

## OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS:

# TROUBLE AREAS IN TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD

## Some Revisionist Thought

by Richard Berg

*Richard will undoubtedly be answering questions on and debating the merits of the rules to his TSS masterwork for the rest of his natural life. Some of you are obviously getting to him, since here he renders some official second thoughts on a few of the game's elements.*

*Terrible Swift Sword* was, by its very nature, a complex game. Even as complex games go, it took an exceptional amount of work to design, being the first game of its type done at SPI. Unfortunately, no matter how many hours of work, no matter how much thought and concentration you put into a game—especially a game as all-encompassing as *TSS*—there are always areas where loopholes or plain unsatisfactory rules occur. Now, I am not referring to simple errata, where a mistake has been made in printing or a die roll should be an addition, not a subtraction, etc. I am referring to loopholes and mistakes that players take advantage of to produce unrealistic results and to areas where the rules do not reflect reality.

From the hundreds of letters received for *TSS*, it became readily apparent that there were three areas which players were dissatisfied with. The first area consisted of the rules for rout; the second, the ability to use infiltration tactics at the expense of Withdrawal Fire; and the third, the extended usage of artillery as an offensive weapon similar to a tank. Based on the comments concerning these three items, specific changes have been made in the rules—changes that should be considered official rather than variants. The changes reflect new ideas and new solutions not conceived during the initial design work. None of the changes add any complexity to the game, and they all add greatly to an already high level of realism.

### Morale and Rout

The present basic rout rule in *TSS* is 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. For example, a regiment of 800 men that takes 100 losses is less likely to disintegrate than a 200-man regiment taking similar losses. Unfortunately, while this may be true in theory, it was not true in practice at Gettysburg. The varying brigades and regiments all had a remarkably diverse level of training and morale: e.g., look at the disparity between results for The Iron Brigade and any unit in the XI Corps. This is quite an obvious comparison; but the idea of individual variation can be applied consistently to all

units. And, in the basic game, this concept was not reflected.

To be sure, the Brigade Combat Effectiveness Option (which is still viable with the new Rout/Morale Rule, below) handled this shortcoming to some degree. However, this option worked only in the cumulative; there was nothing on the individual unit level to reflect training, etc. For example, the regiments of Gordon's Brigade (all R2's) had been severely reduced by the last few campaigns. However, what was left was a hardened corps of veterans who were little disposed to rout, despite their unit size. In the game as it now stands, the regiments of Gordon's Brigade, historically a strong brigade in terms of morale, are quite susceptible to rout. The new rule changes this.

The following rule should be substituted for 14.2.

[14.21] All regiments in each infantry or cavalry brigade have a letter rating (see listing below). The regiments within each brigade all have the same rating; thus, if Kershaw's Brigade is a 'C', all regiments in Kershaw's Brigade have a Morale Rating of 'C'. The letter rating, running from 'A' through 'E' is the unit's Morale Rating.

[14.22] Units use their Morale Rating in determining the chances of Rout (see 14.1). Using the Morale/Rout Table, the player rolls for each unit that has a chance of routing by throwing a die and cross-referencing that die roll with the unit's Morale Rating. Thus, if an R2 with a Morale Rating of 'C' takes a casualty and rolls a 3, it will not Rout.

[14.23] A unit that has suffered *more* than 50% losses (from its original strength) adds *one* to the Rout die-roll.

[14.24] Presence of a Leader in the hex still subtracts *one* from the die-roll.

[14.25] All HQ and Provost Guards are 'D' units. All artillery batteries are 'C' units.

[14.26] *The Morale/Rout Table*

Die	Unit Morale Rating				
	A	B	C	D	E
1	•	•	•	•	•
2	•	•	•	•	•
3	•	•	•	•	R
4	•	•	•	R	R
5	•	**	R	R	R
6	**	R	R	R	R

• = No Effect, No Rout

R = Unit Routs

\*\* = Roll again; if a '6' is rolled, unit routs

Unit Morale Ratings (see 14.21)

CSA

Kershaw(C), Semmes(D), Barksdale(C), Wofford(D); Garnett(C), Armistead(C), Kemper(C); Law(D), Anderson(D), Robertson(B), Benning(C); Hays(C), Hoke(C), Smith(D), Gordon(B); Steuart(D), Nicholls(C), Stonewall(A), Jones(D); Daniel(C), Iverson(D), Doles(C), Ramseur(C), O'Neal(D); Wilcox(D), Mahone(D), Wright(D), Perry(D), Posey(D); Pettigrew(D), Brockenbrough(D), Archer(E), Davis(D); 1/Perrin(B), 2/Lane(D), 3/Thomas(E), 4/Scales(C); FitzLee(B), Hampton(B), WHF Lee(C), Jenkins(C), Robertson(C), Jones(C); Imboden(B).

