



Richard Brook

Winter 2026 OLLI Discover

WW1, PART II – 1914 AND THE GUNS OF AUGUST



Today's Summary

Beginnings of War, 1914

The assassination of Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand by Serbian terrorists led to a war that would ultimately involve most of the world's nations.



World War I

- Beginnings of War, 1914
- War in 1915
- War in 1916
- War in 1917
- War in 1918

General Alfred von Schlieffen



Alfred von Schlieffen
(1833 – 1913)

German field marshal and strategist

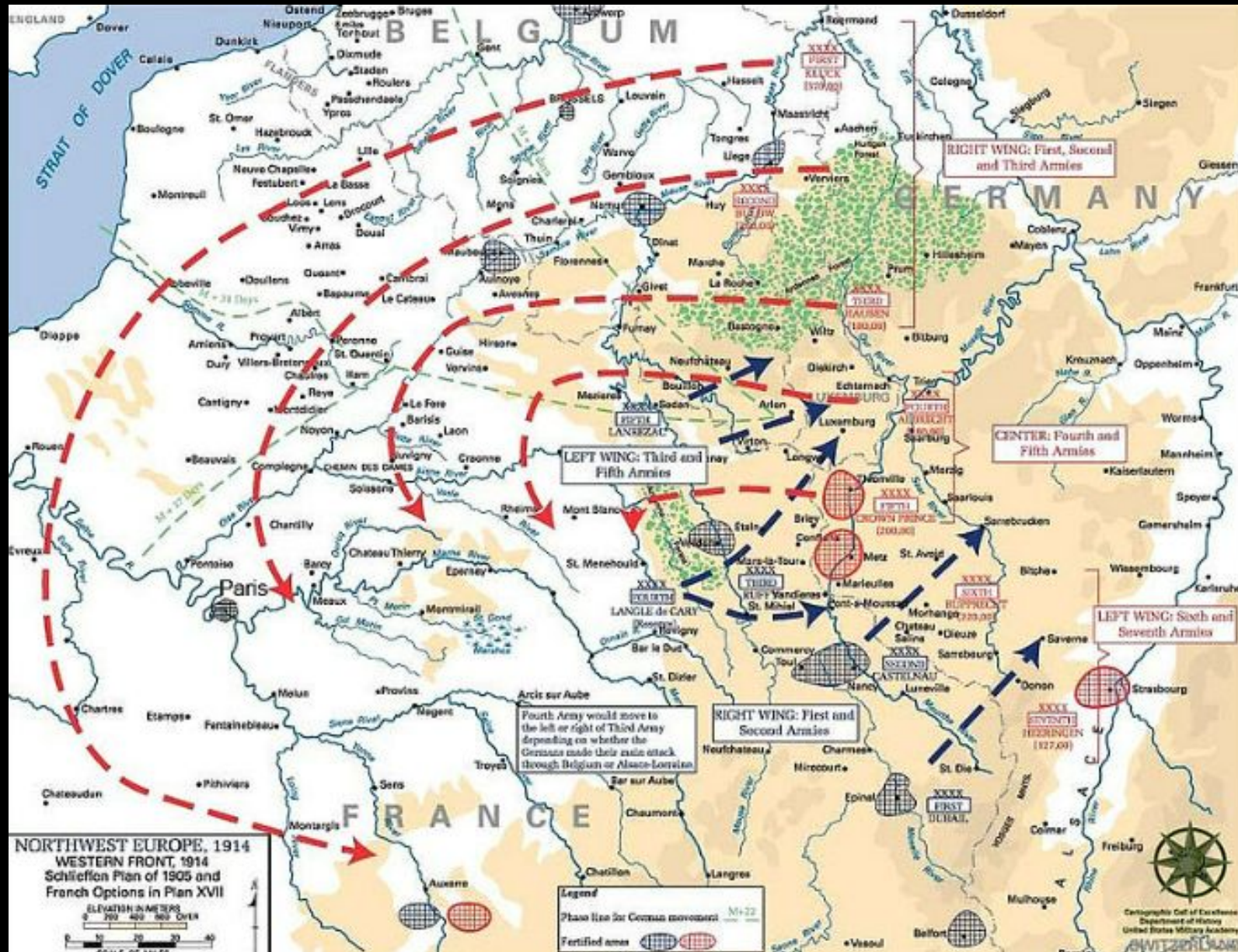
Believed in the Power of the Attack

Created his “Plan” in 1905 for a strategic offensive to outflank French defenses and circle behind them

