

## Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT15: 1 – 5 October 1914 (October 1).

### General Situation

As the autumn approached, the question of whether this would be a short war was still not yet answered. Trenches were starting to appear, especially in Eastern France, in Prussia and around Belgrade where the fighting lines had been less mobile. Factories started to receive orders to replace the equipment and supplies which had been expended in the opening battles. The French government also cashed credit on Wall Street and bought stocks of American manufactures which they deemed would be useful to their Army.

### The Western Front

The German advance in France was now threatening places held especially dear in the French mind. The aftermath of the disastrous French attack at Canaples (5-3.0810) at the end of September had weakened the French defence of Amiens in which much trust had been placed. On 1 October and the next two days, the German 2nd Army made a vicious series of unrelenting attacks and threw the French out of the city with heavy losses and the abandonment of much artillery.



Figure 1: The Fall of Amiens, 3 October 1914.

A similar attack by the German 3rd Army on the French 9th Army covering Reims was not quite so immediately successful. Nevertheless, the French ordered a retreat from the city on 5 September and the whole French line fell back towards the Marne unable to do more than delay the German movement forwards.

The Germans were also introducing new reserve formations to their front. Several went into action near Buzancy (5-3.1915) in the Argonne. Again the French had no choice but to give ground. At the same time, the Germans continued their bombardments around Verdun and there was even an attack at Thann (5-3.2822) in Southern Alsace as the German 7th Army probed for weakness on its front.



Figure 2: The Escape of the Belgians, 3 - 5 October 1914.

The Entente benefitted from one encouraging development. The Belgians definitively threw in their lot with the Allies and their Army emerged from the Antwerp fortifications. This surprised the German 5th Reserve Division which found Belgian cavalry in its rear as three Belgian divisions attacked without stopping to deploy. The unfortunate Germans surrendered themselves for internment in the Netherlands on 3 October and the Belgians managed to make contact with French 6th Army forces near Ghent two days later<sup>1</sup>. For the moment all German forces north of the Scheldt had been forced away and the wrecked ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge as well as Brugge were back in Allied hands.

Dunkirk was now turned into an important base for the BEF. At the other end of France, the citizens of Marseilles meanwhile enjoyed the exotic sights of the landing of the Secunderbad

<sup>1</sup> Since the Germans had another 5<sup>th</sup> Reserve Division in their front at Lille, they were able to cover up the surrender of this Division very well and it did not become widely known about until after the war.

Cavalry on 3 – 4 October.

## The Eastern Front

The Austrian Armies in the Carpathians were showing some signs of recovery. The Russian offensive had exhausted itself for the present and individual Russian Divisions had overextended themselves and held long fronts with weakened strength. While the Russians endeavoured to strengthen the ring they had established around Przemysl, the Austrians made several minor attacks on the more exposed Russian positions without allowing themselves to be drawn out of the safety of the mountain valleys.



Figure 3: The Russian ring around Przemysl, early October 1914.

The struggle in western Poland remained focused on Czestochowa and the Upper Warta. The Russians retook Czestochowa on 4 October for the second time. Meanwhile, the Russian 10th Army moved forward in strength towards the German border. By 5 October, the Russian 24<sup>th</sup> Division was only 35 kilometres south east of Thorn.

The Russian 1st and 2nd Armies were also pressing the German 8th Army simultaneously. To absorb this pressure the Germans had pulled back from some of their earlier gains in Masuria beyond the lakes. Rennenkampf attacked on his left towards Drengfurth (4-5.2008) on 3 October and with his right wing west of Mehlaubern (4-5.1804) on 4-5 October. This second attack was intended to cut off a column of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Landwehr Brigade which was attempting to infiltrate along the Baltic coast but the incompetence of the Russian 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Cavalry Division prevented any success.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Front, the Russian 8th Division led an attack on the 2nd Reserve Ersatz Brigade which proved unequal to the task of holding Allenstein. The town fell to the Russians on 4 October. The loss of this famous Prussian town was something of a shock to German public opinion as even temporary incursions of Russians into populated regions were viewed with special horror no matter how well the Russian soldiers behaved.

On the Eastern Front therefore both sides experienced success and failure in roughly equal proportions and the overall situation remained finely balanced.

## Serbia

With no warning, the Austrian 5th Army pulled back from the advanced positions they had established on the Kolubara River and retired to the Sava River on 1-3 October. The Austrians still held the south bank of the Sava and Obrenovac (6-5.1408) in strength. Belgrade remained under close observation. The Serbians made no effort to follow the Austrians and they continued improving their defences. Trench lines now surrounded Belgrade.

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	54							12	66	343	Good – *Lost Allenstein
Austria-Hungary	1							1	1	172	Good
Central Powers	55							13	68	515	
France	42							-	42	425	Good – *Amiens captured
Great Britain	-							-	-	35	Good
Russia	9*							NA	9	156	Good – *Czestochowa recaptured
Belgium	(1)							NA	(1)	(75)	N/A - Brugge recaptured.
Serbia	-							NA	-	(8)	N/A
Entente	49								49	614	

## Player Notes

**CP:** *This was my first ever production phase using this game system. There is a lot of mathematics involved and there is some difficulty – of the time consuming variety – in accounting for every hex in which there is a resource. However, it also adds a very intriguing and ultimately enjoyable strategic aspect to the game. It becomes clear early on that food and special metals will be critical for the CP. I have lost a food producing area along the Nieman R to Russia but have taken several in Belgium, Russian Poland and France. All the*

