

## Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT169: 1 – 5 August 1916 (1 August)

### General Situation

As the war moved into its third year the end seemed as distant as ever. The rioting and crop burning that had spread across the East and parts of the Balkans in late July died down rapidly as the Central Powers swiftly reasserted control. There had been many arrests and sometimes the whole male population of a village had been rounded up. The times were not gentle and insurgents could not expect much mercy. It was true that lawyers were quickly arguing the rights and wrongs of the laws of occupation which had been little defined by history and was subject to many ambiguities. However, the niceties of Section 20-7 in the German Military Code was not going to help those who had been accused of burning barns still less those who had actually been caught doing such things.

### The Eastern Front

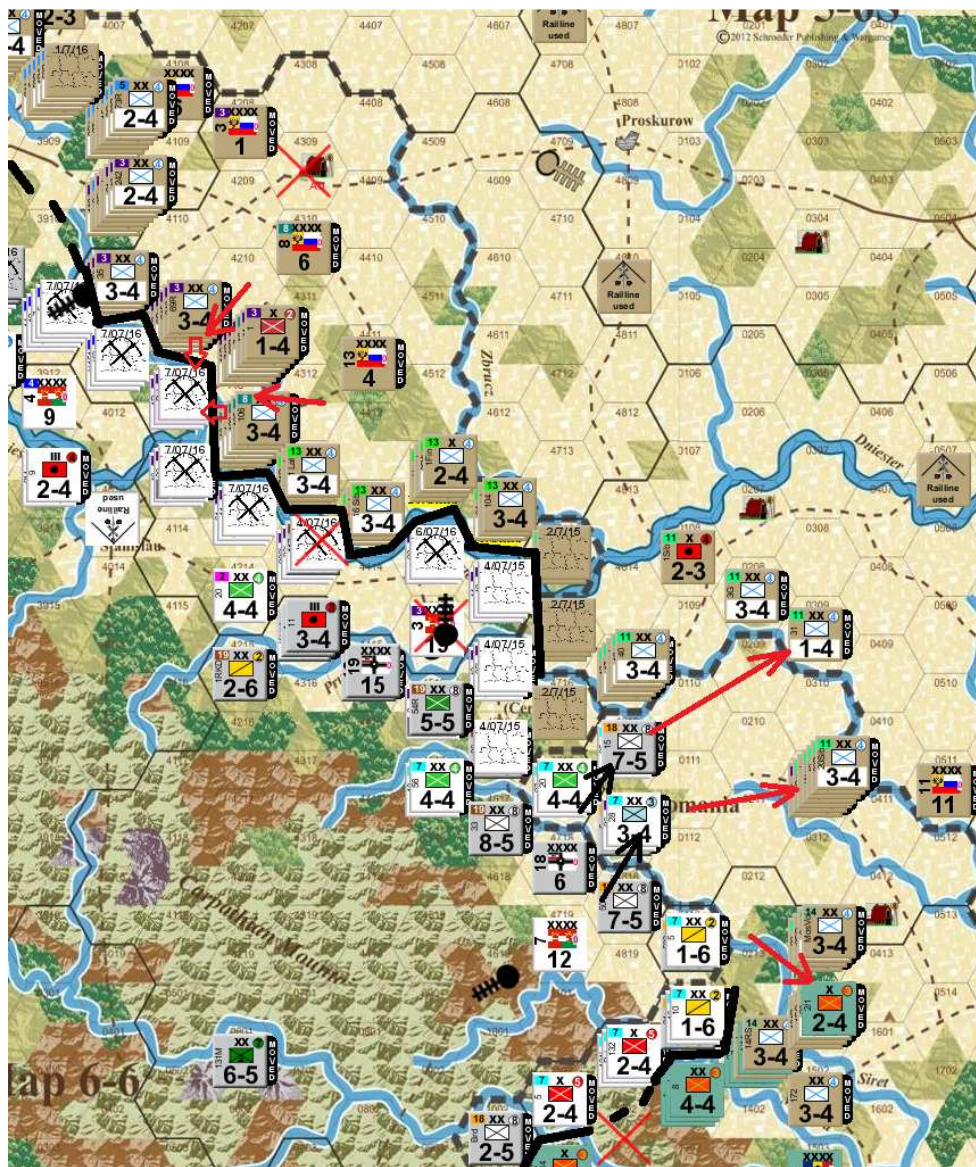


Figure 1: Offensive action along the Siret and Strypa sectors, 1-5 August 1916.



