## ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT

# DRIVE ON WASHINGTON

## *The Battle of Monocacy Junction*

In July of 1864, the sands of time were clearly running out for the Confederacy. The years of grim attrition had all but extinguished the capacity of the Army of Northern Virginia to carry the war home to the Yankees. *Almost* extinguished...but not quite!

*Drive on Washington* concerns the last battle of the last offensive launched by CSA forces in the East during the War for Southern Independence. A Confederate Corps under General Early surprized a U.S. Army division led by General Lew Wallace some 30 miles outside Washington, D.C. Based on the *TSS*-system, *Drive on Washington* simulates the desperate struggle that ensued when Early's troops tried to force the Monocacy River defended by Wallace's scattered brigades. The game includes special rules detailing the influence of Early's leadership, the Confederate search for a hidden ford during the battle, the effects of fighting over fences and wheatfields, and more. *Drive on Washington* includes 200 counters, Exclusive and *TSS*-system Standard rules books, charts and tables, and a 22" by 34" map.

# PEA RIDGE

## *Gettysburg of the West*

Early in 1862, Union prospects appeared bleak indeed. Far from controlling the rebellion, the armies of the North appeared hard pressed even to contain it. Confederate inroads into the border states pointed the way to potential military and political disasters that seriously threatened the viability of the Union war effort. The darkest hours came on 7 and 8 March when, below the towering Pea Ridge, an outflanked and out-numbered Union army faced a Rebel force twice its size and fought desperately to save not only the state of Missouri, but its own collective skins!

Utilizing the popular *Terrible Swift Sword* system, *Pea Ridge* simulates this critical two-day battle in a game that can be short or long, but is always prone to unforseen reversals of fortune. Special rules include Confederate militia (armed with *shotguns*), attachment and detachment of brigades (fighting often splits into two fronts, and how a player's forces are distributed can be decisive), and the possibility of the battle lasting into the night and a second day. *Pea Ridge* includes 200 counters, *TSS*-system Standard and Exclusive rules books, charts and tables, and a 22" by 34" map.

***Drive on Washington* and *Pea Ridge* will each sell for $8.95.**
**Available 15 April 1980.**

## Drive on Washington and Pea Ridge

*Monocacy Junction* has been retitled *Drive on Washington*, and *Pea Ridge* may be titled *Pea Ridge, Gettysburg of the West*. That last bit might sound a bit rich, but that is how the battle is referred to by Trans-Mississippi Department historians. Both games are nearly finished as far as design and development go. My co-developer, Tom Hudson, has done a heroic job of pushing the game, himself, and our testers to get the job finished in the short amount of time we have for the project. Both games have turned out to be a lot of fun to play. *Drive on Washington* is a game of subtle moves, timely actions and, most of all, incredible play balance. The game starts off at a slow pace as the Confederates await the arrival of General Early. Slowly the Confederates begin to move and maneuver as they try to cross the river that is between them and Washington D.C. Around the middle of the game they have crossed in strength, and the game begins to accelerate. The Union, out-numbered three to one, tries to hold on as ever more Confederates stream across the ford and bridges. Then the game reaches a crescendo and a conclusion of Game-Turn 15. Both armies are wrecked, and the Victory Conditions indicate a close game. Though the game usually ends in a near run thing, there is always the possibility that the Confederates will bag the whole Union force and indeed "drive on Washington." *Pea Ridge* has a very different feel than *Drive*. *Pea Ridge* is a classic brawl. The game starts off with a full blown, all-out, hell bent for leather fight. The Confederate army has caught the Union by near complete surprise, and an army of 16,000 men is bearing down on a task force of 1,000 Union Troopers. The entire Confederate army is plowing into this force, but the Union troops have some advantages that help them: they are armed with rifles and the amazing Colt six-shot revolving rifles; they are well led; and reinforcements arrive. The Union army slowly reaches the battlefield and begins to slow the Confederate advance. By the end of the first day of battle, both armies have taken a beating, but both are still on their feet. *Pea Ridge* is a classic situation, and it has turned out to be a very exciting game. The game tends to end in decisive victory, one way or another, as it did historically. The two games make a good pair because they are different play experiences. They'll be out soon and then on to Cedar Mountain, New Market, and more.

*Eric Smith*

and completely illustrated. The package will also include a map, under 100 counters, and dice. And it will sell for under ten dollars.

We intend *Dragonslayer* as an introduction to role-playing. We believe that it will introduce people who have never experienced hobby gaming to the hobby in a way that will encourage them to stay with us. We believe that it will introduce people who have never tried role-playing to that genre in a fashion that is consistent with the sort of rules and mechanical rationality and lucidity one generally expects from SPI. And finally, we anticipate that *Dragonslayer* will introduce SPI to a different approach, one that will expand and diversify our ability to publish simulations.

*Eric Goldberg*

## *Great Battles from the American Civil War, Vol. 3: The Battle of Wilson's Creek*

The phone is ringing. I'm in bed, I can't get up. The bed is covered with manuscript pages, counter manifests, maps, counters, cigarette butts, garbage from the deli, etc. Someone knocks at the door. I go to write some hasty notes but can't find any paper. I turn to write on the wall but the wall is totally covered with scribbles and proofreader marks. At least sixteen voices break in with rules questions. I wake up.

That dream is not very far from the reality of the past two months, or so it seems. Eight solid weeks spent in the SPI playtest rooms at midnight, with dice clenched in one hand, note pad in the other, muttering to myself. But, finally, the first two volumes of the project, which has been variously known as the *TSS/Stonewall* Project, are finished, and at this writing (early Jan.) winding their way through the Art Department.

The project is now officially known as Great Battles from the American Civil War. All games are based on Richard Berg's *Terrible Swift Sword* system. Each game will have one standard map and two hundred counters, and will be marketed in SPI's new packaging format — a one inch box with no counter tray.

*Volume 3, Wilson's Creek*, which was designed by Richard Wright (his first game for SPI), is scheduled for publication in *S&T* 80 (next issue). Other games currently under consideration include: Cedar Mountain, Brice's Crossroads, Belmont, and New Market.

Volumes 1 and 2 of Great Battles of the American Civil War are *Drive on Washington — the Battle of Monocacy Junction*, and *Pea Ridge*. Pea Ridge was probably the most important battle in the Trans-Mississippi, ending forever Confederate hopes of securing Missouri. The Battle of Monocacy Junction occurred during Jubal Early's raid on Washington in 1864. Monocacy Junction was probably one of the most important "unknown" battles of the Civil War. The fact that the battle was fought at all was a strategic Union victory. The Union force at Monocacy Junction was the *total* defense of Washington at the time of the battle. If the battle had not been fought the Confederates would have undoubtedly been able to burn and sack Washington. The destruction of Washington would have been of little military value by 1864 but would have had immense political consequences for Lincoln, coming as it did in an election year. The "what ifs" boggle the mind.

Both games have been intensely play-tested. Eric Smith, my co-developer, and I went full bore

for two months. We play-tested the games six days a week (sometimes seven) with one of the best corps of playtesters ever assembled at SPI. Without their help and effort we would never have gotten the two games finished on time.

When Eric and I walked into this project it seemed simple and straightforward. We were to develop the two games simultaneously, and since the system already existed (in fact the *TSS* system is an award winning system), it was supposed to be a piece of cake.

Soon after Eric and I got down to work it was like a bomb went off, with alarm signals everywhere.

The trouble was that there were no standard rules. We had to cull and boil-down ambiguous and contradictory rules from three different games (*Terrible Swift Sword, Stonewall,* and *Bloody April*) to find some sound body of standard rules that can support an as yet limitless number of games in the Great Battles of the American Civil War series.

Our problems could basically be broken down into two groups: problems we discovered in the system itself; and problems we had in trying to format a standard set of rules that was functional and flexible.

Most of the problems we had were of the second kind. The *TSS* system as Richard Berg designed it is very good and fun to play, but it was designed for a specific situation — Gettysburg. Most of the difficulties we had were in making concise standard rules that could be used in as many and varied situations as possible.

We hope *Wilson's Creek* will bear us out in our belief that we've taken a good system and made it a little better by cleaning it up and streamlining it.

Following, I am going to present readers with a fairly detailed description of *Wilson's Creek* as it stands at this stage of development.

I remember the debate during the staff meeting in which we discussed the new, longer format for progress reports. The two main points of contention were that some staffers were a little leery of giving away "state secrets" and some were afraid that readers would be disappointed if everything in a progress report didn't find its way into the finished game. Concerning the first point, I have no worries; very few gamers are unfamiliar with the *TSS* sysem. About the second point I am a bit concerned. *Wilson's Creek* is in the very earliest stages of development, and I want readers to be aware that the things under discussion here are the very first fruits of development and are subject to heavy revision.

The *TSS* games in print were all designed before work on Volumes 1 and 2 had begun. One of the problems we ran smack into with *Pea Ridge* and *Drive on Washington* were the LOS rules. Gettysburg, Shiloh and even Kernstown are relatively flat areas. We felt that the rules for higher terrain in *TSS/Stonewall/Bloody April* were makeshift at best.

Now the terrain at Monocacy Junction and even Pea Ridge is pretty flat too, but we surmised that some of the games in the series would have pretty rugged terrain. When I first saw the *Wilson's Creek* map, I had a sneaking suspicion that we had a battlefield that was rugged enough to suit even the most hard core grognard.

The first thing I did was to try to make a prototype map, editing the designer's original map to fit the new line of sight rules we had hammered out. My naive hope that the area of Wilson's Creek was more or less flat (as the designer's map indicated) proved to be totally unfounded. That first map had some pretty weird terrain, to say the least. Of course, the fact that the whole area is wooded only added to the fun. Finally, I gave up. Either the designer designed a map of an area that had been hit by an earthquake, though flat, or I was trying to shove a round peg into a square hole.

Next I got some Survey maps of the area and Lo!... just as I suspected — the area was incredibly convoluted. The area of the battle field is actually two ridge-hill masses with Wilson's Creek meandering in a gully in the center of the map between the two ridge masses.

The whole area is a shifting mass of elevations with no more than five congruent hexes at the same elevation. The elevation difference between ground zero and the highest elevation is 200+ feet, with woods covering the whole. For fans of *TSS* this is something new.

I had the survey map blown up and made an elevation key from it which I transferred (after three aborted efforts) to a blank hex sheet.

The map should be loads of fun for the Art Department. Every hex is color coded for elevation, besides being a woods hex (well, not quite every hex is woods), not to mention various information on the hexsides. Luckily RAS considers this map a bit of a challenge and promises something new.

Readers might find it interesting to know that woods hexes don't block LOS for artillery, and they block LOS for small-arms only slightly (units can fire through woods hexes). We tried something like this in *Pea Ridge* with two flavors of woods — light and heavy. The working term for woods in *Wilson's Creek* is "brush."

