

been able to quickly bring forward a Siberian Division and the 1st Guards Division. This last had been sent by the Russian 4th Army as part of a redeployment to support the beleaguered Russian 9th Army.

Hindenburg's main attack was near Radom towards which he thrust four German Divisions on 24 December. The city was in danger for forty eight hours and once again only Russian Cavalry stood between the Germans and their goal on 25 December. The Russian 42nd Division arrived at Radom on 26 December and managed to stabilise the position with the assistance of the III Cavalry Corps (6th and 7th Cavalry Divisions and the 1st Terek Cossack Division).

And this was not all of the fighting on the Eastern Front during Christmas week (not for the Orthodox of course). The German 8th Army celebrated an advance of the 35th Reserve Ersatz Division¹ after it defeated the Russian 2nd and 56th Reserve Divisions at Nasielsk (4-5.1817) on 24 December and forced them to take refuge in the Nowo Georgievsk fortress complex. The Russian 2nd Army was also still trying without success to re-capture Nowy Wies (4-5.2114). On 27 December, the German 50th Reserve Division defending this small town reported that its effective strength was less than fifty percent but that it had beaten off the latest Russian attacks.

Six hundred and forty kilometres to the south east, at the other extremity of the Eastern Front, General Kovess had made another attack led by the Hungarian 23rd and 27th Divisions across the railway (5-5.4017) which led north to Stanislaw. The Russians here were in some disarray and fell back more than 20 kilometres. Their 69th Reserve Division which was at the end of the Russian line and deeper in the mountains had to make a difficult crossing of ice bound high plateaus in order to break contact with the Austro-Hungarians and reach safer positions.

Serbia

There remained little activity on this front. The Serbian government was going through one of its periodic bouts of anxiety for the security of Belgrade and pressure was put on the Army to strengthen the forces guarding the crossing points of the Sava which covered the capital. This was done thanks to tiring marches on roads caked with mud and slushy snow.

The Near East

A regiment of French engineers (2nd) debarked at Mudros on 26 December. This was part of a number of Allied maritime operations which were to support the blockade of the Turkish Straights. Thanks to aerial photography the Allies had a fairly good idea of the defences built by the Turks (with German help) to prevent any intrusion of these waters. The French engineers' job would be to build up the port infrastructure available to the Allies in the Aegean, while further consideration was given to what sea and land operations might take place. Lemnos was Turkish prior to the Balkan Wars. The Greeks thought it was theirs now, but the Entente claimed its status had not yet been resolved and naturally stepped into the vacuum. This contributed to the delicate diplomatic situation which the Entente had with the Greek Kingdom.

¹ This unit was offered a change of name by Hindenburg, but it took pride in its origins and retained it for the duration.



Figure 2: The Turkish defences at the Straits and the French presence on Lemnos, late December 1914.

In Iraq, the lead elements of the Mesopotamian Corps came up to the outermost pickets of the Turkish defences at Kut on 27 December. There were two Indian Brigades, one on each side of the Tigris, with the Imperial Brigade some distance to the rear as a reserve. The effort of reaching so deep into Iraq came at some cost. The Indian infantry had advanced much further and faster than their heavy equipment which was mostly still strung out on the road between Al-Amarah and Ali Gharbi.

The British also now decided they could not support an advance up the Euphrates as well as the Tigris and the 16th Indian Brigade was recalled from An-Nasariyah on 25 December. They were obliged to abandon some of their stores to be fought over by the delighted inhabitants of that ancient city.

In the Caucasus, winter was set in and there was only limited movement. The Russians were strengthening their hold on the Eleskirt Valley as the 4th Turkmen Brigade was marching through snow covered passes towards Karakilise. On the western flank of the Turkish 3rd Army, a Kuban Mountain Brigade (1st) had penetrated to the top of the Id Valley (6-8.2412) without finding any opposing Turks.

The Western Front

Falkenhayn was determined that the Entente should enjoy no Christmas rest and orders were sent out forbidding any fraternisation. Lacking the capability to make a major attack, Falkenhayn could still insist that the enemy were kept occupied as far as possible. Von Hausen's 3rd Army was the most aggressive and staged a series of raids and small surprise attacks around the French salient at Épernay between 23 and 25 December.

The English newspaper, "*The Daily Mail*", splashed headlines across its front page on 26 December warning the world, "*Huns Declare War on Christmas*". This actually concealed the truth that there

was a very pronounced lull over almost the whole of the Western Front. Only some years later, did it become more widely recognised that the Germans and British had come out of their trenches and played several football matches. Even on the German 3rd Army front, the fighting of the previous two days had died down by the afternoon of Christmas Day and over 30 choruses of *Stille Nacht* were heard by French troops on the Marne. At worst, Christmas came a day late on some parts of the front, but it was all the more welcome for that.

