Bloody April

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH, 1862

B. LAIDLAW

OFFICER (Front only)

COMMANDER (Front only)

ARTILLERY CREW (Front, Full Strength)

ARTILLERY CREW (Back, Reduced Strength)

CAVALRY (Front, Mounted)

CAVALRY (Back, Dismounted)

INFANTRY (Front, line)

INFANTRY (Back, Column)

THE STRATEGIC SITUATION

With the reduction of Forts Donelson and Henry in February 1862, both achieved with almost ludicrous ease, Jefferson Davies' ill conceived cordon defence policy in the west was in ruins. Only one month earlier an entire army was lost at Logans Cross Roads while defending the Cumberland Gap and now the whole 300 mile line was outflanked and out manoeuvred.

General U.S. Grant, recently promoted to Major General and in command of the Army of the Tennessee, now controlled the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers and, by advancing upstream beyond the forts, threatened to split General Albert Sidney Johnston's forces in two and impale the heartland of the Confederacy. Realising that his widespread forces could offer only token resistance and being threatened in the centre by Major General Buell's Army of the Ohio advancing on Nashville, Johnston abandoned the Tennessee capital, not only a major supply depot but also one of the symbols of Southern pride.

Grant, nicknamed Unconditional Surrender by a jubilant public, saw that "the way was open to the National forces all over the south west", but the quick follow up he hoped for was not to be. Instead, racked by petty jealousy and vindictiveness, the Union command turned in on itself and squandered its opportunity. Major General Halleck emerged as commander of all Union forces in the West including Buell's army in Nashville. He had boasted that he would "split the secession in twain in one month once he had the high command". Now he allowed Johnston's army to slip from his grasp and, having chosen not to pursue, he opted for a policy of leisurely concentration.

Johnston meanwhile, pilloried by the press but still supported by Davies, found himself in command of the newly designated Army of the Mississippi which had been assembled in Corinth, Miss. by General P.G.T. Beauregard. Besides its value as an assembly point Corinth provided a convenient base from which to defend the Memphis and Ohio Railroad, the South's only adequate supply line between the Mississippi and the Atlantic coast.

In early March the Southern Command heard of Union movements down the Tennessee and subsequent encampments along the river. The original idea of launching a surprise attack was Beauregard's and was accepted by the new Commander without alteration. Indeed, the popular hero of Fort Sumter and First Manassas in the days ahead functioned much as the army's commander under Johnston's name.

The final dispatches from General R.E.Lee and Jefferson Davies left Johnston in no doubt, if doubt there had ever been, that on his shoulders rested the destiny of the Confederate south west. This was to be a battle the South simply had to win, a once and for all gamble to re-establish Confederate frontiers in the Kentucky Ohio Valley.
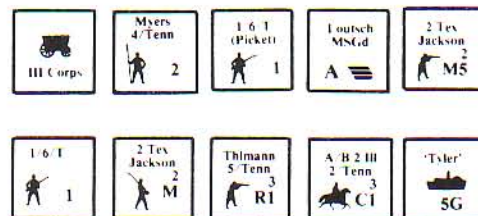
THE GAME

It is this attack on Grant's Army, encamped near the Shiloh Meeting House on the Tennessee, and the fascinating and complex battle which ensued which forms the subject of SPI's latest Civil War simulation "Bloody April" based on the T.S.S. system.
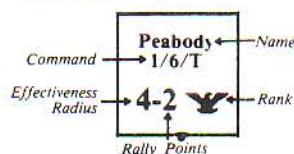
It is not my intention in this article to discuss the merits and the demerits of a system which is already a classic in its own right but rather to concentrate on the developments and differences which are manifest in the new game, either by way of improvement or to fit the particular circumstances of this quite different battle.
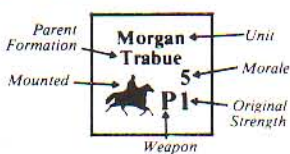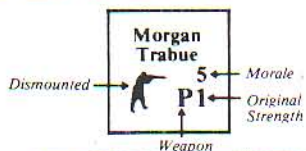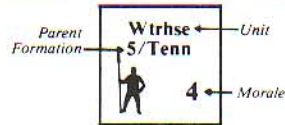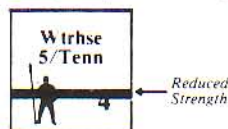
The game components will be familiar to all players of **T.S.S.** or **Stonewall**. There are 1200 counters of which about one third are combat units and a further 200 are leaders and officers of both sides. The rest are informational counters of one kind or another. The Confederate OOB includes the Army of the Trans Mississippi not present at Shiloh but included for the 'what if' scenarios.

The map is in two sections which, when butted together, form a playing area of 33" x 44". The north map is divided more or less diagonally, one half completing the triangular shape of the battlefield and the other devoted to the various charts and indicators for use during the game.

Although the physical quality is adequate I would describe the presentation as a little disappointing. We're still saddled, pardon the pun, with the old cavalry silhouette with the cape covered horse. The Union officer counters are barely distinguishable in colour from the regimental units. What's more, we should be getting away by now from the over stated blue and grey. There was a wide variety of uniform colours at Shiloh. The Louisiana regiments, for example, wore blue while Hardee's Corps was clad in its distinctive butternut. The four colour map is covered for most part in wooded areas which also represents the rough ground and tangled undergrowth which forms that part of the Tennessee valley. The result is effective though my copy is perhaps over heavily printed as the hex numbers are almost impossible to read.

