



The hundred days, 1918

Most people are familiar with the stalemate and slaughter of battles like the Somme in 1916 or Passchendaele in 1917. Less well known is the series of victories won by Allied forces in 1918.

In this case study you can examine a range of sources which cover the final hundred days of the war up to November 1918. See whether these affect your views on the commanders in the Great War.

You will probably find it helpful to study the [Background](#) before you start looking at the sources.

Use the [Worksheet](#) as you look through the sources. This will help you plan your research and think about how to present your findings.

Sources



Agreement by Allied commanders, April 1918



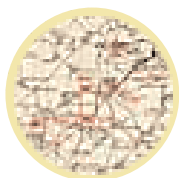
Report on the situation in France, July 1918



War Cabinet meeting, August 1918



Allied aircraft, comparing 1916 to 1918



Map of one division's achievements



Newsreel of captured German defences, 1918

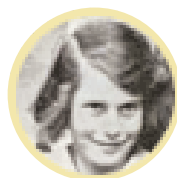


Photo of Haig returning to Britain, April 1919



Source 1

An agreement reached at a conference of Allied commanders, April 1918

(Catalogue ref: WO 32/5596)

How to use this source:

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

- What is the main development set out in this source?
- What has brought this about? (Use the useful notes to help you.)
- How will it make the Allies more effective?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 1

Conclusion.

The Conference decided that—

The arrangement for the co-ordination of the Higher Command on the Western front, concluded at Doullens on the 26th March, 1918, should be superseded by the following arrangement :—

(French text) :—

“Le Général Foch est chargé par les Gouvernements britannique, français et américain de coordonner l'action des armées alliées sur le front occidental. Il lui est conféré à cet effet tous les pouvoirs nécessaires en vue d'une réalisation effective. Dans ce but, les Gouvernements britannique, français et américain confient au Général Foch la direction stratégique des opérations militaires. Les Commandants en Chef des armées britannique, française et américaine exercent dans sa plénitude la conduite tactique de leur armée. Chaque Commandant en Chef aura le droit d'en appeler à son Gouvernement si, dans son opinion, son armée se trouve mise en danger par toute instruction reçue du Général Foch.”

(English text) :—

“General Foch is charged by the British, French, and American Governments with the co-ordination of the action of the Allied Armies on the Western front. To this end all powers necessary to secure effective realisation are conferred on him. The British, French, and American Governments for this purpose entrust to General Foch the strategic direction of military operations. The Commanders-in-Chief of the British, French, and American Armies have full control of the tactical employment of their forces. Each Commander-in-Chief will have the right of appeal to his Government if in his opinion the safety of his Army is compromised by any order received from General Foch.”



Source 2

Extract from a British Army report on the military situation in France, July 1918
(Catalogue ref: WO 158/105)

How to use this source:

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

- How confident was the British officer writing this paper?
- What made this officer so confident?
- Does this source suggest that the commanders were effective leaders and planners?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 2

to return to the question of the Western front
recent events make it unnecessary to discuss Section A
of your paper and appear here to have opened up a
greatly improved prospect of victory. By victory is
meant the defeat of the enemy's armed forces to a degree
that will render them incapable of offering further
effective resistance.

The two great factors that have caused this
confidence to spring up are the arrival of the
Americans and the changed tactical methods adopted
this year.

It is not necessary to enlarge on the subject
of the Americans, as there is no difference of opinion
as regards the value of the American Army.

The changed tactical methods date from CAMBRAI
and Von HUTIER'S RIGA attack. Many were sceptical of
these methods succeeding on the Western front. We had
become accustomed to trench warfare, costly attacks with
limited objectives, and the prospect of a break through

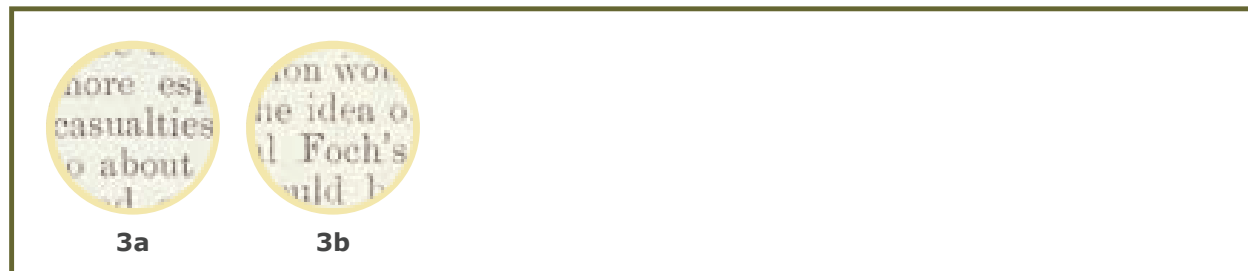
seemed remote. The new methods favour the attack and
give a new and much more decisive character to the
operations. Their effectiveness has now been
demonstrated over and over again. -And why? Because
they are based on sound principles - concentration of
superior force and its sudden and violent application by
surprise. Moreover the means of attack have been
perfected to a degree that enables them to overcome those
means of defence that formerly proved so formidable, the
trench system, barbed wire and the machine gun. We know
ourselves how near these new methods of attack brought us
to defeat.



