
Terrible Swift Sword, 1st Edition

First Day Scenario 0720 - 1700

Replay by TC Bradley

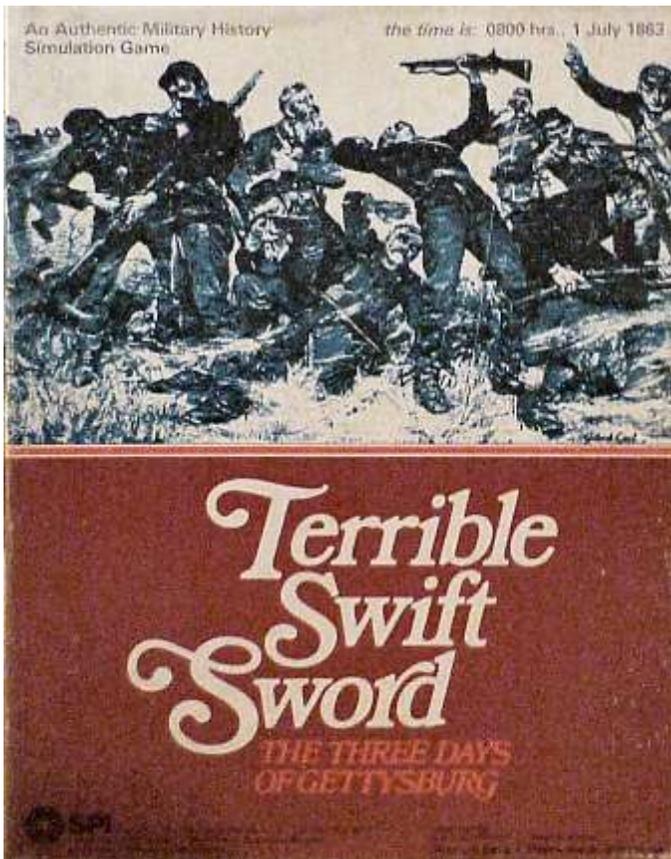
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Terrible Swift Sword The Battle of Gettysburg, 1st Edition, 1976

(Game history comments and 'How to play TSS' provided by Russ Gifford)



Game History

The game that changed everything. Small arms with various ranged weapons and lots of artillery in separate sections by gun type. The game required leaders, command control, morale checks and incremental step losses, units in various formations, and terrain with hills, valleys, ridge lines, woods, and orchards - All BEFORE **Squad Leader** ever thought of half those things!

In many ways, **Terrible Swift Sword** was the culmination of what SPI set out to do with their TAC series games. Just as Panzerblitz brought wargames from the Strategic to the Tactical level for armored vehicles, **Terrible Swift Sword** did the same for men with small arms and artillery. And the skeleton put forth in SPI's earliest TAC games – **Renaissance of Infantry** and all the early games of **Centurian**, **Dark Ages**, and the many **PRESTAGS** games are present in **Terrible Swift Sword**.

The key was the combination of everything, in a beautiful presentation, with detailed rules that made it all very compelling, and very playable. Unlike the previous games I mentioned, that cut corners using generic 1 or 2 color maps

and drab counters, **Terrible Swift Sword** worked into the package a map that made you see the rolling hills of the battlefield stretching out before you. Like Heth, you were determined to push your men down that road!

The Playable Monster

With three maps and 2000 counters, it was the first of SPI's tactical monsters. It also was a major change in the idea of monsters. Most, like **War in the East**, were big, but the rules were 'dumb' in the vernacular of the day. They were at their core simple Move-Fight. Not so with **Terrible Swift Sword**. It was detailed, with formation changes, ranged fire using differentiated weapons, various leader qualities and the need of leaders to allow units to achieve results, or even to rally

from morale failure. It was clearly the game many of us who had been playing wargames for a decade or more were looking for. And we liked what we got. And we proved it.

People often say monsters were bought but not played. Certainly not true in the case of this game. *Terrible Swift Sword* would create a legion of followers who would play the campaign game and the many scenarios over and over again, and want more. The single map Little Round Top scenario was the perfect introduction to the system, and I likely played it 10 times in the first two or three months. Ironically, with an opponent, which was not always easy to come by, but this game invited people to play.

As this replay will show, *Terrible Swift Sword* is as accessible and enjoyable today as it was 45 years ago. Only a handful of games can say that.

Getting Started

That 'quick start' will certainly be seen in this replay. The game begins as the battle of Gettysburg historically started. A handful of Union Cavalry under Buford arrayed on the road leading to Gettysburg, and a few brigades of Confederates coming on board the first turn. Fewer than 20 counters on a side for the first few turns – but more marching on every hour.

As they close on each other, they make choices in formation, in tactical choices, in where and when to attack or defend. It is an easy game to start, with less set up required of the campaign or the first day battle scenario than the single map Battle for Little Round Top!

It was also an easy game to teach people. They would see the map and the counters, with their silhouettes and differentiated weapons, and seen the brigades stretching out over the fields, or marching in long columns on the road, straining to get to the front. Just like those troops, would be players intrigued by the scene wanted in – and said so! You could give someone a 4 or 5 regiment brigade, and by the time they had marched them to the front, they were experienced enough to handle more. I am hopeful that the great pictures by TC evokes the same interest in you. In case it does, I have added an addendum on the end with a brief review of the rules for TSS.

IF you want more, I have links in those rules to my 'classes' on how to play TSS/GBACW. And the Rules, CRT, charts, and other free downloads that might be useful in this replay are available here:

https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PlayerAids.htm

If I choose to clarify a comment, I will place my comments in brackets. [like this.]

But right now – let's get started.

[From the Scenario / Rule Book:

On the afternoon of June 30, two brigades of Union cavalry under General John Buford were camped in the hills west of Gettysburg. To the far west they could just barely see a column of Confederate infantry trudging through the steamy heat toward the small Pennsylvania town. A brief exchange of shots from Buford's pickets caused an immediate withdrawal of the Southern troops (Pettigrew's Brigade from Heth's Division, supposedly looking for supplies). Buford, a capable and resourceful officer, immediately sent word by courier to Major General John Reynolds, in command of the Union I Corps - the nearest body of troops- for Buford was not fooled by this quick Confederate disappearance. He knew that the Army of Northern Virginia would be back -and in force- the next day. With only 2900 troopers at his command, Buford decided to hold the ground, for a quick look around told him that those hills would afford an excellent position for receiving an attack.

