FACILITATOR PACK

Engels: The January Fuel Depot Strike

Southern Engels and the Volga, Saratov Oblast, Russia · Night of 7 to 8 January 2025

Information as of October 2026

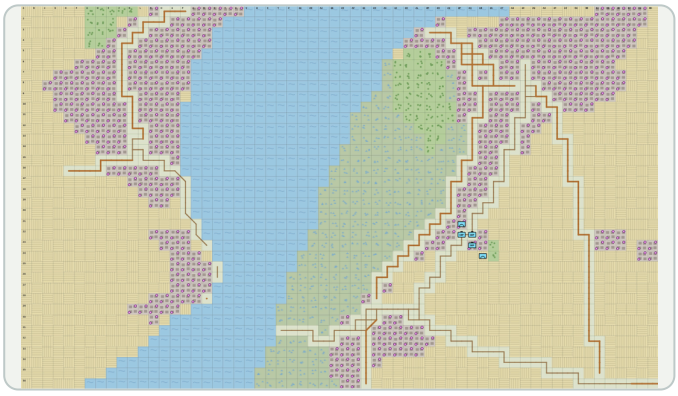
Review provenance

AI reviewed: sources, guide, assessment and model controls. Source attribution and reconstruction limitations remain.

No named human subject-matter reviewer or external validation is recorded. Material completeness is not certification. Instructors should check factual claims, sensitive content, age suitability and local context before use.



Scenario illustration · AI generated



Facilitator map · both sides · Simulation situation map · reconstructed terrain and estimated deployments; not verified historical positions.

Learning objectives

- Locate the Volga, southern Engels and the depot.
- Distinguish the depot from the distant air base.
- Separate an interception claim from the documented fire.

Run time and a good result

Default run clock: 3 minutes 0 seconds at 1×, excluding pauses, briefing and discussion. Time controls change elapsed play time.

Objective: Keep all three aggregate depot functions working through the attack. This is a limited preserve mission; the historical depot was damaged.

Engels: The January Fuel Depot Strike: Keep all three aggregate depot functions working through the attack. This is a limited preserve mission; the historical depot was damaged. Preserve at least 3 represented site functions until the attack ends. The authored limit is 180 simulation seconds across 1 stage. Compare objective progress, time, losses, drone expenditure and recorded civilian harm with a second run. A strong classroom result also explains the source evidence and reconstruction estimates; it does not verify a historical casualty count.

Atrocity notice

The UN Commission found war crimes by Russian authorities, including killings, torture and sexual violence, and a small number of violations by Ukrainian forces. Its March 2023 findings are context, including for later scenarios.

These reports describe the wider conflict. They do not establish that every crime occurred in this modeled battle.

Studying or commanding a side does not endorse its conduct. Drone Front never lets players target civilians, hospitals, schools or places of worship. Civilian harm from simulated strikes is counted and shown in the debrief, including nonzero harm. Civilian massacres are never playable operations. Designated terrorist forces and Wagner remain computer controlled; Gaza war events remain excluded from play.

▼ Dated reports and findings

- 2023-03-16 · UN Commission of Inquiry: war crimes in Ukraine

Learn more: the laws of war

- ICRC: Geneva Conventions and commentaries
- ICRC: Customary IHL database
- UN: Genocide Convention (9 December 1948)
- UN: Rome Statute (17 July 1998), articles 6–8

Historical source notes

A depot fire can disrupt activity without destroying a whole air base.

Interception claims and damage reports can describe different parts of the same attack.

Emergency workers face harm after the attack itself has ended.

Civilian harm

Reuters reported that Governor Roman Busargin announced the deaths of two firefighters as the depot fire spread. Earlier reports of no injuries preceded that update.

Evidence for learning objectives

Reuters geolocates the fire to Engels; the depot's service to the air base is attributed to Ukraine.

The simulation protects three aggregate site functions over 180 seconds; neither count nor duration is a measured industrial assessment.

Reuters attributes two firefighter deaths during the spreading fire to Governor Busargin; this is not a citywide casualty total.

Timings

For 60 minutes, brief for 15, compare both perspectives for 25 and discuss for 20. For 90 minutes, repeat the run. For 180 minutes, compare the historical sources and map geography.

