

## Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT58: 6 – 9 April 1915 (April 2)

### General Situation

Across Europe and the Near East the situation was for some days fairly quiet with few notable developments. The Austrians and the Bulgarians were slowly pushing the Serbians further south and were also crowding them back from the east. There was also a withdrawal of Turkish forces east of Lake Van where the front had been going backwards and forwards like a pendulum since the outbreak of the war. In other places, the fronts were static as preparations for future operations required time to accumulate men and munitions.

### The Western Front

There had been no significant attacks on the Western Front since the fighting in Alsace had died down a month previously. The French had brought their front up close to the Falkenhayn Line, but they were not ready to begin any further offensive. Soldiers' letters and memoirs about front line service from this period made repeated reference to the strong impression that the spring flowers made on them. There were still enough trees standing near the front for the new growth to inspire a heightened appreciation of nature and the birdsong was remarked on more than anything else. A spell of dry weather helped the British and Belgians get on top of the drainage problems of their trenches in Flanders and for a time things were more comfortable there. Compared to the everyday dangers of recent months these days of rest and recuperation were fondly remembered.

### The Eastern Front

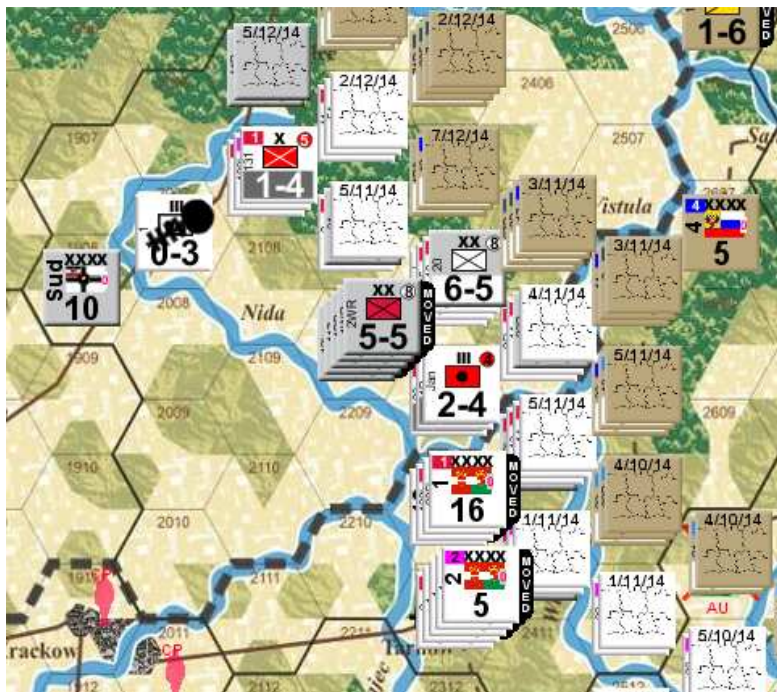


Figure 1: Austrian and German reserves massing in southern Poland, early April 1915.

A lull of a whole week was more unusual on the Eastern Front. The Russian Army was stretched taught across the length of the long front. The defences were strong and adequate in most places, but there was a shortage of reserves and in some locations there were too few men to sufficiently cover the front. Hardly any section of the Russian front could be declared really solid.

The Central Powers were pausing before resuming operations that might be expected to be pursued with greater ferocity than ever before. The Germans had reinforced their 10<sup>th</sup> Army in Prussia and also the Sud Army which provided support to the Austro-Hungarian 1<sup>st</sup> Army in southwest Poland.

There was still mounting tension on the front around Warsaw. The Germans were known to have brought forward heavy artillery and the Grand-Duke had repeatedly said he did not want to be tied to a defence of the Warsaw fortifications. On 8 April, he acted on this instinct and ordered that the fortresses of Novo Georgievsk and Pultusk (north of Warsaw) be immediately decommissioned. It was further ordered that these forts should not be used as strongpoints for any defences of the troops in their locality. Since Novo Georgievsk was the strongest fortress the Russians had ever created in Poland this was not a small decision. Henceforth these two fortresses would be mere bricks and mortar to the Russian Army. Nothing was done about the stores kept in the fortress compounds. These were neglected and left to rot where perishable and to be captured by the enemy where not.

