

# DEATH OF AN ARMY

YPRES 1914

## Exclusive Rules

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## DEATH OF AN ARMY

“The break-through will be of decisive importance. We must and will therefore conquer, settle for ever with the centuries-long struggle, end the war, and strike the decisive blow against our most detested enemy. We will finish with the British, Indians, Canadians, Moroccans, and other trash, feeble adversaries, who surrender in great numbers if they are attacked with vigour.”

Order of the Day, issued on the 29th of October and found on a dead officer of the XV. Corps

The Battle of the Marne signalled the failure of the Schlieffen Plan and of German hopes to win a quick, decisive victory. In turn, this triggered the Race for the Sea as opposing armies attempted to outflank each other. Then, in a final bid to gain the upper hand, both Allied and German Armies clashed in the First Battle of Ypres. On these fields, the British Expeditionary Force, the professional army of Britain was bled dry.

## 16.0 COMPONENTS

Each copy of Ypres1914 includes the following:

- 1 cover sheet,
- 1 general rules booklet,
- 1 exclusive rules booklet,
- 1 22" x 34" map,
- 3 sheets of 5/8 counters
- 2 players' aid sheet
- 1 scenario setup sheet
- 1 Game Box or Ziploc Bag

A six-sided dice is also needed for play and is provided in boxed versions of the game.

**16.1 The Rules Booklets:** The rules booklets (general and exclusive) contain all the rules required for play. Rules are structured to follow the sequence of play. They are numbered with cross references to related rules used throughout the text.

**16.2 Map:** The map shows the Ypres battlefield in 1914. A hexagon grid has been superimposed to regulate the movement and positions of troops. Map scale is 1,350 yards per hex.

**16.3 Counters:** The 440 counters represent the fighting forces on each side and markers used to facilitate the flow of the game. Counters are described on the players' aids.

**16.4 Playing Aids:** Provided with the game are two player's aid sheet and the reverse of the cover sheet containing charts and tables needed for play. These sheets should be kept at hand during play.

## 17.0 GENERAL RULES

All general rules are in effect except when modified by the rules listed below.

### 17.1 Defensive Fire

British units follow the column labels for British on the Fire Combat Results Table when firing defensive fire.

### 17.2 Stacking

Stacking restrictions are managed by stacking points with a limit of 4 stacking points per hex. Stacking points are printed on each counter.

Stacking is restricted to units of the same division including at

the end of a retreat. British cadre-sized brigade units (the ones worth 1 stacking point) are exempt and may stack with any British division. Note this does not do away with the rule that only one division can attack. (17.3) This means the Cadre unit or any artillery from the cadre units division may not attack or barrage with the division it is stacked with.

### 17.3 Divisional/Corps/Army Restrictions

Attacks may only include units from a single division. Units from the same division may attack a target hex from one or more hexes. Barrages may only include artillery units from a single division and/or one corps or army artillery unit. Exception: 18.2 (see 6.0, 6.3, 7.2).

Defending units may call on defensive fire support from an artillery unit of the same division within range of the defenders.

### 17.4 Line of Communications

German lines of communication (LOCs) are traced to the eastern board's edge, Allies to the western board's edge (see 12.1).

### 17.5 Rail Movement

There is no rail movement in this game. Railroads are printed on the map for historical reference only.

### 17.6 Demoralization

There is no series rules 3.6, Demoralization, in this game.

### 17.7 Forced March

There is no series rules 3.9, Forced March, in this game.

## 18.0 SPECIAL RULES

### 18.1 Corp/Army Artillery

Corps/Army artillery counters are provided, which are managed in each side's offboard artillery box. As they arrive as reinforcements, Corps/Army artillery units arrive face up with their artillery strength and range displayed. During a player's co-ordinated combat phase, the phasing player may use his Corps/Army artillery to assist barrages on the map. After the barrage, the counter is flipped to its "Fired" side. At the conclusion of the co-ordinated combat phase, all fired Corps/Army artillery units are returned to face up for the next turn.

General rules for Corps artillery (see 13.2) are still in effect and include Army artillery units. Corps/Army artillery may only participate in barrages (see 3.3, 6.2) and are limited to one Corps/Army artillery counter per attack. Corps/Army artillery units are exempt from division artillery support rules and may support units from any division within its army (i.e., the German Sixth Army Corps artillery cannot support Fourth Army, French cannot support British, etc.)

Corps/Army artillery is ranged from any friendly, deployed divisional artillery unit of the same army on the map. Being managed off-map, they are invulnerable to any combat (including counter-battery fire).

