BRO Games'

The Cossacks are Coming

Designed by **David Bolt**

reviewed by **James Urban**

The Cossacks Are Coming: The Tannenberg Campaign - August and September 1914 is published by BRO Games and is available through Decision Games. This is the second edition of the game depicting the Russian invasion of Prussian territory in August of 1914, the original having been published by Peoples' War Games in 1982. This version is based on the third edition *Death of Empires* rules system and includes an introductory scenario, three battle scenarios, and one campaign game scenario.

The game can be mated with its sister game, *Clash of Eagles: The Battle for Galicia and Poland, 1914* (which depicts the Russian and Austro-Hungarian conflict occurring concurrently with the Russia's East Prussia campaign). Doing so allows gamers to model the conflict raging along the entire Eastern Front in 1914. However, I do not possess both games and thus cannot comment on the linked game. To their credit, members of BRO Games generously offered to travel to my location to play the linked campaign. Unfortunately, this was impracticable on my end and thus I had to turn down the offer. Because of that, and because I also do not have the original game, this review will focus on only the second edition of the game without comparisons to the earlier edition nor the linked game.

The History

Upon the urging of their French allies for assistance to take some pressure off the German sledgehammer marching towards Paris, the Russians launched an offensive into East Prussia on August 17, 1914. The 1st Army under General Pavel Rennenkampf was to drive westward from its staging areas north of Grodno along the Nieman River while General Alekandr Samsonov's 2nd Army simultaneously pushed west and north from the Russian controlled Polish territory that lies adjacent to East Prussia's southern border.

The marshes, lakes, and forests hampered what little communications were attempted between the two armies. Rennenkampf and Samsonov disliked each other intensely and thus each had little intention of supporting the other. However, those messages that were sent by radio either between the armies or to their respective headquarters units were generally sent unencrypted due to a lack of encryption materials among the Russian field radio units. This gave the Germans, who had ample listening posts along their border with Russia, a clear picture of where the Russian units were, where they were going, and how fast they were moving. In most cases, the Germans, commanded by General Max von Prittwitz, had a better understanding of Russian dispositions than either Rennenkampf or Samsonov.

General Prittwitz had originally deployed the four corps of his 8th Army command in an eighty-five mile line running from Gumbinnen on his left flank to Allenstein on his right. However, upon assimilation of the Russian radio intercepts, he decided to concentrate three of those corps against Rennenkampf in an attempt to crush the Russian armies piecemeal.

On the night of the 19th, Rennenkampf issued orders to his forces to stop their advance near Gumbinnen, presumably to reorganize and resupply before making the final push towards Konningsgrad. Prittwitz decided to attack and launched his assault on the 20th. Although the German attack went well initially, many German units were tired and disorganized from a long night march on the eve of battle to reach their jumping off positions. This, combined with effective Russian artillery fire, pushed back the German assault and even sent some units into wholesale panic. The German attack at Gumbinnen failed to destroy Rennenkampf's army.

Word of the failed attack and routing units reached Prittwitz just as radio intercepts indicated Samsonov's forces were on the move and seriously threatening to reach the Vistula which would cut off German forces in East Prussia. Already the Russians were eighty miles closer to the Vistula than were Prittwitz's forces and he panicked. He sent frantic messages to Berlin forecasting complete collapse on the Eastern front unless heavily reinforced immediately.

The German response was swift. Prittwitz was immediately relieved of command and replaced by General Paul von Hindenburg, called out of retirement, who was given General Erich Ludendorff as an additional resource. Also sent east were some units from the thus-far apparently successful right wing marching through the Netherlands but which was already denuded of strength from Schlieffen's original plan.

Upon their arrival it was learned that Colonel Max Hoffman had utilized the efficient Prussian rail system to concentrate the German forces in East Prussia and the plan now was to hit Samsonov with what was left of the 8th Army in its entirety. Although Samsonov was indeed pushing forward, he was doing so without a cavalry screen and broadcasting his situation and intentions in the clear. On August 24th, one of Samsonov's corps stumbled into the one German corps Prittwitz had left behind at Allenstein. After a brief and inconclusive battle, Samsonov halted his advance, presumably to assess the situation and concentrate his forces. Meanwhile, Rennenkampf broadcast his intention to hold up his advance. This allowed the Germans the freedom to strip forces all along the front. Thus, from the artillery and infantry along the Vistula at Thorn to those forces tasked with holding Konigsberg, the German army swarmed upon Samsonov like a host of ants on a gumdrop.