SURPRISE AND CONFUSION

Aided by good fortune and some remarkable short sightedness on the part of the Union command, the Confederates achieved almost total surprise. The encamped Federal regiments were suddenly confronted by waves of screaming rebels pouring out of the woods. Few pickets had been posted and some of these had difficulty in convincing their superiors that a full scale attack was imminent.

These conditions are faithfully simulated in the game. The Federal regiments are set up in the encampment hexes printed on the map, with different facings for units within the same brigade to reflect the Sunday picnic disorganisation of the Pittsburg Landing campsite. Only three small picket forces of one strength point each are temporarily detached from their units to patrol the approach to the camp not protected by the Tennessee River or the Owl Creek.

Movement for the pickets is plotted in advance for the first nine turns and the units are placed on the map only when an enemy unit is spotted or encountered. Since the pickets move only one hex per turn until these conditions are met and can see only out of its front hex side some tense situations can result. However, by opting for the picket set up for the picket from Peabody's Brigade, the Federals can't help but spot Hardees advance detachment across Fraley's Field on the first turn.

Once the Rebs are sighted or the picket is attacked he may dash back to the camp to alert his own brigade or division by stacking with the respective officer or commander. On a roll of 5 or 6 the leader will tell the picket to go to hell until the next turn. When he's finally been convinced, the divisional commander can order his aide to alert other commanders. Alerted units may fire but may not move until the following turn. There is a problem here with artillery which is considered in park' status until alerted. Since it must expend 4 MPs to convert to limbered or unlimbered status it presumably may not fire until the turn following alert. Seems reasonable anyway. Unalerted units are virtually paralysed until they either spot an enemy unit or are attacked. When this happens they are considered alerted from the next turn with only half movement points.

At 0540 on April 6 then the Rebels have a golden opportunity to wield a smashing opening blow. Or do they? By one of the remarkable series of events which make the battle so fascinating Beauregard had elected to send the army into battle in Napoleon's order for the Battle of Waterloo, a massive 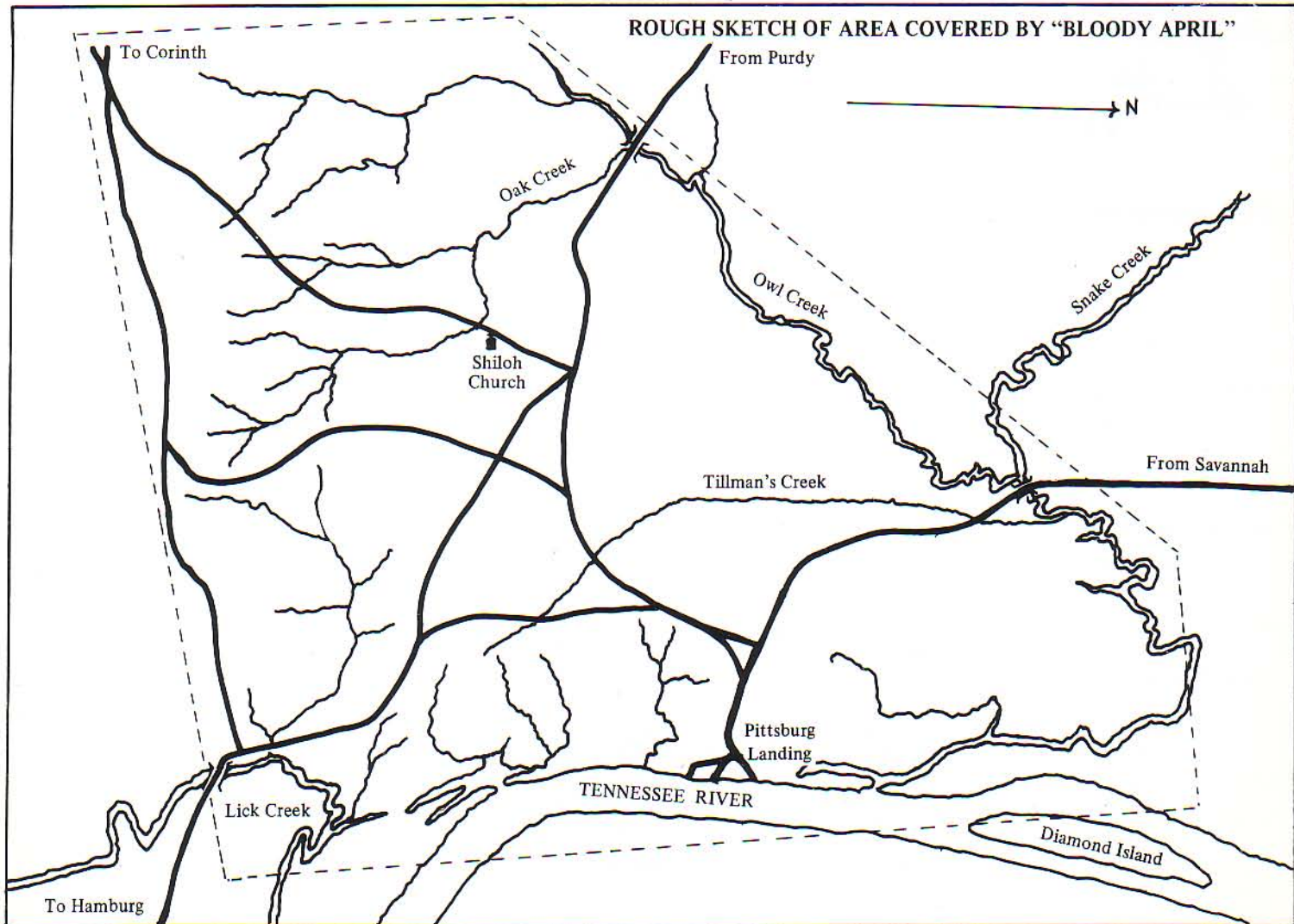line abreast with one corps behind the other in waves. Considering the terrain which was totally unsuitable to this type of formation and the fact that the tactical plan was to turn the Federal left flank, when the approach was at an angle to the right flank this decision seems incredible. Johnston, however, accepted the plan and witnessed its publication in his own name. His was the ultimate responsibility.

