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MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE WORLD WAR

THE EASTERN FRONT

STAFF PRESENTATION

Naval War College
Newport, R.I.
8 November, 1938


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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION
MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE WORLD WAR
THE EASTERN FRONT

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8 November, 1938

1. German Basic Decision. Hold Russia; overwhelm France; then defeat Russia.
2. Eastern Frontier. Enormous theater of war; room for maneuver. Polish Salient: projected into Germany and Austria-Hungary; no natural frontiers; obstacles formed by Vistula River within Salient and Pripyat Marshes.
3. Central Power's Fortified Areas. East Prussia: "Angerapp Line"; forts on Vistula; railway net. Galicia: forts; bases for invasion of Salient.
4. Russian Fortified Areas. Four groups of forts well back from frontier.
5. Franco-Russian Agreement. Offensive at earliest possible moment. Improved Russian Army.
6. Berlin to Bagdad Railway. Vital part of German economic penetration into the East; crossed Serbia; Serbian defeat important.

7. Austrian War Plans. "B": against Serbia, Russia neutral; Serbia invaded; Galicia defended. "R": simultaneous war against Serbia and Russia; weaker invasion of Serbia; bulk of forces in Galicia.

8. Plan "B" Adopted. Reasons; criticism.

9. Serbian Army. Concentrated to resist invasion from north.

10. Austrian 2d Army moves. Kaiser urged use of main forces against Russia; but 2d Army, en route by train toward Serbia, could not be diverted immediately to Galicia.

11. Invasion of Serbia. From west, by 2 armies on wide front; 2d Army, to feint from north but not invade. Austrian dispersion compared with Serbian concentration of force.

12. Battle of the Jadar. Serbians faced west; defeated Austrian north flank and center. Conrad, Austrian Chief of Staff, permitted 1 corps, 2d Army, to invade from north, but Austrian Armies were defeated and withdrew.

13. Criticism of Conrad's Decisions. Use of entire 2d Army: against Serbia, would have defeated Serbians; or, in Galicia, might have saved Conrad from defeat by Russians.

14. Russian War Plans. "G": bulk of Germans assumed massed against Russia. "A": Germans assumed on defensive in east. Under both plans: 2 armies grouped opposite E. Prussia; 3 armies grouped opposite Galicia. 4th Army: to Northwest Group under Plan "G"; to Southwest Group under Plan "A".

If Germans invaded Russia, both Groups to retire, awaiting reinforcements. If Germans took defensive, E. Prussia and Galicia were to be invaded.

15. Russia adopts Plan "A". Information indicated German defensive in east; hence, Plan "A" was adopted, and 4th Army joined Southwest Group.

16. Concentration on Russo-Galician Front. By August 20, 3 Austrian Armies in Galicia faced 4 Russian Armies in southern Poland.

17. Battle of Lemberg, August 23-September 28. Two northern Austrian Armies defeated 2 Russian Armies, but were robbed of victory by advance of 2 southern Russian Armies which defeated 1 Austrian Army before Austrian 2d Army came from Serbian Front. Then, whole Austrian force was driven back 150 miles.

18. Opposing Battle Plans. Conrad believed Russian main forces would be found north of Lemberg and that there would be no heavy attack from the east; planned to strike north and cut off Russians in Polish Salient. Ivanov believed Austrians would advance east; planned to make main attack from east, engage Austrians east of Lemberg, then strike their north flank and cut off retreat. Both commanders made wrong assumptions as to enemy plans.

19. Battles. Five separate, hard-fought battles between individual armies, each battle lasting several days, namely: Battles of Krasnic, Komarov, Gnila Lipa, and Rava Russka, and the Austrian Retreat.

20. Campaign in East Prussia. Took place during same period as Lemberg Campaign. Jilinski had 2 armies; 1st, under Rennenkampf, east of East Prussia; 2nd, under Samsonov, south-east of East Prussia. Von Prittwitz had 8th Army and fortress troops. Russian numerical superiority was offset by German superiority in training, mobility, and artillery.

21. Geography of East Prussia. Country adapted for defense because of lakes, swamps, forests, forts, and railways; "Angerapp Line"; Masurian Lakes.

22. Russian Plan. Mission: Assume determined offensive to cut Germans off from Konigsberg and seize their line of retreat to the Vistula. 1st Army: to advance west, passing north of Masurian Lakes. 2d Army: to advance northwestward, passing south of Masurian Lakes to a line west of the Lakes.

23. Disposition of German Troops. Von Schlieffen had planned that when Russian Armies had become separated by Lakes; whole German force would strike whichever Russian Army first came within striking distance; then, using railroads, move entire army and attack other Russian Army. Von Prittwitz, fearful of this plan, sent 3 corps to oppose Rennenkampf and left XX Corps to meet Samsonov.

24. Battle of Gumbinnen. Rennenkampf defeated 3 corps north of Masurian Lakes.

25. Decision to withdraw. Fearing Samsonov's advance south of Lakes, von Prittwitz decided to withdraw entire Army behind the Vistula; asked von Moltke for reinforcements. Von Moltke sent Hindenburg to command, with Ludendorff as Chief of Staff, and 2 corps from Western Front (corps arrived after Tannenberg).

26. Troops to Right Flank. Before Hindenburg and Ludendorff arrived, von Prittwitz' staff persuaded him to start movement of troops from Gumbinnen to right (south) flank to oppose Samsonov, using railroads to utmost.

27. Rennenkampf Halts. Surprised at absence of Germans in his front and believing them badly beaten, Rennenkampf halted near Gumbinnen for 3 days so as not to hasten German retreat and thus give Samsonov better chance to cut them off.

28. Samsonov's Advance. Samsonov met German XX Corps near Tannenberg before its reinforcements arrived and pushed back its left.

29. Battle of Tannenberg. German troops from Gumbinnen arrived on right of XX Corps and attacked Samsonov's left; other forces struck his right; his center was well in advance; but, he ordered his center to attack. Germans counterattacked on all sides, surrounded, and destroyed Samsonov's Army.

30. First Battle of the Masurian Lakes. Rennenkampf withdrew and entrenched on line from the Baltic to the Masurian Lakes.

Hindenburg planned to engage Rennenkampf in front, then turn his left and rear by movement between the Lakes. Attack succeeded; Russian left was defeated. Rennenkampf ordered general retreat and, under cover of violent counterattack, finally got away after suffering heavy losses, retreating well into Russia.

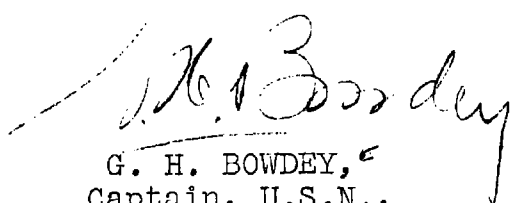
31. Comments on Operations in East Prussia. German strategy: excellent. Hindenburg and Ludendorff received great credit, but Hoffman planned troop movements that made possible Tannenberg victory and Francois, by disobeying Ludendorff's order, made that victory complete. Russians separated their armies by impassible obstacles, thus permitting defeat in detail. Better plan would have been to advance, with both armies on united front, north-westward from Warsaw-Bialystoc, passing south of the Lakes and cutting German communications.

32. Russian Front, 1915-1918. Polish Salient captured from Russia, 1915; other extensive operations, 1916; after 1916, Russian effective military operations ceased and situation became static with Russians on line; Riga-Roumanian Border.

32. Serbian Front, 1914-1918. Late in 1914, Austrians invaded Serbia but were again repulsed. Fall of 1918, German, Austrian, and Bulgarian forces conquered Serbia; road from Berlin to Constantinople now open and controlled by Central Powers.

33. Western Front, 1918. Summary of events, ending with the Armistice.

34. Conclusions.


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MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE WORLD WAR

THE EASTERN FRONT

1. GERMAN BASIC DECISION.

We have discussed the Military Strategy of the World War on the Western Front, the von Schlieffen Plan and its alterations, the French Plans, and the operations resulting from these plans. You will recall that the basic decision governing the German Plans was to take the offensive in the West, while holding defensively in the East, and then, after defeating the French decisively within what was expected to be a very few weeks, to turn toward the East, and concentrate sufficient forces on that front to defeat Russia.

2. THE EASTERN FRONTIER.

SLIDE 1.

SLIDE 2.

The theater of war in the East differs greatly from that in the West. The principal characteristic is its size. As one historian aptly expresses it: "In the West the armies were too big for the country; in the East the country was too big for the armies". There was plenty of room for maneuver and the fighting never did stabilize as in the West and descend to the level of trench warfare. Sixteen or seventeen armies, each approaching two hundred thousand men, were in constant movement against the enemy, sometimes grouped in twos and threes, some-

times acting in convergent combination, yet always separated from one another by wide gaps of undefended and almost unwatched country. Everywhere and always, the flanks were exposed to hostile strategy and maneuvers.