At this point I'm pretty happy with the map, but there are still a few bugs to iron out. Each hex is color coded for its elevation, so we've done away with crest hexsides *per se*, as it would be superfluous. Where two hexes of differing elevation meet the congruent hexside, there is a "crest" hexside. Each elevation level represents an elevation difference of 35 feet. We still have some information on the hexsides for steep crests and ridges. There is an extra movement penalty for crossing such hexsides. In the final version, artillery will probably not be allowed to traverse steep crests or ridge hexsides.

The problem I'm still having with the map is the "wedding cake" effect. The various elevations, with the LOS rules as they now stand, represent an area with plateaus, and this is, I believe, quite inaccurate. The area in Missouri around Wilson's Creek is more gently sloping (albeit with many slopes) than ridge-like. How this translates into game mechanics is that units sitting back off a crestline can't "see" to fire at units at lower elevations, because the crestline blocks LOS. This forces units to sit on the crestlines in order to have an all around field of fire. Units back from a crestline can fire at units on higher elevations only if the target unit is also on a crestline. All this gives a very artificial aspect to the game, and neither the designer nor I am quite happy with the LOS rules as they now stand.

I'm huddling with various staffers here and feel confident we'll solve this problem. The terrain ensures an interesting place for a battle.

This brings us to the next major problem with the game, and again it has nothing to do with Richard's design. When Eric and I got into the first two games, the area that absorbed most of our attention (besides cleaning up the system itself) was the command structure rules or lack of rules.

In *TSS/Stonewall/Bloody April* officers above brigade level were just extra chrome with no real game function other than extending brigade officers' Effectiveness Ranges and rallying units. They were like super brigade officers. All the previous games could be played without division, corps or army commanders. Each brigade operated like an independent brigade. Eric and I cast around for some means to integrate officers above brigade level into the basic fabric of the game.

We finally came up with something called Divisional Integrity. Divisional Integrity (DI) works very easily; each Brigade Commander must be within so many hexes of his Division Commander (each Division Commander is rated for DI) in the Initial Command Phase. A Brigade Commander outside of his Division Commander's DI range may only move one hex in the Movement Phase. The regiments of a brigade whose Brigade Commander is outside of DI may continue to function normally. This rule simulates the tendency of brigades that don't "receive" orders to go "dead at the stick." They sort of just stand around. This is now standard for Great Battles of the American Civil War games.

There is doctrine that allows players to detach brigades and create "independent" brigades with varying effects depending on the particular exclusive rules for the various games.

Players will find that the varying command structures are interesting and very important in the play of the games. For example, in *Drive on Washington* the Union command structure is very loose (to reflect the nature of the hastily assembled Union force). In fact, one of the Union brigades was no brigade at all and has two "Brigade Commanders." All this allows the Union player great freedom in the game. The Confederates on the other hand have a very different situation. The Confederate forces were tightly structured into divisions, and the presence of the corps commander (Early) is very important in the play of the game.

In *Pea Ridge* the Union command structure is again loose (though not as loose as in *Drive on Washington*). The Union over-all commander is not even included in the counter-mix — the Union player *is* the Union commander. The Confederate command is again very tight, in fact the tightest of any side in all the games so far. The Confederates *must* keep a tight division structure. Though the Confederates have the capacity to detach a brigade or two, any brigade designated as detached incurs a decrease in morale. Furthermore when a Confederate officer is killed, he is very difficult to replace. Needless to say, this has a great effect on the play of the game.

In *Wilson's Creek* the Union Command situation is not as open ended as in, say, *Drive on Washington*, but it is very clean. The Union force consists of one large division under General Lyons with the capacity to create one independent brigade (under Sigel). The independent brigade suffers no ill effects for being independent.

The Confederate command structure is very different. The Confederate force is composed of two divisions; one of Confederate regulars under McCulloch, and the other of Missouri Militia (the Missouri State Guard) under Price. Price and McCulloch hated each other; accordingly troops of neither division may stack or initiate melee together.

McCulloch, besides being a division commander, doubles as a brigade commander, which should be very interesting. If McCulloch should die his replacement should be smooth (though there is a one game-turn delay in replacing officers, for both players) while if Price should die it could be very difficult to replace him. This brings us to the play of the game.

The Battle of Wilson's Creek bears superficial comparison to the Battle of Shiloh. In both battles the numerically inferior force surprised the larger force encamped. Both battles were a close thing. In both battles the attacking side lost their over-all commander. In both battles the attacking side lost the battle. Though the Confederates won the bat-

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## OUTGOING MAIL *[continued from page 18]*

tle, they have their work cut out for them in the game.

The Confederate force starts the game encamped and spread out. Typically, brigade commanders are relatively far away from some of their units. Even without the encampment rules the Confederates have a hard time organizing their troops; the encampment rules only add to the Confederate chaos. For players of *Bloody April* the idea of "encampment" is nothing new. However, in *Wilson's Creek* the encampment rules have little resemblance to those used in *Bloody April*. At this writing here's what we've cooked up: all Confederate units start the game encamped; units that are encamped must pay so many movement points to assume a formation. Encamped units are always considered enfiladed for purposes of fire. Encamped units may not assume a formation (encamped units may neither move or fire) until they've been alerted. The Confederates are alerted in one of three ways: (1) if any Confederate unit "sees" a Union unit, *all* Confederate units are alerted; (2) if any Confederate unit is fired upon *all* Confederate units are alerted; (3) the Confederate Player tries to alert his units in the Initial Command of each of his player turns by rolling on the Confederate Alert Table. The Confederate Alert Table is a sliding scale making it very difficult for the Confederates to be alerted in this way early in the game and a little easier as the game goes on.

The Union player has all the initiative early on in the game. The Union player can enter the map in any one of four widely scattered hexes (or two directions if he detaches Sigel). Of course the Confederate player has no idea from which direction the blow will fall.

If the Union player is smart he will use the first three or four game-turns to maneuver his force while the Confederates sleep. As long as the Confederates are unalerted they have no player-turn. This provision, together with the relatively small number of game-turns (15), makes the game actually playable in one four-hour sitting.

In actual playings so far, the game seems to be very balanced. Though the Union force is outnumbered two to one, with the initial deployment and alert rules, the Union player can really make hay when he smashes into the Confederates (from wherever he chooses). In the last two playings we've had a marginal Confederate victory and a decisive Union victory.

The bookkeeping in the game is minimal. We've decided not to use Brigade Combat Effectiveness in *Wilson's Creek* (though this is one of the things that might be changed in the final version — you can do a lot of things with play balance by using BCE). At this point the only bookkeeping players will have to do is keeping track of ammunition and casualties.

Another thing we're toying with is the ammo situation. There are no supply wagons in the game for either player, so ammo depletion will be a key factor in the game. What we're thinking of doing is finding a system of keeping ammo deplete die rolls a secret. It seems odd when units run around large regiments with impunity when they know the regiment is out of ammo. We'll see how that goes.

We're also considering using dummy or blank counters (for the Union). At this point I really can't say how this will work out, and I can't promise it will be in the finished game, but it would be nice at least as an optional rule. Of course, a lot depends on the counter mix and whether we'll have room for twenty or so blank counters.

The game is fun to play and should be a real "player's" game. That's the most important thing to me. I'm excited about the game, and as a gamer myself I'm looking forward to all the Great Battles of the American Civil War games. Oh Richard (Berg), what hast thou created? *Thomas Hudson*

## OUTGOING MAIL *[continued from page 2]*

**Task Force** (Modern naval warfare); Balkoski/Balkoski. AD.

**Grenade** (American offensive against Germany, 1944; second in the *Victory in the West* Series); Balkoski/Balkoski. AD. *S&T* 84 game.

**Rescue From the Hive** (Terran "lancers" invade the hive to rescue hostages from the evil Znons); Karp/Karp. AD. *Ares* 7 game.

**Fighting Sail** (Pre-20th century tactical ship-to-ship naval combat); Balkoski/Balkoski. AD. *S&T* 85 game.

**Asgard** (Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods); Esakof/Esakof. AD. *Ares* 8 game.

**Singapore** (Britain's greatest defeat simulated in capsule format); Kamps/Ritchie. Develop.

**Alamo** (David, Jim, and company battle 10 times their number of Mexicans); Smith/Smith. Develop.

**Advanced Monsters** (*DragonQuest* Supplement #2); Ritchie/Ritchie. Design.

**Battle Over Britain** (Britain's finest hour recreated in detail); Butterfield/Smith. Develop.

**Empires of the Stellar Reaches** (Conquest and decline in the vastness of space); Smith/Smith. Design.

Published since last issue: **Arena of Death, Across Suez, Austerlitz, Hof Gap, Dallas, The Kaiser's Battle.** *David J. Ritchie*

### Great Battles of the Civil War

Currently, the seven games in our hands are undergoing intensive evaluation by myself and my assistant, Phillip Marchal. The games vary greatly both in quality and design. The *TSS* system is being called upon to bend into situations Richard Berg never foresaw when he did *Terrible Swift Sword*. Consequently, the series is developing in to a very eclectic group of releated but different games. I feel that this series of games will ultimately be the most varied and interesting group of system-related games in the wargame field. Now for a look at the individual games.

### Brandy Station

I am sure that many of you out there will be disappointed to hear that this game has been rejected. Quite simply, it will not fit into the *TSS* system without basic modifications to the system. In short, it didn't work. It is my hope that eventually SPI will publish a game on this battle, since it is the biggest cavalry battle of the war and one of the last major cavalry battles in history. This game represents the far end of the games we have received as far as system changes go and has been rejected for that reason.

### Brice's Crossroads

This game, designed by Jim Dawson, is very interesting. The first time he submitted the game, it was a very straight forward affair with almost no exclusive rules. I sent it back to him and requested rules for surprise attack and hidden Confederate movement and set-up. His second version is an excellent response to my suggestions. Basically, Nat Forrest is outnumbered 3 to 1 by a Union force armed with Colt repeating rifles! Even with this he smashed the Union and won a major victory. This is a very difficult situation to design a game around. Jim has designed a system whereby the Confederate forces are represented on the map by picket counters which have no values. Some pickets represent regiments and some represent small squads (equivalent to dummy counters). The actual value of the pickets is revealed when fired upon or when in Line of Sight of Union units. This simple rule allows Forrest to outflank the Union and choose the place of attack almost at will. It also creates the correct mental impression in the Union Player's mind — fear of Forrest! The Union Player ends up being very cautious and paranoid, exactly replicating the historical Union reaction. The Victory Conditions are at present very vague. This is being worked on and, when finished, we'll have a good game. This game will be enjoyed by players who like hidden movement, maneuver, surprise attack, few counters and swift play. Folio map, 19 Game-Turns, and 47 combat counters.