The Confederate player, if he is not to witness his divisions and brigades become hopelessly straggled and intermingled as happened on that Sunday in 1862 will be obliged to split this formation immediately and probably take up an approximation of Johnston's own original plan, an attack with corps abreast, each corps being assigned to a sector of the front. (This assumes of course that players are following the historical set up.) From the first turn the race is on to reorganise and yet take advantage of the surprise situation before the Union is alerted. At the same time the Confederate must beware of repeating the historical piecemeal attacks in his anxiety to draw first blood.

VIVE LES DIFFERENCES

Infantry units, as in **T.S.S.**, are dependent on leaders to enable them to function properly. Artillery and Cavalry are independent of officer control. The main changes here are that the H.Q. units are gone and the commanders have aides. The aides, as seen above, are the means of communication on the battlefield and apart from the Union alert phase will be used mainly in conjunction with the multi-commander optional rules. Replacement Officers are used to replace Brigade Officers promoted in the field or becoming casualties. In keeping with the marvellous detail of the game, all the replacements are named and historically accurate.

When the Confederate attack struck the Union camp on the Tennessee, Grant's army was still being assembled and some unassigned units had lately arrived at the Pittsburg landing. This fact, combined with the difficulty experienced, historically and during the game, in keeping brigades

ROUGH SKETCH OF AREA COVERED BY "BLOODY APRIL"

To Corinth
From Purdy
N
Oak Creek
Owl Creek
Snake Creek
Shiloh Church
Tillman's Creek
From Savannah
Pittsburg Landing
Lick Creek
TENNESSEE RIVER
Diamond Island
To Hamburg

intact, because of the terrain, necessitates a rule to allow the changing of regimental assignments. The Confederate player may find this ploy useful in planning his redeployment discussed above.

Movement rates differ slightly from T.S.S./Stonewall to allow for the different terrain but the basic formations for all units remain the same. The most interesting point here is the re-defined enfilade rule where a unit in column, limbered or mounted formation has only one frontal hexside. When attacked through this frontal hexside by small arms fire the defender gains a shift in his favour because of the reduced target. The rule again aids the Rebel player in the early turn where the encamped Federals are deemed to be in column status.

One of the basic beefs about the T.S.S. system was the over generous allowance given to strong units or stacks in their ability to fire through a single hexside. A new Stacking Restrictions Chart in Bloody April defines not only the maximum number of combat units which stack in a given type of terrain, but also the number of strength points which may fire from a single hexside. The old split fire rule enables this to be done quite easily, though the added complexity is a bit of a mind bender at first.

The T.S.S. veteran should be getting the idea by now that he won't be able to simply punch out the counters and pitch into the game. There are a lot of subtle changes to the system and though not difficult to assimilate, I for one had the feeling of being uncertain as to whether I had missed some important detail after each turn. You must, for example, forget the old ridge, slope, crest system and delve into the mysteries of ravine hexes and hexside ravines — wagons and guns can break down crossing the latter! But courage mon brave, the rewards are worth the effort.

AND YOU KNOW, IT DON'T COME EASY

Richard Berg, the designer of the system, assured us early in the development of Bloody April that, in view of the smaller playing area and fewer units .

involved, his new production would not be a monster game in the mould of TSS or sayHttR. Well, it's not a large game in that sense but it's my guess that Berg's brainchild took on a few little changes from the time he made that statement until its final arrival on the SPI release list. He admits in the rules introduction that the game is somewhat more complex than T.S.S., particularly when the Optional Rules are used to increase historicity, with a concomitant loss in ease of play. The nature of the battle and the fact that it was fought between armies bolstered by many green units does nothing to aid the designer in this respect. Add to this several important revisions to the system resulting from the T.S.S. forum and the range of informational counters can be imagined.

