Battle of Amiens:

The Battle of Amiens was an Allied victory that helped bring an end to World War I. Following the Second Battle of the Marne, the Allies launched an attack in August 1918 with a force of 75,000 men, more than 500 tanks and nearly 2,000 planes. The offensive achieved huge gains on the first day, with Allied troops and tanks advancing eight miles and causing 27,000 casualties. Although the German resistance stiffened, and the fighting was over after a few days, the battle convinced many in the German high command that victory in the war was unattainable.

Following the failure of the 1918 German spring offensives and the successful French counterstroke on the Marne in July, the Allies turned to their own offensive on August 8 in the Amiens sector. The Amiens offensive finally ended Erich Ludendorff’s hopes for further attacks and indeed persuaded the German high command that the war must be ended. Amiens was therefore a turning point on the Western Front.

The Fourth Army commander, Henry Rawlinson, combined for this attack eleven divisions (three British, four Canadian, four Australian) comprising 75,000 men, more than 500 tanks, 1,900 aircraft (including French planes), and 2,000 guns. Against this formidable array, the German defenses consisted of 37,000 men, 530 guns, and 369 planes. Moreover, German defenses were not well prepared, whereas Rawlinson achieved surprise through wireless deception (including periods of radio silence and fake messages from other parts of the line), the last-minute deployment of the Canadian Corps, and movement of troops and materiel entirely by night.

The offensive opened at 4:20 a.m. on August 8 and achieved immediate success. The troops and tanks advanced eight miles, capturing 400 guns and causing 27,000 casualties, including 12,000 prisoners. In contrast, the spearhead of the attack, the Australians and Canadians, suffered but 6,500 casualties. The success of the first day had been due to surprise, the drive and firepower of the infantry, the large number of tanks, and counterbattery dominance.

The offensive was resumed over the next three days, but disorganization and stiffening German resistance limited the advance, and Rawlinson was convinced to end the battle by the Canadian Corps commander, Arthur Currie.