



For a game on an age of military master plans it is fitting for a player of *PATHS OF GLORY* to devise his own—especially when none of the historical ones worked, a fact that the gaming experience will confirm.

The CP player who attempts the Von Schlieffen Plan has little chance of winning the game against a competent opponent: six and a half German armies are too few to accomplish a victory on the Western Front against what amounts to nine Allied armies. No, in order to win in the Basic Scenario the CP player must look elsewhere—to the East.

The Basic Scenario is anything but basic. Psychologically, it is the most realistic, as it accurately portrays the mindsets of the participants at the start of the war. Each expected to win a short, sharp contest that would be "over by Christmas." The Basic Scenario allows the players to focus on achieving this unhindered by long-term considerations, while using all the normal game mechanisms. It is not a simplified game; instead it is a short but complex one. Expertise in this scenario will point the way to victory in the longer scenarios and, ironically, make them shorter.

In order to win the Basic Scenario, the CP player must shift the victory marker to 14 or better by the end of the game. The Von Hulston Plan proposes that this is best accomplished by defending in the West while attacking in the East. The minimum aim is to capture Belgrade, Lodz and Warsaw and then play the REICHSTAG TRUCE event while not conceding any victory points to the Allied player.

Card Considerations

Before I detail the opening moves of the plan, it will be useful to

consider the CP player's Mobilization cards. THE GUNS OF AUGUST must never be played as an event although it can be pre-selected prior to play to ensure that the CP player has a useable 3 Ops card for the opening move. Using it as an event allows the Allied player to subtract a VP with the RAPE OF BELGIUM event—cheap propaganda that the CP player can do without. Card 14 must be played as an event in the second turn if possible as the Austrian Seventh Army will be needed to polish off the Serbs and/ or help against the Russians. Card 7 or 12 must also be played as an event in turn 1, preferably the Tenth Army because of its two extra corps. Place the army in Breslau for use against Russia. Playing the remaining CP Reinforcement card in turn 3 at Breslau will usually be enough to settle matters in the east. OBEROST must be played as an event, and the sooner the better. Doing so removes German restrictions in the East and ties down Russian units that might otherwise be switched against Austro-Hungarian forces. The REICHSTAG TRUCE must be retained until turn 3 to receive the VP. If the CP player has conducted a particularly successful campaign, it might not be needed as an event, in which case it is a useful 4 Ops card at the climax of the game. LANDSWEHR must be retained for use as an event in order to shore up the western defences where a determined Allied offensive can be expected.

RACE TO THE SEA and FALKENHAYN must never be played as events because the CP intends to defend in the West. As such, reaching the coast or stacking in France is unimportant. Besides, Card 9 is best preserved for replacement purposes or for a particularly aggressive opening move. Similarly, given the short duration of the Basic Scenario it is better to not play SUD ARMY as an event. In any case, any spare

German corps is best used assisting the two or three German armies operating in the East.

The ENTRENCH event enables German units on the Western Front to dig in, making it easier to survive an Allied offensive there. However, entrenching in the West costs valuable Ops which are needed for mobile actions in the East where the Russians will be able to dig in themselves. Playing this card as an event also wastes a decent Ops / Replacements card and gives the Allied player a "free" event, allowing him to entrench, too. From the CP perspective, then, it is better to not play this card as an event. Let the Allied player do so if he wishes, giving the CP player the "free" event.

The deal might stick a player with several cards that he has been advised to retain for a later specific use. If so, keep the cards and play a free 1 Ops action instead. Doing otherwise compromises the integrity of the plan.

Eastern Focus

In order to conduct an effective offensive in the East, the CP player cannot afford to waste many Ops in the West. Initially the only German attacks in the West should be mandated ones, preferably against weak targets such as Sedan or Belfort. The Seventh Army can attack Belfort with impunity until the latter is reinforced with an army. The main aim in the West is to hold the line, retain possession of German victory spaces, and make no effort to capture any allied ones except those which come gift wrapped after a disastrous Allied attack. If necessary, shorten the line by redeploying the Seventh Army to Strasbourg or Metz (which is likely to come under pressure).

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Central Powers Play: PATHS OF GLORY

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On the Eastern Front, you start with only one German army in a dangerously exposed position, and it is hamstrung by being unable to attack Russian fort spaces. Lemberg and Czernowitz are vulnerable and Russian armies have the edge over Austrian when reduced. Typically, while the CP player is concentrating on a western offensive, the Russians make more than a nuisance of themselves in the East, effortlessly capturing Lemberg / Czernowitz and even threatening a German VP space or two (the drawn historical result). Fortunately for the CP player, the Russians are less of a menace when actively targeted with enough Ops. German armies outmatch Russian. Advancing Russian units can be put OOS. Russian reinforcements take longer to reach the central front than CP ones. There are more Russian VP spaces to defend than can be adequately defended against a determined attack.

