

## Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg - Centenary Game

GT93: 6 – 9 September 1915 (September 2)

### General Situation

The strain of the war was beginning to show in the British economy. During the past year considerable gains had been made by means of conversion of suitable plant and machinery to wartime production. By September 1915, this potential had been used up and as the summer ended there was a definite stutter in the output of the factories as the limits of the existing capital stock were used up.<sup>1</sup> The economic ministries promised the government that this was being addressed and that the priority was now increasing production of shells by expanding and making more efficient those establishments already operating. Lloyd George, the Minister of Munitions promised results later in the year and such was the energy he communicated most of the doubts were dispelled.

### Near East

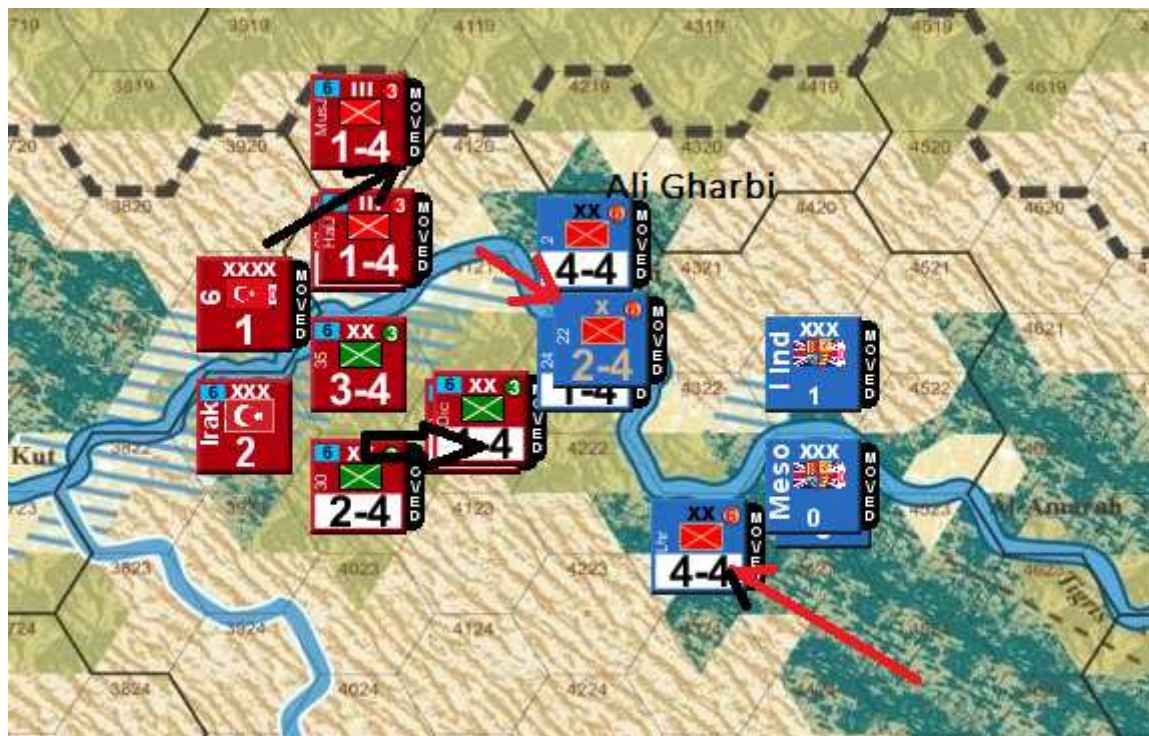


Figure 1: The Turkish Advance across the Plain of Hayy, 6 – 9 September 1915.

Despite the bloody outcome of the last attack on Krithia (6-8.3812), Hamilton's headquarters were thinking of repeating it as soon as possible. Fresh drafts of Australian volunteers were on the way from Egypt and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division was designated to be the main force in the next assault. In keeping with the new policy of limited attacks, the objective was set as the so-called "Triple V" position at the head of Chicken Valley (6-8.3812) which had defied all previous Allied attempts to breakout. The Australians were given several days to plan the attack which it was determined would not take place until 13 September.