USA

1/1/I(A), 2/1/I(C), 1/2/I(D), 2/2/I(E), 1/3/I(C), 2/3/I(D), 3/3/I(D), 1/1/II(E), 2/1/II(D), 3/1/II(C), 4/1/II(D), 1/2/II(C), 2/2/II(C), 3/2/II(D), 1/3/II(C), 2/3/II(E), 3/3/II(D); 1/1/III(D), 2/1/III(C), 3/1/III(D), 1/2/III(D), 2/2/III(E), 3/2/III(C); 1/1/V(D), 2/1/V(E), 3/1/V(C), 1/2/V(D), 2/2/V(D), 3/2/V(B), 1/3/V(C), 3/3/V(D); 1/1/VI(C), 2/1/VI(C), 3/1/VI(C), 2/2/VI(D), 3/2/VI(C), 1/3/VI(D), 2/3/VI(D), 3/3/VI(D); 1/1/XI(D), 2/1/XI(E), 1/2/XI(D), 2/2/XI(D), 1/3/XI(E), 2/3/XI(D); 1/1/XII(D), 2/1/XII(C), 3/1/XII(D), 1/2/XII(D), 2/2/XII(C), 3/2/XII(C); 1/1/Cav(C), 2/1/Cav(C), R/1/Cav(B), 1/2/Cav(C), 3/2/Cav(C), 1/3/Cav(C), 2/3/Cav(C).

The range of letters (A through E) represents levels of training, general morale, and capability of company officers, etc. An 'A' unit would be a special "elite" unit, while an 'E' would represent "green" troops. The difficulty with quantifying characteristics of this sort is that there is little basis, other than subjective assessment, to base one's decision on. The Iron Brigade, the Stonewall Brigade, The Philadelphia Brigade—these units are all fairly well-documented. But what of the majority of the units? Regimental histories are not *that* abundant, and, moreover, the information they impart is highly suspect. And then what do you do with a unit like Stannard's Brigade (3/3/I)? These Vermont regiments should officially be classified as "green". However, their performance on the third day belies that description. So, do you base a rating on pre-battle assessment or actual battle reactions? The choice is not easy, and it is subjective at best.

What has been done with the Morale Ratings here is that units have been given their approximate (and admittedly subjective) level of performance during the battle, with other areas of assessment taken into consideration where specific information was lacking. Players who use this system will find the game's realism increases considerably, espec-

ially in the opening day's combat (check out Heth's Division's ratings!).

#### *Infiltration and Withdrawal Fire*

There has been a considerable problem with players taking advantage of the fact that units may fire Withdrawal Fire only once per phase. They are drawing fire with one unit, then parading six or seven more units right by that unit without fear of fire, similar to what German troops did in 1918. The Withdrawal Fire rule had been written in its original form because I felt that players would not want to have constant firing back and forth, as in *Torgau*. I was wrong, and unfortunately, all the playtesting that we did failed to reveal this flaw. Therefore, the problem is being corrected to reflect the realities of defensive position and fire in the Civil War era. *Change To* (11.12) (Second sentence). Units may fire Withdrawal Fire *any* number of times, subject only to possible ammunition depletion.

#### *Offensive Artillery*

The number of schemes and maneuvers that players have come up with to use their artillery offensively has been simply amazing! Using the Retire by Prolong Rule and the fact that artillery does not take casualties, players have begun to use batteries as if they were the early

forerunners of the tank. Obviously, this is not what was intended in the design.

There is nothing ahistorical about using artillery offensively; such a procedure just takes exceptional planning and incredible support. Artillery was rarely used in this manner in the Civil War, especially at Gettysburg. Artillery is meant to have a supportive and defensive role. The rules should reflect this historical reality, and in essence they do; but several loopholes have appeared to disrupt the balance between precedence and playability.

Artillery does not take casualties for several reasons, chief among which is the fact that losses to artillery are in guns and it would seem ludicrous to have rifle fire take out guns! Furthermore, losses to crewmen were few (from small-arms fire) at Gettysburg, and the no-loss/Pin-only rule from small-arms fire reflects this fact.

The following changes and additions to the rules reflect an effort to clear up the loopholes and add more realism in terms of artillery tactics and the ability of artillery to operate under fire.

*Add to* (10.82) Pinned artillery is halved in Fire Strength when it fires (defensively).

*Add: New Case* (6.23) If an artillery battery desires to either limber or unlimber (change formation) and that battery is within range and LOS of any enemy small-arms units (excluding Guards) those enemy small-arms units may fire at that battery *before* it changes formation. This fire is considered a form of Withdrawal Fire. If, in the course of such fire, a battery becomes pinned, it may *not* complete its change of formation; i.e., it may not limber or unlimber. This rule may be used whether the battery is the top unit or the bottom unit in a stack.