The outstanding feature on the front was the Polish Salient. Russian Poland projected into Germany and Austria-Hungary some 230 miles from east to west and was about 200 miles from north to south. It was bounded on the north by East Prussia; on the west, by the Germanic states of Posen and Silosia, abutting upon the highly-important industrial and mining areas of the latter state; and upon the south by Galicia, an Austro-Hungarian state. At its extreme west point, it was only 180 miles from Berlin. There were no natural frontiers, broad rivers, mountain chains, or desert tracts separating Poland from Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Vistula River, a broad, deep, and sluggish stream, flowed diagonally across the salient, northward to the Baltic, and formed a considerable obstacle to military operations. To the west of the Vistula, there is an open, undulating, cultivated plain; to the east, the country becomes increasingly marshy and wooded, until some 70 miles east of Warsaw, an invader would be confronted by the 300-mile barrier of the Pripyat Marshes. This forms a great military obstacle, with roads few and far between and villages rising as separate islands among the swamps. Near the center of the salient, was Warsaw, a city of 800,000 popula-

tion, strongly fortified and containing great quantities of military supplies. It was the center of several radiating railway lines.

3. CENTRAL POWERS' FORTIFIED AREAS.

East Prussia, to the north, is a land of lakes, marsh, and forests, containing better roads than Poland or Russia. Its principal military feature was the chain of lakes and fortifications known as the "Angerapp Line". This line lay thirty miles from the frontier and extended north and south some sixty miles. It could not be pierced and could be avoided, in an invasion, only by marching westward along the Baltic shore towards the ports and fortress of Konigsberg, or northward from Warsaw toward Danzig, at the mouth of the Vistula.

The Angerapp Line was but an outwork in Germany's eastern defenses. The main line of defense followed the Vistula by way of the fortress of Graudenz to Thorn, thence via Posen to Breslau. These last three places were fortresses, elaborately prepared to act as bases of field armies, and strongly garrisoned by fortress troops. All were connected by a network of strategic and commercial railways - a system second only in efficiency to that on the Western Front.

Galicia, to the south of the salient, is a wooded, rolling, well-watered region, the southwestern border of which follows the crest of the Carpathian Mountains from 4,000 to 8,500 feet high,

but crossed by several railways and easy passes. The three principal cities of Galicia, (Cracow, Przemsyl, and Lomberg,) were all fortified. They formed a line of strongly defended areas and depots designed strategically to serve as bases for an invasion of the Polish salient.

4. RUSSIAN FORTIFIED AREAS.

Thus it is evident that the defense of the salient against invasion presented a very difficult problem for the Russian General Staff. The western flank was impossible to defend, for all Russian forces west of Warsaw were exposed to attack from the flanks and the rear. Likewise, a Russian invasion of Silesia was practically impossible so long as East Prussia and Galicia were held by the enemy. Therefore, the Russians had prepared an elaborately defended line well back from their own frontier, extending from Kovno, on the north, through Warsaw, to Dubno, and consisting of four groups of forts. Opposite East Prussia, the line of the River Niemen, was defended by the fortresses of Kovno, Olita, and Grodno. The River Narev, which flows into the Vistula from the northeast below Warsaw, was protected by five fortresses. In the center, lay the triangle of fortresses at Warsaw, Ivangorod, and Brest-Litovsk, with a subsidiary system, including Novo Georgievsk, near Warsaw. Facing Galicia in the south, was a smaller triangle of forts near Dubno. Warsaw, Novo Georgievsk, Ivangorod, and Kovno were in course of being modernized at the outbreak of war, but the others were out of date and largely dismantled.

5. FRANCO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT.

Since 1906, both France and Russia had been bound "on the first news of German mobilization to mobilize all their forces without previous discussion". Every year the relations between the French and Russian Staffs had become more intimate. Both Staffs believed that Germany would use her main force against France and, initially, only a minimum against Russia. Both agreed that their armies should take the offensive at the earliest possible moment, and that their first and chief objective would be the destruction of the German Army. In the 1913 Conference, General Joffre stated that France would concentrate 1,500,000 men by the tenth day of mobilization and would begin operations on the eleventh. General Jilinsky declared that Russia would, in 1914, be able to move against Germany by the thirteenth day with 800,000 men, apart from the forces deployed against Austria-Hungary. After the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Army had been thoroughly reorganized and greatly improved. It was vastly superior in every way to what it had been. This is evidenced by the fact that the Russian mobilization in 1914 was accomplished on schedule time.

SLIDE 3.

SLIDE 4.

6. BERLIN TO BAGDAD RAILWAY.

From the viewpoint of Germany, the defeat of Serbia by Austria was important. When Wilhelm II became Emperor of Germany,

that country was becoming an industrial power, and colonial expansion became of great importance. The Kaiser cultivated Turkish friendship in order to advance his plans for economic penetration into Mesopotamia and Persia. The Berlin to Bagdad Railway was a vital part of this economic penetration into the Near East and towards the Far East. German plans went well until the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, August 10, 1913, which ended the Second Balkan War. As a result of this treaty, there was formed an anti-German barrier across Germany's route to Turkey. The Berlin to Bagdad Railway entered Serbia at Belgrade and ran toward the southeast via Nish, thence on into Bulgaria and Turkey. Thus, Serbia, being on the side of the Allies in the World War, closed that part of the railway crossing her territory and frustrated, for a time, Germany's desires.

7. AUSTRIAN WAR PLANS.

SLIDE 5.

SLIDE 2.

Field Marshal Conrad von Hotzendorf was the Austrian Chief of Staff and had prepared the war plans. It will be remembered that the agreement between Germany and Austria called for Austria to withstand the Russian blow while Germany was disposing of France. Conrad believed thoroughly in the offensive against Russia with an attempt to cut off the Polish Salient by an advance from the South. He seems to have believed that Germany would aid by attacking with seven or eight army corps from the

north; whereas, we know that the German plan called for using initially not more than four corps, and they were to be used on the defensive.

The Austrian War Plan "B" (Balkan) was for a war against Serbia and Montenegro, with Russia Neutral. According to it, three of the six armies were to invade Serbia, the Fifth and Sixth from the west and the Second from the north, while the other armies took precautionary defensive positions against possible Russian invasion of Galicia. Plan "R" (Russia) was for a war against Serbia and Russia, simultaneously. In this case, only the Fifth and Sixth Armies, much weaker than the others, were to invade Serbia from the west, while the other four armies were to go to Galicia. Under both plans, the Fifth and Sixth Armies were to mobilize in Bosnia and Herzegovina, west of Serbia; the First, Third and Fourth Armies, in Galicia; and the Second Army near Budapest, midway between them, prepared to move toward either front.

3. PLAN "B" ADOPTED.

As previously discussed, Austria sent an ultimatum to Serbia on July 23, began to mobilize on the 25th and declared war on Serbia on the 28th.

Let us consider some of the factors leading up to Conrad's decision as to which Plan to put into effect. It was known that Russia might enter the war if Serbia were invaded.

It was generally believed, however, that Serbia could be subjugated within three weeks and that then the bulk of the Austrian troops used against Serbia would be available for the later phases of the opening battles with Russia. Conrad is known to have even hoped that a rapid, thorough overwhelming of Serbia might be completed without interruption by other Powers. He states in his account of his actions: "Meanwhile there was danger that Russia would seize Austria's upraised arm, might threaten war or even actually resort to it. From a military point of view therefore the most desirable thing would have been to take the initiative against this danger and to treat the war against Serbia as a side-show. But to do this on the strength merely of the possibility of Russian intervention was out of the question, since if Austria acted thus the obligation on the part of her allies to cooperate would lapse. Moreover, Austria would thereby incur the grave charge of letting loose a world war, whereas the war against Serbia was merely a brutally imposed action of self-defense. For the diplomats the situation was clear. It was otherwise for the Chief of the General Staff, who on the one hand must keep before him the rapid and decisive war against Serbia, but on the other must be prepared suddenly to divert everything towards a war with Russia".

Opposed to this point of view, we find these considerations; quoting Winston Churchill: "The life-- and death -- fortunes of

the Austro-Hungarian Empire depended upon the Russian action. If Russia invaded Austria, every man would be needed. Until a battle had been fought between Russia and Austria no entanglement of Austro-Hungarian forces in Serbia could be tolerated. If on the other hand Russia, confronted with the armed might of Germany, lowered her sword, the chastisement of Serbia would be easy and sure. A very few days would settle the question one way or the other. Conrad had only to reply to those who pressed to strike down Serbia: 'We shall know very soon whether it is to be Plan B or Plan R, and I insist upon that delay, even if we lose our advantage against Serbia' ".