After a short pause, the Central Powers commenced fresh action along the Siret River. As a preliminary to this the head of the map section of the German Danube Army was dismissed from his post and sent to join the infantry. The whole Army was redesignated 18th Army on 1 August. On the same date, the Sud Army became the German 19th Army.

On 1 - 2 August, the 19th Army supported by the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army forced the Russians back from Ibănești (5-5.4816) and pivoted north to put pressure on Russian forces which were giving up ground along the Prut River east of Czernowitz. With the Central Powers well established across the Siret the Russian 11th Army began a more general retreat towards the Prut showing little inclination to die defending the northern extremity of Romania. Since the Russian Women's Division was caught up in this retreat, and this fact was gleefully picked up by military conservatives everywhere, the cause of female equality in combat units suffered a set-back at the very start.

A feature of this offensive was the very close cooperation between the Germans and Austro-Hungarians which had previously never been much in evidence. Now, however, most Austrian commanders were willing to accept their great dependence on their allies and the idea of an Austrian sphere of influence was being forgotten. In any event, it was increasingly clear that the Hapsburg soldiers were no longer keen to go into action unless it was plain that the operation benefitted from German planning and a German spearhead.

Sometimes the Austro-Hungarians were not given that support. One instance was in the Russian advance to the Strypa River between 3 - 5 August. This was carried out mainly by the Russian 3rd and 8th Armies and was a final thrust of the Russian summer offensive. The Austrian Polish Legion held part of the river line and by coincidence the Russians threw in their own Polish brigade along the same part of the front. The madness of Pole fighting Pole in different uniforms was obvious but it didn't prevent the two parties from destroying each other.

## The Balkans

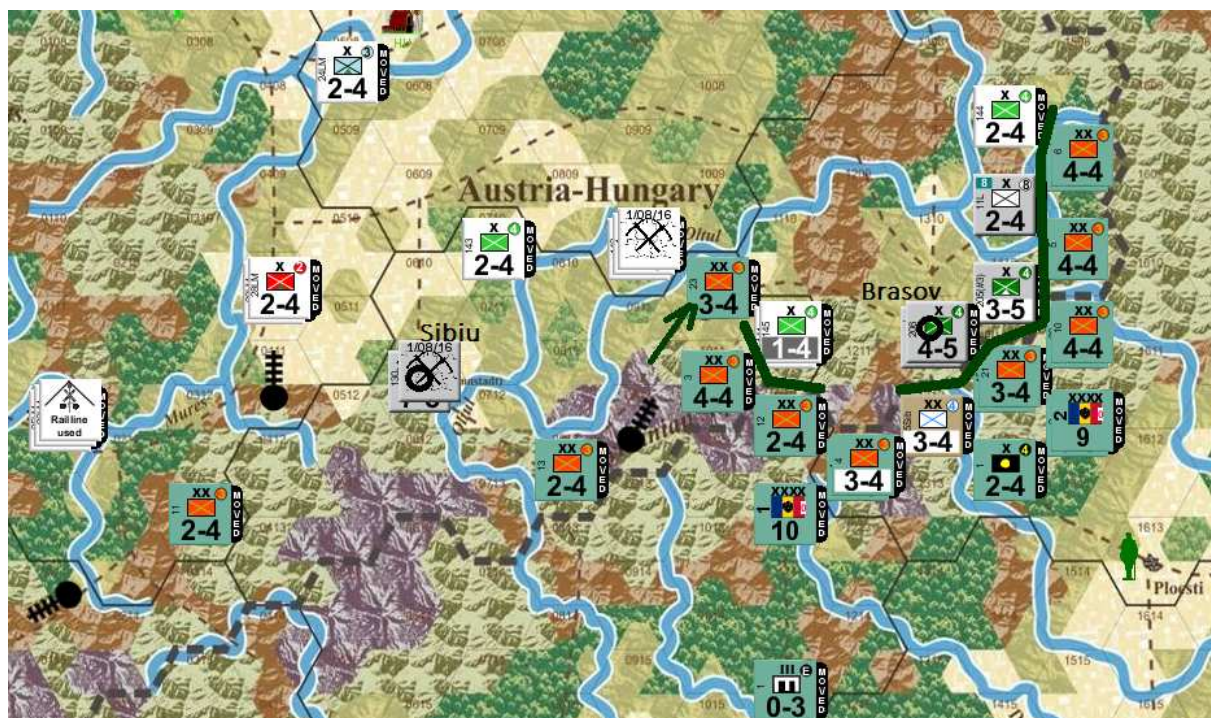


Figure 2: The Transylvanian front, 1 - 5 August 1916.