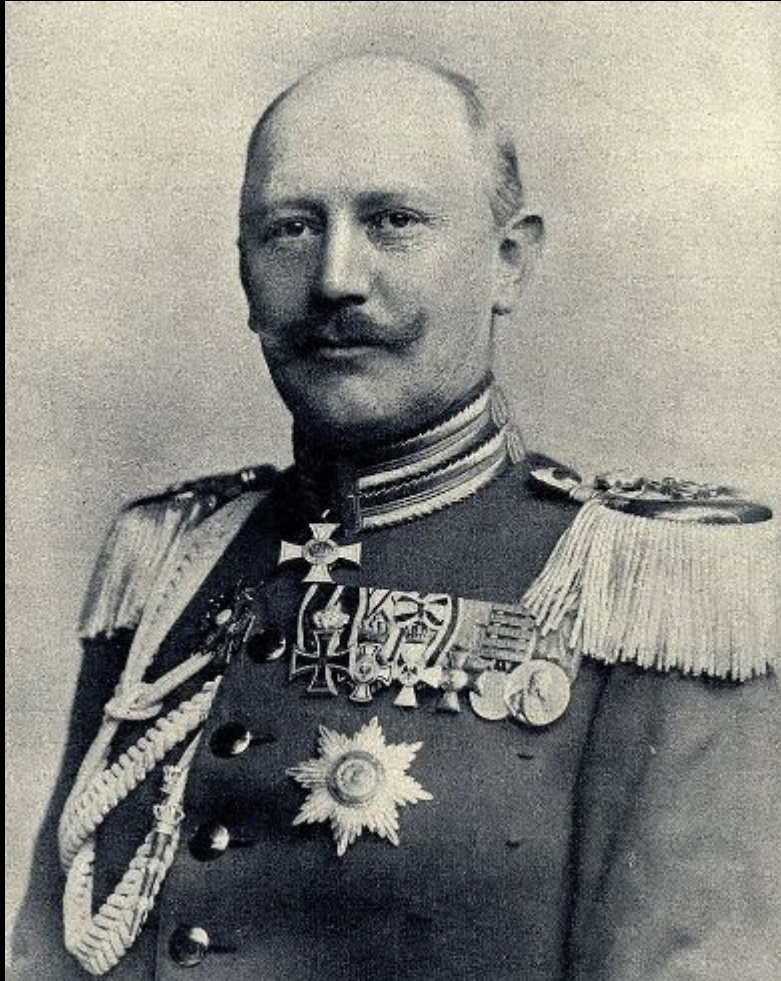
Cross the Seine to the west of Paris
Cross the Marne and encircle Paris

His plan further enhanced by Von Moltke, his successor

The von Schlieffen Plan



Helmuth von Moltke



Helmuth von Moltke (the Younger)
(1848 – 1916)

Chief of the German General Staff

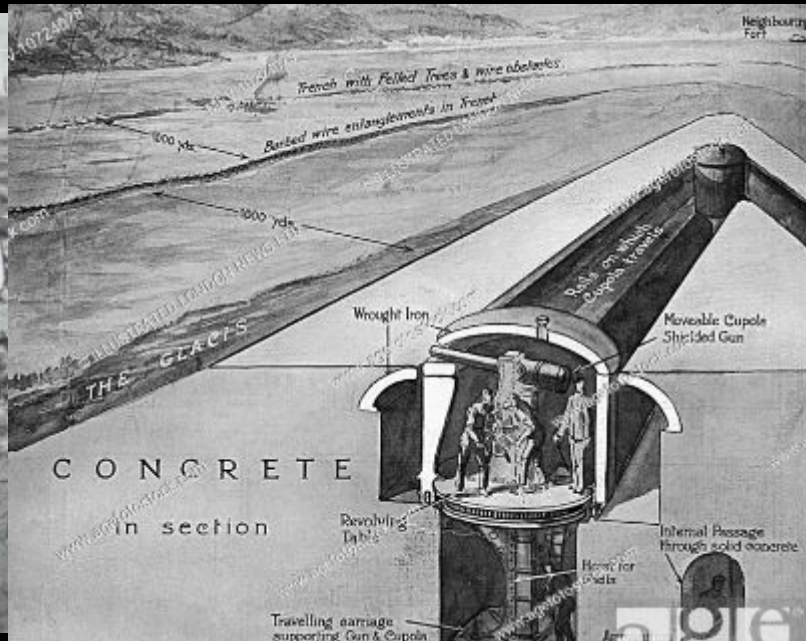
The Kaiser called him "Julius"

