NEAR EAST 1915

INTRODUCTION

Near East 1915 retraces WW1 in the Middle Eastern theater, which pitted the Entente (Britain, Russia and their allies) versus the Ottoman Empire, the first eager to expand their territories at the expense of the declining Ottoman Empire. The Entente player must seize the key objectives of the Middle-East. The Ottoman Turkish player must try to repel the multiple assaults and, above all, prevent the collapse by also securing some local gains (Yemen, Persia, Causasu) and holding on Turkish core.

From February 1915 to November 1918, the Middle Eastern theatre of World War I saw the Entente Powers—primarily Britain, Russia, and Arab insurgents—fight to dismantle the Ottoman Empire.

The Opening Offensives period of 1915 started with the failed Ottoman attempt to seize the British-controlled Suez Canal and the bloody Allied defeat at Gallipoli. In the following years, war expanded across multiple fronts, including the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and Sinai, while the British-backed Arab Revolt crippled Ottoman railway lines and supply hubs.
In late 1917, British imperial forces captured major strategic milestones — including Baghdad, Jerusalem, and Damascus — drastically weakening Ottoman resistance.
The campaign ended in 1918 after a brief but failed upsurge of the Ottoman Empire.

Players represent the Entente and the Central Powers in campaign stretching from Suez to Persia and Gallipoli to Kuwait.

- The Entente seeks to claim the main objectives in Turkey and the Near East, to force the collapse of the Ottoman Empire
- The Ottomans must resist on 3 fronts and preserve the future by delaying the surrender, or even taking key objectives.

The Ottoman Surrender index will determine the winner (if it exceeds 10 at any time, Entente wins).

Event cards will renew the game through a variety of diplomatic, military and political fluctuations.

DURATION

Average Duration: 6h30
Favored Side: None
Most Difficult Side to Play: Ottomans

The scenario lasts 91 turns (between February 1915 and November 1918), each representing around 2 weeks.

The Entente player begins, followed by the Ottoman player.

FORCES

The Entente player controls the British (beige), ANZAC (beige), British Indian (sand), Royal Flying Corps (light blue) and Royal Navy (blue), French (dark blue), Hijaz Arab Revolt (yellow), Kuwait (pink), Russian (green), Bolshevik Russian (purple) and rebel Persian (light green) units.

The **Ottoman player** controls the Ottoman Turkish (red), Arabic vassal troops (dark red), German (grey), Saud Tribe (green), and Persian (light green) units.

MAPBOARD

The map represents the Near East (from Mediterranean Sea to Persia and from Turkey to Arabia), and covers different theaters: European Turkey, Anatolia, Caucasus, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, Arabia, Egypt.

Russian units may only enter Caucasus and Anatolia, and later Persia (via Event).
The British forces are limited the West (Europe, Egypt, Syria-Palestine) for the EEF EEF (Egypt Expeditionary force) or the Easr (Mesopotamia, Persia) for the MEF MEF (Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force)
Hijaz Arab units may only enter Arabia and Palestine-Syria.

MAPBOARD

Three Ottoman armies cannot leave Europe I II V (I, II and V, color coded in blue), although they may detach units via cards to assign them to other theaters.

Two Ottoman armies cannot leave Anatolia and Caucasus III IV (III, IV, color coded in khaki), although they may later enter Persia.

Other Ottoman armies with specific theater designations are limited to those theaters, such as :

Me Mesopotamia, Sy Palestine-Syria (and Egypt), Hj Hijaz, Ym Yemen or Pe Persia.

The Ottoman «Ylderim» YL (Lightning) army appears late (1917 or 1918) and is a powerful army with no geographical restrictions.

Regarding Off-Map boxes, the terrain effects more or less the same as on the main map, but movement costs (including connections) are usually 1 point higher. However, restrictions for difficult terrains (e.g. Mountains, Deserts) do not apply.

There are also 3 different railroad (RR) lines indicated on the map with a year date next to them. Those lines do not exist at the begining of the game but can be constructed by either side when they play (and pay) the relevant cards allowing to complete those unfinished RR.