General Robert E. Lee received the information of this brief encounter from Major General Heth stoically. Heth was convinced that the force encountered had been local militia. He was ordered by Lee to reconnoiter in force the following morning. So, at about eight o'clock in the morning of July 1st the brigades of Brigadier Generals Archer and Davis tramped down the Chambersburg Pike from Cashtown into one of the most decisive clashes in the history of warfare.

Terrible Swift Sword 1st Edition: First Day Scenario 0740 – 1700

Replay by TC Bradley

Hello – TC Bradley here. Modified my game table specifically for this:



Ok, so this is going to happen. Seemed a shame to put it away unplayed.

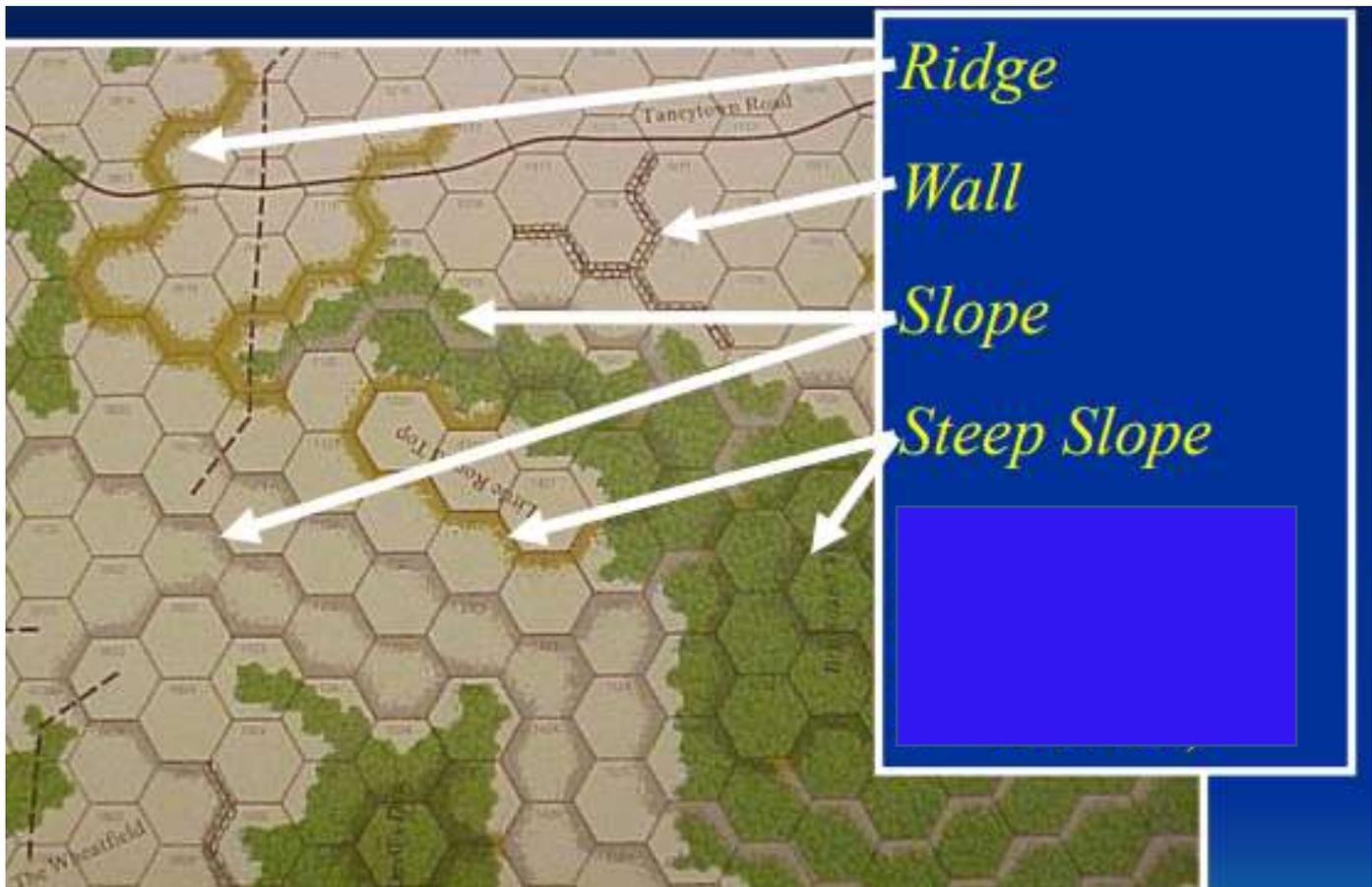
I am finalizing the rule set I'll be using for my play through of TSS1. Generally, I will use a mix of TSS1, TSS2, and the original (std) GBACW. Russell H Gifford's side by side comparison of the three has been a good starting point for this evaluation. <https://www.russgifford.net/PDFs/TSSvsGBACWv2.pdf>

[Eric Lee Smith, developer of the GBACW series for SPI, wrote to say, "Avoid the original CRT, the casualty rate is WAY too high." Since he fixed it in the later games explains some of the choices you see below.]

For those following along at home, in my TSS game, I'm using a mixed ruleset, based on TSS1+errata-77 with the optional supply rules, with FCRT/MCRT [Small Arms CRT and Melee CRT] and the Stacking rules from GBACW/TSS2. Additionally, for artillery v. artillery, I'm using the original TSS1 Fire CRT [meaning he is using the Counter Battery line from the TSS1 Fire CRT], and I'm using the BCE [Brigade Combat Effectiveness] charts from TSS1, but the BCE rules from TSS2.

So it begins!

Terrain Key:



TSS, start of 0900, July 1, 1863.