The assault began on August 27th with a massive artillery bombardment followed by an equally massive infantry assault that resulted in the total collapse of both flanks of the 2nd Army. Not knowing this until much too late, Samsonov had ordered his center to attack the German positions. Thus, three Russian corps unwittingly advanced even further into the forming salient that was to be their demise. By August 29th the Germans had completed their encirclement and a slaughter of the Russian forces trapped within began in earnest. Soon, nearly 150,000 Russians had been killed, wounded, or captured. Samsonov was never found and it's generally believed that he committed suicide. The victorious 8th Army now turned its

full weight against Rennenkampf, along with recently arrived reinforcements that had been dispatched per Prittwitz's earlier desperate pleas for help.

Upon hearing of Samsonov 's defeat, Rennenkampf established what he intended to be a defensive line, but this line was too long and too thin to be of any effect. The German juggernaut struck on September 8th and attempted to encircle and annihilate the 1stArmy as they had done to the 2nd. However, Rennenkampf ordered two divisions to sacrifice themselves so that the rest of the army could escape. Leaving much of their heavy equipment behind, much of the remaining Russian army was able to escape but 125,000 Russians did not. In less than a month the Russians had lost two major battles, most of their vehicles, horses, and guns, and over 275,000 men.

The Game

The game's components consist of one 22" x 34" paper map, 840 double-sided counters, a standard series rules booklet, an exclusive rules booklet, four player aid charts, six strategic and army charts, eight scenario set up charts, six plastic baggies for counter storage, two dice, and a game response card.

The map, which has a scale of five miles per hex, is a wonderful amalgamation of form and function. The overall base color is a light crème with black and smoky grey lines depicting rail lines and roads. Much attention has been given to the rail lines because they serve a critical role in the game's supply and strategic movement rules. The detail given to the rail lines is such that they have six different classifications:

- European gauge single and double track,
- Multiple track,
- Russian gauge single and double track, and…
- Narrow gauge railroad.

The Russian track is differentiated from European track by being colored in a dark blue color instead of the black of the European track. This is the one issue we found with the map – the dark blue can easily look like black depending on your eyesight and lighting conditions. This problem is somewhat ameliorated by the national boundaries being marked on the map with a yellow line. The rail gauge changes at the border so the coloring isn't too difficult to work with, just an inconvenience.

There is much attention to detail such as the inclusion of ferry crossings and some canals. Even the historical location of the battle of Tannenberg is marked. Punctuated throughout the map are areas of rough ground, woods, lakes, swamps, and rivers.

The cobalt blue Baltic Sea occupies the northwestern corner of the map and is fed by the capriciously flowing Vistula River that runs from the south near the city of Cloclawek to the north, where it empties into the Baltic just east of Danzig. A large salient is created as it bends sharply westward from Thorn, passing near Bromberg (which lies on the extreme western edge of the map), returning to its northerly run at the other shoulder of the salient at Graudenz.

Along most of the eastern and northeastern boundaries flows the Nieman River running roughly from Grodno to Kovno along the eastern edge of the map and continuing westward to Tilst near the center of the map at its extreme northern edge. This river has many marshy areas along its length but the third major river on the map, the Narew, is the source of the majority of the swamp terrain.

The main run of the Narew River is from the south-central portion of the map in a generally northeasterly direction, ending just west of Grodno. However, this particular river has numerous smaller tributaries rated in game terms as minor rivers and along the banks of these are large areas of swamp.

Just north of this marshland lies the largest and densest concentration of lakes on the map, the Masurian Lakes, making them the dominating terrain type in the center. Because of the marshes to the south and the lakes in the center, effective maneuver in these portions of the map is generally restricted to road and rail movement.

The counters come in three sheets – one exclusively for the black-and-white status markers, another for the majority of olive green colored Russian units, and the third containing the remainder of the Russian units, all of the field grey colored German units, and a few more status markers. Despite the operational level of the game, units do have facings to differentiate their front from flanks and rear. Their size is primarily at the brigade and divisional level, with one strength point representing one thousand to 1,500 men for infantry, 450 to nine hundred men for cavalry, and two or three batteries for artillery. Russian artillery units are included in generally regimental strength with a few battalions and smaller units while the German artillery units include a more diverse mix of brigades, regiments, and battalions.

Besides the infantry, cavalry, and artillery unit types mentioned above, and excluding the variety of status markers, the game includes leader counters, aircraft (which includes both fixed wing aircraft and balloon units), supply, fortress, engineer, machine gun detachment, and headquarter units.

