

the infantry advanced on both sides of the Arras-Cambrai national road and carried the German intrenchments on a front of eight miles, in the face of a most resolute resistance by ten German divisions, holding a very strongly prepared position. This was one of the most remarkable exploits during the war. Almost 10,000 prisoners were taken and an advance made of five miles. Further progress was made next day and on September 4 the British advanced within seven miles of Cambrai. The Germans were forced to fall back on the outer defences of the Hindenburg line. As a result of these operations the Lys salient was evacuated by them. Lens, Bailleul and Kemmel Hill were abandoned and the important railway centre at Hazebrouck was freed from any further menace. Seven British divisions were engaged in this operation. Between August 26 and September 3 they took 8,850 prisoners belonging to thirteen German divisions, and 200 guns.

By the night of September 8 the Germans had retired to the general line, Vermand-Epehy-Havrincourt, and thence running northward along the east bank of the Canal du Nord. From Havrincourt southward, their main line of resistance was the system of defences known as the Hindenburg line which ran southeastward of the Scheldt canal at Bantouzelle, thence following the line of that canal to St. Quentin. In front of this main line strong detachments held well prepared advance positions about Havrincourt and Epehy, which must be taken before a final attack could be made on the Hindenburg line. On September 12 two corps of the Third British Army attacked on a front of five miles at Havrincourt, employing the New Zealand and three British divisions. These positions were carried and the line advanced. On September 17 the Ninth British and the Australian Corps captured Holnon village and a neighbouring wood. Next day, early in the morning, the Third and Fourth Armies attacked in the midst of a heavy rain on a front of seventeen miles extending from Holnon to Gouzeaucourt, accompanied by a small number of tanks. The First French Army and two American divisions co-operated south of Holnon. The British troops advanced to a depth of three miles as far as a strongly organized belt of defences formed of the old British and German lines of 1917. They were stubbornly opposed and had severe losses. Fourteen British divisions were engaged and captured 11,750 prisoners among whom fifteen German divisions were identified, and took one hundred guns. All the positions required for an attack on the main Hindenburg line were then secured. The French army had also advanced steadily on their right and on September 20 reached the Oise near Vendeuil. The fort of that name was taken by them on September 22.

The First American Army was organized in the latter part of August by the withdrawal of divisions hitherto serving with other allied armies. General Pershing was placed in command and took over a sector of the front extending from Port-Sur-Seille to Verdun, where he began independent operations. After a very fierce artillery preparation lasting for four hours in the early morning of September 12 the seven leading divisions assisted on the left by French troops advanced at daybreak against the German salient at St. Mihiel,