Moltke is blamed for weakening the von Schlieffen Plan by transferring too many troops to the East and leaving insufficient force to win the first Battle at the Marne; causing the subsequent 4 year stalemate

Liege, Belgium Fortifications



The Liege Fortresses



General Erich Ludendorff



Gen. Erich Ludendorff
(1865 – 1937)

First Quartermaster General
From Aug 1916 to Oct 1918

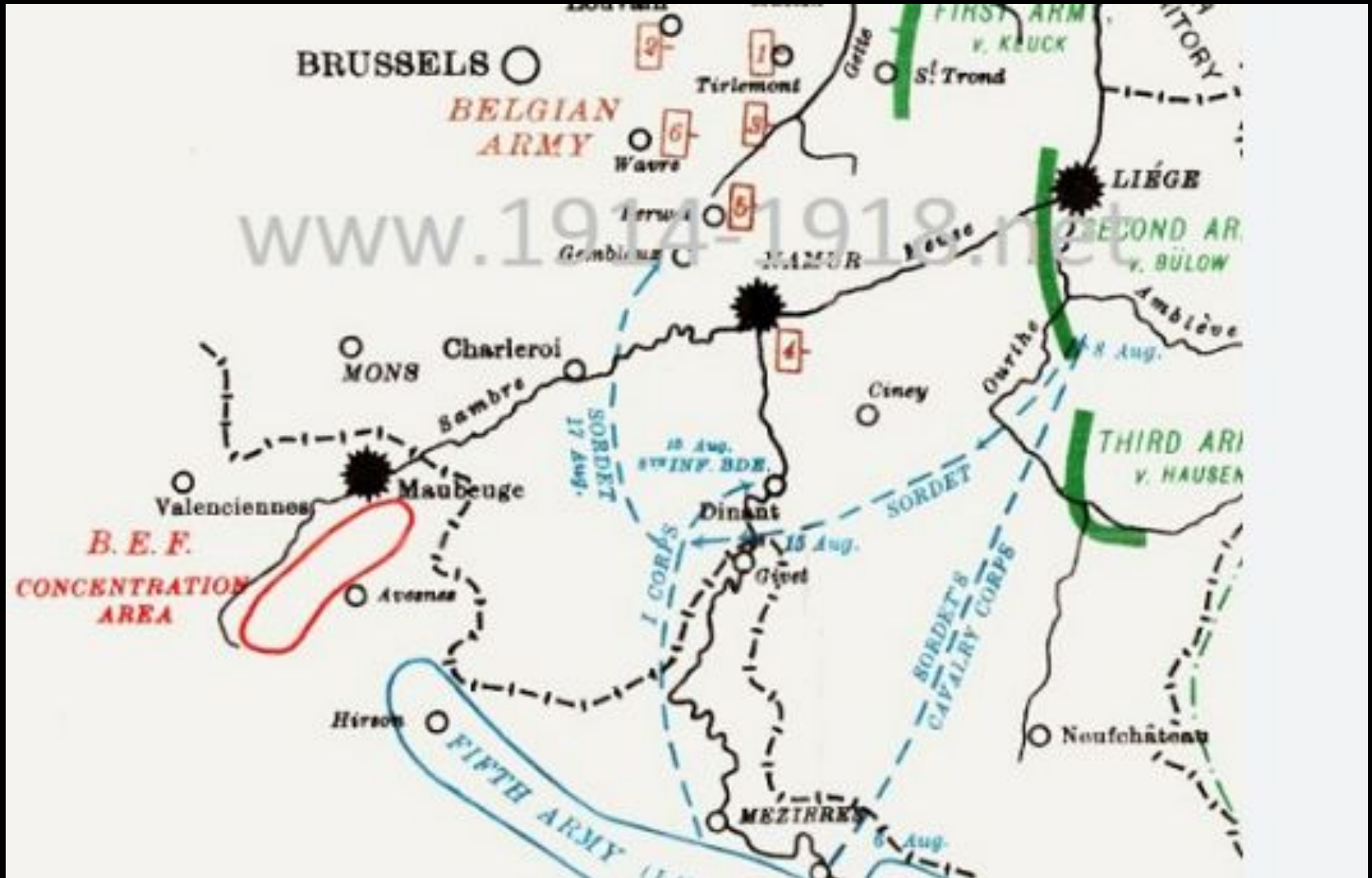
Commanded armies in the East
before transferring to W. Europe