There are two rule booklets - a forty-eight page standard series rule book for the *Death of Empires* series and a sixteen page rule book covering special rules exclusively for *The Cossacks Are Coming: The Tannenberg Campaign* game. The booklets for this game should be used as a model for any game company.

Immediately upon picking up the standard rules booklet I was struck by an excellent feature – a comprehensive table of contents. Furthermore, designer notes are sprinkled throughout the rules where the note is most appropriate to the rule it discusses. Some of these notes are just a brief sentence or two following the rule, similar to the venerable West End Games' format, while others are a running narrative. An example of this is from the exclusive game rules covering artillery unit strength determination:

Barrage factors of:

- Two represent batteries with a caliber less than 65mm;

- Three less than 95mm;

- Four less than 135mm;

- Five less than170mm;

- Six less than 220mm;

- Seven less than 330mm;

- Eight represents batteries with a caliber greater than 330mm.

Barrage factors are sometimes reduced to reflect lack of equipment, aged equipment or poor training. Barrage factors are sometimes increased to reflect additional equipment or different calibers present in a unit. Therefore, some German *Landwehr* formations have artillery class units with barrage factors of two even thought the predominant caliber in those units was 77mm. This lower barrage factors reflects the lack of batteries attached to these formations. Russian field artillery class units have a barrage factor of four even thought the predominant caliber in those units was 76mm. This reflects the number of guns (eight) per battery attached to these formations.

The inclusion of such explanations is excellent because while gamers may not necessarily agree with how strength is calculated, they at least understand what the designer's intent was and just what a four means. Notes like these also address why some peculiarities exist that gamers might otherwise pick up on but be unable to figure out why.

The exclusive game rules booklet is sixteen pages long (including a table of contents) that covers the rule differences between the standard series and this particular game. For example, here the Russians always have the initiative on every turn and no player may have more than three impulses per turn. There is one minor quibble I have regarding the research found within the rules. In the exclusive rules, the German leader Hoffman is referred to as General Hoffman. I'm assuming this is Lieutenant Colonel Max von Hoffman, the 8th Army's chief operations officer. I'm certain Herr Hoffman would have liked to have been a General in August of 1914 and in command of the German 8th Army, but my sources indicate he was a Lieutenant Colonel at this time. Of course, rank has no affect on any aspect of play so this is a very minor quibble. Yet I'm surprised to see such an oversight in a game that has so obviously had a lot of research put into it. But then again, perhaps my resources are in error as to his rank.

This brings us to another outstanding feature of the rules - the inclusion of a bibliography, albeit an annotated version. This not only provides an excellent source for those gamers wishing to do some further reading on the topic depicted in the game, but also gives those with fact inconsistencies (like Lt. Col. verses General questions) a list of sources against which data can be compared.

The rules even include a glossary of terms so if you're unsure what the term *Corps Formation* refers to you while reading the rules you can quickly check the glossary for a brief reminder and get right back to where you were.