*captured Belgian food is required in Belgium and so is most of France's, but I do manage to import 2 factors worth from the French. The loss of Mulhouse means one less to feed in Germany. However, the loss of several Austrian cities means their food demand is less and Hungary produces more than it needs, so I am able to import food into both Austria (2) and Germany (3) from Hungary. Romania also has an excess (4), which Germany imports. Food shortages cost me DM for Germany and Austria. Germany also establishes shipping termini to set up resource pipelines to Norway and Sweden for iron ore. Critically for the longer term, Germany starts to import large quantities of special metals from Turkey and is grateful for the coal and iron being imported from captured Belgian and French territory. Both Germany and Austria commence raising large numbers of replacements for the front lines and Germany also produces 2 x mountain divs and 2 x cavalry divs. Cav may seem an odd choice, but I still think they will be useful assets for the campaigns to come in the East. Replacements will start arriving in great numbers by Jan 15; the fully formed divs 3 months later and the cavalry after only 9 months.*

- *East: I draw back again in E Prussia. It is very elastic here with little opportunity for either side. His approach to the outskirts of Allenstein is a threat, so I launch a spoiling attack here supported by the arrival of 2 x artillery regts newly arrived from the West. I launch another attack NE of Kattowitz to keep him honest. If I don't keep threatening this flank then he will be able to bring more to bear on a struggling AH.*
- *Galicia: Przemyśl is now surrounded by Russian forces and, unless relieved, will hold out for 28 turns. What will it require for AH to break the siege? At this point there is no chance of evicting the strong Russian forces in place, but I think the Russian steamroller has run out of steam. I need to build up AH strength and supplies and hold my current line. Two spoiling attacks by AH will remind the Russians that AH is weakened but by no means a spent force.*
- *Serbia: More repositioning. I have not the strength to attack in Serbia to any good effect yet.*
- *West: Supply is somewhat alleviated after the production of 77 supply factors and an additional 45 supply as part of my reinforcements. There are also two new HQs which are established and each of these deploy with 10 supply. They will help to introduce more supply to the front and will be in position to help rebuild degraded units as replacements start coming in. I use much of my rail capacity moving these supplies around and have a well established rail network now functioning in occupied French and Belgian territory. The French evacuation of the fortification S of Longuyon allows me to advance significantly more strength toward Verdun and I start to smash away at the fort SE of Verdun. Verdun is gradually becoming invested. My attacks should clear the French positions NW of Verdun and also, hopefully, of Reims. My other major objective is to push him out of Amiens, a critical rail node. I revive fighting in the Vosges by attacking his positions NW of Mulhouse. If I can clear this ground, it may compel him yet to abandon Mulhouse. At this stage I am 60km from Paris and he has little between my advance forces and the city. He has concentrated much of his strength running from Dunkirk to Criel and I wonder if he will regret this. If he holds on there too doggedly he risks having all of the forces N of the Somme cut off from the French heartland; which will mean less ability to secure Paris from attack. His strength to the N does have me on the defensive along the Scheldt, though, and I am now expecting the Belgians to start attempting a breakout. Within 4 days, I will*

*have a new reserve army of 6 divs ready to deploy and they will likely be necessary to contain the Belgian threat.*

**AP:** *I took a couple of opportunities this turn in Flanders and at Allenstein in Prussia to inflict DM on Germany with little or no risk to myself.*

*I can hardly write about what is going on in France without giving away my thoughts to my opponent. So I will censor myself for a turn or two.*

*We have implemented the production system of the game. There is no doubt this has its challenges. I think it essential to establish a good record keeping system that simplifies the task in successive months. When first getting in to it, my advice is to take it slowly. At least playing on Vassal there is an advantage or two. The position at the beginning of the month can be recorded. A quick check will establish that all the powers will be able to use their factories (less any captured) at full capacity this month. Therefore the supplies produced can go on the map before starting the Oct 1 turn. Since the rest of the production activity does not result in any units appearing for a couple of months at minimum there is ample time to establish the details of builds and stockpile moves while waiting for your opponents turns. Similarly the size of food deficits does not have to be worked out an agreed instantly.*

*For the Entente production, I made use of Serbian Metals and Food. Britain sent coal to France. The US supplied the rest of the deficits. I was a bit surprised my situation was still healthy despite losing quite a bit of food and resource in France but a lot of benefit stems from the fact that Brest and the ports in Western Britain are within 40 hexes of America. I did not forget that the Italians need to be resourced too.*

*Below are the production totals for October 1914, not including the drawdown of stockpiles and the calculation of food deficits.*

#### **Production Totals**

##### **Supply**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Ge</b>	<b>AH</b>	<b>Ot</b>	<b>Bul</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>Br</b>	<b>Rus</b>	<b>Be</b>	<b>Se</b>	<b>It</b>	<b>Rom</b>	<b>Gr</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>Ent</b>
Oct 14	77	18	-	-	95	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	60

##### **Weapon Production (stockpile use)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Ge</b>	<b>AH</b>	<b>Ot</b>	<b>Bul</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>Br</b>	<b>Rus</b>	<b>Be</b>	<b>Se</b>	<b>It</b>	<b>Rom</b>	<b>Gr</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>Ent</b>
Oct 14	42 (+80)	23	-	-	145	22 (+70)	50 (+20)	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	212

### Manpower (Colonial/Dominions)

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	69	36	-	-	105	41 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	2	6	-	-	-	-	209

### Food Deficits

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	9	4	NA	-	<b>13</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-

### Calculation of Food Deficit

Germany				Austria	
Needs	83	PCs		Needs	29
Less	-1 = <b>82</b>	Mulhouse		Less	-5 = <b>24</b>
Food	67	Germany		Food	24
Less	-2 = 65	Prussia		Less	-7 = 17
Plus	1	Romania		Plus	2
Plus	1	France		Plus	1
Plus	3	Hungary		Plus	3
	70 (-82)	Total Food			23 (-24)
Deficit	<b>12</b>				<b>1</b>