

attack failed with severe loss. Between April 9 and May 12 the Allies reported the capture of fifty thousand prisoners and four hundred and forty-four guns with nearly one thousand machine guns and many trench mortars. On May 15 General Petain, who had won renown by his successful defence of Verdun, was appointed commander in chief of the French armies in France in place of General Nivelle, who took command of a group of armies under him. General Foch, who had been in partial retirement for six months, succeeded General Petain as chief of staff. Hard fighting continued near Arras where the Germans made violent counter-attacks on the British troops. An Australian division carried the salient near Bullecourt on the night of May 9, but was partially driven out next day. The position was finally taken by them on the 17th. The change of command of the French armies encouraged the Germans to assault their newly won line along the Ladies' Road, but they failed to gain much ground, and were eventually expelled from the heights overlooking the valley of the Ailette. Early on the morning of June 7 an attack was made on the salient south of Ypres on a front of nine miles by the British.

The ridge between Messines and Wytschaete had been strongly fortified with three lines of intrenchments protected by broad belts of wire entanglements and many concrete emplacements for machine guns. Nineteen deep mines had been excavated beneath this ridge from the British trenches and loaded with many hundreds of tons of high explosives. For two weeks preceding the attack an overwhelming fire of artillery directed from aircraft had been maintained against the German works, and nearly succeeded in silencing their fire. The mines were exploded simultaneously with a concussion that was felt in London and formed craters some of which were eighty feet deep and of great width. The infantry advanced at once under cover of the smoke and carried the front line in a few minutes, then moving forward against the second line. The garrisons of the two villages continued to resist obstinately until the afternoon, but the remainder of the position was taken shortly after daylight when the assailants again pressed on and penetrated the third line. Violent counter assaults were repelled during the following night, and trenches on a two mile front were captured near Souchez. More than 7,000 prisoners and twenty guns were taken.

The Allies had secured a decided ascendancy in the air and adopted a settled policy of harassing and wearing down the German resistance by continual raids and surprise attacks on different parts of their line. A great force of British artillery was concentrated near Lens on a narrow front and a violent bombardment continued for the remainder of the month of June. Constant small gains of ground were made, but the Germans resisted stubbornly from concealed positions among the mounds of slag and refuse from the mines, which are such a striking feature of the country in that locality. The British had also taken over the sector next the coast, but a heavy bombardment seriously damaged their trenches and destroyed the bridges they had thrown across the river Yser. An attack by a superior force succeeded in overwhelming a body of troops on the further side of the river whose retreat had thus been cut off. A