

## **Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game**

**GT168: 28 – 31 July 1916 (7 July).**

### **General Situation**

Almost on its second anniversary the war took a darker turn. The trigger was the harvest in the occupied territories of the East and the Balkans. Food shortages were becoming more widespread and the military authorities were getting impatient with the rural populations and city garrisons were dispersed into the countryside to supervise the collection of the crops. Of course this was interpreted as a plan to illegally seize produce and in any event manipulate price. There was also some truth in the farmers' fears because Hindenburg and Ludendorff had both been outspoken on the food question and they planned to take almost all food distribution into state control and if necessary with military supervision.

Unrest was particularly intense in Northern Serbia and Western Poland. In both places, there was frequent burning of warehouses and other stores. This militant mood was perhaps encouraged by the recent advances of the Serbians and the Russians as some of the resisters and looters expected the occupation to end in the near future. The cities were affected too. With the occupying forces dispersed there were massed demonstrations in Belgrade and Warsaw during the last days of July ostensibly protesting about food prices but also demanding peace. For some days the main railway lines were blocked and now in some places ripped up by the more extreme elements.

### **The Eastern Front**

The contending sides were largely disengaged at the end of July. The Russians had sent forward columns to create an advance guard to probe into Central Poland. They reported that the Germans were not contesting the region. By the end of July the most advanced Russian forces were along a line Mordy - Kock (4-5.2718 -4-5.2720) and Russian cavalry had raided beyond Siedlce (4-5.2618).

The Central Powers did not follow up their attack on the Siret and allowed the Russians to regain some of their positions though they did not always choose to. Both sides were also feeding extra forces into the new Romanian conflict though both were also frustrated by the poor railway communications.

### **The Balkans**

The Romanian invasion of Transylvania and other Hungarian territory was encountering difficulties in late July. The defence of Brasov was placed in the hands of the German 103rd Mountain Division which deterred the Romanians from continuing their direct attacks. However, finding a way around the Central Powers defences was by no means easy and the inexperienced Romanian infantry found it difficult to manoeuvre effectively.

Apart from the thrust at Brasov the Romanian 13th Division had advanced close to Sibiu/Hermannstadt though here too they were firmly blocked by German Mountain troops (130th Division). Even further west the Romanian 11th Division invaded the Mures Valley which was found to be undefended.

The government in Bucharest placed great expectations on the arrival of the Russians and only regretted that they had not had the opportunity to march a Russian Division through the capital to display it to the populace. One early arriving Russian Division (46<sup>th</sup>) was deployed to the Danube

River near Călărași (6-6.2216). This precaution was a reflection of concern about the developing threat to the Dobruja which was considered an outrageous betrayal by the Bulgarians who had scandalously brought a Turkish Division with them.

