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The World War

1914 to 1918

On behalf of the

Reich Ministry of War

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and Army History

\*

The Military Operations on Land

Tenth Volume

Published by E. S. Mittler & Son

Berlin in the year 1936

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The Operations of the Year 1916

up to the Change in the Supreme Army Command

With forty-five Maps

and Sketches

EME

Published by E. S. Mittler & Son

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Introduction to the Tenth Volume.

After the dissolution of the Great General Staff, whose military history departments were incorporated into the Reich Archive, the task of publishing the official work on the World War fell to it. The editing was in the hands of the Historical Department, from which the Research Institute for Military and Army History was newly formed on April 1, 1935. This institute continues the work, beginning with the present volume, on behalf of the Reich Ministry of War.

The volume covers the events of the year 1916 on all war fronts up to the resignation of General von Falkenhayn. A particularly broad space has been allocated to the description of the battles at Verdun, because the unusual difficulties and the nature of that struggle, which was particularly significant for the progress of the war, only come to light when the details of the tactical conduct of the battle are presented.

Special thanks for willing and valuable support are also expressed here to the War Archive in Vienna and the Historical Section, Committee of Imperial Defence in London.

Page: X keyno: 004

Table of Contents.

VIII. The Eastern Front until the End of August

A. The Russian March Offensive

1. The Front of the Central Powers until Mid-March . 424

2. The Russians' Attack Preparations . . 428

3. The Defensive Battle at the Front of the Supreme

Commander East . . . . . . . . . . . . 433

B. The Brusilov Offensive until the End of July

1. Until the Beginning of the Attack

a) The Development of the Situation until Early June . . . . . . 439

b) New Russian Attack Plans, End of March until Early June 445

2. The Battles until June 23

a) The Defense at the Austro-Hungarian Front until

June 7 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 450

b) Conference of the General Staff Chiefs in Berlin and the Battles

on June 8 and 9 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 458

c) Events until June 15 and Deployment of the Attack

Group Koevel . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 463

d) The Russian Leadership from June 4 to 16 . . . . . . 469

e) The Counter-attack of Army Group Linsingen from June 16 to

23 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 473

f) Events at the Adjacent Fronts . . . . . . . . . 479

3. The Allied Army Commands from June 10 to

23 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 481

4. Shift of the Focus of Russian

Operations to the South

a) The Russian Leadership from June 13 to 24 . . . . . . 494

b) Conclusion of the Attack of Army Group Linsingen, June 24

to July 18 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 497

Observations . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 506

c) New Setbacks on the Southern Wing of the Austro-Hungarian

Front and Formation of Army Group Archduke

Karl, June 24 to July 15 . . . . . . . . . . . 508

d) Progress of the Battles at the Austro-Hungarian Front

until July 27 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 514

C. The German Part of the Eastern Front in June and July . . . . . . . 516

D. Reorganization of the Entire Front against Russia

1. Until the Conference in Berlin on July 18 . . . 523

2. Until the Conclusion of Negotiations on

July 27 in Pleß . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 529

3. Transfer of Command to Field Marshal

von Hindenburg and Friction with the Supreme

Army Command . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 533

Page: XI keyno: 005

Table of Contents.

Page

E. Final Relocation of the Russian Center of Gravity to the Southwestern Front

1. Intentions of the Russian Leadership . . . . . . . 538

2. The Battles from July 28 to August 6

a) The Defensive Battle at Kovel . . . . . . . . . . . . 540

b) The Defensive Battles of the 3rd and 2nd Army and Army Group

Archduke Karl . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 546

3. The Battles from August 7 to 28

a) New Plans of the Russian Leadership . . . . . . . . . . 549

b) The Defense of Army Group Archduke Karl . . . . . 550

c) The Defense at the Front of the Supreme Commander East and

his Disputes with the Supreme Army Command . 554

F. Questions of Overall Command of the Eastern War in August . . . . . 558

G. Observations . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 564

IX. The Front Against Italy

A. Events until Mid-March . . . . . . . . . . . . . 568

B. The Battles until Mid-July

1. The Austro-Hungarian Breakthrough

Attack in Tyrol

a) The Preparation Period . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 571

Attack Plan and Deployment of Army Group Archduke

Eugen . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 573

b) The Execution of the Attack

The Battle at Vielgereuth and Lafraun . . . . . 577

The Battle at Asifero and Asiago . . . . . . . . 578

c) Italian Countermeasures

The Defense . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 583

The Counter-offensive . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 586

d) Observations . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 588

2. Events at the Remaining Front . . . . . . 590

C. The Sixth Battle of the Isonzo from August 4 to 16

1. Decision and Attack Plan . . . . . . . . . 591

2. Course . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 593

X. The Events in the Balkans and at the Front of

Turkey

A. The Development of the Situation in the Balkans . . . . . . . . . . . 596

B. The War of Turkey . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 603

Page: XII keyno: 006

Table of Contents.

XI. Further Development in Other Areas of

Warfare

1. Political Situation and Prospects for Peace . . . . 617

2. The War at Sea and in the Colonies . . . . 618

3. The Air War . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 621

4. Railways . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 625

5. Army Replacement Situation and its Supply

with Weapons and Ammunition . . . . . . . . . . 626

Food Supply Situation . . . . . . . . . . . . . 631

XII. The Resignation of General von Falkenhayn . . . . 634

XIII. Review of General von Falkenhayn's

Warfare Leadership

A. Autumn 1914 and the Year 1915 . . . . . . . . . . 646

B. The Year 1916 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 662

Bibliography . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 678

Index of Persons . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 682

Index of Military Units . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 692

Appendices.

1. German and Enemy Artillery at Verdun and on the Somme 1916.

2. On the Attack on Verdun.

3. On the Battle of the Somme 1916.

4. Overview of the War Year 1916 until the End of August.

Page: XIII keyno: 007

Table of Contents.

Maps and Sketches.

A. Military Command.

Map 1: The Battlefields of the Central Powers End of August 1916. 1:10,200,000.

Map 1a: The Power Grouping End of August 1916.

B. West.

Map 2: The Front against France. Status on February 21, 1916. 1:1,000,000.

Map 3: Verdun 1916. 1:80,000.

Sketch 1: Verdun-East. The situation on February 21.

Sketch 2: Verdun-East. Artillery deployment of sections A, B, and C on February 21.

Sketch 3 and 4: Verdun-East. The situation on February 22. The situation on February 23.

Sketch 5: Verdun-East. The situation on February 24.

Sketch 6: Verdun-East. The situation on February 25.

Sketch 7: Verdun-East. The situation on February 26.

Sketch 8: Verdun-East. Attack of the V. R. R. and XV. A. K. from February 25 to March 10. 1:80,000.

Sketch 9: Verdun-East. The attack of the right wing of the A. K. Stranz from February 25 to March 8. 1:80,000.

Sketch 10: Verdun-East. Distribution of attacking forces between the Maas and Damloup from March 2 to April 15.

Sketch 11: Verdun-East. The situation from April 16 to May 27.

Sketch 12: Verdun-East. The situation from May 29 to July 12.

Sketch 13: Verdun-East. First Green Cross shooting on the night of June 22/23.

Sketch 14: Verdun-East. The situation from July 24 to August 28.

Sketch 15: Verdun-West. The battles from March 6 to 30.

Sketch 16: Verdun-West. The battles in April.

Sketch 17: Verdun-West. The battles in May.

Map 4: The Front against France. Status on July 1, 1916, morning. 1:1,000,000.

Map 5: Somme. The situation on July 1, 1916. 1:80,000.

Sketch 18: Somme. The situation on July 5 and 8.

Sketch 19: Somme. The situation on July 14 and 31.

Sketch 20: Somme. The situation on July 19.

Sketch 21 and 22: Somme. The situation on August 7, 12, and 18.

Sketch 23: Somme. The situation on August 28.

Page: XIV keyno: 008

Table of Contents.

C. East.

Map 6: The front against Russia on March 18, 1916.

Sketch 24: The defensive battles at Lake Narocz in March 1916.

Map 7: The Brusilov Offensive from June 4 to 15, 1916.

Sketch 25: The counterattack at Nowel from June 16 to 23.

Sketch 26: The defensive battles in the Czartorysk arc from July 5 to 9.

Sketch 27: The Russian incursion north of the Lipa from July 16 to 18.

Sketch 28: The defensive battles in Bukovina and at the Dniester from late June to early July.

Sketch 29: The defensive battles at Baranowicze in early July.

Sketch 30: The defensive battles at Brody in late July.

Sketch 31: The defensive battles at Nowel from July 28 to 30.

Sketch 32: The defensive battles in Bukovina and at the Dniester in August.

D. Italy.

Sketch 33: The Upper Italian theater of war 1916.

Sketch 34: Italy. The Tyrolean front 1916.

Sketch 35: Italy. The Isonzo front 1916.

E. Turkey.

Sketch 36: Turkey. The battles on the Caucasus front.

Sketch 37: Turkey. The battles in Egypt.

Page: XV keyno: 009

Table of Contents.

Abbreviations.

A. Abt. ..... = Army Division

Abt. ........ = Division

Al. Gr. ...... = Army Group

A. K. ........ = Army Corps

A. O. K. ..... = Army High Command

Art. ......... = Artillery

bayer. ....... = Bavarian

Brig. ........ = Brigade

Btl. ......... = Battalion

Bttr. ........ = Battery

Div. ......... = Division

Ers. ......... = Replacement

Est. ......... = Squadron

Felba. ....... = Field Artillery

Feldmlt. ..... = Field Marshal Lieutenant

(Austro-Hungarian designation for Genlt.)

finnl. ....... = Finnish

F. K. ........ = Field Cannon

Fl. .......... = Aviator

Flak. ........ = Anti-Aircraft Cannon

FusA. ........ = Foot Artillery

G. ........... = Guard

gem. ......... = Mixed

Gen. ......... = General

Gen. Feldm. .. = Field Marshal General

Gen. Kdo. .... = General Command

Genlt. ....... = Lieutenant General

Genmaj. ...... = Major General

Gen. Ob. ..... = Colonel General

Genst. ....... = General Staff

G. K. ........ = Guard Corps

Gr. .......... = Group

Grn. ......... = Grenadier

Haub. ........ = Howitzer

Hgt. ......... = Army Group

H. K. K. ..... = Higher Cavalry

Commander

honv. ........ = Honved, Hungarian parts

of the Austro-Hungarian Army

I. Br. ........ = Infantry Brigade

I. D. ......... = Infantry Division

Inf. .......... = Infantry

Kan. ......... = Cannon

kauf. ......... = Commercial

Kav. .......... = Cavalry

K. D. ......... = Cavalry Division

Kdr. .......... = Commander

K. K. ......... = Cavalry Corps

k. u. k. ...... = Imperial and Royal

(Troops of the joint Austro-Hungarian

Army) in distinction from k. k. (Imperial-Royal

Austrian) and k. (Royal-Hungarian) troops

Komp. ........ = Company

Kost. ........ = Costs

Kub. ......... = Kuban

k. u. k. ...... = Imperial and Royal

Ldst. ......... = Landsturm

Ldw. ......... = Landwehr

l. F. H. ...... = Light Field Howitzer

l. M. G. ...... = Machine Gun

l. M. W. ...... = Mortar

Mrs. ......... = Mortar

O. B. Ost ..... = Commander-in-Chief East

Off. .......... = Officer

österr. ....... = Austrian, designation

for the Austrian (k. k.) parts of the A.-H. Army, in

peace "Landwehr", in war "Rifle"

Division, "Brigade etc. called

A.-H. ......... = Austro-Hungarian, designation

for the parts of the joint (k. u. k.) Austro-Hungarian

Army

Pi. ........... = Pioneer

R. Br. ........ = Reserve Infantry

Brigade

R. D. ......... = Reserve Division

Regt. ......... = Regiment

Res. .......... = Reserve

Page: XVI keyno: 010

Table of Contents.

R. K. ....... = Reserve Corps

Schütz. ...... = Riflemen

selbst. ...... = independent

s. F. H. ...... = heavy field howitzer

sib. ........ = Siberian

Terr. ........ = Territorial

turk. ........ = Turkestan

ung. ........ = Designation for the Hungarian parts (Honved) of the Austro-Hungarian army

Uss. ........ = Ussuri

verst. ....... = reinforced

züsf. ........ = composite

On maps and sketches, further abbreviations are sometimes used. There, Arabic numerals (depending on their size) mean: armies, divisions, brigades, or regiments – Roman numerals: corps or battalions; everything else is explained in the text.

Page: VIII keyno: 011

VIII. The Eastern Front until the End of August.

A. The Russian March Offensive.

Map 6, Sketch 24.

I. The Front of the Central Powers until Mid-March.

After the conclusion of the major battles of the year 1915, the armies of the Eastern Front had gone with full force to strengthen the positions. The great width of the fronts and, in comparison, the small number of troops stood in the way of rapid and strong expansion. It took the forces almost entirely for months. In the Austro-Hungarian army, it could not be promoted to the same extent as in the German troops due to the longer duration of the autumn battles and the Russian winter attacks following in December and January, as well as due to the lower equipment with technical means of all kinds. Here as there, work in the flat, often swampy area of the Russian plain was hampered by floods or frozen ground. At the same time, extraordinary work had to be done behind the front for the maintenance and new construction of railways and roads. Access roads of all kinds, including bridges and often many kilometers long corduroy roads, had to be created. In sparsely populated areas, whose few dwellings had often become uninhabitable due to fighting and Russian retreat, it was necessary to provide accommodation for the long and harsh winter. In the construction of positions themselves, one was often forced by groundwater to raise the breastworks from earth and wood; deep dugouts were then impossible. The same resistance to shelling as in the West could not be achieved by the terrain, but with the opponent's lower equipment, shelling was not as urgent as there. Swamps and lakes, which had to represent reliable obstacles in the summer, but were more or less spared in the occupation of the front, made the Russian winter passable for a long time and thus necessitated a changed distribution of forces.

The southern part of the entire front was under the Austro-Hungarian army command. The border lay north of Pinsel near Telechany. In this section, the following were deployed as before: Austro-Hungarian 7th Army under Colonel General Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin, German South Army under General of Infantry Count Bothmer, Army Group of General of Cavalry von Böhm-Ermolli, Chief of General Staff Major General Dr. Bardolff (Austro-Hungarian 2nd and 1st Army), Army Group of Colonel General von Linsingen, Chief of General Staff Major General von Stolzmann (Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, army troops of General of Infantry von Gerok and General of Artillery von Gronau), altogether in early February 45½ infantry divisions, of which six were German.

1) Volume VIII, p. 540 ff., 550 ff. and 589 ff. — 2) Volume IX, p. 309 ff.

keyno: 012

Page: 426 keyno: 013

The Eastern Front. — Russian March Offensive:

against Russia for the time being only defense was in question'). In the dis-

cussion on February 3rd') both General Staff chiefs agreed on this.

On the other hand, the Commander-in-Chief East had not given up hope

that within the overall situation he would once again have the opportunity

for offensive action. Quietly, he had been preparing an operation over the lower

Dvina since early December\*). It was intended to give the left wing of the army

better positions and a shortening of the front by almost 50 kilometers, as well as

the possession of the large city of Riga. On January 29, General Ludendorff

presented this plan to General von Falkenhayn in Lida, who, however, could not

promise the necessary reinforcements. Nevertheless, the Commander-in-Chief

East — as he wrote on February 4 — felt obliged to return to the question. He

pointed out that there was no tactical necessity for the attack. This would require

an increase in forces of seven to eight divisions along with strong artillery.

The execution depended on the onset of dry weather. General von Falkenhayn

was opposed to the plan given the overall situation, but reserved the decision,

similar to all Balkan attack plans') until mid-March.

Meanwhile, on March 5, the Navy approached the supreme army command

with the plan to take possession of the islands of Oesel and Moon, which close off

the Gulf of Riga\*); for them, this meant an "operation of the greatest style" and

corresponding preparations. One to two divisions and strong heavy artillery

were required in land forces. The best time was right after the ice melted, around

mid-April. When asked for a statement, the Commander-in-Chief East agreed,

even if the necessary land troops (one division and heavy artillery) could not be

easily spared from the mainland front. The precondition was that the fleet

ensured naval supremacy in the Baltic Sea and secured the connection to the

islands. Their possession would be of particular importance if the proposed

operation against Riga was seriously considered. In view of the retreat of the

Western Army and the signs of large Russian attacks now present, all these plans

had to be postponed.

1) G. 7 ff. — 2) G. 17, 20 and 441.  
3) Major von Fleischmann in the night of December 2/3, 1915 and January 15, 1916  
to the Austro-Hungarian army command.  
4) G. 18 ff.  
5) Volume VIII, C. 468.

Page: 427 keyno: 014

Commander-in-Chief East: Plans and Defensive Measures.

In the first half of March, the enemy began to noticeably strengthen his forces in front of the Commander-in-Chief East's front. An attack on the Dvina seemed imminent. On the other hand, the 10th Army believed that a Russian attack was being prepared against the group of Lieutenant General von Hutier (General Command of the XXI Army Corps) in the area of Lake Narocz. At that time, the following were stationed:

between Lake Wiszniew and Lake Narocz, the 9th Cavalry Division with the 9th Landwehr Brigade and the 75th Reserve Division; a breakthrough at this point could achieve the greatest effect for the enemy, as it would allow him to get behind the northern adjoining sections;

between Lake Narocz and Lake Mjadziol, the 31st Infantry Division;

north of Lake Mjadziol to the section boundary east of Goduzischki, the 115th and 42nd Infantry Divisions.

Since the lakes were now impassable and the railway conditions for rapid reinforcement in this area were unfavorable, the Commander-in-Chief East moved the 80th Reserve Division, which was stationed west of Smorgon, behind the southern flank of the Hutier group into the area east of Lake Narocz to Smie. However, his attention had meanwhile shifted forward to the Dvina front. By March 15, he too had come to the conclusion that the main Russian attack against the Hutier group was imminent; the opposing Russian 2nd Army was extraordinarily reinforced. In response to a query from the Supreme Army Command, the Commander-in-Chief East replied on this day: According to reliable reports, the Russian XXV, V, XXVI, IV Siberian, III Siberian, XXIV, I Siberian, I, XXVII, and XV Corps, as well as two cavalry corps, were already in place or on the move. The German 8th Army was therefore also to be reinforced: 86th Infantry Division and a regiment of the 107th Landwehr Brigade from the 12th Army, 107th Infantry Division from the Scholz Army Group, and if necessary, also the reserves of the 8th Army. The report concluded: "I have firm confidence that the 10th Army will hold its positions. As for the performance of the Russians, I have no reason to assume that their morale has declined. The number of deserters in recent times was normal. No deficiencies in armament, equipment, and supplies have become known. I must therefore assume that the attack will be carried out with the usual ruthlessness and disregard for losses."

Page: 428 keyno: 015

The Eastern Front. — Russian March Offensive.

2. The Attack Preparations of the Russians¹).

Despite the severe defeats and shocks of the summer of 1915, Tsar Nicholas declared at the Feast of St. George on January 2, 1916: "I will not make peace until we have driven the last enemy from our land, and then only in full agreement with our allies." Accordingly, the Russian military leadership, headed by the Tsar himself with General Alexeyev as Chief of Staff since September 1915, prepared everything to resume the offensive with full force in 1916. The only acknowledged obstacle was the lack of rifles and the unfavorable ammunition situation. The successes of the autumn campaign in Volhynia and Litgalicia had restored confidence in their own abilities. The concern that the Central Powers, after defeating Serbia, might also subdue Romania and thus eliminate Russian influence in the Balkans, perhaps even attack Odessa, demanded swift action. Thus, the Russian plenipotentiary, General Shilinski, proposed a joint attack from Italy, the Balkans, and Galicia against Austria-Hungary during discussions in Chantilly in December 1915²), as had been desired by Russian wishes and interests since the beginning of the war and especially since Italy's entry into the war. The Tsar could assume supreme command. However, the Russian plan was rejected. In this meeting, General Shilinski exaggerated the army strength for April 1, 1916, to 2¾ million³). Presumably, he hoped to achieve early relief through an attack by the Western powers, which he believed were unnecessarily hesitating. However, when the independently undertaken Russian winter offensives in Eastern Galicia⁴) ended in failure and heavy losses, it became quite clear by the end of January that Russia would probably not be ready to attack until June or July, no earlier than the Western powers. Meanwhile, at the end of February, the German successes at Verdun prompted a lively exchange of ideas between the French and Russian military leadership.

¹) Main sources: Russ. official value: "Strategic Overview of the War 1914—1918", V. and VI. Part; N. Walentinow, "Derber mit den Bundesgenossen", I. Part; French official value, Volume IV; Sir Alfred Knox, "With Russian Army, 1914—1917." — ²) Volume IX, G. 128; Volume X, p. 45 ff. — ³) Walentinow, a. a. D., p. 87. — ⁴) Volume IX, G. 311.

Page: 429 keyno: 016

Plans and Army Strength of the Russians.

On February 27, a discussion about attack possibilities took place at the Russian Grand Headquarters in Mogilev. At that time, the Russian armed forces were organized into the army groups of:

Northern Front, over which General Kuropatkin had just taken command1), with the 6th Army on both sides of the Finnish and Riga Gulf to protect Petersburg, the 12th and 5th Army (these two together 25 infantry divisions) from Riga to just south of Dvinsk;

Western Front under General Ewert with the 1st, 2nd, 10th, 4th, and 3rd Army (together 60 infantry divisions) extending to the southern edge of the Poltino Marshes;

Southwestern Front under General Ivanov with the 8th, 11th, 7th, and 9th Army (together 42½ infantry divisions) extending to the Romanian border.

Additionally, directly under the Supreme Army Command:

Baltic Fleet, which was still immobilized for a longer time due to ice conditions.

Against Turkey stood the Caucasus Front (7½ infantry divisions) Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich and the fleet in the Black Sea. The Russian troops had just urgently taken Erzerum through Armenia2).

For deployment on the French front and at Salonika, there were two infantry brigades each, partly on the way there, partly in formation.

Against Germany and Austria-Hungary, the following strength ratios were calculated:

Russians | Central Powers

Northern Front .. | 368 battalions = 266,000 rifles | 181 battalions = 159,000 rifles

Western Front | 917 = 643,000 | 382 = 336,000

Southwestern Front and reserves behind it (Guard) | 684 = 495,000 | 592 = 521,000

Total 1969 battalions = 1,404,000 rifles | 1155 battalions = 1,016,000 rifles

1) 1904/05 Commander-in-chief against Japan. The previous commander-in-chief, General Ruzki, had been dismissed due to illness.  
2) See p. 604 f.

Page: 430 keyno: 017

The Eastern Front. — Russian March Offensive.

In a communication made to the French plenipotentiary, General Pau¹), the rifle strength was indicated as slightly higher, at 1.5 million, plus 142,000 cavalry. The armament currently consists of: 6000 machine guns, 5000 field and mountain cannons with 1270 rounds each, 585 field howitzers (12 cm) with 540 rounds each, 460 modern and 516 older heavy guns with 685 rounds each. By April, the rifle strength was to increase by about 400,000 men with the formation of five new divisions, and the number of machine guns and artillery by one-sixth of the stock. A Serbian volunteer division and a Czechoslovak volunteer brigade were formed from Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war. The attempt to form a Polish brigade in the same way failed. Instead, it was formed from Russian soldiers of Polish origin.

In the intentions of the Russian military leadership, a complete change had taken place. All efforts to reach a military convention with Romania had failed. The plan for a joint comprehensive attack against Austria-Hungary, which had always been in the foreground, was therefore abandoned, the change of perception justified in a memorandum by General Alexeyev as follows:

In view of the changed situation in the Balkans since the defeat of Serbia, Romania should have been won over first. However, this required the provision of a Russian army of 250,000 men to secure the Dobrudja against Bulgaria. On the other hand, the danger that Romania would join the ranks of the opponents if the demand was not met seemed to have diminished, as the German Balkan forces were significantly reduced, the Austro-Hungarians were occupied in Albania, and the Bulgarians were tied down by the French and English in Salonika. However, General Alexeyev was now concerned about the northern flank of the Russian front. He was thinking of a German attack on Riga with the participation of the fleet, for which the sea routes to the west, through the Skagerrak Strait, were much freer than before, as the Russian ships had the way from the north through the Moon Sound. The drift ice would tear away the Russian mine barriers in the Irben Strait and in the Gulf of Riga.

¹) French official report, a.a.D., Notice 1020. — Knor (a.a.D., p. 421 f.) gives slightly lower figures.  
²) The army counted in May 1916, apart from individual Landwehr brigades in the interior and Aufsalz, 152 infantry divisions, which were increased to 163½ through new formations in the summer of 1916. Most of them were in the rest only 12 battalions. In cavalry, there were 47 divisions (two brigades = one division) in May, 50 in summer.

Page: 431 keyno: 018

Attack Plan of General Alexejew.

To tear away the Gulf of Riga. The German naval forces could advance there

before the Russian fleet is freed from the ice. In connection with such a German attack, there was also the possibility that Sweden would join the enemy's camp; Finland therefore needed reinforcement of troops. But such were also necessary for the Caucasus front. On the front against Germany and Austria-Hungary, defense had become more difficult because the retreat of the previous year had significantly worsened the railway situation. The network now lying behind the front was no longer sufficient to quickly bring reserves to the breach point. The transfer of a corps from the north to the southwest front took 23 days and, even if the entire supply line was interrupted, still twelve.

Under these circumstances, General Alexejew considered it urgent to preempt the Germans with an attack in the north.

He justified this intention in the meeting on February 27 by stating that in the north, the Russian forces outnumbered the enemy by about 400,000 rifles = 47 percent, while in the south they were equal. In the north, the resistant enemy stood with a greater number of heavy artillery and technical aids of all kinds. A success there would bring the Russian army closer to Berlin and thus to the center of the enemy alliance; it could therefore have an enormous impact and influence the outcome of the war. The southern theater of war was of lesser importance. To prepare for the attack, army reserves had to be brought to about 18 corps. As a result of the meeting, it was determined that the main attack against the Germans should be conducted from the left wing of the northern front and the right of the western front. In total, 400,000 men were envisaged for this, with reinforcements from the southwest front. If the attack was successful, the southwest front should also go on the offensive.

The timing for the attack depended on the "impassability" expected in spring due to the snowmelt and the completion of equipment with rifles. Until the aforementioned, urgently needed expansion of heavy artillery was completed, General Alexejew did not want to wait but was content with reinforcement only for two heavy units already in formation, totaling 24 guns. Finally, the concern about an impending German attack on Riga became so great that he decided to attack in the area east of Daugavpils before the start of the snowmelt. Also, on the 2nd and again on the 5th of March, a relief attack was requested by the French military leadership to prevent further German troops from being moved from the Eastern to the Western Front.

keyno: 019

Page: 433 keyno: 020

Russian Attack Preparations.

Postponed to March 20, as the heavy artillery intended for it had not yet

arrived. Thus, the combat actions initially focused on the attack of the 1st

and 2nd Army of the Western Front.

Only the wing corps (XIV Corps with three divisions) south of Lake Dryswjaty

was to attack from the 1st Army. In the 2nd Army under General Smirnow,

eleven divisions were ready to advance in the first line, nine in the second,

over a width of about 90 kilometers. They were divided into three attack

groups, which together (apart from field guns) had over 106 15-cm and 132

12-cm howitzers. The opponent was assumed to have 13 German divisions

in accordance with the actual strength. On the morning of March 18, both

armies began artillery fire preparation, followed shortly by the infantry attack.

3. The Defensive Battle on the Front of the Commander-in-Chief East1).

When the expected Russian attack began on March 18, rivers and lakes

were not yet thawed, but there was already up to 30 centimeters of water

over the ice. In the section of the Hutier Group, including the lakes, 60

kilometers wide, five divisions held the front line, with more than three

standing as reserves behind them. Among them, the 80th Reserve Division

had already moved into the Rybinitz-Swir area, the first parts of the 86th

Infantry Division were marching north from the railway at Soly towards Swir.

North of Wornjanin, a regiment of the 107th Landwehr Brigade was advancing.

The 107th Infantry Division arrived by foot and rail behind the northern

flank of the Hutier Group at Komai and Goduzischki. Additionally, the army

group assembled a Landwehr regiment and three Landsturm battalions as

the last reserve east of Vilna at the Wilejka railway station. The enemy

seemed ready to attack with 14 divisions in the front line and about half

that number in reserves behind.

After a nightly diversionary attack against the section of the 115th Infantry

Division, the Russian artillery opened with the dawn with the heaviest fire,

especially against the section occupied by Landwehr and Landsturm of the

9th Cavalry Division and the left flank of the 75th Reserve Division in the

south, against the left flank of the 42nd Infantry Division in the north.

1) Details are contained in "The Great War in Individual Representations,"   
published on behalf of the General Staff of the Field Army, Issue 31, "The   
Russian Spring Offensive 1916." — Simultaneous events on the rest of the   
Eastern Front E. 439 ff.

Page: 434 keyno: 021

The Eastern Front. — Russian March Offensive.

Division in the north. The mass attacks of the Russian infantry, which began about three hours later at these positions and were repeatedly renewed after each new artillery preparation, collapsed already in the snowfield of the German position garrison. The dead, who remained lying in front of both the southern and northern flanks of the group, were estimated at about 4000 each. This was opposed by a loss of only about 200 men on the German side. Russian deception operations in other sections of the front were soon recognized as such. Only small parts of the German reserves had participated so far.

On March 19, the Russian attacks against the northern flank of the 42nd Infantry Division were repeated with particular intensity and in even greater breadth than the day before. They now also attacked the southern flank of the adjacent group of Lieutenant General von Garnier (Higher Cavalry Commander 6). As long as it remained light, all attempts were repelled. In the darkness, at 9 p.m., however, the enemy managed to penetrate the position of the 42nd Infantry Division with parts of four divisions in a width of not yet 400 meters. A counterattack quickly organized by the division commander, Lieutenant General von Bredow, at dawn on March 20, with reserves quickly assembled, drove the Russians out again. However, the situation in the entrenched trenches of this section began to become difficult due to rising meltwater.

Following minor combat activity on March 20, new heavy Russian attacks followed at the previous focal points of the battle on the night of March 21. The enemy penetrated the sharply protruding part of the section of the 75th Reserve Division at the southern end of Lake Narocz, which lost 2500 men and had to withdraw its defense into a line position during the day. The enemy also managed to penetrate the positions on the northern flank of the 42nd Infantry Division again on March 21. Here, with the involvement of parts of the 107th Infantry Division that had been deployed in the meantime, they could be driven out again by evening and lost 600 men alone as prisoners. In view of the extraordinarily heavy losses suffered by the Russians in front of this section, Lieutenant General von Hutier initially considered the danger there to be averted. He turned his attention to the southern flank.

Meanwhile, the enemy had also continued to attack further north. In the Army Group Scholtz, the thrusts led by about four Russian corps began on March 19. They were primarily directed against the positions of the 3rd Infantry Division near Wisly and the 87th Infantry Division at Driswjathy Lake. They were successful nowhere.

Page: 435 keyno: 022

The Defensive Battle at the Eastern Commander-in-Chief.

Infantry Division at Lake Driswjathy. They had no success anywhere. In front of the 8th Army, the enemy seemed to be concentrating strong forces, a total of ten divisions, in the area of Jakobstadt and showed active operations here on March 21, so that General Otto von Below expected an imminent attack. An operation directed on the same day south of Riga against the 6th Reserve Division might have been merely a diversion.

On March 21, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief reported to the Supreme Army Command, upon their inquiry about the state of the battle, a report in which he described the strong deployment of Russian forces against the 10th Army. Since the enemy had used drumfire on a large scale for the first time, the battles were severe, but he was confident that the 10th Army would hold its positions. The significance of the battles that flared up on the Dvina front was not yet clear. That further attacks, perhaps at other points on the front, would follow with the deployment of Russian guards or other troops withdrawn from the Austro-Hungarian front was possible, as it apparently was not just operations to relieve the French, but the great Russian spring offensive.

On March 22, the enemy made only a futile attempt to attack the 10th Army against the Landwehr, which held the section of the 9th Cavalry Division at the extreme right wing of the Sontier Group. The most fiercely contested part of the group front, directly adjoining Lake Narocz, was taken over by the 80th Reserve Division. Troops of the 86th Infantry Division had already been inserted here. Behind them, as a new reserve coming from the army group Prince Leopold, the 119th Infantry Division was expected. In view of this accumulation of troops, Generaloberst von Eichhorn ordered on March 23 the transfer of the entire section south of Lake Narocz to the group of General von Carlowitz (General Command of the III Reserve Corps), which until then had only two divisions under its command on a narrow and quiet front.

In the Army Group Scholz, the Russians had repeated their attacks on the night of March 22 and extended them northward to the group of Lieutenant General von Launestien (General Command XXXIX Reserve Corps). In the 8th Army, the strengthened attack at Jakobstadt had hit the positions of the 109th and 41st Infantry Divisions, a weaker thrust at Friedrichstadt the 36th Reserve Division. The enemy had no success anywhere, although partially very severe.

Page: 436 keyno: 023

The Eastern Front. — Russian March Offensive.

Losses. It was no different for him when he repeated his attempts the following day. At Jakobstadt, however, his offensive strength seemed far from exhausted. The Commander-in-Chief East therefore requested the 22nd Infantry Division, which had meanwhile been released from the Austro-Hungarian front and provided by the Supreme Army Command at Baranowicze, as a reserve to Mitau.

The following days brought only weak repetitions of the Russian attacks against the Scholtz Army Group and the 8th Army. They ended on March 26 with another very strong attempt against the 41st Infantry Division, which, like all previous attempts, remained unsuccessful. Thus, the Russian offensive strength at the Dvina section was exhausted. The German losses remained very low.

The Commander-in-Chief East had already considered the situation with the German 10th Army as stabilized on March 23. Persistent thawing weather, which caused the water in the trenches of the lower sections to rise up to a meter, made further combat activity increasingly impossible in the coming days. Only against the northern flank of the Hutier Group (107th Infantry Division) did the enemy make another unsuccessful attempt on March 26. Since then, he seemed to be withdrawing troops from the front line, an impression that was fully confirmed by aerial reconnaissance and finally by intercepted radio messages on April 3. The ice of the Dvina also broke now, the river rose by 1½ meters. Despite the unfavorable weather, the enemy tried again on April 6 and 7, but again unsuccessfully, to gain ground south of Lake Narocz. On April 9, the Commander-in-Chief East reported to the Supreme Army Command that the high water would make a unified attack by strong Russian masses unlikely in the near future. However, he emphasized that a repetition of the attacks, and indeed by considerably stronger forces than before, was to be expected once the road conditions improved. This could occur faster than in normal years due to the dry weather.

Meanwhile, the General Command of the III Reserve Corps was preparing a counterattack south of Lake Narocz to regain the position lost on March 21, which, due to its high location, dominates the surrounding area. Difficulties in the supply of ammunition and attack equipment forced the operation initially scheduled for April 13 to be postponed to the 28th. On this day, the 86th Infantry and 80th Reserve Division regained the old first line and beyond that, the highest peak of the hill area located in the formerly Russian position area.

¹) C. 302 and 439 ff.

keyno: 024

keyno: 025

Page: 439 keyno: 026

Emperor's Lecture in Wilna.

proposed to take the city. This would be feasible with the addition of three to four divisions and the necessary heavy artillery and could lead to all enemy troops deployed between the crossing point and Riga being cut off from supplies. Cooperation of the fleet against Ösel could significantly ease the operation, but would require another division. Whether the offensive could extend to Lake Peipus depended on how much the number of divisions to be supplied could be increased, and how long they could afford the Eastern Front. The threat to Petersburg and the exploitation of the current internal disorder in Russia to increase to a collapse ... Should it" — which cannot be overlooked — "be possible to simultaneously combine an Austrian-Romanian operation with the offensive of the left wing, then the chance would again be given to bring about the decision on the eastern theater of war, which would at the same time provide the best relief for our Turkish allies."

However, the realization of these far-reaching plans — as General von Falkenhayn immediately explained after the General Field Marshal's remarks — was out of the question. As long as Germany's best offensive forces were tied up in the West, and Austria-Hungary's against Italy, there were no troops available for a larger offensive in the East.

B. The Brusilov Offensive until the end of July.

I. Until the beginning of the attack.

Maps 6 and 7.

a) The development of the situation until early June.

During the heavy spring battles at the front of the Commander-in-Chief East, combat activity on the entire remaining Eastern Front was limited to occasionally intensified Russian artillery fire and a few minor operations against the Austro-Hungarian part of the overall front. Accordingly, Army Group Prince Leopold had handed over the 119th Infantry Division to the Commander-in-Chief East in March, and the 22nd Infantry Division, withdrawn from the Austro-Hungarian front, was also transferred there¹). The Austro-Hungarian front section had, however, simultaneously also given up German units for the German Western Front and Austro-Hungarian units for the front against Italy (Austro-Hungarian "Southwestern Front").

keyno: 027

Page: 441 keyno: 028

Tasks of the Austro-Hungarian Front.

indicating that the German Corps Gerok¹) would be withdrawn from

the Linsingen Army Group if needed; each of the allies was solely

responsible for holding their front. However, he was willing

to follow a suggestion from Generaloberst von Conrad to arrange for

the delivery of some Turkish divisions.

Given the needs on the Western Front, the Gerok Corps had to be

dispatched as early as March, but its 22nd Infantry Division had to be

sent to the Eastern Front due to simultaneous Russian pressure against

the front of the Commander-in-Chief East. In this situation, General

von Falkenhayn requested and received the ally's consent to also withdraw

the Marshal's General Command and the 3rd Guard Infantry Division

from the German Southern Army for the West. When Generaloberst

von Conrad then offered the High Command of this army for relief,

he was met with rejection. However, General von Falkenhayn declared

himself willing to assist with German troops south of the Pripet in the

future if necessary, given a changed situation. By the end of April, only

the High Commands of the Linsingen Army Group and the German

Southern Army, the 48th, and on the extreme northern flank the majority

of the 82nd Reserve Division, remained under German command.

By the end of April, Generaloberst von Conrad had also withdrawn

troops from the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front, amounting to six divisions,

which he intended to use against Italy. He had replaced two of them with

troops from the Balkans and from border protection against Romania²).

His hope for the use of Turkish forces was disappointed. Only a weak

division for the Isonzo Front was to be brought in through time-consuming

transports, but partly due to railway conditions, partly due to losses on

the Asia Minor front³), without heavy weapons, vehicles, and horses. In

addition, the little help offered in Constantinople — as reported by an

Austro-Hungarian officer sent there — was regarded as the "salvation of

the monarchy." Under these circumstances, Generaloberst von Conrad

had already completely abandoned them at the beginning of March. On

the other hand, he had managed to significantly increase the numerical

strength of the Austro-Hungarian units on the front against Russia by

recruiting replacements and new equipment. The front occupation was, despite the weakening in six divisions, compared to the state of February 1st, increased by about ten percent (60,000 rifles and 255 guns).

¹) Gen. Rbd. of the XXIV. R. K. with 1st and 22nd I. D.  
²) Withdrawals: 3rd, 10th, 34th, 43rd I. D., 21st Lstf. Geb. Brig., plus two individual  
regiments, 12 battalions, and 15 heavy batteries. — Replacement for this: 53rd and 70th I. D.  
³) See p. 614 f.

Page: 442 keyno: 029

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

six divisions, compared to the status as of February 1, increased by about ten percent (60,000 rifles and 255 guns). It now counted 629,000 rifles and 2,690 guns1), whereas the Russians seemed to have 640,000 rifles but only 2,000 guns. Although the newly recruited replacements might lag behind the dispatched troops in terms of internal cohesion and training, and some parts of the artillery equipment might be outdated, there remained a numerical superiority that could be considered sufficient for defense in the positions fortified over months. However, the ammunition supply (400 rounds for each field cannon2)) was only about half of the amounts available at the German sections of the Eastern Front. Whether Generaloberst von Conrad was aware of this, and to what extent he made reductions in favor of the front against Italy, is not known. In any case, the Chief of the General Staff was convinced that the increase in fighters and guns would suffice to compensate for the deductions, especially of the most combat-effective and internally valuable units and formations3).

He viewed the Russian attack, as did the army leaders, with full confidence, after the Austro-Hungarian troops had succeeded in repelling all Russian attacks on their own in January4). Since then, however, the enemy had noticeably weakened to attack the front of the Commander-in-Chief East. Also, strong forces, according to agent reports 80,000 men, were supposed to have moved from the area south of the Pripet to the Caucasus front5).

The withdrawal of Austro-Hungarian forces from the front against Russia had already early on raised concerns for General von Falkenhayn regarding the northern section, for whose security the German Generaloberst von Linsingen was responsible. He had already on March 28 and again on March 31 inquired with General von Stolzmann, the Chief of Staff of Army Group Linsingen, whether the withdrawal of Austro-Hungarian troops from the Styr Front had not already exceeded the permissible limit, and whether the "responsibility for the security of this now purely Austro-Hungarian front section could still be further imposed on a German leader."

1) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 235. The number of divisions does not allow for a useful comparison. By the end of May, it was (independent brigades = 1/2 division counted) still about 40, despite the deductions, as the troops for Italy were partly taken from transferred divisions. In May, the divisions averaged 16 battalions and 200 guns (70 guns were thus considerably stronger than German divisions (mostly 9 battalions and 48 guns).  
2) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 376.  
3) In a communication from Genltz. a. D. v. Cramon from January 11, 1934, it states: "The weakening of the front can be well expressed in numbers. It refers more to the combat value of the withdrawn and remaining units at the front, the distribution of efficient artillery, the shifting of available replacement formations from the east over the Italian front, and due to the ammunition reserves in the east in favor of Tyrol."  
4) Volume IX, p. 309 ff.  
5) p. 431 and 608 f.

Page: 443 keyno: 030

Serious Weakening of the Austro-Hungarian Front.

Already on March 28 and again on March 31, General von Stolzmann, the Chief of Staff of the Linsingen Army Group, was asked whether the withdrawal of Austro-Hungarian troops from the Styr Front had not already exceeded the permissible limit, and whether the "responsibility for the security of this now purely Austro-Hungarian front section could still be imposed on a German leader." General von Stolzmann noted in a personal diary on March 31, 1916: "A difficult question to answer! Who wants to take responsibility for the steadfastness of the Austrians? No one can! On the other hand, the Russians can do nothing at the moment, especially since they have weakened themselves considerably." He replied that he — under the present circumstances — considered the security of the section to be absolutely guaranteed. However, if the enemy were to bring in stronger forces, no German leader could take responsibility.

When the ground was dry enough for larger operations to become possible again at the beginning of May, the distribution of Russian forces across the entire front seemed to be the same as in March; approximately two-thirds of the divisions were correctly assumed to be north, only one-third south of the Pripjet. However, the Commander-in-Chief East continued to expect a resumption of Russian attacks against his front.

Meanwhile, since mid-May, signs of Russian attack preparations against the front south of the Pripjet became noticeable. Contrary to the previously practiced strong restraint in the air, Russian air units advanced over the combat front and attacked towns and railway stations with bombs on May 31. The enemy also showed increased artillery activity against the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian 7th and especially the 4th Army. Generaloberst von Conrad found it necessary to return the Austro-Hungarian 13th Infantry Division, which had been temporarily withdrawn from this army behind the right army wing to the 7th Army, to the 4th Army and to reinforce its artillery with eight heavy batteries. During the meeting with General von Falkenhayn in Berlin on May 24, he emphasized the need to obtain assurance once again that if the Russians were to bring stronger forces from the north into the area south of the Pripjet, which would take them about three weeks, he could also count on corresponding reinforcement of his front by German troops. General von Falkenhayn agreed to this.

Page: 444 keyno: 031

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

Time would be used — also to count on corresponding reinforcement of his front by German troops. General von Falkenhayn agreed to that.

From the front of the Commander-in-Chief East, Major von Fleischmann¹) reported on the same day to Teschen that the enemy had apparently abandoned the attack at Dünaburg, and the transfer of the Russian Guards to the south was possible. An offensive at Smorgon, however, was still expected. On the evening of June 2, he reported that the attack against the German 10th Army and the northern flank of the 12th was "due to break." On the other hand, the situation on the Italian front also made a relief offensive against the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front increasingly likely. The signs for this increased. Against the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, the Russian attack measures had now advanced so far that Generaloberst Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin concentrated his reserves there on May 28. Tension also increased with the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, but leaders and troops faced the Russian attack with confidence. When Generaloberst von Linsingen inspected the naturally strong positions during the month, he, like all other officers sent there, expressed full recognition²). His Chief of General Staff had expressed himself very confidently in Teschen on May 27: Numerically, the Russian was not superior, his training was inadequate; he considered a Russian attack success "impossible." The aerial reconnaissance, for which two German field and one artillery air division as well as two Austro-Hungarian air companies were available, had not detected increased road and column traffic during the last third of May, but had noted troop concentrations at Olyka in front of the army group's front. When on May 29, it seemed from radio messages that the previously assumed Russian VIII Corps at Rowno was being brought to the front, Generaloberst von Conrad withdrew a division of the 1st Army for his disposal just in case. Thus, in terms of reserves, apart from the cavalry, there was one behind each army, two behind the 4th and 7th Army, and 2½ infantry divisions ready.

1) Austro-Hungarian liaison officer.  
2) In a report that Generaloberst von Linsingen submitted to the Supreme Army Command on June 8, after the Russian attack success, it said: "I have inspected all the attacked positions and am of the opinion that they are all laid out in such a way that they can be held with the troops available to me. I had to consider them suitable even for a not very reliable troop to make an attack impossible for a superior enemy."

Page: 445 keyno: 032

Assignment of the Higher Command Posts.

2½ infantry divisions ready). In the 4th Army, a brigade, whose almost exclusively Ruthenian troops were considered unsuitable for repelling Russian attacks, was replaced by another. When the Kaiser on May 31 in Slonim had a briefing from Field Marshal Prince Leopold and the Generalobersten von Böhm and von Linsingen about the situation, the latter reported, "that he guarantees to hold the front entrusted to him against any attack by the enemy currently facing it, and that he could launch a promising offensive on Rowno with the addition of just two German divisions"2).

At the key Austro-Hungarian positions, the Supreme Commander, Archduke Friedrich, expressed his serious concerns about the weakening of the front to the German General von Cramon3). However, Generaloberst von Conrad had turned his full attention to Italy and felt, as far as known, in agreement with all the higher leaders of the Austro-Hungarian front section, capable of withstanding any Russian onslaught. He was even determined to cover the troop requirements on the Tyrolean front, since General von Falkenhayn rejected the Duke Albrecht and the k.-u. k. XII Corps from the German Army Group Prince Leopold, with a division from his own eastern front, as soon as the railway situation allowed. That would have been on June 8. The start of the Russian attack prevented the execution.

b) New Attack Plans of the Russians4), End of March to Early June.

In view of the spring floods, the Russian command had ordered their northern and western fronts in the last days of March to halt the already failed general offensive. Partial operations were left to them, however, to keep the enemy under pressure. In a memorandum dated April 4, the Chief of General Staff expressed the intention to resume the general attack in mid-May. He also emphasized that they were superior to the enemy by 671,000 rifles (1,732,000 against 1,061,0005)), and with the battalions brought up to full strength, even superior by 877,000.

1) Details p. 450 and map of the Brusilov Offensive.  
2) Note by General von Falkenhayn from July 29 with the addition: "This brief report constituted the entire briefing, which thus differed greatly from that of all other commanders-in-chief." Note in the diary of Major General von Stoltzmann matches this account.  
3) Communication from Lt. Gen. a. D. von Cramon from January 11, 1934.  
4) See also p. 433.  
5) Central Powers (notably without 6th Army) 466,000 against 200,000 of the Central Powers, Western Front 754,000 against 420,000 of the Central Powers, Southwestern Front 512,000 against 441,000 of the Central Powers.

Page: 446 keyno: 033

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

Battalions at full strength were even superior by 877,000. This superiority was double north of the Rokitno Marshes, while south it was only one-sixth.

On April 14, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Tsar in Mogilev. General Alexeyev presented the following plan based on his memorandum: With reinforcement by the 1st Army, the northern front would be five times superior in number to the enemy. It advances with four corps from Riga to Mitau. A few days later, the western front, six times superior in number to the enemy, attacks Wilna, if necessary, it will be further strengthened by the guards stationed north of it. The southwestern front seeks to divert the enemy's attention and prepares to attack from Rovno as soon as the offensive north of the Rokitno Marshes is underway.

The main attack was thus to fall again on the western front. Generals Kuropatkin and Ewcrt, commanders of the northern and western fronts, however, raised serious concerns. Both were under the fresh impression of their previous completely unsuccessful attacks. The German positions, they argued, were so strongly built and so deeply structured that a new attack would be hopeless without a similar deployment of heavy artillery as the enemy used for his attacks. The war minister General Shuvayev, who was also present, stated that he could provide ammunition for light guns in the usual quantity, but heavy guns and their ammunition could not be provided in the required amount, certainly not in the summer of 1916. Under these circumstances, General Ewcrt, who had unsuccessfully requested eight corps as reinforcements before the meeting to resume the attack, considered it best to remain on the defensive until sufficient heavy artillery with ample ammunition was available. He also opposed the attack on two spatially distant locations; one must decide on one location, either on the northern or the western front. For the latter, he demanded a preparation time of at least one, preferably two months.

General Brusilov, since early April commander of the southwestern front, expressed himself quite differently. He considered any waiting to be undesirable and emphasized, pointing to the excellent spirit of his troops, that the southwestern front could not only, but must attack as soon as the other fronts were attacked, even if there was a lack of aircraft, horses, vehicles, and ammunition.

1) A. A. Brusilov, "My Memories," p. 165 ff.  
2) Since March 29, successor to General Polivanov, who was dismissed for domestic political reasons (Knorr, ibid., p. 412).  
3) Previously commander of the 8th Army. The previous commander of the southwestern front, General Ivanov, had joined the Tsar's entourage.

Page: 447 keyno: 034

New Russian Offensive Plan: Main Attack on Vilna.

wished and emphasized, referring to the excellent spirit of his

troops, that the Southwestern Front could not only, but must attack,

as soon as attacks were made on the other fronts, even if there was a lack

of aircraft, horses, vehicles, and ammunition. He demanded

no reinforcements, but only that all three army groups simultaneously

attack, so that the enemy would be confused and his

defensive strength shattered. The attack of the Southwestern Front would relieve the

other army groups, even if it itself remained unsuccessful.

Under the strong impression of these statements, the

Russian military leadership decided that by May 14, all army groups

should be ready to attack. General Ewert did raise further

concerns in the following days due to the early timing, and also made

new insatiable demands for ammunition and shots — if they could not

be granted — instead of the main attack assigned to him, he proposed a

smaller operation at Baranovichi. The operational

order of the Tsar from April 24 nevertheless insisted

that the Western Front should lead the main attack, namely from Molodeczno to Vilna.

The Northern Front, reinforced around the 1st Army, was to advance from the

area of Daugavpils and southwards also in the direction of Vilna,

the Southwestern Front, disturbing the enemy along its entire front,

was to attack from Rovno to Luck. The timing of the attack would depend on

the situation with the allies and the supply of ammunition and

would be announced about a week in advance. The guiding principle

was to deceive the enemy about the time and place of the actual attack.

Experiences from both the local and the Franco-Belgian theater of war

were to be utilized.

The German success at Lake Narocz on April 28, which cost the Western Front

another 11,000 men and resulted in serious damage to morale,

meant a noticeable disruption in the preparation of the main attack.

The armies could not be made ready by May 14. The

start of the attack was postponed to mid-June. In view of the Austro-

Hungarian attack preparations in South Tyrol, however, as early as

May 12, Tatishchev approached the Russian military leadership with warnings,

and shortly after May 19, the military plenipotentiary, Major General

Count Ruggien, urgently requested help. General Alexeyev was against

an immediate attack, as he was not prepared and there was still a lack of ammunition,

especially for the heavy artillery. An inquiry with the army groups revealed on May 24 that General Brussilov was ready to begin the attack of the Southwestern Front on June 1 with the artillery opening fire.

1) E. 436 f.   
2) G. 334 f. and 436 f.

Page: 448 keyno: 035

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

However, on May 24, it was revealed that General Brusilov was ready

to begin the attack of the Southwestern Front on June 1 with the artillery

opening fire. He insisted that the Western Front attack simultaneously.

Since this could only be ready by mid-month, he had to accept that the

main attack planned there would only commence about a week after his

own attack. However, he requested reinforcement by a corps and ample

ammunition. Corresponding shifts and transports began on May 25 and

could be completed within a week. Then the attack — as General

Alekseyev replied to the Italians1) — should begin immediately and

unexpectedly. The army order of May 31 stated: “The

continuous shifting of Austro-Hungarian troops to the Italian front and

the difficult situation in which the Italian army finds itself require a

vigorous attack by the armies of the Southwestern Front on the numerically

weakened Austro-Hungarian troops opposite. For a simultaneous decisive

attack on all fronts, we lack artillery ammunition, especially the heavy

kind.” The attack was set for June 4 for the Southwestern Front, and

for June 10 or 11 for the Western Front. The Northern Front, from

which a corps (5th Siberian) was already designated for the Southwestern

Front, was now to limit itself to diversionary attacks and therefore had

to give up another corps (XXIII) to the army reserve. But the Western

Front also began to weaken; it was to provide, albeit “only temporarily,”

two cavalry corps to enable the Southwestern Front to pursue effectively

towards Kovel if their attack succeeded.

In the 350-kilometer-wide section of the Southwestern Front

between the Rokitno Marshes and the Romanian border stood, as before,

the 8th, 11th, 7th, and 9th Armies. At the beginning of June, they

numbered around 40 infantry divisions, 15 of which were with the 8th

Army. Although the army command urged an attack with this army

alone, General Brusilov insisted on conducting the attack with all four

armies simultaneously, each in the most suitable section. Only in this

way could the enemy be kept in the dark about their own intentions;

he must feel seriously threatened everywhere. The attack should then

be pushed forward where it succeeds best, by bringing in troops and

ammunition. Preparations had already begun in mid-April, immediately

after the meeting in Mogilev. The 8th Army under General Kaledin was to deliver the main thrust and lead along the Rovno—Lutsk railway from a 23-kilometer-wide front on both sides of Olyka.

keyno: 036

Page: 450 keyno: 037

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

2. The Battles up to June 23.

Map 7.

a) The defense on the Austro-Hungarian front until June 7.

On the morning of June 4, the Austro-Hungarian front south of the Pripet, starting from the right wing, was occupied as follows:

Front Occupation 1) | Reserves 1) | Front Width

Gen. Ob. Frhr. von Pflanzer-Baltin | 10 Inf. Div. 5 Rad. Div. | 2 Inf. Div. (1/2 5., 1/2 36., 30.) | almost 150 km

Gen. d. Inf. Grf. von Bothmer | 5 Inf. Div. | 1 Inf. Div. (38.) | over 50 km

Army Group Böhm-Ermolli

Gen. Ob. von Böhm-Ermolli | 4 Inf. Div. | 1 Inf. Div. (29.) 1 Rad. Div. (4.) | 50 km

Gen. Ob. von Puhallo | 2 Inf. Div. 1 Rad. Div. | 1 Inf. Div. (25.) | 60 km

Army Group Linsingen

Gen. Ob. Archduke Josef Ferdinand | 6 Inf. Div. | 2 1/2 Inf. Div. (11., 13., 1/2 45.) 1 Rad. Div. (10.) on fieldwork at Cholm | 75 km

Corps of Gen. d. Inf. Fath | 2 Inf. Div. | | 30 km

Corps of Gen. d. Kav. Frhr. von Hauer | 1/3 Inf. Div. 3 Rad. Div. | Smaller units, together about 1/2 Inf. Div. | 40 km

from the German A. Gr. Gronau | 1 Inf. Div. | | 30 km

In the early morning hours of June 4, the army command in Teschen received the report that the expected attack against the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army had begun. Shortly thereafter, the order of the commander-in-chief of the Russian Southwestern Front became known, calling his four armies to attack. At the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, the enemy attacked immediately south of Olesnica and advanced to Ofta; counterattacks were initiated. Russian attacks against the German South Army led only to temporary breaches on its northern flank. In the Böhm-Ermolli Army Group, there were partial attacks. However, the enemy seemed to have had the greatest success only in the area of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army near Sopowka; reserves were set for a counterattack.

1) In the map, the distribution of front occupation and reserves could only be shown if they were closed units.

Page: 451 keyno: 038

Reliable Perception on the First Day of Attack.

From the Linsingen Army Group, it was learned in Teschen by

late evening that heavy fire had been concentrated mainly on the center of the Austro-Hungarian

4th Army; weaker infantry attacks against the Austro-Hungarian 4th Infantry Division had failed;

a brigade from the army reserve had been made available to the corps of Field Marshal Lieutenant

Szurmay and the X Corps. Already in the morning, after the first reports

about the start of the attack, Colonel General von Linsingen had requested the

25th Infantry Division, which was held as an army reserve behind the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army.

However, Colonel General von Conrad could not decide to fulfill this request given the still unclear overall situation.

The reports about the enemy in front of the army group confirmed the concentration of the Russian XXXX Corps in a narrow

area and the deployment of the VIII Corps in the front line between

XXXII and XXXX Corps. Behind these assault troops, further

forces were reported on the march, including two cavalry divisions. Colonel

General von Linsingen reported in the evening from Jablon: "The order

of General Brussilow and the concentration of forces on and south of

the Rowno—Klewan—Lucz road suggest the intention of an attack

against the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 37th, center of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd, and the Hungarian

70th Infantry Division as well as the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division.

The strength of the enemy and the relatively

minor damage from his artillery fire promise no success for him. The attack against the 4th Infantry Division is considered by the

army group command as a mere demonstration."

Under the impression of this favorable assessment on the one hand, and the

Russian incursions at the 7th and 1st Army on the other, Colonel General

von Conrad decided to march the Austro-Hungarian 25th Infantry Division

south to Rudnia, to deploy it from there as needed

for a counterattack at Spanow in front of the 1st Army or also by rail to the

7th Army.

At the 7th Army, on June 5th, south of the Dniester,

there were again fierce battles. Essentially, further

advancement of the enemy was prevented. However, the defender's consumption of forces was

so great that holding out without new reserves no longer seemed

guaranteed. To make such available, Colonel

General Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin decided to withdraw his forces standing in the area of Zaleczkyi

to the left riverbank during the night of June 6th behind the Dniester. At the Strypa front,

drumfire lay on the lines of the XIII Corps at Jazlowice; an intervention

seemed imminent. The front of the German South Army was only under weak fire.

Page: 452 keyno: 039

The Disfront. — Brusilov Offensive.

was only under weak fire. According to prisoner statements, parts of the Russian Guard had arrived in Tarnopol, and strong forces seemed to be gathering here. In front of the Böhm-Ermolli army group, the enemy strengthened in the area of Kremeniece. In the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, he had made some progress north of Sopanno. The Austro-Hungarian troops had suffered heavy losses. The army group urgently requested the assignment of the Austro-Hungarian 25th Infantry Division.

In the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the artillery fire of the previous day, as it turned out on the night of June 5th, had caused significant damage to the positions. However, the losses were within tolerable limits; the Hungarian 70th Infantry Division, which had probably suffered the most, counted a total of 57 dead and 170 wounded out of a total strength of around 12,000. The enemy's losses were said to be much greater; 1,900 dead and wounded Russians were said to be lying in front of the front. At the army group command, there was full confidence. The 4th Army would be pleased that it was right and that the enemy was now really attacking, General von Stolzmann had written in his diary. Generaloberst von Linsingen had told the defenders that he was convinced that every leader with his troops was inspired by the idea that "holding out in the positions to the last man was necessary to nullify the weak attacks undertaken by the Russians to balance the successes in South Tyrol." In the event of a local breakthrough, he had recommended using the reserves in a unified, as comprehensive as possible counterattack. On the other hand, the army commander, Archduke Josef Ferdinand, had already seen fit to order the saving of artillery ammunition.