The development of the artillery gun crews from the TSS errata through Stonewall, has resulted now in separate counters for both men and guns. The crew counter shows only the full strength and reduced status, a separate indicator being necessary for the limbered or unlimbered mode of their guns. Whereas only one gun type was assigned to each battery in the previous games. Bloody April comes up with a full range of calibres and types of weapons for each unit.

Again, partly as a result of the terrain at Shiloh, an elevated fire rule has been introduced which will prove a welcome relief to those of us who have struggled against masking the artillery field of fire with our own infantry on the Chambersberg Pike. The overshoot rule has disappeared because of the relatively short ranges at which direct fire can be effected but batteries using elevated fire must check for scatter. Artillery and infantry will be in close support most of the time and the bombardment phases present in T.S.S. are discarded as there was less in the way of artillery duels at Shiloh. Small arms fire directed at a battery will affect only the crew and if they rout or are eliminated the guns are left in place to be captured or may be moved by any friendly unit. Conversely, crews which lose their guns may have spare or captured pieces assigned to them provided that they are

familiar with weapons of that type. The permitted use of captured and recaptured guns makes them a valuable prize and encourages the close support with infantry mentioned above: however the Union player should not miss the opportunity to occasionally mass on the edge of the open fields across which the Rebels must press their attack.

One of the more easily forseen changes in Bloody April is the revised Fire C.R.T. Richard Berg publicly and at least some players privately have observed that the T.S.S. Fire C.R.T., though no doubt statistically accurate, produces an unrealistically high casualty rate. Whether the reason for this is that the table is based on the weapon capabilities and not their effectiveness or rather that players continue to use units long after they realistically should not be so used, is now purely academic. The new CRT is directly adaptable to T.S.S. and players who will not buy Bloody April would be well advised to beg, borrow or steal a copy for themselves.

There are two rules which indirectly modify the CRT and are critical to the simulative quality of the game. Both require extensive book-keeping and if the game is to be worthwhile I don't see any way round them. The rules are Ammunition Level and Unit Fatigue and are substantially different to the Ammunition and BCE rules found in TSS and Stonewall.

Each unit in Bloody April is assigned an Ammunition Point level, each point representing one round of ammunition. Thus each time a unit fires it expends one point. Confederate regiments and batteries start with 10 rounds and their Union equivalents 6 rounds. Cavalry on either side have 5 rounds. The rule is no more accurate apparently than its old TSS equivalent, merely less random. The players have undeniably more control over the situation and should usually be able to avoid the embarrassment of having a depleted unit in a critical attack.

The Rebels bring six supply wagons onto the field

AREA AROUND PITTSBURG LANDING

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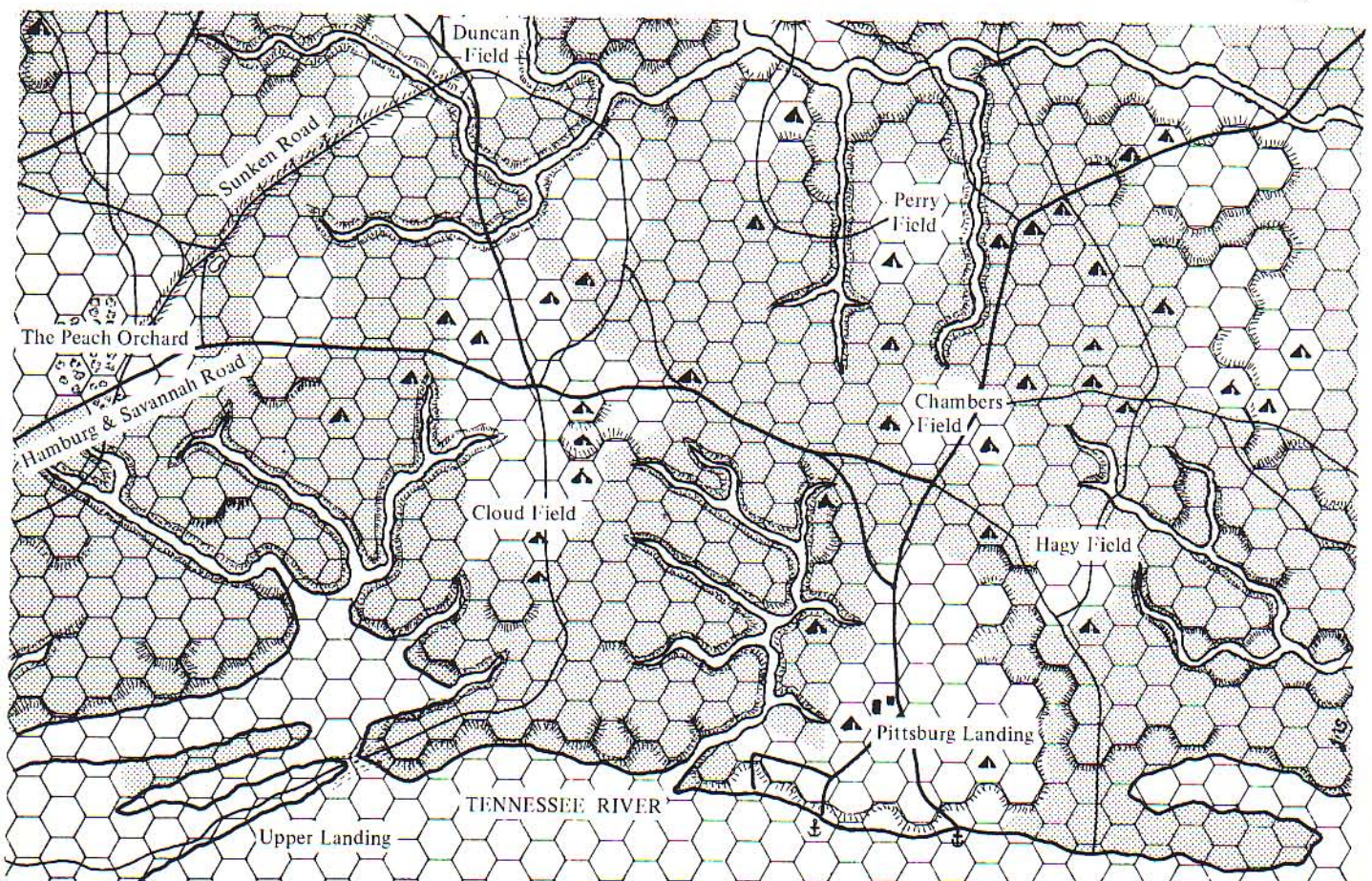
with them which are allowed to exit the map to reload. However, the ease with which this condition can be achieved diminishes as the Bluecoats are pushed back. The overrun Union camps are also fair game to the Southern troops and infantry and artillery can pick up limited amounts of ammo from this source if they spend one turn ransacking the place. Only one unit may re-arm this way and thereafter the camp is depleted.

