

Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT80: 10 – 14 July 1914 (July 3)

General Situation

In Paris despite or rather because of the war a major military parade was planned for Bastille Day. The President and all the major Ministers would take the salute with Joffre. Every ambassador and other foreign dignitaries would be presented with a display of French military might. Three infantry divisions were in the city for the march past. They included the 12th Division which had played a prominent part in the fighting in Artois and were well known to the British. There was also a Colonial Division that had been in the recent offensive in Champagne. In addition there was the 5th Engineer Regiment and (the highlight) two regiments of Artillery.

On the day, the entire headquarters staff of the French 7th Army led the parade. General Maud'huy was fitted out in a uniform that commentators declared to be a bit Bonapartist. Other complaints about the parade were that there were only a few cavalry in it and bad weather meant the air service could not be represented. Finally some of the infantry were new recruits who had been in the ranks for only a few hours and evidently neither knew how to dress properly or keep in step. However, it was supposed to be a popular war and those who were foolish enough to point out these shortcomings were condemned for being too stuffy and out of step with current fashion. If the Army wanted millions then they had to accept the scruffy and those with two left feet.

The Western Front

Maud'huy had more worries than the problem of controlling his horse down the Champs Élysées. On 10 July, just four days before the parade, a large concentration of Germans had been detected between St Jean-aux-Bois and Pierrefonds (5-3.1014) where the German line came closest to Paris about 65 kilometres from the Arc de Triomphe. Maud'huy was forced to send reinforcement to this sector in case the Germans chanced an attack. This included the 51st Reserve Division which was otherwise designated to be the third infantry division in the Bastille Day parade. It was perhaps for the best because the programme was excessively long as it was.

No German attack actually materialised before 14 July. There had been planning in the German 2nd Army which had wanted to try out a first major attack using gas. Falkenhayn, however, refused to authorise it. He considered it too chancy and in any event the wind was in the wrong direction. German proponents of gas warfare would have to come up with a more convincing case for the use of this unfamiliar weapon. Legality was also an issue, but Falkenhayn avoided ruling one way or the other on this aspect of the plan that he had been given.

The Italian Front

The Austrian Army of Tyrol had finally persuaded Conrad of the difficulties of its situation and, at its base in Bozen, it was busy incorporating fresh drafts into its ranks. Although they were supposed to be skilled in mountain warfare, the Tyrolean Jaegers had to reduce their standards to meet the requirements of the emergency. It was said by Conrad that anyone who answered the call to enrol wearing a pair of lederhosen would be suitable for the mountain brigades.

several understrength divisions of the Russian 4th, 5th and 9th Armies fought a rear guard operation against the Germans and units of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army which had come north from Rovno. The fighting took place in nameless swamps which made it impossible for the attacking forces to move forward with any speed. The consequences of fighting in such a morass could have been more serious but the Russian forces were ordered to withdraw in 13 July. This was itself no easy feat but somehow the surviving Russian infantry dragged their sodden persons and equipment away.