By 3 August it was becoming apparent that the Romanian advance into Transylvania was not going to achieve very much. The defending Austrian and German forces were growing a bit thicker on the ground and most of the Romanian moves had been blocked by these defenders and by the terrain itself which was able to defeat Romanian plans without further assistance. Nevertheless, there were still threatening moves going on to the west of Brasov where the Romanians had reached easier terrain. The German mountain troops could not yet regard the situation with total complacency.

The Serbo-Montenegrin thrust towards Nish and the Belgrade-Sofia railway had also reached its limits. The railway was broken between Žitkovac and Stublina (6-5.2212) but the railway traffic still had an alternative route through the Nisava Valley. The Serbian advance further north was blocked by the arrival of the Austrian garrison of Belgrade. Their comfortable responsibility of giving custom to the cafés of that old city was now thoroughly terminated.

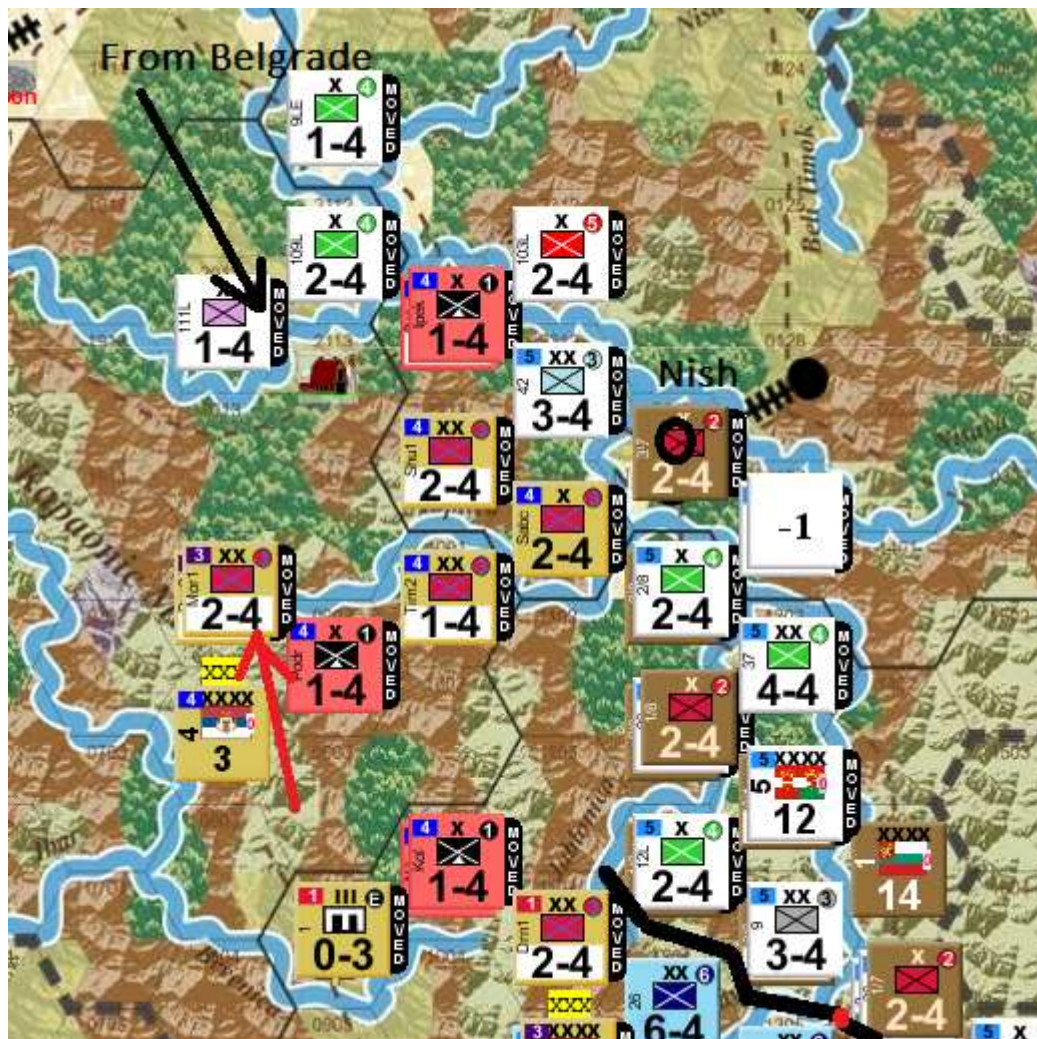


Figure 3: The Montenegrins astride the Nish - Belgrade railway, 1 - 5 August 1916.

### The Near East

There were some signs that the campaigns in the Near East would begin again. The Westerners in the British military elite had lost some of their persuasiveness as the results of the summer offensive in France had shown how far away victory might be. Gallipoli was not such a fresh memory and Murray and Maude were pleading for resources and not without some success. In India, the 11th



Division departed from Bombay heading for Basra on 3 August demonstrating that the sub-continent's military power was not exhausted.

At Murray's headquarters there was a debate on when the attack on the Jaffa - Jerusalem line should begin. The newly arrived commander of the 18th Artillery Regiment suggested that they should wait until supplies of the new CRT high explosive were available. On enquiries it was discovered that this wouldn't be until 1917. The rough speaking Australian commander of the ANZAC Corps pointed out that his men had never needed better ammunition to deal with "critters" and he predicted that CRT would make little difference in Palestine.

Yudenitch had also made a plea for support and he cited intelligence which suggested that the Turks were either planning an attack or preparing to send troops away to other fronts. He argued that the arrival of Turkish forces on the Eastern Front would be the consequence of his prolonged inactivity. Surprisingly, the Tsar gave in to this pleading despite the critical situation on the main front. However, it was unlikely that whatever the Tsar might send could really transform the stalemate in the Caucasus.