### Belmont

Belmont has been submitted by an old friend of SPI, Jim Epperson. He has done playtesting for us on *Bloody April* and has helped Richard Berg with research. His game is a very curious item. Its main points of interest are a wonderful set of simple naval rules for the two Union gunboats (the Lexington and Tyler of Shiloh fame) and the Confederate transports. The map is divided by the Mississippi River, which also divides the Confederate Army into two unequal parts, one on each side of the river. Unfortunately for the South, the smaller begins on the Kentucky side where the forces under Grant are undertaking a "reconnaissance." The battle is one of desperation for the Rebs as they await their reinforcements. Nice rules are included for hidden deployment for the Confederate shore batteries, stragglers, skirmishers (a *very* nice rule), Confederate camps, and voluntary breakoff of battle by exiting the map. The game is interesting and has possibilities. Folio map, 21 Game-Turns, 48 combat counters.

### Pleasant Hill

This rather obscure battle is the second and last battle of Bank's ill-fated Red River Campaign. The game is designed by Leonard Millman and Dr. David Martin, the men who brought you the OSG games, *20th Maine* and *Devil's Den*. The game is the only real slugfest we've received so far. It resembles Shiloh in the intensity and density of combat. This is not to say that the armies don't maneuver; they do, but the sides are so even that the game will always come down to a knock-down drag-out brawl. This is the favorite among the testers so far (they love to watch the casualties grow). The game is simple and has very few system modifications. It has a number of optional rules, most of them concerning commanders and their special historical abilities. The only other major rule that is new is a Union troop activation rule, which allows the Confederate Army a shot at destroying the first two Union brigades which are exposed and able to be surrounded if the Confederate plays carefully. This game represents a really determined effort to dig up the details of an obscure OB. Millman and Martin are both veteran researchers, and it shows. This campaign is one of the most difficult of the war to get information on. They have done an admirable job. Full-size map, 12 Game-Turns, and 103 combat counters.

### Cross Keys/Port Republic

The designer of this game is a veteran of the *Pea Ridge/Drive on Washington/Wilson's Creek* game design/development circus. In those crazy days it was this man, Joe Reiser, who helped in ways beyond the call of being a mere playtester. His experience with that set of games has helped him to design the game I find most interesting of the lot. This game also elicited the highest feedback rating in *S&T* in the past two years. The game is very unusual. Joe has adjusted the scale to 175 yards to the hex (instead of the usual 125) and this has allowed him to get the entire battle of Cross Keys/Port Republic on one map. The game breaks down into two fronts — one against Fremont and one against Shields — and in the middle is Stonewall Jackson and the Valley army. It is a desperate situation! The rules include the possible capture of Jackson on the first turn, the limited intelligence of General Fremont (i.e., a stupidity rule that limits the number of brigades he may commit to battle), special BCE rules, and other unique chrome. We hope to be able to get the game into four pages of exclusive rules, which will make the game a prime candidate for *S&T*. Full size map, 28 Game-Turns, and approximately 80 combat counters.

Other games that I expect to see at any minute are Rich Berg's *Corinth*, Mark Herman's *New Market*, and Jim Simon's *Olustee* and *Cedar Mountain*. These games will be evaluated when received. There is much interest in *Cedar Mountain*, since it is a head-to-head fight between the Stonewall and Iron brigades. *Corinth* is one map, but it has lots of counters and would require a change in packaging. *New Market* has a capsule map, (that's right folks). *Olustee* has a brigade of Union black troops and has a new type of terrain — bay shore.

I have a few requests to make of you *TSS* fans out there. First, I am interested in names for these games. We need names for all of them since we can't very well call them by their battle names. Second, I am interested in obtaining additional research for any of the battles; maps or OB material is best. Third, if you are interested in blindtesting one of these games write me care of SPI. More next time. *Eric Smith*

## When Less Is More

Predictably, our removal of *FYEO* from *S&T* has elicited heated response from that column's partisans. While not wholly unexpected, the ire of those who wrote to protest our decision is, nonetheless, distressing. This is especially true since a number of those who wrote were obviously of the opinion that we were trying to pull some sort of ripoff by dropping *FYEO* at the same time that we launched the *FYEO Newsletter* at $50 a pop. We'd like to take a few minutes now to clear this matter up.

The decision to drop *FYEO* from *S&T* was, in part, motivated by a desire to avoid offering two competing products, it is true. However, this was a relatively minor element in a decision which had been brewing for some time. The fact is, we probably would have dropped *FYEO* from *S&T* even if we had not decided to launch the *FYEO Newsletter*. The reasons behind this fact should be obvious to most of the magazine's readers. Historically, the column has tended to rate relatively low in the estimation of our subscribers, as often as not finishing only just ahead of *Briefings* and whatever *Datafile* brought up the rear. About 12-15% of feedback respondents seem to have been in love with the column, another 15-17% heartily hated it and the other 68-73% just couldn't seem to work up any enthusiasm for it either way. That breakdown has remained remarkably constant over the years.

Aside from the fact that the column wasn't exactly winning the hearts and minds of the readers, it wasn't generating much enthusiasm on the part of the staff either. For a variety of reasons (most having to do with budget constraints and the bi-monthly publishing schedule), *FYEO* was usually not very timely and was sometimes outrageously inaccurate. Given the resources which could be devoted to it in its magazine format, there was simply no way to upgrade the quality enough to make anyone here really happy about it.

The obvious failure of the column in *S&T* combined with the desire of the staff for a timelier format within which to work gave birth to the idea of an *FYEO Newsletter*. We knew that there were

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# Designer's Notes

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

Please do not order these games in advance of their publication announcement in *Strategy & Tactics.*

### Sword and the Stars

Last week Redmond, John Butterfield, and I sat down to decide on a name for the final game. The working title has always been *Empires of the Stellar Reaches,* which we have never intended to use since it is so close to *Empires of the Middles Ages.* A title has now been decided upon, and with that the game's development is finished. I am very happy with the final result. The elements that I am most pleased with include:

1. **Game Length**: You can now finish a game of *Sword and the Stars* in a single evening.
2. **Increased Decisiveness**: The addition of the StarGate to allow Operations to be undertaken in any part of the galaxy has changed the complexion of the *Empires* system drastically.
3. **New Special Rules**: New random events, Operation results, and more.
4. **Game Value**: This game will be a bargain; for 10 dollars the players will get a folio map, four hundred counters, a 24-page rules book, two dice, a one-inch box, and 56 Year Cards. In addition, the basic *Empires of the Middle Ages* system, which has proven to be *so* popular, remains virtually intact with changes made only to increase the entertainment value of the game.

Thus, my time spent with the game is over. Now it enters Art Department land, where it will undoubtedly receive the same kind of deluxe treatment the original game received. I eagerly wait to see the new map which I am sure will be beautiful. *Eric Smith*

### Great Battles of the Civil War

I have had a chance now to look over two more recently submitted games on the *TSS* system, *New Market* and *Corinth.* In addition, I have sent two other games back to the designers for additional work. *Brice's Crossroads* was sent back so the designer could wrap up a good set of Victory Conditions for the game, and *Belmont* was sent back for a re-design of the naval and map exiting mechanics. Neither game has been rejected; rather, both are still very much in contention for the three slots available to *TSS* games in the production schedule. The three games chosen for production in the spring/summer will be decided upon soon.

### New Market

This game, designed by veteran designer Mark Herman (of *Stonewall* and *Mech War 2* fame) originally came in as a *TSS* system capsule game. I sent it back to Mark several months ago, and he has brought the game more into line with the Standard Rules of the Great Battles system. It remains a capsule game, but is very close in design to the basic system. We tested it recently, and the testers did not know quite what to do with it. It is a strange game, because the Confederates have only six (count'em) regiments of infantry and a smattering of artillery. Add to this a nifty skirmisher rule, and the Confederate force nears 20 counters. The Union begins play with no more than 10 counters on the map. The two armies face off, and the Confederates attack. The attack pushes the Union down the length of the map until Union reinforcements arrive to stem the tide. This game is the most difficult one I have had to evaluate because of the small number of units and the tendency of small games to "explode" (i.e., chance is critical). I will take my time with evaluating the game, and I have the sneaking suspicion that it will turn out to be a real player and that we will publish it in some form or other. Don't hold me or SPI to my word however. More on this game later.

### Corinth

*Corinth* was originally designed over a year ago by Rich Berg as the follow up to his *Bloody April* game. He has recently redesigned the game to bring it into line with the Standard Rules. The game's main features are hidden entry of the Confederate forces, a nice set of solitaire mechanics, and 200 combat counters! The game is big. It is too big to fit into the standard 200 counter limit of the series. If we accept it, we will issue a special game in the series which would include 300 counters and would probably cost an extra dollar or so. The game itself is a very bloody affair with lots of units running head on into lots of other units. The situation is such that the Confederates, who are on the offensive, will almost assuredly advance almost the length of the map before the game ends. Thus, the game has lots of combat combined with considerable maneuver. The game is in the early stages of evaluation but appears to be the most sound of the initial designs I have received, as one would expect from the System's designer, Rich Berg.

In conclusion, the project is sailing very smoothly, and I am awaiting the arrival of several reworkings of previously submitted work before making my decision. By the next issue of *S&T,* the primaries should be over and the development campaign begun in earnest. *Eric Smith*

### Alamo

Again *Alamo* has entered the horse latitudes of game design, only this time land is in sight. I have redesigned the Terrain Effects charts and the Combat Resolution system, and the tests have been very satisfactory. The speed of play has been increased by twenty percent or so. The main problems now in front of me are art school and the Great Battles of the Civil War series. The end of design and development is near, although I almost feel Davey and company are resisting my efforts as much as they resisted those of Santa Anna. *Alamo* is being given the time it needs and the production schedule is very loose for the game; when I'm finished with it, it will be produced. The result should be worth the wait. *Eric Smith*

### Voyage of the Pandora

This game is in production land and will soon be published in *Ares #6. Voyage* is a solitaire game that puts the player in command of the Biological Survey Mission *Pandora* and its crew on a mission to explore a variety of planets and capture exotic creatures. The final components include 100 counters, an 11" × 17" game-map, and a 16-page rules book. However, only six pages of the book are actually rules and charts; the remainder is composed of 232 paragraphs that the player does *not* read before playing. During the game, the player is directed from paragraph to paragraph as a result of his decisions and the dictates of luck. The paragraphs describe all sorts of planets and environments, dozens of creature encounters, intelligent aliens, expedition accidents, and deep space occurrences ranging from mechanical problems to space pirates.

Great importance is placed on the player's decisions concerning the make-up of his expeditions and the type of environments they will explore. Having the proper tool or the character with the right expertise in a given situation can make the difference between capturing a creature or finding an alien artifact and total disaster.

Extensive playtesting has happily shown that no two games of *Voyage* are alike. Some missions find only a few hardy life forms on hostile worlds while others accumulate a whole zoo of creatures from lush planets. *Voyage of the Pandora* is a unique game with a system that we hope may be applied to other science fiction and fantasy situations.

