



RULES OF PLAY

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The Longest Trench

Famous Battles of World War I.

Game design :

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1. GAME IDEA

The Longest Trench recreates World War I in a series of historical land and sea battles. The Central Powers (Germany and its Allies) are in opposition to the Allies (Great-Britain, France and their Allies). As a Supreme Commander you try to defeat your opponent by allocating your troops, planes and ships with the right support on the right front and at the right moment.

GAME COMPONENTS

- . Rules of play
- . 1 game-board
- . 82 cards
- . 2 sets of 40 cards
- . 2 summary cards
- . 2 Pawns (1 yellow & 1 red)
- . 6 dice (common D6)

STRETCH GOALS

- . 2 sets of 14 bonus cards
- . 2 sets of 5 Extra bonus cards
- . 5 Standoff counters
- . 5 Alternative battles counters

2. OBJECTIVE

Gain the most victory points or achieve a total victory before the end of the game.

3. CARD DESCRIPTIONS

The cards consists of 2 sets of cards



Allied player

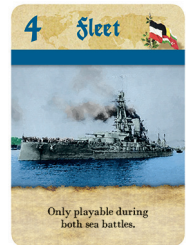


Central player

Each set consists of 4 types of cards:



Army



Fleet



Support

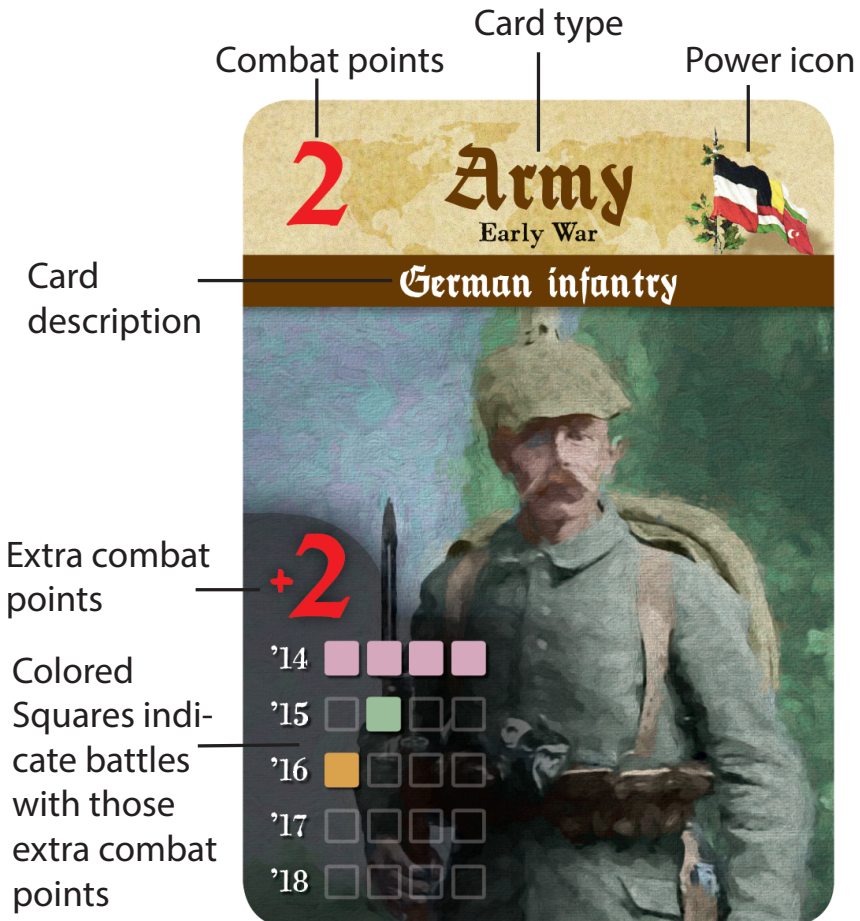


Special

Each set can be expanded by 14 Bonus cards with a mix of these type of cards.



Example
of
a typical-
Bonus
Card



Battle Track

Victory Points track

Land battle

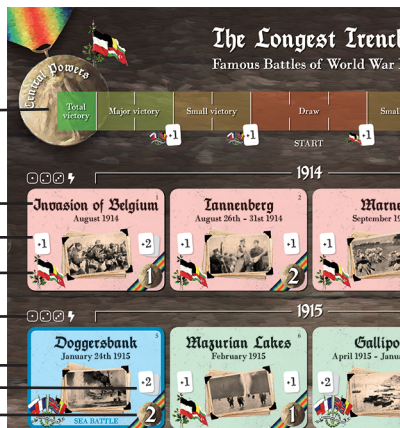
Extra Cards for the attacker
Attacker icon

Artillery hits

Sea battle

Winner extra cards

VP rewards



4. GAME-BOARD

The game-board shows the Victory point track and the battle track. The 20 battles are performed in chronological order.

