

Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT162: 1 – 5 July 1916 (1 July)

General Situation

The mood in Berlin was grim. The German government expected something of an explanation of the situation from Falkenhayn. The Foreign Ministry was warning that Romania was planning to join the Entente. Nobody could deny that the Austrians had been defeated in Eastern Poland and now it was openly speculated that Lemberg might be in danger. The German Chancellor and Foreign Minister had both promised more aid to Austria-Hungary but how much this would have to be was unclear.

Perhaps the most alarming feature of Austria-Hungary's weakness was advised by Walter Rathenau. Austrian factories were increasingly operating on short time and there were also strikes. To keep the factories running, manpower had to be reserved and Conrad made a bitter attack on the Hungarian agricultural sector on 3 July accusing it of being a scheme to protect Hungarian manpower from the exigencies of the war. Neither did it help that the new Russian invasion of Galicia was encroaching on good farmland which had with difficulty been put back into production in the last year only to be lost again as the harvest approached.

The Eastern Front

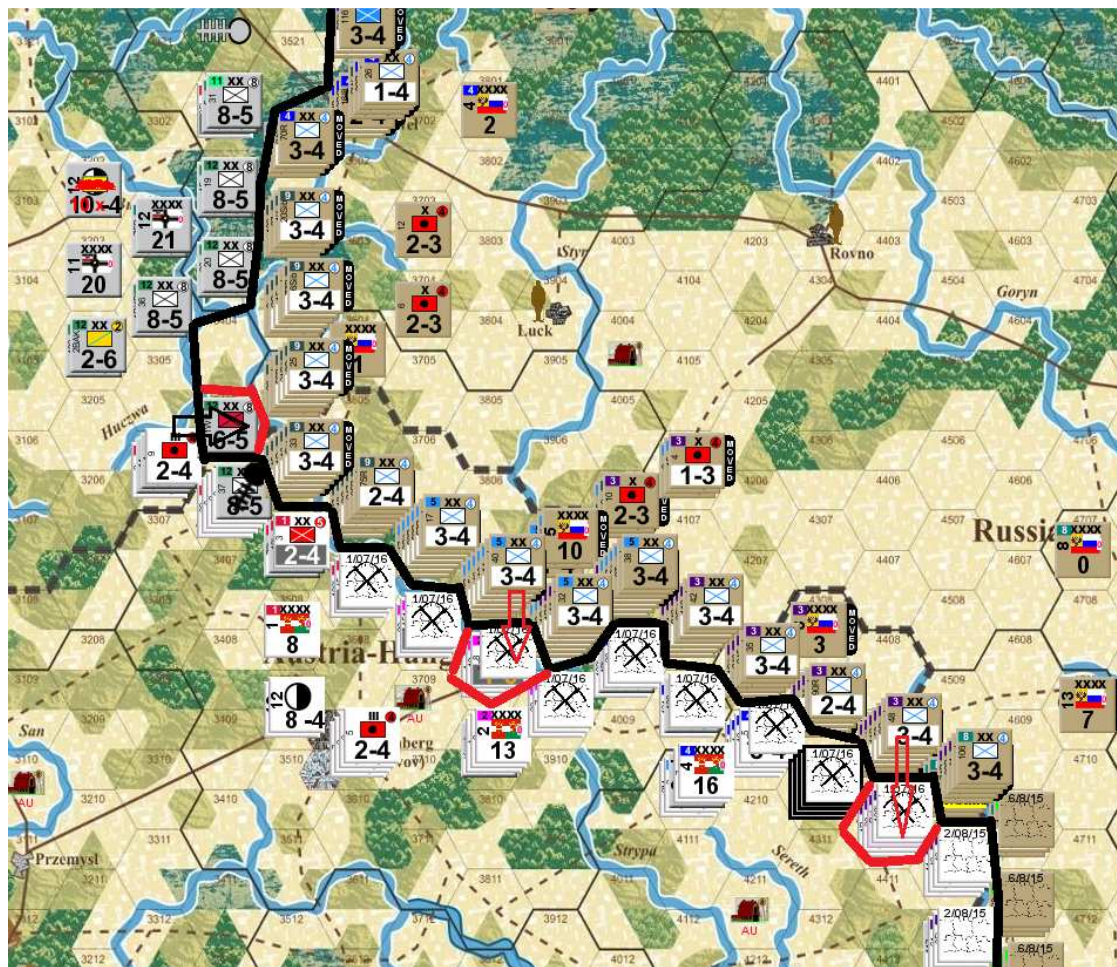


Figure 1: The Germans intervene as the Russians threaten an advance to Lemberg, 1-5 July 1916.