Looting, however, takes precedence over the need to find ammunition. The Confederates, many of them raw recruits who had finished their field rations the previous day, simply gorged themselves on Yankee rations and "Cincinatti whiskey". Others grabbed belts, sashes, swords, letters and any other trophies they could find and headed for the rear. Confederate units moving adjacent to a Union camp on the first day must enter the camp as the next movement point expended and make a morale check against stragglers caused by looting.

Union troops are supplied from ten field wagons, as well as their own camps and the dump at the Pittsburg Landing. Neither side can obtain ammunition from any of the cavalry camps and naturally artillery camps will provide artillery ammunition only.

The second of these conditions, Battle Fatigue, is described thus in the foreword to 'Shiloh : Bloody April' by W. Sword — "Fear dulls the mind even as it exhausts the body and with it the emotions. Blessed sleep is the only restorative and tired fighters prize it more than victory."

The Confederacy, in one of the most remarkable surprise attacks in American history, came within an ace of inflicting a major defeat on the North. That they failed was, in one small part, due to the fact that the exhausted Rebels were unable to capitalise on the advantage so dearly won in the first twelve hours.

At the beginning of the first day each infantry unit has a total of 24 Fatigue Points available for use. Almost any activity apart from using only one M.P. will involve the expenditure of Fatigue Points, including being fired upon or routed. Fatigued units are severely restricted as to their permitted activities, they are unable to initiate melee or fire offensively, movement allowance is halved and there is a greater chance that the unit will rout.

Only units which are totally inactive for a full Game Turn and are not adjacent to an enemy unit will recover a single Fatigue Point during day game turns. At night, units fulfilling the same conditions will recover 3 Fatigue Points in a camp hex and 2 Fatigue Points per turn in the open. Of course, both sides are equally affected by fatigue and are equally disadvantaged by the rain which fell in torrents from 2300 through 0200 on the night of April 6th. During this time only encamped units can recover from fatigue while movement rates and the ability of artillery to fire are reduced also. As if all this was not enough on this night of horrors, the gunboats Tyler and Lexington took turns in maintaining a harassing fire against the thoroughly miserable Confederate troops. The effect was more morale sapping than casualty producing as they watched the air bursts send huge tree limbs crashing down about them, and in game terms troops subjected to the bombardment from the boats on the Tennessee will naturally be unable to recover F.P.s during that turn.

SEEING THE ELEPHANT

Despite the fact that the war was almost a year old, it was two largely untried armies which faced each other at Shiloh. The unsoldierly confusion of the Union camp was as much a demonstration of the lack of training and experience as a lack of discipline. The Confederate troops who filed into battle order near Shiloh church could hardly contain their excitement over the coming adventure and were in serious danger of betraying their own presence to the enemy. After the rain which had dogged their marches' into the line, many of the men in Hardee's corps fired their muskets "to see if they would go off". A private in the 'Dixie Grays', Henry Morton Stanley, (yes, the same one) joked with a friend as they stuck violets in their caps — perhaps the Yankees wouldn't shoot them if they saw the flowers, a sign of peace.

The original TSS rule for susceptibility to rout was based on the theory that a unit's rout is caused in large part by the percentage of losses it takes relative to its size. Although the idea had merit it took no measure of the qualitative rather than the quantitative strengths of individual units. The subsequent errata made good this deficiency by assigning to each unit a morale rating based where possible on its previous record and on its conduct during the battle of Gettysburg. A lot of subjective assessment is built into these ratings, but that is just one of the facts of life in simulation gaming that we have to live with.