### 18.2 Independent Brigades and Cavalry

Any number of independent units (units without a divisional designation) and cavalry may participate in a coordinated combat alongside a division. Independent units and cavalry may receive artillery support offensive or defensive from any divisional artillery of the same army, or off board corps/army artillery in a barrage. British cavalry divisions that have their own artillery and may use that artillery on the offense in addition to that of

another division.

*Example- The British 7th Division has two brigades that are eligible to attack a German unit. In addition, a unit of the 3rd Cav and a unit of the 2nd Cav are also adjacent. The British player may barrage with all of the 7th Division Artillery that is in range along with any artillery of the two cavalry divisions that is range and one off-board corps artillery. The two units of the 7th Division may then attack along with the two cavalry brigades.*

### 18.3 British Infantry Brigades

The British infantry brigades are much larger than the regiments of the other side. As a result, each brigade is made up of three steps instead of two. When a reduced unit suffers an additional step loss, replace the unit with a cadre-size unit. (The unit with a stacking value of one and the (X) for size of unit)

### 18.4 British Territorial Army

During the fall of 1914, battalions of the British Territorial Army began arriving. As the fighting around Ypres intensified, these units were thrown in piecemeal to replace battlefield losses.

During designated turns, the British Army receives replacement steps. These are indicated by the # BR indicated on the Turn Record Track, where the # indicates the number of territorial replacement steps.

Each territorial replacement step may be used to increase the strength of any British infantry unit on the map, increasing it from cadre to reduced strength or from reduced to full strength.

An individual unit may receive only one replacement step per turn. Brigades that have been destroyed (3 step losses) cannot be replaced.

Choose the target unit for the replacement step at the beginning of the turn. The receiving unit is then disorganized and must roll one die, losing that many movement points to reorganize (see 7.0).

Territorial replacement steps can be saved from turn to turn, if desired.

### 18.5 French 89th Territorial Division

In order to keep contact with armies to the north, units of the French 89th Territorial Division must stay west of the Yser canal and north of Ypres.

### 18.6 Samson's Armoured Car Group

Air Commodore Charles Rumney Samson, Royal Navy Air Service, pioneered the British use of armoured cars in 1914, creating the RNAS Armoured Car Section.

The RNAS armoured car counter is a small unit with no stacking value. It may stack with units of any British division. It has a fire strength of 1, which may be added as barrage or defensive artillery strength to any unit it is stacked with. It has no melee strength. It cannot be attacked when alone and is retreated if an enemy unit enters the hex (essentially, the Germans treat the hex it occupies as vacant). It is eliminated if it has no retreat option.

The unit has no step loss equivalency. Instead, it may be lost as a consequence of melee combat it is involved in (whether attacking or defending). After melee combat, a die is rolled. If the number is equal to or less than the melee combat result against the British, the armoured car unit is eliminated.

**18.7 French Withdrawal:** On October 20th and 21st the French cavalry units must conduct cavalry withdrawals when attacked. The French 87th Territorial, though infantry, must also conduct withdrawals, using the same rules as cavalry, on these two turns. These French units may not attack on the 20th or 21st.

## 19.0 SETUP & REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULE

Setup and reinforcement information is recorded on the upper-left corner of each counter (front side). Players must sort their counters based on this information prior to play.

**19.1 Setup:** The setup displays the Initial Forces on the players' setup aid. The front side is used for the Campaign game and the Langemark scenario. The back side is used for the Fabeck's attack scenario.

Units on the display are placed on the assigned hexes listed; Or within the range from that hex listed. Artillery may setup in limbered or deployed status.

**19.2 Reinforcements:** The Turn Record Track located on the map includes the list of arriving units. (BR for British, FR for French, and GR for German).

- Allied reinforcements arrive on western map edge hexes.
- German Fourth Army (The darker green German units) reinforcements arrive on the northern map edge hexes east of the Yser Canal (east of hex 0119) and on eastern map edges, north of the German Army boundary line.
- German Sixth Army (The lighter green German units)
- reinforcements arrive on southern map edge hexes east of the British set up boundary and on eastern map edges south of the Lys River

## 20.0 SCENARIOS

There are three scenarios. The first captures the initial meeting engagement of the opposing armies, while the second focuses on the main German attack led by General Fabeck and the final scenario is the entire battle.

### 20.1 Battle of Langemark

**20.1.1 Setup:** Allies setup first using the Langemark setup on the setup sheet, artillery starts deployed or limbered.