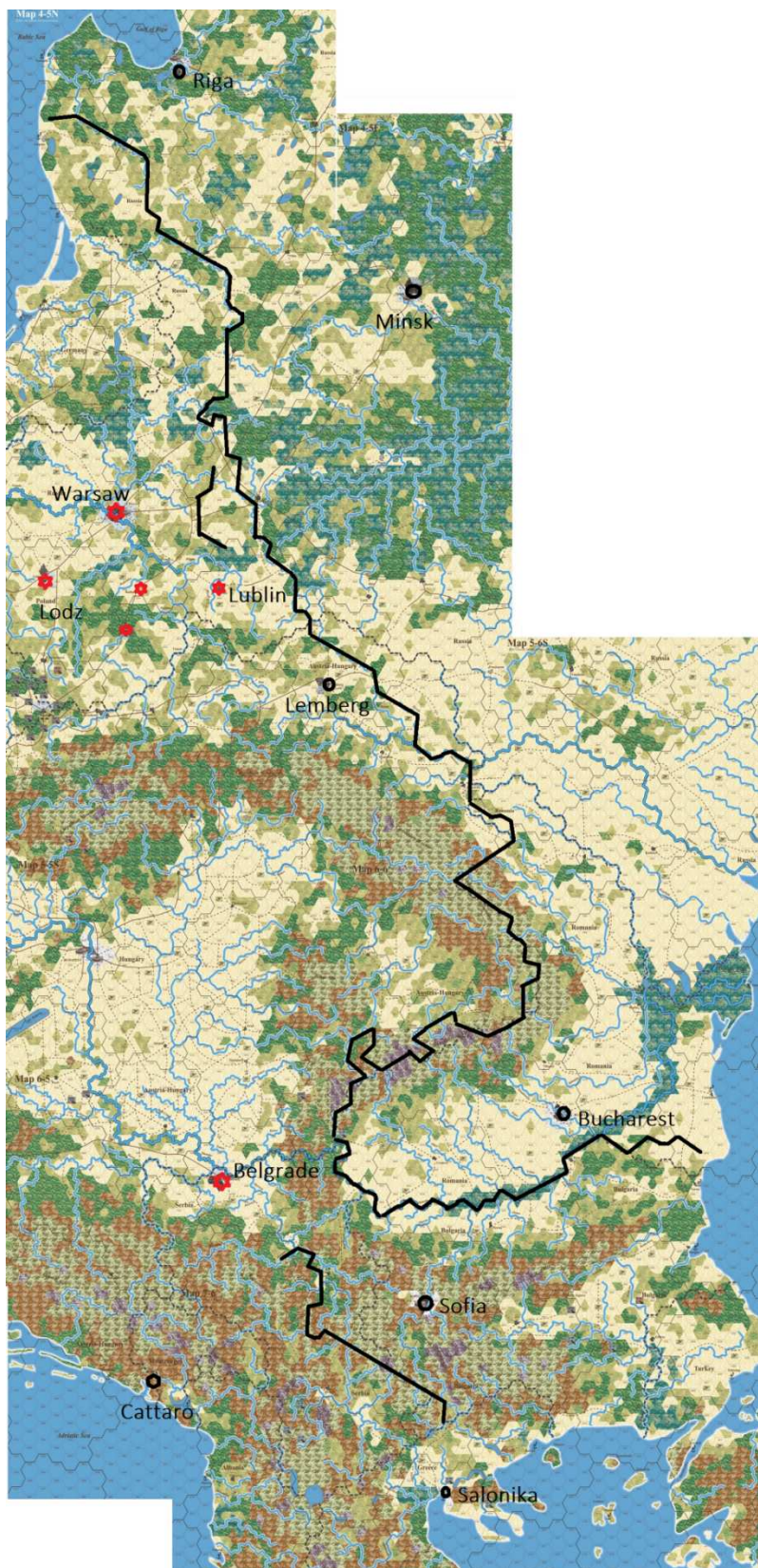


Figure 1: Overview of the Eastern and Balkan Fronts with cities in unrest shown in red, 31 July 1916.

## The Near East

Everything remained very quiet across the whole Near East.