Gameplay

Unit Organization

The organization and status of the various forces constituting the armies in the game are tracked on army charts. These charts facilitate keeping record of who the army commander and staff officers are,
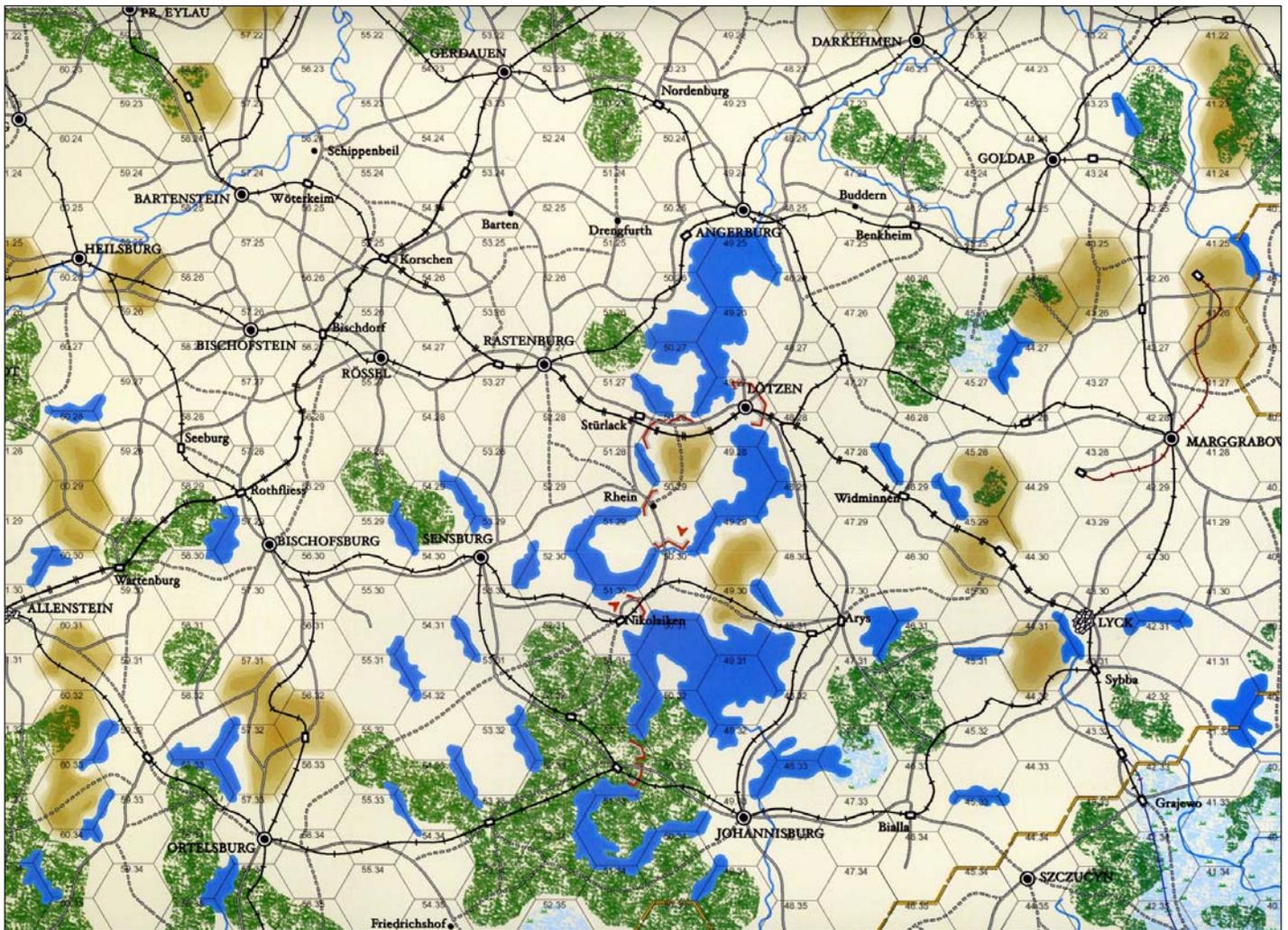
the mission assigned to the army, the ammunition points available to each formation attached to the army, and so forth.

With a few exceptions, all units belong to what's referred to as a "primary formation" that consists of a command counter and all units assigned to that formation. Each unit has its primary formation identified on its counter.

Each primary formation has a morale level that every unit in that formation inherits and their corresponding command counters are attached to higher formations known as corps, army, and strategic formations by placing the command counter on the army or strategic chart corresponding to the higher formation they're attached to.

The differences between the corps, army, and strategic formations impact how the formations are utilized. For example, strategic formations are always considered to be in supply if within supply range of any friendly operational rail hex (not supply depot). While this sounds really nice, such formations must be given hold orders and they can't receive replacement points or ammunition points and thus can't recover their strength after battle. Another example is the corps formations. These formations are in supply while within supply range of a supply source and have, as the rules put it, "a unique feature" in that they have Corps Headquarters Holding Boxes. All units in these boxes are considered to be in the same hex as the corps headquarters counter. The combat units of the primary forma-

tion move around as their corresponding headquarters counter moves around the map. This keeps the stacks of units manageable and eliminates problems of collapsing stacks and the chaos that generally ensues as a result. Incidentally, as mentioned previously, units on the map do have facing - a rather unique feature considering the operational level of the game.

Speaking of stacking, there are stacking restrictions per hex, for movement, and even combat. For hexes, the rules state players can choose the stacking criteria for their units:

- All the units of two different formations in a hex, or…
- Units from more than two different formations in a hex, but not more than six brigade equivalents total for a hex.

There's a list of unit sizes ranging from company level through army size units up to main depot units and their brigade equivalent values.

