

Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary

GT3: 10 – 14 August 1914 (August 3)

General Situation

The Germans were getting ready to commence a bombardment of Liege with heavy siege artillery hoping to achieve its swift capitulation. The first line Divisions of both Germany and France were racing to complete their mobilisation and the collision of these huge armies could not be long delayed.

The Russian 1st Army was also in an advanced state of readiness and the German 8th Army was preparing to parry any threat to East Prussia. On 12 August, the Russians left Kovno heading for the German border.

The mobilisation of the Austrians and Russians in Galicia and the neighbouring parts of Russia was proceeding more slowly. However, the commander of the Austrian Armies in the Balkans, Potiorek, was finalising his orders for a crossing of the Sava and Drina Rivers to begin a final reckoning with Serbia.



Figure 1: Mobilisation Zones prior to the East Prussian Campaign.

The Western Front

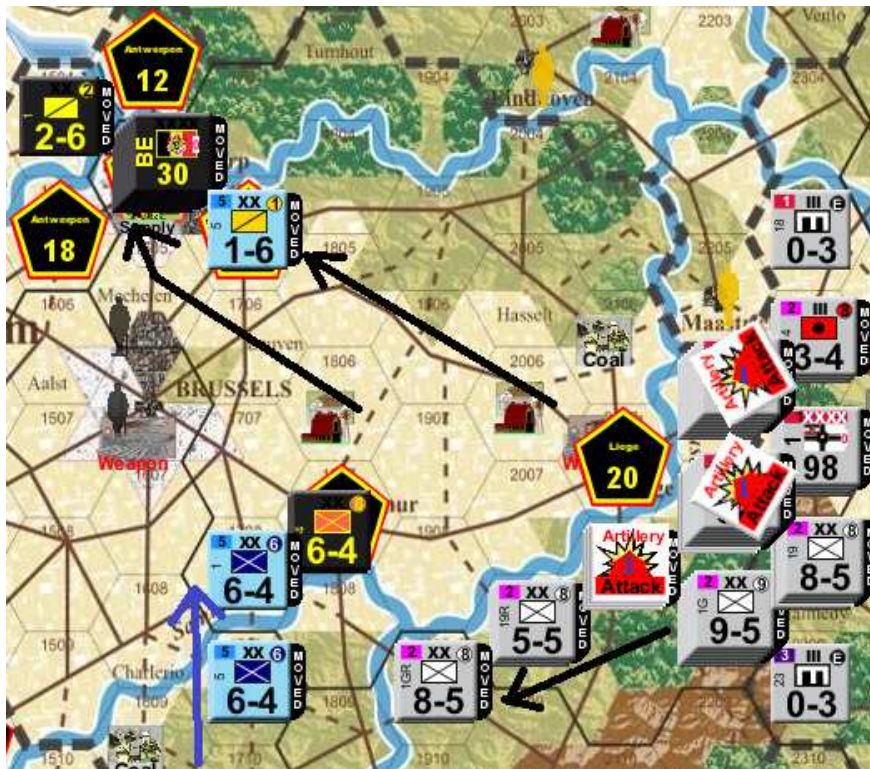


Figure 2: Liege under attack and the Belgian Army withdraws to Antwerp, 10 - 14 August 1914.

The Germans continued to mass outside of Liege. The Guns of August opened fire on 10 August and steel began to strike concrete in a battle that could have only one conclusion. Nevertheless the Belgian forts could at least hope to hold out for some days. The Belgian Army did not need to sit under the German shellfire and it was ordered to retire to Antwerp which it reached between 13 – 14 August.

The 4th Belgian Division remained at Namur to help block the road up the Sambre Valley. French infantry were already moving to their aid. The Germans were not far away. On 12 August, their 1st Guards Reserve Division had fought with the French 3rd Cavalry Division for the bridges near Dinant (5-3.1809). The Germans had the best of this fight but they did not cross the river so the French completed their movements without interference from this direction.

On the frontier between France and Germany huge forces were now on the move. The German 4th, 5th and 6th Armies were massing to the west and south of Metz and the 7th Army was concentrating in Alsace. The Germans had also crossed the border and were occupying Longwy with a large force. There had been a similar movement in Lorraine where the Germans had moved unopposed into France towards the Meurthe River east of Lunéville.

A critical engagement of the two sides was rapidly approaching. Joffre was creating two large concentrations. The 1st and 2nd Armies were being prepared for action between Nancy and Epinal and the 3rd and 4th Armies were now formed on the southern edge of the Ardennes.

Serbia

On 10 August, Potiorek commenced the Austrian offensive against Serbia. On 11 August, the 5th Army crossed the Drina at Koviljaca (6-5.1109) which was contested but not prevented by the Serbian Lejsnica Regiment. This unit was sacrificed by Putnik, the Serbian warlord, in order to cover a planned withdrawal to the Kolubara River. This abandoned the north western corner of Serbia to occupation by Potiorek's command. Meanwhile to the north of the Sava River the Austrian 2nd Army pressed forward towards Belgrade and occupied menacing positions on the frontier not far from the city outskirts.



Figure 3: The Serbians fall back in the face of Potiorek's offensive, 10 - 14 August 1914.

DM Situation – August 1914

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	-	30*	-					30	30	Good *Mulhouse Lost
Austria-Hungary	-	-	1					1	1	Good
Central Powers	-	30	1					31	31	
France	-	2	2					4	4	Good
Great Britain	-	-						-	-	Good
Russia	-	-						-	-	Good
Belgium	-	-	(10)					(10)	(10)	N/A Luxembourg occupied
Serbia	-	-	(1)					(1)	(1)	N/A
Entente	-	2	2					4	4	

Player Comments

CP: On the WF, I can now move most of my regular divisions so advance rapidly along the Meuse and through the Ardennes, using a lot of column movement to get through the rough terrain. I am able to move a large quantity of siege artillery up to Liege and start to reduce the fortress. Importantly, I can now use limited rail capacity to move siege artillery, which I do to bring some guns forward from Mainz. It is slow going moving the heavy guns. I have still not crossed the Meuse as I do not wish to encircle Liege and make an unnecessary fight of it. It is to the German's benefit to force the defending garrison to retreat. There is also an opportunist attack made against the French and Belgian cavalry screen north of Givet. I may take a cavalry loss myself, but it is in my interests to whittle down his weaker cavalry forces as they a real nuisance factor in delaying my rate of advance. The most important aspect, outside of reducing Liege and crossing the Meuse, is now to concentrate forces in preparation for the French Plan XVII. In E Prussia, I move my cavalry and regular divisions to start a blocking action along the borders, using the Masurian Lakes and Drweca River to anchor flanks. In Serbia, the 5th Army moves aggressively to seize a bridgehead across the Drina River while 2nd Army concentrates NW of Belgrade along the N bank of the Sava River.

AP: Only the French 3rd Army could make a mandatory attack this turn but I prefer to delay it so my Armies can attack in unison. I was not expecting the German move towards the Meurthe and this limits the room of the 1st and 2nd Armies to manoeuvre into position. The Serbians retreat to stronger positions and to play for time.