Conrad adopted Plan "B" calling for the use of three armies against Serbia.

9. SERBIAN ARMY.

SLIDE 3.

SLIDE 6.

Northern Serbia is bounded on three sides by the Danube and its tributary, the Save, into which the Drina flows. On the north, lay Austria; on the west Bosnia, annexed by Austria.

The Serbian Army consisted of about 200,000 men, and was organized into three armies, each of which was not much stronger than an Austrian Army Corps. Leaving detachments to observe the frontier and to resist invasion, General Putnik assembled his armies in the center of northern Serbia facing north, with the left near Valjevo. The Austrian and Serbian concentrations were, of course, but parts of the general European

concentrations made in August, 1914, as shown by this slide.

SLIDE 5.

SLIDE 6.

10. AUSTRIAN SECOND ARMY MOVES SOUTH.

In accordance with Conrad's decision, the Austrian Fifth and Sixth Armies concentrated west of Serbia and the Second started south toward the northern Serbian border. On July 31, the Russian mobilization was in full progress and the Kaiser telegraphed to the Emperor of Austria that he had ordered mobilization, beginning August 2, and was (quoting) "prepared, in fulfillment of my duties as an ally, to begin war against Russia, immediately. In this momentous struggle it is of the greatest importance that Austria should direct her main forces against Russia and should not divide her forces by an offensive against Serbia." The Second Army being on trains en route south, no course was open but to allow its eight divisions to complete their journey, detrain at their appointed sidings, proceed to their assembly points, and then re-entrain for the trip to Galicia. Conrad ordered that it would not enter Serbia, but would begin its movement toward Galicia on August 18.

SLIDE 7.

11. INVASION OF SERBIA.

General Potiorek commanded the invading army. He knew the orders given to the Second Army, nevertheless he ordered

his Fifth and Sixth Armies to cross into Serbia upon two widely separated and divergent lines. The Fifth, advancing on August 12, was to reach Valjevo on the 17th; the Sixth, starting between August 14-18, was to move on Uzhitze. The Second was to make a feint at crossing the Save from the north near Mitrovitza and Shabatz but was not to invade. As a result, the Austrian Fifth Army, six divisions, might expect to meet ten Serbian divisions, for the Sixth Army was out of contact, wandering off to engage a small Montenegrin force and one and one-half Serbian divisions coming from Uzhitze. While the Austrians were thus dispersing their strength, the Serbians concentrated their force by keeping their three armies in a central position. General Putnik, realizing his desperate situation, found safety by running risks, determined to hurl his whole strength at whichever of his encircling foes **first exposed themselves to battle.**

SLIDE 7.

SLIDE 8.

12. BATTLE OF JADAR, AUGUST 16-17.

The direction of invasion being discovered, Putnik swung his Third and Second armies to face west, behind the Dobrava and Jadar Rivers, followed by his First Army, in Reserve prepared to guard against attacks from the north. By August 15, the right of the Austrian Fifth Army had reached the Jadar, near Krupanj and Zavlaka; the left was approaching the Dobrava, which flows into the Save below Shabatz; the center was farther to the west than the flanks.

The next day there began the Battle of Jadar on a front of thirty miles. The Serbian left, being threatened on both flanks by the advance of the Austrian XIII Corps, fell back; but, on the north and in the center the Austrians were repulsed. Particularly in the center, their losses were severe; one division was routed and fled and the entire VIII Corps was driven back across the Drina.

SLIDE 5.

SLIDE 8.

13. AUSTRIAN SECOND ARMY DIVIDED.

That night, Conrad left Vienna for Galicia, where on August 17 he learned Potiorek's unpleasant news. The latter had demanded the full support of the Second Army, which was to begin movement on August 18 for Galicia. A few minutes later, the Second Army reported the retreat of the Austrian north wing and that its own IV Corps was advancing on Shabatz to their assistance. Conrad realized that the departure of the Second Army might well result in the defeat of the Fifth and the failure of the campaign. On the other hand, if used against Serbia almost certain victory would result, which might bring Bulgaria and Turkey - enemies of Serbia - into the war as allies of Austria and Germany. Meanwhile, the Russian forces were assembling in great strength beyond the Galician frontier, thus demanding the concentration of the greatest possible Austrian

forces on that front. Faced with this dilemma, he divided the Second Army. He permitted the Second Army to use the IV Corps towards Shabatz, if this was judged necessary to gain success.

14. BATTLE OF JADAR, AUGUST 18-19.

The Battle of Jadar continued on August 18 and 19. Although the IV Corps from the Second Army drove back the Serbian right, the Serbian Second Army, reinforced by a division from the First Army in reserve, drove back the Austrian center, while the Serbian left held its own. The whole Fifth Army was now in a poor situation. Its men were exhausted and supplies of ammunition and food were running low. Its center and left were retiring. Hence, Potiorek ordered the general retirement of the Austrian forces beyond the Drina.

15. CONRAD'S DECISIONS CONCERNING SECOND ARMY.

We have noted the failure of General Potiorek to concentrate the forces under his command for use against a smaller army, caused by the separation of the Fifth and Sixth Armies and their unconnected objectives; also, the concentration of force employed by General Putnik where it could be used in the decisive direction, and his use of reserves at the decisive moment. But the principal lesson to be learned is from a consideration of Conrad's decisions. First, he committed himself to moving the Second Army toward Serbia, instead of to Galicia. Next, he divided it, furnishing from it insufficient forces to permit a victory in Serbia. As a result of these two decisions,

it was not until about the last of August that the Second Army began to arrive in Galicia, too late to be of assistance at the critical time. It should have been required to fight somewhere at the crucial moment, but its power was wasted in two theaters. "It left Potiorok before it could win him a victory. It returned to Conrad in time to take part in his defeat."

16. RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION.

SLIDE 9.

SLIDE 2.

The order for general mobilization, signed by the Czar at noon, July 30, involved in European Russia and the Caucasus about 2,700,000 men in addition to some 900,000 special reserves and fortress troops. The arrival of various Asiatic army corps, beginning with the thirtieth day of mobilization, would raise the total to about five million men, of which two-thirds were combatants.

17. RUSSIAN WAR PLANS.

Russia had alternative mobilization plans depending upon the expected action of her opponents. Plan "G" was for a war in which the bulk of the German forces would be massed against Russia; Plan "A" (Austria) contemplated Germany on the defensive in the east. In both plans, the field armies were to be divided into the Northwest Group (First and Second Armies) and the Southwest Group (Fifth, Third, and Eighth Armies). The Fourth Army was to be added to the Northwest Group under Plan "G";

or to the Southwest Group under Plan "A". The Sixth and Seventh Armies were to protect the flanks. All Russian Poland was to be evacuated west of the Vistula when war began so as to insure an unhurried concentration. The Northwest Group was to concentrate along the East Prussian frontier and the Southwest Group along the Galician frontier.

If Germany invaded Russia at the outset, both groups were to retire towards a line running north and south through Brest-Litovsk and behind the Pripyat marshes, abandoning all of Poland, including the fortresses about Warsaw and along the Vistula and Narev. If necessary, there would be a further retirement to gain time for the arrival of more Asiatic troops,

If Germany remained on the defensive in the east, the Northwest Group was to invade East Prussia, and the Southwest Group, Galicia. This was to be in preparation for an assembly east of Warsaw for a combined advance into the center of Germany.

SLIDE 10.

SLIDE 6.

18. RUSSIA ADOPTS PLAN "A".

The Grand Duke Nicholas assumed command of the armies operating against Germany and Austria as soon as war was declared. By August 6, it was learned that the main German forces, including those along her eastern frontier from Pomerania, Posen, and Eastern Silesia, were entraining for the West. It was evident that Plan "A" would come into force; hence, the Fourth

Army joined the Southwest Group. The Russian concentration proceeded according to that plan and the two groups moved toward their respective objectives.

We will consider, first, the operations on the Galician Front; later, the operations in East Prussia.

19. CONCENTRATION ON RUSSO-GALICIAN FRONT.

SLIDE 11.

SLIDE 2.

By August 20, the Austrian armies were facing Russia on the general line: from Lemberg to Cracow, in the following order from right to left: Third Army (Brudermann); Fourth (Auffenberg); and First (Dankl). The flanks were covered by army groups under Kovess on the right, and Kummer on the left.

The Russian Southwest Group under General Ivanov concentrated covering the general front from Ivangorod to the border of Roumania, in the following order from right to left: Fourth Army (Salza), Fifth (Plehve), Third (Ruzski), and Eighth (Brusilov). In addition, during this period two new Russian Armies were forming; the Ninth at Ivangorod; the Tenth, east of Warsaw.

SLIDE 11.

