

SINEWS of the SOMME

Supplying the Great Battles of 1916



MAIN THEMES : Critical Thinking, Education & Team Building

Outline

This is a simulation of the logistics preparation for the weeks immediately before the great battles of the Somme. It starts at the point when the decision to launch an offensive has been taken, and ends just as the battle begins.

The aim of the players of this game is to develop the logistic infrastructure needed to prepare for the great breakthrough battle commencing on 1 July 1916. It is a complex problem involving multiple factors and tests critical thinking in a challenging way.

Gameplay

The players form teams representing different parts of the Army that are responsible for supplying the front line. One group focusses mainly on planning and building railways (an important part of the massive supply efforts) another team on the road transport using horse-drawn wagons and motor transport (the British Army was the most motorised army in the World in 1916) and building the new roads needed to support them. The apparently simple task of shifting thousands of tonnes of food, fuel, ammunition and other stores to the front



took several months. Decisions about routes of roads and railways form an important part of the game.

At the end of the game there is a debrief of the process and how critical thinking was applied both within and between the teams. Teams have the opportunity to reflect on how their decision making was affected by the complex information environment and the time pressure and how this might inform their practice and planning in future

Ideal Audiences

- Organisations wishing to practice critical thinking and analysis skills.
- Organisations seeking a team building challenge.
- Students looking at the First World War, Military History or logistics..

Example game structures

Sinews of the Somme : For 12 players	
Team	Number in team
Army Transport Team	4
Army Railways Team	4
High Command Team	4
Total	12

Sinews of the Somme : for 24 players	
Team	Number in team
High Command Team	4
British 3 rd Army Transport Team	5
British 3 rd Army Railways Team	5
British 4 rd Army Transport Team	5
British 4 rd Army Railways Team	5
Total	24