMG Bde, Lessons Learnt in Recent Fighting," 15/8/18, RG 9, III, v.3942, folder 51, file 3, NAC.
  34. "Summary of Operations, CIF, 8/8/18- 10/8/18," August 1918, RG 9, III, v.3942, folder 49, file 1, NAC. See also Wallace, pp.85-88.
  35. "Lessons Learnt during the Fighting on August 8th and 9th, 1918, #1 Group, CIF," August 1918, RG 9, III, v.3942, folder 51, file 3, NAC.
  36. Gregory Blaxland. *Amiens: 1918*. (London, 1968), p.178; Nicholson, pp.398-406.
  37. For example, "War Diary," 8 August 1918, MG 30, E113, Bell Papers, NAC; and also "Memories of WW I," 8 August 1918, MG 30, E417, Baxter Papers, NAC.
  38. Arthur Conan Doyle. *The British Campaign in France and Flanders, July to November, 1918*. v.5 (London, nd). p.27.
  39. Dancocks, *Spearhead to Victory*, pp.55-56; and Nicholson, *C.E.F.*, p.420.
  40. Tim Travers. "The Evolution of British Strategy and Tactics on the Western Front in 1918: GHQ, Manpower and Technology." *Journal of Military History*, vol 54, #2, (Washington, April 1990). pp.193-98. Travers did concede in this same article that the artillery and the infantry also played vital roles in the victory.
  41. This characterization of the BEF's development is similar to that elucidated in S. Bidwell and D. Graham in their seminal work *Firepower*, although the latter present the development in a somewhat more positive light.

Dean Chappelle completed his M.A. in Military History at the University of New Brunswick and is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Ottawa.

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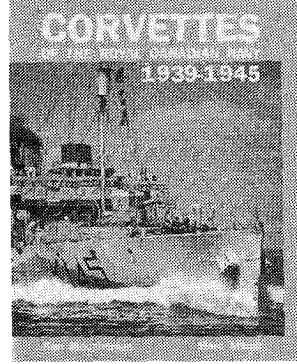


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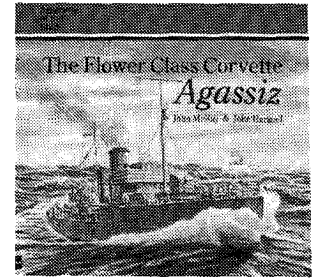
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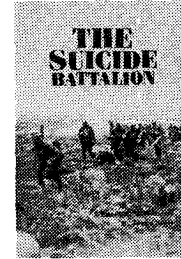
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