20. BATTLE OF LEMBERG.

From August 23 to September 28, 1914, the Russian and Austrian forces fought the Battle of Lemberg along a 200-mile front. At first, two northern Austrian armies defeated two

Russian armies. They were robbed of victory by the advance of two southern Russian armies upon Lemberg, which defeated one Austrian Army before the arrival of the Second Austrian Army from the Serbian front. The whole Austrian front was then driven back 150 miles and only reformed behind the Wisloka River.

SLIDE 12.

There were five separate hard-fought battles between individual armies, each battle lasting several days. There were involved 648 Austrian battalions against 720 Russian battalions and between 500,000 and 600,000 men were lost or killed.

SLIDE 11.

21. OPPOSING BATTLE PLANS.

Conrad believed that the main Russian force would be found between Lublin and Kholm and that there would not be a heavy attack towards Lemberg from the east. He was still hopeful that the Germans in East Prussia would move south; hence, he planned to strike northward into Poland so as to cut off large Russian forces in the salient. On August 22, he, therefore, ordered the First Army to advance northward toward Lublin and to cross the Tancv River and occupy the high ground beyond it. He ordered the Fourth Army to move toward Kholm on the following day, and the Third Army to remain in front of Lemberg and prevent any interference from the east.

Ivanov believed the Austrians would advance east, not north. His plan was to make a mass attack, not from the north, but from the east. The Eighth and Third Armies, beginning August 18-19, were to march west, crossing the frontier by the 22nd, with their right toward Lemberg and their left on the Dniester. This was expected to cause the Austrians to face east, meanwhile the Fifth Army starting from near Kholm on the 22nd, was expected to strike the Austrian north flank when the battle east of Lemberg began. The Fourth Army was to move south at about the same time as the Fifth towards the San River and beyond, and thus be ready to cut the enemy's probable line of retreat towards Przemsyl and Cracow, while the Eighth Army would prevent their retreat south.

Both commanders were equally in the dark. Their assumptions were exactly contrary to the facts. The Russian right, seeking to turn Conrad's left met his main offensive, and the Austrian right was soon overweighted by the advance of the Russian left.

22. BATTLE OF KRASNIK, AUGUST 23-25.

SLIDE 12.

We will now discuss the five great battles, beginning with the Battle of Krasnik.

SLIDE 11.

SLIDE 13.

The Russian Fourth Army left its concentration area near Lublin before all its effectives and transport had arrived, for little real opposition was expected in the near future. It was ordered to advance across the San to a position west of Przemsyl. Early on August 23, the advance guards of the Russian Fourth and the Austrian First Armies collided head-on just north of the Tanev River. At first, neither side could make much progress, but in the afternoon, the Austrian left Corps came into action and the Russian right was driven back upon Krasnik. Battle was renewed the next day, but by night the Austrians had superior numbers which caused the Russians to fall back about three miles. On the 25th, General Dankl ordered his right and center to hold, while his left enveloped the Russian right. This movement caused the Russian right to give way; followed in succession by the Center and left; and the Fourth Army fell back four miles.

23. RUSSIAN REINFORCEMENTS.

Neither the Grand Duke nor Ivanov could understand why so much Austrian strength was in the west nor how the Austrians could ignore the westward push of the Russian Third and Eighth Armies on Lemberg. They concluded, therefore, that the Austrians confronting the Fourth Army were there to cover the flank and rear of the Austrian armies; and they decided to crush this force. The XVIII Corps of the newly formed Ninth Army was rushed south from Ivangored to turn the left of the Austrian First Army, and the Russian Fifth Army was directed to strike its right and rear.

24. AUSTRIAN PREPARATIONS FOR FURTHER ATTACK.

Conrad was highly elated with the success at Krasnik, but had not sensed the strong attack coming from the east. As his Fourth Army was by this time almost on a line with the right of the First Army, he ordered it to take the offensive between the Bug and the Vistula. He also drew three divisions from his right (Third) Army to assist in this offensive. His optimism was shared by Brudermann, commanding the Third Army, who, despite the loss of the three divisions, asked permission to move north and east on the 26th to envelope a Russian column which had been reported about forty miles east of Lemberg, moving towards the West. Conrad agreed and Brudermann ordered his reduced Third Army, together with most of Kovess' Army Group, to march north and east on the 28th.

Thus we see the sole defense of the Austrian right not only giving away a quarter of its strength to aid in the northern battle, but confidently advancing north and east against what was believed to be a weaker foe, while the left two Russian Armies of greatly superior strength were advancing slowly towards Lemberg from the east on an eighty mile front.

SLIDE 12.

From the 26th onward, therefore, two separate battles (Krasnic and Komarov) began and raged simultaneously some 30 miles apart, each reacting continually on the other.

25. BATTLE OF KOMAROV, AUGUST 26-28.

SLIDE 11.

SLIDE 14.

The Battle of Krasnik continued on August 26th. General Ewarth, who had displaced Salza in command of the Russian Fourth Army after his defeat at Krasnik on the 25th, was reinforced on his right by the XVIII Corps, against the left of the First Army. Farther to the east, there began the Battle of Komarov between the Austrian Fourth and the Russian Fifth Armies. As Plehve's Fifth Army, pursuant to the Grand Duke's orders, wheeled toward the southwest to strike Dankl's (First) Army's right flank, he exposed his own flank to attack by Auffenberg's (Fourth) Army. Both Plehve and Auffenberg underestimated the forces opposed to them. Auffenberg immediately decided to attack, his left moving on Zamosc and his right on Komarov.

The initial direction of march favored the Austrian Fourth Army which struck the various corps of the wheeling Russian Army. By evening August 26, Auffenberg's flanks were five to

SLIDE 11.

SLIDE 15.

ten miles farther advanced than his center. The next day, fighting continued with little change in the situation. Plehve, still underestimating his opponent's strength, continued his wheel.

On the night August 27-28th, the right flank division of the Austrian VI Corps marched into and through the outpost of the Russian Vth Corps. The Russians waited till the mass of the division was crowded upon a long stretch of banked-up road across a swamp; then opened a devastating fire from all sides. The Austrian division was thrown into confusion and after suffering four or five thousand casualties, the remnants escaped, leaving four thousand prisoners and twenty guns in Russian hands. In the darkness, panic spread to other divisions. This delayed until late afternoon, August 28, the whole attack of Auffenberg's center and right.

SLIDE 11.

SLIDE 16.

In the meantime, the three divisions under Archduke Joseph detached from the Third Army, came up on Plichve's left and had some success. Auffenberg's enveloping movement was progressing satisfactorily and, by the morning of August 29th, his situation promised great success.

26. THE BATTLES OF THE GUILA LIPA, AUGUST 26-30.

SLIDE 12.

Before going farther with this action, we must now turn to the fighting east and southeast of Lemberg which had been going on during the same period.

SLIDE 11.

SLIDE 17.

On August 26th, the Austrian XII, III and XI Corps, of the Third Army, had advanced to the Zlota Lipa against what they believed were decidedly inferior forces. The Russians, in greatly superior strength, were advancing cautiously because they still believed that three Austrian armies were in their front, but they were prepared for quick deployment. On **contact**, the Austrians attacked, but were overwhelmed, and by nightfall, were in full retreat, with two divisions so panic stricken that they only rallied in Lemberg, 25 miles away. Conrad, upon receipt of reports of the battle, finally realized that the Russians were in force against his right; hence, at 8:00 a.m. August 27th, he ordered the Third Army to retire to a line close to Lemberg; also, he ordered Auffenberg to return to Brudermann his three divisions, under Archduke Joseph, which were attached to the Fourth Army. Later, upon receipt of more encouraging reports, Conrad modified his orders so that the Third Army would stop at the Guila-Lipa and the three divisions would remain with Auffenberg.

Ivanov continued his arrangements to continue the attack against the Austrian Third Army. On August 30, his Third and Eighth Armies delivered an irresistible attack. The Austrians were completely defeated. The roads leading back to

Lemberg were filled with a mass of terror-stricken men, absolutely disorganized, and intermingled with fleeing inhabitants of the countryside. By nightfall, the Austrian Third Army was finally halted eighteen miles from the field of battle.

27. CONRAD'S DECISION TO CONTINUE BATTLE OF KOMAROV.

SLIDE 12.

SLIDE 16.

Conrad at his headquarters at Przemsyl was now faced with the necessity of making a momentous decision. Since the morning of August 26, two great battles had been going on. To the north, at Komarov, Auffenberg was about to surround Plehve and gain a decisive victory. To the east, his Third Army had been shattered and great Russian masses were but a day's march from Lemberg and within three days' march of the lines of communication and supply for both Austrian Armies to the north. He hoped to off-set the defeat of his Third Army by a brilliant victory in the north, but needed two more days in which to do so. He decided to secure for Auffenberg the two days required and to endure for that space the hourly increasing peril from the East. As it turned out, the Russians took that length of time to regain contact with the Austrians near Lemberg, for they had advanced slowly and cautiously.

