

# LOOS:

## THE BIG PUSH, 25-28 SEPT 1915



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### 10.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 10.1 Historical Background

The massive Allied offensive on the Western Front in the Fall of 1915, masterminded by the French General-in-Chief Joffre, was intended both to draw German strength away from the reeling Russians and to pinch out the German west-front salient known as "the Noyon Bulge." The British attack at Loos (pronounced *Lo*), forming half of the the northern prong of the offensive, was launched with limited artillery support and was the first major commitment of Britain's newly-raised "New Army" division. The ostensible aim of the northern prong was to seize German rail lines behind the front, but in reality was a diversion from the main French offensive in Champagne.

#### 10.2 Special Rules

Rules 13.0 through 18.0 modify or add to the system standard rules. Except as noted in those sections, all standard rules apply.

#### 10.3 Game Scale

Each hex represents 440 yards (1/4 mile or 4/10 kilometer). Each turn represents a half-day. Units are all non-mobile ("leg") infantry representing German battalions (800 men), German regiments (2,500 men), or British half-brigades (about 1,750 men).

### 11.0 SET UP

#### 11.1 Set Up Sequence

Place the turn marker in the Zero Hour box of the TRT (Turn Record Track). Place all 10 artillery markers and the British observation marker on

the British artillery track. The German player deploys first (11.2) followed by the British player (11.5-11.6). The remaining cases of this section explain the reinforcements available to each side.

#### 11.2 German Initial Deployment

The initial German forces consist of the 27 battalions belonging to the 14<sup>th</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, 117<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bavarian (14, 111, 117, 3B) Divisions. Each battalion may be placed in any hex except those in the British front line. Every hex in the British front line must be in a German ZOC. Battalions may not be stacked (see 18.0) in the initial set up. Set aside the two battalions with blank fronts; they are treated as being in the deadpile and may be used for replacements (11.4).

#### 11.3 German Reinforcements

The 11 regiments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard, 8<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Bavarian Divisions (2G, 8, 4B) enter after the game begins. The exact turn of entry depends on die rolls. At the beginning of each of his movement phases after the first, the German player rolls one die for each division not yet entered. If the result is within the span indicated for a division for the current game turn, it is released. If not released, the division remains in reserve until the next movement phase. When released, all regiments of the division must be placed on or adjacent to any one of the German entry hexes (0110, 1201, or 2306). They may be broken down into battalions (see 13.2). They move normally in the turn of placement.

#### 11.4 German Replacements

During each of his movement phases, the German player rolls one die for replacements.

Halve the result, rounding down, to determine the number of replacement battalions (13.2) received. Replacements must be deployed immediately; they may not be accumulated for a later turn. If no counter is available for a replacement, the replacement is lost. Each replacement battalion received must be placed in an unoccupied, German-controlled town hex. They move normally on the turn of placement.

### 11.5 British Sectors

The British front line is divided into six sectors (I through VI), each consisting of a front line of hexes and a second (reserve) line. The effects of the front line are explained in 14.2. The use of the second line is explained in 11.7.

### 11.6 British Initial Deployment

Sort the British infantry units by division. Place the 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Divisions in the Available British Reserves box. Each of the other divisions must be placed in one of the sectors of the British front line. All six sectors must be manned by a full division, but there is no requirement to man every hex in each sector. The two halves of a brigade may be stacked (18.0).

### 11.7 British Reinforcements

British reserves may be committed from the Available British Reserves box during any British movement phase after Turn 0 (Zero Hour). Each division must be placed as a whole, all six units in the same sector, but the two divisions need not be placed in the same sector or on the same turn. During the movement phase of the turn after placement, the units move into the front line of their sector. During the movement phase of the second turn after placement, the units move normally. For example, if the 21<sup>st</sup> Division is placed in the reserve line of sector II during the Turn 1 British movement phase, they move to the front line on Turn 2, then move normally on Turn 3.

## 12.0 VICTORY CONDITIONS

### 12.1 British Instant Victory

The British player wins the instant a British unit enters, for any reason at any time, one of the German entry hexes (0110, 1201, or 3306).

### 12.2 German Instant Victory

The German player wins the instant after Turn Zero there are no British units in any hex other than in the British trenches.