Session	Plan
45 minutes	Brief: 10 min; Run: 15 min; Collect: 5 min; Review: 15 min
60 minutes	Before questions: 5 min; Brief: 10 min; Run: 20 min; Collect: 5 min; Debrief and after questions: 15 min; Discussion: 5 min
90 minutes	Before questions: 5 min; Brief: 10 min; Run 1: with drones: 20 min; Run 2: without drones: 15 min; Collect: 5 min; Compare and discuss: 25 min; After questions: 10 min
180 minutes	Before questions: 10 min; Brief and staff roles: 15 min; Run 1: with drones: 25 min; Run 2: without drones: 20 min; Break: 10 min; Run 3: syndicates: 30 min; Collect: 10 min; Seminar replay and debrief: 40 min; After questions: 10 min; Close: 10 min

Staff roles

commander
Track the limited preserve mission.

intelligence
Compare the dated reporting.

fires
Record simulated effects and civilian exposure.

droneOps
Compare the assumed drone card with the reported role.

Opposing staff objective

Disable at least one aggregate depot function. This represents the documented depot fire, not destruction of Engels.

Decision points

- Opening: which places are civilian districts?
- During the run: how many aggregate depot functions remain?
- After the run: how do the early casualty reports differ from the later update?

Before and after questions

1. **Which claim did Reuters independently support for the Engels episode?**

   A. The exact fuel loss was measured from the fire imagery.
   B. The fire location was verified in Engels' industrial zone.
   C. The air base's complete destruction was independently proven.
   D. The local drone type was identified from the governor's report.

   > **Answer B:** Reuters verified the fire's location using satellite imagery. It attributed the depot's military service role to Ukraine.

2. **How should the reported eleven drone interceptions be scoped?**

   A. A verified count of drones that struck the depot directly.
   B. A verified count of drones operating only over Engels city.
   C. A Russian ministry claim covering the wider Saratov region.
   D. An imagery count of drone wreckage beside the depot.

   > **Answer C:** Reuters attributes eleven destroyed drones over Saratov region to Russia's defence ministry; this is not a confirmed local depot total.

3. **What is the scope of the Engels deaths reported by Reuters?**

   A. Two aircrew deaths during the January drone interception.
   B. Two city residents killed in a verified whole-city tally.
   C. Two military fatalities added to the site's equipment costs.
   D. Two firefighters killed while responding to the depot fire.

   > **Answer D:** Reuters reports Busargin's announcement of two firefighter deaths as the fire spread. These are emergency responder deaths.

4. **What does preserving all three Engels site functions demonstrate?**

   A. Completion of the simulation's limited preserve condition.
   B. Confirmation that the historical depot escaped any damage.
   C. Measurement of every historical tank's remaining fuel volume.
   D. Verification that emergency responders suffered no casualties.

   > **Answer A:** The simulation sets a protection objective for three represented sites. Its functions are aggregate model abstractions.

5. **How should Engels' Liutyi card and eleven flight opportunities be read?**

   A. As confirmed type and local totals for the historical attack.
   B. As proxy type and compressed opportunities in the simulation.
   C. As an identified type and a regional interception tally.
   D. As a full local inventory and its verified launch count.

> **Answer B:** The simulation accuracy note explicitly calls Liutyi a stand-in and the eleven opportunities an abstraction; local type and total remain assumptions.

Discussion

- Why is damage different from total destruction?
- Which drone and air defence details remain assumptions?
- How does the fire affect people after the strike?

Debrief rubric

Strong
Meets the objective or explains why it was not met; uses the published sources and run evidence, separates known facts from assumptions, compares both sides' losses and cost exchange, and evaluates precautions against civilian harm.

Adequate
Describes the objective and main decisions, identifies at least one source and model limitation, reports losses and harm, and gives a reasoned change for a second run.

Weak
Reports only victory or points, treats teaching settings as real performance, gives unsupported historical claims, or omits uncertainty and civilian harm.

Facilitator notes

Assess historical source analysis through the cited readings, answers and discussion. Run metrics describe the simulated run; they do not verify historical claims or demonstrate that a source-analysis objective has been met.

Published readings

1. Reuters, Anastasiia Malenko: Ukraine says it attacked oil depot serving air base for Russian nuclear bombers, 8 January 2025, Investing republication
2. Euronews, Evelyn Ann-Marie Dom: Ukraine claims it struck a military fuel depot supplying Russian air base, 8 January 2025
3. Meduza: Ukrainian drones attack Saratov and Engels, 8 January 2025

Complete source list

Wikipedia: Engels-2 air base, January 2025 history, accessed 5 October 2026

Reuters, Anastasiia Malenko: Ukraine says it attacked oil depot serving air base for Russian nuclear bombers, 8 January 2025, Investing republication

Euronews, Evelyn Ann-Marie Dom: Ukraine claims it struck a military fuel depot supplying Russian air base, 8 January 2025

Meduza: Ukrainian drones attack Saratov and Engels, 8 January 2025

Kyiv Independent: Ukraine strikes oil depot supplying Engels-2, 8 January 2025

Ukrinform: General Staff confirms strike on oil depot in Engels, 8 January 2025