In essence, the above rules will reflect the fact that artillery batteries rarely operated well under fire. It is not impossible to unlimber a battery in front of an enemy defensive position now, but it sure will take a lot of support and planning—all of which is reflective of the tactical situation of the day.

The above three sections represent the only three areas that caused any major controversy. If anyone has any comments on these rules—or on any other—I always welcome letters. *TSS* is a popular game; I hope to keep it a fresh game by constantly upgrading the rules.

—Berg

## Napoleon's Last Battles

[continued from page 14]

the *Ligny* or *Quatre Bras* maps until 1400/June 16.

[28.43] (Optional) British Variable Entry. For any number of reasons, the Anglo-Allied concentration could have been faster or slower. Wellington himself had only vague ideas of where all his forces were on June 16. The following rule simulates this effect. Before the game starts, the Allied Player places his units (except Wellington) on their appropriate slots on the reinforcement track. Note that in all cases except Merlen, Kruse, Ompteda, and Best, each group of units should be represented by its Officer. Ignore the entry of Officers marked on the track—Officers must enter with the largest group of units under their command. For each single unit or Officer, two die must be rolled, and the arrival time of the given unit(s) are advanced or put back on the turn record chart.

#### *DIE ROLL*

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12  
-6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4

*Example:* The Brunswick Division is slated to enter 100/June 16. Two die are rolled, resulting in a "3". The Brunswick division (4 units and a Leader) is moved five turns earlier on the reinforcement track, in effect starting on the map 16 movement points from B0605 (28 movement points for the cavalry unit). If a "12" had been rolled, the division would have entered on turn 1400/June 16.) Treat night and rain turns as single turns unless using rule [25.6]. Dispositions should be kept secret from the French Player; the Allied Player should use scratch paper or dummies to keep record of the location of his units. Dummies

deployed need not represent real units; in addition, the Allied player need only reveal units on the *Ligny* and *Quatre Bras* maps until the French enter the *Belle Alliance* or *Ligny* maps, or until turn 1400/June 16, at which time all dummies must be removed and the real location of units revealed. All units enter on the hexes given on the reinforcement tracks, except that the 3rd and 1st British divisions may enter at hex B0120, if desired.

[28.44] French Optional entry. Before the game begins, the French Player may decide which hex (L0334 or Q1134) his reinforcements will enter. All reinforcements enter on the turn indicated. The entry hexes must be written and cannot be changed after the game starts. When using this variant, the French Player does not receive the 50 point handicap of [28.5], and the game cannot end before 1400/June 17.

#### [28.5] *VICTORY CONDITIONS*

As printed in [26.0], except that the French Player starts out with a 50 point handicap, representing the fact that he'll have to maneuver to destroy the Prussians.

*Notes:* In many respects, a better game than the Campaign game, as the Battle of Ligny is not a sure thing. In effect the Allied Player can decide where to make his stands. He may decide, for instance, to fall back on Wavre, but in one game played this resulted in moderate losses as the Prussians attempted to cross the bridges in the east, because they had neglected to put sufficient blocking forces on the road. In another game, the Prussians attempted to shift west with two corps, leaving one corp to protect their supply lines. This resulted in their getting chopped up on the road to Quatre Bras, although the Allies later went on to win. The game is definitely not a

walk-over for the French. The Victory Conditions are extremely tough to satisfy, almost impossible if the French Player fails to exit units. It's almost impossible, for instance, to win scenario [27.0] using the Campaign Game Victory Conditions. I consider the French to have won a moral victory if they achieve one hundred points at the end of the game. If the French optional entry is used, a slight possibility exists that the French may be able to shoot right up the Brussels road, but since they can't win before 1400/June 17, they must keep the Prussians away from the southern half of the Brussels road. The variable Anglo-Allied reinforcements tend to keep the French Player guessing as to what he will face.

#### [29.0] *ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL SCENARIO*

[29.1] All maps, all Campaign rules

[29.2] Game begins 1400/June 16 and ends 2100/June 19 (i.e., one day later).

[29.3] *DEPLOYMENT:* As in regular Campaign game

[29.4] *SPECIAL RULES:* On turn 0300/June 19, the Allied Player receives 200 Austrian 4-4 inf., 45 Austrian 3-6 cav., and 6 Austrian 6-4 art. units.

[29.5] *VICTORY CONDITIONS:* As in [26.0]

*Notes:* Good luck! Represents the next Army waiting to take on Napoleon. Does not include the 170,000 Russians, who would require still another scenario. For all its apparent drama, a French victory in the Waterloo Campaign would have been far from decisive. It was the longest of long shots, which the French could ill afford to lose. But as a game, as represented in *Napoleon's Last Battles*, it remains a classic.