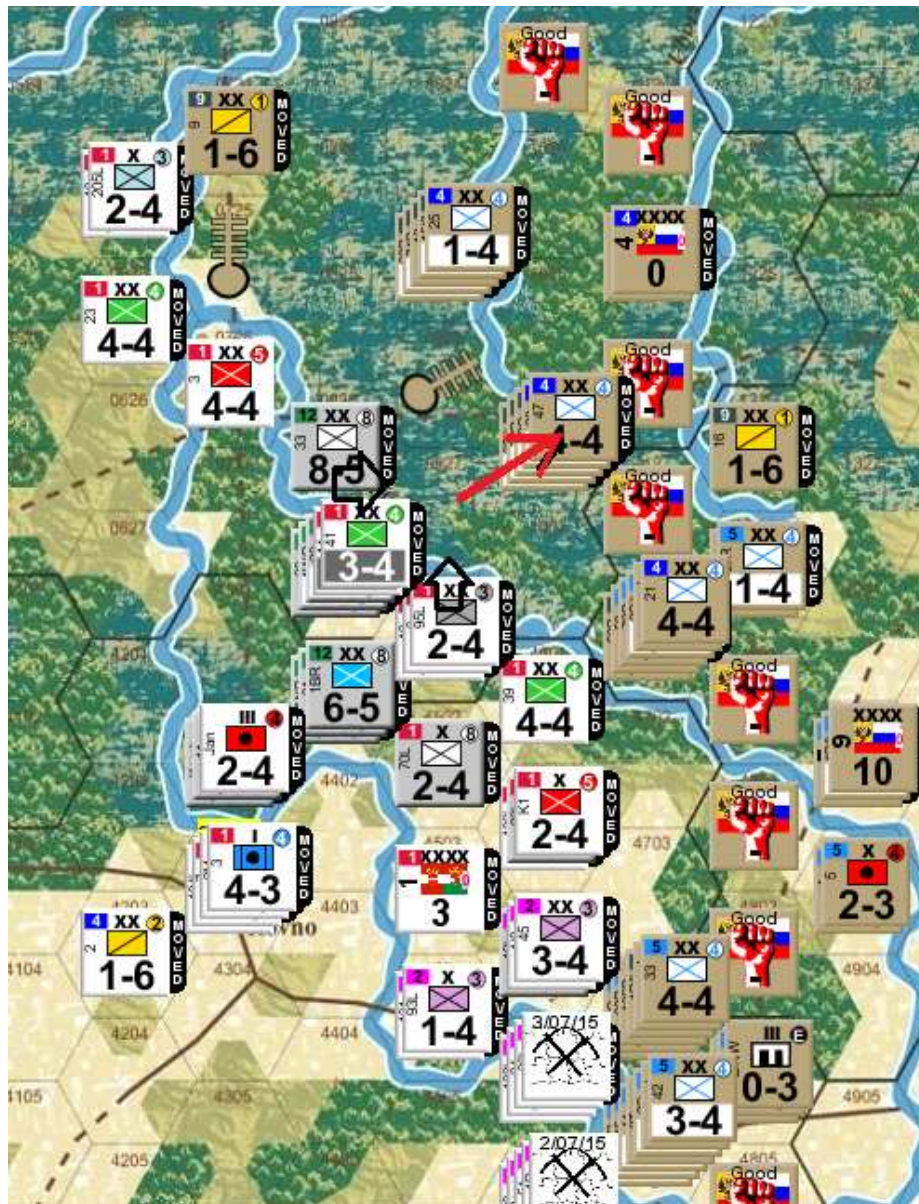


Figure 2: The Central Powers' bridgehead over the Slutch River at Sarny, 10 – 14 July 1915.

The Balkans

There was an eastwards movement in the Balkan Front. The Bulgarian 2nd Army had been given the mission of covering the long Greek frontier from Albania to the coast of Thrace. The Serbians were also starting to move more forces to join their 2nd Corps in Greek Macedonia. Already they were thinking of ways to re-enter their homeland (as they perceived it). The first major town inside Serbia was Monastir but this was securely held by the Bulgarian 7th Division. On 13 July, to boost morale,

the Serbian 2nd Corps ordered an incursion to occupy the nearby locality of Bač (7-6.1413) to plant their flag and give a warning that the occupation of Serbia was not complete or uncontested.

The Near East

Hamilton was privately chastened by the consequences of the second attack on Achi Baba (7-6.3812). He was publically adamant it had been the right thing to do but there were few replacements available to fill the depleted ranks and once again this meant that continuing the attacks was impossible. It also had to be recognised that the Australian and New Zealand units were so reduced that there was no possibility of putting them into action again.

Far away in Iraq, the Turkish 27th Division moved into Ali Gharbi on 11 July. The town was half deserted but the Turks were quick to turn it into a bustling base. Within a day or two, Turkish and Indian patrols were encountering each other not far downstream.



Figure 3: The Turkish 3rd Army pushes through to Otlukkapi, 10 - 14 July 1915.

The peace of the mountains of Eastern Anatolia was disturbed by gunfire on 10 July when the Turkish 3rd Army began a new series of attacks southeast of Erzerum. Their plan was once again to try and turn the Russian defences and get into the Aras Valley by a flanking manoeuvre.