### **The Western Front**

The German Air Service had held their own against the Allied Air Forces during the early summer but by the beginning of August the French were producing in large numbers the Nieuport 66 which was a significant step ahead of German aircraft of the period. It was said that when German flyers saw the "Double Sixes" rolled out on French airstrips they kept well out of the nearby airspace.

### **The Italian Front**

On the Austrian side of the Italian front there were rumours that the Germans were coming to help save them. Although Boroević had his defences in good shape he was wise enough to welcome the possibility of further aid from allies. The Italians were clearly preparing for further action but it was not known when or where the next blow would fall.

### **Player Notes**

*CP: I made several monumental moves at the end of July by evacuating Belgrade, Warsaw, Kielce, Lublin, Radom and Lodz. The outcome is that AH pays no food penalty and Germany's reduces to 3DM; a massive difference. My reading of this is that it sits within the rules. The Russians are not far off and I have vacated these cities and declared them open to prevent fighting within them. By ensuring there are ZOC free corridors that the enemy could use to get to them, I place them outside my own front lines which have all re-adjusted to place these cities beyond the front. In NATO parlance, we refer to positioning of friendly forces as the FLOT (forward line of own troops). This determines the frontline for own troops, not the location of the enemy forces. What lies between is No Man's Land. I therefore would argue that Rule 20-4 does not cause the penalty of supply costs nor rail track being ripped up. The rules on this I would argue need quite a bit of review as they are too vague. What I am doing is arguably a bit gamey; but then I can make a strong case that it is realistic. I have suggested that if I opt to not pay the supply cost for not garrisoning these personnel centres, then it is fair for the rail to be ripped up. If I do, I consider it payment to local militias to police their own infrastructure and maintain the rail lines. I think this is a fair option and would be interested in the thoughts of others. Addressing the national food shortages at this critical stage of the war would seem a strategic imperative and thus justify the "liberation" of cities in previously occupied territory.*