Units in **Bloody April** have ratings from 1 (worst) to 5 (best). Green units marked with a ? rating remain an unknown quantity until they experience combat for the first time. (In A.C.W. slang 'Seeing the Elephant'). At that point two dice are rolled against the Seeing the Elephant Table and the result becomes the permanent rating for that unit.

The test for rout following the taking of casualties on the CRT or a retreat is similar to the revised TSS rule, repeated in **Stonewall**, where a dice roll is made against the Morale Rout Table (MRT). A new P/R result on the Fire CRT however is dealt with by rolling one dice against the Morale Rating of the unit without reference to the MRT. A roll equal to or less than the rating will Pin the unit while a higher result will cause it to rout. Similarly, artillery gun crews and cavalry units when being rallied, as well as units which are endeavouring to co-ordinate fire, test with a die roll against their Morale Rating. Again the problem of when to use the MR alone and when to refer to the MRT required careful thought at first.

Morale in **Bloody April** also affects the Melee CRT; whereby one point is added to the Melee Strength of a friendly stack if its lowest morale rated unit exceeds the highest M.R. of any enemy unit by two points or more.

Whenever a green Union combat unit is attacked while unalerted and finds on checking for 'Seeing the Elephant' that it has rating of '1' it must check for catastrophic rout. This recreates the total routs that occurred in some cases where whole units were effectively taken out of the battle by total demoralisation. On a roll of 1, 2 or 3 all but one point of that unit will be counted as stragglers.

On both sides the number of men who walked or ran away from the guns was remarkable. Green units and those with an M.R. of 2 or less undergo a check for stragglers when using more than one M.P. A roll of 6 will cost them 1 S.P. in stragglers unless they are stacked with a leader.

Combat produces stragglers when a unit suffers a rout and finds a check based on its M.R. on the Stragglers Table. If the unit is still not rallied by the end of the next Final Command Phase it checks again against a more favourable Straggler Table.

The looting Confederates (who are also susceptible to stragglers) heading along the Corinth road loaded down with booty and now joined by fleeing companions without even their own weapons are matched by the terrified Federals huddled under the bluffs at the Pittsburg Landing. Brigadier General 'Bull' Nelson, arriving in the late afternoon as part of Buell's Army of the Ohio, estimated seven to ten thousand cowering under the riverbank. Unable to disembark his troops from the ferry because of frightened men anxious to reach the other shore Nelson, mounted on his huge black horse, shouted "Gentlemen draw your sabres and trample these bastards into the mud! — Charge!"

Stragglers can be recovered by units in a similar fashion to the recovery of Fatigue Points. However, the recovery is uncertain and only a die roll of 1, 2 or 3 will succeed. Cavalry adjacent to a unit attempting recovery can be used to round up the missing troops in which case no die roll is necessary.

THE ROSTER SHEETS

Although introduced as an optional extra in the T.S.S. errata, Stragglers are an essential part of the **Bloody April** rules. Like many of the other rules discussed above it requires a good deal of book-keeping but all of the information which needs to be recorded during the game can be shown on the Roster Sheets provided in the package. (You will have to make photocopies to have enough but let's

not nit-pick). The Union and Confederate players each have a different type of sheet reflecting their separate systems of organisation; the major differences being that Confederate Artillery is usually attached to a brigade while Federal Artillery is grouped together as part of a division.

Each brigade has its own sheet recording its attached units and also its Officers and Commanders. A system of boxes is used to record the Strength Points of each unit and these may be used as an alternative to the familiar S.P. markers which are also provided. The strength of the artillery batteries is similarly recorded though of course separate lines are needed for each type of gun within the battery. Again, gun type/strength markers are provided as an alternative to the book-keeping chore. However, with 2 strength markers for each battery, one for each regiment and informational markers for Pin, Limbered, Rout, Fatigue, In Park, Broken Down, plus officers and aides, you could have a problem with stacks. Certain of the rules, though, make book-keeping mandatory, the Morale Rating of green units for example and the attachment of unassigned units.

The rules on Stragglers, Ammunition Supply and Fatigue are essential to the game as a simulation and, although simplified options are provided for Fatigue and Ammunition Supply, and the Stragglers rule could possibly be omitted to make for an easier game, I would warn strongly against anyone buying the game unless he is willing to put some work into it. It has obviously been a labour of love on the part of the designer and he has produced a detailed simulation rather than an easily playable game. I think there will be very little satisfaction in playing a simplified version and there are better games on the market if this is what you want.

On the other hand, for the A.C.W. afficionado it's all there. The Optional Rules include a special Fire Co-ordination Table to demonstrate the difficulty experienced in trying this ploy with green units who had had little tactical training. A Weapons Exchange Rule allows units armed with older weapons to swap them for captured and discarded weapons left by the enemy. Again, some recording is necessary to use the rule. Mistaken Fire reproduces the tragic episodes when friendly units were fired on by their own side. The Forest Fires Rule is an additional piece of historicity to create the fires which further added to the confusion and panic. There is even a rule to restrict the movement of General Grant because of his injured leg!