Buford's troops begin deployed on the Gettysburg side of Herr Ridge and north of the Hagerstown road. They have the 1st and 2nd Brigades of the U.S. First Cavalry Division, a single battery, and a supply wagon. They are dismounted, armed with carbines, and ready to fight since there is no where better to defend while waiting for Reynolds to send reinforcements.

[Below: The lead brigades of Heth's Division of AP Hill's Third Army Corps enter in Staging Area One at 0740, under the command of Archer (3rd Brigade) and Davis (4th Brigade). On the following turn, as the lead units spot Buford, they break into line to engage the Union army.

In the subsequent turns, as Archer and Davis reach the skirmish line thrown out by Buford's men, the rest of Heth's Division will start their march into history.]

TSS, 0820 July 1, 1863





Close up: Buford has blunted the initial push from Archer and Davis west of Herr Ridge, with Davis' brigade getting the worst of it thus far.

But Brockenbrough and Pettigrew will be coming over the next ridge line this turn.

The Iron Brigade will be passing the Peach Orchard this turn heading north.

[We see the full picture here below: the rest of Heth's Division is coming on, with Pegrams Artillery and a supply wagon at the front, and the 1st and 2nd brigades under Pettigrew and Brockenbrough, along with Major General Heth (two stars) and Third Corps Lt. General AP Hill (3 stars)]



TC writes: I have been struggling to express the sense of excitement and anticipation I've had getting this game on the table. The very slightest glimpse of the map and units moving across the board has really captivated me and brought forth the deep and enduring reasons I am still in this hobby, nearly 50 years later.

Pat Hirtle commented, "That photo takes me back 40 years. No other map, no other counters, evoke such strong memories for me."

[I can say the same. TC does a GREAT job on these pictures, making it easy to follow along. Trying for a few close ups to see if I can bring this home.

Close up on 0820 arrivals below. In this picture we seen the supply wagon, and then the REST of the column, two brigades of four regiments each. (One regiment with the red in column Brigade leader Pettigrew, and we can't see Brockenbrough's brigade leader counter as he and his lead regiment are under the In Column counter, meaning everyone on down the road is also in column. At the end are 4 gun sections/ batteries, limbered for the road.

The 3 star general is Third Army Commander Lt. General AP Hill, and the leader with two stars is Division commander, Major General Henry Heth. Note the sunken railroad cut through the ridge beside them!]



[TC has some of the Arty deployed along the ridge line. N stands for the smooth bore Napoleons which have nasty up close capabilities, and T is for all the rifled cannons, great for longer range work and Counter Battery fire.

Terrain Reminder – Golden lines denote a ridge. Someone must be adjacent to a ridge to see over it, or be seen from beyond it. Gray splash marks are a slope, and adj to it, on the non-slope side, you can see down, and beyond the slope. If you are not on the slope, you can only see the first hex beyond it.]

TSS, 1000 July 1, 1863

Pettigrew's brigade moves into position on the Confederate right and is immediately met with carbine and artillery fire from the Union left on Herr Ridge. Half the brigade routes, and another regiment is pinned down. But the Union horse artillery is almost spent, having lost some caissons from Confederate artillery fire. A.P. Hill orders up more artillery to try to push the cavalry off the ridge.



This is the first edition. No morale ratings on the counters. Originally, the morale was checked by rolling against the current strength of the regiment. The errata added the more familiar morale rating system. I'm tracking the morale *[from the errata]* on the BCE sheets for each brigade.