28. BATTLE OF KOMAROV, AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1.

Let us see what use Auffenberg made of his opportunity. On August 30, the Austrian First Army, still engaged with the

Russian Fourth Army about Krasnik, to the westward of Luffenberg, had captured Krasnostav and thus threatened to separate the Russian Fifth and Fourth Armies. Plohve's Fifth Army was in a critical position and might well be surrounded altogether. In fact, that night he had issued orders for immediate retreat. Luffenberg's plan for August 31 was simple; on the right, Archduke Joseph with his three infantry divisions, and two cavalry divisions, was to advance westward to the Huczwa and to destroy bridges over the Bug; on the left, Archduke Peter, with a similar infantry force, was to envelop the Russian right flank; in the center, the Austrians were to press forward at every point. There were no other Russian forces near enough to interfere. One more thrust on either flank, and the encirclement of 100,000 men would be complete.

SLIDE 12.

SLIDE 13.

But now the fortunes of war intervened for the Russians. Archduke Joseph on the Austrian right received an airplane report that a Russian division was marching up behind him on the east. On the left, the Archduke Peter received a report from cavalry patrols that Russian battalions were encircling the northern flank of his enveloping movement. Both archdukes took similar action; Joseph sent back his cavalry and parts of two infantry divisions to protect his rear; Peter

withdrew his whole force seven miles to the rear; the Russians under Plehve marched out of the trap in good order. As it turned out, there had been no real danger on either flank; on the right the reported Russian division really consisted of only a few cavalry squadrons with horse artillery, scouting on the extreme north flank of the Russian Third Army; on the left, the reported Russian battalions did not even exist.

It was not until the morning of September 1st that Auffenberg realized what had happened. Then, he ordered the advance resumed and his whole army set out in pursuit. But it was too late. Although thousands of prisoners and many guns were captured, Plehve's army had escaped.

29. AUSTRIAN THIRD ARMY FALLS BACK.

SLIDE 12.

SLIDE 17.

East of Lemberg, the Third Army was trying to hold its position, but both flanks were threatened; Russian pressure was increasing, panic had caused the flight of one infantry division and one cavalry division: hence, Brudermann asked permission to fall back. Conrad approved and the Third Army withdrew twenty miles to a line of lakes and marshes west of Lemberg.

30. CONRAD'S PLANS, SEPTEMBER 2.

SLIDE 12.

SLIDE 19.

The general situation was now apparent to Conrad. His Third Army had retreated west of Lemberg and he expected that

the Russians would continue to follow it. He had observed that the general tendency of the Russian advance was inclining constantly northward. By this time, his Second Army had rejoined him from the Serbian front and it now was in line on the south, overlapping the Russian southern flank. On September 2, he ordered the Second Army to advance upon the left and rear of Brusilov's (Eighth) Army enveloping that flank; the Fourth Army (Auffenberg), to abandon the pursuit of Ploche and to turn right-about toward the south so as to strike the right and rear of Ruzski's (Third) Army. If the Russian left wing continued its pursuit to the west, it would thus be struck simultaneously on both flanks. On paper, it was a bold, formidable plan. Unfortunately for Austria, however, her armies were weary and battle-worn, and the task was more than they could perform.

31. THE GRAND DUKE'S PLANS, SEPTEMBER 2.

By September 2, the Grand Duke knew that the main Austrian forces were near Krasnik and Komarov many miles north of Lemberg; and that the longer the Austrians who had fled from east of Lemberg remained on the Vereszysta or in the general vicinity of Lemberg, the greater would be his chance to destroy them. Hence, he had no intention of pressing any further advance from the east. His new Ninth Army, descending the Vistula from Ivangorod, was now coming down on the left and rear of the Dankl's (First) Army, while Ewarth's (Fourth) Army was attacking it in front - the decisive strategic thrust which he had planned from the first. Moreover, on the night September 1-2, he had received

SLIDE 2.

word of the Russian disaster at Tannenberg in East Prussia. He was deeply concerned with Plohve's situation and did not know whether or in what condition he might escape.

SLIDE 20.

SLIDE 19.

Therefore, he ordered Ruzski's (Third) Army to turn from westward to north-westward and march to Plohve's aid, and Brusilov's (Eighth) Army, less two corps to be left confronting the Austrian right, to incline to the north in touch with Ruzski.

32. AUFFENBERG'S SITUATION, SEPTEMBER 2.

As a result of Conrad's and the Emperor and Duke's orders, Auffenberg moved somewhat southwest expecting to strike Ruzski, whom he supposed to be moving west, in flank. At the same time, Ruzski was moving northwest to hit Auffenberg in rear. Neither commander could understand what was happening. As the truth gradually dawned on them, Ruzski turned west to attack Auffenberg, but the latter in two days, with much difficulty and considerable skill, succeeded in changing front to meet the attack.

In the meantime, farther to the south, the Austrian Second Army, whose movements we have considered at some length, had made no headway against the weak Russian south flank.

33. BATTLE OF RAVA RUSSKA.

SLIDE 12.

SLIDE 21.

(a) Situation, September 8.

By September 8, we find the Second, Third and Fourth Austrian Armies in line facing east confronting the Eighth and Third Russian Armies. Forty miles to the northwestward, we find the First Austrian Army facing the Fourth and Ninth Russian Armies. Opposite this gap in the Austrian line, and as yet unconscious that there was a gap, were the Fifth Russian Army and a Russian cavalry corps (Dragomirov).

(b) Conrad decides to attack Russian South Flank.

But Conrad was still looking for decisive victory and, realizing that his Second and Third Armies had only the Russian Eighth Army in their front, he decided to order these armies to advance and strike that army in flank, while his Fourth Army attacked the Russian Third Army. But before he could issue these orders, he received a message from Dankl (First) Army that he was forced by the situation to retire behind the San River. Nevertheless, Conrad issued the orders for attack.

(c) Battle on September 9.

On September 9 both sides attacked simultaneously and the fighting was terrific. The Austrian Second and Third Armies, despite their local superiority, made no progress. Neither Ruzski nor Brusilov were able to break the Austrian line. By nightfall, the fronts were practically unchanged.

(d) March around Auffenberg's flank, September 10-11.

SLIDE 22.

SLIDE 21.

But the final blow, destined to bring about the Austrian retreat, came from the north. On September 10, Dragomirov's cavalry corps penetrated deeply into the gap between Auffenberg (Fourth Army) and Dankl (First Army), followed by Plehve's Fifth Army, passing by the left flank of the Archduke Joseph's three divisions. The whole of this force was already in rear of Auffenberg's left, when, early on September 11, Auffenberg's wireless picked up a Russian message, sent in the clear, ordering Plehve to reach Cieszanow and Brusno that day. These small towns were several miles in rear of Auffenberg's left flank. Conrad sent orders for Archduke Joseph to march against this Russian force, but Auffenberg realizing the condition of Joseph's divisions, reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 men by eighteen days' continuous marching and fighting, did not pass on the order. Instead, he at once ordered his army to retreat southeast, and was guided further to safety by other intercepted Russian messages.

SLIDE 12.

SLIDE 23.

34. AUSTRIAN RETREAT.

At last, Conrad realized that he was beaten and that retreat was the only course of action left to him. At 5:30 p.m.

September 11, he issued orders to withdraw his entire force behind the San River.

It is a coincidence that this retreat began within two days of the time when von Moltke acknowledged his failure on the Marne and ordered the German right and center to withdraw.

The Austrian retreat was terrible. There was little fighting power left in the Austrian forces. After crossing the San, Conrad found his forces too disorganized to turn to meet the pursuing Russians. Hence, he ordered the retreat to continue to the Dunajetz, which flows into the Vistula more than 130 miles west of Lemberg. The Russian pursuit stopped soon after crossing the San and the Austrians were thus enabled to reform between the Dunajetz and the Wisloka and along the Carpathians.

35. CAMPAIGN IN EAST PRUSSIA.

SLIDE 6.

We will now consider the Russian campaign in East Prussia which was taking place during the same period as the campaign near Lemberg which we have just discussed. The initial concentrations at this time on all European fronts are shown on this slide.

36. OPPOSING FORCES.

SLIDE 24.

SLIDE 2.

General Jilinski, who as Russian Chief of Staff had a year before made the final secret arrangements with the French for mutual cooperation in a war against the Central Powers, was given command of the Russian Forces on the northwestern Russian Front. His forces consisted of two nearly equal armies; the First under Rennenkampf, located near and south of Kovno; the Second, under Samsonov, along the Narov River.