**20.1.2 Game Length:** the game starts on October 20 and is played until the completion of the October 24 turn. The German player is the first player

**20.1.3 Victory:** victory is determined by the number of high ground hexes taken by the Germans.

- 0: Allied decisive victory
- 1: Allied substantive victory
- 2: Allied marginal victory
- 3: German marginal victory
- 4: German substantive victory
- 5+: German decisive victory

**20.2 Fabeck's Attack:** See setup on the player chart.

### 20.3 First Battle of Ypres (Campaign Game)

**20.3.1 Setup:** Allies setup first using the Campaign setup on the player chart, artillery starts deployed or limbered.

**20.3.2 Game Length:** the game starts on the October 20 turn

and continues until the end of November 12 turn. The German player is the first player.

**20.3.3 Sudden Death Victory:** At the completion of every turn, game end conditions are judged. If either player completely controls Passchendaele Ridge (the connected high ground hexes stretching from hex 0908 to 1914), the game ends and victory goes to the player who controls the ridge. Control is judge by the complete absence of opposing troops on the ridge, the game continues if the opponent maintains at least one unit on the ridge.

**20.3.4 Victory Conditions:** At the end of the November 12 Turn, victory is judged by the player who controls the most high-ground hexes. Control of a hex is judged as going to the side who manages to isolate the hex from his opponent's side (even if the opponent has isolated units on the hex; see 9.0). Hence, it is important to keep a continuous line of units and zones of control. If a hex is not isolated from either player or is isolated from both players' sides, then the hex goes to the last player to move a unit through the hex.

A summary of major ridge formations is as follows:

- Passchendaele Ridge: 24 hexes
- Kemmel: 8 hexes
- Neuve Eglise: 6 hexes
- Wytshaete: 3 hexes
- 2616: 1 hex

**20.3.5 Exiting the Map:** If a player is successful enough to exit units off his opponent's map edge (that is, exiting German units off the west edge, or Allied units off the east edge), he gains the equivalent of one high ground hex per unit that exits. To exit the map, a unit must be in communication with its own map edge (i.e., not isolated, see 9.0), and must spend one movement point to physically leave the map. Once a unit exits the map, it cannot return to the game.

## 21.0 DESIGNER'S NOTES

For Ypres 1914, I wanted to create a simple, fluid game that moves quickly -- sort of a Napoleon at Waterloo for the First World War. Well, it didn't quite turn out that way - simple, perhaps, fluid, not quite. There aren't many innovative rules per se but one significant departure from most games is the reversal of the movement and combat phases. The decision to begin with a combat phase was intended to capture the general flow of the battle of the Great War. Most attacks were planned overnight and started at dawn of the next day. Generally, troops were positioned accordingly, often in plain sight of the enemy. After the initial attack, communications would falter, and the original plans would disintegrate. It then fell on the initiative on individual commanders leading smaller units to carry it on, with limited artillery support. The former reflects the co-ordinated combat and the latter the hasty combat procedure.

The combat procedure is designed to follow the general tactics employed during the time. While artillery was the principle killing force on the battlefield, tactically, its roll was to suppress the defenders, allowing the assaulting troops a chance to close in and engage. If insufficient firepower was used, the defenders would be provided a chance to inflict losses on the assaulting troops as they approached. The three-step combat system

captures this process. On their own, artillery would not produce sufficient casualties in game terms to be represented by a step loss.

The combat strengths of units are, for the most part, rifle counts - one strength point per 1000 men. This did create some slight asymmetry as numbers were jiggered to capture fractional values. This was deemed acceptable. Also, it gives a bit more variation to the units rather than having them all the same.

One significant departure from this calculation is for the reserve divisions of Fourth Army. These represent the freshly recruited units, raised from primarily from enthusiastic students and old soldiers, trained in less than six weeks. Enthusiasm only carries so far as these young troops were killed in masse in legendary events oft referred to as "the Slaughter of the Innocent."

Artillery strengths were based on throw-weight per minute (rate of fire times the shell weight). This tended to lessen the impact of the heavy guns but given that the entrenchments were minimal and that there were no fortifications, this seemed appropriate. Ranges were set to 85% of maximum range. These details were based on information collected from Wikipedia.

As the game developed, many ideas fell in place. Attacking across the open helped to enable the attacker to engage the defender, even if he does the unsporting tactic of disengaging from a planned attack. Light artillery firing over open sights while in limbered mode best captures fire-and-movement tactics, which was their intended use.

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## 23.0 CREDITS

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