

eleven divisions in succession in their frantic efforts to check this attack. The advance was continued along the whole front with slow but steady success until October 8, when the Canadian Corps carried the canal crossings near Ramillies, northeast of Cambrai, making that town untenable. The Germans consequently abandoned it and fell back on the line of the river Selle. On the night of October 9 Cambrai was occupied by British and Canadian troops. In ten days of victorious fighting the last and strongest German line had been effectually smashed and the way opened for a war of movement and a thrust against their railway communications. This may be regarded as one of the most decisive operations of the war. Between September 27 and October 10 thirty-five British infantry, three British cavalry, and two American infantry divisions engaged forty-five German infantry divisions, from whom they took twelve thousand prisoners and two hundred and fifty guns. The moral effect of so damaging a defeat was of still greater importance.

Arrangements for the development of offensive operations on the Flanders front were settled at a conference held by Marshal Foch at Cassel on September 9. The large force assigned for these operations was placed under the command of the King of the Belgians. It was composed of the Belgian Army, two corps of the British Second Army, several French divisions, and two American divisions transferred from the Meuse. Without any preliminary bombardment the two British corps attacked on a front of five miles and easily carried the whole of the high ground east of Ypres, which had been so fiercely fought over the year before. The Belgian attack was made on an eight mile front from Dixmude to the north of Ypres and made an advance of about three miles. Next day, the British crossed the Lys and advanced upon Roulers, which the Belgians were likewise approaching. The Germans commenced to withdraw from La Bassée and from Armentières and Lens. A salient was driven into their lines which greatly endangered their positions on the Belgian coast. During its advance on September 28-29 the Second British Army took 4,800 prisoners and one hundred guns.

The second and final phase of the British offensive then began, having the capture of Maubeuge and the disruption of the main lateral system of the German railway communications as its chief objectives. The Fourth and Third British Armies, and the right of the First Army advanced with the left flank resting on the canal running from Cambrai to Mons and its right covered by the First French Army. North and south of the Aisne the French armies, assisted by some Italian troops, continued their forward movement. On October 8 the First French Army advanced along the Oise to the southward of St. Quentin, and French and American troops attacked in Champagne and east of the Meuse, and made important progress. The Third and Fourth British Armies advanced on a front of seventeen miles in the direction of Le Cateau, assisted by one American division. The German positions were penetrated after severe fighting to a depth of between three and four miles. Their unfinished trenches were quickly carried, and they were driven into the open country beyond. The enemy's resistance fairly broke