Opposed to the Russians, there were in East Prussia, only the Eighth German Army, some cavalry, and the fortress troops, all under the command of General von Prittwitz. Of the fortress troops at Konigsberg, Thorn, and other minor forts, about four or five detachments, each equalling about one brigade, could be made available for field operations.

Comparing the forces, we find that Russia had 20 infantry divisions (organized into eight army corps) and $8\frac{1}{2}$ cavalry divisions, against 11 infantry divisions (organized into four army corps) and 1 cavalry division of the Germans. This gave the Russians a great numerical superiority, but comparing unit with unit, we find that each German infantry division, although numerically weaker than a Russian infantry division, had a greater fighting strength than the latter because it contained fifty percent more artillery. Also, we find that the German troops were better trained, had better officers and non-commissioned officers, were more mobile because of ample motor and rail

transportation, and were especially superior in the amount of medium artillery and in the efficiency of their signal communications.

37. GEOGRAPHY OF EAST PRUSSIA.

The configuration of East Prussia offered an excellent opportunity for a concentric advance from northwest Poland. But the terrain over which the Russians were to advance was exceedingly difficult. The movements of troops were restricted by lakes, swamps, and forests which made the country peculiarly adaptable for defense. On the Russian side of the border, roads and railways were few and far between, thus handicapping Russian movements and the services of supply. In East Prussia, the mobility of German forces was facilitated by many good roads and a strategic network of railways.

Considering East Prussia, from north to south, we find:

First, the area more or less fortified surrounding the fortress of Königsberg;

Second, the Insterburg Gap, extending some 43 miles northwest from the Masurian Lakes, flat farming country, except for several forest areas, and suitable for movement of all arms; but blocked from advance from Russia by an excellent line of defense formed by the Angerapp River;

Third, the Masurian Lakes Position, a line of continuous lakes extending 50 miles from Angerburg to the frontier south of Johannisburg, the few gaps between the lakes being protected by

field works and, at Lotzen, by a fort; the whole forming an impregnable front capable of defense by a few troops; and,

Fourth, the frontier extending 75 miles westward from Johannisburg; on the Russian side, a sandy, forest waste, with marshy streams, practically no roads; deliberately left a waste as a defensive measure against Germany; on the German side, wooded and close, but with good roads.

38. RUSSIAN ORDERS FOR THE ADVANCE.

On August 13, General Jilinsky issued orders to his army commanders for the advance into East Prussia.

The Mission of the forces was to assume a determined offensive, with the object of cutting the enemy off from Konigsberg and seizing his line of retreat to the Vistula.

The First Army was to advance westward from a north and south line near the frontier, southwest of Kovno, to the line: Insterburg-Angerburg (a line extending about 30 miles to the north of the north end of Masurian Lakes), turning the Lakes by the north. Cavalry, with infantry support, was to cross the border on the morning of August 16; the army corps, to cross the next day, the 17th.

The Second Army was to advance northward from a line close to the border west of Grodno, to and beyond an east and west line, west of the Masurian Lakes, passing in flank and rear of the Lakes. Cavalry, with infantry support, was to cross the border on the morning of August 18; the army corps, to cross the next day, August 19th.

39. DISPOSITION OF GERMAN TROOPS.

SLIDE 24.

SLIDE 25.

Von Schlieffen had left a plan for defense of East Prussia. At a certain stage of the Russian advance, their armies for several days would be separated by the Lakes, with no lateral communication, and no chance for mutual support. His plan was to throw the whole German army at that time against whichever of the armies first came within effective striking distance; then, using the excellent railway system, to move around and strike the other army. Many a war-game, with all its attendant railway time-tables had been played in accordance with this plan in the years before the war.

Whatever happened in the preliminary battles, it was von Prittwitz' duty not to be cut off, or so mauled that he could not form a continuous fighting front along the Vistula. The situation was so delicate and momentous, that von Prittwitz felt from the outset that it was an unsolvable problem.

As a result, he compromised by sending the XX Corps to await Samsonov's Army and the I Corps to delay Rennenkampf, while the XVII and I Reserve Corps were to be held near the center.

General von Francois, commanding the I Corps was a man of great vigor, with an unruly temper, who at times verged on the insubordinate. He could not bear the idea of surrendering

German soil to an invader, so he vehemently urged Prittwitz to allow him to attack as soon as Rennenkampf had crossed the frontier. For this offensive, he urged that the rest of the Eighth Army be sent to his aid for he believed there would be time enough to get back and turn on Samsonov. Von Prittwitz compromised again; he left his XX Corps to meet Samsonov, as planned, and sent his two other corps from the center to join Francois.

40. BATTLE OF GUMBINNEN.

SLIDE 26.

During August 17-18, the Russian First Army crossed the border and after a fierce advance guard action, formed for battle on August 20 just east of Gumbinnen. Francois' I Corps surprised the Russian right at dawn and drove it back seven miles in disorder. General von Bulow's I Reserve Corps on the German right made some progress. The XVII Corps, under General von Mackensen, in the center, made a frontal attack without surprise and with little or no artillery preparation. The Russians had entrenched. They opened a devastating fire which repulsed the attack, many of the Germans fleeing in panic. This defeat caused the German right to stop its advance.

41. PRITTWITZ DECIDES TO WITHDRAW.

SLIDE 27.

Von Prittwitz, in his headquarters nearly 75 miles from the battlefield, had awaited with great anxiety the result of

this first collision with Russian Forces. The impressions he gained from the reports were most unfavorable. The results certainly were not good and, it probably seemed to him, that at best the battle was a draw. He could not afford a drawn battle when another Russian Army was approaching him from the south, but was glad that he still had the XX Corps in that direction. He feared that the vast Army coming from the direction of Warsaw might overwhelm his XX Corps and cut off the retreat of his other forces. The line of the Vistula seemed his only refuge. And then, at 6:30 p.m., the definite news reached him that long, heavy Russian columns had been seen crossing the border on the front Soldau-Ortelsburg. His staff were doubtful about giving him this information, but it had already reached him. He announced his decision to withdraw. His staff and particularly

SLIDE 28.

his generals in the field were against this decision and urged renewal of the Battle of Gumbinnen for they felt sure they could defeat Rennenkampf, even without the XX Corps. But, Prittwitz was determined to break off the battle and retire behind the Vistula.

42. PRITTWITZ TELEPHONES VON MOLTKE.

Instead of relying on his competent staff and acting only with them, he took independent action without their knowledge. He telephoned to von Moltke, told him the situation and his decision, and asked for reinforcements. Von Moltke received

the impression that Prittwitz was unequal to his task, so at once looked for some one to succeed him.

43. HINDENBURG AND LUDENDORFF.

General von Hindenburg had retired some years before and had not as yet been recalled to active service. He had served many years in East Prussia and knew it thoroughly, better than any other general in Germany. Von Moltke decided that he was just the man to take over command in East Prussia, so on August 22, he telegraphed for him. Von Moltke also selected Ludendorff as Chief of Staff for Hindenburg.

44. LUDENDORFF'S ORDERS.

That same day, Ludendorff, from General Headquarters at Coblenz, telegraphed orders to the Eighth Army; some reinforcements from the fortress garrisons were to join that Army; the Army staff was to meet him at Marionburg; and the various corps were to be handled independently until Hindenburg could arrive. He then took a special train, picked up Hindenburg at Hanover, and the famous combination of Hindenburg and Ludendorff was on its way to East Prussia.

45. GERMAN TROOPS MOVED TO RIGHT FLANK.

SLIDE 29.

Meanwhile things had been happening at Prittwitz' Headquarters. On August 20, while Prittwitz, unknown to his staff was telephoning von Moltke, General Hoffman, Chief of the

Operations Section, VIII Army, finally convinced Waldorsee, Chief of Staff, that the retirement could not be made without another battle because Samsonov's Army was 30 miles closer to the Vistula than the German forces which had been engaged that day at Gumbinnen. When Prittwitz reappeared, they persuaded him that he must fight another battle even to retreat.

Under the impulse of Hoffman, a series of movements was planned which would strain to the utmost the East Prussian railways, but which practically without alteration concentrated the forces for the Battle of Tannenberg. All the troops engaged at Gumbinnen were to break contact and retire as fast as possible. Francois' I Corps, and the 3rd Reserve Division of the I Reserve Corps, were to entrain 20 miles west of the battle-field, and in 48 hours were to be carried to the right flank of the XX Corps. Mackensen's XVII Corps and Bulow's I Reserve Corps were to march to the rear as far as possible so as to turn south and join the left of the XX Corps if circumstances should require or permit.

Thus on the night of August 20, Prittwitz' decision to fall back to the Vistula had been cancelled by him and every move had been made by his staff for the coming battle. He did not inform von Moltke of these changes, nor his own staff of his telephone conversation with von Moltke. The latter, thinking that Prittwitz and his staff had failed, did not think it worth while to inform them of the change in army commanders.