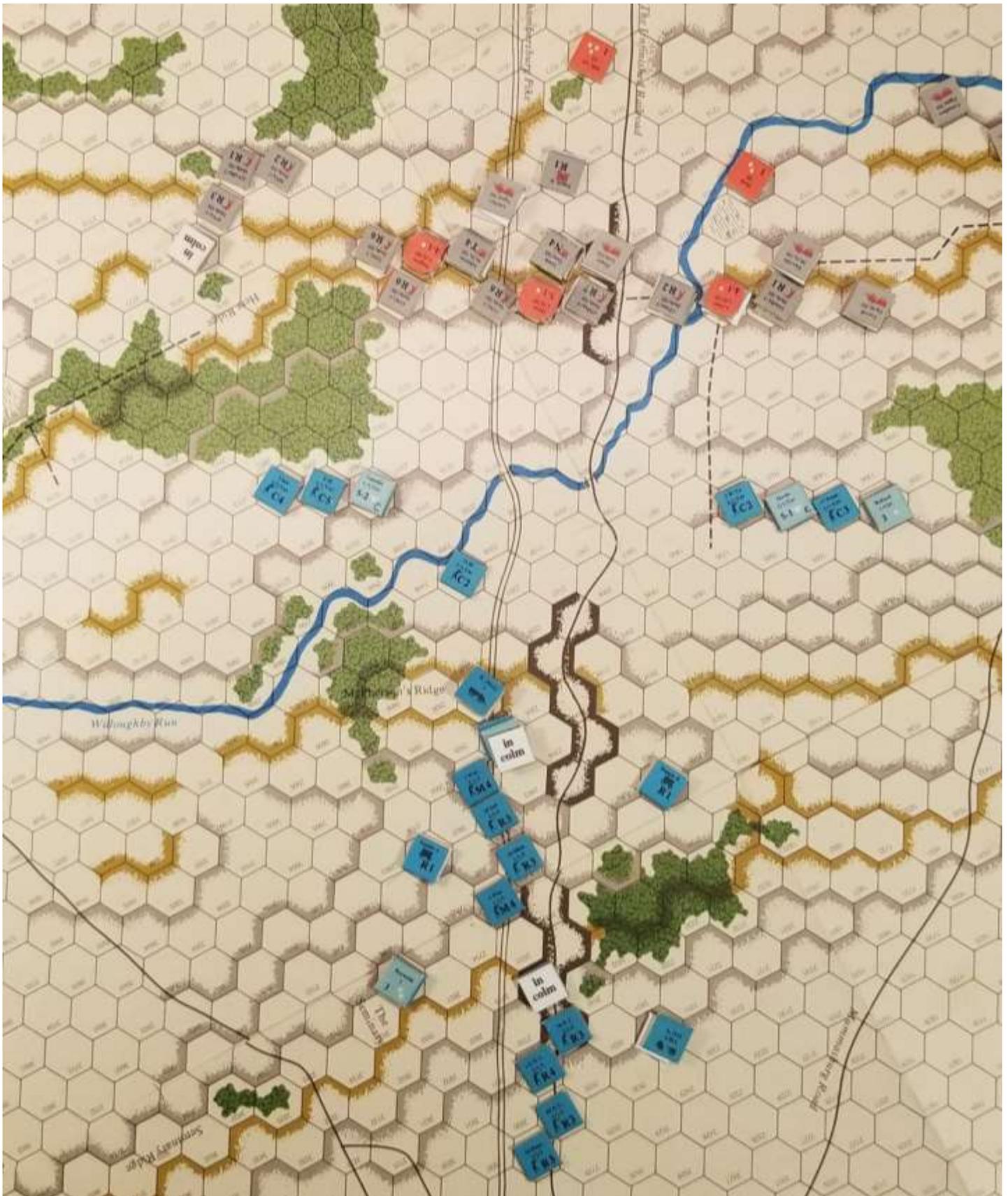


TSS, 1100, July 1, 1863

As Heth gets three brigades lined up to move on Herr Ridge, Buford pulls back his cavalry, just as Wadsworth shows up behind McPherson's Ridge. Brockenbrough is sent south, using the woods as cover, to attempt to flank the Union position.



[Let's see if we can get a close up on these?]



Meanwhile, Robinson's 2nd Division of I Corps heads north, past the Peach Orchard along the Emmitsburg Road. Doubleday is moving up the Hagerstown Road and will appear on the scene this hour. Pender's Division, of A.P. Hill's III Corps is still an hour away.

TSS, 1320, July 1, 1863 McPherson's Ridge



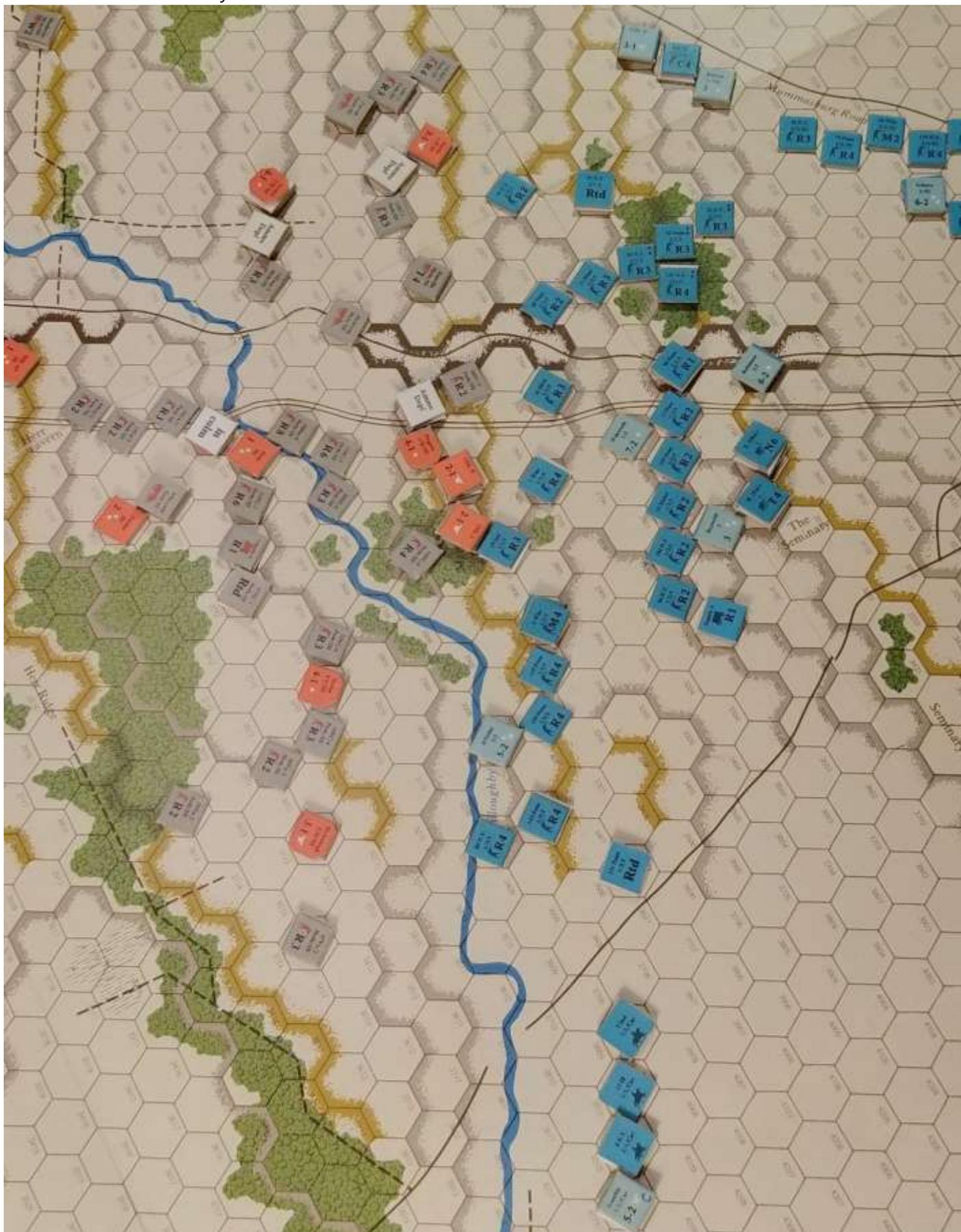
Pettigrew and Davis made another charge and pushed the Iron Brigade out of the Wood again, and captured the Union battery on the ridge. But Davis got pinned down, and a counter-charge by the Union pushed the Confederates out of the woods and Davis took a minie-ball to the head, leaving his lone regiment stranded on the ridge.