On the night of June 5th and early morning, the intensity of the Russian infantry attacks increased. Since they were all repelled and the Archduke reported quite hopefully, Generaloberst von Linsingen expected a complete failure of the enemy. In this sense, he reported to the Supreme Army Command in the morning. During the day, however, the situation took an unfavorable turn. The first sign of the shift was the report from the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which arrived at 10 a.m. and stated that after very heavy drumfire northwest of Olyka, a strong Russian attack by one of the local regiments had forced a retreat to the second position. The entire 13th Infantry Division had been made available to the X Corps to retake the first position. Gradually, however, it became apparent that the enemy had thrown the center of the army, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd and the Hungarian 70th Infantry Division, out of the first and partly also out of the second position.

Page: 453 keyno: 040

Bad News from the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army.

infantry division, had been thrown from the first and partly from the second position. The army remnants (11th and 13th Infantry Division) were already entangled in the retreat, which came to a halt with all four divisions only in the poorly developed third and last position. Thus, the front was pushed in on a width of about 25 kilometers and pushed back up to six kilometers. The troops had suffered heavy losses; some regiments are said to have not counted at all, others lost 40 to 50 percent of their combat strength. In view of the size of the losses as well as the "shattered mental state of the troops and their leaders"), even the next stand was questionable. The 4th Army no longer had any significant reserves, the army group only had half of the Austrian 45th Infantry Division behind the northern flank of this army. Generaloberst von Linsingen marched south and ordered the Gronau army group to send five battalions by rail via Brest-Litovsk—Kovel. From these troops and artillery of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, a new division was to be assembled, but it could not be ready behind the breakthrough point before June 7. Meanwhile, the 4th Army Command was urged to bring the troops to a standstill through personal influence on the lower leaders and to take into account the neighboring groups; only then could success be expected from the introduction of the reserves.

The simultaneous serious battles at the Austro-Hungarian 7th, 1st, and 4th Army had — as already emerged — not only resulted in territorial losses, but, what weighed much more heavily, brought considerable losses in people and material. Generaloberst von Conrad faced difficult decisions. Three divisions were still available, one behind the German South Army and behind the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, as well as the Austro-Hungarian 25th Infantry Division of the 1st Army, which had already been set in motion to the south. The situation of this army seemed to be more difficult than that of the 7th Army, which had essentially repelled the enemy on June 5 and also had the possibility of creating new reserves in its own area. On the other hand, the 1st Army, which had suffered heavy losses at Sopronow, seemed particularly threatened by the arrival of new enemy forces at Krzemieniec. Generaloberst von Conrad therefore decided to release the Austro-Hungarian 25th Infantry Division of the Böhm-Ermolli army group for deployment with the 1st Army in case of urgent need, with the explicit reservation, based on the experiences with the 4th Army, that this division should only be used uniformly.

1) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 387.

Page: 454 keyno: 041

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

For the Linsingen Army Group, Generaloberst von Conrad primarily attempted to obtain German reinforcements. He informed the army group command that it would have to manage without Austro-Hungarian assistance. At 10:15 in the evening, he urged General von Falkenhayn: "So far, the Russians have achieved successes on a section of our 7th Army's front south of the Dniester and today also west and southwest of Rovno opposite the 4th Army." The local superiority of the enemy south of the Dniester and the importance of this section, which borders directly on Romania, compelled the sending of available reserves there. Based on the discussion from May 24<sup>1</sup>, he initially requested that available forces, possibly from the German Eastern Front, be transferred via Kowel to the Linsingen Army Group. The assembly of strong Russian forces near Tarnopol might soon necessitate a request for reinforcement for the German Southern Army.

Still unaware of the extent and disastrous impact of the Russian breakthrough at the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, General von Falkenhayn initially believed that the Austro-Hungarian military leadership would have to manage without German assistance. In his responses, he pointed out that, according to the agreement of May 24, German forces should only be deployed if the enemy had made significant shifts from the north to Galicia. Currently, that was not the case; the Russians were rather facing the German Eastern Front with triple superiority, fully prepared for an attack. He recommended, in light of the Southern Army's report that enemy fire had been kept within moderate limits and that troops had been observed moving backward in vehicle traffic before the middle of the army, to relieve the German forces there and transfer them to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. Furthermore, he had General von Cramon point out that due to the lack of available German reserves, the only option left was to take troops from the Italian front, including South Tyrol. This was bitter, but he saw no other way out. If the enemy shifted parts of his forces from the German Eastern Front to the south, he would not hesitate to send German troops for support.

While this decision was being made, Generaloberst von Linsingen supplemented his evening report to the German Supreme Army Command by explaining that the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army had partially retreated in panic with severe losses, although the enemy had apparently only deployed the VIII Corps and three cavalry divisions as reinforcements so far. By bringing in a composite division, he attempted to hold the wavering line.

keyno: 042

Page: 456 keyno: 043

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

The neighboring 2nd Army had to assist with the necessary ammunition.

However, the counterattack could only take place on June 8, while the

1st Army, on the other hand, had to prepare reserves behind its left flank

due to the breach at the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army.

The Russian attack continued at the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. It hit

the troops before they had re-established themselves in the third position;

parts had already crossed this defensive line westwards. The

army command of the Hungarian 70th and Austro-Hungarian 11th Infantry

Division had no more resistance power at all. In view of the confused

situation at the Szurmay Corps and the X Corps, it considered retreating

behind the Styr and reported this to the army group. "Retreating behind

the Styr" — Generaloberst von Linsingen replied at 10:40 a.m. — "is out

of the question. The two corps must hold their positions under all

circumstances." He again demanded personal intervention by the army

commander in this sense. However, Archduke Josef Ferdinand had already

informed all three corps of his army of the sections to be occupied during

the retreat behind the river and reported at 11:45 a.m. that attempts to

stop the troops were in vain. "The good regiments have shrunk very

much due to combat losses, the Ruthenians fail almost completely."

There is not much to hope for from the marching half of the 45th Infantry

Division. A Russian thrust on Luck finds no corresponding resistance

anymore. The Archduke here considered the danger of a "complete

breakthrough and encirclement of the X Corps" to be great, "which would

also call into question holding the Styr line."

Generaloberst von Linsingen, who hoped to have the composite division,

including five battalions and three batteries of German troops, ready at

Palcza the next day, again urged at 3:35 p.m., but in vain, to hold the

position. In the evening, it turned out that the front line of the army

from Mlynow, where there was still a connection to the left flank of the

Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, ran behind Staw and Styr to the southern

end of the outer bridgehead of Luck, then suddenly past Nierow through

inaccessible forest area to the last Styr lowland near Kosti. Here, the

closing Corps Fath had already had to bend its right flank back somewhat.

By the retreat of the entire Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, a bulge of 75

kilometers wide and 20 kilometers deep had formed within three days.

Of the 8<sup>1/2</sup> infantry divisions of the army, hardly half were still

somewhat combat-effective. Generaloberst von Linsingen wanted to attempt to halt the backward movement by deploying the fresh forces positioned at Palcza.

Page: 457 keyno: 044

Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. Abandonment of Lucz.

attempt to at least halt the backward movement by deploying the fresh forces assigned to Palcza. For the time being, however, only half of the Austrian 45th Infantry Division was available at Riwnecy, which was to be brought up to divisional strength by German troops during the course of June 7. In addition to this half-division, the following were anticipated: from the Gronau Army Group, a cavalry brigade; from the Prince Leopold Army Group, the 28th Landwehr Brigade; and in a few days from the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the Austro-Hungarian 29th Infantry Division. General of Cavalry von Bernhardi was to take command of all these troops.

Before the newly forming division was ready on June 7, a new Russian attack hit the entire front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. The army command had been moved from Lucz to the railway leading from Kowel to Perespa in the morning, where the Bernhardi Corps was to assemble. In the afternoon, the parts of the Surmay Corps and the X Corps deployed in the bridgehead of Lucz, a double line of fortified and barricaded positions, retreated. Under the pursuit fire of Russian artillery, "infantry and batteries hastened in wild flight" across the Styr. But even the Austro-Hungarian II Corps on the left, which had suffered little until then, continued the retreat along the entire front and left only small rear guards on the right bank of the Styr. By evening, the entire Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was completely shaken behind the river. The depth of the incursion was already 40 kilometers and more. At the request of Generaloberst von Linsingen, Generaloberst Archduke Josef Ferdinand had been relieved of his position. His successor, Generaloberst Tersztyánszky von Nádas, was still awaited. Generaloberst von Linsingen himself was initially tied to this rather remote headquarters due to the connections converging in Jablon. In his view, the immediate concern was whether it would be possible to hold the Styr line. A continuous, albeit not fully developed position on the heights of the west bank and the strong water obstacle in front favored the defense. Nevertheless, it was questionable whether the Surmay Corps and the X Corps, whose troops were described as demoralized by the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army command, would hold the river crossing. The Linsingen High Command expected the front to falter again. It wanted to gather its reserves at Perespa, ready to attack southward on the western bank of the Styr as soon as the enemy crossed the river.

1) Previously commander of the 49th R.D. with the 9th Army (Army Group Prince Leopold).  
2) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 400.  
3) Last commander-in-chief of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, Volume IX, p. 206.

Page: 458 keyno: 045

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

advancing to the river. It assumed that the Styr section

below Lucz would be held. For the Corps Fath in the north, which, like the Corps Hauer, had repelled repeated Russian attacks since the evening of June 6, there was therefore no concern. In the south, however, the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army had already had to bend its left wing westward and was to take over the Ikwa and Styr section up to about 15 kilometers south of Lucz on the orders of the Austro-Hungarian High Command from June 8; the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division was then to join it. This shifted the focus of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army northward. The army command was moved to Wladimir-Wolynsk.

On this day, June 7, the situation with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army had also taken a new, very serious turn. The Russians had broken into the positions of the XIII Corps at Jazlowie and had pushed through in pursuit beyond the Strypa. By evening, the front had been pushed back more than 20 kilometers wide, from the Dniester to the railway east of Buczacz, four to five kilometers behind the Strypa into the second line of defense running there. The local command considered it possible that order and composure might return to leaders and troops by the following morning, but the High Command was already preparing for the possibility that the coming days might bring significant territorial losses. Since the army's reserves had already been used up, the Southern Army had to assist. The enemy had undertaken nothing serious against it and the Böhm-Ermolli Army Group.

h) Discussion of the Chiefs of Staff in Berlin¹) and the battles on June 8 and 9.

Already on the evening of June 6, General von Falkenhayn had no doubt about the seriousness of the situation with the Linsingen Army Group. The German reinforcements promised in the morning, two mixed brigades, seemed to him by no means sufficient. Since the enemy was again standing ready to attack from the Pripjet as before in undiminished strength, that is, with almost double superiority, it was a dangerous gamble to withdraw troops from there. Withdrawals from the Western Front were hardly justifiable given the situation and intentions there²). Moreover, it was a front section for whose defense Generaloberst von Conrad was primarily responsible with his own troops. Thus, General von Falkenhayn had in the night of June 7 initially turned to him and demanded the deployment of sufficient Austro-Hungarian reinforcements, even if it would take some time for them to arrive.

¹) Connection to p. 454.  
²) p. 311 ff.

Page: 459 keyno: 046

First Deployments from the German Western Front.

Initially addressed to him on June 7, demanding the deployment of sufficient Austro-Hungarian reinforcements, even if it would take some time for them to arrive. If they did not come at all, it could "actually happen that the Russians, with numerically barely equal forces, would reshape the entire war situation in the East to their advantage." The response from Teschen was delayed. Before it arrived, General von Cramon reported at noon on June 7: Lieutenant General Metzger, the head of the operations department at the Austro-Hungarian army command, was of the opinion "that with Austrian troops — even those available from the Southwest Front — the situation at Auf can be restored." Further reports from Generaloberst von Linsingen clarified the completely diminished resistance of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army; their troops had retreated so far without compelling reason that the counterattack intended from Riwne was no longer feasible. Quick German assistance seemed necessary. General von Falkenhayn ordered the dispatch of the 108th Infantry Division from the area of the Commander-in-Chief East and the X Army Corps from his previously held back Western reserves to Kowel. In the communication about this to Generaloberst von Conrad, he emphasized that he assumed it was self-evident that all somehow dispensable Austro-Hungarian units would be transported to the threatened front using the railways to the fullest extent. At the same time, he asked the allied Chief of Staff for a discussion in Berlin on June 8.

Generaloberst von Conrad had initially considered prompting General von Falkenhayn to abandon the Verdun offensive, whose progress seemed minimal to him anyway. German troops were to settle the situation against Russia, while the Austro-Hungarians continued the fight against Italy. With this aim, Lieutenant General Metzger also made the aforementioned communication to Lieutenant General von Cramon. The reminder that the Austro-Hungarian army had taken responsibility for holding the Eastern Front beyond the Pripet, and indeed holding it with their own troops as long as the Russians did not regroup their forces, seemed to have faded with Generaloberst von Conrad and his staff. When by the evening of June 7 the situation at the front became increasingly threatening, it became clear to the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff that his plans would not prevail in the discussion in Berlin, but rather the situation would be discussed to abandon the Tyrolean offensive. So he decided, "only reluctantly," to travel.

1) p. 316. — 2) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 438.

Page: 460 keyno: 047

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

By the afternoon of June 8, when Colonel General von Conrad arrived in Berlin, reports of further deterioration at both breakthrough points were already available. The necessity to restore the situation seemed as urgent to him with the 5th and 7th Armies due to the proximity of Romania as with the 4th Army. He considered a counterattack with far-reaching goals. On one hand, the Russians were to be dealt an "active" blow that would offset their current great success and thus eliminate the dangers it had "caused (among Russia's allies, neutrals, Romania — ultimately in Serbia and Montenegro; in Russia itself)". On the other hand, it was necessary to prevent Russia from once again taking possession of Eastern Galicia and Bukovina. Both were necessary — concluded Colonel General von Conrad — due to a "repercussion on the great war decision, which we must primarily keep in mind and which currently reduces Italy to a secondary theater of war." Thus, he was now ready to draw troops from the Alpine front to Galicia. On the other hand, he wanted to request more divisions from General von Falkenhayn, which, however, should not roll to Kowel, but be at the free disposal of the Austro-Hungarian army command to Lemberg.

General von Falkenhayn had also meanwhile dealt with the question of now conducting a "quick, energetic strike" from Kowel in the east. However, during the discussion in Berlin, it no longer played a role. Besides the plans for the west, it was noted that the railway conditions behind the front at Kowel excluded the rapid deployment of strong troops.

The result of the discussion was summarized by General von Falkenhayn on the evening of June 8 in a telegram to Colonel General von Conrad, stating: "There is no disagreement about the seriousness of the situation on the Galician front regarding both the tactical events and the operational ones and their repercussions for the entire course of the war. The situation is so serious that all available forces must be thrown to the threatened front. Naturally, Austria-Hungary is primarily obliged and also determined to postpone all offensive operations against Italy behind the defensive measures in Galicia." Therefore, the 61st Infantry Division had already been set in motion from Tyrol to Galicia, with strong heavy artillery and as soon as possible, additional infantry units would follow with the greatest acceleration.

1) p. 461 f.  
2) Remarks from June 9 on the result of the discussion transmitted by General von Falkenhayn.

Page: 461 keyno: 048

Discussion of the General Staff Chiefs in Berlin.

strong heavy artillery and as soon as possible also further infantry units would follow her with the greatest acceleration. At the moment, such units are not available because the 2½ divisions still standing in the second line are not considered for use in Galicia and other troops could only be withdrawn from the front in a few days, after a permanently sustainable line at the edge of the Asiago Plateau had been won. General von Falkenhayn then suggested that at least 2½ divisions, relieved by the aforementioned, would be made available for Galicia. On the German side, forces in the strength of more than four divisions with very ample heavy artillery are being transported to the Linsingen army group. Whether a fifth division (11th Bavarian from the West) could still be sent or must go as a replacement for the 108th to the Hindenburg army group should be decided based on the situation upon their arrival in Warsaw. Then it continued: "Operationally, we have decided to restore the situation through a strong offensive of the Linsingen army group from the area of Kowel in the direction south past Kowno. All incoming reinforcements will therefore be directed to Kowel. The 1st, 2nd, South, and 7th Armies receive the strictest order to hold their positions with all means, but no reinforcements." Details followed about unloading at the Koweler railway and equipping the arriving German units with local transport.

These records were agreed upon by Generaloberst von Conrad with the sole reservation to also allocate parts of the Austro-Hungarian reinforcements to the Austro-Hungarian 7th, 2nd, or 1st Army if necessary, provided that "the deployment of a small force would suffice to prevent a serious failure for the whole." He was thinking especially of using the Hungarian 61st Infantry Division, which could not be ready for use in Galicia until June 17th. Even without them, at least 7½ divisions would still be needed for the assault group at Kowel. Meanwhile, General von Falkenhayn insisted that everything that could be brought out must be sent to the Linsingen army group. He requested heavy steep artillery batteries for the Western Front if they became available in Italy.

Meanwhile, the disaster at the front in Galicia and Volhynia continued its course. The Austro-Hungarian XIII Corps of the 7th Army had continued its retreat; its southern flank was already 17 kilometers west of the Strypa estuary by the evening of June 8th.

keyno: 049

Page: 463 keyno: 050

Further Retreat of the Austro-Hungarian 7th and 4th Army.

The day thus ended at the Austro-Hungarian X Corps, and accordingly, the

1st Army was forced to bend its left wing from the Styr into the extension of the

Strwa front. This created a gap about 15 kilometers wide between it and the 4th Army.

In the north, the enemy could cross the Czernia; the right wing of the still assembling

Bernhardi Group had to be withdrawn

so that it would not be prematurely involved in battles. Thus, it was already a

glimmer of hope that the Austro-Hungarian II Corps managed to hold its ground below Rozhische

on the Styr and repulse the enemy, who crossed at Kolki, in a counterattack;

it lost 1300 prisoners. The northernly adjoining

Corps Fath and Hauer also repelled all Russian attacks

as before.

In the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, leaders and troops had very little

confidence for further resistance in the area east of Buczacz.

Colonel General von Pflanzer had already decided to retreat southward,

swinging back with the entire army over the Dniester to the Pruth,

to strike from there into the enemy's flank if it turned

towards Lemberg. In view of the experiences at hand,

the Austro-Hungarian military leadership had serious reservations against

this "extraordinarily bold plan"), which initially had to tear a wide gap

between the Austro-Hungarian 7th and the Southern Army. It expressly ordered the

7th Army not to withdraw the XIII and VI Corps

over the Dniester under any circumstances, but to maintain the current front in firm connection with the Southern

Army. As the enemy did not press strongly on June 9,

it was possible to comply with this order.

c) Events up to June 15th2) and Deployment of the Attack Group

Kovel.

While the troops were rolling in to form the Attack Group

Kovel, the overall situation south of the Pripjet became more difficult day by day.

The morning of June 10th brought a new severe

breach by the Russians into the front of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army at Olyka.

The remnants of 2½ infantry and a cavalry division of

Field Marshal Ritter von Benigni were already in full retreat

southward against the Pruth by noon. Colonel General von Pflanzer

withdrew the neighboring troops, above all, to maintain the connection in the north

expressly ordered again by the military leadership.

1) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 431.  
2) For the southern wing only until June 12.  
3) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 443.

Page: 464 keyno: 051

The Eastern Front. – Brusilov Offensive.

The retreat movement went over two rearward positions and ended for the right army wing (Austro-Hungarian XI Corps) only behind the Pruth on both sides of Czernowitz. Not east of Snjatyn, the line turned sharply north to the Dniester east of Horodenkta. In this area, it was only possible in the course of June 11, with great effort, to build a new, albeit very thinly occupied front. A single day had resulted in a loss of terrain of almost 30 kilometers in depth. But the front at Buczacz had also given way further on June 10. It now ran from the Dniester bend east of the Koropice mouth north to the previous right wing of the German Southern Army, which was still on the Strypa. At the request of General Count Bothmer, it had been extended due to the events of June 10 by transferring the right wing corps of the 7th Army (Austro-Hungarian VI Corps) to just north of the Monasterzyska–Buczacz railway.

In view of the low resistance capability of the troops of the 7th Army, Generaloberst von Pflanzer deemed it necessary to withdraw his forces south of the Dniester to the same level as those north of the river. This meant further retreating about 30 kilometers. The report on this intention concluded: "The possibility of stopping an attack currently does not exist at all. Such a decision would lead to the complete disintegration of the Bögen group." By the evening of June 12, weak forces had arrived as the right wing of the 7th Army to defend Bukovina from the Romanian border to Jablonitza behind the Pruth, with the main forces from there to Njezvritza on the Dniester. Thus, the army was on the same level as the Southern Army. However, their resistance was so low that Generaloberst von Pflanzer considered further retreat southwest to Delatyn, to take a flanking position against the Russian advance with the "ruined army" according to his already mentioned plan. However, the army command did not allow this.

The German Southern Army, reinforced by the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, had maintained its positions. However, serious danger threatened its right wing if the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army implemented its further retreat plans. At the request of General Count Bothmer, the Austro-Hungarian XIII Corps of the 7th Army was also subordinated to him on June 12. However, the danger was by no means eliminated, but only the unreliable junction between the two armies was once again shifted further south by a corps width. The Austro-Hungarian 7th Army had lost terrain on both sides of the Dniester, 90 kilometers wide and up to 60 kilometers deep, and had lost more than 50 percent of its strength.

1) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 449.

keyno: 052

keyno: 053

Page: 467 keyno: 054

Preparation of the Attack Group Kornel.

pushed forward to the north, towards Kopyle on the Styr, managed to close the gap

in the front again. The advance troops of the Bernhardi Corps

were withdrawn behind the Stochod, its b.ö.u. 29th Infantry

Division was inserted as the right wing of the b.ö.u. II Corps into the front.

On June 12, the situation remained unchanged. For the leadership of the

attack group Kornel, the commanding general of the VI Army Corps, General of Cavalry von der Marwitz,

was made available to the army group. In terms of troops, along with the

11th Bavarian Infantry Division, the 43rd Reserve Division

was also to roll in from the west, but the beginnings of both were not expected before

June 17. In terms of cavalry, from the Gronau Army Group

and from the General Government of Warsaw, the staff of the 9th Cavalry

Division, the 2nd Guard Cavalry Brigade, and five individual regiments

were either already in place or on the move, partly announced. The army group's own

air forces of Linsingen were reinforced. Given the uncertainty

whether the enemy-encircled front of the b.ö.u. II Corps

and the Corps Fath and Hauer could hold in the Styr bend of Zartorysk for

long, Generaloberst von Linsingen did not want to wait for all reinforcements to arrive

but to lead the counterattack as soon as possible, from the area south of Kornel to the

east. Due to this "purely frontal" thrust, General

v. Gallwitz had concerns and pointed to the better prospects

of an attack from the north over the Styr section Stuhl—Rokit.

However, he withdrew his objections when he learned of the reasons from Generaloberst

von Linsingen's instructions for the attack. In them, it was stated

that the enemy would not continue the offensive to the west due to a lack of forces

for the time being. Initially, he seemed to be bringing up reinforcements, supplies,

and ammunition. His measures suggested

that he would soon attack not to the south but to the north,

to roll up the Austro-Hungarian positions in this direction.

In doing so, he would have to offer the left flank to the attack group to be prepared south of Kornel.

By the evening of June 14,

the troops of the X Army Corps would also be unloaded, but further

forces would not arrive before the 17th. Therefore, the counterattack was to be conducted on

June 15 with four German divisions (X Army Corps, 108th Infantry

Division, and Division Rusch) from the west, right wing along

the upper Lurja. The b.ö.u. X Corps and the Surman Corps,

which had been brought to full or divisional strength by replacement troops,

would, as far as possible, participate, especially the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army.

Page: 468 keyno: 055

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army. For this, its subordination to the Linsingen Army Group was already being pursued by the German Supreme Army Command.

In connection with the impending attack, the relocation of the Linsingen High Command, at least its first echelon from Jablon, to the vicinity of the combat operations was necessary. General von Falkenhayn had already urged this and pointed out the great moral significance of such a measure with the words: "One may even ask whether personal influence in such a critical situation is not the only thing from which success can be hoped. The wire may suffice for communication between staffs that are attuned to the same tone. It is not enough where deep-seated grievances exist." However, Generaloberst von Linsingen considered the time for forward relocation to be appropriate only with the start of the counterattack, as it was in no way foreseeable whether the front would not give way further by then and perhaps require another change. According to a record by Lieutenant Colonel Drechsel, then Chief of Staff of the X Army Corps, it was announced to his commanding general and him upon their arrival in Jablon on the evening of June 12: "The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army is defeated and scattered. We do not know where its remnants are. At present, Kowel is not yet occupied by the Russians. However, it is very questionable whether the X Army Corps can still unload in Kowel. We expect further reports by morning."

During this exchange of opinions between the highest German offices, the Austro-Hungarian Army Command authorized the 1st Army on June 12, if the Russians were to launch a strong attack before the start of the German counterattack, to withdraw their front to a prepared position on the Galician border. On the other hand, Generaloberst von Linsingen was forced by delays in the transport of reinforcements to postpone the start of the counterattack.

On June 14, new Russian attacks began against the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 1st Armies. The 1st Army, which was to come under the command of Generaloberst von Linsingen for the unified conduct of the counterattack on June 15, retreated with a loss of about 10,000 men, to join with the adjoining northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army to fall back to the line Lopuszno—Radzimiłłow—Berestezczko.

1) p. 482 f. — 2) Communication from August 14, 1934.  
3) Austrian official report, Volume IV, p. 471.  
4) Ibid., p. 491.

Page: 469 keyno: 056

Delay of the Counterattack. Evasion of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army.

to retreat to the line Lopuszno—Radzimiłłow—Berestezczko. Generaloberst von Linsingen had agreed under the given circumstances but expressed the expectation that the army would now hold its positions, as the enemy was hardly superior in numbers. For participation in the counterattack, only its extreme left wing seemed to be in question; these were the 61st Infantry Division and two Cavalry Divisions that had just arrived at Stojanow. The 4th Army, which despite its formation only had the management of a corps, no longer held its ground from the evening of June 15, about six kilometers west of Lokacze and Kisielin. Meanwhile, the X Army Corps had been unloaded enough that Generaloberst von Linsingen set the attack to begin on June 16; he had moved his headquarters to Kowel on June 14 for this purpose. He intended, as he reported to the Supreme Army Command on that day, to attack with the "Marwitz Strike Group" (four divisions) from the northwest, with the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army from the west, with the three Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Divisions and the Hungarian 61st Infantry Division from the southwest. In contrast, General von Falkenhayn, referring to his concerns expressed on June 12, suggested including the entire Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the Austro-Hungarian II Corps in the attack front. Even if their pressure could only be weak, it would still be beneficial, as strong Russian forces were now advancing westward and would likely collide frontally with the attack of the Marwitz Group. Generaloberst von Linsingen accordingly adjusted his plan.

d) The Russian Command from June 4 to 16.

Section 25.

The offensive of the Russian Southwest Front, initially intended only as a diversion, had already shown successes at the main attack point, with the 8th Army, in the direction of Luck by June 6, which far exceeded all basic assumptions. By noon of that day, 4000 prisoners, 77 guns, and 134 machine guns were counted as spoils. At the 11th, 7th, and 9th Armies, a greater visible success was initially lacking. Similarly, the attempt to pave the way for larger cavalry bodies over Maniewicze to Kowel via Proskuroff for the 8th Army had failed. In their entirety, however, the subsidiary groups had significantly contributed to gradually drawing away Austro-Hungarian reserves from the main breach point in the north.

Gradually, however, the striking power of the 8th Army waned. There was a lack of forces to exploit the success at Luck — as it would have been easy in view of the complete collapse of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army — operationally further.

Page: 470 keyno: 057

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army would have been easy to exploit operationally. The only reserve, the 5th Siberian Corps, was still assembling at Olyka. Thus, the army command and army group had reservations about continuing the offensive beyond Luck. German troops were identified at Rozhyszcze1). Further advances westward exposed the flank to a potential counterattack by forces that could be deployed along the Kovel—Maniewicze railway. Thus, General Brusilov instructed the 8th Army on June 8 to hold the center at the Styr from Sohl to Targowica. The flanks were to press north and south to initially collapse the adjacent enemy fronts. The strong army cavalry concentrated on the northern flank was again tasked with "breaking through into the enemy's rear regardless of any advances." The 11th Army was to assist by attacking over Dubno. The 7th Army, which had successfully breached a broad front north of the Dniester the day before, and the 9th Army were to continue the attack, with the latter being reinforced if necessary by the 113th Infantry Division from Odessa to Proskurow.

Attempts to expand the breach point of the 8th Army initially failed. However, the enemy's withdrawal naturally allowed for the advance, albeit of only weak forces, over Luck to the west.

Meanwhile, it was clear that the main attack originally planned for June 10 or at the latest June 11, which the Western Front was to lead, would be delayed north of the Pripet. On June 3, a day before the start of the Southwestern Front's attack, the Supreme Army Command addressed General Ewcrt's concerns by agreeing to postpone his attack until June 13, or at the latest June 14. The next day, however, General Ewcrt requested further extensions; he wanted to conduct only a preliminary attack on June 13, with the main attack on the 17th. After initial refusal, the Supreme Army Command agreed. This increased the risk that the enemy would move troops from the area north of the Pripet southward and possibly strike the 8th Army's flank from the direction of Kovel. This could benefit the later main attack of the Western Front, but caution in continuing the offensive beyond Luck seemed advisable.

1) See p. 462.

keyno: 058

Page: 472 keyno: 059

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

From the reserves, the XXIII Corps was rolling towards Rowno, the 113th Infantry Division towards Proskurow. The 8th Army received the line Kowel—Wladimir Wolynsk as attack targets, with its strong cavalry to secure against the north, while the southern adjoining armies were to hold a line averaging 30 kilometers ahead of the current front, running over Radziechow—Brzezcany—Stanislau—Kolomea to Kuty.

These orders led to partial attacks on June 14, which brought local territorial gains. On the other hand, all four armies had strong reinforcements, without which further attacks promised no success. General Brusilov could not provide them. Meanwhile, the preliminary attack of the Western Front at Baranowicze on June 13 had ended in complete failure, and the attack at Pinsk was postponed to June 17, the day when the major main attack was also to begin, which the Western Front was still to lead. From the Southwestern Front, the 9th Army had turned south with two corps and begun to cross the Pruth. It was recognized that a counterattack threatened the 8th Army from the direction of Kowel. Five infantry and one cavalry division of newly arrived German and Austro-Hungarian reinforcements were identified, with three more infantry divisions to follow. General Brusilov had therefore already ordered the 8th Army on June 15 not to continue the offensive and to hold strong reserves behind the right wing. However, in the evening of the day, he issued an order for the regrouping of the army to attack Kowel at dawn on June 17, which was the next task to take possession of. In the direction of Wladimir, any forward movement of the infantry was to be halted.

Meanwhile, the 11th Army had attacked over the Plaszewka and pursued the enemy retreating towards the Galician border.

When the German and Austro-Hungarian counterattack began on June 16, the 4th Cavalry Corps, XXXVI Corps, 5th Cavalry Corps, and XXXX Corps held the Styr bend from Czartorysk in front of the 8th Army. Between Styr and Stochod, the V Siberian Corps was newly deployed. West of the railway to Kowel, the XXXIX and XXXX Corps stood before the Stochod, south of Zaturce, the VIII Corps joined in a broader formation up to north of Gorochow.

1) P. 470, 494, and 517.

Page: 473 keyno: 060

Development of the Situation with the Enemy.

As reinforcement, the XXIII Corps was advancing over Rowno. As the right wing of the 11th Army, which was connected to the south, the XXXXV and XXXII Corps were positioned in a formation about 30 kilometers wide, extending south of the Rowno—Brody railway.

e) The Counterattack of the Linsingen Army Group from June 16 to 23.

Position 28.

The troops of the Linsingen Army Group were positioned on the morning of June 16 as follows:

The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army under Generaloberst von Puhallo, which connected to the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army at Brody, held the 40-kilometer front to Golatyn with 3½ exhausted divisions. As the left wing of the army, positioned to the west, ready to attack:

Hungarian 61st Infantry Division just north of Gorochow; to the west, connecting with the cavalry corps of Field Marshal Lieutenant Ostermuth (Austro-Hungarian 4th and 7th Cavalry Divisions) south of Swinuchy.

Austro-Hungarian 4th Army under Generaloberst von Tersztyanszky with the 10th Cavalry Division (including a composite German brigade) with the front facing east south of Lokacze, with the remnants of five infantry divisions positioned backward on both sides of Chorostow and from there northeast beyond the Turja, thus concealing the deployment of the German X Army Corps.

Attack Group Kowel with "Assault Group Marwitz" (X Army Corps, 108th and Austro-Hungarian 29th Infantry Division, these withdrawn from the front of the Austro-Hungarian II Corps1) behind the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army from Czesnówka on the Turja to south of Solotwina. Here, the Bernhardi Group joined with the Rusche Division behind the Stochod and, leading over to the Styr defense, the Austro-Hungarian II Corps. Two mortar battalions were arriving at Kowel2).

Following to the north were the Austro-Hungarian groups Fath, positioned in the Styr bend of Czartorysk in a sharply protruding and thus particularly endangered position, and Hauer, finally the German Army Group Gronau.

The air forces had been brought to six German field and one artillery air division and three Austro-Hungarian air companies.

In terms of reinforcements, besides cavalry, the 43rd Reserve Division in Stojanow and the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division (including two heavy field howitzer and one mortar battery) were expected; both had recently suffered heavy losses at Verdun and were to arrive by train starting June 17.

1) p. 467. — 2) In total, 12 heavy steep-angle and 3 heavy flat-angle batteries were transferred with the X Army Corps.

Page: 474 keyno: 061

The Offront. — Brusilov Offensive.

Field howitzer and a mortar battery were expected; both had recently suffered heavily at Verdun and were to arrive by train starting June 17.

The enemy seemed to have about four corps from Bereczkcz over Torczyn to Porecpa with the front facing west, about three from Porecpa to Kolki with the front facing north, in the area west of Torczyn in front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army and the Marwitz Group only weaker forces, mainly cavalry. Full clarity about the course and strength of the enemy's deployment had not yet been gained, as everything was in constant motion. The lack of clarity of the area added to the difficulty. It was densely covered with larger and smaller forests and scattered individual farms, structured by many small elevations and showed height differences of up to 50 meters. Thunderstorms and heavy downpours that had fallen over the combat area in recent days had made the roads impassable. Softened clay soil and flooded swampy lowlands, numerous river and stream courses made the movements of the vehicles, which were also partially inadequately harnessed, difficult. Above all, the arrival of the heavy batteries and the ammunition columns, which were still considerably behind or not even unloaded, suffered from this. Nevertheless, Generaloberst von Linsingen believed he could not wait any longer and therefore adhered to the execution of the attack on June 16. Consideration of the urgent situation of the Fath Group and the arrival of Russian reinforcements had been decisive.

The thrust of the Marwitz Group with three battle-ready, rested German divisions in the front line was to bring the decision. They were to attack at 9 a.m., with the right wing along the Turja, with the left in the general direction of Luck. The entire Bernhardi Group was to join this attack on the left, from whose pressure the opening of the Stochod crossing from Soszyczno was hoped for, on the right the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, advancing with the main forces over Lokacze to the east. The attack group of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army received Bludow as the target, the parts of this army standing further east were to join the advance.

In the Marwitz assault group, the X Army Corps under Generalleutnant Walter Freiherr von Lüttwitz began at 9 a.m. as ordered. Immediately in front of the front, only weak enemy forces were reported, as it soon turned out, cavalry.

Page: 475 keyno: 062

Army Group Linsingen: The Counterattack.

revealed, cavalry. The effect of the heavy artillery'), of which

only in the early afternoon hours was each division assigned a battery,

the mortars could not yet be positioned due to the poor ground, was lost in the forest and

swamp of the confusing terrain. The Russian artillery seemed to have

more ammunition than in 1915 and also to shoot better2).

Thus, the attack of the X Army Corps in the terrain rich in natural strongpoints

on the first day in the decisive direction, towards

the height of Kisielin, with its southern, 20th Infantry Division, did not

advance northwards, while the northern 19th Infantry Division got stuck in

impassable swamp terrain. After the Russian cavalry

had been pushed back about five kilometers, the corps found itself in the evening

facing the heavily entrenched main forces of the Russian XXXIX and

XXXIX Corps. It went better with the already fully assembled

108th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Bettmann, which

south of Solotwin in the direction of Dorosino took a bridgehead

about two kilometers deep on the right Stochod bank.

On the other hand, the attempt of the Bernhardi group, at Boguszówka on

the south bank to gain a foothold, was unsuccessful; they had to be content with having essentially held their ground3), because here the enemy pushed forward4). At Gruziatyn, he was able to expand his bridgehead on the

front bank even further; the encirclement of the Fath Corps

was complete here. To the right of the Mannix group, the s.-u. 4th Army could

advance without significant resistance, up to the height of Lokacze.

South of Lokacze, however, three Austro-Hungarian

cavalry divisions (10th and Cavalry Corps Ostermuth) retreated from the Russian

attack from the lake section of Swiniuchy southwestwards against the southern

Bug. The Hungarian 61st Infantry Division advanced from Gorochów

northeast a few kilometers, but could not hold the gains.

The s.-u. 7th Infantry Division entrenched itself at Golatyn and

east on the north bank of the Lipa. Overall, no decisive success was achieved anywhere.

1) As far as can be determined: X. A. K. 3 f. s. F. H., 1 10 cm-3Btrr., 1 or several  
Mtr. Btrrn; 108. I. D. 2, The Slide 1/2, s.-u. 29. I. D. 2 f. s. F. H. Btrrn.; everything  
else still far back.  
2) Communication from Genlts. a. D. Boehm-Zettelbach, then Genlt. Off. of the  
20th I. D., from July 15, 1934.  
3) From Bernhardi: "Memoirs from my Life", G. 435.  
4) As it seems, in contradiction to the last instructions of General  
Brusilov (p. 472).

Page: 476 keyno: 063

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

In the attack against the cleverly entrenched and deeply structured enemy, the attack of the X Army Corps did not break through on June 17 either. The 108th Infantry Division and the subsequently deployed Austro-Hungarian 29th Infantry Division managed to expand the bridgehead on the right bank of the Stochod. Otherwise, the day brought no significant results. Generaloberst von Linsingen had felt compelled to assemble the 9th Cavalry Division (four brigades), to which all present German cavalry units were consolidated, to support the front behind the breach at Smolinitschi and to push forward the foremost regiment of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division behind the Bernhardi group for the same purpose. In the evening, however, he requested further significant reinforcements from the Supreme Army Command and Generaloberst von Conrad to carry out the mission assigned to him, which saw Rowno as the target, as the enemy, "according to reliable reports," was constantly bringing in reinforcements; identified were the XXIII, XXXXVI, and V Siberian Corps. When General von Falkenhayn subsequently pointed out to the Chief of Staff of the Army Group, Major General von Stolzmann, over the phone that no further troops were available at the time and the railways were occupied, the latter hoped to break through with the existing and still arriving forces in an attack from three sides. If necessary — as General von Falkenhayn decided — one would have to be content with pushing the enemy back as far as possible, without aiming for Rowno. Furthermore, he pointed out that, based on experiences made in the West even against tough opponents, an enemy not standing in permanently fortified works would certainly be worn down by the fire of our heavy artillery, if only the effect of the heavy field howitzers and mortars, "in a confined space," for the battery no more than 200 meters wide, was concentrated. Similarly, "storm machines" could be fired through the massed use of light field howitzers, according to experience. Reinforcements from the Austro-Hungarian side were not to be expected. Generaloberst von Linsingen ordered the continuation of the attack "with the greatest emphasis" for the next day. The aim was to defeat the enemy before he could bring in more troops.

1) See p. 460 f., 482 and the following response from General von Falkenhayn. Further details were not ascertainable.  
2) This meant, according to the usual language of the time: based on intercepted radio messages.  
3) Only the XXIII Corps was new, the XXXXVI was formed from divisions already fighting on this front.

Page: 477 keyno: 064

Army Group Linsingen: Minor Attack Successes.

But even on June 18, despite more favorable weather, there were no decisive advances against well-hidden Russian machine guns. It was a heavy day of attack for Group Marwitz against a numerically superior, well-entrenched enemy who repeatedly tried to gain ground and left extraordinary numbers of dead. However, the 20th Infantry Division of the X Army Corps still failed to take the commanding Russian high position northwest of Kiiselin. Their mortars, which could not advance due to the softened ground, had meanwhile been assigned to Group Bernhardi. But even ammunition, especially heavy, was not sufficiently brought forward due to a lack of columns, which had not yet fully arrived, and impassable roads. Further north, the 108th Infantry Division achieved some successes. This secured the position on the right bank of the Stochod, but for the overall situation, only insignificant success was achieved. The spoils amounted to 4000 prisoners, 21 machine guns, and two cannons in three days of fighting. Meanwhile, the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army had even retreated several kilometers under Russian attacks near Gorochow. Four cavalry divisions, including the German 9th, were just enough to fill the gap from there to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which lay exhausted with its right wing at Lokatce. In the north, the situation in the Styr bend near Zartorysk caused the greatest concern.

The resilience of the Austro-Hungarian II Corps and the Fath Corps — as Generaloberst von Linsingen had already reported on the evening of June 17 in response to his request for reinforcements — was seriously declining due to continuous fighting and the daily increasing Russian pressure. On June 18, Generaloberst von Conrad replied: "The main task remains to push through with the attack. In contrast, the defense of the endangered Styr bend is secondary." If the advancing 1st Bavarian Division was indispensable for the success of the attack, then further north, forces could be saved if necessary by occupying the Stochod position. Generaloberst von Linsingen had a different opinion. He passed on the decision with the addition of the Chief of the General Staff, that in this case, the Russian forces stationed at the lower Styr would immediately turn west, i.e., against Group Bernhardi. Troops for offensive use would therefore not be freed. "The order to retreat has not been given by me; rather, the commanders between Stuhl and Kolki have been urged by me in the strongest terms to hold out. Report on this to indicate the mood of reluctance to retreat."

Page: 478 keyno: 065

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

In an evening telephone conversation with Major General Tappen, Major General von Stolzmann sought to reassure about what had been achieved so far. With a ruthless offensive from three sides — he believed — it would be possible, after the arrival of the 43rd Reserve Division at the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division at the Bernhardi Group, to "decisively defeat the enemy at one point" and thereby at least restore the situation. The intention was to resume the attack in a planned manner after the reinforcements arrived on June 21.

June 19 brought the capture of the eight defended positions around Kisielin by the 20th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General von Schöler. The Russians suffered heavy losses. Otherwise, the day passed without significant changes on the front against Luck. As a result of the loss of Kisielin, the enemy seemed to be preparing to withdraw his parts advanced to the west, to strengthen the northern front of the Luck arc at the expense of the southern front, and to bring in more troops from the area north of the Pripet. Accordingly, reserves of the Eastern High Command had already been set in motion to the south, the 107th Infantry Division behind the endangered Styr arc to Maniewicze, the 5th Reserve Division initially behind the Gronau Army Group, where new Russian attacks were expected according to air reports. Furthermore, the Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division, coming from the Italian front, was to move to the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army at Stojanow.

As the deployment against the southern front of the Russian incursion was delayed, the attack began on June 21 only in the west and north, but despite the deployment of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, no progress was made. On the other hand, the enemy retreated before the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, where he had already withdrawn troops on June 18 and on the 19th, the burning of villages suggested intentions to retreat. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army followed up to Zaturce and Swiniuchy.

On June 22, the immobile attack group on the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army under General of Cavalry Tugen von Falkenhayn (General Command of the XXII Reserve Corps) was also ready. From it stood the remnants of the Hungarian 61st Infantry Division¹), behind which the first parts of the Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division arrived, at Gorochow, the 43rd Reserve Division south of Swiniuchy, the Cavalry Corps Sternuth and the 9th Cavalry Division at this location.

¹) Further details on the situation north of the Pripet pp. 479 and 517 f.  
²) The division, which had 8000 rifles on June 16, had only 3000 rifles on June 19 (Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 495).

Page: 479 keyno: 066

Army Group Linsingen: Preliminary Conclusion of the Counterattack.

and the 9th Cavalry Division at this location. During the day, they pushed back weaker opponents, mainly cavalry, a few kilometers to the east. On June 23, they were able to advance to Golatyn—Pustomyth and Gadyn. Thus, the counterattack of Army Group Linsingen temporarily concluded.

Despite the deployment of 9½ new divisions, including six German ones with three mortar battalions, in eight days of fighting from June 16 to 23, only a pushing back of the Russians, especially their furthest westward advanced parts, was achieved. The success suffered under the difficulties of the terrain, particularly also because the German core troops brought in only gradually arrived due to extremely unfavorable railway conditions and were deployed in view of the low resistance capability of the Austro-Hungarian divisions before they were fully assembled. Since the combat strength of the Austro-Hungarian troops was completely insufficient to hold the parts of the enemy standing in front of their front, the Russians, far superior in total number, were able to relatively undisturbed shift their reserves to the positions threatened by German attack. Their further advance against Lemberg or Kowel was blocked, but a decisive success was not achieved. The total booty counted nearly 6000 prisoners, 28 machine guns, and 2 cannons.

f. Events at the Connection Fronts.

Maps 6, 7, Sketch 28.

Meanwhile, the 81st Reserve Division of Army Group Gronau successfully repelled Russian attacks on June 19 at Logischin, north of Pinsk. On June 23, the army group was subordinated to Army Group Prince Leopold, as the growth of Army Group Linsingen and the tasks further assigned to it required relief in the north.

At the front of the Southern Army, the Russians had already been trying in vain since June 14 to extend their positions taken on the west bank of the Strypa against the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps to the north, but were mainly held back by troops of the German 48th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General von Oppeln-Bronikowski.

keyno: 067

Page: 481 keyno: 068

Further Retreat Movement of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army.

continued. On the evening of June 23, their right wing was already positioned between

Kimpolung and Jacobeny, with other parts in disconnected groups

advancing as far as west of Wiznitz. From there, there was a connection to the

western wing of the army holding Czernaüwa's northern wing. Against

it, against the southern army reinforced by the 105th Infantry Division, and against the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the enemy had not continued his attacks.

3. The Allied Army Commands from June 10 to 23.

Maps 6, 7.

During the described combat operations, further significant

discussions took place between the German and Austro-Hungarian General Staffs,

which, however, had no direct influence on the events at

the front.

In the course of June 10, the first reports arrived in Teschen

that a severe Russian breakthrough had also occurred with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army. Generaloberst von Linsingen reported that he had given the Austro-Hungarian

4th Army the direction to retreat northwest,

as its connection with the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army was in question; the retreat had already affected their northern wing.

Generaloberst von Conrad faced an extremely serious situation. He

was concerned, on the one hand, that Romania would join the enemy camp if the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army continued to retreat, and on the other hand, that

the Russians would take the path to Lemberg through the gap that opened between the Austro-Hungarian 1st and 4th Armies. He considered — as he informed the German General

Staff through General von Cramon — the situation so serious

that it no longer concerned only Austro-Hungarian interests but was

"decisive for the world war." The possibility that even the positions still held, especially in Bukovina, would have to be abandoned

made it more likely that Romania would yield to Russian pressure

and join the Entente. He saw "a decisive

means" to reshape the situation and dictate terms to the enemy again,

only in the fact that another thrust should be made with further German troops at a

different location than with the Linsingen Army Group.

He now wanted to draw all available forces from the Italian front for this purpose. These statements were supported by Major General von Cramon with

the addition that he had — despite some exceptions — the impression that at the main breakthrough points, the resistance capability of the Austro-Hungarian troops was exhausted, and that as they retreated from position to position, even the troops still holding would lose significantly in moral and physical value; the newly recruited replacements were no longer fully effective.

1) p. 483 ff.  
2) Connection to p. 461.  
World War. Vol. X.

Page: 482 keyno: 069

The Offront. — Brusilov Offensive.

at the main breakthrough points, the resistance capability of the Austro-Hungarian

troops was exhausted, and that when retreating from position to

position, even the troops still holding would lose significantly in moral and physical

value; the newly recruited replacements were no longer fully effective.

General von Falkenhayn had meanwhile also received a statement

from the Chief of Staff of the "Mackensen" Army Group, Major General

von Seeckt, dated June 9, who, like his superior commander,

was particularly familiar with the conditions on the

battlefront in Galicia and Volhynia from the 1915 campaign and

voluntarily explained the following: The Austrians and Hungarians have

already admitted a loss of 50,000 prisoners, the total

loss will amount to 100,000 men\*), "thus an army. Russia,

having finally found the long-known weak point of the front,

will not stop pressing forward." He proposed the rapid formation

of a new army near Lemberg or Kowel. The decisive factor

for this would be the railway conditions. The target of the attack must be Kowno in both cases.

The new army should consist of about six German and four

Austro-Hungarian divisions; one of the divisions could

be provided by the Balkans. The entire front, except for the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army and the

Southern Army, should be combined under a German army group command,

otherwise "the whole matter is hopeless." In conclusion, he offered

his own services for the new task.

These explanations did not remain without effect on the further decisions

of General von Falkenhayn. The Romanian threat

he did not consider urgent — as he replied to General von Cramon on June 11 —

as long as Bulgaria "remains on board"\*\*). He

suggested placing the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army under the Linsingen Army Group.

On the other hand, a cooperation of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army with the

German Southern Army for a counterattack was conceivable. For the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army,

he considered the German 105th Infantry Division from the Balkans as a possible support. "Indeed" — he further threatened

Colonel General von Conrad himself — "in this case, as Your

Excellency has known for a year and a day, a decisive change in

command would be essential." The simplest solution would probably be

to assign Major General von Seeckt as Chief of Staff over the

current chief of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army.

\*) G. 596 f.  
2) That was still underestimated. See G. 483.  
3) G. 597 ff. and 642.

Page: 483 keyno: 070

The Allied Army Commands.

Generaloberst von Conrad rejected a change in command over the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army and initially also the appointment of Generalmajor von Seeckt, as a fruitful collaboration between Generaloberst von Pflanzer and a German chief of staff imposed on him was not to be expected. However, he could not ignore the necessity of transferring the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army from the Böhm-Ermolli Army Group to the Linsingen Army Group. On the other hand, he proposed to subordinate the German South Army to Generaloberst von Böhm-Ermolli to ensure its cooperation with his Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. This arrangement would have meant a weakening rather than strengthening of German influence. A report from the South Army to the Supreme Army Command stated that a counterattack conducted jointly with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was out of the question due to a lack of forces; rather, the focus of future battles must lie on the southern flank of the army. General von Falkenhayn did not agree to the Austro-Hungarian counterproposal. The Austro-Hungarian 7th South and 2nd Armies remained independent. On the other hand, Generaloberst von Conrad, under the crushing impression of the daily events at the front, especially the unbearable further retreat of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, agreed to the position demanded for Generalmajor von Seeckt at the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army as "Chief of General Staff" after repeated German insistence.

Meanwhile, the Russian victory reports, which matched the reports from their own side, increasingly indicated the danger of a complete collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front. The official Russian army report of June 11, which was available to the German Supreme Army Command early on June 12, already reported 106,000 prisoners, 124 guns, 180 machine guns, and 58 mortars as booty. At both breakthrough points, in Bukovina and near Luck, the German and Austro-Hungarian forces were in no way sufficient to help simultaneously. As the situation had developed, there was nothing left but to initially assign all available troops to the counterattack of Generaloberst Linsingen. Any doubts that had existed about this were resolved in these days. The German 105th Infantry Division, which was not expected until later, was also temporarily assigned to the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army. Furthermore, General von Falkenhayn deemed it necessary to secure even greater influence on the measures on the Austro-Hungarian front against Russia. For this, he considered Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen, who had already led Austro-Hungarian armies in the summer and autumn of 1915 and at the Ballon

Page: 484 keyno: 071

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

now perhaps dispensable, for the suitable personality. Thus he brought to General von Cramon for presentation to Generaloberst von Conrad, he considered "the leadership of the supreme command by a firm man on the spot, whose name means a lot, necessary and suggests entrusting Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen, whose staff would naturally have to be supplemented by the Austrian side, with this task." The entire Austro-Hungarian front against Russia would be subordinated to him, because the connecting army command could not fulfill the task proposed for Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen due to its other tasks and the distances involved — from Teschen 500 kilometers to the front — just as the German Supreme Army Command could not exercise command over the individual armies, which were subordinated to Generalfeldmarschall von Hindenburg. The communication concluded: "I am certain that General von Conrad will be convinced that my proposals are guided only by factual considerations and unreserved trust in his understanding of my openness."

Generaloberst von Conrad saw in the proposal the effort to eliminate the Austro-Hungarian army command1). He replied on June 13: He would thereby "take on commitments regarding tasks and the distribution of forces, not only within the Russian front, but also in relation to the other theaters of war, which would make it very difficult to account for the current situation on all fronts. The deployment of a once, albeit very proven leader, he did not consider decisive in the current situation against Russia. However, he considered it decisive that, in recognition of the urgent necessity to overcome the great crisis in the northeast now, the maximum possible number of troops from both sides be deployed for this purpose." Falkenhayn could be convinced that the utmost was being done from Teschen for this purpose. That with the deployment of German troops, the German leadership would also be granted a decisive influence on the operations was self-evident and certainly the case to a sufficient extent. He proposed the consolidation of the k.-u. 7th and the Southern Army under Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen or also under Generaloberst von Böhm-Ermolli with Generalmajor von Seeckt as chief of staff, who could then be replaced by another German general staff officer at the ö.-u. 7th Army.

General von Falkenhayn declared this counterproposal "unfortunately unacceptable, as it did not mean a complete measure. Only if Mackensen commands the entire front, in which the truly effective parts are predominantly German, can he determine force shifts and force deployment with sufficient freedom of action in such a serious situation, and the otherwise necessary protracted discussion between Archduke von Conrad and me about the conduct of operations and force distribution is eliminated.

1) Volume VI, p. 38 f.

Page: 485 keyno: 072

Proposal for Subordination of the Eastern Front under Gen. Field Marshal von Mackensen.

Mackensen commands the entire front, where the truly effective parts are predominantly German, allowing him to determine troop movements and deployment with sufficient freedom in such a serious situation, thus avoiding the otherwise necessary protracted dispute between Archduke von Conrad and me over the conduct of operations and distribution of forces. Just as it does not occur to me to intervene in these matters of the Hindenburg or Prince Leopold Front, which in their extent correspond exactly to the Galician, General von Conrad can equally come to terms with the command unity under Mackensen there. ... It is a matter of the gain and loss of the war, and all minor considerations must be silent." As Generaloberst von Conrad stuck to his counterproposal, General von Falkenhayn abandoned further attempts. "On your way" — he replied on June 14 — the intended purpose, the consolidation of the entire command south of the Pripjet in the hands of a general on site with a significant name, was not achieved. If that is not the case, then the recall of the Field Marshal from the Balkans is also not justified, for which Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria explicitly asked.

Regarding the deployment of forces with the Linsingen Army Group and the necessity for it to remain in place to determine the timing of the counterattack based on its own knowledge of the situation, there was no disagreement between the two General Staff Chiefs. However, General von Falkenhayn later no longer considered the use of the 105th Infantry Division, initially intended for the 7th Army, appropriate when he learned how weak the internal cohesion of the Benigni and Hadfy groups of this army was. The division would not be able to stop the retreat but would likely be drawn into it. He proposed to assign it to the right wing of the Southern Army to assist with a counterattack from there. Generaloberst von Conrad, however, did not view the situation with the 7th Army as hopeless, considering the reinforcement of a Southern Army by one to two divisions as completely insufficient to conduct a counterattack. He wanted to assign not only the 105th but also the 48th Infantry Division, which was rolling in from the Italian front, to the 7th Army, but on June 15, after a sharply worded response from General von Falkenhayn, he agreed to the transfer of both divisions to the right wing of the Southern Army. This was intended to at least prepare the later counterattack of this army.

Page: 486 keyno: 073

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

On the same day, Generaloberst von Conrad presented to the German

Chief of General Staff his overall assessment of the situation in

the following statement: "As we are clearly in the greatest crisis of the World

War and only immediate full agreement in military action

can lead to the goal, I ask Your Excellency to allow me to briefly and frankly present my view of the

overall situation. The success of the attack by the Russian Southwestern Front in Volhynia and Bukovina

has, in my opinion, led the Russian military leadership to the decision

not to launch an offensive against the German front, but to bring all

strong forces that can be spared there to the Southwestern Front, in order to

exploit the previous success, to completely crush one of the two

enemies, namely the weaker one."... This

increasing superiority on the Austrian front, thus over Eastern

Galicia, because only after a complete victory over this front is the way clear

for achieving the main goal of the Entente: for the subjugation

of Germany. If Your Excellency, like me, are convinced that

the Russians are about to seek the decision of the war south of the Pripet,

thus in Eastern Galicia, then it is in our common

interest the compelling necessity to bring everything that is dispensable elsewhere

to this war decision. Of course, I am

determined to do this to the utmost extent. However, I must point out that

300 battalions will face 620 battalions of the Italians, probably

the absolute minimum to prevent the latter from advancing into the interior

of the monarchy, which would also have a decisive impact on the war.

In the Balkans, we have two weak Landsturm divisions,

with only a single mountain brigade as a "powerful core"). In the

war decision now sought by the Russians, I consider only a large

joint action to be effective. This requires the concentration of the

maximum possible of our forces between the Brest-Litovsk—

Rovno line and the Cam-Sniester line, to give the decision through a powerful offensive at

a suitable place."

General von Falkenhayn, who hoped for clarification of the situation through the

counterattack beginning on June 16 at Kovel³), replied provisionally: On the German side, "everything that can be done at the moment has been done."

1) Information followed about new Russian formations in front of the Army Group Linsingen:  
III., XXIV. and V. Siberian Corps. In fact, only the V. Siberian Corps  
was south of the Pripet, the other two remained as before in front of the D.Ö.H. front.  
2) Since the winter (p. 596), parts had been withdrawn.  
3) p. 469.

Page: 487 keyno: 074

Exchange of Opinions of the General Staff Chiefs.

provisionally: On the German side, "everything that can possibly be done at the moment has been done. Meanwhile, the prerequisite for any further action is that no inch of ground south of the Pripet is voluntarily left to the enemy, so that leaders and troops are forced by all means to really fight and not withdraw to rear positions for so-called operational reasons, because somewhere in the business front the enemy has gained an advantage or even just threatens with an attack, and that finally the necessary reinforcements from Tyrol in infantry, but especially artillery, are brought in with the greatest acceleration. If this prerequisite is not met, we will not be able to gain the time to prepare larger joint operations."

On June 17, the final answer followed: "Your Excellency's view that only full harmony in military action can lead to success, I share all the more convinced, as I have always advocated it unreservedly and have vividly lamented any deviation from it. If Your Excellency further believes that it is certain that the Russians have decided not to launch an offensive against the German Eastern Front, but to use all their forces shifted for defense against our front south of the Pripet, then that is quite possible. However, there is no evidence for this yet. That is precisely the characteristic of the Russian success, that it was undoubtedly achieved with relatively weak and numerically inferior forces. As far as I know, the enemy has only a few divisions in transit from the north. Only the two divisions of the V Siberian Corps have been confirmed as arrived. In contrast, on our side, 7½ infantry divisions with heavy artillery and a cavalry division, and on the Austro-Hungarian side, two infantry divisions have arrived or are in the process of unloading. According to your information, two more Austro-Hungarian divisions will follow initially, as I firmly assume, also sufficient artillery. — In my opinion, with strong support, it must be possible to at least force the Russian assault to give way, if not to compel the forces on site to do their duty. This demand must be emphasized with the greatest urgency. If it is not met, then the necessary prerequisite for the preparation of a future operation, as Your Excellency has in mind, is not given.

1) Overstrength Div. Rutsche, 19., 20., 105., 108., 11th Bavarian I.D.; 43rd R.D. and 48th I.D. from the Italian front; the 29th I.D., which has already been on the Eastern Front, is not included.

