

## **Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game**

**GT26: 19 – 22 November 1914 (November 5)**

### **General Situation**

The British Government hosted a Conference at London of the Allied Powers on Commercial and Industrial Warfare between 19 and 22 November. The delegates were generally presented with an optimistic picture which assured them of the long term economic supremacy of the Entente. The French delegation nevertheless had to advise on the huge losses of iron ore, coal and manufacturing resources which had been lost to the German invasion. It also turned out that a large fraction of the French harvest had been lost too. It was noted in the Conference record that trade and shipping had responded well to these developments and the population of France would not starve as a result during the coming winter. The Russian delegates boasted unlimited resources in their great territories but had to admit they were in desperate need of munitions which they could only buy abroad if the French and British did not outbid them. They expressed great disappointment that the British Expeditionary Force had been generously equipped but had actually been in no significant action for nearly a month.

The Entente had imperfect knowledge on the performance of the Central Powers' economies in wartime. It was recognised that the Germans had gained access to a lot of French resources and some of the Polish harvest had fallen into their hands. The British announced a plan at the London Conference to buy up Swedish iron ore in the winter to prevent the Germans acquiring it. The blockade was believed to be effective and, denied access to world markets, the German agricultural and industrial sectors would be unable to cope in the long run.

### **The Western Front**

Once again, French attention was pulled to Verdun where the German artillery opened fire again on 19 November. The rate of fire was slow and the Germans were having more difficulty finding targets in the autumn gloom. Nevertheless, the French were compelled to react and General Sarrail's prestige allowed him to secure for 3<sup>rd</sup> Army the support of three French artillery regiments, to cover the Verdun front. With this the French hoped to bring the German bombardments to an end finally.

There had been no major movements on the Western Front since the end of October, until on 20 November, the German 3<sup>rd</sup> Army made an overwhelming attack in the Marne sector. Von Hausen's force had in recent days shifted its centre of gravity westwards from the eastern to southern Champagne. The punch in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army's attack was delivered by three strong Saxon Divisions which broke the French 25<sup>th</sup> Division to pieces in less than 24 hours. The left wing of the French 9<sup>th</sup> Army temporarily collapsed and the Germans pushed suddenly into Montmiral (4-3.1317) where they were obliged to regroup.

Fortunately two Divisions of the French 6<sup>th</sup> Army (6<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup>) were in reserve and able to intervene within 48 hours but not before the Germans had advanced nearly 20 kilometres from their start line. By 22 November, the whole French Army was in motion as they responded to this new emergency. The 4<sup>th</sup> Army closed up on the 9<sup>th</sup> Army and attempted to block any further German movement forward.



Figure 1: The German 3rd Army captures Montmiral, 20 November 1914.

### The Eastern Front

The German 8<sup>th</sup> Army now resumed active operations. However, it did not press towards Warsaw, which was where the Russian defence was thickest. Instead on 19 November, three German Divisions were committed to attack across the Omulew River (4-5.2013) and into the marshes between it and the Narew. The Russians had taken advantage of their success at Strzegocin (4-5.1916) to reoccupy this region which had been regularly shifting to the control of one side and then the other since September. Ludendorff was perhaps only concerned to protect his left flank before resuming the advance to Warsaw, but the German infantry did not welcome another foray into the marshes at this time of the year.

The pressure on the Russian 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Armies eased for a few days. This was partly because the German 9<sup>th</sup> Army was engaged in mopping up operations around Glowno (5-5.1601) where the Russian 2nd Opolchenie Brigade was surrounded after being detailed to conduct rear guard operations northeast of Lodz. There was also some indecisive fighting at Ujadz (5-5.1802) on 19 – 20 November, but further south there was a lull.

On 19 November, a Polish deserter from the Austrian 12<sup>th</sup> Division crossed the front line and was captured by the Russian 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. He informed his captors that an offensive was to begin on the following day with the object of breaking through to Przemysl. His unit had been told that the garrison of the fortress would sortie and meet the relief force.

This news was something that Ivanov, commanding the South West Front, was known to be anxious about and this confirmatory intelligence was reported through the chain of command with

uncharacteristic speed. There was in fact no Austrian attack, it was cancelled at the last minute, as the Austrian Divisions intended to attack had all indicated that the Russian lines opposite were well manned and apparently alert.



Figure 2: The Situation at Przemysl, 19 - 22 November 1914.

On the day of the supposed attack, a Russian pilot brought back some photographs which seemed to confirm a concentration of the garrison of Przemysl in the southern quarter of the fortress complex. The possibility of a sortie was now an accepted fact at South West Front Headquarters. To forestall this, Ivanov authorised the commencement of an artillery bombardment against the likely assembly areas of the garrison. Three Russian artillery brigades were engaged and they managed to hit some encampments of a Croat Landwehr Brigade with some effect on 22 November. By this time, the main Austrian attack had not materialised and the firing was suspended so that enemy intentions could be further assessed.

### Serbia

Since early September, the Serbians had, with Montenegrin assistance held a small portion of Bosnian territory, but their forces beyond the Drina were very thinly spread. On 20 November, the Serbian Lim Light Infantry Regiment was driven off Mount Žep (6-5.1112) with heavy losses. The Austrian attack had been unexpected and the strong Hungarian 40<sup>th</sup> Division had provided the weight of the assault. Having lost control of the high ground commanding the river, the Serbians summoned distant units to prepare a more effective defence of the Drina. At the same time, they still maintained other footholds on the Bosnian side of the river.