### The Balkans

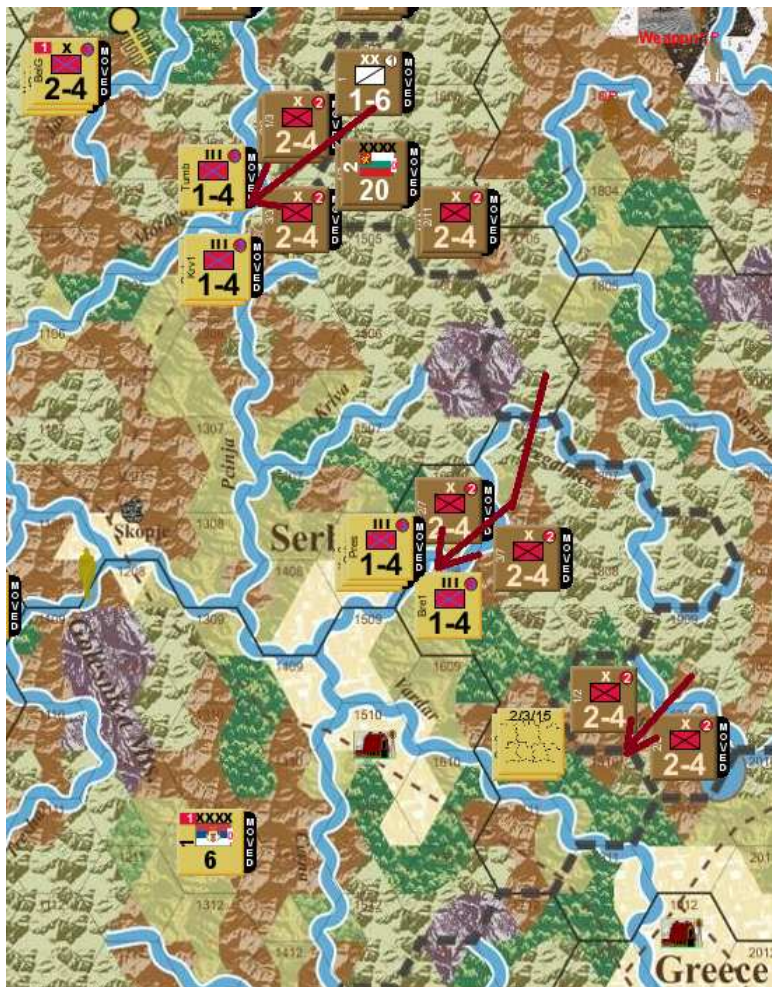


Figure 2: Initial advances of Bulgarian 2nd Army in southeast Serbia, 1 - 9 April 1915.

The Austro-Hungarian 5<sup>th</sup> Army united with the Bulgarian 1<sup>st</sup> Army as both moved south of Nish. The reinforcement of the Central Powers forced the Serbians off the line of the Toplica River. By this time, both Serbia and Montenegro had lost more than half of their territory. The Serbians were being forced into the southern regions which they had only controlled since the conclusion of the

Balkan Wars. The advancing Bulgarian 2<sup>nd</sup> Army intruded into eastern Macedonia and found some sympathisers among the inhabitants, few of which were Serbians.

### The Near East

There was little activity in either Egypt or Iraq where the two sides were keeping apart again. The British undertook one innovation in the defence of the Suez Canal after the recent Turkish attack which was to locate an advanced brigade at Romani (8-8.1138), east of the Canal, in order to serve as a breakwater against any future attack. The British garrison of the Canal had to be increased to accommodate this extra duty.

In the Caucasus, the Russians had strengthened their left wing (1<sup>st</sup> Turkestan Corps) in northern Persia. On 6 April, the Turkish Van Corps started pulling back towards Van leaving the Russians to advance in their wake. Although historians have never been able to confirm the motivation of this movement it is more than likely that the Turkish commanders were worried about the length of their supply lines and wanted to shorten their front for they had become quite spread out in their earlier movement in the opposite direction.



Figure 3: The Russians advance to the east of Lake Van as the Turks fall back to shorter lines, 6 - 9 April 1915.

## April 1915 DM Summary

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	2	-						15	17	715	Good
Austria-Hungary	-	-						-	-	338	Good
Ottoman	-	-						NA	-	15	Good
Bulgaria	-	-						-	-	-	Good
Central Powers	2	-						15	17	1058	
France	-	-						-	-	582	Good
Great Britain	-	-						-	-	72	Good
Russia	2	-						NA	2	388	Good
Belgium	-	-						NA	-	(95)	NA
Serbia	-*	-						NA	-	(19)	NA * Nish lost
Entente	2	-						-	2	1042	

### Player Notes

#### CP:

- *East: A period of concentrating forces in depth to be able to select points of attack.*
- *Galicia: As with the Germans in E Prussia and Poland; a period of consolidation.*
- *Serbia: AH begins to configure its forces for concentrated offensive operations in conjunction with the Bulgarians, who are starting to move into Serbia in strength.*
- *West: No change.*
- *Caucasus: Quiet. I use Black Sea transports to move some RPL from Constantinople.*
- *Mesopotamia: Quiet.*
- *Palestine: Extraction continues.*
- *Gallipoli: Quiet.*
- *Italy: Nothing to report.*

*AP: I hope it was the right decision to abandon Novo Georgievsk. It is the best fortress the Russians have and since you cannot get REPL for abandoning it, the only advantage is to avoid the DM consequences of a bombardment. It was not an easy decision because, although I do not want the Russian fortresses to sit uselessly under a bombardment, I also have to consider the enemy supply which would have to be used up in artillery attacks which are not now necessary.*

*I think it probable that a resumption of the German/AH offensive in the East is only a turn or two away and this will be a stern test. From what I have seen so far, it does not look likely that Ivor will*

*instead wait until May to attack in order to double his available supply (trebling it if he waited until the end of May when supply replenishment in June would be imminent). I am not sure if I can hold out against an April attack. I do not really want to go through what the Russians suffered in March again, but I might just brazen it out on the basis that it will be 2 - 4 bad turns followed by another pause. If I though the attacks would last 6 – 8 turns, I might have a different attitude.*

### 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	-
Dec 14	10	6	NA	-	<b>16</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Jan 15	9	5	NA	-	<b>14</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Feb 15	15	-	NA	-	<b>15</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Mar 15	15	-	NA	-	<b>15</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Apr 15	15	-	NA	-	<b>15</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-

### Calculation of Food Deficit – April 1915

<b>Germany</b>			<b>Austria</b>		
Needs	83	PCs	Needs	29	PCs
Less			Less	-4 = 25	Galician PCs
Food	68	Germany	Food	24	Austria
Less	-3 = 65	Prussia/Alsace	Less	-7 = 17	Galicia
Plus	4	Romania	Plus	2	Hungary
Plus	1	France	Plus	6	Germany
Plus	3	Hungary			
Plus	1	Poland			
Less	6	Austria			
	68	Total Food		25	Total Food
Deficit	<b>15</b>			-	