The Suez canal can be crossed by land movement (as a major river) and all regions adjacent to it are to be considered when checking for control of the Canal.

The British Empire (connection is one-way only to Cairo) and British India can only be entered by British Empire forces.

VICTORY

IMMEDIATE VICTORY

For the Entente player if all Ottoman units are eliminated from the game or if Constantinople is captured. It also wins if the Ottoman Surrender index exceeds 10 at the end of a turn (see special rules).

For each player if he reaches or exceeds 50 VP at the end of a turn.

Failing that, the player with the most victory points (VPs) at the end of the game wins.

VP BONUS

VP gain upon capture:

- The Entente player gains 1 VP if he controls one of the following cities: Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, Gallipoli, Adana and Erzurum.

- The Ottoman player gains 1 VP if he controls one of the following cities: Kars, Tiflis, Tehran, Aden.

- The Ottoman player gains 2 VP if he controls at any time any and each of Port Said, Suez and Cairo.

VP gain at end of game:

- The Entente player gains 1 VP for each of following cities: Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, Gallipoli, Madinah, Tehran, Baku, Adana and Erzurum.

- The Ottoman player gains 2 VP at the end of the game for the control Baku, Tehran, Aden, and any region in Egypt (per region).

SPECIAL RULES

ECONOMIC PHASE

There is one such phase on Turn 1 (exceptionally), then only during even-numbered turns starting Turn 2.
Income for both sides mostly come from regions and boxes, with the values printed on the map.
The Ottoman player also receives extra income when playing German assistance and support cards.

SUPPLY SOURCES

- Ottoman player : All boxes in Turkey, Damascus, Baghdad.
- Mixed: Cairo, Aden, Tehran, Tiflis, Baku, Basra.
- Entente player: British Empire, British india, Alexandria, Cyprus.

THE OTTOMAN SURRENDER INDEX

The index represents the slow disintegration of the Ottoman Empire during WW1.
It starts at level 0 and will grow by +1 every 12 turns (which is more or less every 6 months) once the card «Ottoman Collapse» (mandatory) has been played.
It will also grow bwhen some key cities are captured, such as Jerusalem, Damascus, Erzurum, Adana and Baghdad (+2 each) or Gaza, Madinah or Gallipoli (+1).

Cards may also influence its increase, but a few Ottoman cards (representing Central Powers success in the war such as the Conquest of Rumania or the failed Somme Offensive in 1916) will allow it to decrease.

Entente failure at the Dardanelles (*Dardanelles Evacuation*) will lead to a strong decrease.

OTTOMAN TRENCHES

Ottoman trenches (called Siper in Turkish) will enter the game only via play of cards (they cannot be purchased directly).

Some of those trenches can later be improved (to a stronger -bunker-like - version that will prevent retreat unless destroyed), via play of the *Fortified Line* card.

ADEN AND YEMEN

Aden is British-controlled initally and can only be reinforced by playing cards (which cost VP loss to the Entente). It can be attacked by Ottoman forces from the adjacent Yemen box, and local tribes may join the attack (providiing extra local allies otherwise not available). Conquest of Aden brings VP to the Ottoman player as well as a decrease in the surrender index.

TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES GUNBOATS

The Entente player, once he controls Basra, may receive river gunboats that can be used in regions that are adjacent to the major river parts of the Tigris and Euphrates.
Those units are not «naval» units and cannot go to sea, and may only be used in the regions neighboring the river courses, as a land artillery unit.

SPECIAL RULES

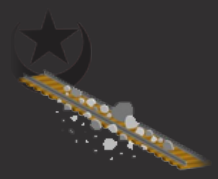
LEADERS AND ARMY HQ

Both sides have Army HQs which are in fact 3*** leaders (with 0 values, except 1 in defense for British HQs) and can be used when a regular leader is absent or dead (their ranks are always lower than the correpsonding named leaders).

THE ARAB REVOLT

The Arab Revolt will occur around 1916, via Card Play. It may have a slight chance of not occuring IF the Ottoman player has received and played previously the card «Succesful Jihad».
When it occurs, Hijaz troops will take over the Taif and Jeddah boxes, and Hijaz troops, led by *Husseyn* will appear there.