*John H. Butterfield*

### Universe

Design work has just begun on our new science fiction role-playing game. All of the game systems that will be included are still in the planning stages, but one thing is already certain: *Universe* will be like no other role-playing product. So large and all-encompassing is a game of this nature, that description of its progress is difficult. Here are a few thoughts:

Our earliest estimates of the game's final components include a 22" × 17" four-color stellar display, a 22" × 17" tactical ship-to-ship combat display, 100 counters (for use with the tactical display), one 20-sided die, one 68-page gamesmaster's guide, one 20-page player's guide, and one 20-page adventure book (including a few complete adventures and extensive outlines and ideas for other adventurers). Hopefully, we can sell all this for $10.

The game will be set in real space, represented in Cartesian coordinates on the Stellar Display. Stretching 32 light years from our sun in every direction, over 100 stars (with possible planetary systems) will be shown on

[continued on page 37]

# Designer's Notes

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

Please do not order these games in advance of their publication announcement in *Strategy & Tactics*.

### British Army of the Rhine

The necessary research on the OB for this game has already been completed by the Central Front series' redoubtable designer, Chuck Kamps. Yours truly has recently completed the game-map. *BAOR* is well on its way. Despite being developed as an *S&T* issue (#88), *BAOR* will include a full 400 piece countersheet. The number of units involved is staggering. The Warsaw Pact will be fielding the equivalent of four armies, including units from Poland and the Western military districts of the Soviet Union. Arrayed against them will be elements of the BAOR, the Belgian I Corps, and the West German III Corps. The terrain involved is extremely varied. The northern quadrant of the map depicts the beginning of the North German Plain — densely populated, but otherwise devoid of obstacles. The southern two-thirds of the map is surprisingly rough terrain and promises to offer some very difficult fighting for the advancing Pact forces. Both players will have to make some interesting sacrifices in order to pursue their main objectives in such varied terrain. A number of aspects of the game mechanics have been evolving fairly rapidly from game to game. This is a healthy development, but we appreciate the need to maintain overall consistency. We will pause some time in the near future and issue a definitive wrap-up applying to the whole series. *Bruce Maxwell*

### Great Battles of the American Civil War

First I would like to thank all of those people who wrote me and offered their services as blindtesters. I have many more names now than I can possibly use, but that is preferable to not having enough. I have sent out the blindtest kits for *Corinth* and *Jackson at the Crossroads* (or rather Bruce Maxwell sent out *Jackson*). My quest for names for these games led to some really funny responses: Brice's Crossroads as Fustest with the Mostest, That Devil Forest, Crittur Company, Piercing Sherman's Lifeline; Belmont as There is a Yankee, You Looked Like Giants, Grant's Grunt (I can see it in Barnes and Noble); Cross Keys/Port Republic as Surely the Lord Is on Our Side; Olustee as Loss of a State, Sunshine State Campaign (how about Orange Tree State Campaign); and finally, my favorite, Corinth as A Hot Fight (in Mississippi). I do appreciate all the title suggestions that were sent in and I don't mean to unfairly pick on the people who wrote those above. It does show how difficult it can be to think of a suitable title. I think what I'll do is name the games after the battle, as in *Pea Ridge*, and then append a subtitle, e.g., *The Gettysburg of the West*.

Now for the final word on the game evaluations. I have already begun development of Richard Berg's *Corinth* design, Jim Simon's *Cedar Mountain* design, and our new R&D staffer, Bruce Maxwell, has begun *Jackson at the Crossroads*. The other games in the running have not disappeared, however. We have bought Mark Herman's *New Market* game, David Martin's and Lenny Millman's *Pleasant Hill* game, and I am seriously considering the purchase of *Brice's Crossroads*. Why so many? The games are good and their release will be staggered over the next few years. Thus, after the three Origins releases this spring, there will be a break in the release of the small games. Eventually Martin and Millman's game will be increased up to a two game package covering both of the battles of the Red River Campaign, Mansfield and Pleasant Hill, with a method of connecting the results of one game with the other. The other games that were submitted will be returned to their designers or an option will be bought on them, allowing us the privilege of full purchase at a later date.

**Corinth.** This game has been a joy to develop so far. My blindtesters are all responding with good material, the manuscript is in good shape, and the game is *fun* and *big*. I wish all games went this smoothly. At present, I am rewriting the rules for Army Commanders, and the various Confederate Entry rules. The only real problem so far uncovered in the game is a tendency for the Confederates to be trapped against the far map edges. By the time you read this report, this problem will have been long solved. My object in *Corinth* is to create a real balanced "player" along the lines of the original *TSS*, that is, a game where the players are fully in control of the strategic options of their armies.

**Cedar Mountain.** *Cedar Mountain* is off to a much slower start than *Corinth*. This is due to the fact that *Corinth* was designed by a veteran SPI designer and *Cedar Mountain* is the product of a design team's first effort. Ultimately the game will be very good, colorful, and exciting. I have a lot of work ahead of me since I have to generate an entire manuscript. Some of the main assets of the game are a beautiful map with enough room for the charts and tables, the need for vigorous attacking on *both* sides, and very few special rules. In short, this game by its very nature will be a player's game.

*Eric Smith*

**Jackson at the Crossroads.** *Jackson at the Crossroads*, designed by Joe Reiser, arrived on my desk already well developed at the beginning of January. The battle represents a very interesting situation, with each player having one flank on the offensive and one on the defensive. Historically, Jackson was completely caught by surprise by the initial Union advance, and only managed to fight his way free of the Union encirclement after making several very aggressive responses. The Union reacted extremely slowly to the opportunities created, and indecision lost the day. Recreating the tremendous imbalance in command initiative without straightjacketing the players into the historical outcome has proven to be the major challenge of the game. Joe and I have run through a great many command and control variants for both sides. We believe that we have found a solution that accurately portrays the historical realities without destroying player initiative. The game is now in the hands of half a dozen blindtest groups who will shortly provide an objective evaluation of our efforts. Initial reactions to the game have been highly favorable so far. Despite the highly tactical nature of the game system, there is a markedly strategic flavor to the options each player faces in deploying his forces. The game promises both players a real challenge.

*Bruce Maxwell*

### The Alamo

By the time you read this, *Alamo* will have been turned into David Ritchie for the R&D edit and, indeed, may even be in the Art Department. A few days ago I was given the incredible news that the managers have decided to increase the size of my little game from a capsule map to a folio map. I am very happy about this! I can now put charts and tables on the map and increase the hex size for easier play. The game will be better for this stroke of fortune at the end of its R&D life. *Eric Smith*

### Battle Over Britain

Have no fear! *Battle Over Britain* is still flying high. Projects of higher priority have pushed back *BOB's* publication, but it *will* be published and it will be fine. While I have been wrestling with *Voyage of the Pandora*, *Universe*, and *Laserburst*, the strategic game has been playtested here at SPI and blindtested across the country regularly. That portion of the game is entirely finished. The Tactical Combat Game (consisting of a number of scenarios that allow the players to recreate actual raids) is finished too, except for the final rules manuscript. The Advanced Tactical Game (play it *forever*) is still in the development state. I cannot say for sure, but look for *BOB* in the fall of '81.

*John H. Butterfield*

### Spies

Lenny Glynn and John Prados collaborated on the design for this project, and the results are, I think, really exciting. The subject matter is the bitter espionage war that took place in Europe between 1933 and 1939. As currently configured, *Spies* is a five-player game wherein each player is a spymaster guiding the intelligence operations of Germany, Italy, Britain, France, or Russia. Turns are one year in length (7 turns per game). During the course of each turn, players maneuver agents across Europe pick-

# JACKSON AT THE CROSSROADS

Joe Reiser turned *Jackson at the Crossroads* over to me for development at the beginning of January. Since then, work on the game has been proceeding at a healthy pace. The game situation is rather complicated, and presents an intriguing set of problems to each player, as each must operate with one flank on the offensive and one on the defensive. Historically, Jackson was waiting in the Cross Keys/Port Republic area to deal a telling blow to at least one of the two Union armies chasing him down the valley. The actual Union approach was so rapid, however, that he was taken by complete surprise. Only by the most aggressive counterattacking on Jackson's part, and the most dilatory behavior on th Union part, was Jackson able to escape both pincers of the trap.

Recreating the tremendous difference in command initiative between the two sides has proven a major problem. We have faced once again the inevitable dialectic between observing the historical rigidities of the actual event and providing the players with sufficient freedom of action to develop the potential of the historical situation. Joe, as was mandated by his role as designer, locked the players into a rigid sequence of limited initiatives based on actual events. I, as mandated by my role as developer, have tried to dismantle the obstacles to player initiative as much as possible.

The key to attaining this goal without destroying the historical nature of the game, and its value as a simulation, is in the honing of the victory conditions into a suitable framework for motivating player solutions which reflect the actual strategic objectives and the vulnerabilities of the two combatants.

Over many late night games, Joe and I hammered out a compromise that we are both happy with. In the process, we broke the game wide open. The Union Player has the capability to launch much more vigorous attacks than the major Union commander, Fremont, ever alllowed. The Confederate Player is gifted with greater freedom of movement than Jackson considered prudent at the time. The result is a much more active game without the long lapses of inaction characteristic of much of the two-day struggle, and the potential, at least, for a wide variety of outcomes all over the map. These capabilities are not free, however, being woven into a matrix of checks and balances.

The game is now in the hands of a half dozen veteran blind-test groups who will shortly provide an objective evaluation of the changes made and their overall effect on play balance. So far, the initial reaction to the game as a whole has been very favorable.The various options that each Player faces in deploying his forces provide very challenging problems which most players enjoy, and lend a slightly strategic flavor to the game despite the highly tactical nature of the game system. Almost every area of the map sees action.

With the overall forces fairly evenly balanced, mobility plays a large part in any successful strategy, especially for the Confederacy. The Confederate forces enjoy the interior lines of communication and must take advantage of this fact to avail themselves of the uncoordinated positions of the Union pincers.

The game also includes four "What If" scenarios based on the events after Jackson's "capture," a very likely possibility considering that Union cavalry missed him by two minutes during the start of the actual battle. Among these scenarios is the very interesting alternative that Jackson's second-in-command, General Ewell, accepts the Union pincer move as successful and begins the game with the decision to march north

towards Washington with the whole Valley Army, thus effectively turning the tables on the trap. In all, this promises to be a very lively game.

*Bruce Maxwell*

## CORINTH

Richard Berg's game, *Corinth*, will be one of the three *TSS* system games issued for this year's Origins convention in San Francisco. The other two games will be Joe Reiser's *Cross Keys/Port Republic* and Jim Simon's *Cedar Mountain*.

