

1914:Dispatches

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Hans Korting

(translation of a Dutch review for Ducosim)

In 2007 GMT Games published 1914: Twilight in the East by Michael Resch. This monstergame, containing 2.240 counters and 4 maps of 22"x34" depicts the battles fought on the Eastern Front in 1914. Where many games focused on the Western Front, Twilight in the East shows how interesting this first year on the Eastern Front during World War I really was.

In Prussia, Poland, and Galicia the armies of Germany and Austria-Hungary clashed in a hard fight with the Russians. The battle of Tannenberg is easily the best known, but there was so much more. This was already visible in the game, but with 1914:Dispatches, Michael Resch adds even more on top of this.

This first 1914:Dispatches was supposed to support the game 1914: Twilight in the East. Did it succeed doing so? Absolutely!!!

The magazine, 64 pages, contains a wealth of information about this first year of the war on the Eastern Front. It looks a bit like Avalon Hill's The General, but the quality is much better. All the articles are accompanied by clear, color printed maps that are really helpful and allow you to follow the text easily, and so the strategic plans of the belligerents.

Next to a lot of deep information about the battles themselves, there is a lot to learn about the strategies used, the mobilizations, the structure of the Austro-Hungarian army, the train of thought of the officers maneuvering the armies around on their maps, and the distrust between the German and Austro-Hungarian commanders.

Rian van Meeteren depicts the status of the Austro-Hungarian army in the period leading up to the First World War. He not only shows what Austria-Hungary looked like, but also the many languages spoken and the way this influenced the organization of the Austro-Hungarian units. It allows the reader to gain a good understanding of this. Some charts give a good overview of the mix of the many languages spoken and differing population segments.

Michael Resch shows what a disastrous mobilization took place in Austria-Hungary and how this affected the war. He also shows, using Player Notes, how the battles raged in Galicia and uses game map hex numbers to show what happened, and where the critical points are. A fantastic way of using Dispatches, and the game, to learn about this part of the war. Next to this the strengths of the participating armies are compared using charts. A true feast for the analysts among us.

The historical articles also use the hex numbering, allowing you to follow the war with your maps on the table.

Dispatches also contains a new introductory scenario on the battle near Ivangorod, a new scenario covering the battles near Lodz and Kracow, and a 'What if?' scenario using the Austro-Hungarian mobilization plan of the winter of 1913/1914 as its starting point. To do this, some new counters have been printed inside the magazine (which can also be

downloaded from the website www.consimgames.com). Plan is to include them in GMT's C3i magazine using the bonus countersheet. (with a bit of luck they might even appear shortly)

Michael Resch shows 'guts' by admitting that he misjudged the Victory Conditions of the Campaign Game and a revised edition is printed in Dispatches. By a well thought out and analytical article, loaded with historical information, he tells about this revision and why he did this. Dispatches also contains 2 new player aid cards that solve 'problems' encountered during game play; read automation of the game system, modifiers, and such.

With the knowledge that Michael is working on a game covering the first year on the Western Front I already look forward to a similar publication covering this.

I can only conclude that 1914:Dispatches is a 'must have' for every owner of GMT's 1914: Twilight in the East. But also non-gamers can learn a lot from Dispatches. I do not think that you will find that much and well written information on the war at the Eastern Front in 1914 anywhere.

Highly recommended!