5. GAME SET-UP

1. Place the game-board in the middle of the table.

2. Place the Yellow pawn on the white “Start” box in the middle of the victory points track.

3. Place the Red pawn on the first battlefield of the Battle track: “Invasion of Belgium” in 1914.

4. Give each player one deck of cards: Central powers or Allied powers.

5. Stretch goal only: Each player separates his Bonus cards and shuffles them. Then, 6 cards are randomly drawn from it and added without looking to the main deck. The other cards are removed from play without looking at them.



Supply =
facedown
Draw pile



Discard pile=
Face-up cards

6. Each player shuffles his deck of cards and places it on a facedown pile in his reach. This pile is called the Supply. Each player draws the top 9 cards from his Supply.

7. Each player gets 3 dice and a Summary card, which are placed within reach.

8. Leave the “Standoff” counters in the box. They are only used with the variant rules.

6. GAME FLOW

The game consists of a series of historical battles, which are fought out in chronological order. Players place armies on 3 fronts, add support cards and resolve artillery fire by using the dice. Then, the combat outcome is checked for each front separately. Whoever wins on the most fronts, wins the battle and gets the victory points for it. Sea battles follow a similar game sequence.

7. GAME SEQUENCE

A game can last 20 battle turns. The game can be shorter in case of a total victory. Each turn, players perform 3 phases:

- . Preparation
- . Combat
- . Aftermath

Land and sea battles are resolved slightly differently. The particularities for Sea battles are indicated in **blue**.

Battle Summary

Preparation

1. Attacher draws extra cards
2. Play 1 Special card, Attacker first.
3. Exchange 1-3 Cards

Combat

1. Deploy armies/ **fleets** one by one. Attacker first.
2. Add all support. Defender first.
3. Artillery/**broadside** fire. Add dice. Attacker first.
4. Combat resolution

Aftermath

1. Remove destroyed armies/ **fleets** from play (+4)
2. Discard other cards
3. Adjust VP & draw cards
4. Draw 4 cards, keep max 9 cards
5. Move red Pawn

8. PREPARATION

1. Check on the Battle track which player is the attacker. That player draws a certain number of extra cards from his supply as indicated on the board.



The Central Powers are the attackers and draw 1 extra card.

2. First, the attacker can play one “Special” card, then the defender. This is an optional action. **Note: for Sea battles not all “Special” cards are applicable.**



3. Both players can exchange 1 to 3 cards. Play the cards face-up on your Discard pile and draw the same number of cards from your Supply. Do not replace the cards one by one, but all at once.



9. COMBAT

1. Deployment: a land battle takes place on 3 fronts (left, centre and right) **while a sea battle takes place on 3 zones (vanguard, centre and rear)**. For game purposes, this makes no difference.



Left
Vanguard

Centre
Centre

Right
Rear

2. Both players alternate by placing face-up up to 3 “Army” cards to occupy the fronts, one army per front. The attacker selects his “Army” card for each front always first. The defender can react by placing his Army card opposite to it. The attacker can play his second (and third) “Army” card at the left or right of a previous played “Army” card. This has no particular importance. The defender, however, must always play his cards opposite to the last card played by the attacker. Thus, all cards of one power are placed in a row and opposite to the other power (see example next column).



Deployment order:

1. First army of attacker (Central)
2. First army of defender (Allied)
3. Second army of attacker (Central)
4. Second army of defender (Allied)
5. Third army of attacker (Central)
6. Third army of defender (Allied)

When a player passes, he may not continue placing other armies, although his opponent still has the opportunity to do so. Thus, the players are allowed to leave some fronts unoccupied. All unoccupied fronts are automatically lost. **Follow the same procedure for Sea battles, but place only “Fleet” cards.**

3. In addition, players may add one “Support” card facedown on each “Army” card of the fronts. In opposition to the deployment of armies, the defender starts placing all his Support cards before the attacker does so. **For Sea battles, do not use any Support card. Instead, you may place another (spare) “Fleet” card facedown as a supporting fleet.**

4. Artillery fire: The attacker rolls 3 dice, even if some fronts are unoccupied. Each 1, 2 or 3 causes the same number of hit

1 Support card for the Allied powers + 1 Artillery die



2 Support cards for the Central powers + 2 Artillery dice

points (e.g.: a “3” represents 3 hit points). Each 4, 5 or 6 is a failure. The attacker can place one die with hit points on each occupied front.