- For road movement, a formation may not be larger than one division-sized primary formation or four brigade equivalents (whichever is larger) but movement by rail or naval movement has no size restrictions.
- For combat, a player can adopt one of two criteria for stacking during combat, either all the units of one formation in a hex participate in combat, or units from more than one formation in a hex participate, but not more than two brigade equivalents.

So while the stacking rules can might be considered by some as overly complex, requiring players to be on their toes comparing unit sizes with their brigade equivalent values, attention to such detail provides much flexibility for the gamer regarding their force deployments and commitment of units to combat.

Sequence of Play

Each turn of the game is known as a weekly interphase. At the start of each weekly interphase players receive replacements (if applicable to the scenario), entrenchments are constructed, rail points are adjusted, and so on. It is also at this time that the number of impulses (and the length of those impulses) is determined. The player with the initiative (determined by die roll in the series rules, but it's always the Russian player in this game) gets to determine how many impulses there will be and how many days are in each impulse. Each interphase must consist of five days, but there can be seven one-day impulses or one five day impulse or three impulses of two, three, and two days or any combination that results in seven days. The number of days per impulse is important because it determines the number of movement points available during the movement phase, how many strength points of units can entrain and detrain, an so forth.

At the start of each impulse, regardless of the number of days in the impulse, weather is determined. This means if you have seven one day impulses the weather is more likely to change throughout the week than if you have one seven day impulse (which would actually ensure the same weather the entire week).

After the weather is determined, players may attach units to new commands or even detached and become an independent command. After adjusting force levels based on reinforcements or mandatory withdrawals, players issue orders, called mission orders, to army and corps sized units except cavalry - their more independent role on the battlefield gives them more flexibility. These mission orders remind me of command chits one uses when playing wargames with miniatures. Orders are issued by the player (the supreme commander) to leaders. The orders cascade down the chain of command with the divisions and corps assuming the orders of the higher formations and leaders according to the chain of command.

The four orders are:

- Advance,
- Retire,
- Hold, and…
- Flexible.

Depending on which order is being followed, various movement restrictions and combat modifiers are applied. For example, units with advance orders can only move in a specified direction as the advance direction for a given side (in this game that generally means eastward for the Germans and westward for the Russians). They must move at least one hex closer to an enemy unit if at all possible and cannot increase the distance between themselves and the enemy. Likewise for retire orders, only they must move away from enemy units, never closer. If advancing or retiring, units cannot recover morale or receive replacements - they're either too busy moving forward or running away. Hold orders have no restrictions on movement direction but units that move under hold orders have movement costs doubled. Units with flexible orders can move in

any direction without any penalties. The flexible order is a nice, flexible order to give. However, the main depot associated with an army under the flexible order cannot move. So if you're attacking or retreating it's not a good one to choose for you risk outdistancing your supply. The fuzzy part comes in when holding a position. Generally, if you're intending to hold a position, you'll issue flexible orders instead of hold because that provides the opportunity to adjust your units' positions without a movement point penalty.

The catch when giving orders is that certain leaders have certain preferences to reflect their style of command. A die roll (with modifiers) determines if the leader will follow the orders given to him or will instead do what he'd prefer to do. This is a nice feature that can give players fits as they try to order a formation forward to destroy what's left of an enemy force but the local commander is overly cautious and instead insists on holding their position. However, there is a modifier applied each turn the subordinate disobeys his orders that makes it all the more likely they will eventually come around and finally do as he's told. But the law of gaming dictates such insubordination will occur at a critical point in the battle. Instead of digging in behind a river line your army will surge across to engage the enemy, destroying your plan and forcing some improvisation. The only time the hold orders muck things up is when your subordinate commander decides he's going to hold when you don't want him to. That's where the penalties hit. They're there to dissuade you, the player, from being able to force your generals to do something they don't want to do.

Supply

Next, before movement and combat, players must determine supply levels. Supply is a mini-game unto itself and the supply rules take up nearly four pages in the rule book. Briefly, the source of supply generally begins in a player's home country with their army base marker. It trickles down from there along a contiguous friendly rail path free of enemy units and zones of control to the main depot for the army. Each army has its own main depot and it is from this main depot that:

- The formation's units' ammunition points are replaced,
- Supply units for the army stretching out from the rail heads are traced,
- Replacements moving to the front are traced, and…
- The ability for rail to transport military units is determined.

These capabilities will be modified depending on the location of the depot. For example, if the army's depot is on a double rail line that can be traced back to the army base and no other depot shares that double track, all of the above functions are available. From that maximum status the capabilities degrade. For example, if other armies have their depots along the same double track, every army's supply capability is downgraded one level. At this level only three of the four functions mentioned above can be used. The lowest level of supply (short of being out of supply) still allows two functions to be chosen but excludes rail movement from the options.

