

## Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT128: 5 – 8 February 1916 (February 2)

### General Situation

The lull in operations remained widespread. The fact that the war was not visibly progressing suggested to some that it was without purpose and could be stopped. If that were true there were many wives and children who would have reason to be thankful. Advocates of peace, including the Pope, American private emissaries, and the Women's Christian Temperance League all tried to voice these wishes and nobody disputed their goodwill. It made no difference, however, moderate pacifists risked association with anti-war socialists and anarchists and the alternative to war was hardly recognised by the bulk of public opinion throughout most of the belligerent powers.

### The Eastern Front



Figure 1: The Russian West Front withdrawal, 5 - 8 February 1916.

The German 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Armies continued to menace the Russian lines in Eastern Lithuania and Belorussia. On 5 – 6 February these forces pushed more aggressively into the Russian front and penetrated the defences north of the Neiman River. The Germans found that these positions had been abandoned by the Russians and it became clear that the Russian line of resistance had been pulled back much further east.

### The Balkans

General Sarrail arrived in Kavalla to take command of the French force which was quickly gathering in the Balkans. He was dismayed to see that his authority was limited to a solitary Corps headquarters though, by the end of the first week of February, there were two French Divisions in Greece (26<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup>) with a third (22<sup>nd</sup>) expected. Since there was also a British (3<sup>rd</sup>) and New Zealand Division in the Balkans, the Western Allies had made quite a significant commitment.

By this time, the Austro-Hungarian 5<sup>th</sup> Army had completed its redeployment and was in contact with the Serbian-Montenegrin forces covering Monastir. Several Bulgarian Brigades had moved in the meantime into Albania and were deployed south of Tirane.



Figure 2: South-West Serbia, 5 - 8 February 1916.

### The Near East

The situation around Baghdad continued to improve for the Turks. Chiefly this was due to the fact that reinforcements were now approaching from the north in larger numbers. The railway terminus near Samara was being readied to carry them on the last stretch towards the city. Townsend meanwhile had pulled back the forces which had probed around western Baghdad as far as the

Euphrates. He was considering his next move in view of the fact that the flood season was anticipated within about a month.

### The Western Front

Haig had been in command of the British Forces in France for over two and a half months. The condition of the British Army had improved significantly in that time. Most units were up to strength. Supply stockpiles were growing although were still not considered adequate for a major offensive against the Germans on this front. The British front was still less than 120 kilometres long and was relatively straight. Haig's four Armies (plus a Reserve Army), were matched by three German Armies (16<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>) which were considered to be rich in all the equipment that Prussian militarism could lavish on its favoured sons. Haig was under no illusion that his command would face tough opponents when he next attacked and for this reason he was insistent that he would submit to no pressure to attack before his training and equipment programmes were completed. He could also point to the fact that fresh forces were still arriving from Britain (2 more Divisions in February and two more Brigades of heavy guns). Such forces needed to be fully trained and integrated into the Army in the field and the more troops who arrived; the bigger were the supply and equipment requirements.