TSS, 1340, July 1, 1863 McPherson's Ridge

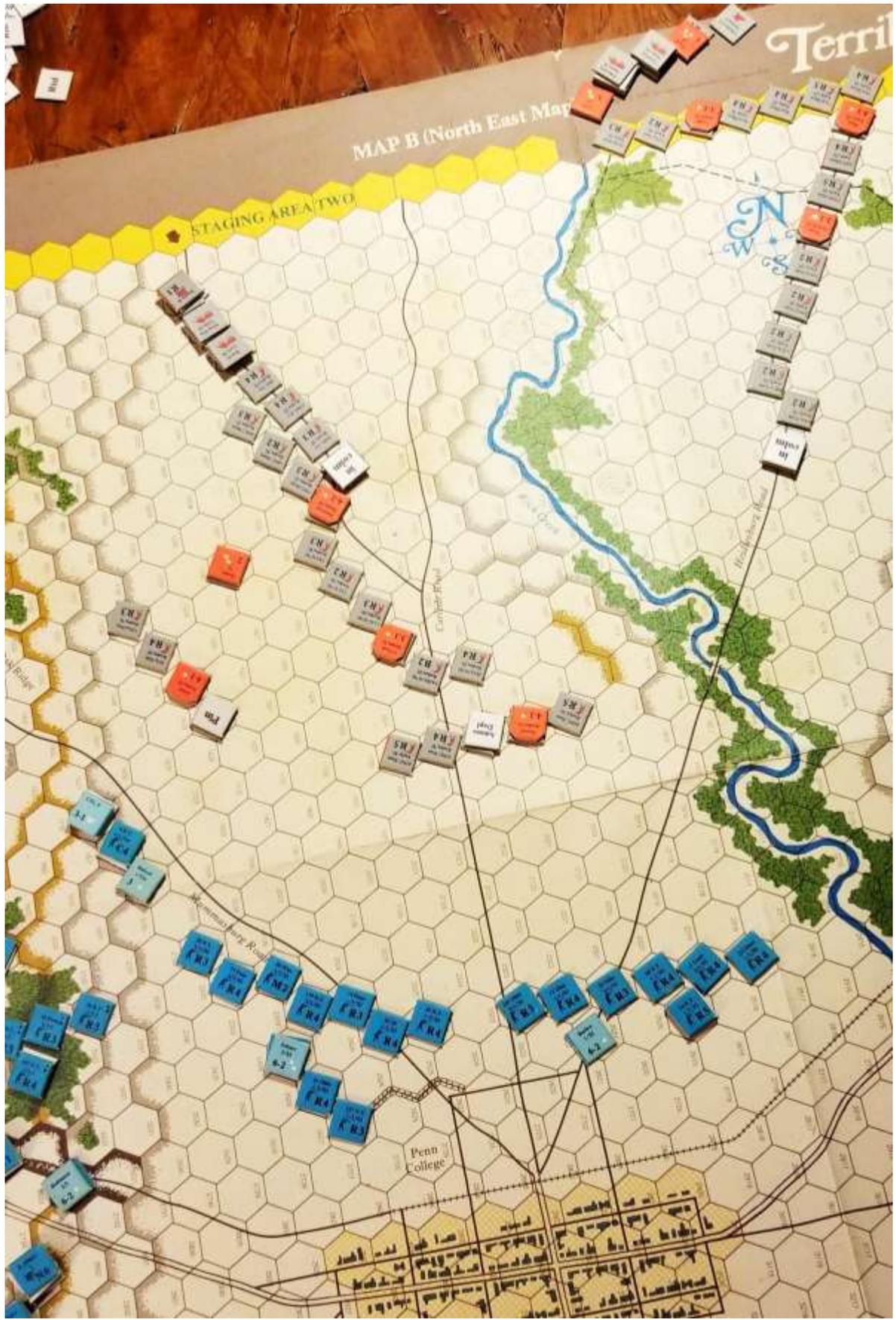
Pender moved up in support with Lane's brigade in another desperate charge. This time, the Confederates pushed the 1st Division off the ridge for good, but at the cost of Lane's left arm; he was carried to the rear.

1400 McPherson's finally falls to the Confederates.



[Note what is not seen just to the above and right – picture below.]

[The threat from behind the right flank is causing trouble as Rodes' Division arrives at 1300 in Area 2, and Early's Division shows up at 1340 in Area 3!] XI Corps has to fall back on Gettysburg.



Rodes moved south and skirmished with the lead elements of the XI Corps. The rebel columns streaming in from the north (Early came in on the heels of Rodes) spooked the XI Corps, probably with remembrances of Chancellorsville. Howard immediately began the withdrawal back to the high ground south of the town.

1400 Howard sets a reserve by Cemetery and Culp's Hills.

[Note this photo is to the RIGHT of Gettysburg in the above photo, reversing POV.]



TSS, 1420, July 1, 1863



[Close Up]

Perrin's brigade of Pender's division moves around the left flank of the remnants of Heth's division, on McPherson's Ridge and manages to push elements of the 2nd Division of I Corps off Seminary Ridge. Buford's troopers are pulled out of the line, and what's left of the 1st Division begins pulling back behind Seminary Ridge, with the 2nd Division covering. Doubleday is still holding off the weaker Brockenbrough on the Confederate right across Willoughby Creek.



Close up of Perrin's brigade of Pender's division as it pushes the remains of the 2nd Division of I Corps off McPherson's Ridge.



TSS, 1440, July 1, 1863



Close up of McPherson's Ridge at 1440

The Rebels hold the entire ridge now, and the Union has fallen back to the Seminary and the slopes before the ridge.



Below is the closeup of Doubleday is still holding off the weaker Brockenbrough on the Confederate right across Willoughby Creek.

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While the pressure will remain on the main road with more and more Rebels entering, and following the thoroughfare to Gettysburg, the action is already shifting to that town, as more Rebels are converging on the town.

Close up – in front of Gettysburg



Rodes pushes south to put pressure on the right flank of I Corps and to begin skirmishing with XI Corps.

Close up: Early moves east, with the intent of flanking the XI Corps position. Howard orders Schurz and Barlow to begin shifting east and south, back towards the town and hills behind.



TSS, 1500, July 1, 1863



Close up on McPherson's Ridge from above, 1500.