### 12.3 Victory By Town Control

A player controls a town when he controls all its hexes. All town hexes on the map are controlled by the German player at the start of the game. Control switches to the British player the instant a British unit enters a hex. It remains in British control until entered by a

German unit. A single town hex may change hands any number of times per game. If neither player wins an instant victory, the game continues until the end of Turn 8. At that time, count the number of whole towns controlled by the British player.

2 or more	British victory
1	Draw (the historical result)
0	German victory

## 13.0 UNITS

### 13.1 German Regiments

German regiments are three-step units. The full strength side of the regimental counter represents the three-step strength; the reverse side represents the two-step strength. To portray the one-step strength, remove the regimental counter and replace it with a German replacement battalion (13.2). If no replacement is available, the step is lost. A German regiment may be broken down into battalions at the beginning of any German movement phase (including the phase of arrival). Remove the regimental counter and replace it with two or three replacement battalions depending on the regiment's current strength. If there are fewer replacement battalions in the deadpile than steps in the regiment, the excess steps are lost. The battalions must be placed in the regiment's last hex or in any adjacent hex into which the regiment could move. Once broken down, a regiment may not be reformed.

### 13.2 German Battalions



All battalions are one-step units and are placed in the deadpile after taking a loss. The 27 battalions with unit IDs are deployed on the map at the start of the game. They are backprinted without unit IDs and with a red dot; this side is used for replacements (11.4) and regimental breakdown (13.1). The two battalions with no printing on the front are available for these purposes immediately: they start the game in the deadpile. A battalion marker may be eliminated and replaced any number of times per game. Always place the red-dot side up when returning the marker to the map.

### 13.3 British Units

British units are identified by division

and brigade. The division ID is important for set up only.

Each brigade consists of two counters, representing the historical deployment of each brigade in a forward and reserve line. The counters all are two-step units and may operate independently for all purposes. The two counters of a single brigade may be stacked together (18.0).

## 14.0 TERRAIN

### 14.1 High Ground

High ground represents the mild but critical elevations in an otherwise flat battlefield. They have no movement or combat effect; use the effects of any other terrain in the hex. High ground is important only for observation purposes (see 17.2).

### 14.2 British Front Line Hexes

Only British units may enter front line hexes and they may do so during set up, arrival of reinforcements, movement, or during retreat after combat. A retreat, regardless of required length, always ends in the first front line hex entered. A unit in a front line hex may move only into an adjacent non-front-line hex. German ZOC do not extend into the front line hexes (except for purposes of set up) and German units may not move or attack into them. German artillery may bombard British units in front line hexes only; use the "Trench" line on the CRT.

### 14.3 German Trenches

Any hex with at least one trench hexside is a German trench hex. For movement purposes, the +1 MP cost is incurred only when crossing the trench hexside. When a German trench hex is attacked solely across trench hexsides, use the "Trench" line on the CRT. If attacked across a non-trench hexside from an adjacent trench hex (whether or not in combination with attacks across a trench hexside), use the "Secondary Trench" line on the CRT. When attacked from a non-trench hex (whether or not in combination with attack from trench hexes or across trench hexsides), use the CRT line corresponding to the other terrain in the defender's hex. In addition to the foregoing, trenches have the following effects.

- 1) British ZOC do not extend into a trench hex across the trench hexside.
- 2) no units of either side may use infiltration movement (5.1.2) to cross a trench hexside in either direction.
- 3) if a unit attacks across one trench hexside and is adjacent to another enemy unit (or more than one) also behind a trench

hexside, the other enemy unit must be attacked in a separate combat (not bombardment). If not attacked in another combat, its defense factor is added to the defender's combat strength.

- 4) one-step German units in trenches ignore bombardment results (but see 17.5).

Only German units receive the benefit of trenches; if a British unit defends a trench hex, regardless of the direction of attack, use the CRT line corresponding to the other terrain in the defender's hex.

## 15.0 TURN SEQUENCE

### 15.1 First Player

The British player is the first player.

### 15.2 Zero Hour

The game begins with the British combat phase of the zero hour turn. German movement allowances are halved during Zero Hour.

## 16.0 COMBAT MODIFICATIONS

The following standard rules are modified as indicated below:

### 7.6 Combat Results

Attacking units never retreat; they always take step losses instead.

### 7.7.1 Bombardment Retreat

Defenders may not retreat from a bombardment; they must take the step loss instead.