When Ludendorff arrived at Marienburg on the evening of August 23rd, General Hoffman reported the troop movements then in progress. He agreed with them all and made no changes. Says Hoffman "I found him extremely surprised to learn that all the instructions and orders necessary for the intended attack on the Russian Warsaw army had already been given".

SLIDE 30.

This slide shows the main strategic plan for the Battle of Tannenberg.

46. GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS SENT TO EAST PRUSSIA.

Von Moltke, thinking that the Russian forces had been under-estimated and having received favorable reports concerning the operations on the Western Front, decided, on August 25, to reinforce the VIII Army. He allotted six Army corps for this purpose, but four of them (two each from the center and the left wings of his western armies) could not at once be disengaged. The other corps, the XI and the Guard Reserve, from his right wing armies - that is, from his main attack under the Schlieffen Plan - were sent to East Prussia. They arrived there after the Battle of Tannenberg had been won by the Germans.

47. EFFECT OF WITHDRAWAL OF GERMAN LEFT.

The Russians were distinctly surprised on the morning of August 21, to find no Germans in front of Rennenkampf's Army and decided that the Germans must have been severely beaten. Jilinski urged forward Samsonov's Army. Samsonov turned his advance more toward the west. Rennenkampf remained nearly three

days near Gumbinnen so as not to hasten the German retreat and, thus, give Samsonov a chance to cut off more German troops.

48. SAMSONOV'S ADVANCE.

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SLIDE 31.

During August 23, Samsonov's three center corps, advancing northwest, came in contact with the German XX Corps, which had been reinforced by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ divisions. Francois' troops coming from Gumbinnen by rail had not yet reached the right of the XX Corps. That corps gradually swung its left back, partly from pressure and partly from design, until by August 25 its left was facing east while its right was facing south. By that night, one reinforcing division had reached the left of the XX Corps, and Hindenburg ordered the troops to hold their ground.

49. SITUATION AUGUST 25.

SLIDE 30.

SLIDE 32.

On the 25th, the German wireless at Konigsberg picked up two uncoded messages stating exactly what the two Russian armies were to do. In the early morning, the first message stated that the Russian First Army would not reach the line: Gerdauen-Allonburg-Wehlau, until the next day, thus making it certain that Samsonov could receive no aid from that army. In the afternoon, the second message showed that Samsonov believed the rearward

wheel of the XX Corps' left was part of a general retirement and that he had only to pursue; thus indicating that he would not attack before the next day.

50. AUGUST 26.

General Francois's troops began to arrive on the right of the XX Corps during the night August 25-26. Ludendorff ordered Francois to attack at dawn to relieve the pressure on the XX Corps. Francois protested vehemently because much of his artillery and all of his ammunition trains had not arrived. It took the weight of Hindenburg's authority to make Francois obey. Even then, his attack on August 26 was delayed and his troops were so restrained that little progress was made that day. In the meantime, the Russian VI Corps, protecting Samsonov's right, collided with Mackensen's and Bulow's Corps and was badly defeated and fled some 20 miles to the south.

51. BATTLE OF TANNENBERG.

SLIDE 30.

SLIDE 35.

At daybreak, Francois attacked near Usdau and drove back Samsonov's left corps in disorder. By nightfall, we find Samsonov's Army in a terrible predicament. His right (VI Corps) had been thrown back in great disorder; his left (I Corps) had been similarly treated; his center is far in advance, the XV Corps having been heavily engaged for three days, the XIII

Corps several miles farther north but meeting little opposition. Nevertheless, at midnight, August 27, he ordered his center to continue the attack.

SLIDE 30.

SLIDE 34.

On the 28th, the Germans counterattacked. The XX Corps advanced successfully. Mackensen and Bulow moved westward so as to help the XX and also to be in position to defend the rear and flank against any move by Rennenkampf. Francois, on the right, attacked vigorously to the east and reached Heidenburg by nightfall.

That night, Francois was ordered by Ludendorff to turn toward the north in the direction of Lahna. This would have resulted in virtually abandoning any serious attempt to round up the Russian center. Francois' advance troops were half-way from Heidenburg to Willenberg along a road running due east, within a few hundred yards from the edge of the forests to the north. Francois disobeyed the order. Instead, during the entire 29th he hurried his troops eastward, building up as he went a long line of detachments to hem in the Russians when they should try to escape toward the south. With 25 battalions, he strung his command out over a length of 50 kilometers.

52. RUSSIAN DISASTER.

SLIDE 30.

SLIDE 35.

The next two days saw the end of the tragedy. Samsonov's Army was destroyed and he committed suicide on the battlefield. The Germans captured 92,000 unwounded prisoners, of which number Francois' command took 60,000, and 30,000 wounded prisoners. Out of five army corps, three and one-half had been lost in dead, wounded and prisoners.

SLIDE 36.

53. RUSSIAN DEFENSES.

Having learned of Samsonov's fate, Rennenkampf knew that the Germans would attack him. He, therefore, withdrew his forces eastward and entrenched them on a line extending through Wehlau and Angerburg from the Baltic to the Masurian Lakes, with special attention given to the passage between the Lakes at Lotzen.

54. GERMAN PLAN OF ATTACK.

SLIDE 37.

SLIDE 36.

Having destroyed Samsonov, the Germans were faced with the necessity of disposing of Rennenkampf. Plans were at once begun to accomplish this. Two fresh army corps (Guard Reserve and XI) had arrived from the Western Front.

The German plan of battle was to engage Rennenkampf on the line from the Lakes to the Baltic and then turn his left flank and rear by a movement between the Lakes. Of course, there was a chance that Russian forces in Poland might strike the turning movement in flank, but that chance had to be taken.

The XX, XI, I Reserve, and Guard Reserve Corps, comprising eight divisions, were to attack the position in front, while the I and XVII Corps and the 3d Reserve Division (a total of five infantry divisions and the cavalry) were to make the turning movement. The remaining three infantry divisions were to be used toward the southeast to guard the right against any Russian advance from Warsaw or the Narva River.

55. FIRST BATTLE OF THE MASURIAN LAKES.

It required four days to regroup the forces in preparation for the advance, which began on September 5. The Germans facing Rennenkampf advanced slowly and drew up in his front by August 7th, but did not attack until the 9th. Meanwhile, Francois' Corps on the 7th and 8th had taken, in succession Biella and Arys. Then Francois, with two divisions, turned north, sending his 3rd Reserve Division to the east against Lyck. At the same time, Mackensen (XVII Corps) marched through the Lotzen Gap, but was stopped beyond it by the Russians. The cavalry with Mackensen was blocked by transport and unable to pass the gap.

SLIDE 37.

SLIDE 38.

On September 9, there was fighting all along the line. Neither the frontal attack nor Mackensen's force could make any progress against the Russian resistance. But Francois' two divisions, starting at daybreak, turned the Russian flank and struck the left and rear of the Russians confronting Mackensen, while the 3rd Reserve Division defeated a Russian force at Lyck. The whole Russian line opposite the gap broke in confusion losing 5,000 prisoners and sixty guns to Francois. His two divisions had marched 77 miles in four days, with deploying and fighting during two of them.

56. RENNENKAMPF RETREATS.

As soon as Rennenkampf learned of this disaster, he issued orders for the immediate general retreat of his whole army. To cover the movement, two divisions near the center made violent counter-attacks against the Germans on September 10. The German XX Corps was staggered by the blow and unable to resume its advance for two days. The counter-attack accomplished its purpose and Rennenkampf's Army escaped to the Niemen. The Germans pursued until the 14th, but were unable to overtake the main forces.

The Russian main forces actually covered 55 miles in 50 hours while still remaining in ranks. Rennenkampf's losses were

about 45,000 captured, 100,000 casualties, and 200 guns.

57. COMMENTS ON GERMAN OPERATIONS IN EAST PRUSSIA.

The excellence of the German strategy at the First
SLIDE 30.

SLIDE 39.

Battle of the Masurian Lakes and at Tannenberg, as indicated by these slides, is obvious. Hindenburg and, especially, Ludendorff received great credit for these victories. They were the stepping-stones by which Ludendorff rose to effective control of the whole German War. However, it must be borne in mind that the troop movements which made possible the victory at Tannenberg were ordered by von Prittwitz on the initiative of General Hoffman and were well under way before Hindenburg and Ludendorff arrived; also, that if Francois had obeyed Ludendorff's order on August 25th to make what would have been a premature attack, and his order on the 28th to advance in a direction which undoubtedly would have enabled the mass of the Russians to escape southeast, the victory would have been far from complete.

Winston Churchill says: "The credit of the victory belongs in large measure to the General Hoffman, but its glory must forever be associated with General von Francois, who though commanding only a single corps acted with that rare alternation of prudence and audacity which is characteristic of true soldierly genius, and who upon his justly founded convictions defied Ludendorff and gained for him a dazzling victory against his orders.