## The Near East

Indian troops in the service of the British Crown occupied Qurna on 22 November and encountered no Turkish forces in doing so. Southern Mesopotamia had been gained without a fight and most of the Indian infantry had not yet seen a Turkish soldier.

In the Caucasus, the Turkish 3<sup>rd</sup> Army prepared a major attack on the Russian lines west of Sarikamis at Kizilçubuk (6-8.2507). Here the Turks used heavy guns to help blast the Russian 2<sup>nd</sup> Turkmen Brigade off the high mountain slopes. Severely outnumbered the few Russian survivors (mostly cavalry) fell back to Sarikamis in some disorder on 20 November. In the next couple of days, the Russian 1<sup>st</sup> Caucasus Corps was forced to pull back the whole of its line to prepare a close defence of Sarikamis. The mood was grim, the Russians had not expected the Turks to get the better of them and the rumours coming back from Kizilçubuk had suggested that there had been hand to hand fighting. The results of combat were more horrific than those typically experienced on the European battlefields, if for no other reason than it was harder to evacuate the wounded.



Figure 3: The Russians Falling Back on Sarikamis, after the loss of Kizilçubuk, 20 - 22 November 1914.

The Russians did make some advances elsewhere. In particular, the Turks did not attempt to hold the Eleskirt Valley as their Kurdish Cavalry were having difficulty maintaining themselves due to shortages of forage. The Russians were able to occupy Karakilise on 22 November without opposition.

## November 1914 DM Situation

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	-	25	16	5	7			9	62	475	Good
Austria-Hungary	1	5	6	6	2			5	19	204	Good
Ottoman	-	2*	1	-	2			NA	5	5	Good – *Basra lost.
Central Powers	1	32	23	11	11			14	92	684	
France	3	8	4	1	10			-	26	503	Good
Great Britain	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	45	Good
Russia	4	10	10	11	6			NA	41	226	Good
Belgium	-	-	(3)	-	-			NA	-	(93)	Good
Serbia	-	-	-	-	(1)			NA	(1)	(9)	Good
Entente	7	18	14	12	16			-	67	774	

## Player Notes

CP:

- *East: Having achieved my aims from the last four days by pushing the Russians away from Lodz and successfully reorganizing some of my German divisions, I know aim for further limited attacks with very modest objectives:*
  - *8<sup>th</sup> Army to push back the Russian 2<sup>nd</sup> Army encroachment back towards German territory SE of the Johannesburgerwald.*
  - *9<sup>th</sup> Army to mop up a pocket in the agricultural area NE of Lodz and to further prise apart the link between the Russian 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> armies along the Pilica River.*
- *Galicia: No attacks along the Galician front.*
- *Serbia: I have been slowly manoeuvring laterally to attack a weak point in the Serbian trench line and now seize that opportunity, which will enable me to break into the line.*
- *West: Main focus remains reorganising divisions along the front and absorbing replacements in the rear areas. A pinpoint artillery attack will cause some very limited damage to Verdun. I conduct one major offensive with 3<sup>rd</sup> Army to attack the French 4<sup>th</sup> Army SW of Epernay. His forces there have not yet completed their trenches and an advance in this area will allow me to cut his main rail LOC and also turn Epernay into a salient.*
- *Palestine: I start entrenching along the border.*
- *Caucasus: The Turks launch an attack on the heights to the SW approaches of the Sarikamis valley.*
- *Mesopotamia: The Turks continue to concentrate forces within Mesopotamia*

AP: When I saw Ivor's move my heart sank. I knew his 3<sup>rd</sup> Army attack was likely to succeed and it has deferred yet again the time when I might seize the initiative in the West. I am also not a little frustrated that I cannot get the British into action at the moment. They are pinned down in an important defensive position in the north trying to complete entrenchments and they are just not available for anything else.

Generally, my opponent is staying active and keeping me parrying diverse threats and regularly changing the threatened point. This is good DWK play because defensive positions tend to become firmer as reserves arrive and this defensive shifting around often causes the creation of new weak points elsewhere. Another example this turn was in Serbia where he took advantage of the weakness of my outlying positions in Bosnia.

My attack on Przemyśl was a rare Russian artillery attack. I feared that the Austrians are planning a relief attempt. This may just have been a threat in my imagination and shows how jumpy I am at the moment.

Winter cannot come soon enough.

## Production Totals

### Supply

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	77	18	-	-	95	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	58
Nov 14	77	18	-	-	95	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	58

### Weapon Production (+ is use of pre-war stockpiles)

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	42 +137	23	-	-	202	27 +70	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	217
Nov 14	42 +26	23	-	-	91	27 +70	50 +20	50	-	1	-	-	-	-	218

### Manpower (+ is Dominion/Colonial Manpower)

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
Nov 14	70	37	-	-	107	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	6	-	-	-	-	207

### Food Deficits

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Nov 14	9	5	NA	-	<b>14</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-

### Calculation of Food Deficit

<b>Germany</b>			<b>Austria</b>		
Needs	83	PCs	Needs	29	PCs
Less			Less	-4 = 25	Galician PCs
Food	67	Germany	Food	24	Austria
Less	-2 = 65	Prussia	Less	-7 = 17	Galicia
Plus	4	Romania	Plus	2	Hungary
Plus	1	France	Plus	1	Serbia
Plus	3	Hungary			
Plus	1	Russia			
	74	Total Food		20	Total Food
Deficit	<b>9</b>			<b>5</b>	