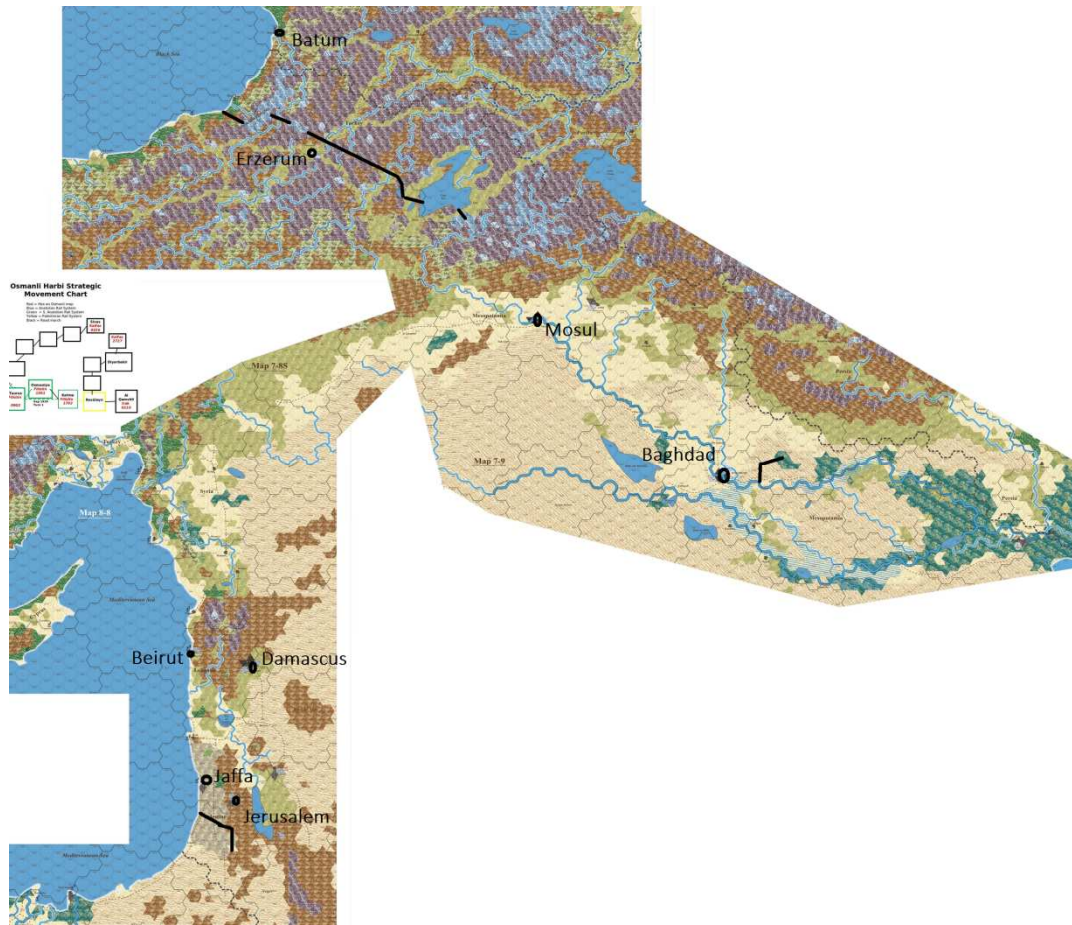


Figure 2: Overview of Near East, 31 July 1916.

## The Western Front

The French attack in Eastern Champagne was over in less than three days. The stand-off between the two sides resumed. Ludendorff did a tour of inspection of the whole Western Front and returned in time to greet Hindenburg for his first arrival at the General Staff headquarters on 29 July.

## The Italian Front

Cadorna began a weeks' leave on 30 July. Austrian intelligence got a report of it and was categorical that this had to be misinformation. The Austrian forces on the Italian Front were ordered to be extra vigilant.