**The Battle.** The battle of Corinth stands as probably the most evenly matched major battle of the entire American Civil War. The armies of each side numbered just over 20,000 men. In addition, both were veteran and ably led, at least at the brigade level. The leadership at division and army level was something else again. On the Union side was Major General William S. Rosecrans; on the south was Major General Earl Van Dorn. Rosecrans was an able organizer and leader of men. His main fault as a soldier was his inability to gain the initiative because the "right" moment to jump off never arrived, at least in his opinion. His lack of initiative eventually led him to disgrace at Chickamauga and to being relieved of command altogether at Chattanooga. Earl Van Dorn, on the other hand, was too much the rash cavalry trooper. He didn't lack for initiative; indeed, he had more than enough for two commanders. What he lacked was a sense of planning and orchestration. His defeat at Pea Ridge in the previous winter rankled him and he was anxious, even desperate, to regain his good reputation. His bloody defeat at Corinth led to a court of inquiry after the battle. He was cleared of all charges, but his career was at an all time low.

Van Dorn's plan at Corinth was to feint toward a city in Tennessee and then double-back on Corinth, thus striking what he hoped would be only part of Rosecrans' army. Rosecrans was alarmed by Van Dorn's move, and his natural cautiousness led him to do just the opposite of what Van Dorn had expected. He called his troops to mass at Corinth. The resulting battle was very bloody with much fighting in the woods as at Shiloh. In the end, the Confederates were bloodily repulsed after a two-day battle. Rosecrans did not pursue vigorously, and Van Dorn's shattered army got away. The Confederate assault was undone principally by the numbers of Union troops, the outer works (an entrenchment which covered the northern approaches to Corinth), and battery redans guarding Corinth itself. It was a kind of set-piece situation with the Union controlling the main defensive positions.

**The Game.** Richard Berg's initial design for *Corinth* was turned in this fall and was a very good and complete design. We playtested it during the evaluation procedure, and the players liked it. It was composed of a single map and almost exactly 200 counters. Its exclusive rules covered night, pre-dawn artillery barrages, special cavalry limitations, artillery rapid fire, unusual deployment rules, melee initiation limitations, and battery redans and secondary redans. After the game was accepted for publication, I was assigned as the developer.

**Development.** The first things I did as a developer were to make eight copies of the game and send them out to blindtesters and to write the government for additional map sources. It is very unusual to send out a designer's original submission to blindtesters. Normally the developer completely rewrites the rules and gets far into the development before blindtests are set. In this case, the manuscript was already in good shape and in SPI format, so I sent it out. I then organized my playtesters and began intensive play of the game. Almost immediately it became obvious that this game, like all games, had a few problems.

The first and most difficult problem to solve involved the game's set-up procedure and a tendency for the game to be unbalanced against the Confederates. In the original, the Union Player was given virtually free deployment, while the Confederate Player plotted the entry of his units onto the map through various assault areas. The Union Player was told the entry area of one of three Confederate divisions and then he set up his units. This led to the Confederates being trapped against the map edges if the Union Player set up well. To solve this problem, I have created a Union reserve of three brigades (out of 10) which must set up near Corinth. Historically Rosecrans held a third to one half of his army in reserve. In addition, I altered the movement through woods from 3 to 2. This helped the Confederates. Finally, I limited the Union to setting up no closer than five hexes from a map edge. These changes have made it possible for the Confederates to get on the map and avoids that "edge of the world" effect we all hate so much.

The second problem concerned the map and the order of battle. The battle of Corinth is not one of the better documented battles of the war. In fact, it is much less documented than Pea Ridge, to my surprise. When I was researching Pea Ridge, I thought I was having difficulties, but they were nothing compared to Corinth. The feds supplied me with a great map, indicating a band of fallen timber near the town of Corinth itself, in addition to the one outside the outer works. The timber outside the outer works delayed the Confederate attack considerably, and now I must assess the effect of the inner band of timber. The government map held no other surprises, but it did indicate that certain minor corrections were needed. I also hired Dr. David Martin to research the order of battle. He was able to turn up certain inaccuracies in the original, but he also came up against the fact that the battle is not well documented. So I'm left with the best OB I know how to get and the best map possible. I am currently working minute changes of weapon type, morale rating, and strength into the game. These changes will alter the game very little, but they will increase its accuracy.

**The Next Steps.** My next course of action is to monitor the blindtest reports very carefully. In doing this I will further assess the play balance of the game. This game will ultimately be one of the most balanced of wargames. It must be so because the actual forces are so equal and the battle was a close call for both sides. I am also thinking of including the exact historical set-up for those players who want to reenact the actual battle as closely as possible. This change will be a major piece of work and, if I do it, the historical situation will probably become the main scenario. The free set-up would still be included of course. I am also clarifying the unique melee rules. With the help of my blindtesters and my experience with designing *Pea Ridge*, writing standard rules, and developing *Wilson's Creek* and *Drive on Washington*, this game will turn out well.

**In Conclusion.** I wish all games were this easy and this much fun to develop. *Corinth* will be one of the most satisfying of all the projects I've been involved in. I think all of you will enjoy it.

*Eric Smith*

## ROADS TO MOSCOW

Properly speaking, *Roads to Moscow* is not a game at all. It is actually an expansion kit for the popular *Panzergruppe Guderian* which allows players to explore the possible consequences if the Germans had gone for Moscow after Smolensk instead of turning south to sew up the Kiev pocket. I evaluated the initial design favorably, but felt some trepidations about the job of developing it, as this would be my maiden effort in the R&D end of the hobby.

# Designer's Notes

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

Please do not order these games in advance of their publication announcement in *Strategy & Tactics.*

### Cedar Mountain

This game has gotten off to a much slower start than *Corinth.* I have a manuscript that I'm finding very hard to work with. To insure the game goes smoothly, I have taken on an assistant. His name is Joe Reiser, and he will be helping me in the rules development and play balance. I am still writing the rules of course, but his assistance will greatly improve the game. Joe is the designer of *Cross Keys/Port Republic* and a veteran of the *Wilson's Creek* project. Currently the game is being playtested in house *very* vigorously. The game is the simplest of the Great Battles series, and I expect the *S&T* audience will like it very much.

*Eric Smith*

### Jackson at the Crossroads

The game-map for *JATC* was based on a careful examination of the topographic maps of the battlefields of Cross Keys and Port Republic prepared in 1863 by Captain Jed Hotchkiss, Jackson's invaluable chief engineer, and on the game designer's personal exploration of the area. Even our best efforts sometimes go awry, however, and the game-map proved to be a case in point.

The diligence of one of our blindtesters, Bruce Shelley, produced a US Geological survey map which revealed a number of major errors in our terrain study. Hotchkiss, in an effort to better depict the two battle areas, had compressed the terrain between them and expanded the areas themselves. We had not caught this distortion. Furthermore, the terrain was considerably more broken and forested than we had been led to believe.

I am now putting the final touches on a new game-map based on the topographical detail on the Survey map and the forest and roadnet info culled from Hotchkiss' map. The new map is sufficiently different to warrant a whole new playtesting effort. Naturally this is quite an inconvenience, but infinitely preferable to working with an incorrect game-map. Once again, blindtesting has proved an invaluable aid in providing corrective perspective, input, and information for the game design process. The help we receive from you, the gamer in the field, is much more valuable, and much more appreciated, than we — the few and the busy — have time to express. My sincere thanks goes to my blindtesters.

Feedback on the game itself continues to be enthusiastic and creative. As originally composed, the game was well balanced, but at the cost of onerous Union idiocy rules. I am a firm believer in the principle that a player should have the ability to control his own fate given a sufficiently competent handling of his forces. If such able handling is nullified by a die roll that undoes all his efforts, how can he be credited for a good or bad performance? Indeed, how can he be blamed for giving up in disgust?

Therefore, we have removed the old system of rolling to determine which of Fremont's brigades can evade his restrictive deployment and attack individually. And we have removed the die rolling to see how long such a brigade can attack before Fremont recalls it. Fremont is now given an initial command level which allows him to commit up to two brigades at a time to attacking Ewell. For each Confederate brigade which loses BCE, Fremont's command level is increased by a brigade. For each Union brigade in Fremont's command (counting Blenker's Division, he had seven brigades) which loses BCE, Fremont's command level is reduced by one brigade.

The net effect is to allow the Union player the potential to commit all of his huge force if his initial efforts are successful, but to practically nullify him in the Cross Keys area if he is initially worsted. Fremont's remarkable timidity is thus simulated without trapping the Union player into an inevitable historical outcome.

Why have the idiot rules at all? Simply put, had Fremont vigorously committed his whole force to a determined attack on Ewell's division at Cross Keys, the Valley Army would have been decisively defeated. In game terms, *JATC* would become a Union cakewalk.

On the Port Republic front, a combination of new victory conditions and a reinstated Union ability to burn the bridge over the North River have presented the Union player with some very challenging options. He can either commit his small force to taking Port Republic at the very outset of the game and try to hang on until sunset, or he can fall back to the Lewiston Mansion and prepare to repulse the inevitable Confederate Counterattack. Caught between these two Union pincers, the Confederate player must make critical decisions as to whom to strike first, and with how much.

We have introduced a rule which allows for considerable Confederate redeployment during the first night. Though appreciably outnumbered and strategically embarrassed, an inspired Confederate player can use his superior mobility to wreak most Jackson-like execution on an unsuspecting Union player.

Further work is still required in some areas of the Exclusive Rules. The artillery bonus initially granted to Jackson's artillery needs to be re-examined as it may be based on a false premise. The retreat rules require expansion, and I am still looking for further ways to spice up the victory conditions. *JATC* has proved to be a real challenge to me as a developer. The tactical situation was absolutely fascinating, and the strategic implications of the battle were enormous. The subtleties of all the potential that was never realized in the historical outcome need to be captured in detail, and developed as player options, while still doing justice to the brilliance and blunder which actually ruled the field. This is a challenge we will do our damnedest to meet.

*Bruce S. Maxwell*

### Corinth

The development of this game is proceeding at a good pace. Richard Berg and I are working closely together on the game, and the blend of his and my ideas will make for a good game I feel. The blindtesters have been reporting over the past month, and all of them like the game. However, a tendency for the Confederates to be beaten on the first day is being demonstrated. Rich and I are working out a simple method of preventing this or making it less likely. In short, we are in the balancing stage of development, and I foresee no problems.

*Eric Smith*

# Designer's Notes

### Who Was That Game Company I Saw You With Last Night?

Sometime in the near future, you may be bemused by the sight of a new *Avalon Hill* game called *Panzergruppe Guderian* or *Freedom in the Galaxy* or even *Frederick the Great*. Didn't SPI do those, you might say to yourself. Well, of course we did. But we recently sold the rights to five existing SPI games (the three mentioned plus *PanzerArmee Afrika* and *Conquistador*), to Avalon Hill. This may shock some of you who are relatively recent fans of SPI, but it's really nothing so new.

Several years ago we did *PanzerBlitz* for Avalon Hill (their bestselling wargame) and subsequently sold them *France 40* (which appeared first in *S&T*). Avalon Hill can repackage, and sell successfully, SPI games simply because Avalon Hill has a broader distribution net than SPI and can expose the games to many buyers that would otherwise not see them.