### 7.7.2 Displacement

A unit unable to retreat without displacing another unit must stand fast and take the step loss.

### 7.9 Advance After Combat

Advances are limited to a length of one hex. All participating attacking units may advance. An advance may be made into the vacated defender's hex or any vacant hex adjacent to the vacated defender's hex.

## 17.0 FIRE SUPPORT

### 17.1 Fire Support Limitations

Bombardment is the only form of fire support allowed. Each player has an Artillery Track indicating the number of fire support markers available each turn. Each marker may be used in either player's combat phase, but only once per game turn. Only units that can be observed (17.2) can be bombarded.

The attacking player must place all fire support markers, one per combat, at the beginning of his combat phase. If the target hex is adjacent to one or more attacking units, he must announce

which if any units will attach the target hex upon placing the bombardment marker. After all attacking markers are placed, the defending player places any markers desired, one per hex.

### 17.2 Observation

An enemy unit is observed if it is adjacent to a friendly unit, or if a friendly unit has a line of sight (LOS) to it.

An LOS is a line no more than four hexes long from the center of the observer's hex to the center of the target hex. The LOS is blocked if the target hex or any intervening hex (but not the observer's hex) is anything other than clear. If the LOS runs along a hexside, the LOS is blocked only if both adjacent hexes are other than clear.

A unit on high ground ignores all blocking terrain except other high ground.

The British aircraft marker is used for observation. It may be placed at the beginning of each combat phase anywhere on the map. The placement hex and all adjacent hexes are observed regardless of terrain.

### 17.3 Fire Support Factors

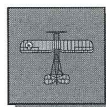
The fire support markers have no strength indicated. Instead, one or more dice are rolled immediately prior to resolving the bombardment. The number of dice to be rolled during a given turn is indicated on the player's Artillery Track. Total the result of all the dice together; that is the marker's factor for that bombardment.

### 17.4 Bombardment Resolution

To resolve a bombardment, determine the firepower of the artillery marker (17.3) and find that strength on the appropriate terrain line of the CRT. Do not consider the strength of the target unit. Resolve the bombardment normally, but ignore Ex, No effect, and all "A" results. If the bombardment is being made in conjunction with a ground attack, resolve both the attacker's and defender's bombardments prior to resolving the combat. If stacked units are being bombarded, resolve the bombardment against each unit separately (but it still counts as a single bombardment). Retreat is not allowed after bombardment. After a D2, D3, or De result, the target unit must take a one-step loss (but see 17.5). If a defender's hex is emptied by bombardment and an attack was declared against the hex, the attacking units may advance.

### 17.5 Breaching Trenches by Bombardment

If the target of a bombardment is a German unit in a trench, and the bombardment results in a De, D3, or D2, the hex is considered breached (along with any German loss; see below). Leave the artillery marker on the hex as a reminder.



Ignore the trench terrain in any ensuing regular combat against the hex; use the line on the CRT for any other terrain in the hex. Remove the artillery marker after the combat phase. A German unit in a trench never loses its last step to a bombardment (in other words, a one-step regiment or battalion ignores any loss caused by the bombardment).

### 17.6 Gas

During Zero Hour only, the British player may choose to use gas during his bombardments. Add 1 die to the factor roll for each bombardment (4 total). Any result other than D2, D3, or De results in friendly fire against one adjacent (only) friendly unit. If the unit is stacked, the front line unit must suffer the loss.

## 18.0 STACKING & RESERVE LINES

### 18.1 Stacking

Standard rule 5.3 is modified to allow two units of the same German division or British brigade to end a phase in the same hex. The top unit in the hex is considered to be the front line, the bottom unit the reserve line. German replacement battalions have no ID and are treated as belonging to no division; they may not stack.

### 18.2 Reserve Line Movement

During the movement phase, units move separately. Eligible units may but are not required to end the phase stacked. The stacking order may be changed only during the regular movement phase.

### 18.3 Reserve Lines in Combat

Reserve units do not add their combat factors to combat during the regular combat phase; only the front line unit participates and takes losses (except from bombardment). If the front line unit is eliminated, the reserve line becomes the front line and is no longer considered a reserve unit. If the front line unit retreats or advances after combat, the reserve unit must stay with it.