The German 12th Army finally intervened to assist the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army shore up its defences between the Bug and Huczwa Rivers. On 1 – 2 July, three German Divisions assisted in the re-capture of Czervonograd (5-5.3405). This caused the Russians to abandon their bridgeheads over the Bug north of this location though they still held a large one to the south east between Sosnivka and Dobrotvir (5-5.3506).

The Russians were short of ammunition by the beginning of July but the Russian 3rd Army was resupplied as Brusilov ordered a transfer of munitions from the quiet 13th Army front along the Zbrucz River. This helped enable a strong Russian attack on 4-5 July at Skalat (5-5.4410). When the Russians pushed forwards here scattering the Austro-Hungarian 30th Division they were outflanking the Hapsburg defences on the Zbrucz which had been a stable position for a whole year.

An equally alarming Russian advance occurred on 4 July at Busk (5-5.3808). The line of the Bug had been defended there by Austrian cavalry and mounted infantry for over a week but the cavalry cordon was insufficient to hold back a determined Russian crossing. Altogether, five Russian Divisions forded the river during the night of 3-4 July assisted by low water conditions. When the Austrian cavalry sized up the scale of the Russian effort they hesitated for the shortest period before accepting the inevitable and falling back. By 5 July, the Russian 1st Guards Division was less than 30 kilometres from the centre of Lemburg.

There was no significant fighting north of the Pripet Marshes at this time but the Germans were giving up ground as the Russian Army there probed forwards. In some places, the Russian cavalry was less than 100 kilometres from the Prussian border.

The Balkans

The Russians activated a new 14th Army at Odessa on 3 July. Perhaps the most notable unit in this force was the volunteer Women's Division. It is sometimes thought that this unit was a product of the revolutionary wars which came after but in fact it was an innovation of Imperial patriotism.¹

There had been a significant movement of Allied forces into northern Albania in recent days. The Italian 14th Division was active on the Montenegrin border and was sending patrols up the Beli Drin valley trying to establish whether there were any enemy troops there. The border crossing at Bojovic (7-6.0707) was found to be unguarded on 5 July saving for a printed notice pinned to a fence which announced that Montenegro was closed to visitors. The motto of the 14th Division thereafter was "*No frontiera*".

The Near East

Murray ordered the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to cross the Palestinian frontier on 4 July. They also found a border to be undefended and the advancing British, Australian, Indian and South African soldiers found them picking through old Turkish positions which had been abandoned long enough for the desert to partially reclaim them. The heat of the day was intense and with the Judean Hills looming in the distance the last stretch of desert was crossed very slowly.

¹ It is not in the DWK counter set. I am using the Vassal ability to rename units.

The circumstances of Maude's advance in Mesopotamia were even more acute and became a matter of no small controversy. The ordinary ranks called this the MMMMM and spread it as an insubordinate practice of humming whenever the commander was spotted. Fully expressed this was Maude's Mesopotamian Mid-summer Madness March which was inching its way forward from Kut toward Baghdad. The Army did not fancy another trial against Baghdad's defences which had proved too much for it during the winter. A summer attack seemed even less likely to succeed. Supplies were far too short and the Indian units which covered the desert flank were flayed by sandstorms and suffered heavy losses due to heatstroke. A certain degree of bull-headedness in the 4th Indian Division had forced almost 40% of its effective strength to fall out sick before it had got half way to Baghdad. Something worse happened to the 6th Indian Cavalry Brigade which had to be disbanded on 5 July and absorbed into infantry units after a pointless desert sweep had resulted in the loss of most of the good horses. By this time Maude had learnt a lesson and further desert sweeps were ruled out for the time being. On 5 July, all units were ordered to concentrate close by the river at Aziziyah (7-9.3322) where they could all be sustained more easily.



Figure 2: Maude's Mesopotamian Mid-summer Madness March, 1-5 July 1915.

Having been blocked in his attack in the Çaykara region, Yudenitch was forced to spend several days reorganising his forces. As ever in this terrain, nothing could be achieved instantly, but Yudenitch still preserved some hope that he could break the Turkish lines covering Erzerum that summer. As he said to the rest of the staff, if they couldn't get to Erzerum, it would be due to the lack of munitions for the supplies being sent to the Caucasus were now very irregular.

The Western Front

The success of the Russians was putting pressure on the Western Allies to match their efforts. The French and British press were wondering what secret the Russians possessed that allowed them to break through the Central Powers defences when their own Armies were evidently stalled again after their modest advance in June at Peronne and La Fere.