Page: 488 keyno: 075

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

Preparation for a future operation, as Your Excellency has in mind, has not been given. For it is beyond doubt that such an operation or a similar one would not be feasible in a few days, but at the earliest in several weeks. Therefore, I must again ask Your Excellency to use all the means at your disposal and those of the Army High Command to bring the Imperial and Royal troops to hold out. Incidents like the recent retreat of the XVIII Army Corps and the 46th Infantry Troop Division without serious reason must not be tolerated under any circumstances, otherwise all our other work is in vain. However, a decision on the future operation proposed by Your Excellency can only be made after further clarification of the situation.

Colonel General von Conrad remained — as he said in his response — only to muster everything to ensure the holding of the front as much as possible by bringing in heavy artillery and the two additional divisions. He was aware "of the consequences of the failure that occurred against all expectations, and thus also of the self-denial" imposed on him.

Meanwhile, the situation south of the Dniester developed in an extremely threatening manner. The Austro-Hungarian 7th Army was on the verge of disintegration. The attack sequences of Army Group Linsingen were in no way sufficient to compensate for the dangers of this situation. On the contrary, the setbacks on the left flank of the deeper Austro-Hungarian 1st Army even forced Colonel General von Conrad to assign the 48th Infantry Division, intended for the Southern Army, to that army instead. General von Falkenhayn had two divisions roll south from the front of the Supreme Commander East, where the situation seemed to be relaxing. On the other hand, the Austro-Hungarian military command of Army Group Archduke Eugen had given the order to halt the offensive against Italy on the evening of June 16 and requested two more divisions and heavy artillery, explicitly excluding three divisions consisting mainly of Czechs and Ruthenians as not eligible. When the army group then wanted to make the choice of the future defensive line dependent on what further contributions might be demanded from it, its Colonel General von Conrad replied on June 18 that nothing more would be available for the Russian theater of war except for some heavy batteries.

1) Left flank of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army (G. 468). — 2) G. 480 f. — 3) G. 479.   
4) See G. 518. — 5) Previously 61st and 48th I.D., now also 44th I.D., Rbd. of the   
VIII Corps and 59th I.D.

Page: 489 keyno: 076

Demands of General von Falkenhayn.

General von Falkenhayn did not learn of this final decision at all until the night of June 19, when he was informed that the choice of the defensive line against Italy had been left to the army group command in charge there. After that, I saw that the allied army command was still hesitating to withdraw the front in South Tyrol and to adequately reinforce the one against Russia. At the same time as this news, he learned that Generaloberst von Conrad had proposed to the Linsingen army group the voluntary withdrawal of troops from the Styr-Bogen from Chartorysk to the Stochod position to save forces for the attack. Finally, there was a telegram from Generaloberst von Conrad himself, who — as early as June 15 — concluded that "the Russians would postpone achieving success on their northwest front in favor of the generous exploitation of already achieved successes on their southwest front."

General von Falkenhayn felt compelled to once again clarify his views and demands and to return to the subordination of the entire Austro-Hungarian eastern front under Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen: "That the Russians will strive to secure and exploit the success they have so easily achieved in the southwest is naturally to be expected. However, whether they will unite all their efforts for this is not yet certain. There are indications that they are also making shifts against the middle of the eastern front, the area of Pinsk." Even if the enemy were to bring 15 divisions alone to the Luck front, there is no reason to assume that he could thereby achieve the campaign decision." Specifically, General von Falkenhayn proposed:

"1. Accelerated deployment of the two divisions and artillery from Tyrol to the Linsingen army group to help it succeed as much as possible before the arrival of further Russian reinforcements.

2. Transfer of the supreme command between Dnjestr and Pripjet to Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen, who "himself — naturally under the known restrictions — would be subordinate to Lemberg.

3. Order to the Austro-Hungarian commander south of the Dnjestr to use only the most necessary forces in the Carpathian entrances, while maintaining the connection between the mountains and the Dnjestr at all costs.

1) G. 477.  
2) G. 519.  
3) Cf. G. 483 ff.  
4) I.e. as in 1915 during the campaign against Serbia, Volume IX, p. 157 f.

Page: 490 keyno: 077

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

4. Decisive reduction of the Italian front to free up additional forces, especially artillery, there.

5. Provision of further German reinforcements for the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front."

Colonel General von Conrad replied that demands 1, 3, and 4 had already been met. However, he still had to reserve the use of the two divisions from Tyrol. He also had to ensure secure defense there in the common interest, otherwise Italy could quickly force a campaign decision through success in the southwest of the monarchy. However, he could only request the extraordinary measure of transferring the supreme command between Dniester and Pripet to Field Marshal von Mackensen from his emperor if "further significant German reinforcements, i.e., a German army, were brought in for the decisive battle against the Russian southwestern front." He requested an immediate response on this.

The counter-demand provoked a sharp response from General von Falkenhayn. He emphasized: Since such strong German forces were deployed on the Austro-Hungarian front, his wishes must also be taken into account when deploying the two Tyrolean divisions, as he generally had to ask to be "involved in all major operational decisions." This was necessary due to the responsibility incumbent upon him. He could not agree that conditions would be attached to the transfer of command to Field Marshal von Mackensen. Rather, the situation was the opposite. Already, 8½ German infantry and one cavalry division with strong heavy artillery were "as a core troop on the Austro-Hungarian front, thus a strong German army," and two more infantry divisions were on the way. He could not release more forces at this moment; whether in a few days, only the future could tell.

Colonel General von Conrad was very affected and not willing to "engage in this tone"). Only through the mediation of Major General von Cramon was communication maintained in the following days. Further actions of the k.u.k. 7th Army prompted him to finally assign the two divisions coming from Tyrol to this army2).

However, General von Falkenhayn raised an objection on June 21 through Major General von Cramon: "I ask you to leave no one in doubt there that I consider all diversions of troops from the place where the decision lies, namely the area of Luck, to be a grave mistake."

Page: 491 keyno: 078

Disputes of the General Staff Chiefs.

considered a serious mistake. Since Bukovina has been lost, it seems militarily indifferent whether Kolomeat and other parts of Galicia south of the Dniester are also evacuated. If the thrust at Luck succeeds or at least pushes the Russians back over the Styr, we can easily form a new attack group that, advancing over Tarnopol to the southeast, must quickly put an end to the Russian specter in Bukovina. However, if it is not possible to strike a blow at Luck that paralyzes the enemy there, then even the two divisions allegedly intended for General von Pflanzer will not be able to permanently hold the fate in the area south of the Dniester."

"Reliable sources" in Teschen reported telegrams from the Italian representatives in Petersburg and Bucharest to their government indicating the greatest deployment of forces by Russia and Italy against Austria-Hungary, perhaps also suggesting that Romania's intervention was imminent.

Colonel General von Conrad, who had previously avoided any interference in the leadership of the German-influenced units, namely the Linsingen Army Group and the South and Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, responded to the German Chief of Staff in a conciliatory tone: He was always ready for an exchange of views and sincerely thanked for the suggestion, which he fully agreed with. He also believed that the decision now lay at Luck and everything had to be united there. However, since the two Tyrolean divisions would arrive too late, the first at best on the 28th, there was still time to decide about them; above all, he again proposed the deployment of stronger German forces against the Russian southwestern front, where the campaign decision undoubtedly lay. He recommended, continuing the attack of the Linsingen Army Group, the attack of "strong German and Austro-Hungarian forces" on both sides of the Dniester. But when General von Falkenhayn inquired which fresh and strong Austro-Hungarian forces would be available for this attack, he had to admit on June 22 that he did not have such forces at his disposal for the time being, but could bring in 3 divisions from Italy at the beginning of July. Unfortunately, he was not in a position to simultaneously prepare attack forces on the Dniester, reliably hold the Carpathian passes from Bukovina to Hungary, and the Italian front.

Everything therefore depended on the extent to which German forces could be made available. A meeting in Berlin was supposed to clarify the pending questions.

keyno: 079

Page: 493 keyno: 080

Plan for a Future Counteroffensive on the Dniester.

These parts should, in conjunction with the aggressive units of the Southern Army and, if possible, also the Austro-Hungarian 2nd and 7th Armies, be deployed for an attack from the front of the Southern Army with the aim of hitting the connections of the Russian Bukovina Group. The exact determination of the direction of the attack remains reserved, but the improvement of the transport routes from Volhynia to the Strypa Front and into the Dniester area should be immediately undertaken. Already now, all otherwise dispensable heavy artillery, which is to participate in the attack, should be brought in and the establishment of food and ammunition depots should be undertaken. The Imperial and Royal Army Command will, in favor of strengthening and securing the eastern front south of the Pripet, limit and shorten the defensive measures on the Italian front as far as the vital interests of the monarchy allow. On the other hand, the German Supreme Army Command will, if further Russian reinforcements are undertaken on the front south of the Pripet, naturally use any forces that become available from the Hindenburg and Prince Leopold army groups for the operations planned in Galicia.

Colonel General von Conrad agreed with this summary except for the following: "From the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, which holds 50 kilometers of front in direct attack direction on Lemberg with four divisions, hardly any forces can be freed for the attack. Our attack area will still have to be determined depending on the development of the situation. This could also be arranged so that the connections of the Russian Bukovina Group are effectively hit by an attack between the Dniester and Pruth and east of the Dniester. The shortening of our Italian front is in progress. The counterattack in Italy is imminent, and my further measures will depend on its course. I must always keep in mind that a successful enemy offensive over the Isonzo Front would very soon hit the lifeline of the monarchy, and that in this case the war would be lost for our two empires."

Page: 494 keyno: 081

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

4. Shift of the Focus of Russian Operations to the South¹).

a) The Russian Command from June 13 to 24.

Maps 6, 7.

The Western Front had the task of leading the main attack towards Vilna on June 17 and simultaneously making a subsidiary attack on Pinsk to directly support the Southwest Front's attack on Kovel. Yielding to the pressure of the Supreme Army Command, General Ewcrt had his 3rd Army attack at Baranowicze for the relief of the Southwest Front as early as June 13. In doing so, the Grenadier Corps lost 8,000 men but achieved no success²). The other forces held ready for the operation, including the newly formed "Polish Rifle Brigade"³), were not deployed at all. On June 15, General Ewcrt reported to the Supreme Army Command that everything was ready for the main attack to begin on June 17. However, the enemy positions in front of Vilna were extraordinarily strong. Since the successes of the 8th Army offered prospects of advancing quickly to Kovel and Vladimir, while the 3rd Army could take Pinsk, it was to be considered whether to abandon the attack on Vilna altogether and instead attack with strong forces at Baranowicze, to force the enemy to evacuate the position in front of Vilna by threatening the Lida—Grodno front. In four, or at most three weeks, the two to three corps needed at Baranowicze could be made ready.

On June 15, General Brusilov also outlined the difficulties for the Southwest Front arising from the fact that the attack of the Western Front had been repeatedly postponed. His troops did not understand why they were attacking alone while the main forces were positioned north of the Pripet. The enemy had already brought up troops in the north and could bring more. The own offensive would be stalled unless relieved by a swift attack from the Western Front. Nevertheless, the Supreme Army Command agreed to the Western Front's plans aimed at further postponement. It seems to have been decisive that the overwhelming number of German reinforcements reported in front of the 8th Army did not come from the Eastern Front north of the Pripet, but from the front in France.

¹) Continuation on p. 472.  
²) p. 517.  
³) p. 430.

Page: 495 keyno: 082

New Delay of the Russian "Main Attack" North of the Pripjet.

Reinforcements did not come from the eastern front north of the Pripjet, but from the front in France. Therefore, no significant relief for the southwestern front was expected from the attack in the north in the future. The Russian troops north of the Pripjet seemed bound by the threatening preparations for an attack there. The Russian Supreme Command postponed the main attack, now led at Baranowicze, to no later than early July (the dates fluctuated between June 29 and July 3), aiming for the greatest possible coordination with the attack planned by the Western powers on the Somme at the same time. Italy was also urged to launch a new attack, as "the moment of a decisive success against Austria in this war could be accelerated by a vigorous attack on two fronts"¹). Efforts were also increased to finally gain Romania's active participation.

The attack of the western front at Pinsk was to be coordinated with the further attack of the southwestern front. It was postponed indefinitely when their 8th Army was pushed into defense by the counterattack of the Central Powers on June 16. This counterattack, on the other hand, prompted General Brussilov to urge the Supreme Command to accelerate the attack of the western front. At the same time, he demanded ample supplies of ammunition, as the stubborn battles that had now begun consumed entire quantities compared to the previous rapid advances. Without ample ammunition — as emphasized by the commander-in-chief of the southwestern front — the situation could become untenable and all gains could be lost. However, the overall ammunition situation of the Russian army was not such that the Supreme Command could provide sustainable assistance. Instead, on June 19, they transferred the two corps of the western front (I and I Turkestan Corps) previously designated for the attack at Pinsk to the southwestern front.

Meanwhile, the attack of strong German forces from Kowel became increasingly noticeable. General Kaledin, the leader of the Russian 8th Army, demanded further strong reserves. His confidence in further attack success had diminished since he knew German groups were his opponents²). On the other hand, the consumption of ammunition by infantry and artillery continued to rise; the supply was no longer sufficient. General Brussilov was forced on June 20 to postpone the resumption of the attack, which he wanted to continue despite everything, to early July.

¹) Italian Ambassador in Petersburg on June 21 to his government.  
²) Official Russian Werf, Volume V, G. 57.

Page: 496 keyno: 083

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

The 9th Army was to remain in advance to continue the "pursuit of the shattered forces of the Pflanzer Army." In doing so, it was to take the direction along the Dniester towards Halicz—Stanislau on the orders of the Supreme Army Command and relieve the 7th Army forward. The main attack direction of the southern wing of the army group thus pointed towards Lemberg. In addition, the incursion of large cavalry masses over the Carpathians into Hungary was temporarily considered, but soon deemed impracticable.

On June 24, the S u p r e m e A r m y C o m m a n d moved the boundary between the Western and Southwestern Fronts according to future tasks north to Lake Wygonowhje. The 3rd Army and its troops south of the lake (XXXI Corps with three divisions) moved to the Southwestern Front, to which the V Corps from the northern wing of the Western Front was also to advance. The 3rd Army received the troops stationed at Czartorysk and north from the right wing of the 8th Army; Maniewicze was to be its future attack target. The area near Baranowicze came uniformly into the hands of the 4th Army, which assembled around 21½ infantry and 5 cavalry divisions here for the attack. The Supreme Army Command still intended to lead the main attack at this point. Its best shock troops, the Guards (four infantry and three cavalry divisions), remained as army reserve in the area of the Western Front. On the other hand, the Southwestern Front had been significantly reinforced gradually during June. This is shown by a comparison of the

Distribution of Infantry Divisions

\[

\begin{array}{lcccc}

& \text{Southwest-} & \text{West-} & \text{North-} & \text{total} & \text{of which Pripjet} \\

& \text{front} & \text{front} & \text{front\*} & & \text{south} & \text{north} \\

\text{in May} & 40½ & 59½ & 36 & 136 & 40½ & 95½ \\

\text{End of June} & 57½\*\* & 52½\*\*\* & 28 & 138 & 55½ & 82½ \\

\end{array}

\]

\*) without 6th Army. — \*\*) Additions (partly still advancing): V. fib., XXIII., I., I. turk., V Corps; 78th, 108th, 113th, 117th Inf. Div. — \*\*\*) Additions: III Corps.

Thus, still well over half of the divisions were north of the Pripjet, i.e., in front of the German part of the front. In addition, two divisions from the troops stationed at the Black Sea had been added to the total number. As far as can be determined, further: At the 6th Army at most four divisions, at the Black Sea and inland one division each, against Turkey 14 divisions¹), a total of 20 divisions. The total strength of the army had grown to 158 divisions.

¹) See p. 609.

Page: 497 keyno: 084

Structure of the Russian Army.

sions. The total strength of the army had grown to 158 divisions\*).

On the other hand, the June battles had also created significant gaps; the

losses amounted to around 300,000 men, of which 289,000 were at the

Southwestern Front alone. To what extent it was possible to replace the

loss is not known. However, it is certain that the replacement troops were

considerably less well-prepared for their task than those they had to replace.

The intended attacks by the Russian Western and Southwestern Fronts

for the early days of July, coinciding with the Somme Offensive of the

Western powers, did not occur. This was because new attacks by the Central

Powers had already hit the Southwestern Front. Their infantry divisions

were distributed at this time as follows:

3rd Army 5 divisions and 1 en route

8th - 17 -

11th - 8½ - 2 -

9th - 12 - 1 -

9th - 10 - 1 -

b) Conclusion of the attack by the Linsingen Army Group\*),

June 24 to July 18.

Map 7, Sketches 25, 26, 27.

Generaloberst von Linsingen was determined to continue the attack,

but was also clear that without the deployment of strong new forces,

nothing decisive could be achieved. Reinforcements, however, only

arrived gradually, and the enemy also brought in new forces. On the

German side, on June 24, the 107th Infantry Division\*) moved into the

front next to the 11th Bavarian. With both, General von Bernhardi was

to resume the attack on the east bank of the Styr the next day, to also

assist the Rusche Division in advancing and to push the enemy back to

Rozyszcze. However, the often swampy and wooded terrain in this area

seemed unsuitable for continuing the attack. Therefore, Generaloberst

von Linsingen wanted to shift the focus to the area southwest of Luck,

where the terrain was more favorable and the Russian XXXXV Corps stood in a particularly thin line.

\*) See also p. 430, note 1.  
\*) Connection to p. 473 ff.  
\*) p. 478.

Page: 498 keyno: 085

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

stood on a particularly thin line. To this end, a new attack group was to be formed under the deployment of the advancing 22nd Infantry Division¹) and the 108th Infantry Division, marching from the left wing of the X Army Corps under General von der Marwitz. The Austro-Hungarian military command promised heavy artillery for their divisions involved in the new attack (7th of the 1st Army and 48th). However, they could not grant the requested reinforcements beyond that. Similarly, the German supreme military command rejected the request for another corps, which had been demanded in view of the news of the arrival of the Russian I Corps at Luzk. Reinforcements could only be taken from the Eastern Front due to the tense situation in the West, and even here only as far as the enemy moved north of the Pripet. However, since he could appear correspondingly stronger south of the Pripet in this case, a decisive change in the balance of power was hardly to be expected in the future. Nevertheless, the army group hoped, as General von Stolzmann reported on the telephone to the supreme military command, to advance more quickly after the imminent arrival of heavy artillery²).

On June 25, the attack by the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division under Lieutenant General von Kneussl and the 107th Infantry Division under Major General Handorff brought gratifying, but only local successes, which could only be slightly expanded in the following days with the participation of the Ruschc Division. However, the enemy seems to have suffered quite heavily, losing 1000 prisoners³). The V Siberian Corps, which had only been deployed here since June 14, was replaced by the I Corps, as it turned out in the following days. However, intercepted radio messages from Rowno already indicated another Russian corps, the I Turkestan, was on the move, and the results of aerial reconnaissance left no doubt that the enemy was bringing strong forces from the north and also from the south to Volhynia.

On June 30, the attack of the new Marwitz group was to begin. For this, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division, the 22nd, 108th, and Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division were prepared as the main assault group between the mouth of the Lipa into the Styr and the line Zwininacz—Ugrynow. On the left, the assault group of General Eugen von Falkenhayn joined with the cavalry corps of Field Marshal Lieutenant Freiherr von Leonhardi, the Hungarian 61st Infantry Division, as well as the German 43rd Reserve and 9th Cavalry Division.

¹) See p. 518.  
²) From the west, one i. F.-H. and four Mtr. batteries; from the Austro-Hungarian military command, one 15 cm Ran., three i. F.-S., three 30.5 cm Mtr.  
³) Total capture of the army group since June 9: 11,000 men, 2 guns, 54 machine guns.

Page: 499 keyno: 086

Army Group Linsingen: New Counterattack.

Cavalry Corps of Field Marshal Lieutenant Baron von Leonhardi, the Hungarian 61st Infantry Division, as well as the German 43rd Reserve and 9th Cavalry Division. The attack direction of both assault groups aimed at Luck. The left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and all parts encompassing the breach points from Luck in the west and north up to and including the Bernhardi Group were to participate in the attack. Colonel General von Linsingen hoped that the thrust of the Marwitz Group would surprise and decisively hit the relatively weak enemy in front of them. Careful preparation of the attack, thought out in all details, and the fire of a total of around 250 guns, about 40 of them heavy, were to ensure success.

Thunderstorms and pouring rain, which had already hindered troop movements on June 29, also impaired the course of the attack this time. The early deployed, powerful 22nd Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Dieffenbach encountered stubborn resistance north of Solotyn. The 108th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Bedmann advanced better to the left of it, and the Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division also gained some ground. However, the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division, which had advanced to the Sty, and the adjoining left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, as well as the entire Falkenhayn assault group, were denied any major success. The X Army Corps and the Bernhardi Group made smaller local advances. Thus, the overall result of June 30 was not satisfactory. On July 1, the enemy gave way before the 22nd Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division. The main assault group had thus gained an average of three kilometers of terrain from the starting position. On July 2, it was able to make another leap forward, which brought about five kilometers of terrain gain for the center. The booty rose to about 3000 prisoners. But then, on July 3, Russian counterattacks began, while their own striking power had exhausted itself.

Meanwhile, the situation on the northern wing of the army group had critically intensified. Flyers had reported lively train traffic on the route leading from Sarny on June 28. Since then, the main focus was directed at the Styr bend from Sarny. On June 30, the beginning deployment of the I Turkestan Corps was recognized southeast of Kolki. Colonel General von Linsingen has requested the deployment of the 5th Reserve Division, provided by the Supreme Commander East behind the army group Prince Leopold at Baranowicze. The Supreme Army Command, however, rejected this request because heavy Russian drumfire also here announced an imminent serious attack.

Page: 500 keyno: 087

The Offront. — Brusilov Offensive.

However, the command rejected this because heavy Russian drumfire also

indicated an imminent serious attack here1). At the same time, the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army at Brody, where the railway and road to Lviv cross the border, also expected an attack. The Linsingen Army Group found itself almost entirely on the defensive despite all reinforcements, as the enemy had brought in about the same number of new troops, and the deployed Austro-Hungarian units had partly melted away alarmingly quickly. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, numbering only 20,000 men (five divisions), had a daily loss of about 1,000 men; the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division reported a loss of 4,000 men during the attack on June 30, which could not be fully replenished. Thus, Generaloberst von Linsingen ordered the expansion of permanent positions on July 3; only the attack of the Marwitz Group was to be continued after new preparations.

Then, on July 4, the expected Russian attack against the protruding Styr Bend from Czartorysk broke out. On the morning of the day, from the railway north of Perepisa to the area of Jezierz, a bow measuring about 100 kilometers, there were a total of one German and about six Austro-Hungarian infantry and two cavalry divisions. Of these, the center and left wing of the Bernhardi Corps (107th Infantry Division and eastward adjoining Austro-Hungarian II Corps) as well as the Fath Corps up to the railway to Czarny had the front facing south, north of which lay the left wing of the latter and the right of the Hauer Cavalry Corps (Polish Legion and two cavalry divisions) with the front facing east. In several places on the south side and along the entire east side of the bow, the enemy was already on the left bank of the Styr. It was assumed, quite accurately, that there were about ten infantry and five cavalry divisions, thus almost twice as many. Its preparatory fire seemed strongest on the extreme left wing of the Fath Corps west of Rafalowka. Generaloberst von Linsingen nevertheless expected the main attack against the southern front, especially against Kolki. As a reserve, he had the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division of the Bernhardi Group withdrawn from the front and assembled behind the 107th Infantry Division. Further forces to intercept the attack or to prepare a counterattack were prohibited by the demand of the supreme army command on July 3 for the deployment of a reinforced brigade of the X Army Corps to support the Heeresgruppe Prinz Leopold, which was already engaged in heavy defensive fighting at Baranowicze.

1) See more on p. 520 f.

Page: 501 keyno: 088

Army Group Linsingen: Course of the Styr Bend from Czartorysk.

meanwhile already in heavy defensive combat, Army Group

Prince Leopold¹).

After intense drumfire, on the morning of July 4, heavy attacks were launched

against the positions of the Polish Legion, especially west of Kolki

against the inner flanks of the II Corps and the Fath Corps. At this junction, the enemy broke almost ten kilometers deep.

Colonel General von Linsingen ordered the 11th Bavarian Infantry

Division, reinforced by local reserves, to counterattack on July 5

at 10 a.m. Meanwhile, both flanks of the Fath Corps had

further yielded. The deployment of the Bavarian troops

and their readiness were delayed by oppressive heat, so that

initially only makeshift support of the front at the breach

north of Kolki was possible.

Colonel General von Linsingen now wanted to lead the counterattack in the

direction of Gruziatyn—Kolki and set it for July 7;

the 2nd Combat Squadron (six squadrons with 36 aircraft),

which had meanwhile been brought in at the request of the Army Group from the Supreme Army

Command, was to participate by attacking Russian troop landings and advances.

He also achieved the retention of the already prepared for transport

37th Infantry Brigade of the X Army Corps, which was to be moved to

Maniewicze. In a telephone conversation with General

von Falkenhayn, Major General von Stoltzmann expressed hope

that the situation on the right and later also on the left flank of the Fath Group

could be restored, but he also considered "given the unreliability

of the troops" the possibility that eventually the entire

Fath and Sauer Groups would have to be withdrawn behind the Stochod.

This situation occurred sooner than expected when the Russians resumed

the attack against both flanks of the Fath Corps with great emphasis at noon on July 6.

The foremost parts of the 37th Infantry Brigade, as they came from the railway,

tried in vain to hold the front east of Maniewicze;

a light field howitzer battery fell into enemy hands.

When the enemy also broke into the previously held second position north of Kolki

and thus threatened to cut off the protruding bend

from Czartorysk, Colonel General von Linsingen issued the initial orders for retreat

to the prepared position behind the Stochod at 6 p.m.

On the morning of July 7, the front left Gruziatyn

northwards to the originally held position south of Jezierzce.

It was to be held in the future with as much firmness as possible of the previously successfully defended and well-developed Styr section Sokal—Gruziatyn, seeking connection to the Stochod bend northwest of Gruziatyn and then drawing north on the left bank of the river.

¹) G. 520 f.

Page: 502 keyno: 089

The Offront. — Brusilov Offensive.

claimed and well-developed Styr section Sokal—Gruziatyn to seek connection to the Stochod bend northwest of Gruziatyn and then move north on the left riverbank. That the Army Group Gronau of the Army Group Prince Leopold was also affected could not be avoided.

When General von Falkenhayn pointed out the necessity of saving as much strength as possible due to urgent needs elsewhere, the shorter line Porst—Sitowicze was considered for the southern section, abandoning the Sokal—Gruziatyn arc, as the final front to be held. In the telephone conversation on July 7, Major General von Stoltzmann also stated that the army group could hardly spare any forces even with this shortening of the front, as its strength lay, as he had to report repeatedly, solely in the few German divisions. "The others are partly no longer to be counted at all, as they consist partly of at most 2000 men and constantly complain of exhaustion and combat incapacity." Following this discussion, Colonel General von Linsingen reported to Teschen on the evening of the same day: "If extensive usable Austro-Hungarian reinforcements cannot be initiated in the shortest time, I must refuse responsibility for holding the Stochod line."

The retreating parts of the front, initially only the left wing of Group Bernhardi and Corps Fath, reached the general line Sokal—Kaszowka—Stochod course with the main forces during July 7. The attempt to have the cavalry corps Hauer, which had been less affected by the fighting, maintain the connection with the 82nd Reserve Division of the Army Group Gronau initially still east of the Stochod failed. Under the pressure of the Russian pursuit, the backward movement of the Austro-Hungarian cavalry accelerated to such an extent that by the evening of the day only one division stood as the northernmost wing of the army group on the bank of the river. Although the Army Detachment Woyrsch had already sent the dissolved Bavarian Cavalry Division to reinforce the Army Group Gronau, Colonel General von Linsingen considered the situation so serious in view of the hasty retreat of the Austro-Hungarian troops that he reported to the Supreme Army Command in the evening: "With the enemy's threefold superiority, it remains uncertain whether at places where the few German troops are insufficient, further setbacks will not occur."

1) G. 522.

Page: 503 keyno: 090

not sufficient, nor should further setbacks occur. ... However, if the Stochod position must be abandoned, there is no choice but to retreat step by step, delaying the enemy at all sections, behind the Bug." He requested another German cavalry division for his own left flank and at least one infantry division.

On July 7, however, the previously held hopes for success of the Marwitz group were dashed. The attack begun in the morning by five divisions (Austro-Hungarian 7th, German 22nd and 108th Infantry, as well as the newly inserted 43rd Reserve Division and Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division) encountered stubborn resistance after minor local gains. Generaloberst von Linsingen decided to halt the attack here as well, to free up forces for the northern flank.

On July 8, General von der Marwitz withdrew his troops to the starting position and pulled out parts for withdrawal. Given the threatening situation for the entire Eastern Front, the Supreme Commander East offered a composite division under Lieutenant General Clausius (reinforced 175th Landwehr Infantry Brigade). The Supreme Army Command promised the 121st Infantry Division¹). On the other hand, the difficulties caused by the retreat from the Styr for the southern flank of the Gronau army group led to sharp disputes with the Prince Leopold army group. However, the Supreme Army Command placed the defense at the junction of the two army groups back into one hand by allowing the Gronau army group to operationally withdraw to the Linsingen army group on July 9 for the current battles.

Meanwhile, the entire front of the Bernhardi group had been withdrawn from its positions, gained in heavy attacks barely three weeks earlier, behind the Stochod. Until the railway line Porst—Sitzowice was expanded, the far-advancing bend of Kalusowka was held. The Fath Corps was assigned to the Bernhardi group and reinforced with German troops. At Stobychwa, the Hauer cavalry corps joined, reinforced and strengthened by the 37th Infantry Brigade and the Bavarian Cavalry Division. Behind the front, the 108th Infantry and 9th Cavalry Division, both coming from the Marwitz group, and the Clausius Division began their deployment.

¹) The division had suffered so heavily at Verdun and then again at the Somme that it was temporarily not operational. See Appendix 2 and 3.

keyno: 091

Page: 505 keyno: 092

Army Group Linsingen: New Setback.

The positions of the aforementioned Austro-Hungarian divisions located at the angle of the entire front were less threatened than others. However, it was precisely this spot that the Russians chose for a new attack1).

At dawn on July 16, three divisions of the Russian 11th Army launched a surprise attack between Jagmow and Bludow after a short but intense artillery preparation. They overran the Hungarian 61st Infantry and parts of the 7th Cavalry Division so completely that they retreated eight kilometers southwest in one move; 16 kilometers behind the front, in Gorochow, retreating batteries were stopped. The enemy mainly spared the east against the front of the Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division and largely caused its collapse. In contrast, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division repelled an attack led by weaker forces on the right flank of the group. The intervening German divisions were hardly affected. However, the enemy had torn a hole ten kilometers wide and deep in the direction of Swiniacze. Since he did not push further, it was possible to establish at least a weak defensive line against him using three German recruit battalions located behind the front. The Hungarian 61st Infantry Division reported a strength of only 300 rifles. Under such conditions, even a counterattack prepared by the commander of the 43rd Reserve Division, Major General von Rundel, promised no lasting success. General von der Marwitz requested and received permission to withdraw his group behind the Lipa and the Swiniacze-Putimoty line. The movement had to be carried out on the night of July 17, without being disturbed by the enemy. Heavy losses were again recorded. The Russian army report reported 13,000 prisoners and 30 guns.

The events prompted Colonel General von Linsingen to send a detailed report to the Supreme Army Command, in which he sharply complained about the failure of Austro-Hungarian troops, insofar as they were not interspersed with Germans. He had visited leaders and troops who had recently retreated in honor and had seen sad pictures in their positions. Colonel General von Conrad was very accommodating in requests for the removal of incapable elements, but there were conditions against which every leader was powerless. Therefore, he could not take responsibility for the fact that the 350-kilometer-long front was held as German troops advanced. He regretted having to express this, but he now had so much evidence of the inadequate resistance of the allies that he could rely solely on the German troops, who had achieved remarkable feats in attack and defense for six weeks.

1) G. 539.  
2) G. 514.

Page: 506 keyno: 093

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

I regret having to say this, but I now have so much evidence

of the insufficient resistance strength of the allies that he can only rely

entirely on the German troops, who have achieved remarkable feats in both

attack and defense over the past six weeks.

In his response on July 17, General von Falkenhayn

emphasized that the army group is currently only required to defend;

removing their troops is not intended, so they are able

to sufficiently mix the Austro-Hungarian units with German

troops. When the army group command then reported the intention

to return to headquarters (Jablon) for defense the next day,

General von Falkenhayn opposed this plan, despite the factual reasons given,

as it would have an unfavorable effect on the entire

Austro-Hungarian front, where the continued pressure from the high staffs

would exert an unfavorable influence. Even before

he had decided, after the unsatisfactory result of the

course of the battles, which in no way corresponded to the confidence long

displayed by the army group, to replace the chief of staff, Major General

von Stolzmann, with Colonel Hell, previously with the 10th Army.

When Generaloberst von Linsingen himself then requested

to be relieved of his position, as he bore responsibility for all measures as

commander-in-chief, his request was rejected by the Kaiser.

Reflections.

The counterattack of the Linsingen army group did not bring the expected

success. Even the deployment of 7½ German divisions, including

three divisions of the best and completely fresh assault troops (X Army Corps

and 108th Infantry Division), with about 25 heavy batteries and from

three Austro-Hungarian divisions, did not achieve much more

than stopping the Russian advance. The progress achieved southwest

and west of Luck was at least offset by the loss

of the Szczytoryz arc. The reasons for the unsatisfactory overall result

lay in the nature of the combat conditions.

The idea of deploying significantly stronger troops from home to the

threatened front and thus shifting the focus of the war effort

back to the east was enthusiastically advocated by Generaloberst von Conrad,

but had to be opposed by General von Falkenhayn in view of the overall war situation.

Page: 507 keyno: 094

Army Group Linsingen: Considerations.

rejected by Falkenhayn in view of the overall war situation'). Bringing strong forces to simultaneous, coordinated action on the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front would only have been possible if the dispensable reinforcements had been brought to effect faster than the Russians brought theirs. However, this was mainly not possible because the railways leading to the combat area could not handle significantly more than they actually could bear. A unified attack would only have been possible after a longer wait and corresponding withdrawal of the front against an opponent who had also been reinforced in the meantime. Meanwhile, there was a fear that the combat strength of the allied troops would hopelessly collapse.

Colonel General von Linsingen decided to deploy the reinforcements, which were only gradually arriving, in succession. He found the approval of both army commands in this. However, General von Falkenhayn rightly expressed concerns about the initial approach of the Marwitz attack group'), as this approach led in the least operationally effective direction. However, he eventually conceded to the counterarguments put forward by Colonel General von Linsingen as a connoisseur of local conditions. These were based on an accurate assessment of the current situation. When the attack began a few days later, the enemy had already partially changed their plans\*).

It is therefore quite possible that an attack in the operationally effective direction over Solki—Kosti into the rear of Luck would have actually brought greater successes than the frontal attack from the west. At the very least, the endangered position of the Fath group would have been secured.

The disappointing attack results of the Marwitz shock group on June 16 and the following days were partly due to the already mentioned difficulties of the terrain, partly to the unexpected strength of the enemy resistance. After ten days of costly advances, the Russian troops still proved capable of intercepting the assault of fresh German shock divisions to such an extent that they could only gradually work their way forward kilometer by kilometer in close combat. The enthusiasm for the results of the simultaneous and all later attack attempts, which were undertaken by less fresh divisions at other points of the breakthrough front, was even lower. It was further exacerbated by the fact that the attack strength of the Austro-Hungarian divisions was extremely low. The enemy also recognized this and used their troops accordingly.

1) p. 316 ff. — 2) p. 467 and 469. — 3) p. 494.

Page: 508 keyno: 095

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

When the Commander-in-Chief East was informed by the Supreme Army Command on July 7 about the threat to the southern flank of the Prince Leopold Army Group (then Army Group Gronau) due to the retreat from the Zartorysk arc, he stated in his response, considering the regrouping of the Marwitz Group for a new attack: "Besides, I do not expect much from the Marwitz offensive. After the initial attacks by the Linsingen Army Group had not brought any decisive success and the time-consuming regroupings took place, I would have considered the temporary transition to the defensive as correct," because then it would have been possible to withdraw at least two divisions from the front and support the Fath Group, whose threat had been apparent for eight to ten days. Generaloberst von Conrad also raised the accusation with the Supreme Army Command two days later that the Fath and Hauer Corps had been exposed to failure "without compelling reason," perhaps referring to his suggestion on June 18 under different circumstances to withdraw these corps.

It is worth highlighting the ever-renewing confidence that inspired the Linsingen Army Group Command despite all disappointments. As a result, even if it overshot the target, it facilitated the task for both army commands and also strengthened the confidence in success among the subordinate troops. However, whether the measures taken first to eliminate, then to stem the enemy's breakthrough and to support their own front always represented the best solution, seemed doubtful.

c) New setbacks on the southern flank of the Austro-Hungarian front and formation of the Archduke Karl Army Group. June 24 to July 15.

Map 7, Sketch 28.

In the southern sections of the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front, the situation looked serious. Following the meeting in Berlin, Generaloberst von Conrad had once again made it the duty of the armies standing south of the Linsingen Army Group to hold their positions unconditionally. In the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, whose situation was particularly threatening, the southern flank was not allowed to retreat further than the Carpathian passes west of Dorna Watra and Kirlibaba, to prevent the enemy from gaining access to Hungary and Transylvania.

Page: 509 keyno: 096

Austro-Hungarian Southern Flank: Serious Situation of the 7th Army.

to retreat, so that he denies the enemy access to Hungary and Transylvania; the stronger northern flank was to hold its positions south and east of Kolomea, as only then could the planned thrust from the north against the Russians' connections become effective. The Austrian 44th and, following it, the Austro-Hungarian 59th Infantry Division were in transport to the army.

General von Falkenhayn was also convinced of the overwhelming importance of the situation on the Austro-Hungarian southern flank, since his hope for further significant offensive successes of the Linsingen army group was dwindling. All strength was to be concentrated to restore the situation with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army as soon as possible, but the Russian incursion at Luck was only to be contained. While the Linsingen army group also had only one infantry and one cavalry division and, if the attack penetrated to the Styr, another infantry division available, General von Falkenhayn considered the deployment of six infantry and two cavalry divisions possible, as on a 75-kilometer-long front from the Lipa estuary to Sohul, 15 infantry and four cavalry divisions were deployed. Meanwhile, on June 25, he assigned two German divisions to the southern army, which were just now freed by the relaxation of the situation with the Commander-in-Chief East, the 119th Infantry and 1st Reserve Division. Clear signs of an imminent resumption of the Russian offensive against the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army east of Kolomea and worrying news from Bucharest, however, led to a regiment of the 105th Infantry Division rolling in from the Balkans being sent as a reserve to Kolomea on the same day, and the next day the 119th Infantry Division was also assigned there. Five heavy batteries were set in motion from the west. Even the transfer of the 1st Reserve Division to the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army was considered and only abandoned again due to the heavy occupation of the railways south of the Dniester as impracticable.

Meanwhile, on the southern flank of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, the retreat of Group Korda on June 26 came to a halt in the almost pathless forested Carpathians, which rise up to 2000 meters, already forward of Jablonow and Kirlibaba. The main force of the army was with the cavalry-formed southern flank on the northern slope of the mountains as well as at Wiznitz and Kuty. From there, the positions over Jablonow were abandoned northward to the Dniester, where they joined those of the southern army north of Niezviska.

Page: 510 keyno: 097

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

to the north to the Dniester, where they joined the Southern Army north of Niezviska. This approximately 80-kilometer-long front was occupied by only five a) Austrian-Hungarian infantry divisions and four cavalry divisions, all significantly weakened in combat strength. An attack by 4½ Russian corps was expected against them. When it began with full force on June 28 and quickly gained ground, especially south of the Pruth, the army command was concerned that the troops would achieve nothing in defending against the numerically superior enemy, but would lose their last combat strength and thus be unavailable for the planned counteroffensive. They intended to retreat further if necessary. Both army commands agreed, provided the connection to the Southern Army remained intact. Thus, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army was withdrawn by June 30 to a line running from Czeremosz south of Zabie, west past Kolomea to the area south of Tlumacz.

For the counteroffensive, General von Falkenhayn suggested on June 27 the formation of a special "Dniester Army Group," consisting of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, a newly formed 12th Army from German and Austrian-Hungarian units (especially the German 105th and 119th Infantry and 1st Reserve Division), and the Southern Army. Since Field Marshal von Mackensen was indispensable on the Balkan due to Romania's stance, he proposed the Austrian-Hungarian heir to the throne, the current commander of the Austro-Hungarian XX Corps against Italy, Lieutenant Field Marshal Archduke Karl Franz Josef, as the commander-in-chief of the 12th Army and simultaneously of the army group. He hoped that his election would spur the Austrian-Hungarian military leadership to achieve the greatest performances for this front section. Additionally, he noted in the instructions for Major General von Gramm that the "otherwise unavoidable appointment of a German commander-in-chief might negatively affect the mood of influential Austrian-Hungarian circles. Major General von Seeckt was to assist the Archduke heir as chief of staff. The proposal met with reservations in Lejchen, as they did not want to place the heir to the throne in a task that might lead to failure. However, given the threat of appointing another German commander, Colonel General von Conrad agreed. The new army group command, equally composed of German and Austrian-Hungarian officers, was to convene in Chodorow.

a) 51st, 24th, 30th, 42nd, 21st I.D. and 3rd, 8th, 5th, 6th R.D. with the arrival of Austrian 44th I.D. from Tyrol.

keyno: 098

Page: 512 keyno: 099

The Offront. — Brusilov Offensive.

Meanwhile, the 5th Reserve Division had been held at the Army Group Prince Leopold to support the Austro-Hungarian XII Corps, and likewise the 1st Reserve Division at the Southern Army, as a serious Russian attack seemed imminent there as well. Thus, on the eve of the formation of the "Army Group Archduke Karl," the units designated for its 12th Army were already fully committed. The strong Russian pressure prevented the planned mass formation for a counterattack at the Dniester. At the same time, however, the situation on the Western Front and against Italy was so tense that neither General von Falkenhayn nor Colonel General von Conrad could release additional forces for the time being.

On July 4, the front of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army seemed to stabilize; on the northern flank, the Kraewel Group, reinforced by Austro-Hungarian troops, even managed to gain some ground. However, on July 5, they were also pushed into defense, while the center of the army retreated again before new Russian assaults in the direction of Delatyn. On July 7, the front came to a halt along the Delatyn—Chozimierz line, slightly north. At the Dniester, there was a connection to the now also pushed back right wing of the Southern Army. Without reinforcements, however, holding the current position was not guaranteed. The enemy reported 80,000 prisoners, 84 guns, and 272 machine guns, while the previous battles in the Kolomea area, which also saw a Russian loss of 70,000 men, were ongoing.

In the following days, concern arose over the enemy's pressure against the upper Pruth Valley near Delatyn, which he occupied on July 8, and near Tartarew; he obviously wanted to gain control of the road leading to the Jablonica Pass. On the other hand, since July 6, Colonel General von Pflanzer had been trying to influence the enemy through advances of his troops stationed in the Carpathians. This brought some partial success in the mountains but had no impact on the overall situation. More and more, the decision emerged to address the spatial separation of the two wing groups of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army by reorganizing command relationships. At the request of the Army Group Archduke Karl, it was ordered on July 15 that Colonel General von Pflanzer, with the 7th Army Command, should take over the southern group of his previous army (XI Corps, Cavalry Corps of the Field Marshal Lieutenant Ritter von Brudermann, the Austro-Hungarian 34th Infantry Division rolling in from Tyrol, and pass security in the Carpathians) and the border protection in Transylvania.

1) p. 521.  
2) p. 513.  
3) Connection to p. 465 and 479 ff.

Page: 513 keyno: 100

Austro-Hungarian Southern Wing: Division of the 7th Army. Southern Army.

Knight von Brudermann, the Austro-Hungarian 34th Infantry Division rolling in from Tyrol and securing passes in the Carpathians, and the border protection in Transylvania were to be taken over, while the northern group (VIII Corps and the troops adjoining to the north up to the Dniester, including the German Group Kraewel) was subordinated as the new Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army to the 3rd Army Command rolling in from Tyrol, Generaloberst Kövess von Kövessháza.

The Southern Army¹) had so far repelled all Russian attacks on its own strength, however — as General Count Bothmer had already reported to the Supreme Army Command on June 16 — with heavy attrition of the only German troop, the 48th Reserve Division. It counted 13 battalions and eleven batteries (four of them heavy), which had been used as intervention troops at particularly threatened front positions as needed. In total, the eleven infantry divisions²) of the army seemed to face about twelve Russian ones by the end of June. On the northern wing, a local attack success achieved on July 1 at Worobijowka on the railway to Winniza contributed to stabilizing the situation. Further south, on the railway to Buczacz, the expected strong Russian attack began on July 4. It promisingly led to breaches in the front at Baranów over a width of ten kilometers, which, however, could largely be balanced out by counterattacks. The following day, however, the front from the Dniester to north of the Monasterzyska-Buczacz railway gave way, so that the defense was withdrawn six kilometers into a prepared position behind the Koropiec during the night of July 6. To support this, parts of the 1st Reserve Division (twelve battalions, nine batteries) intended for the 12th Army, which had meanwhile arrived at Podhajce, had to be deployed. The Russian army report announced 10,000 prisoners as the result of the first two days of attack. The total loss amounted to about 13,000 men. Three infantry regiments of the Austro-Hungarian 39th Infantry Division together counted only 1,100 rifles. The war diary of the High Command pointed out the difficulty of the situation, in which it could not be avoided that "with the few reserves at hand, only a wildfire can arise; every small fire must be immediately extinguished, and this seems only possible through the deployment of German troops".

¹) G. 481.  
²) From the right wing Austro-Hungarian XIII and VI Corps, German 48th R. D., Austro-Hungarian Corps Hofmann and IX Corps.  
World War. Volume X.

Page: 514 keyno: 101

The Eastern Front. — Brusilov Offensive.

Gradually, the situation stabilized. However, the 1st Reserve Division had to be gradually deployed entirely in the blocking position, which formed the connection to the still-held part of the former position east and northeast of Monasterzyska. The operational sections of the Austro-Hungarian divisions were shortened according to their reduced strengths. New Russian attacks, directed on July 12 and 13 against the northern part of the front lying from Koropiec to Strypa, were repelled mainly by the 1st Reserve Division under Major General Sietlow. 1200 dead Russians remained here on the battlefield. Then calm ensued; only in the Carpathians did operationally insignificant skirmishes continue.

d) Progress of the battles on the Austro-Hungarian front until July 27.

Map 7, Sketches 27 and 30.

While in the Army Group Archduke Karl, combat activity rested except for an almost uninterrupted small war of the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army in the Carpathians, further north there were new costly battles.

In the Army Group Linsingen, General von der Marwitz, after the experiences of July 16, had withdrawn his main forces north of the Lipa westwards to block further Russian breakthroughs in this direction. This was only possible by weakening the garrison on the 16-kilometer-long, north-facing Lipa front. Only the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division, which joined the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, now stood there. The overall position of this army thus formed a salient at the mouth of the Lipa; from here it ran behind the Styr and then, following the Galician eastern border, south to the railway east of Brody. This approximately 40-kilometer-long, naturally and by construction strong part of the position was occupied by only 2½ divisions. When a new Russian attack seemed to be preparing against the Lipa corner on July 18, Generaloberst von Linsingen offered the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army the Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division, which was in reserve with the Marwitz Group. Generaloberst von Puhallo declined the offer, believing he could manage with his own forces. Only at the urging of the Austro-Hungarian military command did he request the reinforcement on July 20 for the division.

1) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 616.  
2) Connection to p. 506.

Page: 515 keyno: 102

Army Group Linsingen: New Breaches at the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army.

Division. On this day, however, the enemy between Berestecko and the mouth of the Lipa already gained the west bank of the Styr with strong forces. The Austro-Hungarian 48th Infantry Division and further reinforcements arriving from the Marwitz Group came too late. The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army retreated on July 21 to the line Leszniow–Galiczan on the Lipa, where the left wing south of Zwininacze maintained connection with the Marwitz Group. The Russian army report again reported 14,000 prisoners and ten guns as booty.

Meanwhile, on July 22, the army group faced new concerns that Russian masses were also gathering in front of the northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army at Torczyn, and northeast of there, the presence of the commander-in-chief of the Russian Guards was detected by radio traffic in front of the Bernhardi Group at Rozyszcze. Aerial reports on rail traffic and strong troop assemblies clearly indicated that a new major attack was being prepared in the direction of Kowel. But also in front of the Gronau Group, the enemy suddenly gathered fresh forces south of Pinsk. "One is constantly sitting on a powder keg" — this is how the new chief of staff of the army group, Colonel Hoff, described the situation in a long-distance conversation with Major General von Cramon, although he initially did not even want to believe in the presence of the Russian Guards. He nevertheless considered an attack against the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army imminent. However, this army should "for God's sake not be told anything beforehand," as unfortunately happened with the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army on the 19th and 20th. When on July 23, the Russian 1st and 3rd Guards Infantry Divisions were identified near the Rozyszcze–Kowel railway by prisoners, there was no longer any doubt about the seriousness of the situation in this sector of the front. The German Supreme Army Command directed the 121st Infantry Division, which had initially been assigned to the Prince Leopold Army Group due to the fighting, further to Kowel; some Landsturm battalions arrived from Warsaw. Otherwise, the army group had to help itself.

However, before new battles occurred with the Linsingen Army Group, the Russians overran the center of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army at Leszniow on the morning of July 25 and pushed it back to Bolduryn. The Galician border town of Brody was thus immediately threatened from the north. The army was divided; its northern wing (Austro-Hungarian 46th, ½ 33rd, and 48th Infantry Divisions), supported by troops of the German 22nd Infantry Division under their commander, Lieutenant General Dieffenbach, was subordinated to the Marwitz Group on July 26, while the southern wing joined the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army.

¹) See p. 503 and 520 f.

Page: 516 keyno: 103

The Eastern Front. — German Section.

On July 26, the Marwitz Group was subordinated, the southern wing joined the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. The southern border of Army Group Linsingen was thus henceforth northwest of Zborów on the Stryp.

Already on the following day, July 27, the enemy brought down the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army at Brody. It seemed extremely questionable whether the positions further south could be held, Generaloberst von Böhm, with the consent of his army command, also withdrew the parts of his army still standing at the border into the prepared defensive line upper Seret¹) — Martopol — Jasionowo.

The unfortunate defensive battles of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and the southern wing of Army Group Linsingen had again brought heavy losses. In ten days, since July 18, 27,000 prisoners had fallen into Russian hands in the combat area south of the Lipa and at Brody²).

C. The German Part of the Eastern Front in June and July³).

Map 6, Sketch 29.

When the Brusilov Offensive began on June 4, the enemy was still in almost undiminished strength before the German part of the Eastern Front. He might have been twice as superior in rifle numbers to the German forces. The correct assessment had been established at the Commander-in-Chief East that the Russians were primarily preparing strong forces for a new major attack against the Smorgon—Narocz Lake section, less so at the lower Dvina⁴). Accordingly, Generalfeldmarschall von Hindenburg distributed his reserves, which, however, consisted only of individual regiments and battalions besides the 108th Infantry and ½ 1st Reserve Division. At Army Group Prince Leopold, the Russians seemed to want to repeat the attack from October 1915⁵) against the positions at Baranowicze on an expanded scale. Therefore, the first assaults against the Austro-Hungarian front were considered by the Germans as what they were, as secondary attacks, to which the main thrust against the German part of the Eastern Front would still follow.

¹) Northern tributary of the Dniester, not to be confused with the river of the same name flowing through Bukovina and Romania to the Danube estuary (Sereth).  
²) The Russian army report of July 29 reported 40,000 prisoners, 49 guns, 100 machine guns from July 16 to 27, including the 13,000 prisoners and 30 guns captured on July 16 (p. 505).  
³) Continuation on pp. 439 and 444.  
⁴) p. 437.  
⁵) Vol. VIII, p. 559.

Page: 517 keyno: 104

Victorious Defense at Baranowicze.

what they were, as secondary attacks, to which the main thrust against the German part of the Eastern Front would still follow. Soon, however, the seriousness of the situation that arose at Luzk forced the Army Group Prince Leopold as well as the Supreme Commander East, despite the danger on their own front, to assist the ally. The laboriously spared and repeatedly replenished small reserves were handed over to the Austro-Hungarian neighboring sections\*), as their fate was also decisive for that of their own front.

The situation became even more difficult when there was no longer any doubt about an imminent attack against the Army Group Prince Leopold at Baranowicze. Above all, there was concern in the northern part of the section of the s.u. XII Corps deployed north of the railway during a Russian attack. The commanding headquarters of the Army Detachment Woyrsch at Baranowicze considered a German intervention group of brigade strength indispensable there. On the other hand, it had already handed over a brigade to the Army Group Linsingen on June 6 and was, at the urging of the Supreme Army Command, despite all concerns, on June 12 about to let a second one follow, when the Russian attack began the next day, on June 13\*).

Against the positions north of Baranowicze, the Russian 3rd Army of the Western Front\*) had prepared the Grenadier Corps (two divisions), with about 1½ more divisions as a second echelon ready for attack. They were to break through the left flank of the German Landwehr Corps north of the railway to Slonim, which bordered the s.u. XII Corps just south of Lake Kolodtschewo, and then bring down Baranowicze itself from the north. After extensive artillery preparation, the Russian grenadiers launched a dense mass assault in the evening of the day. They hit the northern half of the 4th Landwehr Division of Lieutenant General von Brieske and the extreme right flank of the s.u. 16th Infantry Division, but broke in the defensive fire of Silesian Landwehr, which was effectively supported by artillery and Austro-Hungarian troops. Weak repetitions of the attack on June 14 also ended unsuccessfully. The Russian loss amounted to 8000 men.

The Russian attack prompted the Supreme Commander East to deploy the 22nd Infantry Division, which had been withdrawn as a reserve, to the Army Detachment Woyrsch.

\* Overview of the contributions p. 564 f.  
\*) Details are contained in Volume 9 of the "Battles of the World War".  
\*) p. 494.

keyno: 105

keyno: 106

Page: 520 keyno: 107

The Eastern Front. — German Section.

On the other hand, according to the consistent reports

from the aerial reconnaissance of the 10th and 12th Armies as well as the Army Detachment

Woyrsch, there could be no doubt that the enemy was transporting parts of the reserves stationed

behind his western front to Volhynia.

On June 27 and 28, train traffic reached its peak: In dense

succession and at the shortest intervals, the transport trains headed south.

To disrupt the railway lines and movement,

on the orders of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, the air

forces of the Eastern Army repeatedly attacked Russian loading stations

and moving trains with bombs and machine guns.

To disrupt the enemy's attack preparations, the 10th Army

released gas near Smorgon on the morning of July 2, without the effect

being exploited for a subsequent attack. The next day, after

intense drumfire, the expected Russian attacks began

against various positions of the 12th and 10th Armies, most strongly on both sides

of Smorgon itself. North of the place, the enemy temporarily penetrated the trenches of the 14th Landwehr Division after a

mine explosion.

Otherwise, he was repelled everywhere, but the intensified combat

activity continued in some places until July 6 and also spread to the area

north of Lake Narocz and the region of Mitau. On the other hand,

German pilots extensively bombed troop transports at the Minsk station.

At the same time, the expected new Russian attack had begun with Army Group Prince Leopold.

Against the Army Detachment Woyrsch near Baranowicze, the main attack had been intended by the Russians

since mid-June1). The 4th Army under

General Ragosa was to lead it and gather around 21½ infantry and

5 cavalry divisions between the northern edge of the Rokitno Swamps and

the swampy lowlands of the upper Njemen, while further back

the guards remained ready for transport by rail. The

task was to push the Germans back in the direction of Nowogrodek and Slonim

across the Njemen and Schtschara.

In the early morning of July 2, intense artillery fire began against the

sections of the German Landwehr Corps and the s.-ü. XII Corps. On the

morning of July 3, the infantry attack followed. At the Landwehr Corps

under General of Cavalry Baron von König, it was repelled by the two northern divisions, the 3rd and 4th Landwehr Divisions; small penetrations were eliminated in counterattacks.

Page: 521 keyno: 108

Another Victorious Defense at Baranowicze.

northern divisions, 3rd and 4th Landwehr Division, repelled; small breaches were eliminated in counterattack. At the Austro-Hungarian XII Corps under General of Infantry von Henriques, this was not successful everywhere. At Strobdowa, the front was dented. The resistance strength of the corps, especially the Austro-Hungarian 16th Infantry Division, seems to have suffered so much that Generaloberst von Woyrsch considered replacement by German troops urgent. Parts of the 5th Reserve Division, made available by the army group, were inserted into the front. At Erdöbben, the second position was held over about four kilometers. The seriousness of the situation was clearly expressed by Generaloberst von Woyrsch through his Chief of Staff, Colonel Heye, on the evening of July 3, when he requested reinforcements by telephone from General von Falkenhayn. He could only promise the 201st Infantry Division, which was just being formed. His response confirmed the previous statements of Colonel Heye: "His Majesty is convinced that in the army group every man knows that it is now a matter of the war decision on all fronts, where the use of the last drop of blood is required from everyone." Moreover, General von Falkenhayn could only refer the army group to the Commander-in-Chief East, who, despite the fighting on his own front, already extracted what he could make available1), initially the Bavarian Cavalry Division and some smaller parts, to which he now added heavy batteries.

July 4 brought new Russian assaults. At Darowo, where the enemy broke into the position of the 3rd Landwehr Division of Major General Adams, it was possible to restore the situation by the next morning. At the Austro-Hungarian XII Corps, into which German troops had meanwhile been integrated in divisional strength, there was heavy fighting, but the Russian assault was eventually largely intercepted. In the following days, the enemy renewed his attacks with increasing intensity and with the deployment of new troops, but without any significant success. On July 9, 14 Russian divisions were already identified on a 50-kilometer-wide battlefront in the front line. Their attacks subsided, but were still in preparation. Meanwhile, the retreat of the northern wing of the Linsingen army group behind the Stochód complicated the overall situation. In agreement with the Commander-in-Chief East, the Bavarian Cavalry Division was assigned to support the front of the southern wing of the Gronau army group, with which it crossed over to the Linsingen army group on July 9.

1) "The camaraderie of the armies of the East was famous. There, too, he closed battalion-wise what he could, and we processed the help for Linsingen." Inscription of Gen. Ob. Heye from June 21, 1934.  
2) p. 501 f.

Page: 522 keyno: 109

The Eastern Front. — German Section.

In the East, the Bavarian Cavalry Division was deployed to support the

front of the southern wing of the Gronau Army Group, with which it

joined the Linsingen Army Group on July 9. In the Woyrsch Army Detachment,

the foremost parts of the 86th Infantry Division, newly made available by the

Commander-in-Chief East, replaced further parts of the k.u.

XII Corps. Finally, on July 14, the 5th Reserve

Division under Major General von Woyna regained parts of the former first position

in heavy fighting at Strzbowa and captured 1500 prisoners. Then the situation calmed down. The battles of a week had

already cost 16,000 men, which were almost equally divided between German and Austro-Hungarian

troops, but the latter counted 3700,

the former only 1020 missing. The Russian army

report announced 3000 prisoners. The Russians themselves suffered losses of 80,000 men.

The Russian attacks did not yet seem to be over. Their main

focus apparently shifted further south. Preparations

extended to the front of the Beskiden Corps, where now — after the water level had dropped —

an attack against the thinly occupied front on both sides of the

Wygonowkoje Lake seemed possible. The Russian XII Corps and the

Siberian Cossack Division were supposed to have arrived there. The enemy seemed

to be still reinforcing. The Kampfgeschwader 2, assigned by the Linsingen Army Group, was deployed against its camps and

railway stations. On July 20, the army detachment expected

152 of its own battalions against 384 Russian battalions at its

front, including all reinforcements still in prospect. In the following days, it became

clear that the enemy was weakening again, and Generaloberst

von Woyrsch accordingly released the 86th Infantry Division and two

individual regiments to the front south of the Pripjet. Attacks that

the Russians launched from July 25 to 27 against the section of the k.u. XII Corps, now almost entirely taken over by German

troops, and against the 3rd Landwehr Division, were unsuccessful. On

July 30, the Prince Leopold Army Group reported to the Supreme

Army Command that a "larger attack on a broad front" was apparently

no longer to be expected for the time being.