So far as the particulars of the arrangement, both AH and SPI are happy with the arms-length deal they concluded and continue as friendly business rivals. SPI is especially happy because a number of the games sold are good candidates for the wider exposure they'll get (particularly *Freedom in the Galaxy*). Since the relationship is an author (SPI)/publisher (AH) sort of arrangement both parties have a mutual interest in seeing that the games do well in their re-release.

*Redmond*

### Antietam

Back in September of 1979, SPI released Richard Berg's game *Bloody April*. Richard was ready to follow the release of that game with yet another *TSS*-system game on the battle of Antietam. The *Antietam* design was shelved for the indefinite future because SPI decided to produce small games in one-inch boxes. Part of this switch in direction led to the creation of the Great Battles of the American Civil War series which would allow for standardization of the *TSS* system and creation of a set of smaller, more playable games.

*Antietam* was briefly resurrected in the summer of 1980 so that a study could be made of what change was necessary in order to bring it into line with the Great Battles Standard Rules. The prognosis: massive redesign. *Antietam* was shelved for a second time. A year has passed, but now the game is well on its way to being published.

In the fall of 1980, I was in the process of choosing which three games to publish in the Great Battles system for Origins 81. Part of the reason I was so enthusiatic about Richard Berg's *Corinth* design was that I knew that it was very similar to *Antietam* in design. Thus by developing the smaller *Corinth* design, I would be able to gain a big start on *Antietam*.

Currently I am beginning the development of *Antietam*. I will be using the melee initiation mechanics originally designed for *Antietam*, which appeared first in *Corinth*, as well as the *Corinth* BCE, rapid-fire, and cavalry rules. *Antietam* originally had the old *Bloody April* fatigue system which I had so hated as a tester of the game. Richard and I both agree that the *Corinth* BCE rule is a better solution than fatigue.

I must personally disagree with Eric Goldberg in his Forward Observer column last issue; I find the newer Great Battles system more playable and more fun than the original *TSS* game system. To insure this I am streamlining all the cumbersome command mechanics of the initial *Antietam* design to bring them into line with the Great Battles command rules. In addition, I am making several dirty rules optional, and most importantly, I am revising the artillery ammunition rules. No longer will players have to comb their OB's in search of a battery to mark off one ammo box. I am designing a simple system that still allows batteries to run out of ammo but the players do not keep track of each round fired. I am also using homogeneous gun types in each battery. The rules will list the exact gun types in each battery for those players who want absolute accuracy and are willing to spend the time to figure out the fire strength of mixed batteries.

*Antietam* will consist of two full-size maps, 800 combat counters, a 32-page exclusive rules book (with lots of illustrations), a standard rules book, and a 4-inch box with two counter trays. The exclusive rules will most likely contain a center pull-out section with scenario set-ups in it.

The game will feature several scenarios. Antietam is a battle that doesn't make for easy scenario formulation because of the way the battle was fought. I hope to have a small scenario using only a part of one map so that players can learn the game system without spending hours setting the game up. Also included will be as many scenarios as my blindtest groups and I can devise. I foresee at least four scenarios in addition to the full campaign game. The campaign game will be broken down into three versions, as was done in *Corinth*. The first version will be the historical game which covers the historical Union corps commitments. Historically, the Union attacked piecemeal, one corps after another. Had they attacked all at once, the entire Confederate Army would have been destroyed (they were outnumbered two-to-one). However, George McClellan was in command and Lee knew he would not press the battle in the right way — that is, all out. Had there been another Union commander, there would not have been an Antietam, simply because Lee wouldn't have stopped to engage in battle.

Version two will allow variation in the historical corps committment so that neither player knows the exact Game-Turn a corps will be activated. Finally, there will be a version in which the Union commander will be able to attempt to commit his corps as he sees fit by expending McClellan's Commitment Points. Commitment is still not automatic but this will allow the Union player to try strategies very different from those used historically.

We are currently testing the Union corps commitment rules, using the original Blue and Gray system *Antietam* game. Instead of using the unit movement restrictions in that game, we are using the new *Antietam* corps commitment rules. Thus, it is possible to test these rules over and over in only a fraction of the time it takes to play *Antietam* with its 800 counters!

I would like to thank several people who have been a great help over the past six months in getting *Corinth, Cedar Mountain,* and *Jackson at the Crossroads* into print. First, I would like to thank Jim Bowman and Dr. David Martin for their amazingly thorough research on *Antietam, Jackson,* and *Corinth*. Further I would like to thank all the blindtesters with special thanks to: William Spitz, Gerald Lientz, John McBride and Richard Dorr for help on *Corinth*; Bruce Shelly and Anthony Williams for help on *Jackson*; and Doug Barton for help on *Cedar Mountain*. Special thanks to Andy Eiler for his constant help in the testing done here at SPI on all three games.

In the last issue of *MOVES*, there was an article by Pete Bartam on the Great Battles series. I would like to reply to some of the points he made.

I agree with Pete's opinions in the quality of the game maps. *Pea Ridge* does have the best, but the new *Jackson* and *Corinth* maps should be tied for second place. The exclusive rules of the games printed so far do have a remarkable range of new ideas. However, unlike Pete, I think this is a plus. The system has not really been standardized across the board because people keep coming up with ideas which are superior to the ones that have gone before. Therefore, the exclusive rules will continue to exhibit new concepts. Actually, Pete recommends several new rules of his own; so far the Great Battles series has been an excellent forum for the debate of such ideas. For example, in *Cedar Mountain, Corinth* and *Jackson* the range effects chart has been completely restructured for rifled artillery. The values of these guns have changed all across the board. I am still in the process of rethinking the artillery strengths for use in *Antietam*. It is quite possible that other weapons values will be altered in that game.

Pete begs for some sort of advance after combat mechanic for units whose fire causes a regiment to rout. This is a perfect example of a great new idea which, believe it or not, has never been brought to my attention. I would like to request *MOVES* readers to help me evaluate this idea. Following is a rule I am considering adding to *Antietam*; use it while playing any of the Great Battles games and let me know its effects and whether or not you think it is a valid rule. Please cite specific incidents where the rule came into effect; include a self-addressed envelope if you want

# Burnsiding Our Bridges Behind Us, or the Ford Was a Better Idea... Ruminations on *Antietam*

The most fortunate aspect of *Antietam* (the umpteenth, but current, working title for our new *TSS*-system game on Sharpsburg/Antietam) is that it began design as we were finishing work on *Bloody April*. This

*[continued on page 20]*

**OUTGOING MAIL** *[continued from page 18]*

meant, among other things, that the memory of the latter was fresh in my mind. I could gauge instantly the public reaction to many of the changes made to *TSS* in *Bloody April*, which is why most players will find *Antietam* closer to *TSS* than to *BA* — at least in feel.

As with any game — especially of this size — I started work with the map. We are now in our fourth working version of the game-map, and each one is quite different from its predecessor. My initial version was done solely because (a) I always do the map first, and (b) I needed a map to get a decent idea of the initial dispositions. Therefore, I simply grabbed Old Unreliable, *The West Point Military Atlas* (it's truly amazing how inaccurate all those maps are), and dashed off a quickie. Well, at least the creek was in the right place.

The second (and initial playtest) version of the map was done when I finally got the official Antietam Park version of the battlefield, known as the Bowlby map. This is quite a good bird's-eye view of the field, giving all the terrain detail you could possibly want, except for one thing — elevation. For that I had to await the pleasure of the National Archives, which eventually sent us the series of 14 maps known as the Carman-Cope maps. Aside from giving troop dispositions for almost every important period of the battle, the Carman-Cope maps also have elevation lines at 10-foot intervals.

The result was map three, drawn in the time-honored *TSS* style you're all familiar with. Unfortunately, it looked like a spider's idea of heaven, and the line of sight arguments were getting to be a bit insane. The result was that, after several conversations with my developer, Eric Smith, I decided to bite the bullet and adopt the elevation approach as used in *Pea Ridge* and in my own *Corinth* design. I have no idea what color scheme Redmond will choose, but the playtest map is quite attractive and provides the player with an exceptionally accessible view of the field.

The other main problem prior to design is that of OB, and in that area Antietam is more of a problem than either of its predecessors. While Gettysburg (*TSS*) and Shiloh (*BA*) have (relatively) abundant information, Antietam is missing such data. So again the call went out to our Numbers Man, the eminent Dr. David Martin, and, again, he came through with flying colors. He researched every unit for strength and weaponry and provided us with a listing of each unit, complete with the sources used for strength, plus some invaluable side notes.

Three times the list was revised as new information came to light, the most valuable being the uncovering of the unprinted Carman manuscript on the battle, which provided us with many Confederate regimental strengths hitherto unavailable. It was thru Dr. Martin that we discovered the presence of the Union sharpshooter units with telescopic rifles. Granted, most regiments did not have specific information in this area, so that educated guessing from previous and subsequent battles was widely used. In the main, however, the numerical strengths and weaponry is probably the most accurate ever done, and its thoroughness even startled the historians at the park when they were shown an updated version!

For morale levels — which are more important in *Antietam* than in any previous *TSS* game — I relied on another old researcher and friend, Jim Bowman. His compilations of unit histories was again invaluable, especially in noting the "green" units. Morale is often a difficult area to assess, especially given the relative worth of both armies, and I often gave the Confederate units the benefit of the doubt — especially where it seemed to need it or history more or less demanded it.

A quick look at the numerical strengths let me know right away that the old 100-men-per point scale was not going to work with Antietam. The Confederates alone had over 10 regiments with strengths lower than 50 — some as low as 18 to 20! There were also a large number of units with strengths of 130 to 140, which meant that if I used the 100 scale there would be a major discrepency in relative overall strengths between the two armies. The obvious decison was to go to 50-men-per-point. This seems simple enough, but the havoc it wrought within the system is still being straightened out.

The obvious and immediate changes were to the CRT's. With losses affecting smaller groups, the 1-6 die-roll was no longer adequate to handle the scale; therefore, the CRT was changed to a 2-12 die-roll. The stacking and density charts underwent minor revisions, and a series of completely new, if minor, rules were implemented. And then we were ready to start work.

It's hard to remember exactly what happened in what sequence, as designing a game often entails keeping track (and oftentimes forgetting) many details, so I have set down the changes not so much as when they happened, but more or less in order of how they appear in the game.

Many of the changes brought about in *Bloody April* were either not working or in some disfavor, and most of this had to do with the record-keeping aspect of *BA*. It was obvious that I would have to do some rethinking in this area.

Most of the testing work has concentrated on the adjustments I made to the fire combat portion of the rules. As *TSS* players know, the Fire CRT of that game is unmercifully bloody. In *Bloody April* we reduced losses on the CRT quite a bit, and in *Antietam* we have reduced actual casualty losses even further (by about 25-30%!). Terrain in *BA* helped keep losses down much further than the CRT would normally indicate, but there was no such cover at Sharpsburg. We therefore found that the opening hours of the battle, which were a head-on, massive meeting engagement, produced a horrendous number of dead and wounded. Granted 12,000+ casualties were actually taken during the first four hours of the real battle, but our numbers were just too much.

