

## Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT41: 23 – 27 January 1915 (January 6)

### General Situation

The arrival of the Canadians in France highlighted again that this was a World War and not just a European War. America so far was one of the least represented continents, though there were a number of New World volunteers who had joined either the British or French Armies (even the German Army) and there were plenty of American seamen who had been caught up in the early efforts to impose the blockade on the Central Powers.

Africa appeared primarily through the North African divisions which France had fighting on the Western Front. Recruitment of West African Senegalese had only just begun. Australians had yet to fire a shot in earnest, but they too were gathering in Egypt.

Asia was everywhere already. Two Indian Infantry Divisions and a Cavalry Division were enduring winter and excited the compassion of fashionable ladies in London who imagined that they would be intolerably cold. This was to forget the hardships of the North West Frontier to which these men were accustomed. India also provided the main forces operating for the British Empire in Iraq where they were opposed by Arabs; Turks; and all the diverse nations and tribes who at that time inhabited the Near East and the margins of Persia. Russia also had its own exotics: Armenians; Turkmen; and, in the Cossack Divisions: every Bashkar; Siberian; Crimean and Caucasian tribesman who had pledged allegiance to the Tsar and knew how the ride a small horse.

### The Eastern Front



Figure 1: The German 9th Army captures Radom, 24 January 1915.

Hindenburg secured his reputation with the German public with the capture of Radom on 24 January 1915. As with his earlier success at Jedlińsk (5-5.2102), the previous week, German losses were very low in this operation (by World War One standards) and the Russian 2<sup>nd</sup> Siberian Division, supposed to be an elite unit, had been crushed by the German attack and the remnants who escaped east could barely be formed into a regiment.

The German command in the East was also now expanding as the empire of OberOst grew. In Prussia, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army was split so that a new German 10<sup>th</sup> Army was created to help manage a front which extended from Warsaw to the sea. In southern Poland, Hindenburg formed a Sud Arme which though initially inactive was intended to facilitate liaison and cooperation with the Austro-Hungarians.

### **Serbia**

This front remained very quiet. In the cafés of Belgrade it was confidently assumed that the Hapsburg invaders would not attack again until the spring. The genius of the Serbian war machine, the Vovoide, Putnik, was not so sure but there was little that could be done other than wait.

### **The Near East**

The arrival of the combined New Zealand and Australian Division at Suez on 25 January confirmed that the build-up of British Empire forces in Egypt was accelerating. The ANZACs were given little time to get used to being on dry land again after their voyage for they were quickly put on trains going up to Port Said where they joined the first wave of Australians who had arrived in December.

In Iraq, it looked as if the Turks were winning the race to reinforce the opposed armies at Kut. The Turkish Iraq Corps had reported back to Baghdad that by the end of January they would have seven regiments available to defend the town. Townsend's command did finally get reinforced by the 31<sup>st</sup> Indian Brigade, but even so, on 27 January, the British abandoned some of their most advanced positions near Kut.

In the Caucasus, the Russian advance came to an end between 25 – 27 January as they encountered the Turkish outposts of what was ascertained to be a formidable, well manned line, running from north of Erzerum down to the Murat Valley. Lighter forces including Kurdish cavalry were still relied upon by the Turks around Lake Van where the depot at Bitlis was the primary Turkish base. The Russian forces in the south were also lighter and the Turkish defences were thought to be sufficient. It was still winter and no Russian commander relished the idea of assaulting the Turks in the mountains before the snows started to melt.



Figure 2: The Turkish 3rd Army Front covering Erzerum, late-January 1915.

### The Western Front

On 25 January, the French decommissioned the remaining fortresses around Verdun. General Sarrail, commanding the French 3<sup>rd</sup> Army, had reported that these defences were now impairing his freedom to choose the best ground for the defences in his sector.

On 26 January, the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division paraded through Rouen after disembarking the previous day. The French government made a big show of this event. The crowds attending were overwhelmingly young and female but *Le Monde's* report explained this was due to the fact that most of the city's male population was already serving in the Army or Navy.



Figure 3: The Canadian 1st Division landed in France, 25 - 26 January 1915.

## January 1915 DM Situation

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	-	1	2	5	-	1		9	18	592	Good
Austria-Hungary	-	-	-	1	-	-		5	6	234	Good
Ottoman	-	-	1	-	-	-		NA	1	11	Good
Central Powers	-	1	3	6	-	1		14	25	837	
France	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	552	Good
Great Britain	-	-	1	-	-	-		-	1	63	Good
Russia	2	1	1	10	-	5*		NA	19	292	Good - *Radom lost
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-		NA	-	(95)	NA
Serbia	-	-	-	-	-	-		NA	-	(12)	NA
Entente	2	1	2	10	-	5		-	15	907	

### Player Notes

CP: None this time.

AP: *The Germans were gearing up for another bombardment of Verdun. It might have been a bluff but I had practically resolved previously to abandon the remnants of the fort there when this happened so I gave it up. I only had 5 fortress SP left, and this was much the most vulnerable fortress on this front, and I am tired of letting the Germans have unanswered losses. I will defend Verdun with infantry now.*

*Afterwards, I thought I might have made a mistake. A bombardment now forces an infantry attack to take place (GCR 22 – 13) which could have been painful to the Germans. I will not abandon the other front line forts: Toul; Nancy; and Epinal so easily.*

*I was not very surprised to lose Radom this turn. I keep having to apologise for my lack of initiative in the East, but I am having to contain two strong German concentrations and one strong and one weaker (Kovess) Austrian concentration and keep Przemysl isolated and drip feed the Caucasus with reinforcements. There is not a lot left after that. It has been noticed that the German 9<sup>th</sup> Army at Radom is getting closer to the limits of sustainment since it is now 8 hexes from the railheads. This will prevent it continuing due east but it will do enough harm turning north or south. Its supplies are running out again.*