Meanwhile, in the area of the Commander-in-Chief East,

the 12th Army of the Russian Northern Front had been tasked with driving the German

8th Army from the lower Dvina. The attack was to be

conducted between Riga and Friedrichstadt, with the simultaneous

deployment of a division on the west coast of the Gulf of Riga near Roijen.

However, the landing was aborted due to technical difficulties.

Page: 523 keyno: 110

Subsiding of the Russian Attacks.

Among smaller operations, only the attack from the Riga bridgehead to the south was carried out. It began on July 16 and hit the 6th Reserve Division, which, under Major General Hans von Below, repelled all attempts of the far superior enemy in six days of tough fighting. The Russians lost 15,000 men. Then the combat activity subsided again in this section of the German Eastern Front.

D. Reorganization of the Entire Front Against Russia¹).

Maps 6, 7.

I. Until the Meeting in Berlin on July 18.

At the Berlin meeting on June 23, General von Falkenhayn and Colonel General von Conrad still hoped that the situation of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army would stabilize and that the counterattack of Army Group Linsingen would lead to a successful conclusion. However, both seemed by no means certain even then. The plan for a major offensive in the Dniester area was nevertheless based on this hope. If it did not materialize, the rolling reinforcements were not available and no further ones were freed up at Army Group Linsingen. But now, since June 28 with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, since July 4 with the Southern Army, and since July 5 also with Army Group Linsingen, events occurred that overturned all calculations. They had forced the troops intended for the Dniester offensive and even more to be prematurely deployed at various points on the front²), to support it even inadequately. The attack of the enemy breaking out on July 1 in the west at the Somme, on July 3 on the German Eastern Front at Baranowicze, and then also at Smorgon, as well as the concern about a new major Italian offensive, let every hope vanish of bringing significant fresh forces from any of these theaters of war to Galicia and Volhynia in the foreseeable future and providing the newly organized Army Group Command Archduke Karl³) with an attack-capable army. General von Falkenhayn tried in vain, through sharp pressure on Army Group Linsingen, to free up at least some forces.

¹) Connection to G. 481 ff.  
²) 105th and 119th as well as Austrian 44th and Austro-Hungarian 59th Infantry Division with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, 1st Reserve Division with the Southern Army, 107th and 108th Infantry Division as well as Division Clausius and Bavarian 3rd Reserve Division with Army Group Linsingen.  
³) See 510 f.

Page: 524 keyno: 111

The Eastern Front. — Reorganization.

to free up at least some forces for the Linsingen Army Group.

From the west, he had the 121st Infantry Division roll out, but he

immediately added that it could not be considered combat-ready1).

Colonel General von Conrad decided, despite a new Italian

attack, to bring in a fifth division, the Austro-Hungarian 34th Infantry Division, and

some higher command authorities from his southwest front.

He also now willingly agreed to a renewed approach by

General von Falkenhayn, who wanted to secure the deployment of two Turkish divisions2).

However, the entirety of these reinforcements was

insufficient given the enormous need.

Essentially, the east had to help itself. Thus, the need

to consolidate the entire eastern front under a single

commander became increasingly urgent. The plan once rejected by Colonel General von Conrad,

to appoint Field Marshal von Mackensen as the supreme commander

of the Austro-Hungarian eastern front3), was no longer feasible,

since the threatening stance of Romania could present the Balkan forces

with new tasks at any moment. It seemed logical to restore the position

of the eastern commander to what it once was4),

and additionally to subordinate the Austro-Hungarian eastern armies to him.

Then all the forces of the entire front came under one hand and

could be used without time-consuming negotiations by the Supreme Army Command with

Colonel General von Conrad, wherever the situation required.

General von Falkenhayn, however, had reservations about expanding the authority of a commander

with whom he had not believed he could work productively since the events of January 19155);

the disagreements during the summer campaign of 1915 had repeatedly created new tensions6).

On the other hand, since mid-June, various parties had urged General von Falkenhayn

to give the eastern commander a position of power in the east

commensurate with his great merits, abilities, and reputation as a commander.

Above all, the Chancellor, since the clash with the

Chief of Staff over the issue of the submarine war7), expected advantages for the difficult external and internal political situation from the appointment of the Field Marshal with command over the entire front against Russia.

1) G. 503.   
2) S. 441 and 614.   
3) G. 483 f. and 489 f.   
4) Volume VI, p. 37, and VIII, G. 340 ff.   
5) Volume VII, G. 5 ff.   
6) Volume VIII, G. 340 ff. and 489 ff.   
7) G. 290 f.

Page: 525 keyno: 112

Proposal to Place the Entire Front under Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

difficult external and internal political overall situation regarding the assignment of the Field Marshal with the command over the entire front against Russia. Since early July, this idea played a role in diplomatic exchanges between Berlin and Vienna).

General von Falkenhayn could no longer evade the considerations and admonitions addressed to him. On July 3, he proposed, albeit reluctantly, to the Kaiser that Field Marshal von Hindenburg be appointed as the supreme commander over the entire Eastern Front. Major General von Cramon was to clarify the position of the Austro-Hungarian army leadership through a "very personal and confidential inquiry." The Prince Leopold Army Group was instructed to immediately contact the Eastern Supreme Commander regarding the reinforcements it requested. Thus, even before the final regulation of command relationships, he gained influence beyond his own power area on the distribution and use of the German Eastern forces and also assumed some co-responsibility for the section of the Prince Leopold Army Group.

The inquiry transmitted to Colonel General von Conrad envisaged the operational command of Field Marshal von Hindenburg from Bukovina to the Baltic Sea, with certain restrictions for the Austro-Hungarian part of the front as previously considered for Field Marshal von Mackensen). The advantages of such a regulation — so concluded the order for Major General von Cramon — were as evident as the downsides. On July 3, his response arrived: "Excellency von Conrad believes that the benefits of the proposed measure will not be proportionate to the disadvantages. In the monarchy, the exclusion of the supreme commander Archduke Friedrich, which it would ultimately amount to, would not be understood, but rather seen as an admission of complete impotence to continue the operations themselves. It would also create the impression among our enemies that the Imperial and Royal Army was at the end of its strength and could only be inspired by the name of Field Marshal Hindenburg, meaning that the Central Powers would now play their remaining trump card." A closer contact between the two supreme army commands through daily communication via telegraph was, however, very desirable.

At the same time, as Colonel General von Conrad rejected the proposal "as General von Falkenhayn soon expressed it himself — with good reasons," Lieutenant General Ludendorff, prompted by the events in the Styr bend of Czartorysk and their impact on the front north of the Pripjet amidst simultaneous heavy attacks against the Prince Leopold Army Group, had Secretary of State Helfferich tell the Chancellor on July 4: "The lack of command unity exceeds the level of responsibility that can still be borne in this dangerous situation."

Page: 526 keyno: 113

The Eastern Front. — Reorganization.

prompted by the events in the Styr Bend of Czartorysk and their impact on the front north of the Pripjet with simultaneous heavy attacks against the army group Prince Leopold, the Chancellor on July 4th through State Secretary Helfferich said: "The lack of command unity exceeds the level of responsibility that can still be borne in this dangerous situation."1) A letter drafted on July 5th at the Commander-in-Chief East to the Chief of the Military Cabinet, which dealt with the matter, was not sent2). However, on July 7th, Field Marshal von Hindenburg addressed an urgent warning to him: "At the risk of being misunderstood, I feel it is my duty to express that the current critical situation in the East can perhaps only be resolved if the entire front from Courland to Bukovina is placed under unified command, which must be granted full independence and reserves must be supplied." This step prompted General von Falkenhayn, in an immediate response to Field Marshal von Hindenburg, to outline the difficulties opposing the desired command regulation. It would only be conceivable to subordinate the front from the Baltic Sea to and including the army group Linsingen to the Commander-in-Chief East. Subsequently, he initially proposed a dual subordination, under the German Supreme Army Command for the German part of his future front, under the Austro-Hungarian for the army group Linsingen. He was in agreement with the thoughts of leading Viennese circles and also the Austro-Hungarian Supreme Commander, Archduke Friedrich3). However, General von Falkenhayn declared such dual subordination "completely impossible," as it would "eliminate" the Emperor's influence in "matters of life and death for the army and thus the empire." He wanted to leave no doubt that the German commander on the Eastern Front should only be subordinate to the Emperor and thus the German Supreme Army Command, and that his communication with the Austro-Hungarian army command should go through the German one. This view was now also agreed upon by the Commander-in-Chief East.

Colonel General von Conrad also rejected the new proposal on July 9th "for factual-military reasons," as a division of the Austro-Hungarian front, attacked uniformly and with superiority by the Russians, would only increase the difficulties, as the boundary of the command areas would fall precisely into the main thrust direction of the Russians, Dubno-Brody-Lemberg.

1) Chancellor to Envoy von Treutler on July 4th. — 2) The record of General Mar. Hoffmann" G. 127 f. (5th, 6th, and 7th July 1916). 3) Austrian official work, Volume V, p. 119. The same thought was later expressed by the Chancellor, but whether already at that time is not known.

Page: 527 keyno: 114

New Proposals for the Use of Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

Hungarian front would only increase the difficulties, as the boundary of command areas would fall precisely in the main thrust direction of the Russians, Dubno-Brody-Lemberg. He expressed concern that with further setbacks in this area, the German leadership might prefer the retreat direction to the northwest, while for Austria-Hungary's interests, the direction to the southwest was more desirable). "Variants in the grouping of command relationships" seemed to him "insignificant". Only the bringing in of the forces necessary according to the existing strength ratios could help, particularly to the southern flank.

In a similar sense, the day before, the Commander-in-Chief East had also urged the swift provision of a "truly combat-ready" division for the army groups Prince Leopold and Linsingen, but also of troops for the Austro-Hungarian southern flank. General von Falkenhayn was not in a position to meet such demands at the time. He wanted to try to achieve the subordination of the Linsingen army group under the Commander-in-Chief East in the next few days through verbal discussion. Until then, the subordination of the Prince Leopold army group under the Commander-in-Chief East should also be postponed, with which he fully agreed.

The personal discussion of the two chiefs of staff was delayed. A new Russian incursion into the front southwest of Luck) exacerbated the situation. The closest connection and destruction of German and Austro-Hungarian troops and the corresponding strengthening of German influence were more urgent than ever. Calls for unified German command over the entire Eastern Front also came from Bulgaria). Even influential circles in Vienna seemed no longer opposed to such command by Field Marshal von Hindenburg. On July 16, the Chancellor offered his support to diplomatically support the German demand. However, General von Falkenhayn rejected this, as it would "increase the tensions already existing between the leading circles in Austria-Hungary and provoke new bitterness between the German and Austro-Hungarian military leadership". On the other hand, a report from a reliable source from Pest indicated that "the Hungarians are jumping ship, wanting to make a separate peace! ... It is said that Austria can no longer continue, must make peace").

1) This according to a record by the Chancellor from July 19 about a conversation with General von Falkenhayn on the evening of July 18.  
2) p. 505.  
3) p. 599.

Page: 528 keyno: 115

The Eastern Front. — Reorganization.

Page from Pest suggests that "the Hungarians are jumping off, making separate peace! ... It is said, Austria can no longer, must make peace"). Kaiser Wilhelm) was now determined to once again demand supreme command over the entire Eastern Front for Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

With this intention, General von Falkenhayn went to Berlin on July 18 for discussions with Generaloberst von Conrad, which — although for other reasons — was also desired by him). He was justifiably concerned about the situation at the Dniester, the endangerment of Hungary, and the attitude of Romania. He needed more German troops for the offensive of Army Group Archduke Karl, after the divisions designated for this had mostly already been deployed for other tasks. Lieutenant General Ludendorff and the Minister of War, Lieutenant General von Wild, were present at the meeting, but whether throughout its entire duration is not known. Generaloberst von Conrad remained opposed to the supreme command issue. At the Austro-Hungarian front against Russia, there were 135,000 Germans, 422,000 Austrians and Hungarians, a total of 557,000 men against about 800,000 Russians. Without significant German reinforcements, which could not be provided, changes in command relationships seemed worthless to him. The name "Hindenburg" alone would hardly impress the Austro-Hungarian troops, but they would feel the German patronage oppressive. On the other hand, Generaloberst von Conrad wanted to "absolutely comply with German suggestions and wishes."

Following the question of command regulation, "measures to remedy the further dissolution" of the Austro-Hungarian army were discussed, for which Generaloberst von Linsingen, in addition to his report of July 16) and Major General von Seeckt, among others, had proposed: Personal contact and influence of the army commands by the army leadership; Generaloberst von Conrad must visit them himself once. The corps commanders should be personally held responsible for ensuring that the exaggerated fear of the Russians and reluctance to continue the fight with all force, which appeared in many places, were suppressed. Implementation of all units with German staffs and troops; gaining of front-line officers by reducing the extraordinarily high number of officers in the higher staffs and offices.

1) Diary entry of Gen. Ob. von Plehwe from July 17.  
2) Report of the Legation Councilor von Grünau to the Chancellor from July 18.  
3) Austrian official work, Volume IV, p. 644.  
4) G. 505 f.

Page: 34 keyno: 116

Further Negotiations on the Use of Gen. Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

Front officers by reducing the extraordinarily high number of officers of the higher staffs and chanceries. More abundant replacement of troops and ammunition; whether this is possible — as Generaloberst von Linsingen reported — he could not judge. He had acknowledged that the allied army command was most willing to comply with all expressed wishes; against the large number of unreliable elements, the espionage reputation and the like, it was powerless. To what extent these points were actually discussed in the meeting is not known.

Their outwardly recognizable result was limited to the promise of German mountain troops for the Carpathian defense and the exchange of two Austrian-Hungarian divisions to be filled in advance, which were to be used in quiet sections of the Commander-in-Chief East, for two German divisions to be provided by him. That was all with which General von Falkenhayn believed he could help the ally at this moment.

2. Until the Conclusion of the Negotiations on July 27 in Pleß.

Despite the repeated rejection, the concerns of Generaloberst von Conrad against a command of Hindenburg — as Generalmajor von Cramon expressed to the Chancellor on July 19 — seemed to have already been significantly weakened. General von Cramon had the task of further probing and did not rule out the possibility that the entire front might still be subordinated to the Field Marshal; the concerns of Generaloberst von Conrad about damage to the prestige and trust of the Austro-Hungarian army might be exaggerated. The Field Marshal was probably also popular in the Austro-Hungarian army.

On July 21, the Chancellor urged General von Falkenhayn: "New Austrian defeat southwest of Luck" must have significant internal political repercussions if the Hindenburg factor is not fully exploited soon. All responsible parties owe it to the country and the crown to prevent such danger. Patriotic duty compels me to express this explicitly to Your Excellency." At the same time, the Chancellor instructed the State Secretary von Jagow, who was present at the Great Headquarters, to point out to the Kaiser — if not already done — the grave seriousness of the Romanian question.

1) Record of the Chancellor from July 19. Generalmajor von Cramon had delivered him a letter from General von Falkenhayn, the content of which is not known.  
2) p. 514 f.  
World War. Vol. X.

keyno: 117

Page: 531 keyno: 118

Further Discussions on the Use of Gen. Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

... would be ...” General Lieutenant Ludendorff immediately raised objections to this plan. A negative stance from the Field Marshal followed: The solution meant a compromise for which he could not voluntarily take responsibility. However, General von Falkenhayn stuck to his plan. He communicated it to General Colonel von Conrad on July 23 and added that the Field Marshal had indeed rejected the voluntary acceptance of the proposed solution, but would naturally comply with a supreme command. “I am ready to obtain this command.” To resolve the command issue, the Kaiser would arrive in Pleß on July 25 or 26 for two to three days.

General Colonel von Conrad saw in the proposal the intention to now place the "weight of the decision" on the front south of the Pripet. But General von Falkenhayn rejected this. His proposal was based rather "solely on the intention to exploit the outstanding military strength of the Field Marshal and at the same time the aura surrounding his name for the great general cause, where it is undoubtedly most needed after the regrettable events of recent times." While General Colonel von Conrad was now obtaining the approval of Emperor Franz Josef, the new plan of General von Falkenhayn was already called into question by the fact that the Kaiser — as noted by the accompanying War Minister General von Stein on the journey to Pleß — "since Andrassy," emphasizing the impending collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, had directly requested Hindenburg, considering the appointment of Hindenburg as leader of the Eastern Front as a demand of "people's psychology" and firmly supported this idea. So, on July 25, when the situation at the front had been severely exacerbated by a new Russian incursion at Brody, General von Falkenhayn again asked General Colonel von Conrad whether he still maintained, "even now after the deterioration of the situation in Galicia," that the subordination of the entire Austro-Hungarian front under the Army Group Linsingen under the German Supreme Commander East was out of the question, and whether this also corresponded to the will of his Kaiser. General Colonel von Conrad affirmed both questions.

On the afternoon of July 26, General von Falkenhayn proposed in Teschen the subordination of the entire front under Field Marshal von Hindenburg. General Colonel von Conrad was surprised and once again explained the reasons why, from the Austrian side, this solution was opposed.

Page: 532 keyno: 119

The Eastern Front. — Reorganization.

They spoke of a solution. The decision lay with Emperor Franz Josef, who

had just approved the German proposal of July 22/23, which was quite different.

Archduke Friedrich took a less rejecting stance. He reported to Vienna and

wanted to try to achieve clarification in the discussion with the German

Emperor the following day.

On July 27, Field Marshal von Hindenburg and Lieutenant General Ludendorff

were also summoned to Pleß. They were received by the Emperor for a presentation,

to which General von Falkenhayn later appeared. A somewhat heated discussion

developed between General von Falkenhayn on one side, and the Field Marshal

and General Ludendorff on the other, during which the Emperor decided against

his Chief of General Staff. In the afternoon, the Emperor received Archduke

Friedrich and Colonel General von Conrad. General von Falkenhayn, who felt

sidelined as a responsible military advisor, entertained thoughts of resignation

and stayed away from the dinner table. The subsequent discussions of the German

Emperor with Archduke Friedrich, Field Marshal von Hindenburg, and Colonel

General von Conrad about the regulation of the supreme command were conducted

without the German Chief of General Staff. They were under the immediate

impression of further setbacks at Brody, where on the afternoon of July 27,

the previously held border positions were lost, thus opening the way to Lemberg

for the enemy. This brought a useful result. In substance, it corresponded to

the solution temporarily sought by General von Falkenhayn, but decisively

rejected by Colonel General von Conrad on July 9. The Supreme Commander East

was to take over the entire front from the Baltic Sea to the Austro-Hungarian

2nd Army, initially with the task of repelling the Russian advance. He remained

subordinate to the German Supreme Army Command, which committed to issuing

only such instructions for the front south of the Pripjet as had been previously agreed with the Austro-Hungarian Army Command.

1) Austrian official source, Volume V, p. 120.  
2) Besides the military leaders, the Chancellor and State Secretary von Jagow,   
as well as the Crown Prince Boris of Bulgaria, who had meanwhile arrived in Pleß,   
participated with General Jekow (p. 599).  
3) p. 515 f.  
4) p. 526.  
5) The subordination of this army was only agreed upon on the morning of   
July 28.

Page: 533 keyno: 120

Decision by Discussion of the German Emperor with Archduke Friedrich.

to give, which had previously been agreed with the Austro-Hungarian military command. After Emperor Franz Josef had given his consent, the reorganization came into effect on August 1. Thus, after lengthy, changeable negotiations under the pressure of Russian assaults and the increasing concern about Romania's intervention, a regulation was reached that represented a significant progress. On the one hand, it took into account the prestige of the Austro-Hungarian military command, which continued to have complete autonomy over the army group Archduke Karl, the Italian front, and the front in Albania; on the other hand, it secured support for it through the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief East up to the area of Lemberg with troops from the area north of the Dniester at any time. The command area of Field Marshal von Hindenburg and thus his influence on the overall conduct of the war was expanded to such an extent as corresponded to the views of the German people and the wishes of the Chancellor. However, that this expansion of power would become the source of new frictions with the Supreme Army Command seemed almost inevitable after what had preceded.

3. Assumption of Command by Field Marshal von Hindenburg and Frictions with the Supreme Army Command.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg handed over his previous army group on July 30 to the Commander-in-Chief of the 10th Army, Generaloberst von Eichhorn, with Colonel Freiherr Schmidt von Schmetzseé as Chief of Staff at his side. As Commander-in-Chief East, he assumed command over the army groups Eichhorn and Prince Leopold on the same day, the latter being reinforced by the 12th Army of the previous Hindenburg army group, and at noon on August 1 also over the army group Linsingen, whose command he visited in the following days with Lieutenant General Ludendorff as well as that of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army in Vladimir. Here, a five-day Russian assault had just been repelled. In Kowel, Chief of Staff Colonel Hell presented the view of the army group command that the positions could be held. After repelling all Russian attacks, it is planned to resume the offensive against Luck—Rowno or, if the enemy breaks through at Lemberg, to launch a strong thrust southward against him.

Page: 534 keyno: 121

The Eastern Front. — Reorganization.

To launch an attack in a southern direction against him. In view of the overall

situation, however, Lieutenant General Ludendorff opposed any offensive.

The aim was to strongly expand the positions to withdraw German

divisions for the southern armies as soon as possible. Initially, however,

the 75th Reserve Division, previously a reserve behind the Army

Group Eichhorn, would be prepared at Kowel for all cases. On August 3, the

command over the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was taken over in Lemberg. Major General

von Seeckt, who had been invited there as Chief of Staff of the Army Group Archduke Karl,

provided information about their situation and intentions.

From August 3, Field Marshal von Hindenburg

was in command of the entire Eastern Front from Tarnopol to Riga. Brest was

determined as the future headquarters.

The first directive, which the Field Marshal issued before

taking over command to the future subordinate army groups and

armies, and which he supplemented in the following days,

stated that the allied troops were to be subordinated to the German commanders

in the same way as their own. Training and replacement

were to be promoted and monitored just as with German troops.

1) p. 547.  
2) Organization (two independent brigades are counted as a division):  
Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, Gen. Ob. von Böhm with Austro-Hungarian IV and V Corps, Group  
of Field Marshal Kosak and Austro-Hungarian XXVIII Corps, together about 6 Austro-Hungarian Infantry Divisions,  
12 Austro-Hungarian Sch. R., of the German I. R. K.  
Army Group Linsingen (Organization p. 542), together around 12  
German, 17½ Austro-Hungarian Infantry Divisions, as well as 1½ German, 5 Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Divisions, 32 German, 37 Austro-Hungarian  
heavy battalions.  
Army Group Prince Leopold, Chief of General Staff Colonel Count von Lambsdorff;  
Army Group Gronau (XXXXI. R. K.), together 2 Infantry and 2½ Cavalry  
Divisions, 12 heavy battalions;  
Army Detachment Woyrsch with Beskiden Corps, Ldw. R. and reinforced  
Austro-Hungarian XII Corps, together 8 German, 2 Austro-Hungarian Infantry Divisions, 21 German, 4 Austro-Hungarian heavy  
battalions;  
12th Army with Gen. Command of the XXV and XVII R. R. and High Cavalry Commander 3,  
together about 6 German Infantry Divisions, 37 heavy battalions.  
Army Group Eichhorn, Chief of General Staff Colonel Baron Schmidt  
von Schwindtse;  
10th Army with Gen. Command of the III R. R., XXI R. R. and High Cavalry Commander 6,  
together 10 Infantry Divisions, including the exchange (p. 529) just arrived  
Austro-Hungarian 24th Infantry Division and 1 Cavalry Division, 55 German, 6 Austro-Hungarian heavy battalions;  
Army Detachment Scholtz with High Cavalry Commander 1 and Gen. Command of the XXXIX  
R. R., together 7 heavy and 2 Cavalry Divisions, 19 heavy battalions (the Gen. Command of the  
XXXIX R. R. was transferred to the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army on July 31);  
8th Army with High Cavalry Commander 5 and Gen. Command of the I R. R., together 7 Infantry  
3 Cavalry Divisions, 69 heavy battalions.

Page: 535 keyno: 122

Command Transfer by Gen. Field Marshal von Hindenburg from Tarnopol to Riga.

Implementation with these and use in not too large units was recommended. The 5th and 2nd Armies should be assigned not only a German liaison officer but also a German First General Staff officer. The training of the troops should be enhanced by participation in joint courses, the construction of positions, and the use of artillery should be promoted by assigning German artillery staffs, based on the experiences made in the Western battles. The often excessively large infantry strength of Austro-Hungarian divisions in relation to the number of guns was to be balanced by allocations to German units more richly equipped with artillery. On the other hand, reinforcement of those divisions by German artillery was envisaged. The possibility of increasing the rather low level of artillery material in the Austro-Hungarian units was examined. Gas protection measures and barbed wire, the latter also for the Army Group Archduke Karl, were supplied. The need to assign increased replacements to numerically weak regiments could mostly not be met due to ethnic and language difficulties.

The overall situation on the Eastern Front had further intensified in the days of reorganization.

In the Army Group Archduke Karl¹), the intention to attack had not yet been completely abandoned, but initially, on July 28, a rather serious new Russian incursion occurred on both sides of the Dniester, to which German troops had succumbed. Further attacks seemed to be in preparation.

At the front of the Commander-in-Chief East, the Russian attack against the Linsingen Army Group followed the incursion at Brody²) on July 28. The fighting continued here. New assaults were expected at Brody as well as against the Army Detachment Woyrsch and against the 8th Army before Riga. Whether it was possible to repel all Russian attacks on the now over 1000 kilometers long, only thinly occupied front depended primarily on the resilience of the deployed troops, as well as on timely recognition of the threatened points and appropriate use of the sparse reserves.

The Field Marshal had therefore already demanded reinforcements in Plesz on July 27, and General von Falkenhayn had then envisaged three divisions from the West. Of these, the 123rd Infantry Division, rolling towards Warsaw, was fought off³), and the 195th and 197th were to be formed from soon-to-arrive best troops in Siedlce and Lemberg.

Page: 536 keyno: 123

The Front. — Reorganization.

first be formed. The right of disposal over these troops had

been reserved by the Chief of the General Staff, in view of the possibility that

the danger at the Commander-in-Chief N. might already be averted by the time

the divisions were ready for use, and that they would then have to be assigned to the

army group Archduke Karl. Meanwhile, however, the

Commander-in-Chief East had already disposed of the 123rd Infantry Division,

to free up the 75th Reserve Division, and on August 1st telegraphed that

he had taken the subordination of all three divisions as a matter of course

and considered it indispensable; he needed the divisions particularly for the

Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. It was impossible to make appropriate decisions if

one had to live hand to mouth. He concluded: "That I

must be prepared, after stabilizing the situation, to lead the Austro-Hungarian

armies to my south is just as self-evident to me."

General von Falkenhayn, however, refused to release the 195th and

197th Infantry Divisions before their formation was completed, especially since

the Commander-in-Chief East would not take over the front of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army until the night

of August 3rd and the divisions would not begin to arrive until August 5th

at Lemberg and Siedlce.

Immediately upon returning from the trip, the Field Marshal

reported to the Emperor by telegram on August 4th about his "very serious"

impressions of the Austro-Hungarian army. He considered the situation of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army

to be endangered. He considered the deployment of two German divisions

there to be "impossibly necessary" and again requested the subordination of the

195th and 197th Infantry Divisions. The report was followed on August 5th in the

morning by a detailed report on the condition of the Austro-Hungarian

army with proposals for remedying identified deficiencies. He

concluded: "The army groups Eichhorn and Prince Leopold will hold their

permanent positions. The army group Linsingen and the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army

must first expand their current positions as such." Whether this would

succeed on the right wing of the army group Linsingen and with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army

was doubtful. If the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army had to retreat, the

position of the army group Linsingen, especially that of the Southern

army, would be seriously endangered and the recapture of Bukovina significantly

hampered. If the two requested divisions were made available

— it was further stated —, "on which the outcome of the war decisively

depends, then the permanent position can be expanded with certainty if the necessary wire is delivered.

I will then probably be in a position

to free up considerable forces by the end of August, thus in

a season when active warfare along the Carpathians or elsewhere is still possible."

Page: 537 keyno: 124

Supreme Army Command and Eastern Commander-in-Chief.

When on August 5th the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army continued

to give way, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief turned again in the afternoon

to General von Falkenhayn: He considered the situation to be extremely critical,

and requested that this view be immediately presented to the Kaiser and the release of the

two divisions be obtained, otherwise the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army could face

a catastrophe. In response, General von Falkenhayn made the

requested, albeit still uncertain, units available, but also expressed

that he could not allow anyone influence over the content of his

presentations to the Kaiser. The Eastern Commander-in-Chief

then reported to the Chief of the Military Cabinet: In the deployment

of the two divisions, there was an "unjustified" delay

of about 48 hours. The situation had thus "become very serious. The responsibility for this lies solely with the

Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, who did not want to heed my urgent warnings

and cannot free himself from half measures."

With the 195th and 197th Infantry Divisions, General von Falkenhayn

had given away his last reserves available for the East. In the West, further new divisions

in formation were not yet ready. The Turkish XV Corps, as envisaged by Enver Pasha,

could not be expected for another two to three weeks after a quarantine in Belgrade.

The Austro-Hungarian troops already deployed on the northern front needed

help themselves. To support the front south of the Dniester or the

border defense against Romania in case of need, General von Falkenhayn

demanded from the Eastern Commander-in-Chief that he keep at least one infantry division

ready for the Supreme Army Command near the railway. When this

was declared unacceptable, General von Falkenhayn acknowledged the difficulties

but remained firm in his demand, because: "What would be the use to the great

cause if a reserve stands behind the northern front, but

due to the absence of the division, the Austro-Hungarian front south of

the Dniester is penetrated and thus Romania is prompted to intervene against us?

What advantage would be gained if, although every local setback

on the northern front is prevented by the reserve division, its absence in the Carpathians

nevertheless opens the way for the Russians to Hungary?"

1) G. 546.  
2) G. 418.  
3) G. 524 and 615.  
4) G. 593 ff.

Page: 538 keyno: 125

E. Final Shift of the Russian Focus to the Southwestern Front.

I. Intentions of the Russian Leadership¹).

Map 7.

The futility of the West Front's attack at Baranowicze²) and the success of the Southwestern Front against the Styr Bend of Czartorysk³) prompted the Russian supreme command on July 9 to make the decisive decision to move the guards, which had been held in reserve behind the West Front, to the Southwestern Front in the area of Luck. This meant a final renunciation of the main attack of the West Front, which in the future — as previously the North Front — was only to carry out subsidiary operations. The focus of the offensive was shifted to the northern wing of the Southwestern Front, which was now to lead the main thrust over Kowel into the rear of Pinsk. As a major operational goal, the Russian leadership aimed for a breakthrough at the seam between the German and the Austro-Hungarian part of the front. Additionally, it was important to involve Romania, with which negotiations were underway for a military convention⁴).

The previous battles had cost the armies of the Southwestern Front heavy losses. From May 28 to July 13, they amounted to 498,000 men, of which 60,000 were missing. General Brussilov intended to resume the attack with the 3rd, 8th, and 11th Armies on July 14. At the same time, strong cavalry was to advance to expand the success already achieved at the Styr over the Stochod, where essentially only cavalry was opposing, towards Kamjens-Koszyrskij. Unexpected resistance at this river and reports from the 3rd and 8th Armies, which requested more time for their attack preparations, led to the postponement of their attack to July 20 to await the arrival of the guards. Under their commander, General of Cavalry Besobrasov, a "Special Army" was to be formed to deliver the decisive blow along the railway and road Boguszowka—Kowel.

¹) Connection to p. 494 ff.  
²) p. 520 ff.  
³) p. 500 ff.  
⁴) p. 549. Further details will be included in Volume XI.

Page: 539 keyno: 126

Decisive Attack of the Russian Southwestern Front.

had to lead the railway and road Boguszowka—Kowel. When local reconnaissance revealed that in the attack area of the Special Army, the swampy terrain of the Stochod would cause great difficulties and necessitate a move south beyond Solotwina, General Brussilow decided not to launch a strong attack before Pinsk. The northern wing of the 3rd Army was to advance at Narischki over the Oginski Canal and further over the Jasiolda into the rear of Pinsk, with the army reinforced by two more corps coming from the Western Front (III Corps and IV Siberian Corps). This opened a pincer attack from north and south against the area Pinsk—Kowel. The start of the attack was postponed to July 23. Meanwhile, the 11th Army under General Sacharow, reinforced by two more corps (V from the Western Front and V Siberian from the 8th Army), had already begun the counterattack against the Marwitz group north of the Lipa on July 16 and forced this group and the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army to retreat by July 21. In general, further operations were to attack only "as far as possible" in the direction of Brody; their task was fulfilled if they managed to tie down the enemy in front of their own front. The 7th and 9th Armies were to continue the offensive in the previous direction, thus with the main force along the Dniester towards Halicz and Stanislau.

On July 22, the day before the scheduled start of the attack, the Special Army designated for the main thrust requested a postponement. General Bessarow wanted to wait for the end of the prevailing rainy weather and the complete arrival of artillery ammunition and also wished to expand his attack section to the south. This resulted in another postponement of the start of the attack by five days to July 28. Meanwhile, the supreme command also sent the I Siberian Corps of the Western Front south as reinforcement to follow the Special Army as a reserve.

Thus, the Russian Southwestern Front was structured for the attack, starting from the right wing, as the adjacent overview illustrates.

As an introduction to the main attack, the 11th Army began on July 25 with the advance against the Austro-Hungarian positions north of Brody. On the 28th, the attack of the three northern adjoining armies followed, which was to bring the decision.

1) p. 505 f. and 514 f.

Page: 540 keyno: 127

The Eastern Front. — Shift of the Russian Focus.

<table>

<tr>

<th>Front Width</th>

<th>Inf. Div.</th>

<th>Rad. Div.</th>

<th>Rifles</th>

<th>Opponent according to Russian Estimate</th>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>3rd Army (IV. üb., XXXI., III., 4th Cav. R., Zufsel. R., XXXVI., I. turk.)</td>

<td>200 km</td>

<td>13</td>

<td>7</td>

<td></td>

<td></td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>Special Army (XXX., I., I. G., II. G., G. Cav. R.)</td>

<td>40 km</td>

<td>8</td>

<td>3</td>

<td>247,000</td>

<td>114,000</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>8th Army (XXXIX., XXIII., XXXXV., VIII.)</td>

<td>42 km</td>

<td>8</td>

<td>3</td>

<td></td>

<td></td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>11th Army (V., XXXXV., V. fib., XXXII., XVII., VII.)</td>

<td>110 km</td>

<td>12½</td>

<td>3</td>

<td>163,000</td>

<td>131,000</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>7th Army (VI., XVIII., XXI., XVI., II., 2nd Rad. R.)</td>

<td>90 km</td>

<td>12</td>

<td>2</td>

<td>157,000</td>

<td>87,000</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>9th Army (XXXIII., XXXI., XII., XI., 3rd Rad. R.)</td>

<td>225 km</td>

<td>13</td>

<td>5</td>

<td>144,000</td>

<td>89,000</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>together further in rolling (I. fib.)</td>

<td>66½ km</td>

<td>23</td>

<td></td>

<td>711,000</td>

<td>421,000</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td></td>

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<td>2</td>

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The 3rd, Special, and 8th Armies deployed against the Linsingen Army Group had a total of 79 (heavy guns¹).

2. The Battles from July 28 to August 6.

a) The Defensive Battle at Kowel.

Map 7, Sketch 31.

The Linsingen Army Group² had been preparing since mid-July for the defense against the expected new Russian main attack, which seemed to target Kowel. Besides the two Guard Corps along with the two Guard Cavalry Divisions — the Army Group anticipated, based on enemy preparations for bridge strikes over the Stochod — the Russian I., XXX., I. Turkestan and XXXVI. Corps would participate in the attack.

¹) p. 471, note 3. — ²) Connection to p. 514 f.

Page: 541 keyno: 128

In Anticipation of the Russian Attack.

to participate in the attack. It was expected that the main thrust would be directed at the left

flank of the group of Lieutenant General von Lüttwitz (General Command

of the X Army Corps), thus targeting the Austro-Hungarian 19th and 29th Infantry Divisions,

with subsidiary attacks on the Austro-Hungarian X Corps of the 4th Army and the Bernhardi Group.

Since Colonel General von Conrad directed the Austro-Hungarian ½ 33rd and the Austrian

106th Infantry Division as reinforcements to Brody,

Colonel General von Linsingen wished to position the 121st Infantry Division and the

86th Infantry Division, rolling in from the Army Group Prince Leopold¹,

not on his right flank, but behind the center, south of

Kovel, to — as Colonel Hell explained in a teleconference with General

von Falkenhayn — throw back the strongest and freshest Russian

attack group, the two Guard Corps, through repeated counterattacks

over the Stausen. General von Falkenhayn

expressed doubts about the success of this, and stated that the main concern

remained that the Austro-Hungarian 2nd and former 1st Army should not be forced into an

untenable retreat beforehand, but he emphasized that he could not sufficiently

oversee the situation from afar. The two German divisions

were directed to Kovel.

The experiences of the last weeks also necessitated — as Colonel

General von Linsingen had already reported to the Supreme Army Command on July 18² —

an increasing integration of Austrian-Hungarian units with German troops.

This had begun with the Marwitz Group, and other parts of the army group followed.

In addition, the often negligible artillery losses in relation to the number of prisoners —

on July 21, one division of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army captured 12,000 prisoners, but lost only two guns³ —

prompted a review of whether the artillery had been withdrawn to safety

too early at the expense of the infantry in many cases. During a

visit to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, Colonel Hell became convinced that

“the mood and attitude were beyond description” and proposed

using General Litzmann there as a personality who could “greatly

lift the spirit through his manner of speaking with troops and officers.”

The Supreme Army Command agreed to the proposal, while simultaneously

deploying parts of the 10th Landwehr Division⁴ from the Commander-in-Chief East

to the area behind the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army.

¹) G. 522.  
²) G. 528 f.  
³) G. 515.  
⁴) G. 547.

Page: 42 keyno: 129

The Eastern Front. — Shift of the Russian Focus.

Aerial reports indicated preparations for attacks in front of the Marwitz and Bernhardi groups. On July 27, defectors stated that the Russian attack would begin the next day. However, the army group command did not trust this report, concluding from other available reports that the enemy was not yet ready with his preparations.

Thus, it was a surprise when the enemy attack actually began early on July 3. At this time, the army group was prepared for defense, starting from the right wing, as follows:

Army Group Marwitz:

Group Dieffenbach with Austro-Hungarian 46th, 1/2 33rd, 48th, and 2/3 German 22nd Infantry Division (distributed along the front) south of the Lipa.

Group Fallenhayn with Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division (including 1/2 Austro-Hungarian 4th Cavalry Division), German 43rd Reserve and 1/3 22nd Infantry Division (Wiedee Detachment) north of the Lipa to south of Pustomyth.

Group of Lieutenant General Beßmann with 108th Infantry Division and Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Corps Leonhardi west of Pustomyth.

Austro-Hungarian 4th Army with Corps Szurmay (Austro-Hungarian 10th Cavalry, Austro-Hungarian 11th and Hungarian 70th Infantry Division) and Austro-Hungarian X Corps (Austro-Hungarian 13th, 2nd, and 37th Infantry Division) north of Pustomyth to Zaturce. Behind it, 1/3 10th Landwehr Division was arriving.

Group Lüttwitz with German X Corps (20th and 19th Infantry Division) and Austro-Hungarian 29th Infantry Division forward of the upper Stochod in the positions captured in the attack, behind the river 121st Infantry Division and 1/2 37th Infantry Brigade of the X Corps.

Army Group Bernhardi with Division Rusche on both sides of the railway to Rowno, 107th Infantry Division, Austro-Hungarian II Corps (41st and 4th Infantry Division), behind it 2/3 86th Infantry Division, in the position advancing towards Kaszowka in the Stochod bend; the shorter Porfß—Sitowicze position was not yet completed.

Corps Fath north of Sitowicze behind the swampy Stochod course, with section of Lieutenant General von Kreutz (Polish Legion, Austrian 26th and 45th Infantry Division; behind it, partly already deployed, 11th Bavarian Infantry Division) and section of Lieutenant General Clausius (Austro-Hungarian 53rd Infantry Division and Division Clausius).

1) The Hungarian 61st Infantry Division was withdrawn for recovery.

Page: 543 keyno: 130

Major Attack Against the Linsingen Army Group.

Cavalry Corps Hauer with Austro-Hungarian 1st, 9th, and Bavarian

Cavalry Division behind the Stochod.

Army Group Gronau with 9th Cavalry Division, 82nd Reserve

Division, 5th and Guard Cavalry Division, 81st Reserve Division

on both sides of the Pripjet to Piaritschi north of Pinsk.

In total, the army group counted 17½ infantry divisions against

25 almost twice as strong of the attacker. But it had 164 heavy guns,

the enemy only about half as many. In terms of aircraft, it had a

combat squadron, five field aviation units, and three Austro-Hungarian

aviation companies.

After a short artillery preparation, on the morning of July 28,

three Russian infantry divisions and cavalry attacked the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army,

pushing them back across the entire front from their positions and to Szelwow,

about five kilometers. 15,000 men, 45 guns, and 90 machine guns

were lost. It was again shown that "the combat

value of the infantry, especially the Ruthenian regiments, was very low

and the soldierly spirit of the fighters could no longer bear a stronger burden."

Almost the same happened to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, but the enemy's breakthrough

on the 29th at Lutinsk. Here he had deployed his best and

exhausted forces, a total of eight infantry and three cavalry divisions,

including the guards. Only the 20th Infantry Division

under Lieutenant General von Schißler was able to repel all attacks. At the

19th Infantry Division of Lieutenant General von Schmettau, the

Russian II Guard Corps decisively broke into the position of an Austrian-Hungarian regiment forming the center.

1) 14th Infantry Division, 2nd and 4th Rifle Division, 5th Cavalry Corps with two divisions.  
2) Austrian official work, Volume V, p. 141 f.  
3) I. Guard Regiment (1st and 2nd Guard Rifle Division), II. Guard Regiment (3rd Rifle Division, 3rd Guard Division), XXXIX. Reserve  
(102nd and 125th Infantry Division), XXIII. Reserve (20th and 53rd Infantry Division), Guard Reserve Regiment in reserve.  
4) According to the Austrian official work, the first breakthrough to the left of the Austrian  
regiment occurred at a German recruit battalion. The Austrian  
regiment, steadfastly facing the enemy, was then  
rolled up from here. The German Infantry Regiment 91, adjacent to the right (south),  
to avoid the same fate, vacated its position in time  
and withdrew behind the Stochod. From the Austrian regiment "we took  
terrible wounded." This representation corresponds to a view that had  
initially formed on the German side, but after careful examination  
proved incorrect. The main report is independent of the events  
of our recruit battalion on a flank of the Austrian-Hungarian  
regiment, whose position gave way a mile and  
bent. The German recruit battalion was driven from the south in the rear  
before it gave way in the front.

Page: 544 keyno: 131

The Eastern Front. — Shift of the Russian Focus.

Stronger reserves to restore the situation were not available forward of the Stochod. Thus, the Russian breakthrough during the afternoon caused the southern flank of the division to retreat behind the Stochod. Parts of the Russian I. Guard Corps also penetrated the left flank of the Austro-Hungarian 29th Infantry Division. In the evening, Lieutenant General von Lüttwitz ordered all parts still forward of the Stochod to retreat behind the river. His group remained further in the same line from which they had launched a counterattack on June 16. Their German troops had lost 2700 men and two batteries. Against the Bernhardi Army Group, the enemy only launched weak attacks. In the Stochod bend south of Kossowka, the most advanced salient of the position was lost. Combat activity remained even less in the northern adjoining sections. On July 29, the enemy continued his efforts with reduced strength and without significant results. On the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, a new group under General Litzmann was formed from the 108th Infantry Division and the Szurmay Corps based on the experiences of the previous day. The 121st Infantry Division was inserted into the front of the Lüttwitz Group, and the previously further north positioned 86th Infantry Division was brought up behind this obviously most threatened section. At the Bernhardi Army Group, heavy enemy attacks pushed back the Austro-Hungarian II Corps with serious losses on this day. General von Bernhardi was forced to order the repeatedly postponed withdrawal of the front into the Porst—Sitowicze position. At the Fath Corps, Russian assaults on both sides of the railway were repelled, especially by parts of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division. Signs of attacks against the southern flank of the Gronau Army Group, where the enemy seemed to be preparing supply routes by water, increased and prompted the diversion of the 10th Landwehr Division, which had been assigned to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army due to the threatening situation at Brody, to the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army from Brest to the east.

On July 30, the enemy extended his attacks further south to the Marwitz Army Group, but had no more success here than in the other front sections; at Zwininacze, he left about 2000 dead in front of the front. At the Bernhardi Group, he only slowly advanced against the new positions of the Austro-Hungarian II Corps. The heaviest fighting was at the Fath Corps, where the Russian 3rd Army was mainly at the railway and against Stobychwa strongly advancing.

Page: 545 keyno: 132

Successful Defense by the Linsingen Army Group.

The railway and against Stobychwa pushed strongly forward. However, final success eluded them. Generaloberst von Linsingen was able to express his full recognition to the Fath Corps, especially its 5th and 26th Infantry Divisions, for their stance in the crises of recent days. South of Newel and at the Ognitski Canal, the Russian III and IV Siberian Corps launched the expected attack against the Gronau Army Group. They were repelled at the Ognitski Canal, achieving nothing, with heavy losses. The 10th Landwehr Division, assigned to the army group in the hour of danger, was thus completely free for other use again.

In the previous attacks, the Russian I Guards Corps seemed to have been relatively little involved. It was opposite the Stochod section Solotwin—Boguszowka. The army group therefore primarily anticipated the possibility of further advances at this point and distributed its reserves accordingly. The enemy had no success, but suffered heavy losses when he continued his attacks against the Aüttwitz and Bernhardi groups on July 31. His strongest assault, however, only broke out on August 1 and was mainly directed against the 121st Infantry Division of the Aüttwitz group, which, under Major General von Ditfurth, defended the Stochod section Witoshowka and northwards. They inflicted very heavy losses on the Russian Guards attacking six times here. On the same day, the Bernhardi group repelled all attacks by the Russian I Guards Corps. The situation was temporarily serious. The army group command directed all available forces to the attacked sections. Instructions were issued to the sub-commanders regulating behavior in the event of a Russian breakthrough. If an immediate counterattack by local reserves did not achieve the goal, the counterattack was to be conducted only after the introduction of new forces and thorough artillery preparation. The Commander-in-Chief East, who took command that day, was informed that further support was necessary if Kowel was to be held at all costs. Field Marshal von Hindenburg then had an infantry regiment along with artillery loaded in Brest as the first aid, which arrived at Lubitow on August 2. Further forces from the 75th Reserve Division were to follow. But the enemy remained quiet. His strength seemed exhausted. According to prisoner statements, new attacks were not expected until August 7. When the Commander-in-Chief East arrived in Kowel on August 2, the army group command already viewed the situation as quite optimistic again.

1) p. 533. — 2) pp. 534 and 536.

Page: 546 keyno: 133

The Eastern Front. — Shift of the Russian Focus.

Contrary to expectations, August 3 brought a new attack by the Russians against the Bernhardi group. The enemy penetrated about two kilometers into the positions of the Austro-Hungarian II Corps south of Sitowice but was soon driven back. In the war diary of the army group, the assessment of the situation on this day was simply the word "Powder keg!" However, the following days passed quietly. The main Russian attack was repelled, although its repetition was anticipated. The air forces, especially Bomber Wing 2, which dropped 42 tons of bombs on troop misplacements and unloading stations, contributed to the success.

h) The Defensive Battles of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and the Army Group Archduke Karl.

Sketch 32.

Colonel General von Boehm, the commander of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army¹), considered the situation after the loss of Brody and the withdrawal of his right wing behind the Seret as extremely endangered. He feared succumbing to the pressure of the Russian 11th Army and considered Lemberg seriously threatened. He was only dissuaded from the plan to prepare the evacuation of the city by the intervention of the Austro-Hungarian military leadership. On August 4, the day after the visit of Field Marshal von Hindenburg in Lemberg, the enemy advanced along the Brody—Lemberg railway against the left wing of the army, then shifted the focus of his attack to the right wing, where on August 5 he advanced with emphasis over the Seret and pushed the front westward. The connection to the Southern Army could still be maintained at the previous position for the time being. If it was lost, a serious threat also arose for the northern wing of the Army Group Archduke Karl. Meanwhile, the commander²) ensured that Colonel General von Boehm, who until now had available enemy-free German troops, initially reinforced the resistance force with an infantry regiment along with artillery, then the 197th and subsequently the beginning of the 195th Infantry Division were added³). These two divisions came under the command of the commanding general of the I Army Corps⁴), General of Infantry von Eben, to be deployed in a consolidated manner for the recovery of the Seret position after the completion of transport.

¹) Connection to p. 516. — ²) G. 534. — ³) G. 536. — ⁴) G. 534, Note 2.

Page: 547 keyno: 134

Insertion of German Reinforcements.

South of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army stood the Army Group Archduke Karl with Major General von Seeckt as Chief of General Staff, as before, in an extended front. The intention to launch a counterattack at the Dniester, which had been the basis for its formation, had already been postponed indefinitely on July 23, when it became clear that the necessary German reinforcements would not be available due to the needs of other front sections. The 105th and 119th Infantry and the 1st Reserve Division had to be thrown into the defensive battle, the 121st Infantry Division was assigned to the Army Group Linsingen, and the 5th Reserve Division to the Army Group Prince Leopold. Also, the 10th Landwehr Division, freed in the north by the Austro-Hungarian 24th Infantry Division, was brought elsewhere. Thus, the Army Group of the Archduke, apart from German Landsturm battalions, which could not initially be deployed at the front due to their most inadequate armament and equipment, was only assigned a weak brigade of the Alpine Corps, which was expanded into a division, the "Carpathian Corps" (later the 200th Infantry Division). This mountain group was intended for the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, where it was necessary to prevent the enemy from breaking into Hungary over the Carpathians or making further progress in the immediate vicinity of the Romanian border.

Meanwhile, on both sides of the Dniester, the Russian 7th and 9th Armies resumed the attack on July 28, simultaneously with the start of the major offensive against the Army Group Linsingen. North of the river, the 7th Army, with four divisions, sought to advance between this and Monasterzyska against the right flank of the German South Army to gain ground.

1) Continuation from p. 510 ff. — The Archduke was promoted to General of the Cavalry on August 1.  
2) Organization of the Army Group Archduke Karl (Austro-Hungarian 12th Army Command) at the end of July 1916 from the right flank:  
Austro-Hungarian 7th Army: Gen. Ob. von Pflanzer with XI Corps (40th Infantry Division and two independent brigades), Cavalry Group of Field Marshal von Brudermann, (3rd Reserve Division and an infantry brigade), Group of Field Marshal Rudolf Krausz (34th Infantry Division and a brigade), German Carpathian Corps (200th Special Division) and Austro-Hungarian 8th Reserve Division.  
Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army: Gen. Ob. von Kövess with VIII Corps (59th, 44th, 5th Infantry Division), I Corps (30th, 42nd Infantry Division), Group of Field Marshal von Jahy (21st Special Group, 5th Reserve Division) and Group of Field Marshal d. R. G. S. R. G. (119th, 105th Infantry Division)  
German South Army: Gen. d. Inf. Count Bothmer with Austro-Hungarian XIII Corps (15th Special Group, 2nd Reserve Division, 36th Infantry Division), Austro-Hungarian VI Corps (39th, 12th Jäger Division), German 1st and 2nd Corps of Field Marshal Hofmann (54th, 55th Special Division) and Austro-Hungarian IX Corps (½ 38th, 19th Infantry Division)  
3) Letter from Colonel a. D. Franz, then 1st General Staff Officer at the Army Group, dated August 13, 1934.

Page: 548 keyno: 135

The Eastern Front. — Shift of the Russian Focus.

To gain space. The attacks, which continued until August 2 and were conducted with great intensity, were repelled by the Austro-Hungarian XIII and VI Corps with the assistance of parts of the German 1st and 48th Reserve Divisions, except for minor breaches.

South of the Dniester, the Russian 9th Army had meanwhile attacked the Krauß and Draewel Group (119th and 105th Infantry Divisions) of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army with eight divisions on July 28 in the direction of Tlumacz and Ottynia. A deep breach in the former group quickly led the enemy so far into the right flank of the Krauß Group that it had to urgently withdraw the southern wing of the 119th Infantry Division; four batteries covering this movement with their fire fell into enemy hands. By evening, the new deployment of the division on the right flank had already been deeply outflanked. In agreement with Generaloberst von Roehde, Generalleutnant von Kraewel withdrew his troops to Tlumacz on the night of July 29. The situation of the army, which had lost about 12,000 men and 19 guns, gave cause for serious concern. The front, stretched more than before, could only be very weakly manned, and ammunition was scarce. But the enemy also did not feel strong enough to continue the attack; he followed up to Tlumacz and Ottynia.

Meanwhile, the Carpathian Corps under Generalleutnant von Conta had arrived at the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army. Since the enemy seemed to have weakened here, the army group hoped for success from an advance of the army and at the same time relief for its front north of the mountains. On August 2, the German Supreme Army Command planned further reinforcements for the Carpathians with the 1st Infantry Division¹), which was already on its way to Maramaros Sziget. Even before their arrival, on August 3, the attack of the "Conta Group," now reinforced by an Austro-Hungarian brigade, began against the Ludowa Ridge, which rises steeply 600 meters from the upper Czernemosz Valley, while at the same time the Hungarian 40th Infantry Division advanced further south against the Magura Heights. The enemy retreated from the Ludowa Ridge but took up a new defensive position on a mountain range ten kilometers further east; he was attacked and defeated there again on August 6. After minor further advances in the following two days, the arrival of Russian reinforcements and supply difficulties in the pathless mountain area caused a pause until the 1st Infantry Division, redirected to Kirlibaba, arrived. Further east, the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Cavalry Division was deployed at Talsobeny. Holding the front directly at the Romanian border thus seemed secured.

Page: 549 keyno: 136

Heavy Fighting with the Army Group Archduke Karl.

3. The Battles from August 7 to 28.

a) New Plans of the Russian Leadership¹).

Map 7, Sketch 32.

When the offensive of the Southwestern Front, begun on July 28, quickly stalled after minor initial successes at Stochod and south of Tlumacz, and at the same time the supply of ammunition faltered, General Brussilov ordered a pause in the attack. But already on August 4, he ordered its resumption for August 7. This time, the 3rd and Special Army were to attack Kowel concentrically, the 9th Army to advance on Nizniow—Tlumacz.

Meanwhile, prospects had also grown that Romania would soon enter the war. In accordance with its demands, the Russian Supreme Command prepared to send two infantry and one cavalry division to the Danube estuary to use them in Dobruja against the Bulgarians. The hope that difficulties would arise if the Russians were opponents²) played a role in this. At the same time, it was about forming a new focal point on the extreme left flank of the front against Austria-Hungary, to advance Romania by attacking over the Transylvanian Carpathians, which had demanded the capture of the line Körösmezö—Kirlibaba—Dorna-Watra by the Russians as a precondition for its entry into the war. In contrast, the attack against Nizniow—Tlumacz had to retreat if necessary. The southern wing of the 9th Army in the line Delatyn—Kimpolung was to be reinforced by three infantry and one cavalry division, one of which was from the Western Front, the remaining parts from the 7th Army and the 9th itself.

The commander-in-chief of the 9th Army, General Letschitzki, however, did not make use of the permission to let his northern wing's attack on the Dniester fail. As planned, the Russians launched an attack on August 7 along the entire front between the Dniester and Pruth with nine infantry divisions. In the direction of Kowel, the start of the attack was postponed by one day. Here, on August 8, in the area south of Kowel to Witorowka, the 3rd and Special Army were ready to advance with 19 infantry divisions and began the attack on the night of August 9, with some parts even earlier.

¹) Connection to C. 538 f.  
²) Volume IX, C. 137 and 158.

Page: 550 keyno: 137

The Eastern Front. — Relocation of the Russian Focus.

b) The Defense of Army Group Archduke Karl.

After strong artillery preparation, the Russians attacked the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army between the Dniester and Pruth on August 7, which was now in the last prepared defensive position. The main thrust hit along the Dniester, overwhelming Group Kraewel, whose 105th Infantry Division was breached east of Tlumacz close to the river. Further south, the enemy penetrated deeply through the Austro-Hungarian formation northeast of Ottynia, thus also reaching the right flank and rear of the 119th Infantry Division. Surrounded from both sides, the southern wing and center of Group Kraewel had to retreat to Tysmienica with heavy losses¹). Generaloberst von Kövess ordered the withdrawal of the entire army front to a line running from Nadworna east past Tysmienica to the Dniester, where there were virtually no defensive installations. When the enemy resumed their attacks with emphasis on August 8, they were again successful. The front had to be pulled back south behind the Bystrzyca-Nadwornia, while in the north, a bridgehead was held east of the Bystrzyca, from Stanislau to Maryampol on the Dniester.

This at least provisionally covered the right flank of the adjoining southern army. However, the deep penetration also affected their position, especially since their other flank was already endangered by previous events with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army²). General Count Bothmer had to bend his southern wing on the Dniester back to the west of Nizniow. His center held from Burkanow on the Strypa to south of Zalozce over a width of 45 kilometers as the only part of the former Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front still maintaining its well-developed permanent positions from spring. If further retreats by neighbors made these untenable, increasing manpower needs and thus repercussions on the entire Eastern Front were to be expected. The Commander-in-Chief East tried to assist Army Group Archduke Karl with troops, but given the ongoing pressure in the north, these could only be minor parts, not reaching the strength of a division overall. They were to support the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army. At the same time, the army command sent three Landsturm regiments. No more was available. Generaloberst von Conrad therefore took the opportunity on August 9 to bring the Turkish XV Corps to Army Group Archduke Karl.

¹) The Russians reported a total of 7500 German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners. The number of missing Germans for the entire army group on August 9 was around 3300 men. — ²) G. 546.

Page: 551 keyno: 138

Russian Successes Against the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army.

to draw). It was designated for the withdrawal of German troops from the Southern Army.

Against the new position of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, the enemy advanced closer on August 9, beginning to push back the southern flank at the Carpathian slopes near Delatyn. On August 10, he resumed the attack along the entire front. While he could only slowly overcome the strong section of the Bystrzyca-Nadwornia front in the center, he forced the Kraewel group in the north to retreat behind the lower Bystrzyca due to overwhelming enemy attacks, also in the evening. The Hadhy group had to abandon Stanislau and retreated behind the Bystrzyca-Solotwinska. Given the low resistance strength of the entire front, Major General von Seeckt now advocated for withdrawing the center of the army behind this watercourse as well. This was significantly requested by Colonel General von Kövess. The movement, carried out on the night of August 11, proved extremely difficult on roads clogged with trains and refugees. The northern flank of the army tried to hold the Bystrzyca-Nadwornia front in the mountains south of Nadworna, while the southern flank, which was to give up forces, was withdrawn to the Bystrzyca-Solotwinska by August 13. Access to another gateway into Hungary, the Pantyr Pass, was since then only temporarily blocked by a detachment left behind at Zielona against the Russians. They followed along the entire front but no longer had the strength to continue their attack with emphasis.

Meanwhile, on August 11, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army3) attacked with the 1st Infantry Division4) together with the Hungarian 40th Infantry Division from the area of Kirlibaba northwards, but was unable to gain decisive ground in difficult forested terrain. Further to the left, the 200th Infantry Division (former Carpathian Corps) did not have much more success. The group, now consisting of the German 1st and 200th and 1½ combined Austro-Hungarian infantry divisions, under General von Schen, came to a standstill in the area from the Romanian border to the Tartar Pass. Further northwest, the army was still tasked with blocking the Pantyr Pass in the future, while on the other hand, it was relieved of some of its border protection duties in Transylvania.