### 18.4 Mobile Movement & Combat

A reserve unit may move during the mobile movement phase, but its movement allowance is uncertain. Just before it moves, roll one die and halve the result, rounding fractions up. The result is the number of movement points available to the reserve line unit. If it does not have enough MP to move at least one hex, then it remains in place and cannot attack during the mobile combat phase. If it does move, it may move through a friendly-occupied hex but may not end its move there. A reserve unit that moved in the mobile movement phase may attack



## COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

<b>Terrain Type</b>	<b>Combat Differential (attacking strength minus defending strength)</b>											
Mountain, Mines	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10				
City, Rough, River, Trench	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10			
Broken, Marsh, Ferry, Town, Stream, Escarpment	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10		
Bridge, Woods, Ditch, Grove, Mixed	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10	
Clear, Desert, British Front Line	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10
<b>Die Roll</b>	<b>Result</b>											
1	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D2	D3	De	De
2	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D3	De
3	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D3
4	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2
5	Ae	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2
6	Ae	Ae	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A1	•	Ex	Ex	Ex

**De** = The defending unit is eliminated.

**D3** = The defending unit must retreat three hexes (or deplete one unit of the defending player's choice, instead; see 7.8).

**D2** = The defending unit must retreat two hexes (or deplete one unit of the defending player's choice, instead; see 7.8).

**Ex** = One attacking unit and one defending unit must be flipped to their depleted side (or eliminated if already depleted).

**A1** = The attacking unit(s) must retreat one hex (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

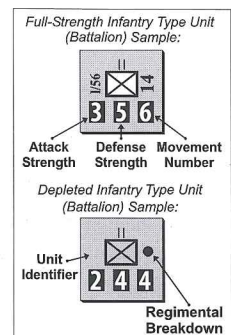
**A2** = The attacking unit(s) must retreat two hexes (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

**A3** = The attacking unit(s) must retreat three hexes (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

**(A)** = One attacking unit must be depleted (or eliminated if already depleted).

**Ae** = All attacking units are eliminated.

• = No effect.



in the mobile combat phase. Resolve the combat normally except:

- 1) no fire support is available to either side
- 2) each attacking unit attacks alone. If two or more units have moved adjacent to the same defending unit, each may attack in turn. Declare all attacks against a single defender before resolving the first. If the defender retreats or is eliminated, any unit yet to attack may advance.

## 19.0 GAME NOTES

### 19.1 Designer's Notes

There were two primary challenges to making this game. First was the adaptation of a game system intended for the fluid, high-speed combat of the mechanized age to one that handled the anything-but-fluid combat of the Western Front of World War I. Second was trying to make an interesting tactical game about the anything-but-fluid combat of the Western Front of World War I. Fortunately, both challenges were achieved with a couple of fairly straightforward rules. Restricting the "mobile" movement

and combat phases to reserve lines limited the number of units able to take advantage of any holes punched in an enemy line, and encourages players to stack units to achieve a breakthrough. This mirrors the doctrine of every army of the time to deploy in successive lines rather than putting every man up front. The alteration of the fire support rules portrays the difficulties of adjusting fire during combat without radios. Note the British support tends to be best in the morning (reflecting the making of plans at night), then tapering off during the day as the situation changed. The Germans, with well-established outposts and telephone lines, were more able to consistently make changes.

### 19.2 Player Notes

The initial set up is important for the British player, crucial for the German. The Germans have enough combat power to stymie two, maybe three British divisions, but not all six. Barring catastrophically bad die rolling by the British player, there will be a breakthrough. Because of the vulnerability of the entry hexes in Lens and La Bassée, the best bet is to concentrate

on the flanks to channel the breakthrough into the relatively empty middle of the map.

The British player can and should react to the German set up by committing his best divisions (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>) against the weakest part of the German line. Once in the open, make hay while the sun shines. It probably is better to penetrate deeply on a narrow front rather than rolling up the line for a wider-but-shallower salient, but a too-narrow breakthrough will allow the German to concentrate his reserves. Use the spotter plane to diminish those reserves before they reach the fighting. For both players, this is a battle of attrition; most combats will cause and incur casualties rather than gain ground. This is frustrating, but only after the enemy has been weakened can real breakthroughs be achieved. Stack sparingly after Zero Hour; stacks are artillery magnets justified only when a particular hex must be taken quickly.

## 20.0 ORDERS OF BATTLE

Posted on the Decision games site on the e-rules page under Folios.