It was still hard for observers to recognise the different realities of the Western and Eastern Fronts. The Russians had advanced on a broad front of over 250 kilometres but had expended less shell than was typical for a British or French attack on a front barely a sixth as long. The Russians had also only defeated the Austrians whereas the Western Allies were up against the best of the Germans solidly entrenched. In one case improvisation was allowed, in the other only the most careful preparations would suffice.



Figure 3: The central sectors of the Western Front, 1- 5 July 1916.

The Italian Front

It was already some weeks after the conclusion of the 4th Isonzo offensive, but many Italian units which had been heavily involved in that action had yet to receive replacements for their losses. The same could be said of the material stocks at Army level. Neither the 2nd nor 3rd Army considered that they were close to the levels of preparedness they had enjoyed before the start of the offensive. They both refused to commit to any further large offensive before the end of the summer. Cadorna indicated in response that he reserved the right to disagree and they must be prepared for anything.

DM Summary – July 1916

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	1							13	14	1310	Good
Austria-Hungary	5							2	7	562	Shaken
Ottoman	-							-	-	78	Good
Bulgaria	-							-	-	23	Good
Central Powers	6							15	21	1976	
France	-							-	-	768	Good
Great Britain	-							-	-	326	Good
Russia	6							NA	6	798	Shaken
Italy	-							-	-	99	Good
Belgium	-							NA	-	(105)	NA
Serbia	-							NA	-	(39)	NA
Entente	6							-	6	1977	

Player Notes:

CP. June was an extremely bruising month for the CP with heavy losses both east and west. AH is now at Shaken Morale and production has gone through the floor. In addition, Romania will enter the war on Turn 5 of July and more food resources have been lost on AH territory. Germany loans additional food to AH and food deficits for the month are 13 for Germany and two for AH. Air parity remains in place and there is no gas available. July could be a bleak month. Due to losses, both AH and Germany use all production to generate RPLs.

- *East: The Russian offensive had not run out of steam and continued to attack. I finally have German support arriving around Kowel but it will take time to bring them to bear for effect and also to start fortifying AH defences. I launch a single combined attack 20km south of the confluence of the Huczwa and Bug rivers to try and clear the bend and establish the Bug as the line of defence. Germany has also established the Danube HQ and started to move troops and supply in that direction.*
- *Balkans: I start to bolster AH positions with Bulgarian troops to reduce losses to AH in the event of combat. It will be in Robert's interest to launch attacks with his Serbs to cause AH attrition.*
- *West: I send all of my (very few) RPL west and have established nearly two corps of reserves entrained to establish a reaction force. Robert stated it was obvious where he would attack and I should reduce forces in those locations. I think he is playing psychological warfare as he has strong artillery fairly widely dispersed and could seize upon any obvious weakness for an opportunistic strike. I do need to be strong in the most obvious locations but cannot make myself too weak anywhere. There is a balance to be struck.*
- *Caucasus: I lost 2/3rds of a div in his last attack but fortunately the central reserve I established is able to reinforce the brave remnants that held the line.*

- *Mesopotamia: Quiet.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Italy: Quiet; but I fully expect more Italian offensive action as they will be very keen to hammer away at AH forces.*

AP: Things are going better than I expected. I have got across the Bug near Lemberg despite threatening an attack with only 16 SP from which the Austrians performed a cavalry retreat before combat. I actually chose not to put a cavalry unit in my attack in order to give the CP that option.

Generally there are few places where I do not have the initiative at the moment. It is costing me in Iraq where I am suffering some attrition as my force gets reduced to its limit of 18 SP (3 divisions) supplied by my advance river head.

The first German attack in Galicia is a sign that things could turn with a strong German counter-offensive. It exposed the fact that the Russians cannot afford to spend supply points on defence now so they are not as strong as they look. However, that is matched by the bad state of the Austrians who have seen significant falls in their weapon, supply and manpower production as a result of being at Shaken Morale. Also I am not sure the Germans have a strong counter-offensive in them at the moment. There is still more to come from my Western Front offensive which is only paused.

The monthly DM totals since the beginning of the game follow.

Monthly DM (cumulative)

[There are some arithmetical errors in this table derived from the underlying game. They are not large. It is tough not to make small mistakes sometimes, the errors could be + or – 4 each year].