1) G. 537 and 615.  
2) Austrian official work, Volume V, p. 190.  
3) Organization starting from the right wing: Austro-Hungarian XI Corps, Group Conta, Group Krauß, totaling 5½ infantry divisions, including two German and two cavalry divisions.  
4) G. 548.

Page: 552 keyno: 139

The Eastern Front. — Relocation of the Russian Focal Point.

On August 7, General of the Infantry Arz von Straussenburg¹)

was tasked with forming a new Austro-Hungarian 1st Army²) to protect

the Transylvanian southern front in the future. For the time being, he only

had a depleted infantry and a cavalry division, as well as a number of smaller

units and formations not suitable for field use.

The situation of the German Southern Army became untenable due to

the retreat of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, especially since the conditions

on its northern flank with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army continued to

cause concern. By August 11, General Count Bothmer had to gradually

bend his right wing back into the south-facing front Maryampol—

Monasterzyska. From there, the line ran to the old permanent position,

which extended from Burkanow to the north. On the left flank, the

counterattack planned for August 11 by the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army

could not be carried out due to the onset of new Russian attacks³). This

kept the situation so tense that General Count Bothmer withdrew his

northern wing, which had been holding out in a far advanced position on

the Seret and was also attacked that day, back to his army (Austro-Hungarian

IX Corps). Since the army was also under pressure from Russian attacks

at other points, especially at the now sharply protruding corner of

Monasterzyska, and at the same time had to provide the 48th Reserve

Division for the approaching Turkish troops and hold further strong

reserves to support the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army behind its right wing,

the army group and army high command unanimously agreed that the

extension of the flanks could not continue. The right time to withdraw

the front should not be missed. General Count Bothmer considered it

appropriate on the evening of August 11 and ordered the retreat. The

army reached, undisturbed by the enemy, by August 13 the previously

planned line, partially prepared for defense from the battles of 1915,

Dniestr north of Jezupol—Zaladow on the Zlota Lipa—Brzezany—Zborow

and north. Here, the right wing of the Eben group of the Austro-Hungarian

2nd Army, which had also been withdrawn, joined.

The excessive pressure, which weighed especially on the Austro-Hungarian

3rd Army, and the feared repercussions on Romania, had prompted

General von Falkenhayn, despite the urgent need in the West, to provide

the Army Group Archduke Karl with additional German forces.

¹) Previously Commander General of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps with the Southern Army. — ²) C. 515. — ³) C. 556 f.

Page: 553 keyno: 140

Difficult Situation of the Army Group Archduke Karl.

In the west, the Army Group Archduke Karl was to be provided with additional German forces. From August 10, the newly formed 199th, then the 10th Bavarian and the 117th Infantry Division, a cyclist brigade, and the general command of the XXIV Reserve Corps were to move from the west to Galicia. The Commander-in-Chief East sent additional parts. By the time these reinforcements arrived, the Austro-Hungarian 3rd, the South, and the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army had already disengaged from direct contact with the enemy. Romania also seemed to hesitate. Thus, Colonel General von Conrad considered preempting further enemy assaults with an attack. At the same time, the German Chancellor, as well as the Commander-in-Chief East, advocated that the decision should now be sought against Russia. According to the latter, as Major von Fleischmann reported from Brest on August 15, another four to five divisions could be freed in the west. Colonel General von Conrad was therefore contemplating major plans when General von Falkenhayn visited him in Teschen on August 17 to discuss the situation and measures. He proposed an attack from Oloczow on Dubno to roll up the Russian 11th Army and the northern adjacent army units from the south. However, he deemed at least 20 divisions necessary for this. These could not be assembled. Nor were the forces sufficient for a thrust from the center of the South Army over Trembowla to cut off the Russian troops west of the Dniester. Thus, only the attack south of the river on Kolomea remained. General von Falkenhayn believed that the Army Group Archduke Karl now had over five German divisions "with which they could do something," and he hoped that they "would decide on this undertaking," as relief south of the Dniester seemed as important for securing the oil sources of Boryslaw and especially the access to Hungary as for influencing Romania.

Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army had continued the attack in the Carpathians with the latter goal, as the troops once deployed for this could only have been brought to the northern side of the mountains through lengthy marching and transport movements. The 1st Infantry Division under

1) Austrian official work, Volume V, p. 204.  
2) p. 560.  
3) p. 560 f.  
4) Presumably, this involved the 117th, 119th, 199th, 10th Bavarian I.D., 48th R.D., additionally, the 1st and 200th I.G.D. were with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, 105th I.S.D. with the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, 1st R.D. with the South Army.

Page: 554 keyno: 141

The Eastern Front. — Shift of the Russian Focus.

Major General Paschen took the positions on the Magura Heights, rising to 1500 meters, on August 18, while the 200th Infantry Division advanced north into the valleys of the Czeremosz. However, strong Russian counteraction then set in, primarily driving Austrian-Hungarian troops from Kukul. The enemy came close to the Tartar Pass. New concerns for Hungary led to the 117th Infantry Division being designated for the southern side of the mountains to Maramaros-Sziget on August 19. It was thus unavailable for the planned attack on the Dniester.

Otherwise, it remained calm for the time being with the Army Group Archduke Karl. In the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, the previous Group Kraewel, which had meanwhile been taken over by General of Infantry von Gerok with the General Command of the XXIV Reserve Corps, had to withdraw the 105th Infantry Division as exhausted behind the front; the 48th Reserve Division took its place. In the Southern Army, the Turkish XV Corps was deployed south of Brzezany on August 20. Since it brought only four field batteries in total, German and Austro-Hungarian artillery had to be assigned to it. In the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, Russian attacks were repelled on August 21 and the following days.

Thus, the second half of August passed without new setbacks. The idea of a counterattack on the Dniester had not yet been abandoned, but the forces were still lacking for its execution. On August 16, the Austrian 44th Infantry Division had moved to the Isonzo Front¹).

c) The Defense on the Front of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief and His Disputes with the Supreme Army Command.

Map 6, 7, Sketch 31, 32.

When the great Russian attack on the Dniester broke out on August 7, the situation also intensified again on the front of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief²).

The Russian pressure against the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army continued following the success of the attack on August 6 into the following days. The enemy did not achieve any further territorial gains, but the position of the extreme southern flank on the Seret could not be held in the long term. If it had to be abandoned, the retreat also affected the adjoining section of the German Southern Army, which still held its permanent position from the spring.

¹) See p. 559, note 2. ²) Connection to p. 536 ff. and 546.

Page: 555 keyno: 142

Successful Defense of Army Group Linsingen.

the subsequent section of the German South Army, which still held

its permanent position from spring. Under these circumstances, the

Commander-in-Chief East deemed it necessary to restore the situation

at the n.-2. Army through a unified counterattack by the now approaching

195th and 197th Infantry Divisions. On the other hand, new attacks

seemed imminent at Army Group Linsingen, at Army Group Prince Leopold,

where a new Russian 2nd Army appeared between the 3rd and 4th in front

of the Army Detachment Woyrsch, and on the extreme northern flank of

Army Group Eichhorn near Luckum. Nevertheless, Field Marshal von

Hindenburg, in view of the events at the Dniester, immediately sent a

reinforced infantry regiment there for assistance and on August 8, two

more followed. However, this day also brought Russian attacks on their

own front, especially the expected new major assault against Army Group

Linsingen, alongside weaker advances at Baranowicze.

At Army Group Linsingen, the attack extended across almost the

entire front from Army Group Marwitz to Army Group Bernhardi. The

main thrust was directed against the latter. It was partly conducted in

six waves with reserves behind and primarily hit the 107th Infantry

Division of Major General Jahndorff, but also the Corps Fath, however,

only led to minor temporary breaches. By evening, the positions were

again in the full extent in the hands of the German defenders. On August

9, only weaker Russian advances followed, then calm returned to the

entire front of the army group. The enemy's offensive power seemed

temporarily exhausted. Prisoner reports indicated that Kowel was again

the target, which was to be reached by August 12. The attempt failed

again under the heaviest losses: In the I. Siberian and I. Turkestan Corps,

companies counted only 20 to 30 men, regiments and battalions had been

merged in numerous divisions. The Special Army alone has lost 40,000

men since July 28.

Before these battles were concluded, General von Falkenhayn, due

to the need at the Dniester, demanded the transfer of the entire 195th

Infantry Group Archduke Karl on August 9. However, the Commander-in-Chief

East considered the immediate restoration of the situation at the n.-2.

Army and defense of Army Group Linsingen necessary. He also brought,

as General von Falkenhayn additionally requested the provision of

ammunition from stocks of the particularly well-equipped former Army Group Hindenburg, especially the 12th and 10th Armies, and expressed serious concerns about corresponding restrictions on future supply demands.

Page: 556 keyno: 143

The Eastern Front. — Relocation of the Russian Focus.

particularly well-equipped former Hindenburg Army Group, especially the 12th and 10th Armies, and demanded corresponding restrictions on future supply requests, also expressed serious concerns.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg addressed the Kaiser: He was tasked with directing any available reserves of the Archduke Karl Army Group, foregoing any of his own offensive intentions. He assured that he was fully aware of the connection between his front and that of the Archduke, and that he only harbored offensive intentions where he had to repel the engaged enemy through counterattacks to enable holding. Furthermore, he saw the freeing up of forces for the Archduke Karl Army Group as his most essential task, especially after receiving information about the deployment of the 1st Infantry Division at the Carpathian Corps, far from the battlefield. However, he was currently unable to free up any significant forces, because: "A strong attack is expected at Mitau, significant Russian forces are positioned in front of Woyrsch, Linsingen is heavily attacked, and the Russians are massing in the breach south of Brody." He had supplied the Archduke Karl Army Group with six battalions and four batteries from his forces, which were so weak for the long front, yesterday and was sending another infantry regiment today. Whether the Turkish XV Corps could be directed there was beyond his judgment.

The Archduke Karl Army Group informed the Eastern Commander-in-Chief that further allocations were excluded given the current situation. He suggested redirecting the Turkish Corps, which had just reached Kowel by rail transport with its foremost parts, to the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, to which Colonel General von Conrad immediately agreed. General von Falkenhayn agreed to the accomplished fact despite justified concerns, but requested that the Turkish troops not be used with the shaken Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, but rather with the Southern Army to relieve combat-ready units at a relatively quiet location. Otherwise, it was absolutely certain that the Turks would bring no help, but rather this appearance, and that the spirit in which this support was granted by the Turkish military leadership would be gravely violated."

On August 10, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army had to fend off new heavy Russian attacks south of Zalosce. The forces designated for the recapture of the Seret position the next day, not yet fully assembled, reported but were already weakened by allocations to the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, had to be deployed to intercept the Russian onslaught.

1) p. 548 and 551.  
2) p. 550 f.  
3) A response to this telegram could not be determined.

Page: 557 keyno: 144

Commander-in-Chief East and Supreme Army Command.

reported, but the troops of General von Eben, already weakened by contributions to the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, had to be deployed to intercept the Russian assault. This was largely successful. However, the planned recapture of the Seret line was no longer feasible. On the night of August 12, the extreme southern flank, along with the retreating northern flank of the Southern Army, evacuated the position previously held at the Seret. With the continuation of Russian attacks here and at other points along the long, thinly manned front, it seemed necessary to evacuate. The Commander-in-Chief East therefore considered any troop withdrawal temporarily impossible and also refused the requested withdrawal of an Austro-Hungarian division from the Woyrsch army detachment despite strong pressure from the Supreme Army Command. The Field Marshal reported to the Emperor again on August 15 personally, how difficult the situation was: "Stronger enemy forces are gathering before Mitau, a very strong superiority still stands before Woyrsch, the situation before Linsingen is not yet clarified, the Russian offensive continues at the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army." The requested withdrawal called into question the further holding of positions. When the Austro-Hungarian division nevertheless had to be withdrawn, the disputes with the Supreme Army Command took on increasingly irritated forms.

On August 18, new Russian attacks began at the army groups Linsingen and Prince Leopold. Generaloberst von Linsingen had again expected the assault mainly against the Lüttwitz and Bernhardi groups and reinforced them accordingly. Instead, the enemy this time surprisingly attacked the Hauer cavalry corps, which had a particularly thin deployment behind the Stochod in a railway and road-poor area, and established a foothold on the border of the Austro-Hungarian 9th and Bavarian cavalry divisions at Rudka-Czerwiszcze on the western riverbank. Varied local battles followed; it was not until August 21 that it seemed assured that the enemy would not break through. On August 23, Lieutenant General Cramon attempted a counterattack with 14 battalions and 16 batteries, but it stalled in the early stages. The same happened with its repetition on August 25. Although this time 17 heavy and 24 light batteries prepared the assault, the troops, consisting almost exclusively of Landwehr, were unable to penetrate the Russian bridgehead position, yet this second attempt cost more than 800 men in losses.

1) Strength ratios p. 562.

Page: 558 keyno: 145

The Eastern Front. — Questions of Overall Leadership.

The attacks, which also began on August 18 by the army group Prince Leopold against the army group Gronau and the army detachment Woyrsch, had been less strong. On August 21 and the following days, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was attacked again, but now unsuccessfully.

Only the situation at Mitau, on the extreme northern flank of the army group Eichhorn, continued to cause concern. Here the enemy had assembled 12 to 16 divisions for an attack, and also seemed to be planning a landing behind the German front. To support the defense, only five individual regiments could be provided as intervention troops. However, the Russian attack did not materialize to the expected extent, but was limited to an attempt to cross the Dvina at Lennemaden, which was repelled on August 27.

F. Questions of the Overall Leadership of the Eastern War in August.

Map 6.

On August 9, news had arrived that Romania's entry into the war was already expected "around August 14." The Commander-in-Chief East therefore assessed the situation as extremely serious when on August 10 the protected new setbacks occurred at the army group Archduke Karl as well as at the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. The Field Marshal telegraphed the Kaiser: "The further retreat of the army group Archduke Karl makes me certain of Romania's joining our enemies. Only with the greatest acceleration of the deployment of significant German forces from the West can the threatening situation still be contained. Your Majesty, I implore you to deploy all troops that can somehow be freed up in the West — these must be four to five divisions — immediately towards Bukovina north of the Carpathians." The Kaiser personally thanked for this message. He left the response to General von Seeckt, who telegraphed the Field Marshal on August 11: One division has been sent east, a second will follow. Further troops would be available if the ongoing new formations had taken shape to some extent. "In the meantime, Your Excellency, as can be inferred from your previous statements, surely everything has been done to free up units from the front under your command for the mentioned army group."

Page: 559 keyno: 146

Commander-in-Chief East and Supreme Army Command.

to free up units from the front under your command for the mentioned army group." He requests notification of what has been arranged in this direction.

The Commander-in-Chief East emphasized again on August 12 that he did not consider it possible for the time being to go beyond the contributions already made. When Major von Bockelberg, who had been sent to the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, personally reported his extremely serious impressions of the recent battles on the southern flank of this army, the Field Marshal General again appealed to the Kaiser based on this report: "The troops so far made available for the southeast will not suffice to hold the situation, let alone restore it. The decision on the outcome of the war now lies in the southeast. I dare to express this view to Your Majesty as a loyal servant, even if it concerns matters beyond my command area." The situation was further aggravated by the fact that Generaloberst von Conrad now frequently demanded Austro-Hungarian forces back from the area of the Commander-in-Chief East to hold the Isonzo. General von Falkenhayn therefore turned to the Commander-in-Chief East in vain. Then he agreed with Generaloberst von Conrad that the army group Archduke Karl would give up a division and in return would probably soon receive the 117th Infantry Division from the west. However, the news about Romania was again not favorable; it seemed not yet ready to strike immediately. General von Falkenhayn thought that it would probably wait until after the harvest, that is, until October. Despite the difficulties of the overall situation in the east and the necessity of reinforcements, he was not in doubt. He therefore anticipated the return from the west to Pleß on August 15.

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief East was in constant exchange of ideas with the Austro-Hungarian army command and the army group Archduke Karl about the situation. General Ludendorff hoped that perhaps Major General von Seeckt, since he had "influence in the Great Headquarters," could achieve that "forces would be brought in with which something could really be done"; he considered such execution possible unless "the Isonzo threw a new wrench into the works."

Page: 560 keyno: 147

The Eastern Front. — Questions of Overall Leadership.

really to do something"; he considered such execution possible if "the Isonzo does not throw a new wrench into the works." He did not agree to the Austrian military command's proposal to extend the area of the k.u.k. 2nd Army further south to relieve the Southern Army, given the situation on his own front.

When on August 15 the Supreme Army Command, despite all objections raised "in view of the continuation of Russian movements over Luminec to the south and the situation at the Isonzo," ordered the immediate transfer of a division of the k.u.k. XII Corps from the Woyrsch Army Detachment, Field Marshal von Hindenburg again turned to the Kaiser: He had just reported that he was not in a position to make such a transfer given the current distribution of enemy forces. After further explanation of the circumstances, the telegram stated: "If the transport of the Austro-Hungarian division occurs without prior replacement from the west, I cannot guarantee to Your Majesty that the front entrusted to me will be held." The Field Marshal therefore requested to refrain from executing the order until either replacement from the west had arrived or the overall situation on his front had improved.

On the evening of August 16, the Kaiser and the Supreme Army Command returned to Pleß. Here they received the telegram from the Chancellor. Additionally, a telegram from the Chancellor arrived at the Kaiser, who, after a visit to Vienna, discussed peace possibilities with Russia and pointed out that "the decision lies more than ever in the east." Austro-Hungarian assistance in this regard was only assured insofar as the Kaiser himself took the matter into his hands with German troops. In influential Viennese circles, the expansion of Field Marshal von Hindenburg's command area was welcomed, and it was only regretted that he did not have the entire Eastern Front under his command. To their own military command, it was said with some regret. These circumstances, the Chancellor said, made it imperative to seek the decision now in the east.

After a briefing with the Kaiser, during which presumably the telegrams from the Field Marshal and the Chancellor were discussed, General von Falkenhayn sought Colonel von Conrad in Teschen on the morning of August 17.

1) Text S. 637.  
2) Certainty could not be established. — Genlt. a.D. Tappen assumes it to be certain in a letter dated June 23, 1934.

Page: 561 keyno: 148

Commander-in-Chief East and Supreme Army Command.

Colonel von Conrad in Teschen. He also wished to restore the situation against Russia with German help through an offensive, as Austria-Hungary's troops had enough to do at the Isonzo. There, the matter is "very vital, the blow hits us in the heart." It is "much less sensitive if we lose Lemberg than if the Italians enter Trieste." However, the available German forces were far from sufficient for a major strike in the East, as the discussion revealed. Nevertheless, after their arrival, even if only in a narrowly limited framework, a counterattack should be carried out; Kolomea should be the target.

After returning from Teschen, General von Falkenhayn again presented to the Kaiser and demanded that Field Marshal von Hindenburg not address him directly. The Kaiser let this rest and rejected the Field Marshal's request in a detailed personal response, which, however, was entirely in line with General von Falkenhayn's views and concluded with the sentences: "My visit to the Western Front and consultation with the leaders and their chiefs there has strengthened my conviction that no man can be withdrawn from there, as the battles against an almost fourfold superiority are very satisfactory. Our arch-enemies want to carry out the preliminary task of holding with the troops available to them and repel the Russian attacks. The division of the Austro-Hungarian XII Corps must be transported immediately. The responsibility for measures ordered by the Supreme Army Command naturally rests exclusively with them."

Subsequently, on August 19, the Commander-in-Chief East again presented the seriousness of the situation to the Supreme Army Command and pointed out that at his front, the increase in troops had been largely offset by simultaneous deductions. However, the enemy had not yet made any recognizable shifts to the front of the Army Group Archduke Karl1). At the same time, the Field Marshal urged Generaloberst von Lyncker to achieve personal reporting to the Supreme War Lord2). When the Kaiser rejected this in the fullest form, the Field Marshal again submitted a very detailed written report to him on August 20, presenting his views once more.

1) In fact, as far as can be determined, in July and up to August 21, three Russian infantry and one cavalry division were moved from the front of the O.B. East to that of the enemy, and one infantry and one cavalry division to Bessarabia for the formation of the Dobruidscha Army (p. 549).  
2) p. 636.

Page: 562 keyno: 149

The Eastern Front. — Questions of Overall Leadership.

expressed his view. He initially opposed the measures of the

Supreme Army Command and criticized above all that the

1st Infantry Division was sent to the Carpathians, and the 195th and 197th were not

assembled closer to the front and made available to him too late. These were measures

that could also be judged differently from the higher

perspective of the Supreme Army Command, as General von Falkenhayn noted in the

margins of the explanations. Regarding the current situation at the front, it was stated

in the report of the Commander-in-Chief East: "The Winitzau Group

(59 battalions, 85 batteries) is threatened by an attack from at least twelve divisions

(II, VI, and VII Siberian as well as XXI, XXXIII, and

XXXVII Corps, totaling 188 battalions, 99 batteries), perhaps

(even from 16 divisions) along with a simultaneous landing. In front of

Boryslaw, there are still 20 infantry and six cavalry

divisions) = 320 battalions, 160 batteries against 113 German and

Austro-Hungarian battalions and 101 batteries. A strong massing

of these Russian forces against parts of the front remains possible to make the numerical

superiority even stronger. — At Army Groups

Linsingen and Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, where German troops

are stationed, it is expected to hold." Where Austro-Hungarian

troops are stationed, there will be serious combat moments of the most concerning kind,

whose consequences cannot be overlooked. "The situation at Linsingen and the

Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army is therefore uncertain and absolutely not stabilized. ... The

main force of the Russian army still weighs on the

front that has been set up. I expect further attacks here, where I cannot conceal the

seriousness of the situation, as the Russian forces have

not yet diminished, but I could not retain the increase in strength

that I consider necessary for securely holding the front, namely three to four divisions instead of one."

After explaining the difficulties now arising from the transfer of the Austro-Hungarian 16th Infantry Division, the Field Marshal continued: "Your Majesty, I have stated in my report of August 5

that I would provide reinforcements for the Butowina as soon as possible, and I can assure Your Majesty

that I am well aware of this task. On the other hand, Your

Majesty has given me the foundation for any future success by holding the current positions. As the circumstances have developed, I have not received the reinforcements that I consider necessary for the successful conduct of the defense, particularly given the state of the Austro-Hungarian troops, even if the fortification construction has progressed further."

1) Actual total strength of the enemy 14 divisions.  
2) Actually 18½ infantry and five cavalry divisions.  
3) p. 536.

Page: 563 keyno: 150

The Declaration of War by Romania.

ordered the current positions. As the circumstances have developed, I have not received the reinforcements, particularly regarding the condition of the Austro-Hungarian troops, which in my opinion are necessary for the successful execution of the defense, even though the construction of positions has progressed further."

When this report reached the Kaiser on August 21, General von Falkenhayn suggested leaving it unanswered, as it contained statements that he considered incorrect1). The Kaiser personally responded with a friendly handwritten private letter2).

In contrast to the statements of the Field Marshal, General von Falkenhayn held the position3) that it was not decisive for the overall situation of the Central Powers whether one stood in the current line in the East, i.e., at the Dvina, the Berezina, and the Stochod, or at the Aa, the Neman, and the Turja4), unless this would cause Romania to intervene, which depended on entirely different factors.

A week later, on August 27, Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary. Thus, a new opponent with around 600,000 fresh troops appeared in the East. The entire front in the East was extended south to the Black Sea; it now measured approximately 1500 kilometers in a straight line compared to the previous 1000 kilometers.

In various places along the previous front, local defensive battles had been fought until the last days; however, the force of the Russian attacks had significantly diminished. In return, the new opponent Romania could immediately bring at least 23 infantry divisions into the fight, against which sufficient forces were initially not available5).

1) The calculations of the Supreme Army Command and the Commander-in-Chief East regarding the number of transferred divisions differed, as access and allocations partly consisted of individual regiments, including Landsturm. Its content is not known.  
2) Letter to the Chancellor from August 21 (p. 638 f.).  
3) According to the line in which General von Falkenhayn had already halted the offensive against Russia at the end of August 1915 and which he then wanted to expand in peace.  
5) See p. 600 f.

Page: 564 keyno: 151

The Eastern Front. — Reflections.

G. Reflections.

In 1916, the Eastern Front was purely about defense against a massive numerical superiority, which only did not fully come into effect due to the Russians' lesser equipment with heavy artillery, air forces, and technical means of all kinds. It had already been shown in the autumn of 1915 at Luck that not only the resistance but also the offensive capability of the Russians was by no means as diminished as General von Falkenhayn had believed after the summer victories. However, the defensive successes of the Austro-Hungarian army in the New Year battles of 1915/16 and the troops of the Commander-in-Chief East in March 1916 strengthened confidence in the solidity of their own front and led to an underestimation of the Russian threat, which was still significant. Perhaps not enough attention was paid to the fact that in March, the German part of the front benefited greatly from the extraordinarily unfavorable weather and ground conditions for the attackers, which aided the defense against multiple superior forces. Otherwise, help from the West might have already been necessary at that time.

The front of the Austro-Hungarian army was less resistant and also poorly equipped with artillery ammunition. The withdrawal of German divisions and Austro-Hungarian core troops in the spring of 1916 was a significant risk, even if the remaining forces were still numerically superior to the enemy. After the Russian attack at Luck, a multiple of what had been taken from this front had to be returned to it, in total (apart from German Landsturm, of which 18 battalions were given from the Western Front) the following reinforcements were successively provided:

<table>

<tr>

<th>German Troops</th>

<th>A.-H. Troops</th>

<th>Turkish Troops</th>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>from the German part of the Eastern Front</td>

<td>from the Western Front</td>

<td>from the Balkans</td>

<td>from the Italian Front</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>June</td>

<td>Gen. Kdo. Bernhardi, Zufsez. Div. Ruchse, 108th Inf. Div., 9th Cav. Div., 107th Inf. Div., 22nd Inf. Div.</td>

<td>Gen. Kdo. of the VI. A. R., X. A. R. (19th and 20th Inf.-Div.), 1st Bavarian Inf. Div., 1/2 XXII. Res. K. (43rd Res. Div.)</td>

<td>105th Inf.-Div.</td>

<td>61st Inf. Div., 44th Inf. Div., 48th Inf. Div.</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>July</td>

<td>119th Inf. Div., 1st Res. Div., two Cav. Brig. (to the 9th Cav. Div.), Bavarian Cav. Div., 86th Inf. Div., 2/3 1st Ldw. Div.</td>

<td>121st Inf. Div., 200th Inf. Div. (newly formed)</td>

<td></td>

<td>59th Inf. Div., Kdo. of the VIII. Corps, 3rd Army Kdo., Kdo. of the I. Corps, 34th Inf. Div., 106th Lst. Div.</td>

<td></td>

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<tr>

<td>August</td>

<td>Gen. Kdo. of the I. A. K., 10th Ldw. Div., parts of the 34th Ldw. Brig., 75th Res. Div., 1/3 1st Ldw. Div., 2nd Cav. Div. (newly established)</td>

<td>197th Inf. Div. (newly formed), 1st Inf. Div., 195th Inf. Div. (newly formed), Gen. Kdo. of the XXIV. Res. K., 199th Inf. Div. (newly formed), 10th Bavarian Inf.-Div., 117th Inf. Div.</td>

<td></td>

<td></td>

<td>Turkish XV. Corps (19th and 20th Div.)</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>Total Access</td>

<td>10 1/2 Inf. Div., 3 1/2 Cav. Div.</td>

<td>12 Inf. Div.</td>

<td>1 Inf.-Div.</td>

<td>6 Inf. Div.</td>

<td>2 Inf. Div.</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>Contributions</td>

<td>1 Inf. Div. (44th)</td>

</tr>

</table>

Page: 565 keyno: 152

Force Requirements of the Defense.

<table>

<tr>

<th>German Troops</th>

<th>Austro-Hungarian Troops</th>

<th>Turkish Troops</th>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>from the German part of the Eastern Front</td>

<td>from the Western Front</td>

<td>from the Balkans</td>

<td>from the Italian Front</td>

</tr>

<tr>

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<td>121st Inf. Div., 200th Inf. Div. (newly formed)</td>

<td></td>

<td>59th Inf. Div., Command of the VIII Corps, 3rd Army Command, Command of the I Corps, 34th Inf. Div., 106th Lst. Div.</td>

<td></td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>August</td>

<td>Gen. Command of the I A. K., 10th Ldw. Div., Parts of the 34th Ldw. Brig., 75th Res. Div., 1/3 1st Ldw. Div., 2nd Cav. Div. (newly established)</td>

<td>197th Inf. Div. (newly formed), 1st Inf. Div., 195th Inf. Div. (newly formed), Gen. Command of the XXIV Res. K., 199th Inf. Div. (newly formed), 10th Bavarian Inf.-Div., 117th Inf. Div.</td>

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<td>2 Inf. Div.</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>Transfers</td>

<td>1 Inf. Div. (44.)</td>

</tr>

</table>

Thus, the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Front was reinforced by a total of 30 1/2 infantry divisions (23 1/2 German, five Austro-Hungarian, and two Turkish) and 3 1/2 German cavalry divisions, while the transfers before the start of the Brusilov Offensive, minus those immediately replaced, amounted to only seven infantry divisions, of which three were German.

The defense was then carried out, albeit with considerable losses in men, equipment, and terrain, with the least possible expenditure of forces over three months, with the end result that the enemy's offensive power gradually exhausted itself. Despite all tactical successes, the intended operational breakthrough was not nearly achieved. Nor was he able to push the front back far enough to achieve anything decisive. The view in both the German and Austro-Hungarian headquarters was that it was relatively insignificant for the outcome of the war whether one stood in the east at the Stochod or the Turja, at the Dunajec or the Aa, as long as the enemy did not invade Hungary or — as was likely associated with it — induce Romania to enter the war.

Page: 566 keyno: 153

The Eastern Front. — Reflections.

when it invaded Hungary or — which was probably connected with it —

prompted Romania to enter the war. The latter, however, was not

dependent solely on the situation in the East, but on the overall

situation of the Central Powers. Therefore, the transfer of stronger German

forces to the Eastern Front could only have influenced the decision of that country

if they were sufficient to achieve a widely visible victory, without causing

the front in the West to suffer even more hardship than was already the case.

Thus, from the standpoint of warfare against Russia,

the insistence of the Eastern commanders on increased allocations

of reinforcements was justified, as was, on the other hand, the

supreme command responsible for overall warfare holding back to the utmost.

To provide as much as would have been necessary to achieve a major success

was not yet possible in terms of space, time, and resources. Certainly, a few more divisions

would have eased the situation in the East, perhaps spared this or that setback.

However, they would hardly have brought decisive improvement to the overall situation.

More would have been required than the West could give up in the summer

of 1916. For the struggle in the East was not easy.

In view of the enemy's superiority, the German troops

also had to struggle extremely hard here. They can be proud of what

they achieved, partly on their own front, partly as supports of the Austro-

Hungarian lines, for almost three months without relief in tough

combat. The severity of the task corresponded to the losses, which

rose to a total of 148,000 men, of which 85,000 were in the defense

against the Brusilov Offensive. In terms of numbers, they were hardly behind

those of the defensive battles in the West, but were spread over

a longer period. The loss figures, since it was mainly about defense,

were significantly lower in terms of booty, with only 50,000 prisoners,

about 200 machine guns, and an insignificant number of artillery pieces.

The losses of the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Army were much heavier.

It lost more than 511,000 men in battle alone, of which more than two-thirds

were prisoners and missing. The Russians claim to have taken 378,000 prisoners,

a number that, even if about 20,000 prisoners from German units are included,

seems exaggerated. These enormous losses of fighters could not be compensated for in any way given the already critical replacement situation of the allied army.

1) Brusilov, a.a.D., p. 219.  
2) The total number of German "missing" at the front of the Brusilov   
Offensive was 26,000 men.

Page: 567 keyno: 154

Loss Figures and Results.

in the already critical replacement situation of the allied army could not be

compensated in any way. Large losses of guns — the Russians claim to have

captured almost 500 —, machine guns, munitions, and war equipment of all

kinds were added and could not be replaced given the prevailing raw material

shortage, just like the loss of human life. Although certainly some troop units

fought exemplary, "the resistance capability and the moral structure of the

army as a whole" had "suffered considerably" under the continuous attacks

of the Russians¹). The Brusilov Offensive represents the most severe shock

that the Austro-Hungarian army had experienced up to that point. Almost

tied down along an entire front by Russian attacks, it now faced the new

enemy of Romania, which — as it seemed — was ready to deliver the death

blow to the Habsburg Empire by marching into Transylvania and further

into the heart of Hungary.

The Russian offensives, with their repeatedly insufficiently supported

mass attacks by artillery, suffered the most severe losses, their attack power

was no longer the same as in June, their best troops had unsuccessfully

charged against the fronts of the Central Powers. The losses of the offensive

undertakings from March to August had grown to about one million men

in total. Yet the hope in Romania kept the confidence in victory alive.

¹) Austrian official work, Volume V, p. 218.

Page: 625 keyno: 155

The War in the Air.

The aviators fought for the necessary freedom of action. Thus, the path

was paved for the future development of the air force, which since 1915

was in the hands of the Chief of the Field Aviation, Lieutenant Colonel Thom-

sen. In August, the necessary organizational improvements began, after

a comprehensive utilization of the homeland's resources for aircraft equipment

according to the unified perspectives of the Field Aviation Chief had already been ensured.

Beyond that, his efforts aimed, anticipating the needs of the immediate

present, at unified leadership of the entire armament of Germany in the air for attack

and defense. His demand for systematic development, training,

provision, use, and organizational consolidation of all air forces and air defense means of the army and navy

found full support from General von Falkenhayn. Even if it ultimately failed,

mainly due to the different interests of the navy, it nevertheless paved the way for the soon-to-follow

consolidation of all air combat resources belonging to the army from field and homeland under a commanding general of the air

forces.

4. Railways

Maps 2, 3, and 6.

The performance capability of the German railways was, despite the enormous demands

posed by the Eastern campaign and the Serbian campaign in 1915, at full strength at the beginning of 1916.

In the east, the restoration work was completed. With the

further construction of the railway leading from Tilsit to the border up to Radziwillischki

(between Szadow and Schallen), the previously inadequate connection to the Russian railway network in the direction of Riga was improved and

adequate supply of the left wing of the army was ensured. The development

of the Serbian railways had also created somewhat satisfactory transport conditions on the

Balkans by the summer of 1916. The Brusilov Offensive and the threat from Romania necessitated the

increased deployment of German field railway formations in the area of the Austro-

Hungarian front. However, the main work was to be done for the attack

against Verdun, where the existing railway facilities had to be completed and supplemented by an extensive field and supply railway network.

1) Memorandum of the Chief of the Field Aviation from March 10, 1916.  
2) Details will be included in Volume II "The German Field Railway System."  
3) Volume IX, p. 437, 442.

Page: 626 keyno: 156

The Further Development in Other Areas of Warfare.

had to be constantly supplemented by an extensive network of field and supply railways. It was achieved that deployment, supply, and the soon-to-follow exchange of units proceeded smoothly. This was aided by the fact that the performance of the railways and the safety of train traffic in the occupied territory of the West no longer differed significantly from those at home, thanks to the tireless work of the field railway authorities. Thus, they were essentially able to meet the suddenly increasing demands of the Battle of the Somme from the outset.

The greatly increasing expansion of the theaters of war, the expansion of existing lines, and the creation of new ones had altogether led to a considerable expansion of military operations. By July 1, 1916, the network of the occupied territories managed by the field railway authorities, apart from narrow-gauge lines in the foremost front area, had an operational length of almost 16,000 kilometers of standard and narrow-gauge railways, nearly double that of the Bavarian state railways. For the operation of this network, in addition to the numerous military formations and auxiliary forces from the German railways, 58,000 officials and workers as well as almost 4,000 locomotives were employed. Despite these tasks, it had so far been possible to manage the constantly increasing traffic within the Reich itself.

5. Replacement Situation of the Army and its Supply with Weapons and Ammunition¹).

Supplementation and strengthening of the army had increasingly demanded the German manpower. Nevertheless, the replacement situation in the first half of 1916 remained generally favorable. At the beginning of the year, the replacement units had a strength of more than 800,000 fit for war use, which in March received a further increase of about 300,000 men through the recruitment of the 1897 class. At this time, about 1.2 million deferred, including 740,000 fit for war use, were in the war economy. The replacement needs of the field army, which had increased considerably in the winter of 1915/16, began to rise again with the start of the Battle of Verdun and averaged 200,000 men per month; it could be covered by about one-third through those who had recovered.

¹) Further details on this as well as on the coverage of new items such as steel helmets, communication means, measuring devices, etc., due to their versatile use in clothing and equipment items, in combat equipment and vehicles, in obstacle material and building materials can be found in the second volume "War Armament and War Economy".

Page: 627 keyno: 157

Railways. — Replacement Situation.

covered by a third through convalescents. As the coverage of the

demand thus seemed secured for a longer time, the army administration

initiated the replacement of the oldest cohorts of Landsturm soldiers

directly at the front with younger forces, fulfilling long-held wishes of the broadest public.

The favorable replacement conditions were, however, not least due to

the fact that restraint was imposed on the formation of

new units. At the beginning of the year, the Ministry of War had declared to the

supreme army command that new formations should be avoided as much as possible

if the stock of replacement troops was to last for a longer time. Besides expanding still incomplete

field units, the focus was mainly on increasing technical and special troops, such as machine gun sharpshooter

units, foot artillery and anti-aircraft batteries, airmen, mortar

and communication formations, often using already existing units

which were accordingly reorganized.

The Battle of the Somme, with its high casualty figures,

however, threw all calculations overboard. Already in the first ten

days of fighting, more than 100,000 replacement troops had to be sent to the field,

and during the almost continuous major battles that followed,

the replacement demands remained at about the same level. To

prevent the rapid depletion of the replacement stock and to avoid having to resort too early

to the next and provisionally last recruitment year (1898),

the army administration was forced to take special measures: The withdrawal of the older Landsturm cohorts from

the front was suspended; the militarily previously unused remainder of eligible Landsturm conscripts was largely

drafted; replacement demands of the troops were only fulfilled to the full extent in the most urgent

cases; those fit for war service, who had been detached to the various

services behind the front arising from the needs of the long positional warfare, were

replaced in considerable numbers by those fit for garrison duty and returned to the combat

troops.

Thanks to this management of forces, the troops engaged in the heaviest

defensive battles could be somewhat adequately supplied with replacements.

At the same time, new formations could repeatedly be undertaken on a larger scale,

as the tense war situation imperatively demanded. Including four divisions composed of replacement troops

intended for coastal defense at home, 16 new divisions were formed during the summer months, partially by expanding already existing brigades, so that the total number of German divisions increased to 175 by the end of August 1916.

Page: 628 keyno: 158

The Further Development in Other Areas of Warfare.

Brigades 16 new divisions1), so that the total number of German divisions increased to 1752) by the end of August 1916. At this time, the replacement troops at home and behind the front still had 750,000 fit for war use. As another source of replenishment, apart from those recovered and deferred, there remained the recruit class of 18983).

Greater were the difficulties in replacing and procuring horses. The horses in the field had suffered greatly from lack of fodder, poor accommodation, and overexertion; on average, 12% of the horses in the West Army and 20% in the East Army were under veterinary treatment each month. By establishing numerous horse hospitals behind the front, efforts were made to promote the recovery of sick and exhausted horses and to contain the risk of epidemics. The homeland could hardly supply any more horses due to the increasing strain on the economic situation; even purchases abroad and in occupied territories yielded only slight increases. Drastic measures had to be taken to meet the demand, which averaged 16,000 horses per month for replacements and new formations. Thus, the War Ministry not only significantly reduced the number of horses in the field and draft army and sought to save on animal traction by increasing the motorization of batteries and columns, but in the summer of 1916, it also proceeded to dissolve a larger number of reserve, landwehr, and landsturm cavalry formations, making around 17,000 horses available for other purposes, mainly for the harnessing of batteries. In the East Army, part of the disbanded units was reorganized into a total of nine unmounted cavalry rifle regiments.

Similar to the replacement supply, the supply of the army with weapons and ammunition in the first half of 1916 could be managed without significant difficulties. This was due as much to the foresighted, constantly production-increasing activities of the army administration and its organs as to the tireless work, which was carried out in the ever-increasing scope of the war industry.

1) 183, 185, 187, 192., 195., 197, 199.—204., 12. and 14. Bavarian I. D., 47. Ldw. D., 5. Ers. D. (cf. C 418).  
2) 1. Rej. Ers. Division has since been dissolved.  
3) On the question of the formation of Polish troops see p. 417.

Page: 629 keyno: 159

Horses. — Weapons and Ammunition.

industry was achieved. The increased demands of the Verdun battle, where the ammunition consumption rose to unexpected heights, could be fully met. General von Falkenhayn particularly recognized this in a letter of thanks to the Ministry of War as a "truly magnificent achievement."

In the spring of 1916, the monthly production of the most important weapons and types of ammunition not only covered the ongoing needs but also equipped the new formations. The continuous increase in modern heavy artillery also enabled a faster replacement of the older equipment still deployed at the front.

Efforts were made to further increase the achieved performance. The factories working for the army's needs increased their capacity. Numerous additional plants were brought in, mainly for the production of light artillery, ammunition, and close combat materials or the necessary semi-finished products. They initially had to overcome some manufacturing difficulties due to the novelty of the task.

The growing scarcity of raw materials also particularly affected ammunition production. Careful management of the available stocks by the War Raw Materials Department, which under the prudent and energetic leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Koeth systematically expanded and extended the management of war-important raw materials, mitigated this shortage. The use of substitute materials gained increasing importance. Lower quality of ammunition often had to be accepted. With the increasing delivery of pressed steel and cast steel shells, the production of inferior gray cast iron shells could be increasingly restricted.

However, in one area, the enemy armaments industry gained an unexpected advantage. While on the German side, the heavy indirect fire had rightly been promoted most strongly for offensive and mobile warfare, the Western opponents had since the beginning of the war switched to increasing heavy direct fire on a large scale. In contrast, on the German side, although on fortifications and gradually also on naval guns were resorted to, the enemy at Verdun was able to increase his flat fire, which reached over 12,000 meters, from 82 to 402 guns between February and June, while the German attacker could only increase from 211 to 228, almost half of which had a range of only 10,000 meters and less.

1) On average, during the first two months of the attack at Verdun, 2.8 million rounds of field artillery and 1.3 million rounds of foot artillery ammunition were fired. Before the battle, in the West (in addition to the full troop strength), 8.5 million rounds of field artillery and 2.7 million rounds of foot artillery ammunition were ready in the rear and with the chief of field munitions.  
2) See p. 631.

Page: 630 keyno: 160

The Further Development in Other Areas of Warfare.

Ship guns were resorted to, but the enemy at Verdun was able to increase his flat fire reaching over 12,000 meters from 82 to 402 guns from February to June, while the German attacker could only increase from 211 to 228, almost half of which had a range of only 10,000 meters and less. To compensate, only heavy high-angle guns of the latest manufacture were considered. However, they had to fire at extreme ranges, i.e., with "maximum charge," were prematurely worn out, and thus resulted in sensitive equipment failures.

The necessity of the continued increase in weapons and ammunition production was demonstrated by the Battle of the Somme. The lavish use of materials with which the opponents sought to shatter the German front there corresponded on the German side to a high wear and tear of weapons due to wear and destruction by enemy fire. In the months of July and August, around 1600 light and 760 heavy guns had to be replaced at the front. Above all, however, the field artillery required enormous amounts of ammunition for barrage fire in the defense against enemy attacks. Its total ammunition consumption on all battlefields reached the unprecedented height of nearly eleven million rounds in July and August, almost three times the entire ammunition stock of the field artillery at the beginning of the war. During the same period, the heavy artillery fired around three million rounds.

Since the new production could by no means keep pace with this enormous ammunition consumption of the field artillery, stocks quickly dwindled. Therefore, measures had to be taken with the greatest acceleration to increase production as quickly as possible. Above all, it was necessary to increase powder production, on which ammunition production was critically dependent. It was not until the spring of 1916 that the quantity aimed for since early 1915 of 6000 tons per month was reached. In July, the powder program, which had already been increased to 8000 tons by the end of 1915, was again increased by 2000 tons to a monthly production of 10,000 tons. However, it was necessary to resort to ammon powder (an Asian mixture of raw lead and ammonium nitrate) to a greater extent than before, which was inferior and limited in its use to certain types of guns, but its production posed fewer difficulties.

1) Appendix 1, Comparison of German and enemy artillery.  
2) Volume IX, C. 382.  
3) Ibid., C. 395.

Page: 631 keyno: 161

Weapons and Ammunition.

All these measures took time to implement. Nevertheless, the monthly production of weapons and ammunition could be increased compared to the spring production up to August 1916 to the following levels:

in spring in August

240,000 242,000 rifles and carbines,

1,250 1,900 machine guns,

600 800 field artillery pieces (field guns and light field howitzers),

250 400 heavy guns (heavy field howitzers, mortars, 10 cm cannons),

450 1,400 mortars (light, medium, and heavy),

2.9 4.7 million rounds of field artillery ammunition,

1.7 2.5 million rounds of foot artillery ammunition (for the mentioned guns),

1.4 4.2 million hand grenades.

But even these increased deliveries were no longer sufficient to meet the greatly increased demand. The German people faced the task of stretching their mental and physical powers in a completely different way than before, in order to supply the army sufficiently with combat materials so that it could withstand the onslaught of almost half the world.

Food Situation.

In the first half of 1916, the food situation developed in a way that threatened to impact the continuation of the war. Initially, it was still possible to compensate for the shortage of one type of food by increased consumption of others, especially through ample meat imports, but eventually, this possibility also dwindled. Everything became alarmingly scarce and expensive. Maximum prices proved ineffective; the markets felt more the imbalance. As early as autumn 1915, "meatless days" had been introduced. In the spring of 1916, potatoes became scarce and had to be rationed. Higher flour portions were issued from Austria. The large stocks of coffee, tea, and cocoa inherited from peacetime were running out, and with them the much-used coffee substitutes chicory and figs. The confiscation of the remaining stocks made these luxury foods almost completely disappear from the food plan. In early summer, the shortage of edible fats reached such proportions that state distribution was introduced to at least ensure for the army, the sick, and the children somewhat adequate quantities.

Page: 632 keyno: 162

The Further Development in Other Areas of Warfare.

to secure somewhat adequate quantities for the sick and the children.

For the others, only a fraction of the usual peacetime consumption remained.

The war, which had lasted almost two years, had already significantly depleted

the livestock; the number of pigs had fallen to half of the peacetime stock.

The meat supply not only for the population but also for the army was in question.

Thus, this too had to be taken into public management. This led in the summer of 1916

to a meat allocation that resulted in only 250 grams per person per week.

Since the final determination of the 1915 harvest showed significantly less favorable

results than expected, bread portions had to be reduced from 225 to 200 grams.

Further restrictions could only be avoided through Romanian grain deliveries.

Finally, even vegetables and fruits, sauerkraut and syrup, canned fruits, jams,

and dried vegetables, and lastly the most nutritious legumes had to be more or less

completely taken into public management. Thus, almost all essential foods were

withdrawn from free trade.

It was characteristic of the spirit of the German people that they willingly

endured these tangible restrictions and deprivations in their overwhelming majority.

However, large parts saw nothing wrong in procuring high-quality foodstuffs

through circumventing the regulations offered by the black market.

Above all, the palpable distress was exploited by left-wing social democrats

to incite parts of the population. This led to street demonstrations against hunger

and war and even to larger strikes in munitions factories in early June.

However, these manifestations of emerging war-weariness remained isolated

and without impact on the conduct of the war itself.

To remedy grievances that were rightly complained about, it was necessary

to ensure that the available foodstuffs were completely recorded and distributed

evenly and fairly. The internal pressure of the situation, minted by various

issued decrees on nutrition, sometimes contradicted each other or caused

inequalities for different parts of the Reich. The goal of ensuring the army's

supply without hunger and shortages at home could only be achieved if the

entire food economy was centralized, if the foodstuffs produced at home were

not only captured through coercion but also through purposeful regulation

fully recorded and evenly distributed, if the agricultural production was maintained at its previous level and possibly even increased, and if all suitable substitutes were used to the greatest extent possible for feeding horses and livestock.

keyno: 163

keyno: 164

Page: 635 keyno: 165

Diminishing Trust in General von Falkenhayn.

a tension that occasionally manifested in sharp disputes during lectures due to the irritability

of the General. The assumption is close at hand that the growing disappointment from month to month over the

course of operations in the Maas area, the unexpected turn of events in the East, and finally the intensified

criticism of the overall situation due to the Battle of the Somme gradually shook the Supreme War Lord's

unconditional trust in the leadership of General von Falkenhayn.

In the military circle of the Kaiser, the serving General Adjutant, Generaloberst von Plessen, harbored doubts,

above all, whether the Chief of Staff would be able to master the increasingly difficult circumstances. The

Reich Chancellor also seemed newly convinced that General von Falkenhayn was not up to his position. He therefore

refrained, in agreement with the Chief of the Secret Civil Cabinet von Valentini, from expressing this conviction

to the Kaiser. "I would like to believe," he wrote to the Cabinet Chief on June 14, "that it is the duty of

General von Lyncker to present the situation openly to the Kaiser... Military considerations,

which come from me, are rejected but are necessary to give due emphasis to the general political considerations").

The Chief of the Military Cabinet, Generaloberst Freiherr von Lyncker, however, firmly refused to suggest a

personnel change to the Kaiser.

The discussions and negotiations that began at the end of June regarding the appointment of Field Marshal von

Hindenburg with the unified command in the East

were of decisive influence on the development of events\*). Initially, the Supreme War Lord still fully supported

the standpoint of General von Falkenhayn. A contrast only became apparent after July 22, when the Kaiser, under

the impression of the concerns and wishes conveyed by the Chancellor from the influential Hungarian politician

Count Andrassy, decided to resolve the contentious issues of command in the East through personal discussions

between Abel and Archduke Friedrich and to include Field Marshal von Hindenburg and General Ludendorff in these

negotiations. General von Falkenhayn perceived the latter measure as an infringement of his rights as the sole

responsible advisor to the Supreme War Lord and saw it as a sign of lacking trust, that he did not side with him in the subsequent oral discussions.

\* von Valentini: "Kaiser und Kabinettschef", p. 230.   
1) p. 524 ff.

Page: 636 keyno: 166

The Resignation of General von Falkenhayn.

that he did not take his side in the following verbal disputes. Through his subsequent self-imposed exclusion from further negotiations, the matters were settled without his involvement. However, he did not draw the final conclusions from the increasingly unbearable situation, but abandoned the intention to resign from his office after consulting with the head of the military cabinet.

Immediately after the regulation of command relationships in the East, a trial of strength arose between the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander-in-Chief East due to disagreements over the deployment of troops and the distribution of reinforcements, about whose seriousness and significance there could be no doubt1). The Supreme War Lord, to whom the Commander-in-Chief East repeatedly turned directly, was anxious to prevent a break and to reconcile again and again. In the extremely tense war situation, he was concerned that a change of personalities in the highest leadership positions of the army could have adverse effects on operations and be interpreted by foreign countries as a sign of internal weakness.

On August 19, Field Marshal von Hindenburg personally urged the head of the military cabinet that he had "after long and thorough consideration, had to gain the conviction that his actions no longer had the approval and his leadership no longer had the trust of the Kaiser." He requested a personal presentation to the Kaiser as soon as possible, to which only Generaloberst von Lyncker and General Ludendorff should be added. Merely for the information of the head of the military cabinet himself, but not for the presentation to the Kaiser, he added that he must consider his conviction as confirmed if the Supreme War Lord did not wish his presentation.

The Kaiser rejected the requested immediate presentation through a telegram sent the same day to the Field Marshal, in which he sought to dispel his concerns as unfounded and stated: "I must, as Supreme War Lord, even if often with a heavy heart, put aside the wishes of my army leaders if the general war situation, as I see it, requires it. In this, the army leader must never see a personal measure or even a lack of trust. It will always be the endeavor of the Supreme War Lord, as far as it is within his power, to help his leaders. This is also evident from the transport of the much-needed reserves in the West, which I arranged despite the objections of the local leaders.

1) See p. 535 ff. and 555 ff.

Page: 637 keyno: 167

Steps of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief and the Chancellor.

Reserves that I initiated despite the objections of the local leaders. Your Excellency still has my trust, which led me to place you in the Eastern section, but I also want you to always provide the fullest cooperation in easing the conduct of this unprecedentedly difficult war during this time of severe tension that I have to endure. I consider your inquiry settled by this. — Your faithful Supreme War Lord Wilhelm."

Meanwhile, the Chancellor had decided to intervene in the conflict between the Chief of the General Staff and the Eastern Commander-in-Chief. Already in a telegram sent to the Kaiser on August 16¹), he had taken a position against General von Falkenhayn, describing his previous war plan as failed and advocating for shifting the focus of military operations to the East: "After the plan to bring France to peace through our advance against Verdun and the Austrian parallel action in Tyrol failed due to the unexpected resistance of France, the surprising striking power of Russia, and the collapse of Austria, the decision lies more than ever in the East... Your Majesty's decision to restore the situation in the East with all our available forces is the only means to withstand the complete collapse of Austria and thus the loss of the war. The alarming weakness of Austria makes it a bitter necessity that we temporarily forgo all and any action in the West, which does not make our defense absolutely necessary, to save every single man to deploy him where the final decision of this world war is now imminent."

On August 19, the Chancellor informed the Chief of the Military Cabinet: "I hear that serious frictions have recently arisen between Hindenburg and the Supreme Army Command. In the event that this leads to a personnel resignation, I must emphasize once again that the resignation of the Field Marshal would have the most serious military and political consequences. If the crisis threatens to take this course, I must place decisive importance on presenting my views to His Majesty the Kaiser before a decision is made."

¹) p. 560.

Page: 638 keyno: 168

The Resignation of General von Falkenhayn.

General von Falkenhayn, to whom the Kaiser communicated the Chancellor's telegram of August 16, had been aware for some time of the forces seeking to bring about his resignation. He took the opportunity to vigorously defend himself against the accusations made against his military leadership in a very detailed letter to the Chancellor on August 21, and to justify his rejection of a decisive offensive on the eastern front with partly fundamental arguments. At the same time, he also provided his interpretation, which the Chancellor had given to his war plan:

"... It seems necessary to me to comment on this in order to prevent incorrect assessments of military events and conditions and to avoid the creation of legends. The plan mentioned by Your Excellency is unknown to the Supreme Army Command. In particular, I have never even considered that the Maas or Tyrol offensive could bring France to peace. How we would be forced to conduct the war in the future given the superiority of our enemies and other decisive factors, I explained to Your Excellency when I established the absolute military possibility in December 1915 to timely create the possibility of the Somme offensive, unfortunately, only too well confirmed my assumptions. We have not deviated from the guidelines developed at that time by a single step. We will not deviate from them for the simple reason that we cannot. The offensives on the Maas and in Tyrol were undertaken independently of each other, one in mid-February, the other in mid-May, and indeed the latter, in Tyrol, against the unanimous advice of the relevant Supreme Army Command. This advice was given around the turn of the year 1915/16 and was accepted at that time. If later compliance was insisted upon, it is because the Austro-Hungarian Supreme Army Command deliberately made their agreement binding on the German Supreme Army Command. As for the attack in the Maas area, it does not pursue the immediate goal of inclining France towards peace, at least no more than any positive military action does. Rather, specific special purposes were to bleed France dry if its army positioned itself before the fortress, and if the fortress is abandoned, to paralyze the further course of the war through internal disruptions as much as possible, and on the other hand, to provoke England into prematurely deploying all its forces.

Page: 639 keyno: 169

Fundamental Expositions on Warfare.

To paralyze shocks for the further course of the war as much as possible, on the other hand to entice England into the premature use of all its forces.

"Both have succeeded, not as hoped — this almost never happens in war — but still to a tolerable extent. This requires no further proof for those who realize what would probably have happened if France could have deployed the strong quarter-million of seasoned soldiers it lost more before Verdun than we did, still at the Somme or elsewhere, and if England had only now begun its offensive after we had to weaken our reserves in the West so extraordinarily in favor of the East. It is therefore not reasonable to admit that France's unexpected resistance strength caused a plan, which, as said, did not exist, to fail."

General von Falkenhayn then elaborated on the warfare against Russia and the question of shifting the focus to the East:

"Equally, there can be no talk of a surprising striking power of Russia. Wherever the newly formed Russian masses have encountered German troops, they have so far performed miserably despite enormous superiority. The Russians have not improved more than the German Supreme Army Command assumed. The error in our calculation lies rather in the fact that we overestimated our allies. They have become far less than we could ever have suspected based on the numerous reports received from the Austrian-Hungarian troops commanding German commanders and many German officers sent to the Austrian front for control purposes. This fact is indisputable, the consequence that must be drawn from it, however, is not that the military decision of the war now lies more than ever in the East, but simply that we have to sufficiently support the wavering allies to bring the Russian flood to a halt. This has been done by the Supreme Army Command within the limits of what is possible in a timely manner, without any external suggestion being necessary, because it is simply a matter of course. However, the repeated emphasis and underlining of this self-evidence is not only questionable but, in my view, even highly dangerous in many directions. It is initially suitable to arouse or strengthen the thought among laypeople that we are at all capable of decisively defeating Russia militarily. But that is no more the case today than it was from the fourth day of the war. Given the numerical ratios, the pressure on our western and northwestern flanks, and the demands placed on us by our allies, we lacked the means and the time to do so.

Page: 640 keyno: 170

The Resignation of General von Falkenhayn.

Northwest flank, the demands made by the allies on us, we lacked the means and the time for that. With this judgment, I find myself in the very good company of my two predecessors. If in this war sometimes and even from military quarters the opposite view has been propagated, it was regularly and easily proven that their representatives had not chosen the hard facts of sober military reality as the sole guideline for their conclusions. Furthermore, the emphasis that the military decision lay in the East contributes to complete confusion of views about our actual war situation. The knowledgeable person who speaks does so under the assumption that in the West the iron wall holds as before. The layman, however, does not know this assumption and concludes quite logically that it is incomprehensible why ruthless forces are not thrown from the West to the East if the decision is to be made here. In fact, the situation is rather the opposite. Whether we fight in the East on the Dvina or the Aa, on the Berezina or the Neman, on the Stochod or the Turija, is irrelevant for the war decision, unless Romania's intervention would be brought about, which, however, according to my conviction, depends on completely different factors. On the other hand, a sudden backward movement in the West would certainly shake our entire front. In such a case, even brilliant successes in the East could no longer help us. In the tension in which we are forced to fight, the relations between the two fronts are such that it is impossible to give preference to one over the other, not even temporarily and conditionally.

"Finally, the emphasis on the East has the effect — and this is its worst consequence — that it infinitely complicates the main task of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, the correct distribution of forces. Here, too, I must return to the already mentioned, somewhat numerous lay class, which in this sense also includes many members in field gray and indeed up to the highest positions. This class believes it is sufficient to decide where to strike and accordingly shift the surplus of forces. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Under the enormous pressure that rests on us, we have no surplus of forces. Any shift in one direction inevitably leads to dangerous weaknesses in another place, which the enemy can exploit if even a slight oversight is made in weighing the measures to be expected from the enemy. The obvious idea of dividing forces between East and West or between one section of the front and another in a certain ratio is a dream.

Page: 641 keyno: 171

Fundamental Expositions on Warfare.

to share in a certain relationship is a dream. Unceasing adjustments

by the Supreme Army Command, which would have to extend to the smallest

units, are the only means to maintain the constantly fluctuating balance.