Close Up: Looking at Rodes' Rebels, closing in on the XI Corps in front of the town, and Early's boys at the bottom flanking.



Now a look at the outflanked and out fought Union forces facing them.



TSS, 1520, July 1, 1863

O'Neal and Daniel have pushed the Union into the town and beyond.



Close up McPherson and Seminary Ridge, 1520



Below: Same Scene, 1540



Note that three observers are directing the battle from Herr Tavern and the ridgeline.



TSS, 1540, July 1,
1863

Gen. Lee, Gen.
Longstreet, and Gen.
A.P. Hill survey the
unfolding battle.



TSS, 1540

Barlow and Howard try to consolidate the line east of Gettysburg, while Gordon pushes the advantage.



Below: Close up of Rodes and CSA troops in the upper right pushing on Gettysburg.

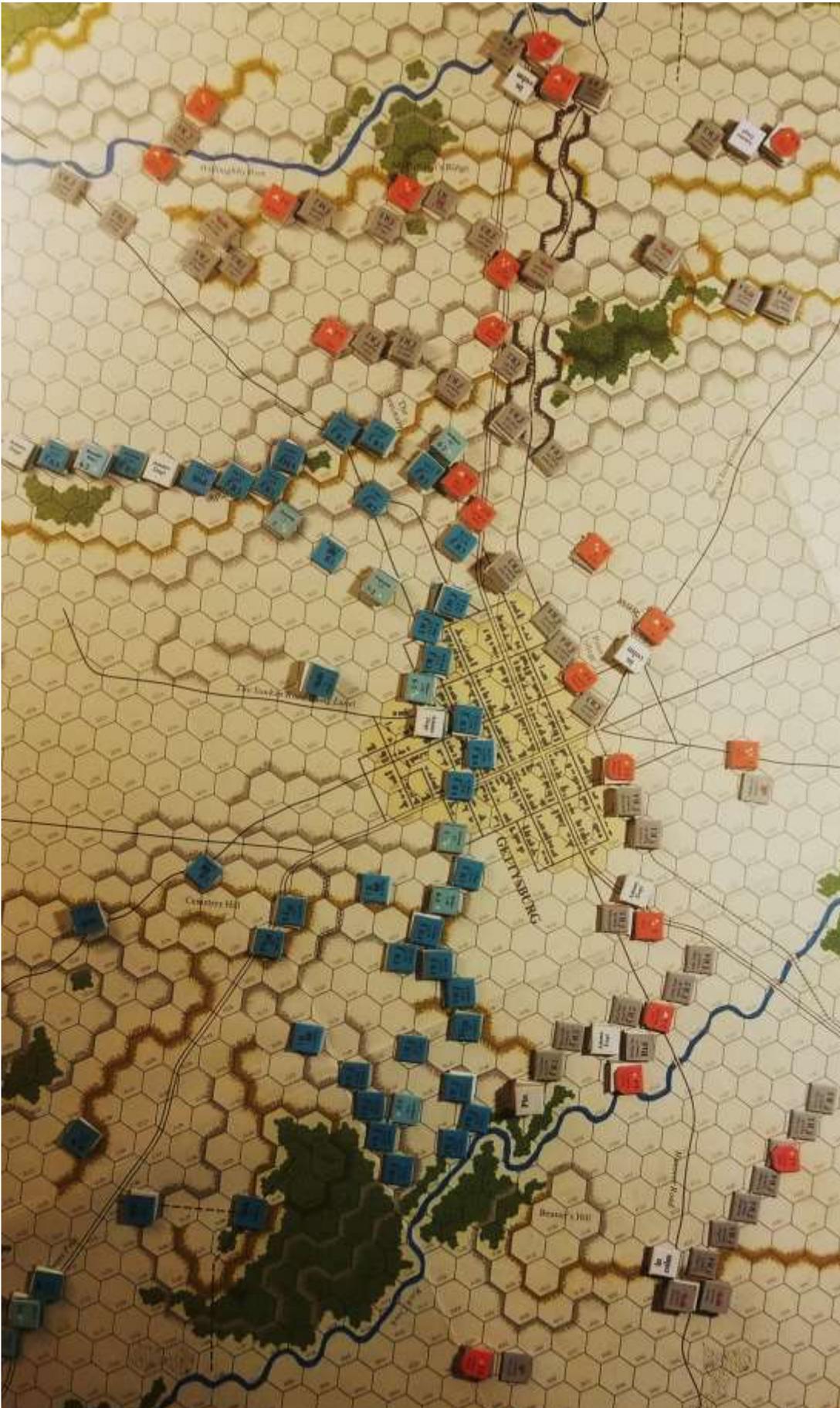


Below: the left flank of the CSA line. Ewell, with O'Neal and his beat up Brigade, while to the left we see Gordon, and the rest of Early's Division pushing hard on the Union Right.



Next: Same area, but now showing the thin line of Union troops deployed on the ridge behind trying to stop Early's crack troops.

TSS, 1600, July 1, 1863



The Union right flank collapsed. The fragile morale of the XI Corps was no match for the veteran troops of Rodes' division.



After a damaging repulse of O'Neal's brigade, Daniel sent the 1st and 3rd Divisions of XI Corps scrambling back into the town and Cemetery Hill. Gordon's brigade from Early's division arrived on the flank to follow up and pushed the Union troops nearly to the foot of Culp's Hill. Doles' brigade, with Perrin from Pender's division, slammed into the center of the Union position, just west of town. Elements of the 2nd Division of I Corps, along with 2/3/XI, withered under the fire.

This threatened the rear and right flank of I Corps position on and in front of Seminary Ridge, and Reynolds called a general withdrawal eastward.

In the span of an hour, two brigades in XI Corps lost combat effectiveness and lost nearly 2,000 in casualties and captures.

O'Neal's brigade is now out of the action, having lost combat effectiveness in that initial charge. Otherwise, the CSA casualties over the hour have been scant.

Another game note on ammo depletion. It got so bad, I had to print more Ammo Depl markers. There are whole brigades on the CSA side with no ammo, and no hope of resupplying until the Supply Train shows up. Even the Union is starting to feel the pinch, though they have had more Supply Wagons on the board. I may reduce the die roll to 1-2, instead of 1-3, in future games.