These supply options do a good job depicting how rail capacity is utilized. There's a fixed amount of trains and physical rail available and thus one cannot constantly and continuously bring up food and medication supplies, ammunition, replacements, and move infantry divisions hundreds of miles day after day after day. These supply rules force the players to give consideration to the limits of the supply. Is it more important to bring up ammunition along your single tracked railroad in an attempt to give it more staying power this day or use that same rail capacity to pull that unit out of a potentially dangerous situation before it becomes critical?

Movement

After orders and supply are determined, it's time to put the armies into motion in the movement phase that consists of two sub-phases:

- The concealment segment and…

- The march segment.

It's during the concealment phase that rail repairs and conversions occur but also it's when players flip their units over to show only a generic army symbol and place dummy counters on top of real units. Both real and dummy units can move so even though your opponent knew at the start of your turn the 1st Infantry Division was in a given hex, after being flipped and placed with a dummy counter and both are moved in opposite directions your opponent isn't certain which location has the actual unit. Units remain flipped until either engaged in combat or by reconnaissance. Once a dummy is revealed as such, it is removed and can be put back into play during the next concealment phase. This mechanic provides a certain degree of uncertainty without a lot of excessive double blind style rules.

Instead of running around chasing dummy units, you can employ your aircraft in reconnaissance to weed out the dummies. Each air unit is rated for range and spotting ability and they can be based in any friendly hex - that is, they're not limited to cities or airfields or anything like that. World War I aircraft bases were primarily an open field anywhere there was enough room to land and so this rule allowing the basing of aircraft in any hex works just fine and keeps the map uncluttered by airfield counters or symbols. To perform reconnaissance the aircraft is simply moved a number of hexes up to its range and four contiguous hexes along its route are selected to be searched. One die is rolled and if its result is less than the spotting value of the aircraft unit, the ground unit is revealed. If a dummy, it's removed. If an headquarters, all combat units attached to that headquarters are revealed as well as the headquarters itself unless that unit is in a city, town, or woods hex. In that case only dummy units are revealed - regular units remain hidden as the troops scatter into the buildings or among the trees so that their actual identity is obfuscated from aerial spotters.

The actual movement rates of the ground units depend on their movement mode. They can:

- Move while deployed for combat (the slowest movement mode but can attack or defend effectively),

- Form up for road movement (they move more quickly along a road but can't initiate combat or expend ammunition points, dig in, etc.),

- Use rail movement which allows them to move very far very

quickly. They must begin their turn in a hex with a rail station connected to a friendly operational rail line. or…

- Naval mode if the unit is in a port hex (with the exception of Marines who can load and unload in port or any coastal hex).

It is also during the movement phase that units can entrench.

Once the phasing player moves, the non-phasing player can perform what's known as counter-movement. Only one movement point per day of the impulse is available so generally only units held in immediate reserve behind the front line combat units are pushed forward to reinforce the front line before combat. However, if players wish to force march, they receive twice as many movement points than they would have otherwise. So if the current impulse has three days, the player would have three movement points available per unit in normal movement, but six if he declares he's force-marching his units. However, force-marching necessitates passing a morale check with an adverse modifier of one per movement point expended in the forced march. The unit will always march the distance desired in the force march, but will take a morale hit of one level per hex.

However, it's during the counter-march phase that players receive replacements. So if there are battle weary units needing replacements, they need to be moved away from the front (two or four hexes from the nearest enemy unit, depending on the presence or absence of friendly units) during the player's regular movement phase to be eligible to receive replacements during the counter-movement phase. As with many of the rules in the game, this requires much forethought by the gamer to position their units in such a way that they can receive replacements brought up by supply units.

Combat

Once all the supply is determined, the enemy has been found, and the marching and counter-marching has been completed, the fighting begins. This process is broken into two segments consisting of four phases each - far too much to cover in much detail so I will summarize at a very high level to give just a taste of what gamers can expect. Players can perform intensive or regular attacks. The former means you get to shoot more often but requires the unit to have saved more movement points to represent the preparations going into such a major attack. In each combat segment, artillery barrages are unleashed before the infantry opens fire but both can't be chosen by a side in the same segment. Thus, if you want to soften up a defender before sending the boys over the top you must reserve enough movement points to declare an intensive assault. That would allow you to bombard in the first segment and follow up with fire combat in the second. If you have movement points sufficient only for regular combat, you can either bombard or assault, but not both.