That the resulting friction is naturally increased to almost insurmountable

levels when preconceived opinions take hold in influential circles or

when attempts are made to apply non-military considerations to purely

military decisions is obvious. Even so far, it has only been possible with

great effort and strict leadership to manage and remain in control of the

frictions. It would not have been possible if the Supreme War Lord had

not applied the full force of his personality in this direction. The longer

the path lasts, the firmer the leadership must become, as the difficulties

of the situation grow naturally over time. Anything that threatens to

loosen the leadership is not only harmful but threatens to bring us ruin..."

This was far more than just a response intended for the Chancellor

from the Chief of the General Staff; it was a kind of general reckoning

with the numerous opponents intent on his downfall. One gets the impression

that General von Falkenhayn, in light of the disappointments and failures

he experienced over the last half year and the resulting damage to his

reputation, wanted to once again demonstrate with all his remaining

intellectual and emotional strength that it was not he, but the circumstances

that were to blame for all failures. It was a cleverly drafted justification,

especially since some of its assertions could be seen quite differently.

One is hardly mistaken in assuming that General von Falkenhayn ultimately

pursued the purpose of convincing the Supreme War Lord in the resulting

crisis of confidence that, as Chief of the General Staff, he saw further than

all others, that he, in contrast to his adversaries, alone understood the

gravity of the situation and was master of it.

The Chancellor's attempt to decisively intervene in the course of events

failed. On August 21, the same day the Chief of the General Staff sent

the aforementioned letter to him, he had gone to the Great Headquarters

in Pleß. Whether a discussion between the two took place there remains

uncertain. In any case, the Chancellor informed State Secretary

von Jagow on the same day in a telegram that General von Falkenhayn

assessed the overall situation as "very serious," but saw no reason for

despair. "Greatest concern was whether the Austrians would hold at the Isonzo."

World War. X. Volume. 41

Page: 642 keyno: 172

The Resignation of General von Falkenhayn.

whether the Austrians would hold at the Isonzo. Also suspicion whether

Bulgaria would remain politically reliable and whether the King had

any intentions of ceding territory“). Otherwise, the Chancellor seems to have

proceeded extremely cautiously in his plan to persuade the Kaiser to dismiss

the Chief of the General Staff. First, he assured himself with Generaloberst

von Plessen, “whether he should express to His Majesty the very unfavorable

opinion about Falkenhayn, as received from various serious quarters“).

The concerned General Adjutant, who had just received serious concerns

from personalities in the Operations Department of the Supreme Army

Command about the General von Falkenhayn remaining in his position,

replied that it was the Chancellor's duty “to address this point in the

presentation of the overall situation.” It is assumed that the Chancellor

expressed his concerns to the Kaiser during his stay in Pleß until August 24,

but this cannot be proven with absolute certainty“). The fact is that the

Supreme War Lord was not yet willing at this time to part with General

von Falkenhayn. The Chief of the Military Cabinet also rejected all

suggestions and demands from various quarters aimed at the dismissal of

the Chief of the General Staff.

General von Falkenhayn himself considered a reorganization of

command relationships for the overall conduct of war, which, if successful,

promised a significant strengthening of his own position. At the end of his

letter of August 21, he informed the Chancellor that he had proposed to the Kaiser to officially take over “the unified leadership of the joint affairs of the Bulgarian-German-Austro-Hungarian-Turkish war effort.”

1) According to notes from the former German military attaché in Sofia, Major General  
von Massow, dated June 25, and the former Legation Councilor Freytag von Loringhoven  
from June 29, 1934, this suspicion was not unfounded. The leading figures in Bulgaria  
felt bound to Germany. However, General von Falkenhayn had not lost any trust  
since the cessation of the Balkan offensive and since January 2, 1916, regarding the  
influence on the Bulgarians. They had recognized Field Marshal von Hindenburg and  
General Ludendorff as the overall operations command.  
2) Diary entries of Generaloberst von Plessen from August 22, 1916.  
3) The Chief of the Civil Cabinet von Valentini reports in his notes only generally  
about the unfavorable mood that was noticed against General von Hindenburg during  
his stay in Pleß, noting elsewhere: “The Chancellor, who was there from August 21 to 24  
(i.e., in Pleß), eventually left us without having achieved anything.” The information  
about the dismissal of Falkenhayn from Valentini, op. cit., C. 140 and 138).

Page: 643 keyno: 173

Attempt to Establish a Joint Supreme War Command.

had proposed to "officially take over the unified leadership of the joint affairs

of Bulgarian—German—Austro-Hungarian—Turkish warfare." "Practically, this solution has already been

implemented," he wrote, "as the lack of official undertaking has shown

deficiencies that make it necessary to take firmer action here as well." Already in mid-July, and again in mid-August, he had

attempted to influence the conduct of the allies against Italy — the only

area in which he had refrained from any interference since the spring of 1915 —

to the extent that he urged the Isonzo front to be placed under the command of Archduke Eugen again,

to better utilize the entirety of the forces deployed against Italy.

Meanwhile, Colonel General von Conrad had rejected this solution in view of

personal considerations.

On August 21, General von Cramon received instructions to negotiate with the

Austro-Hungarian army command about the unified supreme command

of the German Emperor on the following basis: The executing body is the Chief of the German General Staff of the Field Army.

The independence of the individual allied supreme army commands

within their specific spheres of influence should only be affected by this regulation

insofar as the great common cause absolutely

requires it. Generally, therefore, the orders of the overall

war command will be preceded by consultation with the relevant supreme

army commands. However, once orders of the overall war command

are issued, they must be strictly followed." General

von Cramon justified this proposal with repeated suggestions

from Enver Pasha and with the necessity to keep Bulgaria, which had also demanded

German supreme command, firmly and securely on the side of the allies in view of the looming Romanian

threat1).

Colonel General von Conrad rejected the proposal, as it would severely damage the prestige

of the monarchy and mean a surrender of its interests to

the German Empire. Archduke Friedrich was friendly

towards him. The subordination would indeed require great self-denial

and personal sacrifices, but would promote success. The best solution

he saw was in a joint supreme war command under the German

Emperor.

Meanwhile, General von Falkenhayn had a meeting on the morning of August 23

in the Tatra Mountains with the King of Bulgaria,

which apparently also concerned the issue of the supreme war command and confirmed the agreement of views.

Page: 644 keyno: 174

The Resignation of General von Falkenhayn.

The agreement of views was confirmed. At noon, a meeting took place — whether in the presence of General von Falkenhayn is questionable — between the German Kaiser and Field Marshal Archduke Friedrich, about which no details are known. A discussion between the two chiefs of staff the following day led to no result. On August 25, Archduke Friedrich personally obtained the decision of Kaiser Franz Josef in Vienna. It resulted in a counterproposal, which, along with a long accompanying letter from Generaloberst von Conrad, reached General von Falkenhayn on August 27. It stated that the planned war leadership would be entirely ineffective in practice if prior agreement on operations was not reached; for no army leadership would refrain from acting according to its own orders if its own national interest required it. The consideration of Germany's interests was indeed guaranteed in General von Falkenhayn's proposal, which claimed the decision for itself by the German supreme army leadership. However, the transfer of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces to a foreign warlord and a foreign army leadership encroached on the political sphere and also determined the future relationship of Austria-Hungary to the German Empire. Therefore, an agreement was proposed, according to which prior agreement should be reached in the future on the operations to be conducted. If this did not succeed, the word of the German and the Austro-Hungarian army leadership should be decisive. This rejected what General von Falkenhayn wanted. Practically speaking, everything remained the same.

The establishment of a joint supreme war leadership under the German Kaiser would have been such a military and political success that it would have also elevated and newly consolidated the position of General von Falkenhayn. The failure of the attempt coincided with the ominous worsening of the war situation caused by the Romanian declaration of war on Austria-Hungary. As much as General von Falkenhayn had anticipated the possibility of this event, he was unprepared for its occurrence at that dangerous time. This turn of events struck the Kaiser even harder. Deep despondency seized him upon receiving the news on the evening of August 27. At this fateful moment, when the course of the war seemed to be approaching a threatening proximity, there was no higher task for the Chief of the General Staff than to restore to his Supreme War Lord the lost confidence in victory and to strengthen the wavering belief in the ability of his responsible advisor.

1) p. 602 f.

Page: 645 keyno: 175

Crisis Due to Romania's Declaration of War.

there is no higher task for the Chief of the General Staff than to restore his Supreme War Lord's lost confidence in victory and to strengthen the wavering belief in the abilities of his responsible advisor. General von Falkenhayn could no longer achieve this.

The report he gave around noon on August 28, before consulting with the Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff rushing from Teschen, to the Kaiser about the necessary and planned defensive measures against the new enemy, revealed the severe threat, particularly to Transylvania, which initially had to be almost defenselessly exposed¹). The consequences for the continuation of the war were obvious. The Kaiser was disappointed and dissatisfied. In a discussion following the report, Generaloberst von Plessen and, for the first time, Generaloberst von Lyncker expressed their conviction that the resignation of General von Falkenhayn and his replacement by the Supreme Commander East was absolutely necessary. "His Majesty" — as Generaloberst von Plessen wrote in his diary — "holds a long discourse on the merits of Falkenhayn and the inconvenience of the change. I remain convinced, and His Majesty agrees with my view. Lyncker supports me bravely! Hindenburg will be immediately summoned to Plesz with Ludendorff. The Chancellor is also coming." Generaloberst von Lyncker recorded immediately after the events: "For a long, long time I resisted, finally I realized myself that it could not go on, and I wrested the decision from the Kaiser, who also resisted energetically. There is no specific single reason, it is rather the result of a longer development. Both the Kaiser and I bear this heavily."

General von Falkenhayn, upon receiving the news from Generaloberst von Lyncker about the appointment of the Supreme Commander East, immediately requested to be relieved from his position. On the evening of August 28, after a lengthy discussion with the Chief of the General Staff, the Kaiser granted the request in a handwritten letter.

¹) See p. 603.

keyno: 176

Page: 647 keyno: 177

The Autumn of 1914.

joint operations of the 6th Army and the newly established 4th in the Flanders depth were not achieved. At the beginning of November, the fighting armies, after unsuccessfully exhausting their forces, had fallen into a pronounced state of equilibrium along the entire front from the North Sea to the Swiss border, leading to the stagnation of trench warfare. At the same time, the scales of war fortune in the East had once again tilted in favor of the Central Powers. It had become doubtful whether they would still be able to hold back the Russian "steamroller."

The German Chief of General Staff faced the question of whether to shift the focus of warfare from the West to the East and to launch a decisive offensive with strong forces. For a short time, he was inclined to do so when the Commander-in-Chief East reported his intention to advance from the area of Gnesen—Thorn against the right flank of the main Russian force in Poland. It was probably the only moment when the goddess of war fortune visibly extended her hand to General von Falkenhayn. Had a further strong army, predominantly composed of Western troops, been deployed immediately after the start of the new 9th Army's attack west of the Vistula, to strike south of the river into the rear of the main Russian force, a devastating defeat could have been achieved by human reckoning. A bold and grand plan aimed in this direction, which General von Falkenhayn had thoroughly considered at the time, was not executed, mainly because he made it dependent on the condition that the offensive actions on the Western Front were first brought to a victorious conclusion by capturing Ypres.

There is a lack of contemporary historical source material to say with certainty what considerations and motivations were decisive for the Chief of General Staff's prolonged insistence on continuing the attack on Ypres. Here, as elsewhere, the historical clarification and elucidation of his innermost thoughts and motives are limited, beyond which there remains room for speculation and interpretation. We believe the reasons for this decision should primarily be sought in the psychological realm. Certainly, General von Falkenhayn no longer concealed at this time and was internally burdened by the fact that not only had his first strategic plan failed, through which he had intended to convert the Marne campaign, lost by his predecessor, into the decisive victory of Amiens, but also that the Flanders offensive had failed to achieve its operationally limited objective. It is understandable that he, a man called upon in the hour of need, imbued with a passionate drive for victory, resisted with all the tenacity of his unspent will against the public admission of his failure, as it seemed to him to lie in the abandonment of the offensive on the western theater of war.

Page: 648 keyno: 178

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

The man called upon in the hour of need, driven by passionate zeal for victory,

resisted with all the tenacity of his unspent will against the public admission of his failure,

as it seemed to lie in the abandonment of the offensive on the western front. Ultimately,

more was at stake here than his own person and the fame of the commander; it was about

the impact on the psychological state of the army, the trust between leadership and troops,

indeed between leadership and the people. The higher the hopes were, with which the army

and homeland accompanied the heavy struggle on enemy soil, where Germany's best youth

stormed against the enemy, trusting firmly to bring home the final victory, the more the

Chief of the General Staff might have feared that a deep, incalculable psychological setback

could occur if he abandoned this attack and thereby publicly admitted that all previous

efforts, all bloody sacrifices had been in vain. Such an outcome could also have disastrous

effects on the mood of the allies, the stance of the neutrals, and the confidence of victory

of the enemies. All such worries and fears could be alleviated by a visible and impressive

military success, which, even if it remained locally limited and had no further influence on

the initial stage of the movement war, could still become morally and politically significant.

If, through a final, utmost exertion, the hotly contested opera was brought down, which was

operatively completely worthless, also tactically of little importance, but morally the

palladium of the enemies, then the whole world saw the victory of the German arms.

In retrospect, much can certainly be argued against such lines of thought. The morale of

the army and the people was so high that it could have easily endured far more serious

burdens. General von Falkenhayn later declared in the army report that the goal of the

battles in Flanders was achieved through the complete thwarting of the enemy's encirclement

attempts, and this declaration did not fail to have its effect. For the stance of the allied and

neutral foreign countries, a decisive victory over the Russian army could have a much greater

influence than the fall of Ypres. The Danube monarchy and the newly gained Turkish ally,

but also the neutral states of Romania and Bulgaria, were much more directly affected by

the course of military actions in the East than by events in Flanders. It would also have

meant a bitter disappointment for England and France if they had to see how the hopes,

which they had especially in the current moment, placed to a heightened degree on the

devastating impact of the Russian mass assault, collapsed under a German sledgehammer blow.

Page: 649 keyno: 179

The Autumn of 1914.

At the moment, they relied increasingly on the devastating effect of the Russian mass assault, which collapsed under a German sledgehammer blow.

Despite all this, it must be admitted that behind the tenaciously pursued plan to first bring the German offensive in the West to a victorious conclusion, the strong will of a far-sighted, goal-oriented commander could be hidden, allowing the decisive shift of warfare to the East to follow. For such a decision was not necessarily tied to a promising momentary situation, as it presented itself in November. It had to be the result of slowly matured considerations about the overall situation, had to be the result of slowly matured insights and, regardless of the undertaking, create fundamental clarity about the one big question of how and in what way the multi-front and coalition war should be brought to a decision. In years of intellectual work, Count Schlieffen had once established a solid, clear program of grand simplicity in the form of a war plan, which saw the decisive act of war in the rapid defeat of the Western powers. Since the strategic guiding idea of this war plan had finally broken down in the autumn of 1914, the responsible leader of the overall war effort faced the difficult task, in the midst of the pressure of military events, but unhindered by the acceleration of the moment, to find a new, long-term war plan solely based on the overall situation and in agreement with the allied military leadership.

Such a new plan is not recognizable in the warfare of General von Falkenhayn after the final failure at Ypres. No new strategic guiding idea replaced the one laid to rest. The grand proposal for a decisive offensive operation against the Russians, which had been briefly outlined to the allied chief of staff, disappeared from General von Falkenhayn's thoughts as quickly as it had come, before it had taken shape as a firm plan. The destruction of his hitherto maintained hope for victory at Ypres with unusual persistence and the anxious doubt that perhaps a favorable situation in the East had been missed, caused despondency in his soul and paralyzed his thoughts. In those days, General von Wild noted: "Falkenhayn is not quite sure of himself ... He tells me he needs someone to advise and support him, to be his second conscience."

Page: 650 keyno: 180

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

"Falkenhayn is not quite sure of himself ... He tells me he needs

someone to advise and support him, to be his second conscience. He has

considered keeping me as an advisor." And when the Chief of the General Staff

on November 18 declared in a wire to Generaloberst von Conrad that it was

impossible for the reinforcements from the West, which he had meanwhile

agreed to provide, "to be brought in time to participate in the decisions

currently underway in West Poland," if he further expressed in a letter

to the Commander-in-Chief East on the same day that there was apparently

no hope "that the arrival of new forces within the limits of possibility

would bring about a final decision in the East," this was an involuntary

admission of his own failure and thus diminished hope for a great result.

Even if such statements only reflected a temporary mood of General

von Falkenhayn, his emotional shock from the failure at Ypres did not

remain without profound and long-lasting consequences for the attitude

he subsequently adopted towards the overall situation. We are indeed

essentially reliant on the statements he made in his memoirs after the war

due to the lack of documentary evidence. However, his views recorded

there find full confirmation in his actual behavior. It can thus be considered

established that, in the sober, albeit entirely correct realization that the

end of the war was far off, he no longer saw the task of the Central Powers

in the winter of 1914/15 as breaking the ring of the enemy coalition

through the military destruction of one or several opponents in succession

and thereby making the others inclined towards peace. His assessment

of the chances of success and views during this period almost equated

to a renunciation of the idea of forcing a decision in the war with military

means from his own initiative.

Certainly, it must be credited to General von Falkenhayn that he

recognized early on "the increasingly clear plan of England to win the

war through attrition and exhaustion." Since the obvious idea of effectively

countering this plan through the ruthless use of the German naval forces

did not promise success according to the naval command, he saw the path to salvation only in "cautious husbanding of the resources of Germany and its allies" in view of the fundamentally changed situation and the significance far exceeding all previous expectations that had to be attributed to the economic factors of warfare.

1) Volume VI, p. 95.  
2) von Falkenhayn, op. cit., p. 20 ff.

Page: 651 keyno: 181

The Winter 1914/15.

Chief of the General Staff, in view of the fundamentally changed situation and the significance far exceeding all previous expectations, which had to be attributed to the economic factors of warfare, saw the path to salvation only in "cautious management of the resources of Germany and its allies." The aspect thus established as dominant for overall warfare, the s e n s i b l e s e l f - a s s e r t i o n, also meant a significant reduction of goals for military warfare on land. The healthy sense for the fundamental condition of any military performance preserved General von Falkenhayn from the final conclusion "that merely enduring passively (in defense) could still promise success." He was rather convinced that "under all circumstances, action in attack" must be "hammered into" the enemies, "how little they were capable of paying the price for our overwhelming"¹). However, it is obvious that with such narrowly defined objectives for practical "action in attack," any large plan, any agreement with the allied army leadership on the conduct of operations over a wide view was abandoned from the outset. This posed the danger that the previously granted initiative of warfare would be lost. The enemies were free to act as they wished.

From this basic attitude of General von Falkenhayn towards the question of continuing the land war, it is explained that he met the requests of the leaders in the East for the provision of considerable fresh forces, especially the new formations in the homeland, with strong reluctance around the turn of 1914/15. Even if the result of previous operations on the Eastern Front, despite brilliant partial successes of the Commander-in-Chief East, had to be described as insufficient when measured against the goals of decisive warfare, there was still no justification for such far-reaching conclusions as the Chief of the General Staff drew in his response to a new proposal by General von Wild with the words that "we will not achieve a complete military overthrow of Russia." Such a radical statement was only explicable from fundamental considerations about the unusually great difficulties that arose from the nature of the immeasurably vast Russian theater of war, given the existing strength ratios and the constantly threatening danger in the West of any decision-seeking offensive. It cannot be denied that General von Falkenhayn both with his assessment of the scale of forces required for decisive operations in the East and with his estimation of the possibilities and prospects of success offered by the planned undertakings in the Carpathians and in Masuria, in view of the reinforcements demanded and then granted for them, proved to be right against the high expectations to which the leaders in the East initially succumbed.

¹) von Falkenhayn, a. a. D., p. 245.  
²) Volume VII, C. 5.

keyno: 182

Page: 653 keyno: 183

The Spring of 1915.

He thus gained, in his own words, "an unusual freedom of decision"). Russia, however, was hardly considered by him as a field for far-reaching, decisive operations now and in the future. But at the Western Front, always regarded as the main theater of war, a breakthrough operation aimed at deciding the war seemed conceivable to him. From all the considerations, calculations, and explorations made on this, the "Strike on Amiens," already considered earlier, emerged as the most promising plan by mid-March. He eagerly immersed himself in the preparations and, despite the increased political uncertainty due to Italy's entry into the war, he remained committed to breaking through the enemy's defensive system north of the Somme between Arras and Albert on a front width of about 25 kilometers and then causing the northern connection front to collapse. Not with a light heart, but with remarkable agility in decision-making and quick adaptability to the changed situation, he took indefinite leave of this breakthrough plan at the beginning of April, as the ever-increasing threat to the often Austrian-Hungarian ally on the Carpathian Front forced the deployment of the majority of the army reserves on Galician soil. However, the renunciation was not to be final; the Chief of the General Staff hoped, after quickly executing the operational strike in the East, limited by force, space, and time, to still come to decisive action in the West in the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, the unexpected expansion and growing importance of the Galician campaign shifted the focus of warfare so strongly to the East during the following months that pure defense once again became the exclusive, albeit brilliantly solved, task of the Western Front, stripped to the limits of possibility. On the other hand, operations in Galicia could only be continued because General von Falkenhayn managed to convince the Austrian-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff of the necessity to confront the new enemy Italy with a minimum number of forces in strong defense right at the national border. How much, indeed, during this period General von Falkenhayn's desire for offensive activity on the Western Front remained active is evidenced by his intention to immediately return five corps from the victorious pursuit after the capture of Lemberg to the West. Three of them he intended to use for the "cleansing of Upper Alsace," the others for relief purposes at a previously hard-pressed front section in Artvis. It is difficult to justify these plans on military grounds.

1) von Falkenhayn, a.a.D., p. 56.

Page: 654 keyno: 184

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

To let military reasons apply to the undertaking. Although even here a secure proof is not possible, the simplest explanation for the intention to clear Upper Alsace will probably be seen as the clearly recognizable urging of the Chief of the General Staff at this time for the initiation of an early peace, whereby it could be of value that the enemy retains a piece of German soil as a pawn. This interpretation gains in probability when one considers the idea he had formed of the constantly declining resistance strength and the limited endurance of the French people. He indulged in the hope that the French government would soon be determined whether the abandonment of resistance would be more beneficial to the future of the nation than the continuation of the hopeless war for France despite all foreign aid. Perhaps General von Falkenhayn believed at this time that the desired goal could also be achieved without a decisive blow in France.

With the fading of the supposed peace possibilities, the Chief of the General Staff quickly abandoned the intention to weaken the Eastern Army in favor of the Western Army and wholeheartedly joined the plans of Colonel General von Conrad and Field Marshal von Mackensen aimed at expanding the operational goals. However, even in this, he remained mindful of limiting the increased deployment of forces in time and preventing an extension of the campaign "into the boundless." His sole concern was to achieve as much weakening of the Russian army's striking power as possible, so that sufficient rear security for the decisive final battle in the West was achieved for some time. Nevertheless, the successful progress of the campaign against Russia resulted in a certain change in the ideas about the limitation of operational goals in the East. At the end of July, there was even a brief moment when the Chief of the General Staff, under the impression of the successes of the long attack in the area between Narew, Vistula, and Bug, believed that the previously unattainable goal of the military overthrow of Russia had come within reach.

As soon as it became apparent, however, that such an effect could not be expected from the ongoing operations, his warfare, along with the rejection of the offensive against the northern flank and into the rear of the Russians, as emphatically demanded by the Commander-in-Chief East, clearly revealed the endeavor to put a stop as soon as possible to the more or less frontal pursuit running along the entire front, in order to once bring aid to the hard-pressed Turkey at the Dardanelles by opening the Danube route blocked by Serbia, but above all to return strong forces to the western theater of war and to carry out the decisive battle planned in the spring.

Page: 655 keyno: 185

The Summer of 1915.

once to bring aid to Turkey, hard-pressed at the Dardanelles, by opening the Danube route blocked by Serbia, but above all to return strong forces to the western theater of war and to carry out the decisive battle planned for the spring. At the end of July, the head of the field railway system, Major General Groener, noted in his private diary: "They (i.e., Falkenhayn and Tappen) want to be content with the defensive on the Bug line, in order to then bring their ten corps to break through to the west. Falkenhayn always returns to this idea." The Chief of the General Staff also hoped to conduct and complete the campaign against Serbia, for which the East was to give up its forces, so quickly that the great decisive blow on French soil could still fall in 1915. The breakthrough point also seemed to have been envisaged as the front north of the Somme, predominantly occupied by the English. A preceding attack in Upper Alsace was to act as a diversion.

However, as delays occurred at the beginning of the Serbian campaign and General von Falkenhayn, contrary to these plans, allowed operations in the East to be further extended and in part to take other paths than he had originally desired and expected, by the end of August/September there could be no doubt that the time for the breakthrough in the West was receding into the distance. The return of all forces in the East, which became dispensable after the conclusion of the local offensive, to the Western Front would take so much time that the breakthrough operation could hardly have begun before the onset of winter. The severe crisis, which at the end of September was brought about by the unforeseen enemy double attack in Champagne and Artois by General von Falkenhayn, then postponed all the foundations of the plan by months. For a time, it was even seriously questioned whether it could still be considered for implementation. General von Falkenhayn was not deprived of his often-tested nerve strength and calm by the blows of fate. It was due to him, with his often-tested nerve strength, despite the aggravated situation on the Western Front, to remain faithful to the decision made shortly before, to increase the German strength offer for the Serbian campaign as required by the unexpectedly occurred shortfall in the contribution of forces by the ally. In carrying out the Balkan offensive, the Chief of the General Staff strictly adhered to the fact that strong German forces could only be temporarily fixed on a secondary theater of war.

1) Volume VIII, p. 343, note.

Page: 656 keyno: 186

Review of the Military Conduct of General von Falkenhayn.

By early October, he again considered the situation on the Western Front to be so stabilized that he intended to seize the initiative after the arrival of further reinforcements from the East. Naturally, this could not involve the unleashing of new major battles with decisive offensive objectives for the foreseeable future. The heavy losses suffered by the enemy in their unsuccessful breakthrough attempts also gave pause for thought. The Chief of the General Staff began to seriously doubt whether it was even possible to break through an unshakable, heavily fortified defensive front. Thus, in early October, an inquiry was directed to the High Command of the Army Group German Crown Prince, asking whether it would not be advisable to "resume the old plan and carry out the operation in Alsace," aside from political considerations, which certainly also played a role this time, probably more in the sense of a local retaliatory strike for the recent territorial losses in Champagne and Artois. It seemed logical not to conduct such an operation at the previous main focal points of the battles, where the enemy still had very strong forces available for immediate deployment, but rather to exploit preparations already made on the extreme left flank of the army, where an attack could also bring the advantage of ending the impending winter's very difficult mountain battles in the southern arc. The idea may also have been to push the French back to the Reich border to create a favorable starting position for larger future operations. From the discussions with the army group, a firm decision had formed by early December to initiate the decisive battle on the Western Front in the coming spring with an attack from Sundgau towards Belfort in conjunction with operations at other locations. When shortly thereafter the direction threatening France much more sensitively towards Verdun was chosen, it was merely in the belief that the initial strike could be given even greater impact.

Reviewing General von Falkenhayn's military conduct up to the end of 1915, especially the considerations and decisions underlying it, it becomes clear that he repeatedly returned to his idea pursued during the first phase of the war of forcing a decision on land against the Western powers under the completely changed conditions of trench warfare. Freely, the line of thought does not run straight and uninterrupted.

Page: 657 keyno: 187

The Winter 1915/16.

The line of thought does not run straight and uninterrupted. The first deep incision lies in the winter of 1914/15 after the final failure of the attack in Flanders. During this period, the idea of the superior effectiveness of the British starvation and attrition plan pushes the defensive demand for "cautious management of resources" so strongly to the forefront of overall war strategy that there is no room for the idea of initiating decisive offensive operations on one's own initiative. It is only in the spring of 1915 that this idea revives with the increased mobilization of military resources. It finds expression in the plan for a breakthrough on the Western Front. General von Falkenhayn adheres to this indication even in the summer and autumn during the gradually expanding offensive operations in Galicia and Russia, albeit not without fluctuations. The intention of a "cleansing of Upper Alsace," which apparently arises from political considerations after the capture of Lemberg, signifies only a brief intellectual interlude that remains without impact on the progress of military actions. On the contrary, the further expansion of operations against Russia pushes the timing of the breakthrough in the West into the distance. The autumn crisis on the western theater of war temporarily questions the feasibility of the entire plan. After overcoming it, the will to fight decisively against the Western powers gradually regains vitality. However, the operational form in which it is to be expressed has changed: The own breakthrough through the enemy front, whether British or French, is rejected as an introductory act. Through this breakthrough at a vital point for the French, a grueling major battle is to be unleashed without the pursuit of operationally exploitable territorial gains. This, the Chief of General Staff hopes, will lead to counterattacks by the enemy at other points as well, loosening the frozen fronts of trench warfare and enabling the transition to mobile warfare through decisive breakthroughs.

A critical assessment of General von Falkenhayn's conduct of the war in the period discussed here must begin with the determination of what was understood by "war decision" from the standpoint of the Central Powers against the ring of hostile coalition. For Germany and Austria-Hungary, a success could only be considered decisive if it forced an opponent to withdraw or at least completely neutralized them as a military power factor, without which the hostile coalition could not continue the war with any prospect of success.

Page: 658 keyno: 188

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

Exclusion forced or at least completely eliminated as a military power factor, without which the enemy coalition could not continue the war with a prospect of success. It is obvious that successes in the Balkans or against Italy, however desirable they might be, could never have decisive significance for the war. They were defensive victories to secure the overall situation, at best steps to prepare for the decisive battle. Among the three main opponents of the Central Powers, England was the one whose elimination promised to have the strongest influence on the outcome of the war by rendering it defenseless. A coalition deprived of England's assistance and thus mainly limited to France and Russia was hardly capable of winning the war. A coalition of England-France without Russia remained indisputably much more capable of war than a coalition of England-Russia without France.

General von Falkenhayn had already correctly recognized in the autumn of 1914 that England was the strongest power factor of the enemy alliance, the soul of its resistance. The German naval command saw the decisive battle at sea during this period as hopeless due to the unfavorable balance of power for Germany. For the German land warfare, however, it was an utterly insoluble task to strike at the roots of England's power so strongly without the cooperation of the naval forces that it had to withdraw as an active member from the enemy coalition of powers. The highest achievement was reached when it succeeded in inflicting the greatest damage on England by destroying its army stationed on the mainland. Such a blow could, however, be elevated to a decisive one if it was accompanied by the disarmament of France. Then there was a justified prospect of finally becoming master of the third main opponent, Russia, provided that a decisive military engagement against it was still necessary at all.

The possibility of successfully conducting the war according to this fundamental idea was, after the failure of the Marne campaign, although already considerably restricted, not yet completely ruled out. With the transition to trench warfare on the Western Fronts in late autumn 1914, however, all the prerequisites on which the previous war plan had been based ended fundamentally. Decisive was above all the changed role that had to be assigned to the fight against Russia within the framework of the overall war effort. The Russian army had to be halted under all circumstances with a minimum of forces, which, according to the experiences made by the Austro-Hungarian army, was no longer in question. The trench warfare suitable for such a procedure had only begun late on the eastern front, and the defense could not be assigned sustainable strength on the vast, only weakly developed fronts to the same extent as in the West.

keyno: 189

Page: 660 keyno: 190

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

Operational plans against this idea were rightly objected to, as the Russian leadership at the beginning of the war had the ability to evade an inconvenient military decision by timely withdrawal for as long and as far as desired. Such a procedure was now less likely and also more difficult, as the Russian army was in close contact and combat with its opponents along its entire front. It seemed quite ready to seek the decision in the attack. Moreover, it was the art of leadership on the part of the Central Powers to plan operations in such a way that a most decisive result was in prospect, even if the enemy, under the impression of unfortunate partial battles, should try to evade the decision.

General von Falkenhayn had quite accurate ideas about the need for strength and time required to manage this enormous task. However, it remains questionable whether he was right to fundamentally reject the idea. Realization was conceivable only with a significant weakening of the Western army in favor of the Eastern army. If one decided to do this while maintaining the previously extended front, there was a risk of succumbing to the breakthrough attempts of the French and English, which would certainly begin. An unavoidable requirement was therefore a significant shortening of the front. It had to be prepared according to a carefully worked-out plan before stronger forces were sent to the East, so that, as soon as an enemy attack began, one could systematically evade in a sufficient manner. Since, for relevant reasons, Belgium, especially the Flemish coast, could not be abandoned, the extreme limit for such a backward relocation of the front was approximately the line Nieuport—Lille—Maubeuge—Metz—Strasbourg—Upper Rhine. The saved forces, perhaps a dozen corps, were only gradually freed after thorough expansion of the new positions. Thus, a decisive offensive in the East could only be launched after some time. Until then, the task of warfare there was merely to maintain or restore the operational balance.

For the success of such a large undertaking, it was also an indispensable prerequisite that, within the framework of extensive mobilization of domestic manpower for the war effort, labor for position construction was provided and deployed to a much greater extent than in the first two years of the war.

Page: 661 keyno: 191

Reflections for the Years 1914 and 1915.

Had General von Falkenhayn decided in late autumn 1914, after the

final failure of the Flanders Offensive, to change his objective to the east,

he would likely not have been in a position to proceed with decisive action

on a secure basis until mid-1915. This would have been around the same

time he actually began to set a far-reaching goal for operations in the east

beyond previous intentions. Although the actual situation in July 1915 did

not rule out the possibility of concluding the campaign against Russia with

greater operational success than was achieved, if the Chief of the General

Staff had at that time decided in a timely manner on the operation proposed

by the Commander-in-Chief East against the enemy's right flank and rear

and simultaneous advances of strong forces beyond the Bug. However, a

secure basis for envisaging the overthrow of the Russian army with

prospects of full success could only have been created if the supreme

command had long worked towards it with a clearly thought-out war

plan, making the maximum possible deployment of forces available for

the long term and unconcerned about the development of the situation in

the west.

It should certainly not be overlooked that such a radical decision would

have placed the highest conceivable demands on the willpower and tension

of the commander and the dedicated performance capability of the troops.

Moreover, it was not just about purely military considerations, but equally

about political, economic, and not least psychological questions of great

importance. However, this does not mean that the decision would have

resulted in more severe tests of endurance than those actually undertaken

and successfully passed by command and troops at that time without such

a large goal in the background. Nevertheless, such a decision was not at

all an option for General von Falkenhayn. For it contradicted his entire

viewpoint, which was also fully shared by many leaders of the Western

Army, against one of the most important principles according to which he

was willing to conduct the war, which had degenerated into a struggle for

territorial possession, at the Western Front for the embattled and determined

Central Powers. It is certainly no coincidence that the Chief of the General

Staff, precisely in the days when he was thoroughly addressing the decisive

question of how and by what means the future decision of the war should

be sought, turned to Field Marshal von der Goltz and wrote the words: "Even if many lessons from this campaign may remain unproven, one is beyond any doubt, namely this: Hold what you have, and never give up an inch of what you have gained. In accordance with this lesson, I will act and, as I said, do not intend to give up any inch of land in the West voluntarily."

Page: 662 keyno: 192

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

wrote von der Goltz): "Even if many lessons from this campaign may remain unproven, one is beyond any doubt, namely this: Hold what you have, and never give up an inch of what you have gained. In accordance with this doctrine, I will act and, as mentioned, do not intend to voluntarily give up any inch of land in the West."

General von Falkenhayn, according to the well-known words of Moltke, should have been a "star of the first magnitude," "which hardly any century can boast," to make a decision through which he detached himself from such a fundamental attitude with the same sharpness and one-sidedness with which he had previously adhered to it.

B. The Year 1916.

A decisive influence on the plan that General von Falkenhayn based his further warfare on, after the brilliant offensive successes in Russia and the Balkans and the equally admirable defensive victories on French soil, was the entirely accurate idea taken from Clausewitz's world of thought that in this greatest of all wars, through the utmost exertion of power by all participating states and peoples, "the absolute form" of the war was expressed in a size and destructive power never seen before. To make a fundamental commitment to such a view, General von Falkenhayn emphasized sharply and emphatically to the political Reich leadership on November 29, 1915, that in this "struggle for existence in the true sense," Germany and its allies had no other choice but to "continue the war, even at the risk of having to deploy the last man and the last penny, until the will of the enemies to win and thus also to endure the war is broken. "We are forced to follow this path to the good or bitter end, whether we want to or not."

The draft of this letter also contained the sentence that particularly characterized General von Falkenhayn's way of thinking: "Such battles are not decided by the gain of battles or foreign territories in themselves, but solely by the fact that the enemy is deprived of any hope of achieving his purpose through the entirety of military actions."

Page: 663 keyno: 193

The Winter 1915/16.

The enemy will be deprived of any hope of achieving his goal through the entirety of the military actions.

The prospects for this did not seem unfavorable to the Chief of the General Staff. He believed that Russia, after the severe failures of the past year, would be forced to relent due to its internal difficulties in a relatively short time¹), and the faster, the more any attempts to restore its "military reputation" would be thwarted. He assessed the internal conditions of Italy as such that they would soon make the active continuation of the war impossible, provided the Austro-Hungarian army continued to perform its duty to some extent²). According to him, France's military and economic capacity had already been weakened by the course of the war "to the brink of tolerability"³), and the secondary theaters of war in the Balkans and on the Asian borders of the Turkish Empire seemed to have eliminated any serious threat to Germany and its allies. Only the main and arch-enemy England remained unshaken. Its confidence in forcing the Quadruple Alliance to its knees through a war of attrition had not yet been broken. The fundamental idea of further warfare should therefore be to "demonstrate to England the hopelessness of its undertaking"⁴). However, the Chief of the General Staff did not conceal the fact that the ability to hold out on one's own was "limited among the allies," while in Germany itself it was "still unlimited." Thus, the overall situation urgently called for a quick decision in the war. Germany, in its well-considered own interest, took the initiative.

Two means — army and navy — were what General von Falkenhayn believed could achieve the high goal he envisioned through their cooperation. He had full authority over only one of them; he could only influence the application of the other in an encouraging and demanding manner. While the land operations he directed on the western front, by consolidating all available German forces and resources, were to break England's best mainland sword, the French army, and, if possible, also bring about a severe defeat of the English army itself, the navy was tasked with resuming unrestricted submarine warfare to damage the island nation so severely that it would be inclined towards peace in the foreseeable future, by the end of 1916.

¹) p. 9.  
²) p. 7.  
³) p. 10.  
⁴) p. 3.  
⁵) Ibid.

Page: 664 keyno: 194

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

The initiation of unrestricted submarine warfare aimed to damage the island nation so severely that it would be inclined towards peace in the foreseeable future, by the end of 1916. It was the first time that the leader of the land war sought to intervene decisively in the conduct of the naval war with demanding language. For the solution of the task assigned to the navy, he considered the German forces, with the strongest restriction on the fronts of the East and Balkans, to be sufficient; in the matter of submarine warfare, he relied on the expert judgment of the responsible men of the navy.

The plan of General von Falkenhayn completely failed. As much as retrospective consideration requires caution and restraint in judgment, it must still be stated that the plan had little chance of success because the tension between desire and reality was too great. Almost all the assumptions from which the Chief of the General Staff proceeded in assessing the enemies were incorrect. Neither Russia nor Italy was on the verge of dropping out as active members of the enemy alliance due to internal difficulties. On the contrary, despite the severe defeats of the previous year, Russia still demonstrated so much offensive power that it brought the front of the Austro-Hungarian army to collapse over wide stretches. Italy not only withstood the Tyrolean defensive operations but also concluded the sixth Isonzo offensive with a visible military success for the first time. France stood firm at the beginning of the strongest ordeal it had faced since the start of trench warfare and was also able to actively participate in the offensive of its British ally, which, thanks to its inexhaustible influx of power, dominated the field at the Somme. However, the unrestricted submarine warfare, which General von Falkenhayn had described as the "presumably most effective means of war," was not implemented at all. Nevertheless, even if it had been conducted with all the force possible from mid-March, it is seriously to be assumed that, given the small number of available frontline boats, it could have achieved the hoped-for result within the estimated period until the end of the year — quite apart from the incalculable implications of the inevitable entry of the United States of America into the ranks of the opponents.

"War is the realm of uncertainty," says Clausewitz. Three-quarters of the things on which actions in war are based lie in the fog of more or less great uncertainty. Here, first of all, a fine, penetrating mind is required to sense the truth with the tact of its judgment...

Page: 665 keyno: 195

Reflections on the Decision for 1916.

Thus, first a fine, penetrating intellect is called upon to discern the truth with the tact of its judgment... It is always only a sensing and discerning of the truth, according to which one must act.

It certainly cannot be denied that the foundations on which General von Falkenhayn built his plan belonged to those things so shrouded in the fog of uncertainty that even a fine, penetrating intellect had to overcome particular difficulties to sense and discern the truth with the tact of its judgment. Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed that the Chief of the General Staff could derive sufficient justifications from the previous course of the war for the conclusions he drew from his assessment of the current situation and made the basis of his future plans. For the notion that Russia and Italy no longer counted as threatening power factors, that they would, for internal political reasons, effectively take themselves out of action in the foreseeable future, that it was even expedient from the standpoint of the Central Powers not to disturb these impending dissolution processes through offensive pressure, there was at least a lack of compelling evidence. Also, France's previous achievements and sacrifices, incidentally ruthlessly acknowledged by General von Falkenhayn, hardly allowed for such a far-reaching conclusion as he drew with the assertion that it required only one last, utmost exertion of strength from the German side to bring the French people to collapse. It almost seems that he attributed weight to some reports from the intelligence service, which may have been correct in detail, through generalizing and thus erroneous conclusions, which they did not deserve upon unbiased examination. With the unrestricted submarine war, the commander included a factor in his overall calculation about whose effectiveness and success possibilities he initially harbored certain doubts himself. One must probably say that he then too easily and willingly warmed to an idea that was as eagerly advocated by the navy as it was effectively opposed by the political Reich leadership. Thus, it came about that the Chancellor, with the approval of the Supreme War Lord, could defeat the responsible leaders of the war effort on their own field not only with political but also with military reasons. In the end, this resulted in the peculiar spectacle that not even the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, but only the head of the land war, albeit unsuccessfully, insisted on a demand whose fulfillment, upon cool consideration of all pros and cons, offered no sufficient guarantee for achieving the desired goal, but rather threatened to significantly worsen the overall situation.

1) p. 15.

Page: 666 keyno: 196

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

In the cool weighing of all pros and cons, there was no sufficient

guarantee for achieving the desired goal, but rather a

significant deterioration of the overall situation threatened to ensue. Despite

all appreciation for the spirit of decisive and responsible

initiative that characterized General von Falkenhayn's planning around the

turn of 1915/16, one cannot escape the impression that

it was largely guided by wishes and hopes,

which found no adequate support in the actual circumstances. Wishful thinking clouded the view of reality. The

considerable size and difficulty of the impending task were not fully recognized.

As easy as it is to critically review and expose the sources of error in Falkenhayn's plan based on historical

events, it is equally difficult to show an alternative path that, given the situation as it was

around the turn of 1915/16, offered more prospects for success. Even then, amidst the war events,

various proposals were made to the German Chief of General Staff,

and professional criticism has continued to strive to find more promising solutions to this day. They all rest on the indisputably

correct realization that the difficult task of the decisive battle

on the Western Front could only be managed if, in addition to the

war effort on other fronts, the situation was sufficiently cleared so that the

forces required for the final battle were freely available. In this

sense, the idea of Generaloberst von Conrad is often pointed out,

to decisively defeat the Italian army with combined forces first. Others highlight the advantage that executing the

attack on Salonika up to the expulsion of the local enemy forces' armament would have brought for the further course of the war. Yet

others prefer another offensive operation against Russia

and see the most effective way for this in a concentric offensive from

the Bohemian-Galician front and through Romania and Bessarabia

into Ukraine, as General Ludendorff at that time described as

the only decisive factor in the war and which General Groener also repeatedly discussed with General

von Falkenhayn.

We know the reasons that led to the rejection of such plans.

They were rooted in the fundamental idea that these were

operations on secondary theaters of war, which either —

the attacks against Italy and on Salonika — would not be decisive

for the war, or — like the campaign into Ukraine — would lead to an endless

and alongside a quite undesirable appearance of the political situation, they could mean the unraveling of the Romanian question, resulting in a long-term fragmentation of the overall forces.

Page: 667 keyno: 197

Reflections on the Decision for 1916.

they could mean the unrolling of the Romanian question, would result in a fragmentation of the overall forces for a long time. Indeed, General von Falkenhayn overlooked in the plan of Generaloberst von Conrad that a quickly and surprisingly conducted attack against Italy with the concentration of superior forces had considerable significance in terms of final war decision, as it not only created the best flank protection for a subsequent offensive on French soil at a particularly important point of the overall front for the Central Powers, but also enabled the participation of stronger Austro-Hungarian forces or at least — with appropriate troop exchange on the Eastern Front — a significant increase in the German force deployment. A serious threat to the German Western Front by the French and English during the probably only short time-consuming attack against the Italians was hardly to be feared with careful force distribution, although it must not be overlooked that the weather conditions in the mountains did not allow major combat operations before spring, so the Western powers retained freedom of action for a longer time. Determined to support the Italians incessantly, this came at the expense of their forces stationed in France and Belgium. However, what remained for the Central Powers in such an interlocking of operations on the Southwest and Western Fronts in any case in undiminished severity was the uncertainty of the situation in the East. The lack of rear freedom, which had not been achieved in the past year, posed serious dangers for the undisturbed execution of any certainly lengthy and resource-consuming offensive operation on the unified front from the Adriatic to the Channel. This could only be countered by leaving strong German troops in the East; they were absent for the decisive battle in the West. That this could then achieve the desired final goal is doubtful.

As for the attack on Salonika, it must be considered that the prospect of achieving an operational, political, and morally valuable military success there through quick action never existed. It could only be a matter of a systematically and thoroughly prepared approach, about whose considerable difficulties and long duration the sober and factual reporting of the Mackensen Army Group left no doubt. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that a successful execution of this operation would have timely eliminated the power center forming there, which for the time being did not yet seriously appear, but did show as a source of future dangers that required attention.

Page: 668 keyno: 198

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

It was called to pay attention to dangers. Looking back, one may say that the execution of the attack on Salonika, even if it occurred simultaneously with an offensive against Italy, would not have exceeded the capacity of the Quadruple Alliance. A disarmament of the enemies was hardly to be hoped for. In general, the immediate military benefit that the eventual capture of Salonika would have brought to the overall situation should not be overestimated. Certainly, however, the expulsion of the enemies from the Balkans would have meant a similarly great, if not even greater, moral success as their withdrawal from Gallipoli. Such an outcome could have had a decisive influence on Romania's stance.

The question of how to proceed with Romania was of incomparably greater importance than the question of the attack on Salonika. Its prompt unification, whether by amicable means or by force, meant an improvement in the overall military situation in any case, whether the focus of warfare lay in the East or the West. If Romania could not be persuaded to join, the overthrow of its untested army by strategic surprise with the forces available in the Southeast in the winter of 1915/16 would have been achievable in a short time. But even in this case, it was a secondary theater of war within the overall conception of General von Falkenhayn. Since the food situation at home was essentially based on uninterrupted supply from there, it is understandable that he was easily willing to forgo the resolution of the matter.

Closely related to the Romanian question is the idea of the campaign into Ukraine, as the acquisition or overthrow of Romania had to be at its beginning. The Ukraine campaign promised decisive impact on the course of the war because it was the best means to defeat Russia not only militarily but also to break its economic backbone. If successful, the main mass of the army would be free for deployment on the western front. Furthermore, the timely acquisition of the economic resources of the Black Earth country and Romania provided assistance for the endurance of the Quadruple Alliance that could not be overestimated. It promised to mitigate the effects of the British hunger blockade, perhaps even gradually offsetting them. It is therefore immediately apparent that the campaign into Ukraine, from the dual base of Volhynia–Galicia and from the Balkans in the direction of Kiev and Odessa, represented an extraordinarily difficult and time-consuming undertaking that required extensive and thorough preparations over a long period.

Page: 669 keyno: 199

Reflections on the Decision for 1916.

The campaign towards Kiev and Odessa represented an extraordinarily difficult and time-consuming undertaking, requiring extensive and thorough preparations well in advance. Although the necessary deployment of forces could have been largely met by the troops stationed on the Eastern Front and the Balkans in December 1915, thus avoiding significant demands on the Western Front, quick initial successes were possible. However, the further execution of the offensive had to contend with inadequate connections and unfavorable railway conditions, as well as difficulties in bridging large rivers, which would certainly result in a sluggish progression. An essential prerequisite was therefore that the attacker had ample time for the preparation and conduct of the campaign. Since this prerequisite was not met in the situation that arose towards the end of 1915, it was hardly possible to rectify it. For, as inconvenient as a new German offensive against Russia would have been for the opponents, as we know today, they would have certainly stormed the Western Front, and whether it could withstand in the long run, if it had to rely on its own forces, must be questioned. In any case, the campaign in Ukraine under the prevailing conditions was such a far-reaching and thus daring undertaking for the overall situation of Germany and the Quadruple Alliance that even a commander of unusual daring could hardly take responsibility for it. It is understandable that General von Falkenhayn was not willing to do so.

Once again, the immense tension and dangerous interplay to which the Quadruple Alliance's warfare was subjected in fighting on various fronts came to light. Once again, however, the decisive advantage became apparent, which they could have drawn from a long-planned shortening of the defensive front in the West for the overall situation until the point where a justified prospect opened up to bring the decisive battle on French soil with sufficiently strong forces to fruition. What had been neglected in this regard since late autumn 1914 now weighed heavily as an obstacle on the decision-making and freedom of action of the German army leadership.

However, General von Falkenhayn did not perceive this obstacle, nor could he perceive it in the mindset in which he lived. For him, the entire difficult problem of the multi-front war was simply that — with defense on all secondary fronts — only to strike and weaken the Western powers, particularly England, so strongly that they became inclined towards peace.

Page: 670 keyno: 200

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

He began to hit and weaken the Western powers, especially England, so strongly that they became inclined towards peace. He was well aware that this would still cost a lot of hard work, but he trusted in the inner quality of the German army, which, although numerically inferior to the opponents, had so far proven equal to every test of its performance. It remains puzzling, however, that he refrained from any influence on the tactical training of the troops for the many new and unfamiliar offensive tasks ahead of them, even if only by issuing uniform combat regulations. It is noteworthy that during the months-long battle for Verdun, only a single brief instruction of this kind was issued by the Supreme Army Command on April 14. It concerned the combating of machine gun nests. Even in all purely technical questions of warfare, whose scope and significance constantly grew, the Chief of the General Staff sometimes held back conspicuously.

The same strong confidence he placed in his war tools filled him with confidence in his own abilities. "If fate has imposed such a heavy and exalted office on me, very much against my will," he wrote in those critical days, "he truly does not fear earthly responsibility. My conscience and my will are the only guiding stars on my thorny path." Undeniably, he was a man distinguished by richness of thought and acumen, to whom a certain genius cannot be denied, perhaps one of the most imaginative minds of the army at that time. His lively imagination gave rise to a "wealth of visions" that strongly occupied his mind and rarely allowed him to come to rest in truly great decisions. He had ideas that many others did not come to even with the most intense immersion in the material. In doing so, he was a sanguine nature and as such equally susceptible to imaginative elevation as to spiritual discouragement. What he lacked was a tendency towards systematic thinking. His elastic mind worked clearly unorganically and often produced results that lacked compelling logic. He gladly and easily formed certain wishful images from momentary inspirations without rigorously examining their inner justification and durability in mental self-discipline. The balancing self-criticism was missing, which may be particularly painful for people of this kind because it challenges the imagination, which they feel is the best part of their life force and which is sometimes a necessary trait of the commander, and forces it into a serving role. In their midst, such natures feel often alienated, misunderstood, lonely.

keyno: 201

Page: 672 keyno: 202

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

had fulfilled its main purpose if it attracted and weakened the French to such an extent without exposing itself to the danger of a counterattack, that they had to give up their operational freedom of action elsewhere to a greater or lesser extent. The attack was not an end in itself; it was intended to loosen the fronts of trench warfare by using the strongest technical means of combat, to initiate the great decisive battle that promised to bring the Western Front into motion.

A firm idea of how things would play out in the future could, of course, not yet exist. However, General von Falkenhayn considered the various possibilities that could arise as consequences of the attack at Verdun on the overall situation on the Western Front. The most likely and also most welcome to him was that the British army would be forced, willingly or not, to assist its hard-pressed ally at Verdun with a relief offensive on its own front. He confidently expected their victorious defense. Not only that, he hoped to seal the defeat of the English on the mainland with a decisive counterattack. It is striking with what certainty he included in this calculation, which still contained many unknowns, the impact of the unexpectedly occurring defeat at Verdun on the French and English as an undeniable factor. This had the consequence that, despite the clearly recognized limitations of his own forces and means of combat, he believed he could achieve his goal not only at the beginning of the battle but also in its continuation and development with a strong reduction in the use of forces. "Our problem is," he wrote to the Chief of Staff of the 3rd Army, "to inflict heavy damage on the enemy at a decisive point with relatively modest own expenditure."

Even those who attribute a certain ingenious touch to the strategic basic idea of General von Falkenhayn must admit that it was based on an overestimation of the possibilities of effect and prospects of success, which, according to dynamic law, are inherent in every operation conducted with relatively modest own expenditure. The structure is well and hard established with the first deployment of forces before Verdun. If this had been more strongly measured and consequently the attack base had been expanded from the outset, the attack would probably have achieved the effect expected by the Chief of Staff, although it remains doubtful whether he consequently brought the fortress in its entirety or only the commanding heights of the Maas bank into German possession. Certainly, then for the further development of operations on the Western Front, better prospects would have opened up even in the case that the British relief offensive initially or entirely failed to materialize.

Page: 673 keyno: 203

1916. Considerations on the Operational Plan for the West.

development of operations on the Western Front opened up better prospects even in the event that the British relief offensive initially or entirely failed to materialize. The German commander retained the invaluable advantage of his own initiative and was able, in the full sense of a victory achieved over the French at their seemingly strongest point in a short time, to spread his wings for a bold flight. He could, while maintaining the threat at Verdun, force a strong incursion, perhaps even a breakthrough, at another point of the enemy front than the one merely recognized. For operational exploitation through a decisive offensive was never achievable "with relatively modest own expenditure." The same applied, perhaps even more so, to an engagement with the British army in the form General von Falkenhayn envisioned under the interaction of defense and counterattack. No matter how favorably one imagines the course of events, a situation that brought such superiority to the German arms that a subsequent operation in the open field could lead to a decision in the war cannot be conceived, considering the "strength ratios" on both sides, even if, contrary to all expectations, the opponents refrained from any offensive counterattack on the other theaters of war.

The inadequate result of the first assault on Verdun in February is the decisive cause for the unfavorable further development of the situation in the next half year not only in the Meuse area but also on the rest of the Western Front and on all main theaters of the war. All the futile attempts of the following weeks and months to retrospectively increase the result of the first days of attack with constant reinforcement of fresh forces to the desired effect have turned the battle for Verdun very much against the wishes and will of the German Chief of General Staff and also against the original intention of Army High Command 5 more and more and finally entirely into that gruesome "battle of attrition on the spot," which, of course, without regard and distinction of attacker and defender, consumed the forces of both fighting sides equally. However, the loss was more noticeable and consequential on the German side because the French were mostly able to replace their forces before they burned out in battle.

General von Falkenhayn granted no one from his immediate surroundings full insight into his inner thoughts, nor, as far as is known, did he ever let anything be known or recorded about what was then going on in his soul.

Page: 674 keyno: 204

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

has occurred in his soul. Outwardly, he has always maintained a calm demeanor, with few exceptions that can be explained by momentary moods, in high self-control. Therefore, military historiography can only make the ascertainable actions and omissions of the Chief of General Staff the basis of a psychological portrait that shows itself in the most severe crisis of his work. It must emphasize, where it cannot prove, being aware that perhaps all the strokes of the picture are correctly drawn. With this reservation, it must be said: General von Falkenhayn, under the heavy pressure of the unexpected events of Verdun, which overturned all his assumptions, all his wishes and hopes, was unable to maintain the mental balance that the commander needs, "to allow the finest play despite the storms in one's own breast of insight and conviction like the needle of the compass on a storm-tossed ship"). More than once he tried to free himself from the shackles into which the nerve-shattering experience of the energy-consuming battle in the Maas area had entangled his soul. But again and again, he returned to the self-tormenting question of what should become of this battle, to the attempt to continue the enterprise once begun, even if it had long since lost its original meaning, with new deployment of men and material to a tolerable end. Thus, General von Falkenhayn became the thrall of his own work, which had shot up far beyond the intended scope with elemental force and now demanded its tribute imperiously. And this subjugation of mind and spirit to matter persisted, even as he saw with growing clarity a new severe storm gathering threateningly at another point on the Western Front. He did consider whether and how he could prevent this danger, nip it in the bud, but he did not make the ruthless decision to secure the upper hand through quick and decisive action. He waited.

Then unexpectedly, the lightning struck at a distant third point. What had been considered almost impossible in the conceptual world of General von Falkenhayn occurred with the suddenness and self-evidence of a devastating natural event. The Russian army provided such overwhelming proof of the still-living offensive power within it that suddenly and unexpectedly the severe dangers of the multi-front war, long considered overcome, reappeared in their old size and sharpness. Certainly, the blame lay clearly with the ally, who had failed in fulfilling a simple duty task.

1) from Clausewitz, On War. First Book, Chapter 3.

Page: 675 keyno: 205

The Summer of 1916.

clearly revealed, who failed in fulfilling a simple duty task. Essentially, Luck also avenged himself on the German Chief of General Staff for the great omission of the previous year. Once again, the Western Army, as so often before, despite the tense situation in which it found itself, had to give up considerable forces to avert the worst disaster in the East. Only after weeks of varied and crisis-filled battles, which were not only associated with significant territorial loss but also severely shook the internal structure of the allied military, was it possible to bring the situation somewhat back into balance. General von Falkenhayn deserves credit for keeping the German reinforcement within the limits that were an unavoidable necessity given the situation on the other theaters of war, especially in the West.

For there, too, the storm at the Somme had meanwhile come to a bloody discharge. It became all the more consequential as the German dike, insufficiently equipped with defensive means, broke at various points. Its complete collapse could be prevented by the rapid deployment of hastily assembled troop units from all sides, but the situation remained tense until breaking point and led to disproportionately high and rapid consumption of forces in rigid defense. The idea of a counterattack, with which General von Falkenhayn had hoped to end the great decisive battle on the Western Front victoriously by the turn of the year, was gone. The opponents bled the law.

In addition to the British army, considerable parts of the French participated in the combat operations in the Somme area. At Verdun, too, the French repeatedly delivered astonishing demonstrations not only of their resistance capabilities but also of their still inherent offensive power. However, after the failure of the last desperate effort to gain the high ground around Souville, the German leadership was forced to resort to "strict defense" to free up forces and resources to support the Somme front. Thus, given the still sharply tense situation, the combat situation in the Meuse area was only to a limited extent. Thus, the warfare of the Quadruple Alliance lived everywhere from hand to mouth in the true sense of the word since early June. Nothing characterizes this fact better than the statement made by General von Falkenhayn himself in a letter to the Chancellor on August 21: "Under the immense pressure that rests on us, we have no surplus of forces. Any shift in one direction inevitably leads to dangerous weaknesses elsewhere, which can mean our annihilation."

Page: 676 keyno: 206

Review of the Warfare of General von Falkenhayn.

even if only the slightest mistake in weighing the measures expected from the enemy were made." This was the open admission that all decision-making and freedom of action had been lost. Only with difficulty did the fortress of the alliance hold. Then Romania joined the ranks of the allied powers as a new enemy.

With this extreme exacerbation of the situation, the two-year warfare of General von Falkenhayn came to an end.