That this opinion, harsh as it may seem to Ludendorff, has now been accepted in German military circles, may perhaps be inferred from the photograph of the Tannenberg decennial celebrations, in which Francois is accorded the place of honor, even Hindenburg himself, the President of the Republic, being proud to sit "upon his left hand".

58. COMMENTS ON RUSSIAN STRATEGY.

The Russian strategic plan which ended in their disaster at Tannenberg and their defeat in the First Battle of the Masurian Lakes brings to our attention the chances taken by a commander who separates his forces by an impassible obstacle.

The objective of the Russian invasion was to cut off East Prussia from the rest of Germany and to reach the line of the Vistula River from Thorn to Danzig and thus remove the threat of attack against the northern flank of the Russian forces when they began their eventual invasion of the heart of Germany from the direction of Warsaw.

One may well ask why the Russian strategic plan ever contemplated an advance of two separate armies considering all the advantages this gave to the Germans with their lakes, fortifications, and network of railways.

A better plan would seem to have been to have advanced with both armies on a united front northwestward from the Warsaw-Bialystok line towards the Vistula. Such a march would have

passed to the westward of the Lakes, intercepted all German communications, crossed all railways, dislocated all German plans, and swept out of existence all German schemes for changing the bulk of their forces, almost overnight, from one flank to the other.

From the German viewpoint, it seems that the Russians did the very things which the German strategic plans were designed to defeat.

59. RUSSIAN FRONT, 1915-1918.

SLIDE 40.

SLIDE 2.

Time does not permit discussion of the remainder of the war on the Eastern Front. The Polish Salient was captured from Russia in 1915. During July, August and September, 1916, Germany and her allies employed 1,800 battalions on that front compared with 1,300 on the Western Front. The losses during this period were over 600,000 for the Central Powers and more than one million for Russia.

SLIDE 41.

SLIDE 2.

After 1916, effective military operations ceased insofar as concerned Russia; the situation there became practically static, with Russia occupying a line extending roughly from Riga to the Roumanian border.

In March 1917, the Russian Government was overthrown, and on the 15th, the Soviet Government issued Order No. 1, which destroyed the discipline of the troops and delivered the army over to rule of elected committees. The soldiers ceased to fight the foreign invaders and turned against their own officers.

60. SERBIAN FRONT, 1914-1918.

Between the end of August and December 15, 1914, the Austrians made further efforts to conquer Serbia but were repulsed.

SLIDE 42.

SLIDE 4.

In September 1915, at a conference between Conrad, Falkenhayn, and Gautschov of Bulgaria, which country was by this time in the war on the side of the Central Powers, it was decided to operate against Serbia to eliminate her forces and establish direct communication with Turkey by the railroad from Belgrade through Sofia. The force concentrated against Serbia, composed of German, Austrian and Bulgarian troops, was 330,000 men opposed to less than 200,000 Serbians. The advance into Serbia began on October 7, 1915 from the north and east. The invasion was

SLIDE 43.

SLIDE 4.

successful and by November the remaining 150,000 Serbians had retired south and west across the border into the Albanian Mountains. Serbia was now out of the war. The road from Berlin to

Constantinople was open and entirely under control of the Central Powers.

61. THE WESTERN FRONT, 1918.

SLIDE 44.

SLIDE 45.

In spite of the Russian collapse in 1917, large bodies of German and Austrian troops remained upon the Russian front until the Armistice. Even in October, 1917, there were still eighty Teutonic divisions in the East, but at the close of that year, Ludendorff requested the transfer of a million men - fifty divisions and 5,000 guns - to the Western Front.

If Germany was to win in 1918, it could be done only by a successful attack on a large scale before the Allies had become too strong. The United States was now in the war and increasing numbers of American troops were arriving on the Western Front. Every available man was moved to the Western Front by Germany. Artillery was massed until there was actually one gun for every eleven yards of front. Immense ammunition supplies were accumulated.

On March 21, 1918, the German offensives were launched south of Arras and south of St. Quentin. Other offensives were begun on May 27 and July 15. The Allies were pushed back 50 miles and, while no break-through occurred, the July attack came near to disaster for the Allies. But, the German advance was finally stopped.

Increasing numbers of American divisions sufficiently trained for combat now gave superiority in man-power to the Allies. On July 18, Foch began to strike successive blows all along the line and the initiative permanently passed to the Allies.

SLIDE 44.

SLIDE 46.

The Germans prepared for a desperate defensive. By September 25, the Allies were ready for a great offensive at several places and, though the German defense was stubborn, they were gradually forced back. When Bulgaria collapsed, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, on September 29, demanded that the German Government ask for an Armistice.

Continued pressure and the debacle in Turkey and Austria in October broke the will of the German people. Imperial Power was defied, there was mutiny in the Fleet, the Army felt itself deserted by the homeland. As a result the Armistice was signed at 11:00 a.m., November 11, and hostilities ceased.

CONCLUSIONS.

In conclusion we will review briefly some of the outstanding characteristics of the campaigns on the Western and Eastern Fronts.

We have noted concentration of a superior force at the decisive point successfully carried out by Joffre at the Battle of the Marne; by Hindenberg at Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes, and by Putnik at the Battle of Jadar in Serbia; conversely the dispersion of force by the Russians in East Prussia, and by the Austrian Potiorek in his operations against the Serbians before the Battle of Jadar; also, the failure of von Moltke to make his main attack with sufficient strength at the Marne.

We have observed the mobility of the Germans in East Prussia as they made use of their excellent railroads to disengage action against Rennenkampf and to concentrate against Samsonov; also, the mobility of the entire German right wing during its advance through Belgium into France.

There was no coordination of effort between Samsonov and Rennenkampf in East Prussia; and, for a time, very little of it between the British and the French early in the Marne Campaign,

There was absolute lack of cooperation between the British and the French 5th Army at an early stage of the Campaign on the Marne because of mutual, personal dislike of the commanders of these forces. For a similar reason, von Kluck and von Bulow did not always cooperate with each other to the fullest extent.

Joffre was able to concentrate secretly his 6th Army outside the German western flank at the Marne, due in large meas-

ure to insufficient reconnaissance by the Germans. For similar reasons, the Russian left-flank armies at Lemberg were able to concentrate secretly for an advance in the decisive direction and actually advanced for several days without discovery by the Austrians. On the other hand, Russian plans and movements frequently were divulged to their enemies by lack of secrecy in the use of their wireless.

Joffre surprised the German right at the Marne not only by the secrecy of his concentration but by the weight and place of the attack but surprise alone did not insure the victory; likewise, the Austrians were surprised by the Russian left wing at Lemberg.

The movement of Francois' forces from Rennenkampf's front to Samsonov's left was far from being a simple maneuver; but, it was highly successful. On the other hand, Auffenberg's plan of attack to envelop both of Plevne's flanks at Komarov was simplicity itself, yet it failed because of unforeseen circumstances - the reports of imaginary enemies threatening his own flanks.

Although the offensive was undertaken by the Germans against the French before the Battle of the Marne, by the Austrians against Serbia and against southern Poland, and by the Russians against East Prussia, in all these cases, the invading forces were unsuccessful in accomplishing their respective missions; Conrad and Francois both were strongly imbued with the

spirit of the offensive, but with opposite results.

It was not until the Allied Armies on the Western Front were united under one Supreme Command that they were able to bring the war to a successful conclusion; however, there were other very important factors involved and unity of command alone was not responsible for the success.

Loyalty to high commanders and willing subordination to their orders were, of course, prime factors in most successes; nevertheless, there were examples of the lack of it which sometimes gained decisive results. Francois and von Kluck both lacked the proper spirit of loyalty to their superior commanders at times; and both disobeyed orders on occasion. In Francois' case, especially, his disobedience of Ludendorff's orders to turn northward at Tannenberg resulted in making that battle a more decisive victory for the Germans than otherwise. However, in judging such disobedience, it must be remembered that the commander who disobeyed made a decision based on information which he had and which the higher commander lacked.

Von Kluck was so indoctrinated with the spirit of the von Schlieffen Plan that he frequently obeyed unwillingly or took independent action not in accord with von Holtke's conception of the campaign. Nevertheless, we can hardly say that indoctrination is a fault.

While Conrad was at times extremely decisive in his actions, he showed great indecision with respect to the use of his 2nd Army before it was sent to Galicia.

We have reviewed these characteristics simply to show that there is not one fixed set of principles applicable to all cases; also, to emphasize the fact that each situation differs from every other situation to such an extent that what may be the proper action in one, may not be applicable in another.

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THE EASTERN FRONT

Given by Colonel Clement H. Wright, U.S. Army,

Date November 8, 1938

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