Artillery bombardments chew up a lot of ammunition and thus ammunition points associated with the headquarter units are tracked and expended as barrages are initiated. This can lead to units having no ammunition if the shells aren't restocked sufficiently. The strength points of artillery units are multiplied by the barrage strength of those units and all of the bombarding values are added up, modified for weather, terrain, entrenchments, indirect fire, air units designated as artillery spotters, and so forth. This final modified value is checked against the barrage table combined with a die roll to determine the final outcome that ranges from no effect to strength reduction and morale loss to the target.

Once each side has pounded the other with their artillery the survivors can open up with their machine guns and rifles. Depending on the type of attack, the results of the bombardment (if any), and so forth the attacker has a few options at this point. Instead of an all out attack he can optionally choose to probe, pursue, or launch a cavalry charge (if he has cavalry units facing an enemy that has pulled back as a result of a preparatory artillery bombardment). The probe is just that - no actual carnage occurs but the attacker must pass a morale check. If successful, a dummy target counter is revealed as such or the actual combat formation of units is revealed. Pursuit allows a free move advance and attack if the units they're engaging withdrew during the counter-march phase or were pushed back from an artillery bombardment, or simply withdrew before combat. Yes, when faced with a massive attack, players can give up ground to spare being pummeled (with various restrictions), but may still have to face a pursuit attack.

These fire attacks are resolved using the venerable odds calculations with strength modifiers for having machine gun units attached, artillery units supporting the infantry, commitment of ammunition points for participating artillery, and so forth. Column shifts exist for such things as terrain, air unit participation, flank versus frontal attacks based on attacker versus defender hex facing, etc. Results can range from no effect to inflicting a strength loss, morale check, and forced retreat. It's also important to mention the combat result chart has results for both sides. One side doesn't get to launch an attack on an enemy unit without suffering any losses itself. War is a brutal business and the attacker can easily inflict greater losses on himself than the enemy during action.

There are many more rules present that won't even be touched on but provide additional chrome and functionality. To give you a taste of these, such rules include the concept of artillery superiority, cadres and shattered units resulting from excessive strength loss, taking of prisoners, combat engineers, fortress units, overruns, and I'm sure a few more I've forgotten to mention.

Scenarios

There are five scenarios included in the game – one introductory scenario (the battle of Stallupönen), three battle scenarios that cover the battles of Gumbinnen, Tannenberg, and the First Battle of the Masurian Lakes, and one scenario covering the entire campaign.

Stallupönen

This scenario lasts only one combat phase to allow players to get the feel for the combat system. The German player receives I Corps' 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions, led by Prittwitz, in the town of Stallupönen, which they are to hold. This situation depicts the historical event of I Corps' commander disobeying orders who instead of waiting in positions along the Angerapp River ordered his forces forward to meet the enemy.

The Russian player has elements of the III, IV, and XX Corps. The only active area of the map is that in which units begin the scenario. Thus, the players are forced into battle because there is no possibility for maneuver. This is purely an infantry slugfest. If the Germans are pushed out of Stallupönen the Russians win. Otherwise victory is determined by strength point and morale level losses.

Gumbinnen

Lasting only one turn consisting of three impulses, this scenario depicts the Prittwitz's attack against Rennenkampf's 1st Army on 16 August, 1914. The Russian player is forced by rule to attempt issuance of the modified advance mission order while the German player must attempt to issue the flexible mission order. Used in this scenario are leaders, artillery, cavalry, landwehr, supply, and dummy units in addition to infantry. The area for

maneuver is limited to the eastern half of the map and generally prohibits rail movement.

That is, rail movement is prohibited except the German 3rd Reserve Division and 6th Landwehr Brigade which can enter rail mode as part of the victory conditions which mandates specific German units be in rail mode while other units are to be within a specified distance of map locations. For example, the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions must be in or west of Insterburg by the end of the scenario, the 35th and 36th Infantry Divisions must be within one hex of Gerdauen, and so forth. Failure to achieve this by the end of the scenario results in five victory points per unit for the Russian player. Additionally, victory points are scored for enemy strength point losses, prisoner points, and, for the Russians, points for units that make it west of Insterburg. The Germans need to have a minimum of twice the number of Russian victory points to achieve the lowest level of victory; otherwise, the Russians win. There is no draw condition.