In view of the outcome, it must not be forgotten how difficult the task was that he faced from the beginning of his activities. Measured by the effort, leadership skills, and successes of the opponents, his performance stands at a considerable height, although he had at his disposal in the German army a military tool to which none of the opponents had anything equivalent to oppose. The belief in the capabilities of this army is what repeatedly challenges one to examine whether more could not have been achieved with such a weapon after a lost war. However, even in retrospective consideration, it is not easy to identify a path that promised the decisive success required in Germany's situation without the greatest daring. That General von Falkenhayn, despite the overwhelming and constantly growing superiority of the enemies, succeeded in pushing the Russian masses far back from Germany's borders, clearing the way to Turkey by defeating Serbia, and at the same time maintaining the extended front against all enemy assaults on the western theater of war for two years, are deeds that belong to history. Even if General von Falkenhayn ultimately failed to master the task he was set, he will still be honored as a leader of the German army.

Page: 99 keyno: 207

keyno: 208

Index of the Most Essential Literature.

The indexes of the previous volumes also apply to the present volume.

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Page: 679 keyno: 209

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Page: 680 keyno: 210

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Page: 681 keyno: 211

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keyno: 212

Index of Persons.

Adam, Major General, Commander of the 3rd Landwehr Division 521.

Albert King of Belgium 49.

Albrecht Duke of Württemberg, Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of the 4th Army 42. 270. 279. 407.

Alby, French General 220.

Alecseieff, Russian General of Infantry, Chief of the General Staff 45. 326. 329. 428. 430 ff. 445 ff. 576. 584.

von Altrock, Major General, Commander of the 56th Infantry Division 256.

Count Andrassy, Hungarian Politician 531. 635.

Arz von Straussenburg, Austro-Hungarian General of Infantry, Commander-in-Chief of the 1st Army 552.

Asquith, British Prime Minister 329.

Auer von Herrentischen, Lieutenant Colonel, Chief of the General Staff of the XVIII Army Corps.

Auler, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 5th Landwehr Division 91.

von Bahrfeldt, General of Infantry, Commander of the 10th Reserve Division 137.

Balfourier, French General 112 f. 220.

Baratow, Russian General 605.

Dr. Bardolff, Austro-Hungarian Major General, Chief of the General Staff of the Böhm-Ermolli Army Group 425.

Baret, French General 140.

von Batocki-Friebe, Tortilowicz von — —, Chief President, Head of the War Nutrition Office 633.

Bauer, Lieutenant Colonel in the General Staff 38 f. 69. 86.

Badeaire, French General 105. 107.

Beddmann, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 108th Infantry Division 475. 499.

von Below (Eduard), Lieutenant General, Honorary General of the V Army Corps 90. 128.

von Below (Fritz), General of Infantry, Commander-in-Chief of the 2nd, from 19. 7. 1916 of the 1st Army 42. 272. 299 f. 319. 342. 344. 346 ff. 351 ff. 357. 359. 361 ff. 366 f. 369. 374. 384. 412.

von Below (Hans), Major General, Commander of the 6th Reserve Division 523.

von Below (Otto), General of Infantry, Commander-in-Chief of the 8th Army 425. 435.

Knight von Benigni, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal 463. 480. 511.

von Bernhardi, General of Cavalry, Commander-in-Chief of an Army Group 457. 462. 465 f. 475. 497. 544.

Berthelot, French General 221.

von Bertrab, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 39th Infantry Division 91.

von Beseler, Colonel General, Governor-General of Warsaw 417.

Besobrasow, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the Special Army 538 f.

von Bethmann Hollweg, Chancellor 2. 16. 21. 291 ff. 306 ff. 416 f. 524. 526 ff. 532 f. 553. 560. 563. 602. 634 f. 637 f. 641 ff. 645. 665. 676.

von Bodelberg, von Bollard-Major in the General Staff 559.

Boehm-Kettelbach, Captain, General Staff Officer of the 20th Infantry Division 475.

von Boehn, General of Infantry, Honorary General of the IX Reserve Army 368.

Boelke, Lieutenant, Leader of a Fighter Squadron 147.

von Böhm-Ermolli, Austro-Hungarian Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of an Army Group and the 2nd Army 425. 450. 483 f. 516. 534. 546.

Bojadjiew, Bulgarian General, Commander-in-Chief of the 1st Army 601.

Boris Crown Prince of Bulgaria 532. 597. 599.

Page: 683 keyno: 213

Index of Persons.

von Borries, Colonel, Chief of the Gen.

Staff of the 7th Army 39. 42. 273. 280 f.

420.

Boroevic von Bojna, Austro-Hungarian Gen.

of Inf., Commander-in-Chief of the 5th Army

569. 593.

Count von Bothmer, Gen. of Inf.,

Commander-in-Chief of the German South

Army 425. 450. 462. 464. 513. 547.

550. 552.

von Brandis, Lieutenant in Inf. Regt. 24

Bratianu, Romanian Prime Minister

21. 602.

von Bredow, Major General, Commander of the

42nd Inf. Div. 434.

Briand, French Prime Minister 329.

334. 569.

von Brieske, Major General, Commander of the 4th Landwehr

Div. 517.

Bronsart von Schellendorff

(Bernhard), Colonel, Chief of the Gen. Staff

of the VII Reserve Corps, from 30. 3. 1916 of the

Hungarian Group Berndt West, from 19. 7.

1916 of the 2nd Army 133. 221. 366.

Bronsart von Schellendorff

(Friedrich), Major General, Chief of the Turkish

Gen. Staff 614.

de Broqueville, Belgian Prime

Minister 329.

Knight von Brudermann, Austro-Hungarian

Field Marshal Lieutenant 513. 547.

Brusati, Italian General, Commander-in-Chief

of the 1st Army 576.

Brusilov, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief

of the Southwestern Front 313.

345. 446. 448 ff. 470 ff. 475. 494 f.

538 f. 549.

Burkhardt, Major General, Commander of the

100th Bavarian Inf. Div. 360.

Baron von dem Busche-

Haddenhausen, German

Ambassador in Bucharest 21. 602.

Count Cadorna, Italian Major General, Chief of the

Gen. Staff 568. 570. 573. 576 f. 583 ff.

589. 591 f. 595.

von Capelle, Admiral, State Secretary

of the Imperial Naval Office 309.

Capello, Italian General 568 f. 592 f.

von Carlowitz, Gen. of Inf., Commanding

Gen. of the III Reserve Corps 435.

de Castelnau de Curieres —,

French General, Chief of the Gen. Staff

111 f. 114. 120. 334 ff.

Chrétién, French General 106. 108.

Claudel, French Colonel 110.

Clausius, Major General, Leader of a Division

503. 557.

Baron Conrad von Hötzen-

dorf, Austro-Hungarian Colonel General, Chief of the

General Staff 4 ff. 17 f. 20. 306. 311.

311. 316. 318. 321. 425 f. 440. 451.

453. 458 ff. 466. 476 f. 480 ff. 488 ff.

505 f. 508. 510. 512. 523 ff. 528 f. 541.

550 f. 556. 559. 561. 571 f. 575.

580 ff. 599. 614. 634. 643 ff. 649 f.

653. 666 f. 671.

von Conta, Major General, Commander of the 1st Inf.

Div., later Leader of the Carpathian Troops

354.

Coutanceau, French General 69 f.

von Cramon, Major General, Representative of the

O.H.L. at the Austro-Hungarian Army Command

17. 302 f. 311. 442. 445. 454. 459.

481 f. 484. 490. 510. 515. 525. 529 f.

559. 602. 643.

Count Czernin, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in

Bucharest 602.

Dankl, Austro-Hungarian Colonel General, National

Defense Commander in Tyrol,

later Commander-in-Chief of the 11th Army

569. 573 ff. 577. 580. 582.

von Deimling, Gen. of Inf., Commanding

Gen. of the XV Army Corps 90. 177.

Lord Derby, Head of British Recruitment

52.

von Dewitz, Major General, Commander of the

77th Inf. Brigade 72.

Dieffenbach, Major General, Commander of the 22nd Inf.

Div. 499. 515.

von Ditfurth, Major General, Commander of the

121st Inf. Div. 545.

Page: 684 keyno: 214

Index of Persons.

Djemal Pasha, Turkish General, Commander-in-Chief of the 4th Army 604.

von Dorrer, Lt. Gen., Commander of the 44th Reserve Division 225.

Drechsel, Lt. Col., Chief of the General Staff of the X Army Corps 468.

Dubail, French General, Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Army Group 50.

Duchêne, French General 106.

Dumrath, Major General, Leader of a Division 362.

von Eben, Gen. of Inf., Leader of a Group 546. 557.

von Eichhorn, Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of the 10th Army, from 30.7.1916 of an Army Group 425. 435. 533.

von Einem known as von Rothmaler, Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of the 3rd Army 35. 42. 273.

d'Elia, Gen. of Inf., from 16.4.1916 Commander-in-Chief of Army Detachment A 275.

Emanuel Filibert Duke of Aosta, Italian General, Commander-in-Chief of the 3rd Army 591.

Enver Pasha, Turkish General, Minister of War and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy 4. 537. 599. 603. 609 f. 614 f. 643.

Essad Pasha, Turkish General, Commander-in-Chief of the 1st Army 603.

von Etzdorf, Lt. Gen., Commander of the 103rd Infantry Division 265.

Archduke Eugen of Austria, Austro-Hungarian Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Front 569. 574 f. 577. 580. 582 f. 588. 643.

Ewert, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front 429. 446 f. 470. 494.

von Fabeck, Gen. of Inf., Commander-in-Chief of the 12th Army 425.

Baron von Falkenhausen, Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of an Army Detachment, from 16.4.1916 of the Coastal Defense 24. 43. 274 f. 381. 618.

von Falkenhayn (Erich), Gen. of Inf., Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army 1 ff. 56 ff. 64 f. 74. 81. 86. 94. 116. 120. 123. 133. 136. 140 ff. 145. 153. 155 f. 160. 162. 166. 170. 174. 178. 202. 204. 206 f. 214. 224. 227. 230. 234. 261. 264 ff. 270. 274. 277. 280. 284. 355. 364. 366. 370. 374. 376. 378. 380. 437 ff. 454 f. 458 ff. 466 f. 470. 476. 480. 501. 504. 506 f. 509 f. 512. 518 ff. 522. 526 ff. 535 f. 541. 552. 555 f. 558 ff. 571. 582. 597 ff. 606. 608. 610. 614. 616 f. 621. 623. 625. 629. 634 ff.

von Falkenhayn (Eugen), Gen. of Cav., Commanding General of the XXII Reserve Corps 225. 234. 236. 243. 247 f. 250. 254. 478. 498.

Ritter von Fasbender, Gen. of Inf., Commanding General of the I Bavarian Reserve Corps 375.

Fath, Austro-Hungarian Gen. of Inf., Leader of a Corps 450.

Faupel, Major, General Staff Officer with the XI Reserve Corps 355.

Fayolle, French General, Commander-in-Chief of the 6th Army 338. 341. 360. 372 f.

Ferdinand King of Romania 602.

Ferdinand Tsar of Bulgaria 19 ff. 485. 597 ff. 617. 642 f.

Fleischmann von Theissrud, Austrian Major 426. 444. 553.

Foch, French General, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Army Group 49. 51 f. 333 ff. 337. 367. 370. 372. 379.

Francis, General, Commander of the 63rd Infantry Division, later Leader of a Division 364.

von Francois, Gen. of Inf., Commanding General of the VII Army Corps, from 16.7.1916 Leader of the Verdun Assault Group 244. 246.

Frantz, Gen. of Artillery, Commander of the 29th Infantry Division 244. 246.

Page: 685 keyno: 215

Index of Persons.

Frank, Major, 1st Gen. Staff Officer with the Army Group Archduke Karl 547.

Franz Josef I, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary 490. 530 ff. 641.

Sir John French, British Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces 46. 49.

Frenzer, Major General, Commander of the 4th Infantry Division 236. 241.

Archduke Friedrich of Austria, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal, Supreme Commander of the Army and Navy 445. 525 f. 530. 532. 571. 635. 643 f.

Gaede, General of Infantry, Commander-in-Chief of an Army Detachment 43. 275.

von Gallwitz, General of Artillery, Commander-in-Chief of the 11th Army, from 30.3.1916 Leader of the Attack Group Verdun West, from 19.7.1916 Commander-in-Chief of an Attack Group 43. 145. 152. 162. 185. 221 ff. 238. 240 ff. 247 ff. 253 ff. 258. 366. 368 f. 371. 373 f. 376. 378. 381. 387. 390. 414.

von Garnier, Lieutenant General, High Command Rad. Commander 6 434.

Gerard, Ambassador of the United States of America in Berlin 305. 309.

von Gerok, General of Infantry, Commanding General of the XXIV Reserve Corps, later Commander of an Army Group 244. 249 f. 254. 257. 554.

Baron von der Goltz, Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish 6th Army 3. 604 ff. 662.

Baron von der Goltz, Lieutenant Colonel in the General Staff 383.

von Gontard, Major General, Commander of the 33rd Infantry Division 91.

von Gößler, General of Infantry, Commanding General of the VI Reserve Corps 203. 207. 209 f. 213. 214. 217. 220 ff. 224. 226. 231.

Gough, British General, Commander-in-Chief of an Army 341. 356.

Knight von Graf, Lieutenant General, Commander of the Bavarian Replacement Division 99. 102. 127.

Lord Grey, British Foreign Minister 618.

Groener, Major General, Head of the Railway Department 8. 29. 40. 279. 655. 666.

von Gronau, General of Artillery, Commanding General of the XXXXI Reserve Corps, Commander of an Army Group 425. 450.

Baron von Grünau, Legation Counselor 528. 602.

Grünert, Major General, Chief of the General Staff of the Army Group Prince Leopold, from 13.4.1916 of the 2nd Army 42. 272. 300. 355. 425.

Guillaumat, French General 113 f. 140. 221.

von Guretzky-Cornitz, General of Infantry, Commander of the 9th Reserve Division 128.

von Gündell, General of Infantry, Commanding General of the V Reserve Corps 57. 71. 82. 90.

Habicht, Lieutenant Colonel, Commander of the Heavy Artillery of the XXII Reserve Corps 237.

Habsburg von Livo, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant 480. 547.

Hahndorff, Major General, Commander of the 107th Infantry Division 498. 555.

Sir Douglas Haig, British General, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in France 49 ff. 109 f. 138. 326. 333 ff. 339 f. 356. 372. 380.

Hali Pasha, Turkish General, Commander-in-Chief of the 6th Army 604.

Baron von Hammerstein-Gesmold, Colonel, German Military Attaché in Bucharest 601 f.

von Hartz, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 2nd Bavarian Infantry Division 174.

Hasslre, Major, Chief of the General Staff of the V Reserve Corps 126.

Baron von Hauer, Austro-Hungarian General of Cavalry 450.

Haupt, Captain in the Infantry Regiment 24 89.

von Heeringen, Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief of the 7th Army 42. 273. 280.

Page: 686 keyno: 216

Index of Persons.

Dr. Helfferich, Secretary of State of the Reich Treasury Office 16. 526.

Hell, Colonel, Chief of the General Staff of the 10th Army, from 17.7.1916 of the Army Group Linsingen 506. 515. 533. 541.

Ritter von Henriquez, Austro-Hungarian General of Infantry, Commanding General of the XII Corps 521.

Hentsch, Colonel in the General Staff 597.

Herwarth von Bittenfeld, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 5th Infantry Division 73. 78.

Herr, French General 103 ff. 111 ff.

von Herzberg, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 11th Reserve Division 216.

Hesse, Colonel, Chief of the General Staff of the Army Detachment Gaede 43. 275. 295 f.

Heye, Colonel, Chief of the General Staff of the Army Detachment Woyrsch 521.

von Heymann, Lieutenant Colonel, 1st General Staff Officer of the A. D. R. S. 57. 59 f. 67. 83. 86. 153.

von Hindenburg, von Beneckendorff und von — Field Marshal, Supreme Commander East 17. 20. 43. 320. 425 ff. 432. 435 ff. 443. 455. 484. 503. 516. 518 f. 522. 524. 545 ff. 550. 553. 555 ff. 634 ff. 642. 645. 647. 650 ff. 654. 661. 670 f.

Hipper, Vice Admiral 619.

von Hoeppner, Lieutenant General, Chief of the General Staff of the 2nd Army, from 13.4.1916 Commander of the 75th Reserve Division 42. 272.

Hoffmann von Waldau, Lieutenant Colonel, Chief of the General Staff of the X Reserve Corps.

Hofmann, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant, Leader of a Corps 547.

von Holtzendorff, Admiral, Chief of the Admiralty Staff 16. 22. 291 ff. 306 ff. 665.

Humbert, French General, Supreme Commander of the 3rd Army 69.

Hussein, Sharif of Mecca 612.

von Huttier, Lieutenant General, Commanding General of the XXI Army Corps 427. 434.

Count Ignatiev, Russian Colonel 46.

Ilse, Lieutenant General, Chief of the General Staff of the 4th Army 39. 42. 270. 279.

Iwanow, Russian General, Supreme Commander of the Southwestern Front 429. 446.

von Jagow, Secretary of State of the Foreign Office 21. 292. 530. 532. 641.

Jekow, Bulgarian General, Chief of the General Staff 20 f. 32. 532. 598 f.

Joffre, French General, Supreme Commander 44 ff. 50 ff. 105. 107. 110 ff. 114. 120. 135. 137 f. 143. 146. 157. 325 ff. 339 f. 356. 370. 372. 377 f. 379 f. 576. 584.

Josef Ferdinand Archduke of Austria, Austro-Hungarian General Colonel, Supreme Commander of the 4th Army 450. 452. 456 f.

Izzet Pasha, Turkish General, Supreme Commander of the 2nd Army 606.

Kaempff, Lieutenant General, General of Engineers of the 5th Army 58.

Count von Kageneck, Lieutenant Colonel, German Military Attaché in Vienna 530.

Kaledin, Russian General, Supreme Commander of the 8th Army 448 f. 495.

Karl Franz Josef Archduke of Austria, Heir to the Throne, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant, from 1.8.1916 General of Cavalry, Supreme Commander of the 12th Army 510. 547. 577.

von Kehler, Major General, Commander of the 12th Reserve Division 207.

Kempf, Major, Chief of the General Staff of the Hungarian Army 201.

Kiggell, British General, Chief of the General Staff of the British Troops in France 49.

von Kirchbach, General of Artillery, Commanding General of the XII Reserve Corps 370. 381.

Lord Kitchener, British Field Marshal, Secretary of State for War 16. 110. 327. 620.

Ritter von Kneussl, Lieutenant General, Commander of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division 214.

Page: 687 keyno: 217

Index of Persons.

Constantine King of Greece 597. 617.

Edler von Korda, Austro-Hungarian Gen. of Cav. 480.

Kosak, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant 534.

Koso, Lt. Gen., Comm. Gen. of the X. Res. Corps 131. 160. 211.

Baron von König, Gen. of Cav., Comm. Gen. of the Ldw. Corps 520.

Köbb von Köbö, Austro-Hungarian Gen. of Inf., Austro-Hungarian Generaloberst, Commander-in-Chief of the 5th Army 513. 547. 550 f. 574.

von Kraewel, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 105th Inf. Div. 511. 548.

Krafft von Dellmensingen, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the Alpine Corps 192. 395.

Kraus (Alfred), Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant, Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Southwest Front 569.

Kraus (Rudolf), Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant, Cmdr. of the 34th Inf. Div. 547.

Knight Krautwald von Annau, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant, Comm. Gen. of the III. Corps 577.

Baron Kreß von Kressenstein, Lt. Col. 611. 613.

Koeth, Lt. Col., Head of the War Raw Materials Department 629.

von Kuhl, Lt. Gen., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the 6th Army, from 25.8.1916 of the Army Group Crown Prince Rupprecht 30. 39. 42. 271. 281 ff. 322. 381. 420. 422.

Kuropatkin, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front 429. 446.

Kühne, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 25th Inf. Div. 73.

von Kühne, Gen. of Cav., Cmdr. of the 13th Res. Div. 72.

von Laffert, Gen. of Cav., Comm. Gen. of the XIX. A.K. 375. 380.

Count von Lambsdorff, Baron von Manteuffel, Lt. Col., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Army Group Prince Leopold 534.

de Langle de Cary, French General, Commander-in-Chief of the Army Group Center 50. 104. 111. 137.

von Lauenstein, Lt. Gen., Comm. Gen. of the XXXIX. Res. Corps 435.

Ledrun, French General 180.

Baron von Ledebur, Lt. Col., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the VI. Res. Corps 203 f. 218.

Baron von Leonhardt, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant 499.

Leopold, Prince of Bavaria, General Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of an Army Group 43. 425. 445.

Baron von Lersner, Legation Counselor 642.

Letschitzki, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the 9th Army 549.

von Liebert, Gen. of Inf., Leader of a Division 360.

Limant von Sanders, Gen. of Cav., Turkish Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the 5th Army 603. 614 f.

von Linsingen, Gen. of Inf., with the rank of Generaloberst, Commander-in-Chief of an Army Group 43. 425. 442. 444 f. 451 ff. 459. 462. 465 ff. 474. 476 ff. 481. 483. 497. 499 ff. 505 ff. 514. 521. 528 f. 541. 545. 557.

Litzmann, Gen. of Inf., Comm. Gen. of the XXXX. Res. Corps 541. 544.

von Lochow, Gen. of Inf., Comm. Gen. of the III. A.K., from 16.4.1916 Leader of the Attack Group Verdun East 57. 65. 68. 71. 75. 126. 146. 148 ff. 158. 161 f. 166 ff. 172 f. 175 ff. 181. 183. 187. 189 f. 194 f. 264. 267. 297. 391 f. 395 ff. 398 ff.

Loeb, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 14th Res. Div. 72.

von Lossow, Lt. Col., from the end of April Major General, German Military Attaché in Constantinople 605. 608. 614.

von Lossberg, Lt. Col., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the 2nd Army, from 9.7.16 of the 1st Army 42. 273. 355. 366. 412 f. 420.

Page: 688 keyno: 218

Index of Persons.

von Lotterer, Gemmaj., Cmdr. of the

5th Field Artillery Brigade 90.

Ludendorff, Lt. Gen., Chief of the Gen.

Staff of the Supreme Commander East 8.

425. 521. 525. 528. 530 ff. 559.

634. 642. 645. 646.

Baron von Lüttwitz (Walter),

Lt. Gen., Comm. Gen. of the X Army Corps, from

21. 8. 1916 Chief of the Gen. Staff of the

Supreme Commander West 47. 541. 545.

546. 402. 464. 467. 541.

von Lyncker, Colonel General, Chief of the

Military Cabinet 561. 635 ff. 642.

645.

von Mackensen, Field Marshal General,

Commander-in-Chief of an Army Group

19. 43. 483 ff. 489 f. 510. 524 f. 596.

598. 600. 654.

Mahmud Kiaimi Pasha, Turkish

General, Commander-in-Chief of the 3rd

Army 604.

de Maître, French General 140.

Mangin, French General 168.

Marquard, Colonel, Chief of the Gen.

Staff of the 11th Army 43.

Baron Marschall, Gen. of Cav.,

Leader of a Corps 425.

von der Marwitz, Gen. of Cav.,

Comm. Gen. of the VI Army Corps 467. 498.

503. 505. 514.

von Massow, Colonel, German Military

Attaché in Sofia 597. 599. 604.

Mecel, Gemmaj., General of the Foot

Artillery of the Attack Group Berwin

West 204.

Metzger, Austro-Hungarian Lt. Gen., Chief of the

Operations Department of the A. O. K. (Naval

Command) 459.

Micheler, French General, Commander-in-Chief

of the 10th Army 338. 372.

von Mudra, Gen. of Inf., Comm.

Gen. of the XVI Army Corps 133 ff. 140 f.

143 f. 154. 285 f. 297.

Sir Archibald Murray, British

Lt. Gen., Chief of the Imperial General Staff,

former Commander in Egypt 46.

49.

Niedermayer, Lt. Colonel 605.

Niemann, Major in the Gen. Staff 25.

Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia 335.

428. 432. 446 f. 449.

Nicholas Nikolaevich Grand

Duke of Russia, Gen. of Cav.,

Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus Army

429. 604.

Nivelle, French General 146. 157.

168. 180. 185. 194. 335. 392.

von Oppeln-Bronikowski,

Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 48th Reserve Division 479.

Sternmuth, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant

473.

von Oden, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 21st Inf.

Div. 72. 84.

von Pannwitz, Gen. of Inf.,

Comm. Gen. of the XVII Army Corps 343.

346 f. 349 ff. 358.

Paschen, Gemmaj., Cmdr. of the 1st Inf.

Div. 554.

Pašić, Serbian Prime Minister 329.

Pau, French General 430.

Sara Pecori-Giraldi, Italian

General, from 8. 5. 1916 Commander-in-Chief

of the 1st Army 576.

Pétain, French General, Commander-in-Chief

of the 2nd Army, from 28. 4. 1916 of the

Army Group Center 55. 111 ff. 120.

130. 138 f. 143. 146. 157. 168. 180 f.

194. 208. 325. 332 ff.

Baron von Pflanzer-Baltin,

Austro-Hungarian Colonel General, Commander-in-Chief

of the 7th Army 425. 444. 450 f. 455.

463 f. 483. 491. 512. 547.

von Pletten, Colonel General, previously

acting General Adjutant of the Emperor

and 1st Commander of the G. H. Qu.

23. 292 f. 304 f. 528. 635. 642. 645.

von Pohl, Admiral, Chief of the High Seas

Fleet 619.

Poincaré, President of the French Republic

325. 334.

Polivanov, Russian General, Minister of War

until 29. 3. 16 446.

Porro, Italian General 46. 569 f.

Page: 689 keyno: 219

Index of Persons.

Protopopow, Vice President of the Duma 618.

Puhallo von Brlog, Austro-Hungarian General Colonel, Commander-in-Chief of the 1st Army 450. 473. 514.

von Quast, Gen. of Inf., Comm. Gen. of the IX. A. K. 358.

Radtke, Lieutenant of Res. in Inf. Rgt. 24 89.

Ragoza, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the 4th Army 520.

Freiherr Rais von Frentz, Genmaj., Leader of a Division 348.

Sir Henry Rawlinson, British General, Commander-in-Chief of the 4th Army 325. 337. 339. 341. 356. 373.

Riemann (Otto), Gen. of Inf., Cdr. of the 22nd Res. Div. 207. 226. 248.

Sir William Robertson, British Genlt., Chief of the Imperial General Staff 46. 49. 51. 53. 110. 138. 327. 329.

Rohr, Austro-Hungarian Gen. of Cav., later General Colonel, Commander-in-Chief of the 10th, from 17.6.1916 of the 11th Army 569. 582.

Roques, French General, Minister of War 333. 335.

Count Ruggeri, Italian General 447.

von Rundel, Genmaj., Cdr. of the 43rd Res. Div. 243. 505.

Rupprecht Crown Prince of Bavaria, General Colonel, from 23.7.1916 Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the 6th Army, from 28.8.1916 of an Army Group 42. 271. 282. 317. 381. 407. 422.

Rutsche, Genmaj., Leader of a Div. 462.

Ruzski, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front 429.

Sacharow, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the 11th Army 539.

Salandra, Italian Prime Minister 329. 585 f. 592.

Sarrail, French General, Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-French troops at Salonika 45. 325 f. 596.

Sasonow, Russian Foreign Minister 60.

von Seeckt, Genmaj., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Mackensen Army Group, from 15.6.1916 of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, from 1.7.1917 of the Archduke Joseph Army Group 43. 302. 480. 482 ff. 510. 528. 534. 547. 551. 559. 597.

Schilinski, Russian General 46. 330. 428. 432.

Sieger, Genlt., Chief of the Field Ammunition Service 659.

Sixt von Armin, Gen. of Inf., Comm. Gen. of the IX. A. K. 363.

Smirnow, Russian General, Commander-in-Chief of the 2nd Army 433.

Souchon, Vice Admiral 609.

Surmay, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant, Leader of a Corps 451. 455.

Schabel, Genmaj., General of the Foot Artillery of the 5th Army 58. 61. 70.

Scheer, Vice Admiral, from 16. Admiral, Chief of the High Seas Fleet 306. 619 f.

von Schenk, Gen. of Inf., Comm. Gen. of the XVIII. A. K. 68. 71. 145.

von Scheuchenstuel, Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal, Comm. Gen. of the VIII. Corps 577.

von Schmettau, Genlt., Cdr. of the 19th Saxon Div. 543.

Schmidt von Knobelsdorf, Genlt., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the 5th Army 23 ff. 39. 42. 57. 59. 72. 74. 76. 78. 81. 86 f. 94 f. 123. 126 f. 131. 140. 145. 151. 153. 155. 163. 165. 170. 188. 195. 204. 217 f. 253. 256. 267. 270. 297. 304. 311. 319. 391. 397. 399. 401 f. 413. 421 f.

Freiherr Schmidt von Schmidtsburg, Colonel, Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Eichhorn Army Group 533 f.

World War. Vol. X.

Page: 690 keyno: 220

Directory of Persons.

von Scholtz, Gen. of Artillery, Commander of an Army Group 425.

von Schöler, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 20th Inf. Div. 478. 543.

von Schröder, Admiral, Comm. Admiral of the Marine Corps 306.

Count von der Schulenburg, Colonel, Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Guard Corps, from 21.4.1916 in Gen. Staff Dfs. at the A. O. K. 153. 165 f.

Schultheiß, Major Gen., Cmdr. of the 38th Inf. Div. 244. 247.

Schwajew, Russian General, from 29.3.1916 Minister of War 446.

Count von Schwerin, Gen. of Inf., Cmdr. of the 7th Res. Div. 176.

von Stein, Lt. Gen., Comm. Gen. of the XIV Res. Corps 342 ff. 350 ff. 356. 360.

Stepanowitsch, Serbian Colonel 46.

von Stoltzmann, Major Gen., Chief of the Gen. Staff of the Linsingen Army Group, from 19.7.1916 Cmdr. of the 78th Res. Div. 425. 443 ff. 452. 476. 478. 498. 501 f. 506.

von Strantz, Gen. of Inf., Commander of an Army Detachment 24. 91. 96. 128.

Straub, Senior Colonel, Chief of Field Transport 8.

Stürmer, Russian Prime Minister 618.

Tappen, Major Gen., Chief of the Operations Department of the O. H. L. 13. 23. 25 ff. 29. 39. 64. 81. 94 f. 298 f. 301. 304. 308. 314. 320 f. 355. 414. 478. 506. 655.

Terjokhansky von Rada, Senior Colonel General, Commander of the 4th Army 457. 466. 473.

Thomsen, Lt. Colonel, Chief of Field Aviation 374 f. 621. 625.

von Tirpitz, Grand Admiral, Chief of the Imperial Naval Office 16. 292 f. 308 f.

Todorow, Bulgarian General, Commander of the 2nd Army 601.

Townshend, British General 607.

von Treutler, Envoy, Representative of the Foreign Office at the O. H. L. 1. 15. 526.

von Valentini, Chief of the Secret Civil Cabinet 635. 642.

Victor Emanuel III, King of Italy 335. 568.

Wagner, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 121st Inf. Div. 132. 137.

von Wartenberg, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 19th Res. Div. 149.

Wasmus, German Consul in Southern Persia 609.

Baron von Watter (Theodor), Gen. of Inf., Comm. Gen. of the XIII Corps 373.

Baron von Watter (Oskar), Major Gen., Cmdr. of the 54th Inf. Div. 244. 250.

Wehib Pasha, Turkish General, Commander of the 2nd, later the 3rd Army 604. 606.

Weidner, Colonel, Chief of the Gen. Staff of Army Detachment A (Falkenhausen) 43. 274.

von Werder, Gen. of Inf., Leader of a Corps 42.

Wezell, Major, Chief of the Gen. Staff of the III Corps, from 16.4.1916 of the V Assault Group Verdun East 126. 155. 163 f. 188. 397.

von Wichmann, Major Gen., Cmdr. of the 44th Res. Div. 248.

Wichura, Lt. Gen., Cmdr. of the 5th Inf. Div. 73. 172 f.

Wieleman, Belgian General 46.

Wild, Colonel, Chief of the Gen. Staff of Army Detachment Strantz 42.

Wild von Hohenborn, Lt. Gen., Minister of War 7. 21. 23. 25. 236. 310. 313. 316. 321. 414. 421. 528. 531. 649. 651. 671.

Page: 691 keyno: 221

Index of Persons.

Wilhelm II, German Emperor, King

of Prussia 2. 16. 19. 21. 23. 25.

29. 70. 291 ff. 304 f. 308 f. 313. 321.

402. 416 f. 438. 445. 506. 521. 525 f.

528. 530 ff. 536 f. 556 ff. 561. 563.

600. 603. 620. 634 ff. 641 ff. 652. 665.

Wilhelm, Crown Prince of the German

Empire and of Prussia, Genlt.,

Commander of an Army Group

and the 5th Army 24. 28. 39. 42. 57.

69. 72. 119. 141 f. 153. 163. 165 ff.

195. 267 f. 287. 304. 389. 398. 400 f.

422.

Wilson, President of the United

States of America 305. 310. 417.

von Winkler, Genlt., Comm. Gen.

of the IV Reserve Corps, from 24.3.1916

Commander of the 11th Army 601.

von Boyna, Genmaj., Cmdr. of the

5th Reserve Division 522.

von Boÿrisch, General Colonel, Commander

of an Army Division

425. 445. 521 f.

Ritter von Xylander, Gen. of

Infantry, Comm. Gen. of the I Bavarian Army Corps

174 f. 183 f. 264.

Zielow, Genmaj., Cmdr. of the 1st Reserve

Division 514.

von Zwehl, Gen. of Infantry, Comm. Gen.

of the VII Reserve Corps 67. 71.

World War. Volume X.

keyno: 222

Troop Directory.

Subsequent directory of the states not mentioned here, etc.

Germany.

War Ministry 626 ff.

Supreme Army Command 1 ff. 56 ff. 62 ff. 68.

74. 77. 83. 85 f. 92. 94 f. 100. 115 ff.

123. 128. 131 ff. 136. 144 ff. 145. 148.

151 ff. 155 f. 160. 162 ff. 175 f. 187.

195 ff. 198. 202. 204 ff. 212. 214. 222.

224. 227. 230. 234. 238. 240. 242. 257.

259. 264 ff. 273. 277 ff. 342. 344 ff.

351 ff. 355. 357 ff. 362. 364 ff. 368 f.

371. 373 ff. 378. 380 ff. 397. 400 f. 404.

406 ff. 415. 418 ff. 435 ff. 460. 464.

458 ff. 466. 468 f. 476 ff. 480. 498 ff.

515. 517 ff. 535 ff. 541. 548. 550. 552 ff.

571. 582. 594 ff. 606. 608 ff. 610. 614 ff.

621. 625. 628. 629. 634 ff.

Army 42 f. 45. 406. 418. 626 ff. 648. 663 f.

670. 673. 676.

Western Army 11. 40 ff. 270. 302. 311. 316.

417 f. 423. 461. 628. 646. 654. 660.

675.

Eastern Army 43. 316. 424. 454. 486 f. 492. 520.

525. 628. 646. 654. 660. 668.

Army Reserves 11 f. 14. 32. 41. 43. 261.

272. 275. 278. 285. 295 f. 298. 301 f.

318 ff. 342. 344. 349. 382. 409. 411.

437. 459. 518. 537. 652 f.

Commander-in-Chief East (Army Group Hin-

denburg) 9. 17. 20. 43. 302. 310. 320.

428 ff. 432 f. 435 ff. 441 ff. 459. 461.

464. 486. 488. 493. 499. 502 f. 508 f.

516 ff. 521 f. 524 ff. 529 ff. 541. 545 f.

550. 553 ff. 600 f. 634 ff. 647. 650 ff.

Army Group German Crown Prince 12. 24.

34. 37 ff. 42. 100. 132. 156 ff. 183. 186.

195 f. 198. 202. 274. 297 f. 304. 315.

318. 390. 401 f. 408. 412 f. 418 f. 421 ff.

656.

Army Group Eichhorn 533 f. 536. 555.

558.

Army Group Gallwitz 366. 368 f. 371 ff.

376. 378. 380 f. 388. 414. 417 ff. 421 f.

Army Group Crown Prince Rupprecht of

Bavaria 381. 422 f.

Army Group Linsingen 9. 43. 313. 425.

440 ff. 450 ff. 461 f. 465 ff. 473 f. 479.

479. 481 ff. 485 ff. 493. 496. 499.

514 ff. 519. 521 ff. 526 f. 530 f. 533 ff.

540 ff. 545 ff. 555. 557. 562.

Army Group Mackensen 14. 19. 43. 482.

485. 596 ff. 603. 667.

Army Group Prince Leopold of Bavaria

43. 425. 435. 438 ff. 445. 455. 457.

462. 479. 491. 501 ff. 508. 511 f.

515 ff. 519 ff. 525 ff. 533 f. 536. 541.

547. 555. 557 f.

1st Army 42. 366 ff. 373 ff. 419. 421 f.

2nd Army 14. 39 ff. 42. 199 f. 202. 259.

272 f. 275. 280. 295. 299 ff. 302 f.

317 ff. 323 f. 341 ff. 351. 355. 359.

361 ff. 369. 373 ff. 384. 411 ff. 419.

421 f.

3rd Army 14. 28. 32. 34 ff. 39 f. 42. 63.

104. 273. 275 f. 280. 298 ff. 319. 345.

348. 355. 408 ff. 419. 423. 672.

4th Army 14. 32. 39. 42. 275. 279.

295. 316 f. 319. 406. 409. 411. 423.

647.

5th Army 14. 24 ff. 32. 37 ff. 42 f. 56 ff. 65.

74 ff. 80 f. 83. 85 ff. 90 ff. 100. 115 ff.

151. 155 f. 160. 162 ff. 175 f. 187.

195 f. 198. 202 ff. 209 ff. 214. 222.

Page: 693 keyno: 223

Troop Directory.

6th Army 14. 30 ff. 35 ff. 39 f. 42. 271 ff. 275. 281 ff. 294 ff. 299 f. 305. 317 ff. 322. 326. 344. 362. 374. 380 ff. 407. 409 ff. 422. 646 f.

7th Army 42. 57. 63. 66. 74. 273. 276. 308. 284. 314. 319. 348. 366. 360. 378. 410. 473.

8th Army 425. 427. 435 ff. 522. 534 f.

9th Army 425. 427. 437 ff. 444. 519 f. 533 f. 556.

10th Army 425. 427. 435 ff. 444. 519 f. 533 f. 556.

11th Army 43. 221. 596. 601.

12th Army 425. 427. 437 ff. 444. 520. 533 f. 556.

German Southern Army 43. 425. 440 f. 450 f. 453 ff. 458. 461 ff. 479 ff. 488. 491 ff. 496 ff. 523. 530. 546. 555 f. 560 ff.

Army Detachment A (Falkenhausen) 14. 24. 39 f. 42. 63. 66. 131. 274 ff. 319. 408 ff.

Army Detachment B (Garde) 14. 23 f. 39 f. 42. 63. 131. 186. 275 f. 295 f. 319. 408. 410 f.

Army Detachment C (Strantz) 14. 24. 37 ff. 42. 57. 59. 61. 63. 66. 90 ff. 127 f. 131. 133. 156. 172. 186 f. 199. 202. 274. 277. 319. 390.

Army Detachment Scholz 534.

Army Detachment Woyrsch 425. 502. 517 f. 520 ff. 534 f. 555 ff. 560. 562.

Commander of Coastal Defense 275. 619.

General Government Belgium 407.

General Government Warsaw 417. 467.

Army Group Bernhardi 542. 544 ff. 555. 557.

Army Group Gerok (XXIV. Ref. R.) 425. 441. 554.

Army Group Gronau (XXXXI. Ref. R.) 43. 440. 450. 453. 455. 462. 467. 473. 478 f. 502 f. 508. 515. 519. 522. 543. 543 ff. 558.

Army Group Marwitz 469. 473 ff. 498 ff. 503 ff. 507 f. 514 ff. 539. 541 f. 544. 555.

Army Group Scholz 425. 427. 434 ff.

Attack Group Nowel 461 ff. 466 f. 473.

Attack Group Verdun East 132 ff. 139. 140. 143 ff. 181. 183. 186 ff. 194 f. 196. 200. 202. 212. 260 ff. 267. 285 f. 297. 389 ff. 395 ff. 421.

Attack Group Verdun West 132 f. 143. 148. 152. 162. 175. 185 ff. 194. 196. 202. 212 ff. 238 ff. 247 ff. 253. 262 f. 274. 297. 366. 390. 400. 404. 421.

Guard Corps 42. 341. 346. 349. 351.

I. Army Corps 534. 546. 565.

III. Army Corps 26. 42. 61. 65. 67 f. 70 f. 73 ff. 89 f. 96 ff. 98. 100 f. 116. 118 f. 123. 125 ff. 131. 146. 153. 261. 285. 410.

IV. Army Corps 42. 271. 361 ff. 368. 409.

V. Army Corps 42. 57. 90 f. 99. 127 f. 133. 390.

VI. Army Corps 42. 341 f. 467. 564.

VII. Army Corps 42. 176. 254. 256. 275. 285. 298. 301. 315. 390.

VIII. Army Corps 42. 104. 273. 360.

IX. Army Corps 42. 358. 369. 374. 376. 410 f.

X. Army Corps 42. 276. 316. 402. 459. 461. 466 ff. 473 ff. 498 ff. 506. 542. 564.

XI. Army Corps 42. 273.

XII. (Saxon) Army Corps 42. 104. 273. 275. 369. 410.

XIII. (Württemberg) Army Corps 42. 270 f. 368 f. 373. 380 f. 409.

XIV. Army Corps 42. 273.

XV. Army Corps 26. 42. 61. 65 f. 70 f. 79. 81 ff. 85 ff. 90 ff. 96 ff. 101 f. 116. 118. 126. 131. 133. 136. 142. 144. 148. 150. 152. 158. 167 ff. 176 ff. 181. 190. 194. 261. 264. 270. 275. 287. 297. 399 f. 398 f.

XVI. Army Corps 26. 42. 59. 146.

XVII. Army Corps 42. 341 ff. 349. 351. 371. 380.

Page: 694 keyno: 224

Troop Directory.

XVIII. Army Corps 26. 42. 61 ff. 65. 67 f. 71 ff. 87 f. 92 ff. 98. 100 f. 119. 124 ff. 128. 131. 140. 142. 145. 147. 151. 153. 156. 158. 161. 261. 276. 285.

XIX. (Jäger) Army Corps 42. 371. 375. 379 ff. 409.

XXI. Army Corps 534.

I. Bavarian Army Corps 42. 165. 167. 173 f. 179. 181 ff. 190 ff. 196 f. 271. 275. 389 f.

II. Bavarian Army Corps 42. 271. 378. 381. 409.

III. Bavarian Army Corps 42. 57. 187. 202. 409.

Guard Reserve Corps 275. 368 f. 373. 376 ff. 380. 409. 418.

I. Reserve Corps 534.

III. Reserve Corps 534.

IV. Reserve Corps 43.

V. Reserve Corps 26 f. 42. 56 ff. 64 f. 70 f. 73. 76. 79. 81 ff. 90 f. 93 f. 96. 98. 100 f. 104. 116. 124 ff. 128 ff. 136 f. 140. 144. 148. 158 ff. 170 ff. 176. 264. 276.

VI. Reserve Corps 26. 28. 42. 56. 59. 66. 70. 73. 76. 79. 81. 86. 126 f. 156. 203 ff. 224 ff. 240 ff. 272. 297. 344. 349. 356. 358. 360. 409. 411.

VII. Reserve Corps 42. 61 ff. 65 f. 68. 71 ff. 79. 81 ff. 87 f. 90. 93. 95. 98. 104. 123. 125 ff. 131. 148 f. 152. 158. 165 f. 169. 171. 195. 208. 215 ff. 222. 229. 231. 254. 261. 297. 392. 398.

VIII. Reserve Corps 42. 274. 360. 362.

IX. Reserve Corps 42. 271 f. 368. 378. 409. 418.

X. Reserve Corps 28. 123. 131 ff. 136 f. 144 f. 148. 158 ff. 163 f. 167 f. 172. 176 f. 181. 183. 187 f. 190 ff. 195 f. 199 ff. 211. 275. 389.

XII. (Jäger) Reserve Corps 42. 274. 370. 376. 410. 564.

XIV. Reserve Corps 42. 272. 295. 341 ff. 348. 350.

XV. Reserve Corps 43. 274 f.

XVI. Reserve Corps 534.

XVII. Reserve Corps 42. 196. 389. 391 ff.

XXII. Reserve Corps 26. 38. 61. 66. 91. 133. 175 f. 221. 223 ff. 247 ff. 254. 276. 285. 315. 564. 596.

XXIII. Reserve Corps 42. 271. 295. 380. 409.

XXIV. Reserve Corps 242 ff. 249 f. 252 ff. 257. 259. 276. 425. 553 f. 565.

XXV. Reserve Corps 534.

XXVI. Reserve Corps 42. 270. 285.

XXXII. Reserve Corps 42. 295. 380. 409.

I. Bavarian Reserve Corps 42. 376. 407. 409.

Alpine Corps see under Divisions.

Besikent Corps 522, 534.

Carpathian Corps see 200. Inf. Div.

Marine Corps 42. 271. 291. 306. 416 f.

Pascha Corps see under Turkey.

Landwehr Corps 517. 520. 534.

Corps Bernhardi 457. 462 f. 465 ff. 473 ff. 499 f. 502 f. 515. 541 f. 564.

Corps Marschall 425. 441.

Corps Werder 42.

Group Armin (IV. A. R.) 363 ff. 367.

Group Bœdmann 542.

Group Boehn (IX. R. R.) 370. 373. 375.

Group Carlonitz (III. Res. R.) 435 f.

Group Clausius 542. 557.

Group Conta (Carpathian Corps) 548. 551. 556.

Group Dießendach 542.

Group Eben 552. 557.

Group Falkenhayn, Eugen (XXII. Res. R.) 478. 498 f. 542.

Group Fahsbender (I. Bavarian Res. R.) 376 f. 379. 381.

Group Garnier (South. Cav. R. of the 6th) 434.

Group Göhler (VI. Res. R.) 360 f. 363. 367. 370.

Group Hutier (XXI. A. R.) 427. 433 f.

Group Kirchbach (XII. Res. R.) 373 f. 376. 381.

Group Kraewel 512 f. 547 f. 550 f.

Group Laffert (XIX. A. R.) 375 ff.

Page: 695 keyno: 225

Troop Directory.

Group Lauenstein (XXXIX. Res. R.)

435. 534.

Group Litzmann 544.

Group Lüttwitz (X. A. R.) 541 ff. 557.

Group Mitaü 562.

Group Pannewitz (XVII. A. R.) 349 ff.

355. 365. 368. 371.

Group Quast (IX. A. R.) 358. 360 f.

364 f. 380.

Group Stein (XIV. Res. R.) 348. 350 ff.

359. 367. 363. 369. 371. 379.

Group Watter (XIII. A. R.) 374. 376 f.

379.

High Cav. Cmdr. 1 534.

High Cav. Cmdr. 3 534.

High Cav. Cmdr. 5 534.

High Cav. Cmdr. 6 534.

1. Guard Inf. Div. 341. 368. 377. 379.

2. Guard Inf. Div. 319. 341. 378. 381.

3. Guard Inf. Div. 272. 275 f. 302. 320.

351. 353. 356 f. 360 f. 363 f. 409. 411.

425. 441.

4. Guard Inf. Div. 32. 298.

1. Inf. Div. 148. 151. 160 f. 167 f. 170.

176 ff. 188 f. 192. 198 ff. 278. 302.

389 f. 415. 425. 441. 547 f. 551. 553.

556. 562. 565.

2. Inf. Div. 434.

3. Inf. Div. 156. 187 f. 198. 201. 233 f.

236. 239 ff. 276. 389 ff.

5. Inf. Div. 68. 71. 73. 75. 77. 79 f. 82. 85.

87. 89 f. 94. 96. 98. 101. 123 ff.

128. 130. 151. 158. 160 ff. 167 f. 170 ff.

201. 362.

6. Inf. Div. 71. 73. 75. 78 ff. 82 f. 85.

87. 89. 94. 96. 99. 101. 124 f. 128 ff.

151. 158. 160 ff. 167 f. 171 ff. 176. 276.

7. Inf. Div. 361. 363. 367 f. 411.

8. Inf. Div. 361. 367. 411.

9. Inf. Div. 57. 90. 390.

10. Inf. Div. 57. 90. 102. 127. 390.

11. Inf. Div. 272. 319. 341 ff. 346. 349. 351.

353 f. 357 f. 362. 363. 367. 369. 383. 390.

12. Inf. Div. 319. 341. 345. 349 f. 356.

363. 409.

13. Inf. Div. 176. 254. 256.

14. Inf. Div. 176. 255 f. 397. 403 f.

15. Inf. Div. 348.

16. Inf. Div. 368. 371. 375. 378 f. 410.

418.

17. Inf. Div. 320. 360 f. 364. 367.

18. Inf. Div. 274. 320. 360. 362. 364.

367. 369. 378.

19. Inf. Div. 475. 487. 541 ff. 564.

20. Inf. Div. 475. 477 f. 487. 542 f. 564.

21. Inf. Div. 68. 71 f. 73. 75. 77. 79 f.

87. 90. 96. 98. 101. 124. 128. 130 f.

145. 147 ff. 151.

22. Inf. Div. 302. 425. 436. 439. 441.

498 f. 503 f. 515. 517 f. 542. 564.

23. (Saxon) Inf. Div. 273. 410.

24. (Saxon) Inf. Div. 73.

25. Inf. Div. 68. 71. 73. 75. 77. 79 f. 82.

84. 87 f. 94. 96. 98. 100. 124. 128.

131. 134. 145. 147 ff. 152 f.

26. (Württemberg) Inf. Div. 373. 379.

27. (Württemberg) Inf. Div. 373. 378 f.

28. Inf. Div. 368 f. 410 f.

29. Inf. Div. 90 f. 99. 129 f.

30. Inf. Div. 427.

31. Inf. Div. 404 f. 410.

32. Inf. Div. 404. 410.

33. Inf. Div. 319. 341. 349. 358. 367.

34. Inf. Div. 242. 244 ff. 249 ff. 254 f.

257 f. 276.

39. Inf. Div. 90 f. 99. 130.

40. (Saxon) Inf. Div. 379.

41. Inf. Div. 435 f.

42. Inf. Div. 427. 433 f.

50. Inf. Div. 148. 160. 167. 170. 176.

187 ff. 191. 198 ff. 276. 394.

396. 398. 403 f.

52. Inf. Div. 319. 341. 348. 350. 356.

54. Inf. Div. 242. 244 f. 247. 249 ff.

254 f. 257 f. 276. 292.

56. Inf. Div. 175 f. 202. 250. 254. 256 f.

259. 276. 378. 381. 409.

58. (Saxon) Inf. Div. 131. 134. 137. 141.

144 f. 276. 286.

86. Inf. Div. 427. 433. 435 f. 522. 541 f.

544. 565.

87. Inf. Div. 434.

Page: 696 keyno: 226

Troop Directory.

103. Inf. Div. 187 f. 191. 200. 276. 298. 301 f. 318. 389 f. 596.

105. Inf. Div. 481 ff. 485. 487. 509 ff. 523. 547 f. 550. 553 f. 564. 597.

107. Inf. Div. 302. 427. 433 f. 436. 478. 497 f. 500. 518. 523. 542. 555. 564. 596.

108. Inf. Div. 455. 459. 461 f. 465. 466. 473. 475 ff. 487. 498 f. 503 f. 506. 516. 542. 544. 564.

109. Inf. Div. 435.

111. Inf. Div. 378. 381. 407. 409.

113. Inf. Div. 38. 66. 101. 125 f. 128. 130 f. 134. 137. 141. 144 f. 276 ff. 286.

115. Inf. Div. 427. 433.

117. Inf. Div. 271. 275. 364 f. 368 ff. 376. 409. 411. 415. 553 f. 559. 565.

119. Inf. Div. 433. 459. 509 ff. 519. 523. 547 f. 550. 553. 565.

121. Inf. Div. 38. 66. 128 ff. 134. 136 f. 141. 144 f. 148. 151. 156. 277 f. 286. 312. 342. 345. 349. 351 ff. 357 f. 360. 412. 503 f. 515. 524. 541 f. 544 f. 547. 565.

123. (Saxon) Inf. Div. 271. 275. 358. 361. 363. 367 f. 409. 411. 415. 535 f.

183. Inf. Div. 272. 320. 358. 360 ff. 409. 411. 418. 628.

185. Inf. Div. 319. 348 f. 351. 357. 360. 363. 408 ff. 418. 628.

187. Inf. Div. 410. 418. 628.

192. (Saxon) Inf. Div. 258. 418. 628.

195. Inf. Div. 418. 535 ff. 546. 555. 562. 565. 628.

197. Inf. Div. 418. 535 ff. 546. 555. 562. 565. 628.

199. Inf. Div. 553. 558. 565. 628.

200. Inf. Div. (Carpathian Corps) 390. 418. 547 f. 551. 553 f. 565. 628.

201. Inf. Div. 418. 521. 628.

203. Inf. Div. 418. 628.

204. (Württemberg) Inf. Div. 409. 418. 628.

206. Inf. Div. 409.

208. Inf. Div. 410.

1. Bavarian Inf. Div. 168. 171 f. 174 ff. 181 ff. 190. 192 ff. 197. 389 f.

2. Bavarian Inf. Div. 168. 172 ff. 181. 183 f. 189. 194. 197. 390.

5. Bavarian Inf. Div. 202. 409.

6. Bavarian Inf. Div. 389. 394 f. 410.

10. Bavarian Inf. Div. 301. 319. 341 f. 344. 347 ff. 352. 360. 363. 368. 382. 415. 553. 555. 565. 600.

11. Bavarian Inf. Div. 123. 162. 207. 214 ff. 221. 224 ff. 229. 231. 233. 240 ff. 278. 361. 467. 473. 476 f. 479. 480. 500 f. 542 (Section Kreuzh.) 544. 564. 596.

12. Bavarian Inf. Div. 628.

14. Bavarian Inf. Div. 404. 418. 628.

Alpine Corps 176. 181 ff. 189. 191 ff. 199 ff. 276. 298. 301 f. 315. 389 f. 398. 410. 547. 596.

Command of the Alpine Corps 389. 392. 399.

1. Guard Ref. Div. 32. 298.

2. Guard Ref. Div. 273. 275. 285. 298. 301. 319. 342. 348. 350. 356.

1. Ref. Div. 509 f. 512 ff. 516. 519. 523. 547. 553. 565.

5. Ref. Div. 437. 478. 499. 512. 518 f. 546 f. 547.

6. Ref. Div. 435. 523.

7. Ref. Div. 175 ff. 181 f. 188 f. 191. 198. 276.

9. Ref. Div. 57. 66. 71. 82. 90. 93. 96. 99. 101. 124. 128 ff. 134. 136. 276.

10. Ref. Div. 57. 65. 71. 73. 82. 90. 98 f. 124. 130 f. 134. 136 f. 276.

11. Ref. Div. 56. 203. 207. 209. 211. 215 ff. 225 ff. 229. 231 f. 236. 240 ff. 320. 349. 351. 353. 355 f. 360. 367 f. 409.

12. Ref. Div. 56. 156. 203. 206 ff. 221. 225 ff. 231 ff. 239. 319. 344 f. 347. 349. 351 f. 356. 360. 363 f. 409.

13. Ref. Div. 71 f. 75 ff. 79 f. 82 f. 88. 93. 95 f. 98. 126. 128. 130 f. 148 f. 170.

14. Ref. Div. 71 f. 75 f. 79. 82 f. 87. 90. 93. 95. 98. 101. 127 f. 130 f. 395 f.

15. Ref. Div. 360.

Page: 697 keyno: 227

Troop Directory.

18. Res. Div. 369.

19. Res. Div. 131. 134. 141. 145. 148 f.

158. 160. 162. 167. 170 f. 173 ff.

181 f. 184 f. 190. 192 f. 195 ff. 275 f.

286.

21. Res. Div. 196. 198. 276. 389. 393 f.

396. 398. 402 ff.

22. Res. Div. 123. 176. 207 ff. 219. 221.

226. 231 f. 238. 244. 247 ff. 253. 255.

266. 276. 302. 316. 349. 351 ff.

361 f. 364. 409 ff.

24. (Saxon) Res. Div. 362 ff. 367 ff. 373.

376. 410 f.

25. Res. Div. 196 ff. 276. 302. 391. 393.

26. (Württemberg) Res. Div. 319. 341. 348. 350.

356 f. 360. 369. 377.

28. Res. Div. 319. 341. 349 f. 356 f. 360.

410.

30. Res. Div. 57. 187. 390.

36. Res. Div. 435.

43. Res. Div. 221. 227. 230 ff. 236 ff. 240.

243 f. 246. 250. 276. 302. 316. 467.

473. 478. 487. 499. 503 ff. 542. 564.

596.

44. Res. Div. 156. 176. 221. 225. 231.

320. 243 f. 246. 248 ff. 252. 254. 302.

320. 351. 353 f. 358. 360 ff. 366. 410 f.

596.

46. Res. Div. 271.

50. Res. Div. 425. 441. 479. 513. 547 f.

552 ff.

50. Res. Div. 271.

52. Res. Div. 104.

75. Res. Div. 427. 433 f. 534. 536. 545.

565.

80. Res. Div. 427. 433. 435 f.

81. Res. Div. 425. 479. 543.

82. Res. Div. 425. 441. 502. 543.

1. Bavarian Res. Div. 375 ff.

6. Bavarian Res. Div. 379. 381.

7. Bavarian Res. Div. 407.

8. Bavarian Res. Div. 361. 363 ff. 367 f. 370.

374. 376 f. 410 f.

Guards Erf. Div. 389. 393 f. 396. 398.

1. Erf. Div. 271.

5. Erf. Div. 418. 628.

6. Erf. Div. 390.

10. Erf. Div. 390.

19. (Saxon) Erf. Div. 274 f.

Bavarian Erf. Div. 90 f. 96 f. 99. 102. 116.

127. 130. 134. 276. 278. 390.

1. Res. Erf. Div. 628.

1. Ldw. Div. 565.

2. Ldw. Div. 56. 59. 203. 215. 221.

224 ff. 231. 236. 244. 246.

3. Ldw. Div. 521 f.

4. Ldw. Div. 517. 521.

5. Ldw. Div. 57. 66. 90 f. 96 ff. 99. 102.

127. 130. 390.

7. (Württemberg) Ldw. Div. 275.

8. Ldw. Div. 275.

10. Ldw. Div. 541 f. 544 f. 547. 565.

14. Ldw. Div. 520.

15. Ldw. Div. 341. 349.

47. (Saxon) Ldw. Div. 418. 628.

1. Bavarian Ldw. Div. 274.

Div. Burkhardt 360 f.

Div. Clausius 503. 523. 542.

Div. Dumrath 362. 364 f. 369. 410 f.

Div. Frande 369. 377 f. 410.

Div. Frentz 319. 348. 351 ff. 357 f. 361.

364. 409. 411.

Div. Liebert 360. 362. 364. 367 f. 409 ff.

Div. Rüsche 454. 456 f. 461 f. 465 ff. 473.

475. 487. 497 f. 542. 564.

Guards Cav. Div. 425. 543.

2. Cav. Div. 565.

5. Cav. Div. 425. 543.

9. Cav. Div. 427. 433. 435. 467. 476 f.

479. 487. 499. 503 f. 543. 564 f.

Bavarian Cav. Div. 502 f. 521 ff. 543. 557.

565.

Stage Inspection 2 381.

7. Inf. Brig. 410.

37. Inf. Brig. 501. 503. 542.

63. (Saxon) Inf. Brig. 364. 369.

77. Inf. Brig. 57. 65. 71 f. 75 f. 79. 82.

84. 87 f. 92 f. 126 ff. 130. 205. 208 f.

212.

Page: 698 keyno: 228

Troop Directory.

183. (Saxon) Inf. Brig. 275 f.