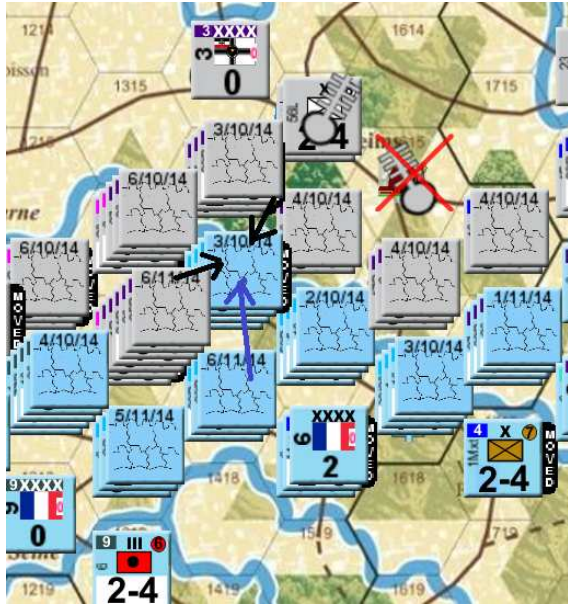


Figure 3: The fighting around Epernay which ended on Christmas Day, 23 - 25 December 1914.

December 1914 DM Situation

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	5	4	16	20	3	6		10	54	569	Good
Austria-Hungary	4	-	-	1	2	2		6	15	225	Good
Ottoman	1*	-	-	-	-	-**		NA	1	10	Good – *An-Nasariyah lost and ** recovered
Central Powers	10	4	16	21	5	8		16	80	804	
France	-	7	8	15	-	2		-	32	552	Good
Great Britain	-	-	-	9	-	-		-	9	57	Good
Russia	8	1	6	4*	5	8		NA	32	268	Good - *Kielce lost
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-		NA	-	(95)	NA
Serbia	(1)	-	-	-	-	-		NA	(1)	(12)	NA
Entente	8	8	14	28	5	10		-	72	877	

Player Notes

CP:

- *East: There are some worrying concentrations of Russian troops developing. I suspect a tally of strength points would show a Russian advantage but his supply has been constraining him. My supply, on the other hand, allows me to keep attacking to try and keep him off balance. So, I up the ante this turn with two attacks by the German 8th and 9th armies. All serve to drive the Russians back. The most significant was an unsupplied attack against two Russian divisions guarding the approaches to Novo-Georgevsk. These divs were in open ground but with trenches on the brink of being completed. The attack succeeded allowing me to advance right up to the confluence of the rivers Wkra and Vistula where I now have sight of the walls of Novo-Georgevsk.*
- *Galicia: AH attacks on the extreme flanks again as Kovess, resupplied, comes back into action to keep driving into the flank of Russian 8th Army and some disconnected elements of the 11th Army. The attack to try and clear away from Kielce fails to make any gains but does cause casualties and forces him to commit reserves to hold his line.*
- *Serbia: No attacks in Serbia; just a little bit of manoeuvring for position.*
- *West: I conduct one very large – but unsupplied – attack against his salient at Epernay. It is an entrenched position within thick woods. My aim was not to capture it, but to attrition him here and hopefully compel him to throw more troops into it or to relinquish it. I surround him on 4 sides and can make this a very uncomfortable location. As long as I am forcing the pace on the major fronts and forcing him to concentrate troops to block my actions rather than his being able to concentrate to take the offensive; I am relatively content. This is why I continue to attack through the winter. No football matches or fraternisation on this front!*
- *Caucasus: Nothing of note.*
- *Mesopotamia: No change.*
- *Palestine: Nothing of note.*

AP: I think I have a pretty good understanding of CP strategy at the moment based on what it has achieved so far. My French and Russian losses are higher than I would want them to be at this stage of the game. If Ivor is trying to keep me off balance and taking the initiative then he is doing a good job. There are a few of elements of the game which have taken me by surprise so far. The Germans made more use of their Artillery than I expected, which I think was good tactics. Also the CP maintaining their offensive activity right to the end of the year was not expected either and as I have noted before I have not been allowed to completely entrench all my fronts yet. I was also surprised at how far the Turks pulled back in Iraq which is making it difficult to get to grips with them there.

This strong start by the CP may be the ideal start to a Campaign Game as the Entente should come in more strongly in the long term so that now the CP has maximised the difficulty of me exploiting that. I am expecting a hard 1915 and will have to be careful not to let the CP get much further ahead in case it becomes impossible to catch up.

This is not to suggest I do not fancy my chances. The Entente have a lot of advantages which will come into play sooner or later. The next three to five months are going to be quite critical and it will be interesting to see which side is most able to dominate the course of events.

Merry Christmas