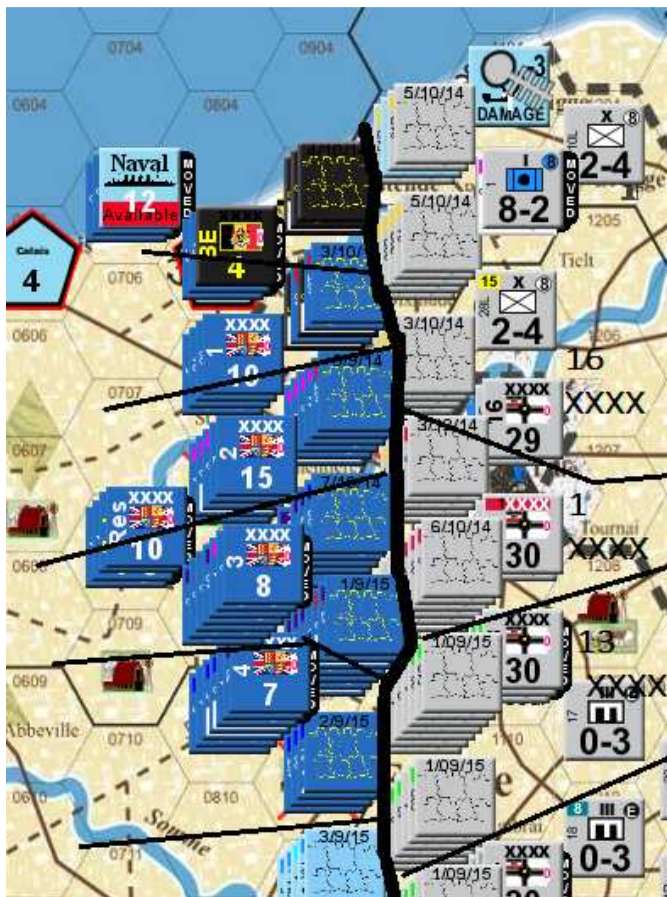


Figure 3: The British sector of the Western Front, 5 - 8 February 1916.

### The Italian Front

All was quiet on the Italian front. The snows in the mountains would not melt for some time.

## DM Summary – February 1916

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	-	-						12	12	1079	Good
Austria-Hungary	2	-						1	3	454	Good
Ottoman	3	-						-	3	65	Good
Bulgaria	-	-						-	-	15	Good
Central Powers	5	-						13	18	1612	
France	-	-						-	-	671	Good
Great Britain	-	-						-	-	237	Good
Russia	2	-						-	2	714	Shaken
Italy	-	-						-	-	53	Good
Belgium	-	-						-	-	(96)	NA
Serbia	-	-						-	-	(32)	NA
Entente	2	-						-	2	1665	

### Player Notes

- CP: *East: My last AH attack could have been worse but it is not enough; I still have to undertake more offensive action due to excessive stockpiles of ammunition. There is little opportunity this turn, but I have to manoeuvre into a situation which accords some favourability for an attack. As for my German armies; wherever they concentrate, the Russians extract eastwards. This is how Napoleon must have felt!*
- *Balkans: The RiP with Bulgaria in Albania is largely complete.*
- *West: My western armies assimilate RPLs and build up their strength.*
- *Caucasus: The last attack was appalling. I lost a division for no marked effect. This was the only feasible area for my Turks to attack but I had hoped to inflict one hit on the enemy.*
- *Mesopotamia: At last my reinforcements begin to trickle in to Baghdad. If I played this again as the CP, I would give a lot more thought to Turkish strategic movement limitations and plan in more carefully the timing of reinforcements. It takes over a month for some strategic movement.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Italy: Quiet.*

AP: *Nothing much is happening. Nothing much is going to happen until the CP unleash some pretty substantial offensives.*

*I was surprised to see German supplies going east this month. There is already a lot of German supply there. However, there can be no sustained combat in the East now because the Russians will simply withdraw. In March, Rule 22 will hit the Germans with a requirement to spend 77 supply and that requirement will be repeated every subsequent month unless the Germans buy some rest and shift the burden of attack back to the Allies (who had it in 1915) by using 3 -4 months of supply in a massive effort. There is no scope to assuage this pressure for action anywhere except on the Western Front. The Western Front also has the Artillery which should make such an attack as cost effective as possible.*

*There are quite a few downsides to a German offensive in the West and if Ivor is trying to find an alternative I could understand. Fighting the Russians is not an answer, sending supply to Austria or Turkey will just transfer the obligation to attack to them.*

*On the other hand, a Verdun style offensive does make sense in this game indeed it is necessary for Germany to take the initiative in the West periodically or else the Western Allies will just conduct the campaign as it suits them. It is possible for the Germans to make single attacks with over 150 combat strength points. The French will not like this. The French are only 229 DM away from Shaken Morale. Germany is 523 away from Shaken Morale. That difference has been getting smaller month by month for about a year. The Germans have to take some control of the shape of the conflict in the West or else I will steadily work to equalising British and French morale and take full advantage of it being 2 against 1.*

*I may be misinterpreting the situation. It is possible to conceal offensive plans in DWK and surprise a sector with a railway concentration and the Germans are the best of all at this. However, I see no such signs and lots of German supply going East seems wrong unless part of a ruse to allay my suspicions.*