Became chief policy maker and de
facto Commander in Chief from 1916
to end of WW1

Promoted the 'Stab in the Back' story
line after the war blaming war's loss
on Marxists, Freemasons and Jews

Leading Nazi supporter until death

The Battle of Mons – August, 1914



General Joseph Gallieni



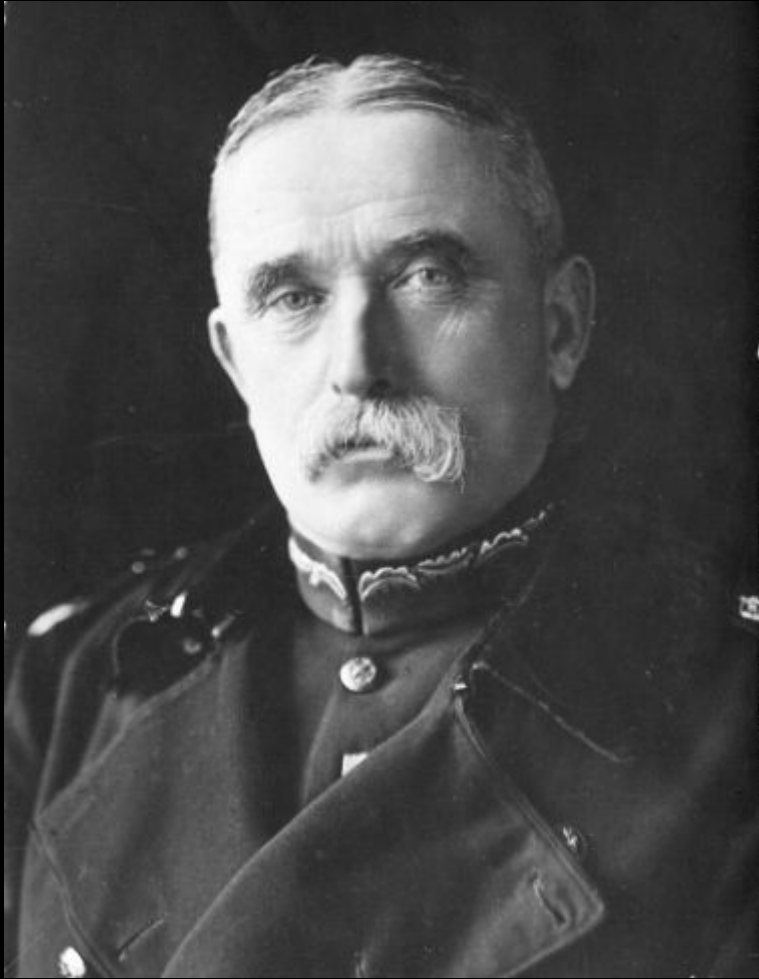
Gen. Joseph Gallieni
(1849 – 1916)

Became the Military Governor of Paris at the start of the war after being responsible for all the French colonies in Africa.

Under his command, the Sixth Army attacked the German west flank at a critical moment during the Battle of the Marne

To accelerate the arrival of his troops to the front, he hired all the taxicabs in Paris to carry men to the front.

Commander in Chief, John French



Sir John French
(1852 – 1925)

Commander in Chief of the British
Expeditionary Forces (BEF), 1914 – 1916

Fought in the Sudan and the Boer War

Chief of the Imperial Grand Staff, 1912

Departed for France on August 14 to
take command of the BEF; told to
cooperate with the French but to not
take orders from them.

BEF left for France with 100,000 men

First major agreement with the French
was to stand and fight at the Marne

Joseph Joffre, Chief of the Army



Joseph Joffre
(1852 – 1931)

Chief of the French Army (1911 – 1916)

Commander in Chief on the Western Front
until the end of 1916

Believed strongly in trading ground with
the Germans for time to pick a good place
to counterattack.