Source 3

Extract from a meeting of the War Cabinet, August 1918

(Catalogue ref: CAB 23/7)



How to use this source:

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

- According to this source, what was the situation on the western front in August 1918?
- What was the attitude of the commanders towards their soldiers' lives?
- Why were the Australians so pleased?
- What were the main achievements in recent attacks?
- How effective were the tanks?
- Does this source suggest that the British and Empire commanders were capable and competent?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 3a

1. THE Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who had just returned from France, reported that there was not much information in addition to that which the War Cabinet had already received. Enemy resistance was stiffening all along the line, and neither Marshal Foch nor Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig proposed to make further attacks for the present unless they could advance without undue expenditure of life. The Allied Generals were, however, testing one or two places which they particularly wished to capture, because it seemed that if these places were taken the enemy would be obliged to fall back farther. It would be seen in the course of the next forty-eight hours whether these operations were worth undertaking.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff continued that he had seen General Currie. He had also seen General Monash, commanding the Australians, with his five Divisional Generals, who were all much pleased with the result of their recent operations, more especially with the smallness of the losses incurred. The casualties of each of the five Divisional Generals had only amounted to about 600 apiece. The casualties of the enemy, on the other hand, appeared to have been very heavy, because the Germans had been pushed back so rapidly that they could not get away owing to the congestion of the roads. The total number of German prisoners taken by the British and French in these operations amounted to about 30,000, together with some 400 to 500 guns. The total losses of the Allies had been about 30,000, of which British losses were about 20,000.



Source 3b

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the tanks had done splendid work. The number of tanks put out of action, whether lost or disabled, amounted to about 60 per cent. of the total, but many of these were not lost to the enemy, and could be repaired shortly. The temporary casualties to tanks were due chiefly to engine troubles and over-heating. The tank personnel had done very well, but it had become clear that there must be two or three relays of personnel, owing to the fact that the crews became exhausted in the intense heat inside the tanks.

Asked as to whether he considered it probable that the enemy would make a stand on the Vesle, General Wilson replied that he thought so. He added that their position would be so uncomfortable that he had from the first favoured the idea of leaving them there, and he believed that this was Marshal Foch's intention, but that it was not unlikely that the Germans would before long re-cross the Aisne.

The enemy appeared to have nineteen reserve divisions, of which fifteen were with Prince Rupprecht, two with the Crown Prince, and two with Prince Albrecht.

Proof of the deterioration of the enemy was evidenced in the fact that the 1st Australian Division, with but small losses to themselves, had so completely knocked out the 5th Bavarian Division that, in the opinion of the Australian Commanders, it seemed unlikely that the latter unit would be able to recover for two months.



Source 4

Report on the actions of Allied aircraft, comparing 1916 to 1918
(Catalogue ref: AIR 1/109/15/16)

How to use this source:

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

- What does this source tell you about the uses of aircraft during the Great War?
- What are the limitations of the source?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 4

COMPARISON OF BRITISH & FRENCH RESULTS ON WESTERN FRONT FROM 1st JULY 1916 to OCTOBER 15th 1918.

	British.	French.
E.A.Destroyed	4104	2026
" Driven down o/c	2257	1985
Machines missing	2321	971 X
Weight of Bombs dropped (tons)	6072	4553

X NOTE: This figure is doubtful, and for the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ months all the French figures are somewhat approximate.



Source 5

Map showing the achievements of one British Army division, September to December 1918

(Catalogue ref: WO 297/2556)

How to use this source:

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

- What do the various marks on the map show?
- What does this suggest about the effectiveness of the British Army in 1918?
- According to the key for the map, what did the 6th Division achieve?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 5





Source 6

Newsreel showing Haig and other commanders inspecting captured German defences, 1918

(ITN Archive /Pathé: 1928.13)

How to use this source:

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

- What does this film clip tell us about the strength of the German defences captured by Haig's forces?
- Does this suggest Haig was an effective commander? (Use the useful notes to help you.)
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 6





Source 7

Photo of the return to Britain of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, April 1919

(Catalogue ref: ZPER 34/154, reproduced by permission of the Illustrated London News Picture Library)

How to use this source:

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

- What impression does this source give of Haig?
- Does this contrast with other sources you have seen or read?
- What impression do you get from the caption?
- What does this source suggest people in Britain thought of Haig at the end of the war?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 7



HOME FROM THE WAR HE DID SO MUCH TO WIN : SIR DOUGLAS HAIG WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTERS AT KINGSTON.