My original intent for this game was to play just the first day scenario. If I follow that plan, I have only 1 hour (3 turns) left; the Confederates are sitting on a Substantive victory. We'll see if I can muster the energy to continue on to the bitter end.

TSS, 1620 July 1 1863





Above, Gordon takes a battery, but the rest of the attack is repulsed!

TSS 1640, July 1, 1863

BCE'd 2nd Division of I Corps could not hold the high ground west of town.

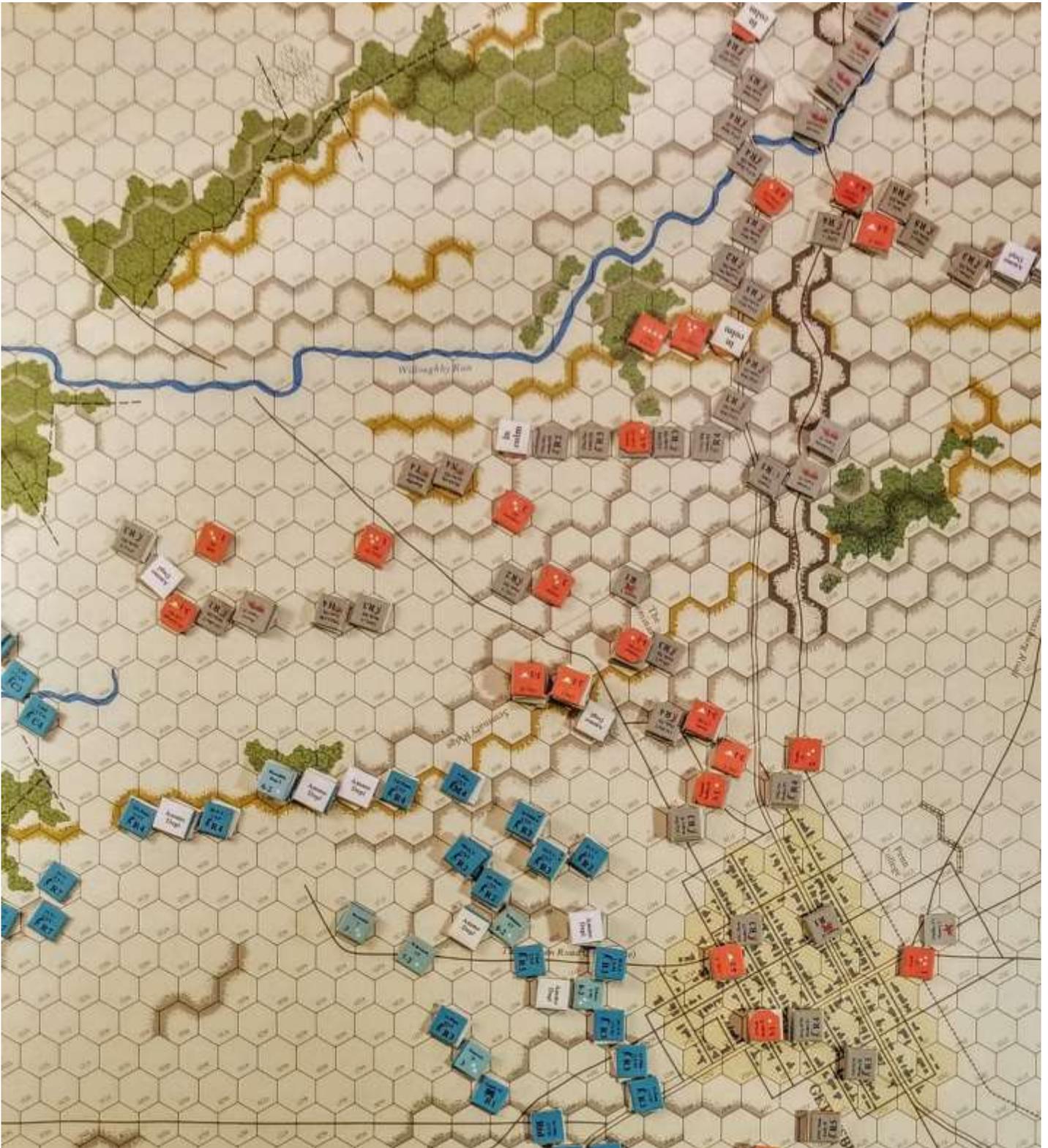


Below: Close up, 2nd Division of I Corps gives up the high ridge over Gettysburg.



With right collapsing and the center position failing, Reynolds calls another withdrawal. The only thing keeping Pender from overrunning Seminary Ridge in the middle is the remnants of the Iron Brigade. Reynolds uses them to rally the scattering units of 2/I and 3/XI to reform a line for a hopefully orderly withdrawal to Cemetery Ridge.

TSS, 1700, July 1, 1863 (Top)



Final Disposition, 1700 turn. (Purposely repeated the lowest hexrow above and top hexrow below to help you orient the maps.)

TSS, 1700, July 1, 1863 (Bottom)



End of the First Day scenario.

The first day (scenario) comes to a close.

Rodes and Pender continued to push the Union center on Seminary Ridge and west of the town. Iverson's brigade charged the 2nd Brigade of 3/XI on the outskirts of Gettysburg, and the two became embroiled in a protracted melee. Iverson committed another regiment to the fight and pushed the Union troops back.

On the left, Gordon and Avery charged the Union positions in front of Culp's Hill. The first charge netted Gordon some Union guns, but the rest of Gordon's and Avery's troops fell back. The next charge pushed the XI Corps troops back to the base of Culp's Hill. Daniel charged the position in front of Cemetery Hill and routed the battered 1/XI units.

In the meantime, Anderson shows up, coming in to take up positions behind Pender and what's left of Heth. He also brought the much-needed Supply Train with him, and the Confederates were able to restock the caissons and the Supply Wagons.