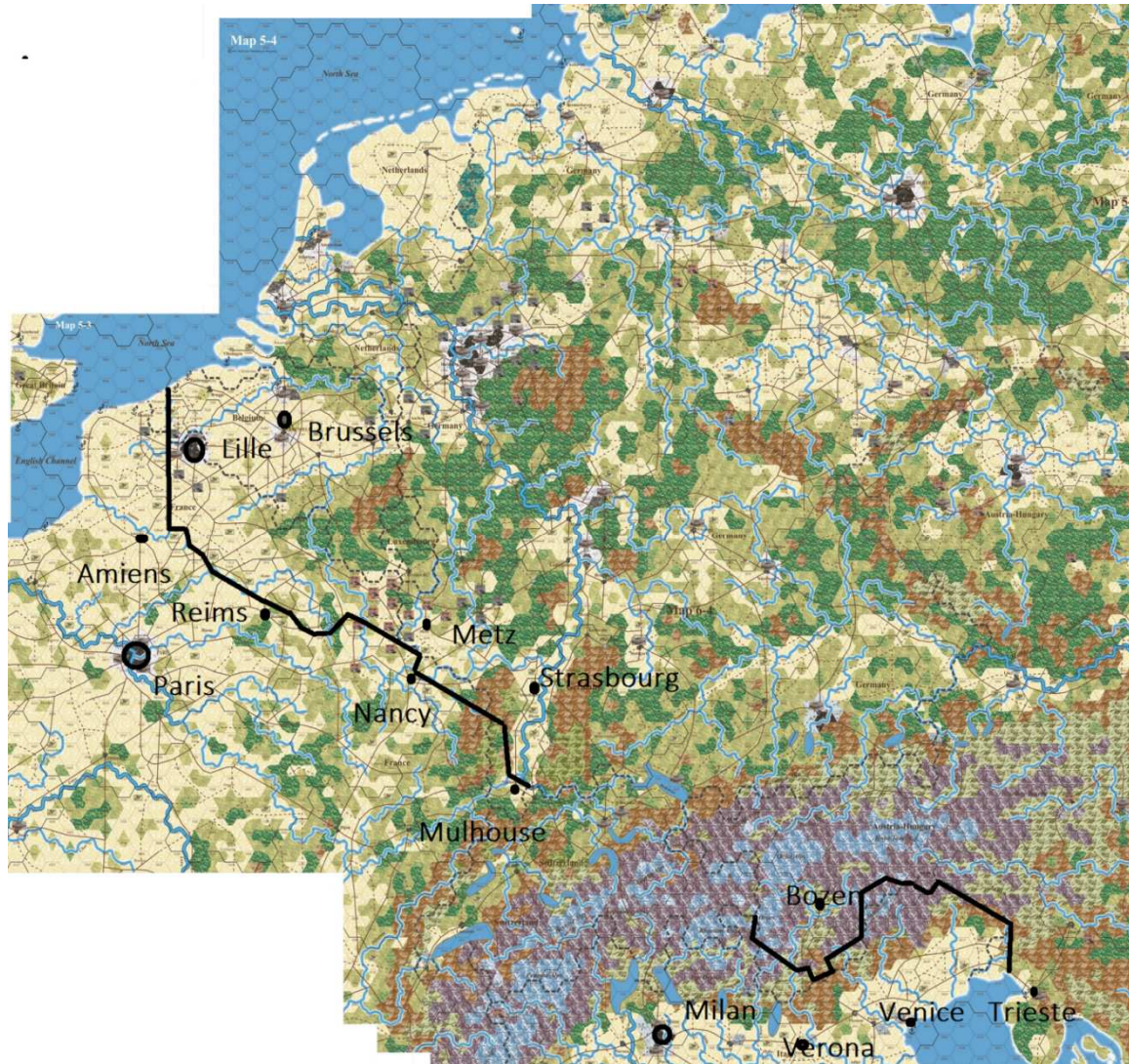


Figure 3: The Western and Italian Fronts, 31 July 1916.

#### Player Notes

- CP: East: I start to straighten my line here again and fall back to a line running through Lemberg with the right flank anchored along the formidable Dniester. A large number of German divisions are moving southwards and some mountain divisions are heading for the Carpathians to help bolster the line there as Romanian troops start to press inwards. They will experience supply difficulties here. I contemplated attacks but have driven the Russians from some of their trenches east of Czernowitz and am now threatening them with strong concentrations within the westernmost portion of Romania. I have vacated Warsaw, Radom, Lublin and Kielce and declared them open cities. I'm hoping this will lower food losses. It is probably a little on the gamey side, but I have left clear routes open to them which are not enclosed by ZOCs. Of course, I know the Russians are far too far off to reach any of these and also, if he did, he would be risking having units isolated and wiped out. I justify this by telling myself these cities are pacified and happy to be free of Russian domination.
- Balkans: I am slowly but steadily restoring the right flank but may need to consider evacuating further gains within Serbia. In fact, as with Warsaw, I have evacuated

*Belgrade and likewise declared it an open city. I will pay no supply penalty as there is an open route into the city for the enemy. This move was motivated more by the requirement of getting those brigades on garrison duties into the fight on my Montenegrin flank.*

- *West: I withstood a very powerful French attack last turn on my 3<sup>rd</sup> Army but got the better with losses of 7:13; although the French rather cruelly used a Russian brigade to lead the assault. It would seem it is definitely a defender's game on the WF; as I experienced all too well myself during my failed offensives earlier.*
- *Caucasus: Some limited manoeuvre but nothing significant.*
- *Mesopotamia: Quiet.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Italy: Quiet.*

#### DM Summary – July 1916

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total [%SM]	Morale
<b>Germany</b>	1	8	10	1	5	9	-	13	47	1343 [83.9]	Good
<b>Austria-Hungary</b>	5	4	-	1	2	1	-	2	15	570 [103.6]	Shaken
<b>Ottoman</b>	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	80 [22.9]	Good
<b>Bulgaria</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	Good
<b>Central Powers</b>	6	14	10	2	7	10	-	15	64	2019	
<b>France</b>	-	6	4	-	-	12	-	-	22	790 [87.8]	Good
<b>Great Britain</b>	-	12	15	-	-	-	-	-	27	353 [27.7]	Good
<b>Russia</b>	6	*5	**3	\$6	%4	4	-	NA	28	820 [136.7]	Shaken – *Kovno and Leipaja recaptured **Grodno recaptured \$ Brest recaptured % Bialystok recaptured
<b>Italy</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	99 [33.0]	Good
<b>Romania</b>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	2	
<b>Belgium</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	(105)	NA
<b>Serbia</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	(39)	NA
<b>Entente</b>	6	23	22	6	4	18	-	-	79	2050	

*AP: Two whole years of this game are now completed!*

*This was a quiet turn. My thinking is the CP needs a bit of time to redeploy and get into position where it can start to turn the tables on the various challenges I have generated in the East and the Balkans. My position is very fragile and the right sort of counter thrust at the right place and time will bring to an end my favourable period.*

*Remarkably my Russians have little more DM to play with than the Romanians so somehow I will have to try and push the latter to the fore.*

*I am quiet mainly because of Russian morale and supply, limited opportunity for the Romanians, with the Serbians lack of punch. In the Near East the different fronts are suffering from competition for supply resources in which they are currently losing out to the European Fronts. I am also debating holding up action in the Near East until the summer is over but I may be too impatient for that.*

*I still have offensive potential in the West and Italy but it would be better if I could accumulate more supplies. Also by holding off I make the dilemmas of CP redeployment more difficult. It is better for me to attack just after troops have been withdrawn to go east.*

*There is a big rule question striking us at the moment concerning garrisons. I will not comment at length but I do not agree with the "open city" declaration in various respects.*