Concomitant with the changes in fire came a change in the ammo rules. Gone, you'll be glad to know, is the excessive bookkeeping of *BA*. Ammo depletion is by random die-roll, as with *TSS*, although the supply wagons have a limited capability in resupplying small-arms ammunition. Battery fire is by rounds, using a simple system that does require a small amount of bookkeeping (but was determined to be quite acceptable by the testers). The amount of ammunition available to both sides *is* limited, although it should be adequate for a well-supervised battle. Rapid-fire is still available, but it is limited to grapeshot (anti-personnel) now.

Another area that underwent considerable overhaul in terms of effect, if not actual rules, is melee. Again taking the suggestions of many gamers, I tied in the ability to melee and retreat before melee with a unit's morale. The good morale units now assume major importance in the battle as few players will attempt to melee or stand with units of low or unproven morale. They simply will rarely function as you wish them to. This change forces the players to plan in advance to a much greater extent than ever before with the *TSS* system.

The major addition to *Antietam*, in terms of rules indigenous to the specifc battle, is the Union Commitment rule. The need for this arose not from the conduct of the battle but from the "why and wherefore" of the battle. Quite simply, if McClellan had not been in command of the Union Army, Lee would not have stood at Sharpsburg; he would have returned across the Potomac. But Lee knew McClellan, and he knew that with McClellan in command he (Lee) stood a good chance of defeating the Union in a defensive battle. Ultimately, although his reasoning was sound, the result failed to bear Lee out, mostly because of the poor state of his troops. However, the major portion of the blame for the Union's failure to thoroughly shatter the Army of Northern Virginia lays squarely on the shoulders of Little Mac, the Union's answer to Braxton Bragg.

McClellan had no idea what was going on and he did even less about it. He waited, he squandered, he commited piecemeal, he failed to inform his subordinates, he did everything that was humanly possible to stop a well-equipped army from defeating a bedraggled force 45% of its size.

This is a situation that the designer has to deal with: the result is the Union Commitment rules. In essence, play is still left in the hands of the gamers in that it is the gamer that still decides what to do. However, the Union player must commit his corps, and he can do this only at certain (albeit plentiful) times. McClellan has a number of *commit points* which he distributes (if he so wishes) amongst his corps commanders. These points are added to those of the corps commanders, producing a total representing a die-roll maximum. Corps are thus commited by die-roll as per the points assigned them. Further adding to the confusion is the fact that corps commanders must then commit their divisions, although this is much easier to do.

Finally, we have the Burnside-Cox problem, in which both of these non-estimable men were having a personality conflict which delayed the transmission of any orders to the IX Corps. So far, the simulation of this aspect of the battle has been quite satisfactory; it has also kept the Confederate player in the game — no mean feat!

Other added fillips are new cavalry charge rules, some optional items such as

*[continued on page 54]*

## OUTGOING MAIL *[continued from page 20]*

bees and infantry armed with captured naval artillery.

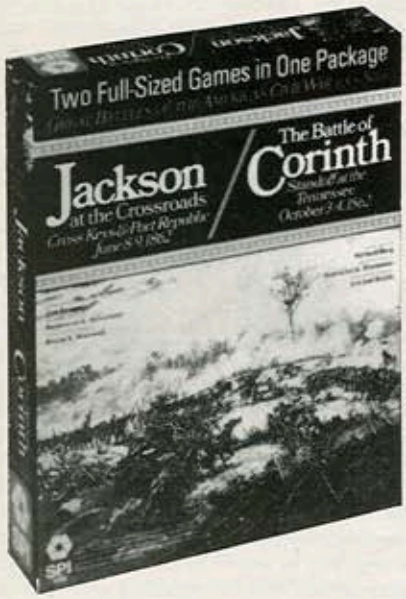
*Antietam* represents yet another step — hopefully forward — in the evolution of this popular battle-level game system. The main reason for *TSS*'s popularity is, so I have felt, its playability, and to this end I have tried to keep playability uppermost in designing and redesigning . Each battle has its own unique problems. With Shiloh it was terrain and surprise; at Antietam it's command and survival. As befits its history, *Antietam* is a bloody game, a battle in which both players are truly trying to destroy each other in terms of manpower. So far it has also turned out to be a remarkably tense game as the Confederate player shifts brigade after brigade in an effort to keep his sagging line from collapsing, trying to keep one step ahead of the Union player, who is valiantly trying to get as much of his immense force in play as he can, only to see division after division destroyed by terrible charges and bloody, toe-to-toe firefights. It is somewhat sobering to realize and appreciate the horrifying immensity of the loss in human life at Antietam, the bloodiest day in US military history. Hopefully, *Antietam* will shed some light on the reasons behind and about the battle, and that appreciation will become even greater.

*Richard Berg*

# Jackson at the Crossroads

# The Battle of Corinth

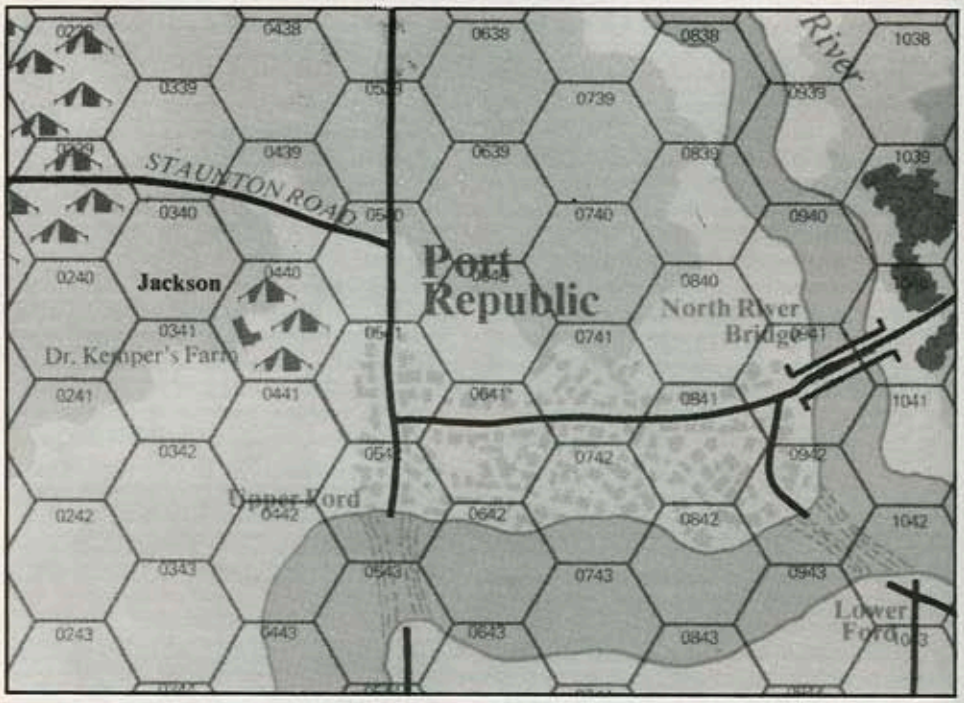
Two important battles that affected the course of the Civil War have been combined in one package! *Jackson at the Crossroads* simulates the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic on June 8–9, 1862 in which the Valley Army successfully defeated two encircling Union armies. *The Battle of Corinth* recreates the desperate October 3–4, 1862 sneak attack by the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi to retake the vital railroad juncture of Corinth. Both games use the *Great Battles of the American Civil War Series* standard rules, which cover melee attack, small-arms and artillery fire, cavalry charges, and the effects of leadership. Each game has a 16-page booklet of exclusive rules to cover the unique features of each battle and an historical article about each event. The game includes two 22"×34" maps, 800 cardboard counters (200 counters per game plus 400 common markers), Standard Rules and Exclusive Rules booklets, and various playing aids.




**Available for $25 in retail outlets nationwide**

Wagon Bridge

*Section of Jackson at the Crossroads game map.*

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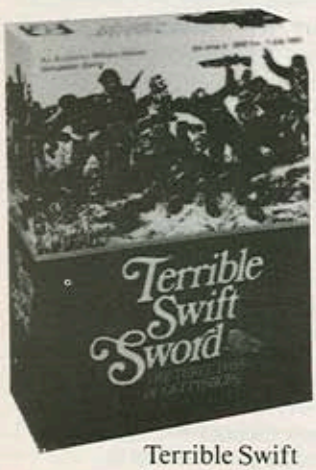
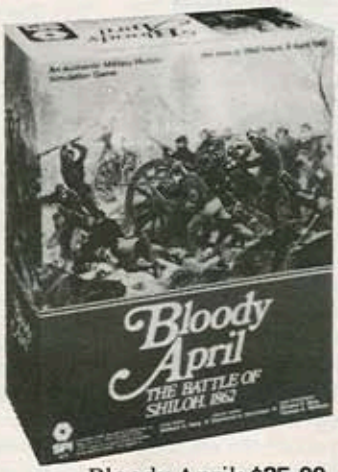



Terrible Swift Sword: **$25.00**

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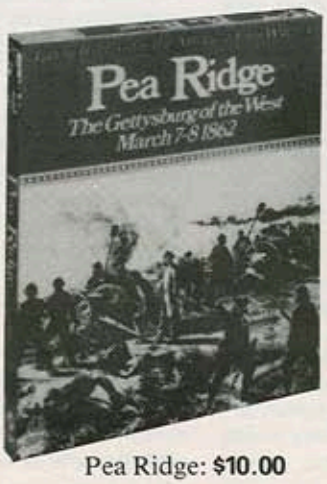


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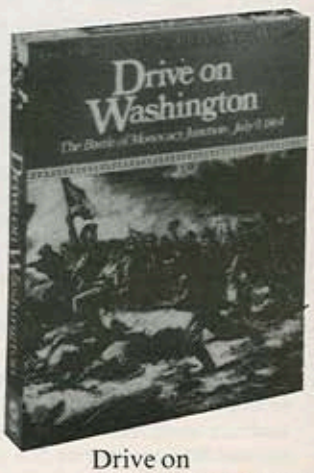


Drive on Washington: **$10.00**

# Antietam and a Defense of Alamo

In last issue I wrote both a progress report on *Antietam* and an article on *Cedar Mountain*. In Redmond's introductory blurb to my article, he accuses me of designing a game on the Alamo in which the Texans cannot win. To make it worse he accuses me of being a fellow traveller in Yankeedom. It's not true! The Texans can win RAS (rhymes with Jazz). All they need do is destroy several hundred Mexican troops in the first twenty-five minutes of the battle and the assault is over. They can win the *war* by rolling successfully on the Continued Siege Table. Admittedly it is a rare occurrence, but it is possible. As for a Texan like me plotting how to win with the Union Army, hey, the Yanks need all the help they can get in *Cedar Mountain* (and in most other battles of the war too). Hope I haven't caused you any trouble, Redmond!