Tannenberg

This scenario uses the central portion of the map and lasts one full turn (seven days total) plus one additional impulse of two days. Rail movement again isn't available and units cannot receive replacements. Prittwitz has ceded command of the 8th Army to Hindenburg, which gives the Germans a better chance of attacking (Prittwitz's preferred order is retire).

The Russian player still must issue the modified advance order to his 2nd Army during the first two impulses but thereafter can issue either the modified advance or hold order. Except for the Russian I Corps, the Russian units automatically accept this order on the first movement segment of impulse one. Several scenario-specific rules are in place governing the deployment of I Corps in a defensive posture around either Soldau or Mlawa.

Victory points are earned for inflicting losses on enemy forces and the Russians get five points for occupying Allenstein, Osterode, and Deutsch-Eylau at the end of any impulse. Again, the Germans need to have a minimum of twice the number of Russian victory points to achieve the lowest level of victory with no possibility for a draw.

Masurian Lakes

Here the eastern portion of the map is again the stage for the second assault on the Russian 1st Army. Lasting one turn (seven days) and two impulses (five days total). There are no reinforcements and still no rail movement can be used although the Russians do have a length of track available with which supply can be traced. The German 8th Army has orders to advance while the Russians are dug into trenches with orders to hold.

Victory points are given to the Russians if they can hold Insterburg, Gumbinnen, Tilsit, Suwalki, and Wilkowiszki with units that aren't isolated. Victory points are awarded to both sides for reducing enemy strength points. The same victory levels exist here as with all previous scenarios - the Germans need a minimum of twice as many victory points as the Russians for a tactical victory. Anything less than twice the Russian victory point level and the Russians win.

The Campaign Game

Interestingly, the few hexes that are west of the Vistula River are still not in play even in the campaign game. Presumably these areas would be playable in the linked game or perhaps a future game that

would include a map of eastern Germany. But at least for this campaign game the majority of the map is available. There are five full turns in this scenario and the Russians must attempt to issue modified advance orders while the Germans are to issue the flexible order.

The rail lines are now available for movement as well as supply as well as all of the associated rules for cutting, repairing, and converting rail lines. Both sides receive replacement factors on the third turn of the game, the Russians receiving ten infantry to the German's six and two artillery to the German's one per turn. However, the Germans get twice as many air replacement factors per turn and three times as many rail points per turn.

Victory points in the campaign game are awarded to the Russian player for holding German towns and cities (five and ten victory points respectively) which are awarded at the end of each impulse. Both sides receive one point per enemy strength unit eliminated and the victory level remains the same - the Germans need a minimum of twice as many victory points as the Russians to win.

However, the level of victory is shifted down one if the Russians are forced to abandon their strategic plan before the fourth turn in the game. Thus, if the Russians abandon it on the third turn, the Germans need have only a numerical superiority in points over the Russians to win a tactical victory rather than needing twice as many.

But if the Russians retain their strategic objective at the end of the fifth turn of play then the victory level shifts in the Russian's favor. That would mean even if the Germans had twice as many victory points as the Russians at the end of the game, it would still be a Russian tactical victory. In such a circumstance, the Germans would need three times as many points as the Russians just to eek out a tactical victory.

The Bottom Line

This game has many interrelated rules that exert some subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) effects upon each other. The record keeping is quite high what with all of the unit strength, morale, army supply levels, rail points, formation attachments, and so forth that need to be tracked. Especially for some things such as victory points and supply capabilities of the various depots which need to be tracked manually each turn on a piece of paper. But for the most part the designers have provided many tools to aid the gamers in these tasks with the strength point chits and various charts and tracks.

Of course, the mere need to track such details will be a turn off for some gamers. Those looking for a light beer-and-pretzel game to play one Friday evening should definitely look elsewhere. This is a game rich in details used to portray not just the artillery and infantry combat of the First World War. It also shows the affect command and control, supply, railroads, and inchoate air power had on the ability of those units to effectively carry out the desired orders of their theatre commanders. All the scenarios but Stallupönen are worth repeated playings. In fact, they'll probably get more playing than the campaign game due to the campaign game's size. They also allow players to work out different strategies for each section of the front in preparation for the real thing when players have sufficient time and energy for the campaign.

But it is these details that makes this game so appealing, at least to those looking to be immersed in a gaming experience rather than just rolling a few dice for an hour and the winner is the person who rolled the most sixes. Those who have the patience, perseverance, and willingness to learn the rules and who have the time to play through the game will be rewarded with a rich gaming experience.