Later on, leader *Faysal* will appear with reinforcements
Leader *Lawrence* can appear (via Card) only if Faysal is still in play



When Lawrence is in play, the Hijaz revolt will allow railraod raids on Ottoman rail lines in Arabia and Palestine. Those lines can be cut, by placing a RR Cut marker in a region where you have a Hijaz raider.

AQABA

This port on the Red Sea is initially under Ottoman control. If captured by Entente, extra Hijaz troops (3 infantry brigades) can be raised there. A British Armored Car unit is also buildable in that region.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS

Both the February 1917 and November 1917 Russian Revolutions will occur at the exact time by play of mandatory Ottoman cards. Those cards have dramatic effect on Russian forces and the continuence of Russian presence in the game.

FEB 17 (turn 49): All Russian units immediately suffer 50% loss, and their morale is decreased by 1 permanently. Also, all Russian units now cost double (permanent effect too).

NOV 17 (turn 67): All Russian units except garrisons and levies (fixed units) are removed from the game. The latter receive 50% loss immediately. A Russian Bolshevik garrison (controlled by Entente) appears in Azerbaijan.

THE UNFINISHED RAILROADS

There are 2 unfinished and 1 unexistant railroads on the map. One of them, the Baghdad RR, can be completed by the Ottoman player once a costly card ($10) is paid. The card can be played only if the regions where the unfinished RR are controlled by the Ottoamns.
The other (Baghad to Basra, Sinai) can be built by Entente, under the same way and conditions, relative to Entente (cost, control).

When the RR are completed, they fonction as all other RR in the game (before that, there are simply non existant).

SPECIAL RULES

ARMOR AND STORMTROOPS SUPERIORITIES AND BREAKTHROUGHS

In this game, Cavalry/Armor superiority only applies to the British tanks, and the German and Turkish Stormtrooper (assault troops) units.

Their presence will provide superiority bonus, and the Stormtroopers also have the ability to breakthrough.

Not that Arab raiders (camels) and cavalry units can also breakthrough
(but they don't have superiority bonus).

PERSIAN TROUBLES / INVASION OF PERSIA

Persia is neutral but in disorder. Initially, Persian units are locked (permanently) and controlled by the Ottoman player. While the initial situation lasts, no non-Persian unit may enter Persia.

This can change either by the play of the «Persian Troubles» Ottoman card (mandatory) or the «Invasion of Persia» Entente card (player choice). Both are exclusive of each other.

When either happen, the Persian units are now unlocked. Some Turkish units (bearing usually the Pe icon) and similary, some Russian units (mostly Cossacks and Turkestan brigades) can now enter Persia.

A few leaders can also enter as well. On the Entente side, no Biritish units can enter, except those which entered previously via the play of the card «Occupation of Arabistan», or the «South Persia Rifles» and «Dunsterforce» cards.

In both cases, Persian income is now received by the sides who controls the relevant boses (Persia $2 and Kurdistan $1, before that, the income is nil). Both sides can construct some Persian units (mostly Militias).

The Persian Gendarmerie cavalry can onlt be controlled by the Ottomans.

THE DARDANELLES OPERATION

The emblematic campaign is spreading over many turns, from the initial landingis (Turn 3) and both sides reinforcements till the final evacuation (which will occur automatically if the Entente fails to capture the Dardanelles box).
Units received by Entente will not be able to move elsewhere, unless destoyed (they can be rebuilt in the British Empire box).

If Entente manages to capture Constantinoble, it is automatic victory.
If Gallipoli is evacuated (Entente failure, mandatory play card), all units will be removed (and recreated in the British Empire box later on) and Ottomans will receive VP and Surrender boost.
Some Ottomans units will also be promoted and allowed to leave the European Turkey sector (which they cannot do otherwise).

If he survives, Ottoman leader Kemal will receive regular promotion (up to 3*** rank).

THE SUEZ CANAL

Control of regions and structures adjacent to the canal will provde strong VP bonus to the Ottomans, both upon capture and end-of-game control (see Victory Points above).