THE SCENARIOS

Perhaps those of you unfamiliar with the battle have gained the impression by now that this terrible pivotal battle of the War between the States was a comedy of errors. If this is so then I apologise. I have concentrated on the details which make the battle so very different to that later confrontation at Gettysburg. For every man who ran there was one who stayed. There is no denying the courage of the men who charged time and again against the Hornets' Nest and many of the men who had huddled together on the Pittsburg Landing pressed home the attack on the Rebel lines the following morning.

Despite the wealth of detail, hindsight will ensure, naturally, that the course of the original battle is never repeated on the board. The Confederates know the extent of the Union line and where the left flank is. They also know that Buell will arrive that day and when, and also that the Purdy Road bridge must be held as it was historically to prevent Lew Wallace's early arrival. More importantly, they will not be deflected from their ultimate goal, prising the Yankees away from the Pittsburg Landing nor will they (hopefully) waste their strength in piecemeal attacks against well defended positions. This though, as I said before, is something we know we have to live with as in all simulations but there is still more than enough detail to give plenty of insight into what happened at Shiloh.

The historical scenarios deal only with the first day since given the strengths and dispositions of both sides, the second day was a foregone conclusion. Each starts with the original set up and covers the Confederate Attack, the First Day, and the campaign game, The Battle of Shiloh. The planned scenario on the Hornets Nest (like Picketts Charge, an exercise in futility) is not included. The hypo-

JOHN LEE

GDW's GAME OF
Agincourt
1415

DESCRIPTION

Agincourt is one of GDW's 120 Series, being designed to be played by beginners and to take two hours or less. The components are a 17''x22'' game map in three colours — green, red and brown — which apart from deployment and stake hexes, contains only clear and forest terrain. The 120 counters, brown for the English (or, as a Welshman would tell GDW, British) and green for the French, are gloss finished as is usual in GDW games. Only two counters have historical designations, Henry V and the Regicide unit: the rest are divided into the following categories: leaders and retinue, men at arms, cavalry and archers. It is a good idea to have a pair of scissors handy as many of the counters are improperly cut (or were in my copy).

The game is 16 turns long though the outcome is in no doubt long before that. **Agincourt** differs from many games in as much as each player has alternate turns rather than phases, each turn being divided into the following phases:
1. The player moves.
2. The player conducts any missile fire he desires.
3. The player melee attacks and his opponent then counter-attacks with any of his surviving units.
4. The player can attempt to rally any of his demoralised units.

All the units have a set movement allowance which is not printed on their counters — cavalry can move 4 hexes a turn, archers 3, and men at arms and leaders a snail-like 2. Facing plays an important part in the game since units may only move and attack into their front three hexes; cavalry are even more restricted in this respect and are restricted to the front hex. Facing also affects combat so you have to ensure that none of your units ever has its back to the enemy, they are very vulnerable from the rear!

Combat is dealt with simply with one combat results table covering both melee and missile combat. There are only two combat results — eliminated and morale check, the latter requiring the defending player to roll two dice and check the result against his morale figure. If the result is lower the unit panics and heads for the edge of the map. Several die-roll modifications on the CRT add 'chrome'; if a unit is attacked from the rear there is a —4 modification, if a cavalry unit moves in a straight line for at least 3 hexes it earns a —2 charge bonus and a —1 bonus is earnt for being next to either a king or a leader. Henry V and various units also add 1 to morale check throws of nearby units. The British player also benefits greatly from a further morale rule which states that any unit that has a friendly unit immediately to its rear may ignore morale checks.

THE GAME

At first sight **Agincourt** appears to be a French walk-over — row after row of their men-at-arms face a thin line of British footmen and archers. But as the French player soon discovers, numbers aren't everything. The British player has better morale, better infantry and, above all, an abundance of archers — the French have comparatively few. The British archers have a 5 hex range compared to the French 3 and are therefore able to rain death down upon the enemy while they stumble across the battle field trying to get close enough to melee. In one of my games half of the French cavalry was destroyed or routed before they even had a chance to dig their spurs in.

To win the game the British player has to eliminate 35 French units before the latter can eliminate 25 British units or exit units off the British map edge.
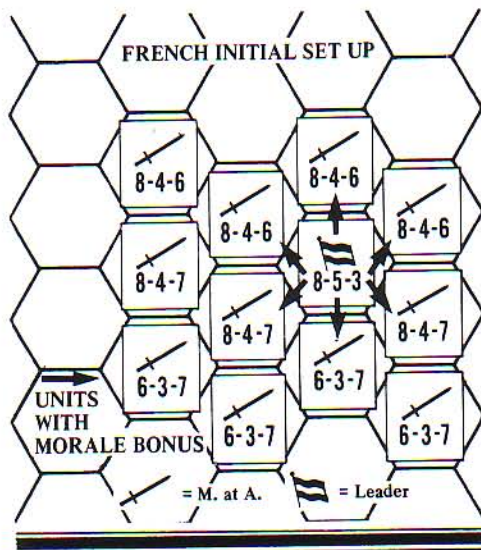
In order to achieve victory, both sides need to think out their tactics in advance with care. I have found that the best thing that 'good King Hal' and his men can do is to act historical and stand their ground and wait for the French, his archers (9-2-6) are doubled in defence when in stake hexes and if these can weaken the French line enough the tough British foot soldiers (9-5-5, 8-4-6, 6-4-5's) can make short work of their counterparts facing them.

