

sudden attack by the Canadian Corps carried the trenches on a six hundred yard front south of Lens on July 22. In the latter part of the month of July the Germans assumed the offensive on the French front along the Chemin-des-Dames, employing specially selected and trained "shock troops" who gained some ground from which they were eventually expelled. On July 31 a combined attack by French and British troops began on a front of twenty miles, preceded by a tremendous bombardment and followed by the use of gas-shells on a large scale. The German front lines were rendered untenable but their troops promptly took refuge in shell craters and prepared positions for machine guns, from which they made a desperate resistance. The greater part of their second line was carried, however, and the third line penetrated. Determined counter-attacks recovered some of the lost ground. Heavy rains then seriously interfered with further operations. Fresh gains were made by the Canadian Corps near Lens. On August 15, advancing on a front of two miles, the First and Second Canadian Divisions captured Hill 70 and gained ground in some places to a depth of two miles. Violent counter-attacks were repelled and they continued to close in upon that town, a place of great importance as a great coal-mining centre from which the Germans had extracted large supplies of fuel. Several of its suburbs were evacuated by the Germans and occupied by British advanced posts. An allied attack near Ypres, preceded by a large number of tanks, was also successful and substantial advances were made. Heavy rains inundated the low country in that vicinity in the latter part of August, and delayed further active operations. The offensive was resumed by the British near St. Julien on September 18, after a prolonged bombardment. Under the protection of a devastating curtain of fire, sweeping along in front of the advancing infantry, several strong German positions were easily taken and organized for defence. Counter-attacks on these trenches were repelled a few days later. Another offensive on a front of nine miles gained further ground in the direction of the Passchendaele ridge on October 4, and five days afterwards a joint attack with the French gained ground to the west of this point. The French resumed their offensive in the vicinity of Laon on October 23, taking fort Malmaison and several neighbouring fortified villages and quarries with eight thousand prisoners. Important artillery positions were gained here and guns brought up to them, from which an enfilading fire was directed on other German intrenchments which were abandoned a few days later when they retreated across the Ailette, destroying the bridges behind them.

Sir Julian Byng was appointed to command the Third British Army, and Sir Arthur Currie succeeded him in command of the Canadian Corps on June 9.

The Canadian Corps took over the Passchendaele sector from the Australian and New Zealand divisions which had previously held it. With the usual preparation of a violent bombardment successful assaults were made on the German positions on October 26 and 30 by the Third and Fourth Divisions, and on November 6 and 10 by the First and Second Canadian Divisions, the last of which carried