In Iraq, the Turkish 6<sup>th</sup> Army moved forward without delay. The weight of the Turkish force was deployed to the south of the Tigris and moved across the broken plains east of the Hai

<sup>1</sup> This is referring to the final exhaustion of the pre-war weapon stockpile.

(7-9.4122) where they hoped to find the British flank hanging vulnerable to an encircling move which might trap the units then retreating slowly towards Ali Gharbi. The campaign at this time had a nightmarish quality in which units could become lost in sandstorms and disorientated by mirages which could have fatal consequences in the trackless waste through which the Turks were moving.

On 6 – 7 September, the Turks began encountering positions of the Indian 24th Brigade which were stretched across the terrain. The Indian troops had orders only to delay because nobody expected them to maintain themselves in such a terrible spot for very long and it was only necessary to buy time for the arrival of the Lahore Division which was coming up from Qurna as fast as possible. The 24th Brigade responded very well to its orders and although there had been few if any bright spots in the British campaign so far this was an exception. Although their own losses were not inconsiderable, the Indian troops fell back to the river without losing their order. The Turks on the other hand were subject to disproportionate losses from both bullets and heat. The Turkish “Tigris” Division had half its men missing from its ranks by 8 September and two other Divisions were badly depleted by their bold exertions.

Yudenitch had for some time been quietly reinforcing the III Caucasian Corps north of the Aras Valley. It had been difficult to get units into position in the high mountain terrain but by 9 September, the Russian 10<sup>th</sup> Division was ready to strike down the road linking the Coruh Valley with Erzerum. The Turkish front was here covered only by Kurdish irregular cavalry but not for the first time these determined warriors kept the attackers at bay and an assault on the village of Karagöbek (6-8.2116) ended badly for the Russians and the Kurds remained in possession.



**Figure 2: The Russians attempt to pass Karagöbek, 9 September 1915.**

### **The Western Front**

Nobody present on either side of the Western Front in early September could have had any doubt that events were building towards a major clash. It was impossible to hide the

overflowing ammunition dumps and the growing concentrations of infantry and artillery. Everyone assumed there would have to be another big push and for most the presumption was the sooner the better for there was only one more season before winter and, though the summer had not been entirely exhausted, the grapes were heavy on the vine.

Joffre and Sir John French had come to an understanding. Poincaré's recent visit to London had not been without particular purposes connected to the need to rouse Britain to steel itself for the upcoming assault that might be a very costly battle. Joffre was concerned that the Germans might try and pre-empt the Allied attack and the French Army was also quite busy clearing the lightly held German trenches which now covered the enemy front in Picardy and north of the Marne. The most effective at these operations was the French 5<sup>th</sup> Army which reached Albert (5-3.0911) on 9 September.