185. Inf. Brig. 274. 276.

187. Inf. Brig. 276.

192. (Saxon) Inf. Brig. 104. 215. 217. 219.

221. 225. 231. 244. 258. 276.

8. Bavarian Inf. Brig. 187.

11. Bavarian Inf. Brig. 187. 192.

32. Res. Inf. Brig. 362.

39. Res. Inf. Brig. 410.

Guard Replacement Brig. 156. 158. 162. 167 f.

9. Ldw. Brig. 427.

10. Ldw. Brig. 457.

47. (Saxon) Ldw. Brig. 276.

107. Ldw. Brig. 427. 433.

175. Ldw. Brig. 503.

13. Bavarian Ldw. Brig. 409 f.

2. Guard Cav. Brig. 467. 504.

Inf. Regt. 24 89.

Inf. Regt. 91 543.

Res. Inf. Regt. 10 239.

Detachment Rüdtke 542.

Ldw.-Det. Nyenheim 90. 93. 99.

Pioneer (Gas) Regt. 81.

Fortresses:

Metz 66. 274. 660.

Strasbourg 660.

Air Forces 63 f. 71. 74. 90. 349. 374.

383. 385. 467. 473. 546. 621. 625.

Aviation Troops 63. 71. 104. 120. 127. 147.

169. 204. 223. 237. 270. 343 f. 346 f.

349. 352 f. 359. 361 f. 364. 374. 376.

381. 385. 406. 444. 520. 545. 607.

623 f.

Combat Squadron 1 of the O. S. L. 74.

95. 122. 127. 147. 347 f. 376.

Combat Squadron 2 of the O. S. L. 63. 71.

74. 95. 122. 127. 147. 501. 504.

522. 546.

Combat Squadron 4 of the O. S. L. 147.

Combat Squadron 5 of the O. S. L. 147.

Special Combat Group Boelke 147.

Flight Detachment 64. 237. 364. 375. 386. 623

625.

Airship Troops 63 f. 71. 74. 127. 170.

204. 237. 346. 375. 380. 386. 621 f.

Railway Corps 29. 64. 388. 600. 616.

625 f.

Motor Vehicle Corps 389. 616.

Naval Command (Chief of the Admiralty Staff)

14 ff. 21. 291 f. 306 ff. 416 f. 426. 432.

650. 658. 664 f.

Fleet 291. 306. 329. 415. 425. 430 f. 439.

615. 618 ff. 625. 650. 658. 663.

Submarine Fleet 291. 307 f. 416. 606. 611.

615. 620. 664.

Naval Airships 622.

Colonial Troops:

German East Africa 621.

Cameroon 620.

Austria-Hungary.

Army Command (Army High Command) 4 ff.

17 f. 20 f. 43. 302 f. 311. 314. 316.

424 ff. 440 ff. 450 f. 453 ff. 458 ff. 466.

468. 476 f. 480 f. 483 ff. 498. 502.

505 ff. 510 ff. 514. 516. 519. 523 ff.

545 ff. 550. 553. 556. 559 ff. 571 f.

577. 579 ff. 587 ff. 592. 599 f. 614 f.

634. 638. 643 ff. 649 ff. 653 f. 666.

671.

Army 45. 415. 417. 420. 424. 439. 442.

525. 528 ff. 534 ff. 543. 564. 566 f.

597. 639. 646. 658. 663 f. 675.

Command of the Eastern Front 439 ff. 450. 459.

483 f. 486 f. 489 f. 492 f. 507 f. 516 f.

518 f. 524 f. 527 f. 537. 550. 559. 565 f.

584. 597. 600.

Page: 699 keyno: 229

Troop Directory.

Command of the Southwest Front 18. 440. 442. 444 f. 454. 459. 461. 466. 478. 480. 485 ff. 489 f. 492 f. 524. 533. 537. 554. 559 ff. 569 ff. 574.

Army Group Böhm-Ermolli 425. 450. 452 f. 458. 462. 465. 483.

Army Group Archduke Eugen 488 f. 573 ff. 577 ff. 582 f. 587 ff.

Army Group Archduke Karl 508. 510 ff. 514. 523. 528. 535 ff. 546 ff. 550. 552 ff. 558 ff. 561. 600.

1st Army 425. 444. 450 ff. 455 f. 458. 461 ff. 465 f. 468 f. 477 f. 481 ff. 488. 498 ff. 504. 514 f. 539. 541. 552. 600. 603.

2nd Army 425. 450 f. 453. 456 f. 461. 468. 473. 475. 496. 516. 530. 532. 534 ff. 541. 544. 546 f. 550. 552 ff. 556. 565.

3rd Army 513. 547 f. 550 ff. 556 f. 565. 574 f. 577.

4th Army 425. 444. 462 f. 465 f. 468 ff. 473 ff. 477 f. 481. 500. 504. 515. 533. 541 ff.

5th Army 425. 572. 592 ff.

7th Army 425. 444. 450 f. 453 ff. 458. 460 f. 463 f. 480 ff. 488. 490 ff. 508 ff. 514. 523. 547 f. 551. 553.

10th Army (Army Group Rohr) 569. 572. 582.

11th Army 573 ff. 577 ff. 582. 588.

12th Army 510 ff. 547.

Territorial Defense Command in Tyrol 569. 571 ff.

Troops in Albania 486. 533. 596.

I Corps 547. 565. 575. 579. 582. 588.

II Corps 457. 461 ff. 467. 469. 473. 477. 500 f. 542. 544. 546.

III Corps 575. 577 ff.

IV Corps 534.

V Corps 534.

VI Corps 463 f. 479. 513. 547 f. 552.

VIII Corps 488. 511. 513. 547. 565. 575. 577 ff.

IX Corps 513. 547. 552.

X Corps 451 f. 456 f. 462 f. 465 ff. 541 f.

XI Corps 484. 500. 509. 512. 547. 554.

XII Corps 425. 440. 445. 512. 517. 520 ff. 534. 560 f.

XIII Corps 451. 455. 458. 461. 463 f. 513. 547 f.

XVII Corps 575. 577. 579.

XVIII Corps 488. 534.

XX Corps 575. 577 ff. 582.

XXI Corps 575. 577.

Corps (Group) Fath 450. 456. 458. 463. 467. 473 ff. 477. 500 ff. 507 f. 542. 544 ff. 555.

Corps Hofmann 513. 547.

Corps Surmay 451. 455 ff. 462. 465. 467. 542. 544.

Group Benigni 463 f. 480. 485. 511.

Group Jachy 480. 485. 547 f. 551.

Group Korda f. XI Corps.

Group Koslat 534.

Group Krauß 547. 551.

Cav. Corps Brudermann 512. 547.

Cav. Corps Hauer 450. 458. 463. 467. 473. 500 ff. 508. 543. 557.

Cav. Corps Leonhardi 499. 542.

Cav. Corps Ostermann 473. 475. 478.

2nd Inf. Div. 452. 542.

3rd Inf. Div. 441. 581.

4th Inf. Div. 451. 542.

5th Inf. Div. 450. 547.

6th Inf. Div. 451. 458. 475. 498 ff. 503 ff. 514. 542.

7th Inf. Div. 581.

8th Inf. Div. 579.

9th Inf. Div. 547.

10th Inf. Div. 441.

11th Inf. Div. 450. 453. 456. 542.

12th Inf. Div. 547.

13th Inf. Div. 443. 450. 452 f. 542.

15th Inf. Div. 455. 547.

16th Inf. Div. 425. 517. 521. 562.

19th Inf. Div. 547.

20th Inf. Div. 510. 547.

21st Inf. Div. 510. 534. 547.

24th Inf. Div. 510. 534. 547.

25th Inf. Div. 450 ff. 455. 462.

26th Inf. Div. 450. 547.

29th Inf. Div. 450. 457. 461 ff. 465. 467. 473. 475 ff. 487. 541 ff. 544.

30th Inf. Div. 450. 510. 547.

Page: 700 keyno: 230

Troop Directory.

32. Inf. Div. 547.

33. Inf. Div. 515. 541 f.

34. Inf. Div. 441. 513. 524. 547. 565.

35. Inf. Div. 425.

36. Inf. Div. 450. 547.

37. Inf. Div. 450. 547.

38. Inf. Div. 450. 547.

39. Inf. Div. 513. 547.

40. Inf. Div. 547 f. 551.

41. Inf. Div. 542.

42. Inf. Div. 510.

43. Inf. Div. 441.

44. Inf. Div. 488. 509 ff. 523. 547. 554.

559. 564. 579. 580.

45. Inf. Div. 488. 515. 542.

46. Inf. Div. 450. 453. 456 f. 461 f. 542.

47. Inf. Div. 488. 515. 542.

48. Inf. Div. 478. 485. 487 f. 498 f. 503 ff.

514 f. 542. 564. 580. 582.

51. Inf. Div. 510.

53. Inf. Div. 441. 542.

54. Inf. Div. 547.

55. Inf. Div. 547.

57. Inf. Div. 593.

58. Inf. Div. 593.

59. Inf. Div. 488. 509. 511. 523. 547. 565.

61. Inf. Div. 460 f. 466. 469. 473. 475.

478. 487 f. 499. 504 f. 564. 580. 582.

70. Inf. Div. 441. 451 f. 456. 542.

106. Lstk. Div. 541. 565.

1. Cav. Div. 543.

2. Cav. Div. 547.

3. Cav. Div. 510. 547 f.

4. Cav. Div. 450. 473. 504. 542.

5. Cav. Div. 510. 547.

6. Cav. Div. 510. 547.

7. Cav. Div. 473. 504 f.

8. Cav. Div. 510. 547.

9. Cav. Div. 543. 557.

10. Cav. Div. 450. 473. 475. 542.

21. Lstk. Mtn. Brig. 441.

28. Lstk. Mtn. Brig. 579.

Polish Legion 500 f. 542.

Air Forces 444. 473. 543.

Fleet 569.

Danube Flotilla 600.

Bulgaria (see also p. 705).

Army Command 302. 615. 634. 643.

Army 19. 43. 430. 596.

1st Army 43. 596 f. 601.

2nd Army 596. 601 f.

3rd Army 596.

Turkey (see also p. 705).

Army Command 4. 556. 599. 603 f. 609 f.

614 ff. 634. 643.

Army 17. 441. 524. 599. 603 f. 615.

1st Army 603.

2nd Army 604. 606 f. 609 ff.

3rd Army 604 ff. 609 ff.

4th Army 604. 610 f.

5th Army 603.

6th Army 604. 606 f. 609. 611.

II Corps 610.

III Corps 610.

IV Corps 610.

VI Corps 615.

XII Corps 612.

XIII Corps 608.

XV Corps 537. 550. 552. 554. 556. 565. 615.

XVI Corps 610.

XVIII Corps 608.

German Pasha Corps 610 ff.

Expedition Corps against the Suez Canal 610 ff.

3rd Div. 611. 613.

14th Div. 611.

19th Div. 565.

20th Div. 565.

Fleet 606. 609. 615 f.

Page: 701 keyno: 231

Troop Directory.

Belgium.

| Army 12. 47. 49. 52. 325. 335.

England.

War Ministry 110. 327.

Army Command (General Staff) 45 ff.

110. 138. 326 f. 329 f. 332. 334.

War Committee 334.

Supreme Command in France 32. 46 f.

49 f. 52 f. 109 f. 138. 325 ff. 331 ff.

356. 367. 377 f. 380.

Expeditionary Force 2. 4. 12. 29 f. 33. 40.

46 ff. 51 ff. 110. 301. 317. 325. 335.

380. 658. 663 f. 672 f. 675.

1st Army 49. 110. 325. 339.

2nd Army 49. 325. 339.

3rd Army 49. 110. 325. 339 f.

4th Army 325. 334. 339. 341. 356. 359.

Reserve Army 341. 356. 359.

III Corps 341. 370.

VIII Corps 341.

X Corps 341.

XIII Corps 341. 367. 370.

XV Corps 341. 367. 370.

I Australian Corps 370.

1st Inf. Div. 363.

2nd Inf. Div. 363.

3rd Inf. Div. 350.

4th Inf. Div. 350. 363.

7th Inf. Div. 350. 363.

8th Inf. Div. 350.

9th Inf. Div. 363.

18th Inf. Div. 350. 363.

21st Inf. Div. 350. 363.

25th Inf. Div. 363.

29th Inf. Div. 350.

30th Inf. Div. 350.

31st Inf. Div. 329. 350.

32nd Inf. Div. 350.

33rd Inf. Div. 350.

34th Inf. Div. 350.

39th Inf. Div. 327.

40th Inf. Div. 327.

41st Inf. Div. 327.

46th Inf. Div. 350.

48th Inf. Div. 350.

56th Inf. Div. 350.

2nd Australian Div. 329.

Kitchener Divisions 12. 40. 52. 340.

Territorial Divisions 327.

Australian Troops 53. 612.

Indian Troops 53.

Canadian Troops 53. 271.

Troops at Salonika for France, Army Sarrail.

Troops in Egypt 47. 53. 110. 327 ff.

610 ff.

Air Forces 340. 343 f. 375. 380 f. 623 f.

Fleet 406. 618 f.

Armored Cruiser "Hampshire" 620.

France.

War Minister 53. 333. 335.

Supreme Council of National Defense 47 f. 328.

Army Command, Supreme Command 24. 44 ff.

103 f. 107. 109 ff. 114. 120. 137 ff. 143.

146. 157. 180. 185. 194. 270. 278. 286.

317. 325 ff. 356. 367. 370. 372. 377.

419. 428. 437. 556. 576. 584.

Army 4. 11. 41. 44. 47. 53. 287 f.

301. 317. 327. 335. 337. 419. 570. 663.

671 ff. 673. 675.

Army Group North 49 ff. 110. 112. 138.

325. 333. 335.

Army Group Center 50. 52. 103 f. 106 ff.

110 f. 137 f. 157. 168. 180. 194. 325.

332 f.

Army Group East 50. 52. 106 f. 112. 138.

325. 333.

1st Army 50. 103.

2nd Army (Group Pétain) 52. 111. 113.

138 ff. 143. 146. 157. 168. 194. 208. 332.

Page: 702 keyno: 232

Troop Directory.

3rd Army 50. 52. 69. 103. 107. 138. 168. 325. 332 f.

4th Army 50. 168. 332.

5th Army 50. 107. 168. 332.

6th Army 50. 52. 110. 138. 325. 336. 338 f. 341. 350. 372.

7th Army 50. 52.

10th Army 49. 51. 110. 138. 281. 286. 325. 338 f. 357.

Sarrail Army (Eng.-Fr. Troops at Salonika) 45. 47. 327 ff. 336. 596. 598. 601 f.

Army Detachment Lorraine 50. 106.

Fortified Sector Belfort 50.

Fortified Sector Dunkirk (XXXVI Corps) 325.

Fortified Sector Verdun 50. 69. 103 ff. 111 ff. 194. 390 ff.

I Corps 81. 101. 107. 110. 112. 114. 140. 221.

II Corps 106. 114. 140.

III Corps 138.

V Corps 69.

VII Corps 78. 81. 87. 105. 115. 140. 370. 372.

VIII Corps 92.

IX Corps 138.

X Corps 69.

XI Corps 138.

XII Corps 138.

XIII Corps 110. 112. 220.

XIV Corps 138. 140.

XVII Corps 110. 138.

XX Corps 100 f. 106 ff. 111 f. 114. 122. 140. 220. 341. 367. 370. 372.

XXI Corps 112. 138. 140.

XXX Corps 53. 69. 106 f.

XXXII Corps 112. 140. 221.

XXXIII Corps 138. 140.

XXV Corps 341. 367.

XXXVI Corps 52. 325.

I Colonial Corps 341. 359. 367. 372.

I Cavalry Corps 333. 372.

Group Baret (XIV Corps) 140.

Group Balfourier (XX Corps) 114.

Group Bazelaire (VII Corps) 109. 113. 140. 220.

Group Chrétien (XXX Corps) 109.

Group Duchêne (II Corps) 109. 114. 140.

Group Guillaumat (I Corps) 113. 140. 221.

Group de Maistre (XXI Corps) 139 f.

1st Inf. Div. 101. 106. 113. 130. 140. 221.

2nd Inf. Div. 101. 106. 113 f. 140.

3rd Inf. Div. 106. 140.

4th Inf. Div. 106. 140.

5th Inf. Div. 106. 168. 171.

6th Inf. Div. 69.

7th Inf. Div. 69.

8th Inf. Div. 69.

9th Inf. Div. 69.

10th Inf. Div. 69.

11th Inf. Div. 220. 350.

12th Inf. Div. 69.

13th Inf. Div. 130. 139 f.

14th Inf. Div. 78. 81. 87. 91 f. 100. 106. 108 f. 112. 114 f.

16th Inf. Div. 92. 100. 106 ff. 140.

17th Inf. Div. 110. 138.

19th Inf. Div. 69. 106. 108 f. 140. 208. 213.

20th Inf. Div. 69.

22nd Inf. Div. 221.

25th Inf. Div. 112. 140. 213. 220.

26th Inf. Div. 112. 140. 208. 215. 220.

27th Inf. Div. 139 f.

28th Inf. Div. 130. 140.

29th Inf. Div. 105. 109. 113. 140. 208. 215. 220.

34th Inf. Div. 220.

37th Inf. Div. 87. 91. 100. 106 f. 109. 112 f. 115.

38th Inf. Div. 53.

39th Inf. Div. 106. 108 f. 112 f. 122. 140. 220. 222. 350.

40th Inf. Div. 138. 140. 213. 221.

42nd Inf. Div. 106. 112. 138. 140. 221.

43rd Inf. Div. 139 f.

48th Inf. Div. 97. 100. 106 ff. 113. 125.

51st Inf. Div. 69 f. 76 ff. 80. 87. 91. 97. 105 ff. 112 f. 115. 122. 278.

52nd Inf. Div. 138.

58th Inf. Div. 53.

59th Inf. Div. 106. 140. 221.

64th Inf. Div. 350.

67th Inf. Div. 78. 81. 91 f. 97. 105. 109. 113. 140. 208.

Page: 703 keyno: 233

Troop Directory.

68th Inf. Div. 106. 112. 114. 122. 140.

69th Inf. Div. 106.

70th Inf. Div. 140.

72nd Inf. Div. (Main Reserve Verdun) 69.

74. 78. 80. 87. 92. 97. 105 ff. 115. 122. 278.

76th Inf. Div. 106. 220.

77th Inf. Div. 140.

120th Inf. Div. 112. 114. 130. 139 f.

126th Inf. Div. 106.

131st Inf. Div. 69.

132nd Inf. Div. 69. 92. 97. 105 ff. 114. 140.

152nd Inf. Div. 69.

153rd Inf. Div. 97. 100. 106. 108 f. 112. 114. 125. 140. 223.

2nd Kol. Div. 350.

3rd Kol. Div. 350.

Marolt. Div. 87. 92. 97.

Det. Deligny 112.

Territorial Troops 52 f. 69. 92. 105 f. 333.

106th Territ. Div. 69.

31st Inf. Brig. 106. 108 f. 112. 114.

32nd Inf. Brig. 114.

38th Inf. Brig. 109. 113.

95th Inf. Brig. 113 f.

96th Inf. Brig. 113.

101st Inf. Brig. 112.

102nd Inf. Brig. 112.

211th Territ. Brig. 114.

212th Territ. Brig. 114.

Air Forces 53. 74. 107. 169 f. 340. 343. 375. 380 f. 622 f.

Fortresses:

Belfort 10. 22 f. 275. 656.

Epinal 64.

Nancy 64. 74. 275.

Paris 621.

Toul 64.

Verdun 10 ff. 18 f. 21 ff. 32. 37 ff. 54 ff. 103 ff. 262 ff. 277. 284 ff. 293. 296. 303 ff. 308 ff. 312. 315. 318 f. 324.

Forts:

Belleville 55. 186. 200. 393.

Belrupt 55. 95.

Bois Bourrus 55. 207.

La Chaume 55.

Douaumont 28. 55. 87 ff. 94. 96. 102. 113 f. 121 f. 124 ff. 129. 131. 133. 143. 146. 151. 157. 161. 163 f. 166. 173. 186. 213. 260. 304. 311. 313.

Génicourt 55.

Haudainville 55.

Marre 139. 207.

St. Michel 55. 95. 186. 190.

Moulainville 55. 189. 199 f.

Rozellier 55. 95.

Souville 55. 94. 98. 116. 132 f. 142. 150. 159. 166. 177. 181. 186 f. 189 f. 193 ff. 199 ff. 260. 266 f. 269. 278. 318 f. 391 ff. 396 f. 399 ff. 413. 421.

Tavannes 55. 116. 132. 142. 148. 150. 159. 186 ff. 195 f. 199 f. 266. 287. 319. 393.

Troyon 57.

Vacherauville 207. 222.

Baur 55. 94. 98. 101. 114. 124. 126. 129. 135 ff. 139. 146. 150. 152. 158 ff. 166 ff. 175. 177 ff. 195. 303. 336.

Camp des Romains 55.

St. Mihiel 55.

Intermediate Works:

Bezonvaux 55 f. 94. 113.

Charny 55. 139.

Châtillon 55.

Froide Terre 187. 189 f. 193 f. 200. 318. 393.

Germonville 55.

Hardaumont 113 f. 131.

Laufee 114. 136. 148. 152. 181. 190. 199 ff. 285. 392. 394. 397. 399. 401.

Thiaumont 94. 98. 123. 128. 132 f. 136. 142. 145. 148. 150. 158 f. 166 f. 173 f. 177 f. 181 f. 192 ff. 196 f. 266 f. 285. 287. 391 ff. 395 f. 397. 401.

Page: 704 keyno: 234

Troop Directory.

Italy (see also p. 705).

Army Command 46 f. 325 f. 328. 568. 570. 572. 576 f. 583 ff. 589. 591 ff.

Army 4. 7. 9. 336. 448. 486. 568 f. 571. 586. 588. 666.

1st Army 568. 576 f. 583 f. 586. 589 ff.

2nd Army 568.

3rd Army 568. 570. 585. 591 ff.

4th Army 568. 573.

5th Army 584 ff. 588 f.

Troops in Albania 596.

X Corps 583.

XIV Corps 583.

XX Corps 581.

32nd Inf. Div. 581.

33rd Inf. Div. 577.

34th Inf. Div. 577.

35th Inf. Div. 577.

37th Inf. Div. 577.

Russia.

Army Command 45 ff. 325 f. 329. 335. 428 ff. 445 ff. 470 f. 486. 494 ff. 538 f. 549. 576. 584. 660.

Army 4. 7. 9. 424. 326. 336. 428. 430. 438. 444. 495. 497. 564. 567. 648. 654. 658 ff. 674.

Army Group North Front 429 ff. 445 ff. 471. 489. 496. 522. 538.

Army Group Southwest Front 429. 431. 445 ff. 469 ff. 486. 489 ff. 494 ff. 538 f. 549.

Army Group West Front 429. 431 ff. 445 ff. 470 ff. 489. 494 ff. 517. 520. 538 f. 549.

Army Reserve 431. 448. 496.

1st Army 429. 432 f. 446 f.

2nd Army 427. 429. 432 f. 555.

3rd Army 429. 432. 496. 496 f. 517. 538 ff.

4th Army 549. 555.

5th Army 429. 432. 496. 520. 555.

6th Army 429. 432.

7th Army 429. 448. 469 ff. 496 f. 539 f. 547. 549.

8th Army 429. 432. 496 ff. 494 ff. 538 ff.

9th Army 429. 448. 469 ff. 496 f. 539 f. 547 ff.

10th Army 429. 432.

11th Army 429. 448 f. 469 ff. 497. 505. 538 ff. 546. 553.

12th Army 429. 432. 522.

Special Army 538 ff. 549. 555.

Dobrudja Army 561.

Caucasus Army 429. 431. 442. 604. 609.

I Guards Corps 432. 435. 438. 444. 446. 496. 515. 518 ff. 538. 540 f. 543 ff.

II Guards Corps 432. 435. 438. 444. 446. 496. 515. 518 ff. 538. 540 f. 543 ff.

Grenadier Corps 494. 517.

I Corps 427. 495 f. 498. 540 f.

II Corps 494. 540.

III Corps 486. 496. 539 f. 545.

V Corps 427. 496. 539 f.

VI Corps 449. 471. 540.

VII Corps 540.

VIII Corps 444. 449. 451. 454. 466. 472. 540.

XI Corps 449. 540.

XII Corps 449. 522. 540.

XIV Corps 433.

XV Corps 427.

XVI Corps 540.

XVII Corps 540.

XVIII Corps 471. 540.

XX Corps 427.

XXI Corps 562.

XXII Corps 540.

XXIII Corps 448. 471 ff. 476. 496. 540. 543.

XXIV Corps 427. 486.

XXV Corps 427.

XXVII Corps 427.

keyno: 235

Troop Directory.

XXX Corps 466. 472. 540.

XXXI Corps 496. 540.

XXXII Corps 449. 451. 471. 473. 540.

XXXIII Corps 540.

XXXVII Corps 562.

XXXIX Corps 449. 466. 472. 475. 540. 543.

XXXX Corps 449. 451. 466. 472. 475. 540.

XXXXI Corps 540.

XXXXIII Corps 562.

XXXXV Corps 471. 473. 497. 540.

XXXXVI Corps 472. 476. 540.

I Caucasian Corps 604.

IV Caucasian Corps 604.

V Caucasian Corps 609.

I Siberian Corps 427. 539 f. 555.

II Siberian Corps 562.

III Siberian Corps 427.

IV Siberian Corps 427. 539 f. 545.

V Siberian Corps 448 f. 470 ff. 476. 486 f. 496. 498. 539 f.

VI Siberian Corps 562.

VII Siberian Corps 562.

I Turkestan Corps 495 f. 498 f. 540. 555.

II Turkestan Corps 604.

Sujeski Corps 540.

Guards Cavalry Corps 496. 540. 543.

I Cavalry Corps 540.

3rd Cavalry Corps 540.

4th Cavalry Corps 449. 472. 540.

5th Cavalry Corps 472. 543.

I Caucasian Cavalry Corps 605.

1st Guards Infantry Division 515. 543.

2nd Guards Infantry Division 543.

3rd Guards Infantry Division 515. 543.

Guards Rifle Division 543.

14th Infantry Division 543.

20th Infantry Division 543.

53rd Infantry Division 543.

78th Infantry Division 496.

102nd Infantry Division 543.

108th Infantry Division 496.

113th Infantry Division 449. 472. 496.

117th Infantry Division 496.

125th Infantry Division 543.

126th Infantry Division 449. 471.

2nd Rifle Division 543.

4th Rifle Division 543.

2nd Finnish Rifle Division 449. 471.

4th Finnish Rifle Division 449.

Siberian Cossack Division 522.

Russian Troops in France 408.

Russian Troops at Salonika 429.

Polish Rifle Brigade 430. 494.

Serbian Volunteer Division 430.

Czechoslovak Rifle Brigade.

Air Forces 443.

Baltic Fleet 429 f.

Black Sea Fleet 429. 607.

Battleship "Imperatiza 615.

Serbia (see also p. 705.)

Army Command 46 f.

Army 326. 329. 336. 596. 601.

Greece (see also p. 705.)

IV Corps 601 f.

V Corps 601 f.

Page: 706 keyno: 236

Troop Directory.

Miscellaneous.

Egypt 3. 45. 47. 53. 110. 327 ff. 610 ff. 615.

Albania 326. 329. 430. 440. 568 f. 584. 596.

Arabia 604. 609. 612 f. 615.

Bulgaria 12. 15. 48. 430. 482. 527. 549. 597. 617. 642. 648.

Dardanelles (Gallipoli) 44. 47. 603. 615. 655. 668.

Greece 4. 18. 20. 44. 47. 597 ff. 601. 617.

India 3. 605.

Iraq 3. 603 ff. 612. 615.

Italy 5 ff. 20. 44 f. 47. 325. 329. 335. 415. 420. 428. 438 f. 441. 445. 447 f. 459 f. 488. 490 f. 493. 495. 512. 568 ff. 643. 653. 658. 663 ff. 667 f.

Japan 44. 329.

Libya 584. 586.

Montenegro 440. 460. 523.

Poland:

Polish Legions in the Austro-Hungarian Army 417.

Polish Rifle Brigade in the Russian Army 430. 494.

Persia 3. 603. 605 ff.

Portugal 329. 617.

Romania 3. 8. 20 f. 44. 47 f. 326. 415. 420. 428. 430. 439. 441. 481 f. 491. 495. 510. 524. 528. 530. 563. 537 f. 547 ff. 552 f. 558 f. 563. 566 f. 596 ff. 614 f. 617. 625. 632. 640. 643 f. 648. 666. 667 f. 676.

Salonika 4. 17 ff. 44 ff. 302. 327 ff. 335. 429 f. 569. 596. 598. 601. 666 ff.

Sweden 48. 431.

Serbia 44. 329. 428. 430. 460. 655. 671. 676.

Turkey 3 f. 45. 415. 439. 441. 598 f. 603 ff. 648. 655. 663. 676.

United States of America 15 f. 21. 291 f. 305 ff. 417. 617. 664.

Submarine War 14 ff. 21 f. 283. 290 ff. 305 ff. 312. 415 ff. 524. 617 f. 620. 634. 638. 664 f.

"Suffex" Case 417.

Economic Blockade 329 ff. 415. 619 f. 631 ff. 650. 657. 668.

Page: 99 keyno: 237

keyno: 238

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German and Enemy Artillery at Verdun and the Somme 1916.

Caliber 6.8—9.9 cm

Caliber 10—14.9 cm

Gunfire

Position Fire

Gunfire

Position Fire

French

British

French

British

French

British

French

British

1. Battle of Verdun. German Offensive from Feb 21 to Mar 20.

French Offensive (Front at Cumières) from Mar 6 to Mar 20.

1. Status: Feb 21.

Total

Further Shellfire (Northern Attack Strikes)

2. Status: Jun 28. French Offensive (Front at Souville) from Jul 6 to Jul 20.

Status: Jul 1.

Total

Further Shellfire (Northern Attack Strikes)

II. Beginning of the Somme

Status: Jun 30. (Front section Fricourt)

Status: Jul 1.

Total

Further Shellfire (Northern Attack Strikes)

Caliber 15—19 cm

Caliber over 20 cm

Gunfire

Position Fire

Gunfire

Position Fire

French

British

French

British

French

British

French

British

Total

and Vol. IV, 2, Annex 2, p. 758 ff. (Annexe 1895); the figures for I, 2; Vol. X, 1, p. 889 and Vol. IV, 2, p. 213; the figures (German mortars) are not included. \* For the can. de 15.5 (long = Schneider) and can. de 15.5 (short = Schneider) are missing. — The sources: "Business p. T." "Construction n. T." "Written (unpublished)" "Report of the Gun Staff (frz.)" The considerable loss of guns since Jun 25, 1916, is contemptible, as the extent of the guns is not ascertainable. — \* Guns that remained fixed on the German front (approx. 75 mm and above).

keyno: 243

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World War 1914–1918. Tenth Volume.

On the Attack on Verdun.

Directory

of the General Commands and Divisions deployed from February 12 to August 28 on the battlefield from Avocourt to the Côtes Lorraines (southeast of Verdun), their replacements, relocations, and losses.

The divisions marked with \*) had four, the others three infantry regiments.

The loss figures are taken from the compilations of the O. H. L. The information in the files of the divisions and troop units deviates significantly from this in part. For the west bank, the losses are only given up to June 20.

keyno: 245

Association | previously (Army) | to (Army) | relieves | deployed in section | Command takeover | Infantry deployed | Losses Off.-Men | relieved by | after relief to | further use (Army)

1. East Bank (West Bank see No. 53 ff.)

1. Gen. Command VII. Res. K. (Gen. of Inf. von Zwehl) | 5. | Army Res. | takes over subsection V. Res. K. | Section A | 7.2. | - | until 11.3. | - | permanently deployed | Parts of 14. Res. Div. | - | -

2. 77th Inf. Brig. (Mixed, von Dewitz) from V. Res. K. | Position troops since autumn 1914 with 5th Army | Forest of Consenvoye Côte de Talou, from 14.3. at Fort Vaux | until 11.3. with V.R.K., from 14.3. again in V.R.K. | until 11.3., 42—1612; further losses before Verdun are included in the 10th and 9th Res. Div. | - | - | -

3. 14th Res. Div. (Genlt. Loes) | Army Res. | 5. | Parts of 77th Inf. Brig. and 10th Res. Div. | Haumont Forest | 7.2. | 7.2.—23.2. | 116—5482 | permanently deployed | 77th Inf. Brig. | - | -

4. 13th Res. Div. (Gen. of Cav. von Kühne) | - | 5. | Parts of 10th Res. Div. | Pfeffer Ridge Haumont Forest Côte de Talou, from 7.3. at Pfeffer Ridge—Albain Forest | 28.2. | from 28.2. | 7.2. | 7.2.—6.3. | 141—5929 | permanently deployed | - | -

5. Gen. Command XVIII. A. K. (Gen. of Inf. von Schenck) | - | 5. | takes over subsection V. Res. K. | Section B | 7.3. | from 7.3. | - | - | Gen. Command X. Res. K. | Charncey (Res. of the 5th Army) | Verdun (5th Army) from 12.4. (see No. 26)

6. 21st Inf. Div. (Genlt. von Oven) | - | 5. | Parts of 10th Res. Div. | Caure Forest Pfeffer Ridge Albain Forest | 12.2. | 12.2.—28.2. | 171—5964 | 14th Res. Div. | Beaumont—Caure Forest | - | -

7. 25th Inf. Div. (Genlt. Kühne) | - | 5. | Parts of 10th Res. Div. | Caure Forest Albain Forest Ridge west of Douaumont village | 3.3. | 2.3.—11.3. | 11.2. | 11.2.—8.3. | 132—4827 | 25th Inf. Div. | Stfl. Longuyon, Res. of the 5th Army | Verdun (5th Army) from 8.4. (see No. 27)

8. Gen. Command III. A. K. (Gen. of Inf. von Lochow) | - | 5. | takes over subsection V. Res. K. | Section C | 11.2. | - | - | Gen. Command X. Res. K. | Strasbourg, Army Res. | Verdun (5th Army) from 16.4. (see No. 26)

keyno: 246

No. | Unit | previously (Army) | to (Army) | relieves | deployed in section | Command takeover | Infantry deployed | Losses Officers-Men | relieved by | after relief at | further use (Army)

9. | 5th Inf. Div. (Genlt. Wichura) | Army Ref. | 5. | Parts 10th Res. Div. | Forest of Ville— Douaumont Village | 11.2. | 10.2.—16.3. | 121—5084 | 113th Inf. Div. | Saarbrücken, Army Ref. | Verdun (5th Army) from 28.4. (fr. 32nd Army)

10. | 5th Inf. Div. (Genlt. Herbut von Rohden) | — | 5. | Parts 10th Res. Div. | Herbebois—Fort Douaumont— Caillette Forest | 11.2. | 11.2.—16.3. | 143—5899 | 58th (Bavarian) Inf. Div. and parts of 121st Inf. Div. | Upper Alsace (Mulhouse), Army Ref. | Verdun (5th Army) from 27.4. (fr. 32nd Army)

11. | Gen. Cmd. V. Res. K. (Gen. b. Inf. von Gündell) | Position troops since autumn 1914 with 5th Army | — | — | East bank of the Meuse to south of Etain, from 12.2. between section C and D | — | — | — | Corps section divided between Gen. Cmd. X. R. and XV. A. R. | — | Upper Alsace (Mulhouse), Army Ref.

12. | 10th Res. Div. (Gen. d. Inf. von Bassewitz, b. 4. A. d. Genlt. Oellmer) | Position troops since autumn 1914 with 5th Army | — | — | From the Meuse to Bois des Hayes, later Gemilly— Bois des Hayes— Fort Vaux | — | until early April, parts until 15.5. | 102—5238 | XV. A. R. 9. R. D., 50th Inf. Div. | Champagne (3rd Army) from 15.6.

13. | 9th Res. Div. (Gen. d. Inf. von Guretzky-Cornitz) | Position troops since autumn 1914 with 5th Army | — | — | Cilla Forest to south of Etain, later Epine Frne.— Bagy Forest— Fort Vaux Section D | — | until 16.4. | 98—4773 | 50th Inf. Div. | Lower Alsace (Buchsweiler), Army Ref. | Champagne (3rd Army) from 15.6.

14. | Gen. Cmd. XV. A. K. (Gen. b. Inf. von Deimling) | Army Ref. | 5. | takes over sub-section V. Res. K. | — | 21.2. | — | — | — | permanently deployed | —

15. | 30th Inf. Div. (Genmaj. von Gontard) | — | 5. | Parts 9th Res. Div. | Baby Forest— Argonne Muln, later Feuill. Forest—south Er | 21.2. | — | 174—7474 | — | permanently deployed | —

16. | 39th Inf. Div. (Genlt. von Bertrab) | — | 5. | Parts 9th Res. Div. | Argonne Muln (balanced)—Etain— Marcy, later north- east Moulinville— Chattanc—Forest | 21.2. | from 21.2. | 116—4882 | — | permanently deployed | —

17. | Gen. Cmd. V. A. R. (Genlt. Eduard von Below) | Position troops since autumn 1914 with A. L. Strantz | — | — | East and Southeast front Verdun— Brionville— Cocon—Forest; from 8.3. Forest of Manheulles— Fresnes— Combes Height— Lecomte Forest | — | — | — | — | permanently deployed | —

keyno: 247

No. | Unit | previously to (Army) | to (Army) | relieves | since Autumn 1914 | deployed in section | command takeover | infantry deployed | losses officers-men | relieved by | after relief to | further use (Army)

18. | 5th Landwehr Div. (Lt. Gen. Auler) | | | | | Bonvillers—Saulx en Woevre, later Manheulles—Combres-Höhe (excluded) | 26. 2. | until 31. 7. | 95—2439 | troops of neighboring sections | A. A. Strantz southern front from 3. 8.

19. | Bavarian Reserve Div. (Lt. Gen. Ritter von Graaf † 3. 7., from 5. 3. Lt. Gen. von Kieshauer) | Army reserve | A. A. Strantz | right wing 5th Landwehr Div. | Braquis, from 28. 2. south of Wartonville—Manheulles (excluded) | from 26. 2. | from 26. 2. | 147—5943 | permanently deployed | | 7th Army, from 6. 5.

20. | 113th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Wienstowski) | | | | | Douaumont village | 11. 3. | 3. 3.—12. 4. | 104—3072 | 25th Inf. Div. | la Fère—Chauny | 5th Army (right wing), from 15. 7.

21. | Gen. Command X. Reserve Corps (Lt. Gen. Koch) | West bank (K. No. 59) | 5. | Gen. Command III. A. K. and XVIII. A. K. | Douaumont village and fort—Saillette forest Albain forest | 16. 3. | 16. 3. | 96—5690 | 1st Inf. Div. | Metz | 2nd Army, from 20. 5.

22. | 121st Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. Wagner) | Army reserve | 5. | parts of 6th G. D. and parts of 10th R. D. | southwest slope Hartamont—Fort Vaur | 11. 3. | 11. 3.—20. 4. | | 21st Inf. Div. | north of Rethel | 3rd Army, from 2. 5.

23. | 58th (fasc.) Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. von Gersdorff) | | | | | Fort Douaumont—Saillette forest Albain forest—northeast Fort Vaur | 16. 3. | 16. 3.—8. 4. | 61—2830 | Gen. Command III. A. K. | | 3rd XVI. A. K. back

24. | Attack Group East (Gen. b. Inf. von Mudra from XVI. A. K. with command staff) | Argonne | 5. | takes command over X. R. K. and V. R. K. | Albain forest—Douaumont village (excluded) | 19. 3. | | | 25th Reserve Div. | | 5th Army (Argonne) from 5. 7.

25. | 19th Reserve Div. (Lt. Gen. von Wartenberg) | Army reserve | 5. | 6th Inf. Div. | Douaumont village and fort—Saillette forest | 21. 3. | 20. 3.—4. 7. | 262—11880 | 25th Reserve Div. | | 7th Army, from 17. 5.

26. | Gen. Command XVIII. A. R. (Gen. b. Inf. von Schenck) | Army reserve (K. No. 5) | | | | 12. 4. (leadership of attack preparations from 8. 4.) | | | Gen. Command X. R. K. | Marchais |

27. | 27th Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. von Oven) | Army reserve (K. No. 6) | 5. | 58th Inf. Div. | Saillette forest—Priesen gorge south of Douaumont village and fort | 8. 4. | 7. 4.—26. 4. | 108—3559 | 6th Inf. Div. | Eisonne | 7th Army, from 17. 5.

28. | 28th Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. Kühne) | Army reserve (K. No. 3) | 5. | 113th Inf. Div. | Vaur village and fort, Damloup | 12. 4. | 11. 4.—28. 4. | 22—1210 | 5th Inf. Div. | Laon |

29. | 50th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Engelbrechten) | | | | | from 14. 4. | | | | | 5th Army, from 15. 7.

keyno: 248

No. | Unit | previously to (Army) | to (Army) | relieves | deployed in section | command takeover | infantry deployed | losses officers-men | relieved by | after relief to | further use (Army)

30. | Attack Group East — Gen. Kdo. III. A. K. (Gen. d. Inf. von Lochow) | Army Reserve (for Ar. 9) | 5. | Attack Group East, Gen. d. Inf. von Mudra | Albain-Wald—northeast Fort Vaux, later B. 33. Thiaumont—Fleury Montagne—Ridge Southwest Slope Har- Douaumont, later Fumin | 16.4. | 20.4. | 222—10773 | 21. Res. Div. | near and northwest Briey | Assault Eng. Assault Btn. 4 and 2.8.

31. | 1st Inf. Div. (Genlt. von Conta) | Army Reserve | 5. | 121st Inf. Div. | 20.4. | 18.4.—17.7. | 88—3383 | 7th Res. Div. | Pierrepont | Champagne (3rd Army) from 6.6.

32. | 6th Inf. Div. (Genlt. Herbut von Bitten) | Army Reserve (for Ar. 10) | 5. | 21st Inf. Div. | Northern part Caillette- Forest—Ridge- Gorge | 27.4. | 26.4.—28.5. | 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div. | Ham sur Heure, Ma- chingen, Valenciennes | Somme (1st Army) from 18.7.

33. | 5th Inf. Div. (Genlt. Wichura) | Army Reserve (for Ar. 9) | 5. | 25th Inf. Div. | south Douf and Fort Douaumont | 28.4. | 27.4.—25.5. | 97—5015 | 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div. | on 23.7. back to 5th Replacement Div.

34. | 6th Replacement Brig. (Genlt. Dame, from 2.7. Colonel Pellius; from 6th Replacement Div.) | A. A. Strantz | 5. | Parts of the 19th Res. Div. | of the 19th Res. Div.; in July also in the section of the 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div. | 10.5.—30.5. | (10.5.—5.7.: 81—3211; included in the losses of the 19th Res. and 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div.) | Command of the Alpine Corps (15. 7.) | 28.6.—5.7.

35. | Gen. Kdo. I. Bavarian A. K. (Gen. d. Inf. Ritter von Rylander) | 6. | takes over right section X. Res. K. | West-East Gorge— Fort Douaumont | 24.5. | 23.5.—15.6. and (in the section of the 1st Bavarian Inf. Div.) 26.6.—10.7. (15.—25.6. rest) | Alpine Corps (15. 6.) | 5th Army (right wing) from 2.7.

36. | 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div. (Genlt. von Tzark) | 6. | 5th Inf. Div. | Fort Douaumont | 25.5. | 25.5.—26.6. | 192—9177 | 4th Inf. Div. (15. 7.) | 11.7.—15.7. (26.6.—10.7. rest)

37. | 1st Bavarian Inf. Div. (Genlt. Albert Ritter von Schoch) | 6. | left wing of the 19th Res. Div. | Albain Ridge | 25.5. | 25.5.—26.6. | 181—6462 | 103rd Inf. Div. | northwest Briey | 5th Army (right wing) from 2.7.

38. | 37th Res. Div. (Genlt. d. Inf. Graf von Schwerin) | Army Reserve | 5. | 6th Inf. Div. | Caillette Forest | 28.5. | 28.5.—23.6. | 114—4814 | 6th Bavarian Inf. Div. | Etang— Mouzon and Longuyon | 5th Army (Argonne) from 14.8.

39. | Alpine Corps \*) (Genlt. Krafft von Dell- mensingen; from 15.7. i. V. Genmaj. Ritter von Tutschek) | 6. | 2nd Bavarian Inf. Div. | Froide Terre Ridge —Westland Caillette Forest | 15.6. | 6.6.—19.7. (Parts also in August) | 276—13130

Page: 32 keyno: 249

40. 1st Bavarian Infantry Brigade (Major General Baron von Lautzhoeus; from 6th Bavarian Infantry Division)

103rd Infantry Division (Lt. Gen. von Klotz)

25th Reserve Division (Major General von Mohn)

Command of the Alpine Corps (Lt. Gen. Krafft von Dellmensingen)

4th Infantry Division\*) (Major General Freyer)

General Command XVIII Reserve Corps (General of Infantry von Steuben)

21st Reserve Division\*) (Major General Briese)

6th Bavarian Infantry Division\*) (Lt. Gen. Ritter von Höhn)

Guard Infantry Division\*) (Lt. Gen. von Larisch)

14th Infantry Division (Major General von Derßen)

33rd Infantry Division\*) (Lt. Gen. Wollstett)

34th Infantry Division\*) (Major General Rauchenberger)

56th Infantry Division (Lt. Gen. Schmiedecke)

2. West Bank (only for the major battle period until mid-June)

General Command VI Reserve Corps (General of Infantry von Gößler)

2nd Bavarian Division\*) (General of Artillery Frantz)

11th Reserve Division (Lt. Gen. von Herzberg)

12th Reserve Division (Major General von Kehler)

previously (Army) to (Army) is from deployed in section

A. A. Strantz 5. of the I Bavarian Army Corps

3. Argonne 5. 5. 7th Reserve Division

5. 5. 19th Reserve Division

5. 5. General Command I Bavarian Army Corps

5. 5. 1st Bavarian Infantry Division

5. 5. General Command X Reserve Corps

5. 5. 1st Infantry Division

5. 5. Alpine Corps

5. 5. 103rd Infantry Division

5. 5. 4th Infantry Division

5. 5. 6th Bavarian Infantry Division

5. 5. Guard Replacement Division

5. 5. 14th Infantry Division

West Bank (see No. 71) newly established Argonne

5. 5. 6th Bavarian Infantry Division

5. 5. Guard Replacement Division

5. 5. 14th Infantry Division

Losses Officers-Men replaced by after replacement for further use (Army)

22.6.—10.7. (22.6.—10.7.: 67—2851; included in the losses are the Alpine Corps and the 1st and 2nd Bavarian Infantry Divisions) 110—4379 61—2150 Guard Replacement Division — 5th Army (West Bank)

23.6. 23.6.—23.7. from 1.7. 136—5612 (until 10.8.) 14th Infantry Division — 5th Army (West Bank)

15.7. 9.7.—5.8. 139—6437 127—5038 33rd Infantry Division — 5th Army (right wing)

15.7. from 16.7. 84—3578 14th Bavarian Infantry Division Mouzon—Stenay A. A. Strantz from 1.9.

17.7. 18.7.—8.8. 95—3230 34th Infantry Division — 5th Army (West Bank)

23.7. 18.7.—20.8. 74—2955 96—1226 14th Infantry Division — from 9.8.

5.8. 29.7.—25.8. 26—965 — from 21.8.

permanent until 12.5. 59—2440 181—5958 54th Infantry Division Cambrai Somme (2nd Army) from 2.7.

until 12.5. 170—6261 4th Infantry Division Diedenhofen — Somme (2nd Army) from 1.7.

keyno: 250

keyno: 251

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keyno: 252

Appendix

The World War 1914–1918. Tenth Volume.

On the Battle of the Somme 1916.

List

of the General Commands and Divisions deployed on the battlefield from July 1 to the end of August,

their replacements, movements, and losses.

The divisions marked with \*\*) had four, the others and also the listed brigades had three infantry regiments.

keyno: 253

Page: 22 keyno: 254

No. | Unit | previously to | relieves: | entrenched | Infantry | relieved by | Change | after | Losses: | Further

| (Army) | (Army) | in the section | entrenched: | of the staffs on: | relief at: | Offz.-M. | Use

| | | | | | | | | | (Army)

12. | Bavarian Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. Wurthardt) | Army ref. | 2., since 19.7.: | Parts of the 26th and 28th Res. Div. | Thiepval | 1.–23.7. | 117th Inf. Div. | 23.7. | Cambrai | 198–8427 | from 27.7.: St. Quentin

13. | 22nd Res. Div. (Gen. of Inf. Riemann) (see App. 2, Ar. 57) | 7. | 6. | Parts of the 121st Inf. Div. | Péronne | 1.–10.7. | Div. Liebert | 10.7. | St. Quentin | 69–3579 | from 24.7.: 7th Res. Div.

14. | 185th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Uthmann) | 3. | 2. | Parts of the 26th and 28th Res. Div. | Pozières | 1.–14.7. | Parts of the 183rd Inf. Div. | 14.7. | Le Cateau | 66–2788 | from 21.7.: 7th Res. Div.

15. | Div. Frentz (Maj. Gen. Frhr. Raitz von Frentz, 30th Res. F. A.) | 7. | 6. | Parts of the 121st Inf. Div. | Barleux | 1.–8.7. | 17th Inf. Div. | 8.7. | Athies | 57–2776 | from 19.7.: 7th Res. Div.

16. | Gen. Kdo. VI. R. K. (Gen. of Inf. von Goßler) (see App. 2, Ar. 53) | Army ref. | 2., since 19.7.: | inserted | Combles | 1.–30.7. | Gen. Kdo. XII. (fäch.) R. K. | 30.7. | Le Cateau | 124–5730 | from 30.7.: 7th Res. Div.

17. | 12th Res. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Kessler) (see App. 2, Ar. 56) | 6. | 6. | Parts of the 12th Inf. Div. | Guillemont | 1.–18.7. | 24th (fäch.) Res. Div. | 17.7. | St. Quentin | 96–3560 | from 26.7.: 7th Res. Div.

18. | 17th Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. von Hertzberg) | 7. | 6. | – | Maurepas | 3.–24.7. | 23rd (fäch.) Res. Div. | 26.7. | Noyon | 74–3472 | from 24.7.: 7th Res. Div. (2nd Wing)

19. | 24th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Altrock) (see App. 2, Ar. 64) | 6. | 6. | inserted | Étréés | 2.–11.7. | 18th Inf. Div. | 11.7. | Cambrai | 102–4406 | from 21.7.: 7th Res. Div.

20. | 3rd Guard Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Bünau) | 6. | 6. | Parts of the 28th Res. Div. | Bazentin | 1.–16.7. | 183rd and 8th Inf. Div. | 16.7. | St. Quentin | 126–4650 | from 21.7.: 7th Res. Div.

21. | 183rd Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Schjellerup) | 6. | 6. | inserted | Contalmaison | 1.–7.7. | 7th Inf. Div. | 14.7. | – | – | –

22. | Gen. Kdo. IX. A. K. (Gen. of Inf. von Quast) | 6. | 6. | – | Péronne | 5.7. | – | – | – | –

23. | 11th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. von Mindthoff) | 6. | 6. | Division Frentz | Barleux | 8.–28.7. | 1st Guard Res. Div. | 27.7. | Guise | 76–2560 | from 27.7.: 7th Res. Div.

24. | 18th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. Zlodz von Blottnik) | 6. | 6. | 44th Res. Div. | Étréés | 11.–27.7. | 1st Guard Inf. Div. | 26.7. | St. Quentin | 92–3159 | from 26.7.: 7th Res. Div.

25. | 123rd (fäch.) Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. Lucius) | 6. | 6. | inserted | Maurepas | 11.–27.7. | 8th Bavarian Res. Div. | 23.7. | Bohain | 101–4481 | from 24.7.: 7th Res. Div.

26. | Div. Liebert (Lt. Gen. von Liebert, 22nd Res. Div.) | 7. | 6. | 22nd Res. Div. | Péronne | 10.–22.7. | 28th Inf. Div. | 22.7. | St. Quentin | 64–2741 | from 21.7.: 7th Res. Div.

27. | 28th Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. Riedel) | 6. | 6. | – | Foureaux-Wald | 14.–24.7. | Gen. Kdo. IX. R. K. | 24.7. | Le Quesnoy | – | from 5.8.: 7th Res. Div.

28. | 8th Inf. Div. (Gen. of Inf. Ernst II. Duke of Saxe-Altenburg) | 6. | 6. | 183rd Inf. Div. | Martinpuich | 12.–25.7. | – | – | – | 139–5484 | –

29. | – | – | – | Parts of the 3rd Guard Inf. Div. | Flers | 15.–25.7. | – | – | – | 113–4107 | –

Page: XII keyno: 255

30. 24th (hächf.) Res. Div. (Maj. Gen. Morgenstern-Döring) 3. 2., since 19.7.: 1. 12th Res. Div. Guillemont 14.7.—1.8. 27th (württ.) Inf. Div. 1.8. Nauroy 149—5715 from 1.8.: Res. of from 19.8.: gradually 2nd Garde-Res. Div. deployed

31. Div. Dumath (Maj. Gen. Dumath, 29th Res. Inf. Br.) 7. 2. Parts of the 11th Inf. Div. Vermandovillers 17.—23.7. Div. Frande Div. Staff not deployed transferred 33—1140 from 21.7.: 7.

32. 5th Inf. Div. (Lt. Gen. Zülchura) (for Anl. 2., 9th Army) 6. 1. inserted Deville-Wald 20.7.—4.8. 26th (württ.) Inf. Div. 4.8. Cambrai 108—4242 from 4.8.: 3.

33. 117th Inf. Div. (Gen. of Inf. Runze) 3. 10th Bavarian Inf. Div. Courcellette 20.7.—10.8. 16th Inf. Div. 10.8. from 15.8.: East 55—3081 from 15.10.: 3.

34. 28th Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. Heidborn, from 19.8. Maj. Gen. Langer) 3. 2. Div. Liebert Péronne 20.7.—4.10. 11th Res. Div. and parts of the 29th Inf. Div. 4.10. with Staff 11th Res. Div. transferred 82—3353 from 5.10.: 3.

35. 8th Bavarian Res. Div.\*\* (Lt. Gen. Freih. von Stein) Gaede 7. 123rd (hächf.) Inf. Div. Maurepas 21.7.—16.8. 5th Bavarian Res. Div. 16.8. St. Quentin 103—6689 from 1.9.: 2. (St. wing)

36. Div. Frande (Maj. Gen. Frande, 63rd (hächf.) Inf. Brig.) 6. 2. Div. Dumath in the section of the 11th Inf. Div. (for No. 9) Soyecourt 23.7.—8.9. 11th Inf. Div. 8.9. transferred 89—4246 from 9.9.: 5.

37. 23rd (hächf.) Res. Div.\*\* (Lt. Gen. von Waboff) 3. 1. 11th Res. Div. Cléry 24.7.—13.8. 1st Bavarian Res. Div. 12.8. Busigny 116—4388 from 19.8.: 6.

38. Gen. Kdo. IX. R. K. (Gen. of Inf. von Boehn) 3. Gen. Kdo. IV. Foureaux-Wald 24.7.—10.8. Gen. Kdo. XIX. (hächf.) A. R. east of Cambrai 10.8. 141—4703

39. 17th Res. Div.\*\*) (Maj. Gen. von Zieten) 8. 3. Inf. Div. Flers 24.7.—10.8. 40th (hächf.) Inf. Div. 10.8. 148—6658

40. 42nd Res. Div. (Maj. Gen. Wellmann) 7. 7. 17th Inf. Div. Martinpuich 23.7.—10.8. from 20.8.: 1. — Morchies

41. Gen. Kdo. Garde-R. K. (Gen. of Cav. Thfr. Marschall) 2. inserted and subordinated to Gen. Kdo. IX Barlieux—Étrées 27.7.—19.8. Cambrai 25—1078

42. 1st Garde-Res. Div. (Lt. Gen. Albrecht) 6. 1. 17th Inf. Div. Barlieux 26.7.—19.8. 17th Inf. Div. 19.8.

43. 6th Garde-Inf. Div. (Maj. Gen. Erfn. von Schweinitz) 6. 2. 18th Inf. Div. Étrées 26.7.—20.8. 18th Inf. Div. 20.8. 39—1841

keyno: 256

keyno: 257

No. | Unit | previously (Army) | to (Army) | relieves: | deployed in section | Infantry deployed: | relieved by | Change of staffs on: | after relief from: | Losses: Off.-M. | Further use (Army)

59. | Brig. Scholz (reinforced 32. Res. J. Br. Genmaj. Scholz) | 7. | 2. | 2nd Guard Inf. Div. | Chilly | 22.8.—3.9. | Parts of the 35th Inf. Div. | 3.9. | Nesle | for Ar. 82 of continuation in Volume XI. | with 15th Res. Div. from 9.9.: 4.

60. | 111th Inf. Div. (Genmaj. Sonntag) | 6. | 1. | 27th (Württ.) Inf. Div. | Guillemont | 23.8.—9.9. | 185th Inf. Div. | 9.9. | transferred | 88—3588 | Strantz from 18.9.: 4.

61. | Gen. Kdo. Garbe-R. R. (Gen. d. Kav. Frhr. Marschall) (see Ar. 41) | 2. | 1. | inserted and until 28.8. subordinated to Gr. Laffert | Courcelette | 24.8.—17.9. | Gen. Kdo. IV. A. K. | 17.9. | — | — | from 10.9.: 4.

62. | 1st Guard Res. Div. (Genlt. Albrecht) (see Ar. 42) | 2. | 1. | Parts of the 24th (Saxon) Inf. Div. | Courcelette | 23.8.—9.9. | 45th Res. Div. | 9.9. | — | 66—3535 | from 10.9.: 4.

63. | 4th Guard Inf. Div. (Genmaj. Graf von Schweinitz) (see Ar. 43) | 2. | 1. | 16th Inf. Div. | Fr. du Mouquet | 23.8.—11.9. | 89th Res. J. Br. (207th Inf. Div.) | 20.9. with staff 8th Inf. Div. | — | 72—4200 | from 15.9.: 4.

64. | 56th Inf. Div. (Genmaj. von Wichmann) (see Anl. 2, Ar. 69) | 6. | 1. | 26th (Württ.) Inf. Div. | Ginchy | 25.8.—9.9. | 5th Bavarian Inf. Div. | 9.9. | Bohain | 98—3075 | from 10.9.: 3.

65. | 2nd Guard Inf. Div.\*\*) (Genmaj. von Friedeburg) | 2. | 1. | 5th Bavarian Res. Div. | Maurepas | 25.8.—11.9. | 54th (Württ.) Res. Div. | 11.9. | St. Quentin | 86—4079 | from 12.9.: 4.

66. | Gen. Kdo. XII. (Saxon) A. K. (Gen. d. Artl. von Kirchbach) (see Ar. 44) | 2. | 1. | Gen. Kdo. XIII. | Ginchy—Combles | 26.8.—17.9. | Gen. Kdo. XXVI. R. K. | 17.9. | transferred | — | from 18.9.: 6.

67. | Gen. Kdo. II. Bavarian A. K. (Genlt. von Stetten) | 6. | 1. | inserted and subordinated to Gr. Marschall | Martinpuich—Flers | 28.8.—18.9. | Gen. Kdo. III. Bavarian A. K. | 18.9. | Cambrai | — | from 20.9.: 6.

68. | 3rd Bavarian Inf. Div. (Genlt. Ritter von Wenninger) | 6. | 1. | 24th (Saxon) Inf. Div. | Martinpuich | 26.8.—17.9. | 50th Res. Div. | 17.9. | — | 131—5319 | from 20.9.: 6.

69. | 4th Bavarian Inf. Div. (Genlt. Ritter von Schrott) | 6. | 1. | 40th (Saxon) Inf. Div. | Flers | 26.8.—17.9. | 6th Bavarian Inf. Div. | 17.9. | — | 138—5985 | from 20.9.: 6.

keyno: 258

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