

sharply to its left and marched eastward, thus presenting its right flank to an allied attack. The German line of communication extended back nearly two hundred miles through Belgium, to their own country, and the railways in many places were destroyed and bridges broken. In this perilous situation, the fateful decision was taken to withdraw six additional army corps and send them eastward for the protection of East Prussia and the support of the Austrian Army, which had been badly beaten in Galicia. After their departure, the advantage of numbers was considerably on the side of the allies.

On September 5 representatives of Great Britain, France and Russia signed an agreement binding each power not to conclude a separate peace, nor discuss conditions of peace without the consent of the others. General Joffre issued an order of the day, directing a general offensive to begin next morning. In the evening a sortie from the garrison of Verdun captured a large provision train on its way to the army of the German Crown Prince. The battle of the Marne began at sunrise on September 6, and continued for seven days. The right of the allies rested on Verdun, their left on Paris. The front of battle covered one hundred and fifty miles, and it is estimated that two and a half millions of men were engaged. By noon of the first day, von Kluck discovered the danger of his position and commenced a hurried retreat covering the movement of his columns by strong rear guards. His retirement exposed the flank of the armies on his left which in turn, were forced to retire. Maubeuge, however, surrendered on the 7th, with its garrison of forty thousand men, having endured a fierce bombardment for twelve days. The besieging force was liberated to strengthen other German armies. After retiring across the Marne, the Germans turned at bay and fought desperately to hold their ground. On September 11, the army of the Crown Prince launched a general attack on the French positions at the Grand Couronné de Nancy, which failed with great loss. On the following day, however, the Germans succeeded in taking the forts of Troyon and Camp des Romains on the Meuse and crossed that river at St. Mihiel. The German armies on their right retired across the river Aisne. Amiens, Reims, Chalons sur Marne were evacuated by them. Many prisoners and guns were lost in their retreat. The victors themselves were so amazed at their success, that it became popularly known in France as "the miracle of the Marne." Foremost among the contributory causes of the German defeat, were the physical exhaustion of their troops, the breakdown of their transport service and the withdrawal of nine army corps at the critical moment to the eastern front.

They had already prepared a strong defensive position on the plateau north of the Aisne, with its right resting on the wooded hills near Noyon, and destroyed the bridges in their front. Four lines of railways leading from Belgium were available for their supply, and another connecting these, ran from east to west, close in rear. Their operations at first were wholly defensive, but were followed later by occasional counter-attacks. The allies prolonged their line steadily to their left in the hope of turning the German position, and striking their communications. The Germans responded by a similar extension