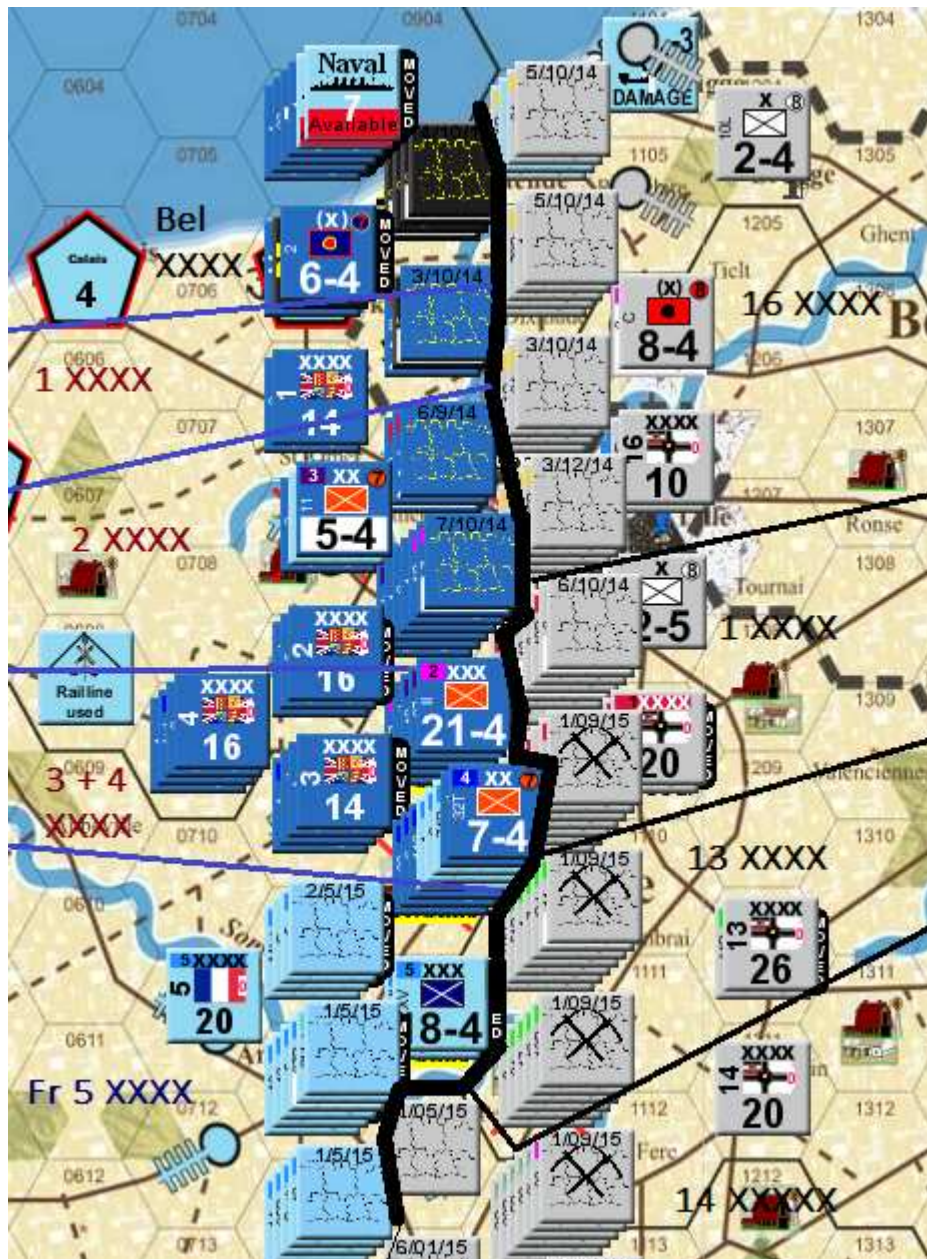


Figure 3: The Western Front, north of the Somme River, 6 - 9 September 1915.

The resulting plan of Joffre was that the British would lead the offensive on their own now that they had sufficient heavy artillery to attack the more solid German defences. The offensive would start on 14 September to give the British time to get their guns fully concentrated. For the time being, the French Army would be held back making at most a diversionary attack. This would give the French more time to work through some of the deep German defences and they would be held in readiness for a possible German attempt to shift the focus of the battle towards the French front. If, however, the Germans were drawn into an extended battle with the British then the French would strike as the Germans tried to shift reserves which would presumably involve some weakening of the front facing the French.

### **The Italian Front**

The Italian Army was preparing for further action but their resources were such that only very slowly were they getting their units back to full strength.

The Italian Prime Minister, Salandra meanwhile announced on 8 September the success of a Purchasing Commission which had visited the United States to secure desperately needed supplies. The Americans had of course been very willing to sell. The Italians main difficulty had been securing their share against similar Commissions already well established by their Allies.

