

INITIATIVE IN BLUE & GRAY

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Moves Footnotes, Issue #28

Below I suggest a couple of modifications that might be tried in any of the Blue & Gray Folio games, which are more than a single day long. Actually, they could probably be modified to fit any multi-day game, but this article will be written in terms of the Quad games.

In almost all sequential movement games, the same Player moves first in each Game-Turn. The specific ordering is usually based on which side had the initiative at the outset, although there are exceptions. But the initiative can shift, especially when the contest spreads over several days. For example, at Shiloh, the Confederates clearly held the initiative during the first day, and as such are given the first move in that game; but on the second day of the battle, Grant's Army took the initiative away from the fought-out Rebels and gained a victory. The determining factor at Shiloh is usually considered to be the reinforcements from Buell's Army, the troops which actually did most of the second day's fighting. However, there is no provision for this shift of initiative, and that is exactly what I present here: a means of determining who moves first each day, based upon the situation at nightfall and daybreak. To supplement this, I also outline a set of rules for simultaneous night-time movement to be used in conjunction with this "Variable Initiative."

Variable Initiative: On the first Day-Turn after any Night Turn, the Initiative Levels of both sides are determined. The Player with the higher Initiative Level (I.L.) moves first on that and all subsequent Game-Turns, until the next Night Turn. The Initiative Level is the sum of the Initiative Levels of all of a Player's units, except those which are

surrounded by Enemy Zones of Control.

Initiative Levels: Only Infantry units contribute to the Initiative Level; Cavalry and Artillery are considered to have an I.L. of zero. All units which have not participated in combat the previous day have an Initiative Level equal to twice their Combat Strength; units which had been in combat, but had retained their Attack Effectiveness at nightfall, have an I.L. equal to their Combat Strength. Eliminated units have an Initiative Level equal to minus their Combat Strengths.

Units which had lost Attack Effectiveness have a variable Initiative Level: Total up the Combat Strengths of all Ineffective units, then roll the die and divide by the result. This is the I.L. of all of the Ineffective units (drop fractions).

Reinforcements: Reinforcements that arrive during the Night Turn are treated as units which had not participated in combat; hence, they contribute twice their Combat Strength to the Initiative Level. Units which arrive during the First Day Turn contribute only their unmodified Combat Strength.

Separated Forces: If all of one Player's units are split into groups which are isolated from one another by Enemy Zones of Control and/ or the map edge, then Initiative Levels are computed for each group, and the highest one is compared with the Enemy Initiative Level.

Ties: In case both sides have the same Initiative Level, the Player who previously held the Initiative retains it.

Simultaneous Night Movement: Movement during the Night Turns is simultaneous. Both

Players write down (plot) their movement for all units, and these plots are executed simultaneously. Each Night Turn is divided into six Time Segments, during which every unit expends one and only one Movement Point, either in moving from one hex to another, or in holding its position.

Collisions: Opposing units must cease movement as soon as their Zones of Control overlap; if two opposing units move such that they are adjacent, then they cease movement and are considered as any other units in opposing ZOC's (exception: see below).

Restrictions: Units in Enemy Zones of Control, or whose ZOC overlap Enemy Zones of Control may not move.

Withdrawal: If opposing units end the Night Turn adjacent, the Player who holds the Initiative may withdraw any of his units from Enemy ZOC under the following restrictions: a) the first hex of movement must be the last hex entered during the previous Night Turn; b) an extra Movement Point is expended in Withdrawal; c) no other Friendly units may be moved until all Withdrawals are executed; d) the first hex may not be in an Enemy ZOC. Withdrawals may only be executed by the Player with the Initiative, and only on the First Day Turn after a Night Turn.

Variations: Two variations might be tried in conjunction with these options. One would be to assign Initiative Levels to the commanders that actually took part in the battles. Thus, Lee might be given a +10 Initiative Level over Meade, and so on. This, however, gets into the broader question of Command Control for the Folio

games, a subject which deserves more attention than I can give it here. A more viable variant would be to double the MP cost of all terrain during the Night Turns, except roads and ferries. This would simulate the increased difficulty in handling large bodies of troops at night.

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