Note: for all battles in 1917 and later, the n° 4 on the dice is also taken into account as hit points. [For Sea battles, use the same system. “Artillery fire” should be read as “broadside fire”.](#)

3. Next, the defender rolls his 3 dice for artillery fire and places his hit points.

4. Combat resolution: reveal all “Support” cards and add up the combat values for each front separately:

- . Combat points of “Army” (including any extra point, which is available on specific battles)
- . Points of “Support” and “Special” cards
- . Artillery hit points



Central Powers played an Army card as support
Not allowed. Not counted.
Allies: $3+1=4$
Central powers: $2+2+1=5$
Central powers win.

Allies: $5+2=7$
Central powers: 3
Allies win with +4.
Central power army destroyed.

Allies: $2+1+2=5$
Central powers: $1+2+3=6$
Central powers win.
Airforce support resolved by die roll.

For Sea Battles

- . Combat points of "Fleet"
- . Points of supporting fleet
- . Broadside hit points

The player with the most points on a front, conquers that front. The defender wins any tie. Above this, if you have 4 or more points than the opponent, you destroy the defeated army/fleet. To win the battle, you must be victorious on the majority of fronts, which is mostly 2 fronts of the 3. The defender wins any

tie. If you are victorious on all 3 fronts, you win a decisive battle. Thus, if the attacker leaves one front unoccupied, he can never win a decisive battle.

Note: fronts which are unoccupied by both sides are not taken into account. They are not considered as a tie and don't result in an automatic victory for the defender.



*Example continued from last page:
Battle outcome: Central powers win on 2 fronts and gain 1 VP + 2 extra card.*

To help memorizing who has won which front, remove the cards from the defeated power at once after determining the winner.



Note: some generals give support points to all Armies in the land battle. When resolving the

combat, leave the general at his position to help memorizing the extra points to apply. Each side can use only one general per battle.

For Sea battles: the same system is used. Read "army" as "fleet" and "front" as "zone".

Aftermath

1. The destroyed armies/fleets (+4) are removed from play.

2. The other armies/fleets are moved to the Discard pile together with any played support card.

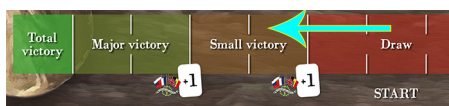
3. The winner of the battle gets the number of victory points according to the battle which was fought.

If he was victorious on all 3 fronts/zones, he gets one additional point for this decisive victory.

When a battle ends in a tie, the defender wins and gets exactly 1 point.

Move the yellow pawn the right number of spaces in the right direction on the Victory Points track.

4. There are 2 "Patriotism" thresholds on each side of the track. When the yellow pawn passes a threshold in the direction of the arrow, the defeated player gets immediately an extra card from his Supply pile. Note that only the defeated player

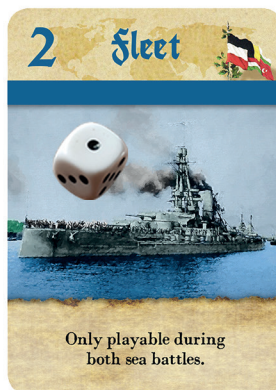
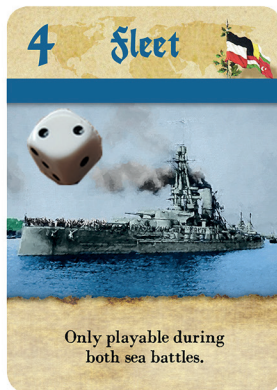
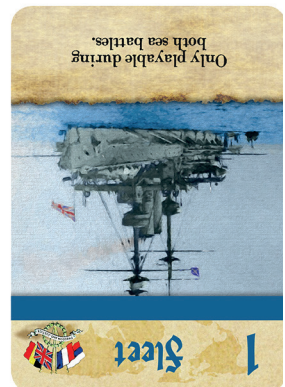
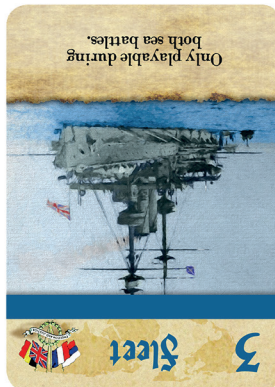
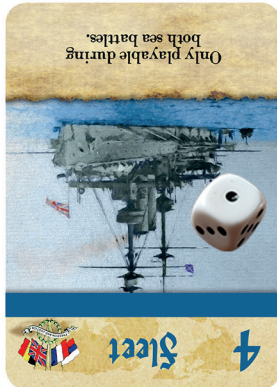