Opening Moves

The opening move of the campaign is important and requires some consideration. As stated, the CP player's minimum task is to capture Belgrade, Lodz and Warsaw. It is possible to capture Lodz and Belgrade on the first turn by using a 3 Ops card to move the German Eighth Army and its corps to Lodz while the Fifth Army and the Timisvar corps attacks Belgrade (with a flank attack option). This is my favored opening, as it gets the German army out of immediate danger and wastes no time going about the capture of Belgrade. The latter is important due to its VP and because it generally frees an Austrian army or two (reduced or not) for use against the Russians. Delaying the attack on Belgrade enables the Allied player to attack, and usually eliminate, the Timisvar corps with the Serbian First Army, removing the CP player's advantage in this sector.

Unfortunately, this opening move allows the Russian Third and Eighth Armies to combine against the Austrian Third, which, if done

in a successful flank attack, can do serious damage. Alternatively, the Russian Eighth can attack and eliminate the Czernowitz corps. To prevent this an alternative CP opening is for the Austrian Third and the Czernowitz corps to preemptively attack the Russian Eighth (with a flank option). An even bolder stroke is to play the FALKENHAYN for 4 Ops to simultaneously attack Belgrade and the Russian Eighth. It is a high risk/ high reward ploy but, even if successful, still leaves the German Eighth vulnerable to a flank attack with a good chance of being reduced (admittedly in exchange for a complete Russian army— perhaps, something that will give the Allied player pause for thought). Naturally, these are CP concerns. The Allied player will have his own plans and worries and might well scoff at the idea of wasting an Ops to attack a corps in Timisvar. Such innocence promotes the CP player's cause.

Follow Through

There are too many possibilities even after the first move to do anything other than paint broad brushstrokes. Ideally, at the end of the first turn, the CP player will control Lodz and Belgrade (Warsaw could also be in the bag, though unlikely). Capturing Belgrade is not enough— eliminate both Serb armies regardless of the attrition involved. If Belgrade is still uncaptured by turn 2, deploy the newly-recruited Austrian Seventh Army to complete the job. The corps at Villach can also help. Recruit the German Ninth or Tenth at Breslau and secure Warsaw. It can be worth taking the time to beef this army up with two corps deployed from the reserve box. These are useful for absorbing losses, outflanking, cutting enemy supply lines and protecting CP lines in the wide-open spaces of Russia. In general the second turn is likely to be fairly quiet, with both players playing reinforcements and other events half of the time. By turn 3, with the capture of Belgrade, Lodz and Warsaw consolidated, attempt to recapture any CP victory spaces under Allied control before setting about de-

stroying as many Russian units as possible with the ultimate aim of capturing yet more Russian victory spaces. Keep the offensive going to offset possible losses in the West and to prevent a Russian recovery. Try to avoid getting distracted by western developments.

The Expected Response

The CP player can expect some sort of Allied response to his eastern offensive. This can take one of three forms: a sustained western offensive, Russian countermoves in the East or a mixture of both. The latter option is probably the weakest because it is likely to fall between two stools with insufficient Ops being allocated to either front to be effective. Aggressive Russian countermoves could backfire, because any attempt to retake Lodz and Warsaw or capture a German victory space could witness whole Russian armies eliminated OOS and the subsequent fall of other Russian victory spaces. On the other hand, relinquishing Poland to create an adequate defensive line will result in defeat—the CP player already having his 14 VPs (including the REICHSTAG TRUCE). Some form of Allied offensive is necessary to save the game. It is best conducted in the West where the French and British can batter away at the German line and hope to capture one or more German victory spaces. The German player cannot afford to ignore an Allied offensive in the West. Rather than counterattacking and allowing the Allied player to dictate strategy, it is best to plug away in the East where a lack of Russian Ops will make the pickings easier. Play the LANDSWEHR when essential and do not overlook a replacements card. Yet, fundamentally, the CP player should stay focused on the Eastern Front.

The many variables in *PATHS OF GLORY* can spike the best laid plans: the lack of a card, a poor die roll, a withdrawal, PLEVE, PUTNIK and so on. The Von Hulston Plan cannot guarantee a CP victory, but should prevent a CP defeat.