- *East: Until there is some resolution to the garrison question and the interpretation of whether they are in the front lines or not, I move some garrison troops back into most of the cities evacuated. A lot of rail is used moving troops to the Carpathians and I have also started to rail German troops to support the Italian front defences. Most points along the AH line are now reinforced with Germans and the CP is taking the offensive along the Romanian front. Given the growing strength of German forces I have re-designated the Danube and Sud armies as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> respectively. The 18<sup>th</sup> Army launches a combined attack onto the Russian 11<sup>th</sup> Army in Romania. I hope to make the Russian presence here untenable and drive a wedge between them and their Romanian allies. Further south, I have reinforced and strengthened the defences around Sibiu and Brasov in Transylvania, which is where the Romanian threat was greatest. I have quite a few German Mt Divs in the region now and more en route.*
- *Balkans: I believe I have no stabilised the open flank here although it required me to vacate Belgrade. There is now a small risk to the Montenegrins of being isolated NW of Nish.*
- *West: This turn is purely about getting supply and RPLs to the front. It will be a tough month given the overwhelming allied air superiority. I have also started to move siege guns eastwards to help deal with Romanian fortifications should they start to become feasible targets.*
- *Caucasus: Quiet.*
- *Mesopotamia: Quiet.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Italy: I am expecting some significant Italian offensive activity this month so have started to rail some German Mt Divs to support the AH troops here.*

#### DM Summary – August 1916

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total [%SM]	Morale
Germany	1							9	10	1353	Good
Austria-Hungary	3							-	3	573	Shaken
Ottoman	-							-	-	80	Good
Bulgaria	-							-	-	23	Good
Central Powers	4							-	13	2032	
France	-							-	-	790	Good
Great Britain	-							-	-	353	Good
Russia	3							-	3	823	Shaken
Italy	-							-	-	99	Good
Romania	-							-	-	2	
Belgium	-							NA	-	(105)	NA
Serbia	-							NA	-	(39)	NA
Entente	3							-	3	2053	

AP: I perceive difficulty in inflicting much loss on the Austrians in the next few months. This was why I took the opportunity of attacking a purely Austrian stack at the corner of the Strypa River and in doing so I used 12 Russian supply points, nearly one month's production.

The controversy of the turn is really the manner in which the CP "abandoned" certain occupied cities apparently to avoid food deficit. This now is serious for the CP as by my calculation the deficit is this month Germany 13 and AH 8. The reason for this emergency is Romania declaring war (4 food deficit) added and my invasion of Galicia which adds 5 to the food deficit. That worsens it by 9 compared to last month. However The CP has engineered a surplus of 10 from Poland and 2 from Serbia by declaring open cities. I have some sympathy with the plight of the CP in this but I believe the proper response should be to drive me out of Galicia and Romania as quickly as possible.

I have nevertheless conceded 9 DM for August and I am hoping that the CP will realise things are not so bad in the next few turns and reconsider this tactic. Below is a table tracking Food Deficit month by month since the beginning of the game showing where food was being gained and lost. Up to now AH has only lost 32 DM to food deficit but that is because the Romanian surplus could be assigned to them. This is no longer possible while Romania is hostile.

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	CP Gains	AP Gains
Oct 14	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>	France, Poland	Prussia, Galicia
Nov 14	9	5	NA	-	<b>14</b>		Artois
Dec 14	10	6	NA	-	<b>16</b>	Artois	Poland
Jan 15	9	5	NA	-	<b>14</b>	Serbia	
Feb 15	15	-	NA	-	<b>15</b>		
Mar 15	15	-	NA	-	<b>15</b>		Alsace
Apr 15	15	-	NA	-	<b>15</b>		
May 15	11	-	NA	-	<b>11</b>	Poland, Prussia, Galicia.	
Jun 15	8	5	NA	-	<b>13</b>		
Jul 15	12	-	NA	-	<b>12</b>		
Aug 15	11	1	NA	-	<b>12</b>		
Sept 15	12	-	NA	-	<b>12</b>		
Oct 15	12	-	NA	-	<b>12</b>		
Nov 15	11	1	NA	-	<b>12</b>		
Dec 15	11	1	NA	-	<b>12</b>		
Jan 16	11	1	NA	-	<b>12</b>		

Feb 16	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>		France
Mar 16	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>		
Apr 16	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>		
May 16	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>		
Jun 16	12	1	NA	-	<b>13</b>		
Jul 16	13	2	NA	-	<b>13</b>		Galicia
Aug 16	9 (13)	- (8)	NA	-	<b>9</b> <b>23</b>	Open Cities	Galicia Romania