can get extra cards in this way.

5. Some battles, as indicated on the Battle track, gives the winner of it 1 to 2 extra cards, which are drawn from your Supply pile.

6. All players draw 4 cards. Your hand limit at this moment in the game, is 9 cards. Discard at your choice any card above this limit.

7. Move the red pawn to the next battle in chronological order.



Allies: $4+1=5$

Central Powers: $4+2=6$

Central Powers win.

Allies: 3

Central Powers (CP): $2+1=3$.

CP, as defender, win the tie.

Allies win automatically.



Battle outcome: Central powers win on 2 of 3 zones. They gain 2 VP + 2 extra cards.

10. END OF SUPPLY

When your Supply pile is depleted, take all cards from the Discard pile, shuffle them and form a new Supply pile.

11. END OF THE GAME

The game ends in one of the following cases:

. The yellow pawn reaches the box “Total victory”. That player has won the game immediately.

. After the last battle the game is also over. Check the position of the yellow pawn to determine a winner. When the pawn stands on a maroon square, the game ends in a draw.

Note: The historical outcome was a minor victory for the Allies.

More Examples



Central victory = win on 2 of 3 fronts =
1-3 victory points



Decisive Central victory = win on all 3
fronts = 1 extra victory point



Tie = victory for defender
= 1 victory point

12. VARIANTS

1. Prepare for war

During the game set-up, you draw 9 Bonus cards out of 14. You select 6 of them. The other 3 cards are removed from play. This variant is highly recommended for experienced players, seeking an extra tactical dimension.

2. Standoff battles

(Stretch Goal only)



Skip Battle

In order to give each game a different

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challenge (and to shorten the average playing time), some battles are skipped by using the Standoff counters.

Roll one die for each year. If you roll 1-4, place a “Standoff” counter on the corresponding battle, counting from left to right. If you roll 5-6, do not place a counter.

When moving the red pawn, skip all battles with a “Standoff” counter.

3. 3 or 4 Players Variant

Although the game is conceived as a 2 player game, here are some extra rules to play it with 3 to 4 players.

- . With 4 players, form 2 teams of 2 players. With 3 players, one player will play alone against a team of 2 players.

- . Each team starts the game with 10 cards. The cards are equally divided among the team-members.

- . When drawing extra cards, team-members must agree how many cards each member can draw.

- . Team-members must agree who will play a Special card without giving info on the card which shall be played.

- . Each team-member may exchange 1 or 2 cards. At the end of the turn, each team-member draws 2 cards.

- . 4-players rules: Cards are kept secret for the other team-member. When resolving a battle, each team-member takes care individually of one or two fronts (by common agreement). Thus, you can only add a support card on your own Army!

4. Fog of war

During the battle deployment, play all Army and Fleet Cards facedown. This speeds the game up, adds a surprise factor, but skips a tactical element. Before drawing bonus cards for the Central powers, remove the bonus “Fog of war” from play.

5. Historical variant

This variant makes it harder for the Central player to win the game. It simulates the real challenge the Central Powers faced. It will also prolong the game. During the game set-up, the Central player must remove 1 fleet n°4 from his Central set of cards. This card isn’t used in the game.

Consider the medals beside the victory track as an extra space. So the track counts now 15 spaces instead of 13. For obtaining a total victory, the marker must end on the medal-symbol.

6. Attrition

This variant simulates the attrition of war. Starting from 1917 (Nivelle offensive), players draw 3 cards instead of the standard 4 at the end of a turn. This attrition continues till the end of the game.

13. DESIGNER NOTES

1. Notes of Arno

Arno and Frederic both live in Flanders (Belgium). The First World War is still

very present there. Each town and village has its memorial with the names and dates of their war heroes.