The best hope for the French player is to charge forward at full speed, especially the cavalry (8-1-8) who get the charge bonus if they advance but are soon eliminated if they stay put. To lower the British archers effect the French should put their best men-at-arms (the 8-4-6's) in the front rank. These are less likely to panic and block the line of advance. Following them, in the second line should be the 8-4-7's who stand the same chance of breaking through the British line if and when it is reached whilst their lower morale can be balanced by leader units (See Fig). The rabble (6-3-7) are a liability, they panic easily and are not much use in a one-to-one melee on a restricted battlefield; they are best kept in the rear as covering troops or, rarely, as a screening force for leaders etc.

The French archers (3-2-8) are also poor; if they can get in range their support can be useful, especially in dislodging the British archers from their stake hexes but the French player should take care to see that they are not placed in an exposed position as they can be routed by any British unit.

The Regicide unit (6-6-3) represents the band of French nobles who swore "they would kill Henry V or die in the attempt". If guarded carefully and committed at the right moment this unit can kill Henry or one of the noble counters and thereby lower his army's morale. For each leader killed the morale drops by one and if Henry himself is killed there is the further penalty of not being able to rally any units in the check phase. The regicides have the ability to move through other units, friendly or enemy, so the only way to protect Henry is to surround him completely with friendly units since the French regicide unit still has to obey the 'one unit per hex' rule. This does weaken the English line.

To sum up: **Agincourt, 1415** is a surpisingly detailed and enjoyable game for its size. The rule book is short and to the point. The only glaring error that I have noticed is a misprint (I hope!) in the victory conditions which states: "The English win when 35 French units have been eliminated, the French win when 25 French units have been eliminated" — Charles VI trying to curb some of his rebellious nobility ???

FRENCH INITIAL SET UP

8-4-6		8-4-6
8-4-6		8-4-6
8-4-7	8-5-3	8-4-7
8-4-7		8-4-7
6-3-7		6-3-7

UNITS WITH MORALE BONUS

6-3-7   6-3-7

= M. at A.   = Leader

OLYMPICA:
THE U.N. RAID ON MARS 2206AD
K.P. GRIMSLEY

The infantry squad burst along the tunnel, destroyed a Webbie unit at close quarters and advanced deeper into the complex. It had been tough going from the moment they had entered the tunnel mouth which the B.O.A.R. had created, but now it looked as though their objective was at hand. Suddenly the team was rushing back along the tunnel. Victims of the tremendous compulsion of the Web, they were smashed into a cliff and destroyed by the resulting avalanche.

This is a scene from Metagaming's micro-game "Olympica". The game situation is that a powerful telepathic being has taken control of the Mars colony and the U.N. have sent a small elite force to destroy the Web generator. The game components are a 8½'' x 14'' map, a 100 unit counter sheet, and a 24 page rules booklet all in a plastic wallet. The map is a red-orange colour with terrain detailed in black. The counters are blue with white detail for the Webbies and the reverse for the U.N.

The turn sequence is fairly standard, but with the addition of a compulsion phase for the Web player and a second move for the U.N. Light Infantry. The combat is odds ratio, with infantry having a range of two hexes. The results are the usual DE, EX, DR, etc with the extra result of DUST which results in the unit being immobile and its firepower halved for the next turn. This simulates the effect caused by the Electromagnetic fields thrown up by explosions in the Martian dust.

The basic scenario is an infantry firefight with some support from stationary Web strongpoints and U.N. Laser Tanks. The advanced scenarios also feature Tunnels, Lifters (U.N.) which greatly increase mobility and the B.O.A.R. a laser powered drill, which can open up the tunnels.

Overall "Olympica" is a very entertaining, simple and quick game (about an hour). The micro-game series appears to be a useful innovation of games of a similar style to Olympica. Amongst these are "Ogre" and "Melee" which the other micro-games are very high in the S&T ratings. These games seem a must for any gamers collection, if only for when a game finishes early. The final factor in their favour is their economic value at about £2 each.

BLOODY APRIL CONTINUED

thetical scenarios examine Confederate Free Deployment (ignoring Beauregard's battle plan), the intervention of the Confederate Army of the Trans Mississippi, Union Free Deployment, No Surprise, Lew Wallace arriving early across the Snake Creek Bridge and various options on the arrival of Buell's Army of the Ohio.

So there you have it, a marvellous game, unreservedly recommended to T.S.S. afficionados who don't mind a little extra effort this time but one to avoid for guys who detest book-keeping in any form. Most of the new rules will adapt extremely easily to the T.S.S. situation and a section of the rules shows how to do this. Included in this section is a full breakdown of the guns for each battery present at Gettysburg. This information alone is worth most of the price of the game to any Civil War buff.

The post publication errata will include a couple of details on set up, particularly on the Union side where there are a couple of encampment hexes wrongly placed and unoccupied, and a couple of rules may need clarification. However, these don't detract too much from a fine production and I for one look forward to the discussions which will surely follow in its wake.

References Used:

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