It was during this push on the Union center and right that Meade's army reached the Demoralization level (8000). Every casualty from now on was an automatic rout. Hancock arrives on the scene to routing troops south of Gettysburg and has to rally them back to slow down the CSA advance.

With right collapsing and the center position failing, Reynolds calls another withdrawal. The only thing keeping Pender from overrunning Seminary Ridge in the middle is the remnants of the Iron Brigade. Reynolds uses them to rally the scattering units of 2/I and 3/XI to reform a line for a hopefully orderly withdrawal to Cemetery Ridge. XII Corps arrives just in time to take up positions to prevent the Confederates from storming up Cemetery and Culp's Hills.

Final tally: 139 VPs to the CSA, 92 to the Union for a ratio of 1.51 to 1. With the demoralization level of the Union reached, that give the Confederates a Decisive victory. The Confederates lost five leaders (Doles and Davis killed), the Union two (Devin killed). The Union also lost 10 guns captured to the Confederates.

--TC Bradley, September, 2020

[I'd like to thank TC for this SUPERB Replay! These pictures are so sharp, you can feel the game move to move. What you saw here is very much what you would experience playing the campaign, except it would be YOU making those tough decisions!]

-- *Russ Gifford*

www.spigames.net

A quick Review of How to Play TSS!

By Russ Gifford

Below is a thumbnail review of the rules to help you enjoy this replay to the fullest!

Movement

Movement costs depends on Formation, on Leadership, and on Terrain. Unit spend points to move, and the cost depend on their formation. (Formation changes also cost movement points.)

Infantry must be in **line** formation to fire but can move in either formation.

They have to be in **column** to get the advantages that roads allow

– specifically, Inf in column or limbered artillery or mounted cavalry pay road costs, NOT terrain costs.

It is more important for Artillery. **Artillery** must be **limbered** to **move** but must be **unlimbered** to **fire**. (And artillery of the day is not a tank. **Artillery that entered a new hex that turn cannot fire**, even if it spent the movement points to change from limbered to unlimbered.)

Formation notes here: https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PDF/GBACWMod2Units%20and%20Formations.pdf

Movement Notes here: https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PDF/GBACWMod5Movement.pdf

Facing

Units have facing. They can only fire or move through their three front hexsides. They also only project a Zone of Control through those hexsides if in line (Infantry) or unlimbered (Artillery).

Facing and ZOC notes here: https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PDF/GBACWMod3Facing%20and%20ZOC.pdf

This means *maneuver* is important. Allowing an enemy to flank you – getting past your front and attacking from behind – increases the damage they can do by a shift on the Fire Chart, or a cost to the morale. And see what happens during a rout! (See Morale below.)

Fire Combat

Units can only fire out their three front hexsides (defined in the Facing segment above.)

Fire is mitigated by weapon type, distance, and terrain.

While most successful fire combat results costs a strength point if the fire is effective, it also requires a unit to check morale, which can cause the unit to rout.

Fire notes here: https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PDF/GBACWMod7FireCombat.pdf

Morale

If the fails a morale check, he must rout back 3 hexes. But if they are surrounded, the routing unit would be forced to surrender, costing the entire regiment of 3 or 4 strength points to be lost.

(Much of this is in the Fire notes above.) Units need a leader to recover from rout.

Leaders

Leaders have to be in Command Radius of their troops to exert their influence. If they are, the troop is said to 'be in command.' **Units must be in command to Move their full movement points, Change formation, or Rally.**

Leaders command ranges are differentiated by their ability. They also impact a unit's morale check if they are stacked with them. They also have to check for injury or death if they are stacked with a unit that suffers a combat loss!

Leader notes here: https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PDF/GBACWMod4Command.pdf

Melee

A key part of the game is melee. If the moving player moves troops adjacent to the enemy, and survives the point blank defensive fire and the incumbent morale check it induced, they may melee the enemy unit, which is really where the overall battles are won or lost.

Melee is not a given, and there is usually a cost for both the attacker and the defender. The games are decided by casualties, and players get double casualty points for capturing troops – which frequently occurs in melee.

Another big Victory Point factor are terrain objectives, and melees can frequently open a door to the victory point terrain hexes.

A defending unit giving ground in a melee often undermines an entire defensive line. That forces them to fall back to a new position, but the enemy will be hot on their heels.

However, as in history, should the attacker lose so many men closing with the enemy that his troops cannot carry the melee, the line can hold, forcing a new round of sacrifices from the attacker to again close with the line and try melee yet one more time. (See Pickett's Charge.)

Melee notes here: https://www.spigames.net/GBACW_PDF/GBACWMod8Melee.pdf

Wrap up items – Rallies, Ammo, Leader Replacement, etc:

Routed Units

Failing a combat-induced morale check, the unit immediately routs 3 hexes during the player turn.

Routed Units:

- Do not conduct fire attacks of any kind.
- Do not have Zones of Control, may not move into ZOCs.
- May move only 1 hex, and cannot initiate melee.

Routed Units may only return to normal in their Rally phase:

- **Must be within their Brigade Leader's Effectiveness Rating AND that leader must expend a Rally Point.**
- *Or they must be stacked with any friendly leader.*

Units part of a Brigade that has lost Combat Effectiveness must also pass a morale check to rally. (See 18.0)

The above should point out why TSS was so good: It integrates ALL THESE things into the ebb and flow of a battle, with what that the time was the most comprehensive rule set ever. (And FAR more user friendly than the Squad Leader rules that followed shortly there after.)

Putting it all together:

Terrible Swift Sword has the following symmetrical Player Turn sequence of play, repeated for each player. **The Phasing player's phases are in bold.**

- **Command**
- **Counter Battery (TSS only)**
- **Movement**
- Defensive Fire
- **Offensive Fire**
- **Melee**
- **Ammo Resupply, Command Replacement, etc**
- **Rally / Recovery**

The player turn now repeats for second player, who becomes the phasing player. After both are completed, a 20 minute turn is marked off.

I provided the links to the slide shows teaching TSS/GBACW above, but if you would like movie versions, with me talking you through it, both sets are at this web page. https://www.spigames.net/spi_gbacw_tutorials.htm

Now – go enjoy this great replay!