From 1914 to 1918, there was a continuous line of 750 km long that ran from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border, consisting of a system of trenches, barbed wire and bunkers. This was the longest trench in human history. The price of the war was high: about 12 million casualties, including my great-grandfather.

He was a trumpeter with the troops at the front and his job was to sound the alarm when there were gas attacks. By conscientiously doing so, he had to blow the bugle while the gas clouds entered the trenches. In that way, he inhaled some of the poisonous gas. Like many others, he did not die immediately. He was taken care for in a field hospital, but then sent back to the front. He survived the war, but his lungs were permanently affected and a few years after the war, he died a long and painful death by the failure of his respiratory system.

Creating this game was for me more than a fun way of pass-time. Somehow I had to deal with this dark part of European history. In 1914, Europe was the leading region of the World. They were dominating in every aspect: political, economical, cultural and in science. Four years later, the golden age was over. There were 10 million death soldiers. Four Empires were disintegrated: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Communism became established in Russia and would dominate the geo-political course of the twentieth century.

France, the moral victor of the war, was weakened and would never regain its dominant position.

Great-Britain had lost its aura of un-

touchable Overseas Empire and the first seeds of the decolonization process were planted. The United States of America became a major world power, but they didn't realize it yet.

When I designed the game, back in 2004, I had never the intention to publish it. It was just for me and a couple of good friends. One day, I invited Frederic Moyersoen, a re-nowned game designer, for a game session. He saw some possibilities. So, we both went to the designer table to work out a publishable game.

I created this game to play the whole First World War in one session. I played some wargames on this topic, but found them too long and too difficult.

The first concept was to skip the map and to make use of a historical series of the actual battles. So, no hexes and counters, but cards and dice.

The second basic idea was to use a victory-track with a pawn. This is to reflect the tide of the war as a match of arm-wrestling.

One difficult dilemma was the uniforms on the cards. Maybe you wonder: "How can I use an Italian soldier in Passendale?"

Well, there were two options. One option would be to use rifle-symbols to represent troops, but this would never reflect the diversity of the involved nations. For example, there were Senegalese troops in Flanders fields, Austrians on Italian mountains and New Zealanders on Turkish shores.

So, hence the concept of a basic combat value and extra combat points if the army matches the historical correct battle.

Consider the Ottoman troops deployed in Verdun as an army of inexperienced German conscripts.

Most of the game basics remained, but many were reorganized, smoothed out and a few ideas were skipped. Now you have the result in your hands.

In the first place, Frederic and I wanted to create a game, not a simulation. So you can find cards and numbers that can be questioned by players with some historical knowledge.

For example: it's very unlikely that Mata Hari, a former Dutch exotic dancer, really did important spy work for the Germans. But she is one of the more colorful myths that we associate with the Great War. Some of you will argue: "Haig +2, that stubborn butcher?"

Well, Marshall Haig played an important role and was commander of the British forces during most of the war. Although he lacked imagination during 1916 and 1917, he made a flawless track in 1918 by holding off the Germans and leading the only decisive break-through in the autumn of 1918. Many people forget these facts. In my humble opinion, he was not a genius but certainly not an incompetent leader.

Other cards and figures were adapted to make a playable game with opportunities for both sides.

Do you know the worst aftermath of the First World War? Nearly one generation later every town and village in Flanders had to add an extra plate for the victims of the second Armageddon....

2. Notes of Frederic

My grandfather was caught and deported to work in the German factories (yes, in WWI). He managed to escape by jumping

of the train. He never wanted to tell more details about how he returned home. When being a kid, I played with a helmet, a gas mask and a hand grenade, which were kept at home as a souvenir. My father told me to be very careful with the grenade and not to pull the pin out of it. Being more scared than curious, nobody tried it and I still don't know if the grenade is still a potential danger.

About the game, I can only add that I discovered a very original and exciting game. So, it interested me immediately to help developing it further. As the basic concept was strong and perfect, my contribution was limited to fine-tuning some mechanics and the game balance. Besides, it was a pleasure to work with Arno. He is very open minded and eager to exchange views and opinions. He has already designed a lot of games with no other ambition than surprising his friends. It was just a matter of time before we found the right game to start up a cooperation.

Credits:

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Esperman, François Romain,
Andre Winter, Christian Diedler,
Dirk Blech.

Note for the reviewers:

The following pages are reserved
for further Stretch goals and pos-
sible add-ons.