### **The Eastern Front**

There were practically no visible operations taking place on the whole length of the Eastern Front during this period. In contrast to the Western Front, observers were tempted to suggest that there might be little further action on this front for the remainder of the year.

### **The Balkans**

The two sides were both devoting considerable effort to improve their fieldworks and secure the positions they had adopted in Albania, on the Greek border and at Salonika. Attacking the enemy did not seem to be anybody's priority.

### **Player Notes**

CP:

- *East: Quiet.*
- *Serbia: Quiet.*
- *West: Quietly building up and entrenching along my newly shortened line.*
- *Caucasus: Quiet.*
- *Mesopotamia: Having traded off losses in the previous turn, the British split one of their divisions into brigades to cover the frontage; so I launch another attack against his southernmost brigade to force a withdrawal and continue to keep his forces off balance along the Tigris.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Gallipoli: Quiet.*
- *Italy: Quiet.*

## DM Summary – September 1915

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	-	-						12	12	884	Good
Austria-Hungary	-	-						-	-	413	Good
Ottoman	2	3						-	5	48	Good
Bulgaria	-	-						-	-	12	Good
Central Powers	2	3						12	17	1337	
France	1	-						-	1	638	Good
Great Britain	4	1						-	5	133	Good
Russia	-	1						-	-	612	Shaken
Italy	-	-						-	-	19	Good
Belgium	-	-						-	-	(96)	NA
Serbia	-	-						-	-	(28)	NA
Entente	5	2						-	7	1399	

AP: This is my first turn after a three week break. I spent some of that time thinking about the enormous distance I still have to go to reach the first thresholds of CP Morale which start to deliver me advantage.

For the Germans I am still 541 DM short of starting the countdown for American entry (1425 DM). I have to ask how many months will that take even allowing for around 140 DM for food deficit in a year. My target is to get there as early as possible in 1916 and no later than the autumn. I will want the British Army to contribute as much as possible to this as I do not want the French at Shaken Morale prematurely (as are the Russians). The Germans can frustrate this by attacking the French but that will bring the US in much faster.

There is only 72 DM between AH and the trigger for the Russian Artillery Surprise which ought to then get me to AH Shaken Morale. However, I cannot strike at AH very easily without suffering disproportionate losses on the Italian Front (which I can afford for a bit) and I will run out of supplies quickly if I attempt anything major on either the Italian or Russian Fronts. I need to opportunistically chip away at AH morale whenever I get a chance. Hitting them at a rate of 1 DM per turn would get to 485 in July 1916. If that seems a too easy rate that is almost exactly what I achieved over the whole period from April to August 1915 with the exception of June 1915 which was a very costly month for the Austrians.

I also need to do some more harm to Bulgaria so they are also under some pressure by the time Romania gets in the war but this can wait until Serbia has been built up a little again.

I am very pleased that attrition is currently working a bit against the Turks and the fighting in Iraq has favoured me since I tested his defences in front of Kut and provoked a counter-offensive. I doubt I will get the Turks to 100 DM before Spring 1916, but that would be better than I was expecting a few turns ago.

*It might be thought I do not need to spread my effort so evenly and should concentrate on one or two CP nations. That might work but any of them can radically reduce their losses by avoiding offensive activity while the others compensate with attacks. It is not easy to just pick off one opponent in this game for either side. This approach keeps my options open and ensures that the CP cannot take anywhere for granted in the longer run.*

Below are the monthly production totals for supply, weapons, manpower and the food deficits.