Joffre sacked many general officers who
failed to follow his plan

Joffre convinced John French to commit
his troops at just the right time and place

Right at the Marne, not so correct later at
Verdun and

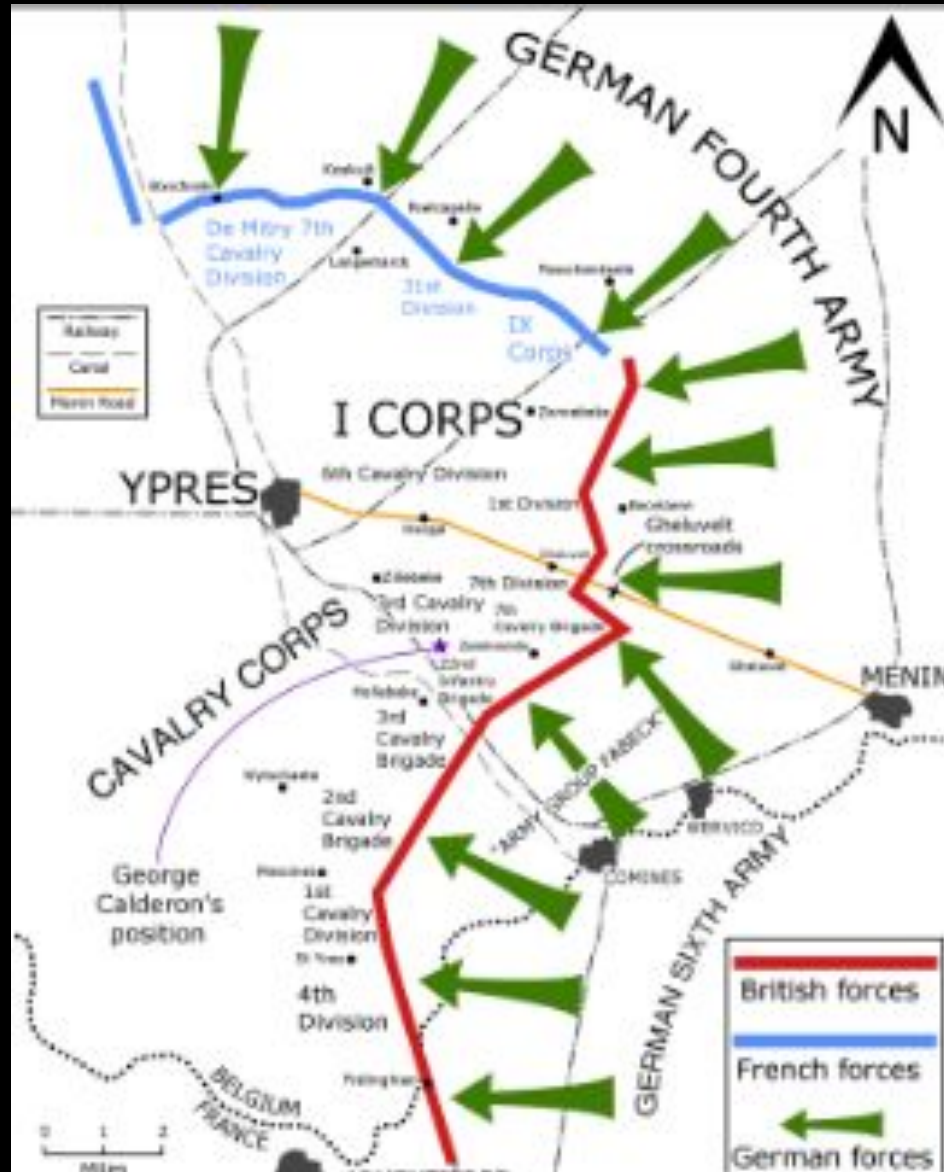
The Battle of the Marne – 09/1914



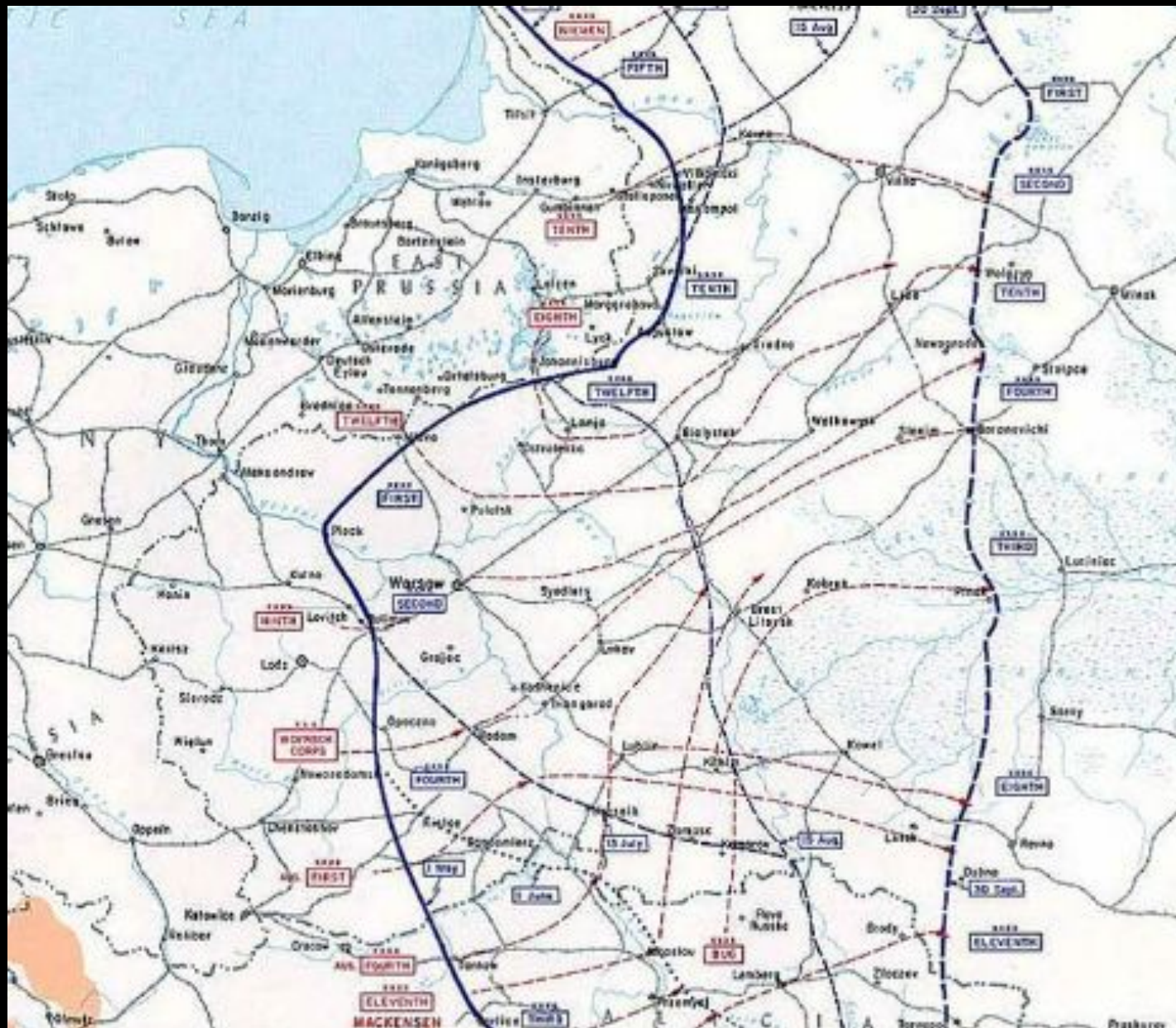
French / German Border – Pre WW1



The First Battle of Ypres



The Battle for Warsaw



The Black Sea Area



Declaration of War on Turkey



Poison Gas Coming Soon



General Erich von Falkenhayn



Georg von Falkenhayn
(1861 – 1922)

Chief of the German General Staff after
Moltke resigned

Falkenhayn removed in 1916 after his
failure at Verdun, just as the Battle of the
Somme began.

He believed that Germany could not win
the war by a decisive battle but would
have to reach a compromise peace.

Fought in Romania (16-17), Palestine
(17-18), Belarus (18-19)

Feder von Bock (nephew)
Henning von Tresckow (son-in-law)

The SMS Magdeburg



Winston Churchill – First Lord of the Admiralty



30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965

First Lord of the Admiralty at the start
of WW1

The War Begins

Beginnings of War, 1914

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Stop ■

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