We are very far into the testing of the campaign game version of *Antietam*. We are testing two games simultaneously — one on Friday night and the other during week nights. The entire mechanics of the game is now set and testing is aimed towards covering loopholes (always a difficult task) and testing the Union Commitment System. I

have redesigned Richard's original commitment system completely. Now instead of Union corps commitment being based on a die roll it is based on a chit pick. Each Union corps commander is given a rating from 1 to 6. These ratings are the number of Commitment Chits the Union player puts in a cup for that corps. He then adds a number of chits to the cup to bring the chit total to 10. Thus, Hooker's cup contains 6 Commitment Chits and 4 "blanks." McClellan is represented in the game by three McClellan Chits in each of three corps cups (there are seven in all). He then reduces the number of "blanks" in each cup in which he placed a McClellan Chit by the number listed on the Chit. If he then picks a Commitment Chit *or* the McClellan Chit, the corps is committed. Chits are not put back in a cup once drawn.

Joe Reiser and Justin Leites are far into a campaign game of *Antietam* which they are playing almost nightly. Their game is going very well and is very tense at this writng. Justin is the Union and it was his strategy to attempt to activate Hooker, Sumner and Burnside with his three McClellan Chits. He put the "0" in Hooker's cup, the "1" in Sumner's and the "2" in Burnside's. On Game-Turn One he picked a Commitment Chit from Hooker's cup thus activating his corps. His other two draws were blanks leaving Burnside and Sumner uncommitted. Justin decided to pull Hooker back since he was not attempting to commit Mansfield. Hooker is very far forward and his flanks are unsupported without Mansfield. On Game-Turn Two Justin picked the "1" Chit from Sumner's cup indicating that the corps was activated but that there was a one Game-Turn delay (leave it to McClellan...). His other two picks ended in blanks. Hooker continued to fall back but Joe saw that no other Union corps were moving so he struck Hooker with Jackson's entire corps. On Game-Turn Three Sumner was committed and began to move up the center across the middle bridge.

The Union picks only once per hour after the first two turns. By Game-Turn Four Hooker was hotly engaged with Hood, D.H. Hill, J.R. Jones and half the other divisions of the Confederate army. Sumner is not located such that he can help Hooker. On Game-Turn Five Justin placed the "1" chit in Mansfield's cup and then drew it right out, thus commiting the corps. What luck! However, by the time Mansfield managed to arrive on Hooker's left flank it was too late. Hooker had been withdrawn because of too many casualties. One positve note for Hooker was that he wiped out Hood's entire division in a single Game-Turn with massed artillery fire at a range of one hex. Joe had gotten a little too rash in his pursuit of Hooker.

A lull came over the game. Both Justin and Joe waited for the other to make the next move. A massive artillery duel broke out between the Union V Corps artillery reserve and the batteries of Longstreets's Corps. Finally on Game-Turn Nine Burnside was committed.

Justin began a push with Mansfield on the Union right, Sumner in the center and Burnside on the left. In the center he did well, badly smashing Rode's brigade and Manning's brigade. Joe was taken aback by the early arrival of Burnside and sent Fitz Lee's cavalry *across* Antietam Creek to slow down Burnside. Smoothbore Napoleons and rifled muskets at point blank range slaughtered the cavalry and two regiments surrendered. Burnside was slowed just long enough for McLaw's and Anderson's divisions, reinforcements from Harper's Ferry, to arrive on the scene to stop Burnside. Thus, the battle stands. The Confederates have dealt out more punishment than they have received but now hold a long, thin line. The Union has lost Hooker, both Sumner and Burnside each have at least one division which is damaged, and Mansfield is in serious trouble unless he can link up with Sumner.

*Antietam* is turning out to be the best grand tactical game I've ever seen, much less worked on. This is because the game has a lot of operational strategy. It does not merely depend on closing with the enemy and firing away until one side drops. This game calls for planning and is very tense and balanced. The Union has the manpower but the Confederates have the terrain and leadership. In *Terrible Swift Sword* the reinforcement schedule determined the strategy of the game, in *Antietam* it's the players. *Eric Smith*

## Editor's Addendum

The author of the article "Super TaskForce" in *MOVES* 57 was mistakenly listed as Charles Kamp. The correct name is Charles T. Kamps, Jr.

## Antietam

We have started yet another campaign game of *Antietam*. The last game ended in a Union disgrace as Burnside flung himself into the maw of D.R. Jones and Sumner was sent to heaven by the Confederate artillery he valiantly charged. With this glorious victory, their second in a row, my Confederate testers have issued the following bulletin:

**Attention All Would-Be Challengers!**

**We, Joseph Reiser and Justin Leites, hereby proclaim ourselves to be the best of all possible *Antietam* teams. We challenge anyone to a campaign game and we will relinquish our title only when beaten. The challenger has choice of sides.**

Once the game is in print, I heartily recommend that some of you in the New York area take them up on their boast. You can write me at SPI and I'll forward your challenge to Justin and Joe.

The game we are currently playing is starting off well for the Union. Justin and Joe are the Confederates as usual, but this time the Union testers, Clayton Smith and Andy Eiler, have them on the ropes. It looks like a probable Union breakthrough will occur on the Confederate left flank near the sunken road. The Union has committed Hooker, Mansfield and Sumner, and all three corps are making a concerted, simultaneous attack — something McClellan never managed to do. The results so far have been good. The Confederates are dealing out a lot of punishment, but the Union attack is stretching their lines to the breaking point. The Confederates have no reserves, which in *Antietam* is a desperate situation to be in. Andy informs me that during the next two turns he expects to break through and destroy D.H. Hill's Division which is anchored on the sunken road. All in all, this looks to be the best test of the game we have had thus far. *Antietam* is a game where experience and expertise are necessary in carrying out one's plans. Otherwise, the battle tends to chaos, with the Confederates coming out on top.

The game is finished for all intents and purposes. We are testing now to even the balance and to cover an occasional loophole which arises. *Antietam* will include several scenarios, which are being tested out of house by blindtest groups. Look for this one in the late spring.

*Eric Lee Smith*

# Jackson at the Crossroads

# The Battle of Corinth

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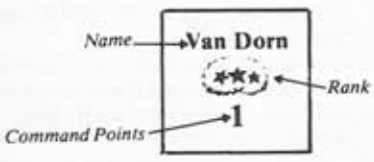
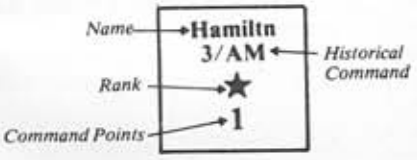
**BUYER'S GUIDE FOR *JACKSON/CORINTH***
**Age Range:** 12 years to adult
**Number of Players:** 2
(Suitable for solitaire play)
**Average Playing Time:** 4 to 10 hours
**Complexity Rating:** High (6.8)
For purposes of comparison, *Monopoly* is considered to have a complexity rating of 2.34.

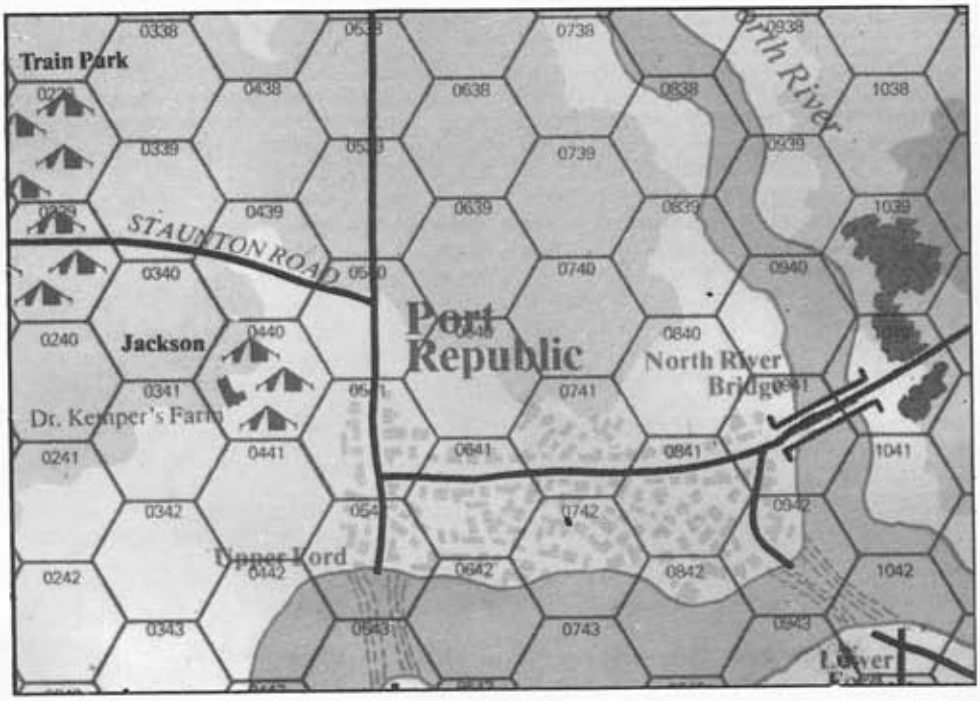
Wagon Bridge

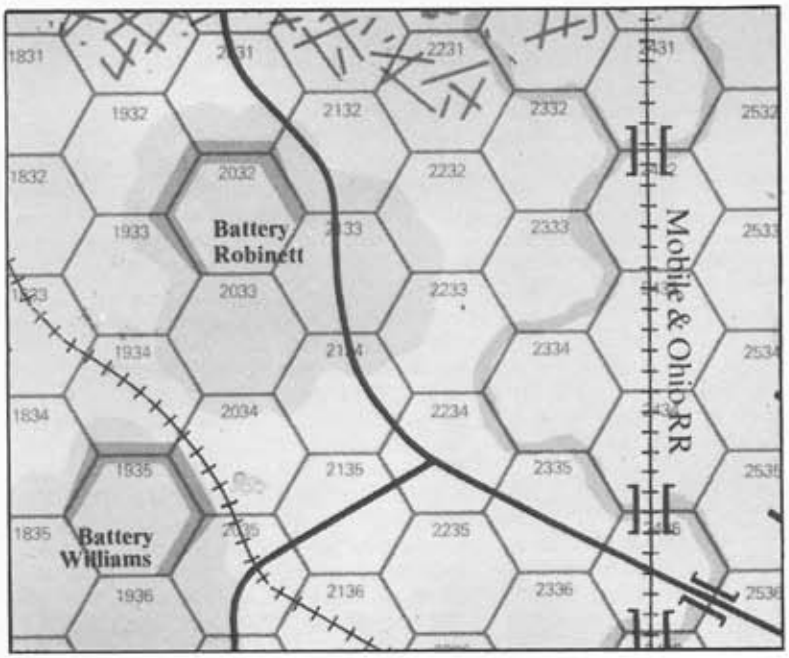
ARMY COMMANDER: Front




DIVISION COMMANDER: Front

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