### Supply

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	77	18	-	-	<b>95</b>	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>58</b>
Nov 14	77	18	-	-	<b>95</b>	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>58</b>
Dec 14	77	18	2	-	<b>97</b>	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>58</b>
Jan 15	77	26	2	-	<b>105</b>	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>78</b>
Feb 15	77	26	2	-	<b>105</b>	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>78</b>
Mar 15	77	26	2	-	<b>105</b>	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>78</b>
Apr 15	77	26	2	-	<b>105</b>	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>78</b>
May 15	77	26	2	1	<b>106</b>	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>78</b>
Jun 15	77	26	2	1	<b>106</b>	30	18	18	-	-	10	-	-	10	<b>86</b>
Jul 15	77	26	2	1	<b>106</b>	30	18	18	-	-	10	-	-	10	<b>86</b>
Aug 15	77	26	2	1	<b>106</b>	30	18	14	-	-	10	-	-	10	<b>82</b>
Sept 15	77	26	2	1	<b>106</b>	30	18	14	-	-	10	-	-	10	<b>82</b>

**Weapon Production (+drawdown on pre-war stockpiles)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Ge</b>	<b>AH</b>	<b>Ot</b>	<b>Bul</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>Br</b>	<b>Rus</b>	<b>Be</b>	<b>Se</b>	<b>It</b>	<b>Rom</b>	<b>Gr</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>Ent</b>
Oct 14	42 +43	23	-	-	<b>108</b>	27 +70	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>217</b>
Nov 14	42 +26	23	-	-	<b>91</b>	27 +70	50 +20	50	-	1	-	-	-	-	<b>218</b>
Dec 14	42 +7	23	2	-	<b>74</b>	28 +30	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>178</b>
Jan 15	42	23	2	-	<b>67</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	1	-	-	-	-	<b>148</b>
Feb 15	42	23	2	-	<b>67</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>147</b>
Mar 15	42	23	2	-	<b>67</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>147</b>
Apr 15	42	23	2	-	<b>67</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>147</b>
May 15	42	23	2	1	<b>68</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>147</b>
Jun 15	42	23	2	1	<b>68</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	-	14	-	-	-	<b>161</b>
Jul 15	42	23	2	1	<b>68</b>	27	50 +20	50	-	-	14	-	-	-	<b>161</b>
Aug 15	42	23	2	1	<b>68</b>	27	50 +20	30	-	-	14	-	-	-	<b>141</b>
Sept 15	42	23	2	1	<b>68</b>	27	50	30	-	-	14	-	-	-	<b>121</b>

### Manpower (Colonial)

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	69	36	NA	-	<b>105</b>	41 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	2	6	-	-	-	-	<b>209</b>
Nov 14	70	37	NA	-	<b>107</b>	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	6	-	-	-	-	<b>206</b>
Dec 14	70	37	NA	-	<b>107</b>	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	6	-	-	-	-	<b>206</b>
Jan 15	70	37	NA	-	<b>107</b>	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	6	-	-	-	-	<b>206</b>
Feb 15	70	37	NA	-	<b>107</b>	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	6	-	-	-	-	<b>206</b>
Mar 15	70	37	NA	-	<b>107</b>	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	2	-	-	-	-	<b>202</b>
Apr 15	70	37	NA	-	<b>107</b>	39 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	2	-	-	-	-	<b>202</b>
May 15	69	37	NA	9	<b>115</b>	40 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	1	-	-	-	-	<b>202</b>
Jun 15	69	39	NA	9	<b>115</b>	40 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	1	NA	-	-	-	<b>202</b>
Jul 15	69	40	NA	9	<b>116</b>	40 (+8)	59 (+13)	80	1	1	NA	-	-	-	<b>202</b>
Aug 15	69	41	NA	9	<b>117</b>	40 (+8)	59 (+13)	50	1	1	NA	-	-	-	<b>172</b>
Sept 15	69	41	NA	9	<b>117</b>	40 (+8)	59 (+13)	50	1	1	NA	-	-	-	<b>172</b>



### 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	-
May 15	11	-	NA	-	<b>11</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Jun 15	8	5	NA	-	<b>13</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Jul 15	12	-	NA	-	<b>12</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Aug 15	11	1	NA	-	<b>12</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
Sept 15	12	-	NA	-	<b>12</b>	-	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	NA	-