Date	Ger	(Cum)	AH	(Cum)	Ott	(Cum)	Bul	(Cum)	CP	(Cum)	Notes
Aug 1914	147	147	69	69	N	-	N	-	216	216	
Sept 1914	130	277	101	170	N	-	N	-	231	457	
Oct 1914	132	413	11	179	N	-	N	-	143	590	
Nov 1914	92	505	31	210	10	10	N	-	132	724	
Dec 1914	69	574	19	229	1	11	N	-	89	813	
Jan 1915	24	598	7	236	-	11	N	-	31	844	
Feb 1915	46	644	66	302	-	11	N	-	112	957	Increased German support for AH
Mar 1915	54	698	36	338	4	15	N	-	94	1041	
Apr 1915	32	730	9	347	3	18	4	4	48	1089	
May 1915	53	783	10	357	8	26	7	11	78	1157	

Jun 1915	39	822	44	399	9	35	-	11	94	1246	
Jul 1915	36	858	5	404	4	39	1	12	46	1293	
Aug 1915	14	872	9	413	4	43	-	12	27	1320	End Increased German support for AH
Sept 1915	48	920	7	420	6	49	-	12	61	1381	
Oct 1915	38	958	13	433	3	52	2	14	57	1438	
Nov 1915	71	1030	6	439	5	57	1	15	83	1521	
Dec 1915	27	1057	7	446	1	58	-	15	35	1576	
Jan 1916	10	1067	5	451	3	61	-	15	18	1594	
Feb 1916	36	1103	16	467	7	68	1	16	60	1654	
Mar 1916	30	1133	16	483	3	71	1	17	40	1684	
Apr 1916	42	1174	20	503	1	72	3	20	65	1749	Russian Artillery Surprise trigger
May 1916	58	1232	16	519	4	76	1	21	75	1848	
June 1916	64	1296	36	555	2	78	2	23	105	1955	Austrian Shaken Morale

Date	Fra	(Cum)	GB	(Cum)	Rus	(Cum)	Ital	(Cum)	Ent	(Cum)	Note
Aug 1914	171	171	7	7	56	56	N	-	234	234	
Sept 1914	212	383	28	35	89	147	N	-	329	563	
Oct 1914	94	477	10	45	38	185	N	-	142	707	
Nov 1914	43	520	3	48	51	236	N	-	94	804	
Dec 1914	32	552	14	62	37	273	N	-	83	887	
Jan 1915	-	552	1	63	27	300	N	-	28	916	
Feb 1915	14	566	6	70	28	328	N	-	48	964	
Mar 1915	16	582	2	72	48	386	N	-	76	1040	
Apr 1915	1	583	11	83	30	416	N	-	42	1082	

May 1915	19	602*	23	106	110	526	-	-	152	1232*	
Jun 1915	15	621	10	116	56	582	12	12	93	1331	
Jul 1915	16	637	8	124	20	602	5	17	49	1377	Russia Shaken Morale
Aug 1915	-	637	4	128	9	611	2	19	15	1392	
Sept 1915	7	644	37	165	5	616	3	22	52	1444	
Oct 1915	21	665	4	169	27	643	16	38	68	1512	
Nov 1915	6	671	58	227	31	674	10	48	106	1618	
Dec 1915	-	671	4	231	13	687	2	50	19	1639	
Jan 1916	-	671	6	237	25	712	3	53	34	1663	
Feb 1916	2	673	14	251	13	725	5	58	32	1707	
Mar 1916	8	681	1	252	8	733	4	62	21	1720	
Apr 1916	31	712	-	252	26	759	-	62	57	1777	
May 1916	25	737	37	289	3	762	37	99	102	1887	
June 1916	31	768	37	326	29	792	-	99	97	1971	

Date	Bel*	(Cum m)	Ser*	(Cum)	Notes
Aug 1914	70	70	3	3	
Sep 1914	4	74	5	8	
Oct 1914	16	90	1	9	
Nov 1914	5	95	2	11	
Dec 1914	-	95	1	12	
Jan 1915	-	95	-	12	
Feb 1915	-	95	1	13	
Mar 1915	-	95	4	19	
Apr 15	-	95	2	22	

May 1915	-	95	5	27	
Jun 1915	1	96	-	27	
Jul 1915	-	96	1	28	
Aug 1915	-	96	-	28	
Sept 1915	-	96	1	29	
Oct 1915	-	96	-	29	
Nov 1915	-	96	1	30	
Dec 1915	-	96	-	30	
Jan 1916	-	96	-	30	
Feb 1916	4	100	1	31	
Mar 1916	5	105	-	31	
Apr 1916	-	105	3	34	
May 1916	-	105	1	35	
June 1916	-	105	4	39	

*Belgian and Serbia do not suffer DM so these totals are for information, they do not count for anything.