This time the route chosen was more direct than the previous attack at Hacı Ömer (6-8.2518). The swing through the mountains was shorter and encountered not Kuban mountaineers but unhappy Russian reservists of the 62nd Reserve Division. Though the Russians did fight well and the Turks had to prevail in many costly actions the defenders were driven back until the Turkish 29th Division reached Otlukkapi (6-8.2417) at sunset on 12 July. From this mountain village they could see the land descending towards the main valley in the distance. Once the Russians realised how far the Turks had advanced they were forced to take countermeasures. Units started to arrive to cover

Köprüköy (6-8.2416)¹. Yudenitch was very displeased at the performance of the III Caucasus Corps which had covered this sector, but his focus on Lake Van and the Murat Valley was one of the main causes of the deterioration in the Russian situation.

DM Summary – July 1915

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	17	1	2					11	31	853	Good
Austria-Hungary	1	-*	2					-	3	402	Good *Czernowitz re-captured.
Ottoman	-	4	2					NA	6	41	Good
Bulgaria	-	-	-					-	-	11	Good
Central Powers	18	5	6					11	40	1287	
France	14	2	-					-	16	637	Good
Great Britain	-	8	-					-	8	124	Good
Russia	*6	2	5					NA	13	595	Good - *Rovno lost
Italy	-	-	1					-	1	13	Good
Belgium	-	-	-					-	-	(96)	NA
Serbia	-	-	-					-	-	(27)	NA
Entente	20	12	6					-	38	1366	

Player Notes

- *CP: East: I have started to try and stabilise an enduring frontline in the east. He is now relatively secure along the Grave Threat Line and can concentrate to make attacks against him very costly. I pull back slightly from Riga (I am not interested in attacking against a personnel centre and city hex – it will be too costly for me) to dig in. I make only one attack against Russia this turn which could go either way. I wish to end my offensives on the EF with Russia at Shaken National Morale before fully switching my attentions westwards.*
- *Serbia: I continue digging in on this front for the longer haul. Now that it is clear that Cattaro is not a rail junction, I have to move reserves headed for the Italian front the long way around the estuary to access rail.*
- *West: I push more reserves into the lines and continue to try and bolster my positions on the WF.*
- *Caucasus: The Turks now have sufficient strength and supply to try and launch another limited attack; which they do to try and push the Russian further away from the valley passes.*

¹ The author spent a happy weekend there in the late 1980s while the town was celebrating the International Úmlaut Festival.

- *Mesopotamia: Quiet.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Gallipoli: Following another brutal attack on this front which witnessed the annihilation of one of my divisions, I begin to regroup. He can manage about one of these attacks per month (with naval gunfire support) and then needs the rest of the time to recover. He will make no great breakthrough on the peninsula and I had questioned why he would do it; but the Turks cannot recover from these blows as the TE can and it will all gradually wear my Turks down.*
- *Italy: I begin the business of building up forces in the Dolomites. The Italians have made a strong start with their offensives along this front.*

AP: Despite the confirmation that we will stick with the original version of the Grave Threat rule, I am not moving my whole Russian force to safety. It is enough to know that I can if I have to. I am perfectly content to fight a few defensive battles on decent terms as it is an easier way to inflict losses on the CP than in any offensive actions and each Russian battle spares the French a bit. This means of course I am prepared to accept Russian Shaken Morale if the CP keeps attacking.

In fairness to my opponent, he has said he intends no more than to nudge me over the threshold of Shaken Morale which is only going to require a few further combats. This is perfectly reasonable. Arguably, the better attack this turn was the one with the Turks despite suffering a 2:1 loss ratio because at this moment Turkish losses are much more acceptable to the CP than those of his major powers. The marshy battle could have been rather bad for the CP but I rolled low.

My latest attack in the Trentino has used up most of my remaining Italian supply so I doubt that I will be able to exploit this advance immediately but the ZOC I have placed in the rear of the position at Riva will make it impossible to evacuate that place except by retreat after combat.