

## The Battle of Bull Run

Feeling the need to get away from painting and preparation for a day and to play a quick game with stuff that I already have prepared, and coincidentally next in my project list, I have played a solo game from "Battle Cry", the American Civil War board game, transferred to a 4ft x 3ft table with 4" Kallistra hexagons and 6mm figures from Irregular Miniatures.

The transfer means that the 13x9 layout must be transferred to 12x6 hexagons. This is not a major problem, as only 5 hexagons are lost.

I played the first scenario from the Battle Cry book, First Bull Run, 21st July 1861.

Note that original US spellings have been used for command cards and dice in accordance with the game.

Here is the table laid out at the start.



and a view from the Confederate lines which gives a better impression of the contours:



Strangely, Bull Run itself is not represented, nor are any roads or the Stone Bridge beloved of Hollywood film makers. But I don't care. It's a battle scenario and I spend too much time not playing games to worry.

At this point it should be mentioned that these are not my best 6mm models. These were prepared in a hurry in the summer of 2003 to be used in a Gettysburg game and have since been hastily rebased to be used with "Battle Cry". One day I will get around to putting some flock on the bases, but the figures are definitely "arms-length" stuff, as will be seen in close-up pictures later.

For those unfamiliar with the game system, it is a card-driven game (and therefore well suited to solo play). Each player has a number of cards with tactical options. One card is played each turn and then replenished from the deck. I find when playing solo that even knowledge of the enemy's hand is soon forgotten when looking at your current side's options.

Cards generally refer to left flank, right flank or center, but occasionally give more freedom. The table is divided into the three sectors (easier with 12 hexagons on the base line). Hexagons that span two sectors are considered to be in both.

Combat is resolved with cubic dice marked with symbols: Infantry, Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, Sabers, Flag. To score a hit you must roll the symbol of the target. Crossed sabers hit anything and a flag causes a one hex retreat towards the base-line (not directly away from the enemy). In my description below the dice rolled will be abbreviated to I,C,A,S & F respectively. Effective dice are shown in red for kills and blue for retreats. The battle would be resolved by capturing 6 flags, i.e. the elimination of 6 enemy units or generals.

Orders of Battle were as follows:

Union:

General Hunter

1 x 3 Cavalry elements

9 x 4 Infantry elements

1 x 3 artillery elements

Confederate:

Generals Jackson and Stuart

2 x 3 Cavalry elements

7 x 4 Infantry elements

1 x 3 Artillery elements.

And so to the battle.

Union turn 1

Probe – Center. 2 units activated in the centre.

In the centre, one infantry unit moved into the farm complex and a second infantry unit moved forward on their left flank.



Confederate turn 1

Bombard. All artillery units may fire twice or move up to 3 hexagons (normally 1 hexagon or fire once).

The Confederate artillery unit moved forwards to the crest of the ridge and unlimbered.



Union turn 2

Attack - Left Flank. An Attack order allows three units to move and/or fire according to their capabilities.

Infantry may move one hexagon and fire.

Three infantry units advanced in echelon on the Union left.



### Confederate turn 2

Assault – Center. An Assault card allows activation of as many units in the specified sector as you have cards in your hand. For this battle, up to 6 units.

Four infantry units advanced towards the top of the ridge, and the artillery opened fire on the Union unit that had advanced to the (Confederate) right of the farm.

Range 3 hexagons = 3 dice.

(Artillery roll 5 dice at 1 hex range, 4 dice at 2 hexes, etc.)

C,I,S = 2 hits (one for I, one for S)



### Union turn 3

Attack - Right Flank

One infantry, one artillery and one cavalry unit advanced.



### Confederate turn 3

#### Assault - Left Flank

Two cavalry units, accompanied by General Stuart, moved forwards around the left side of the woods, while one infantry unit moved forwards to join the infantry line on the ridge.



### Union turn 4

Hit and Run. Any cavalry units and unattached generals may move, "battle", then move again.

The cavalry on top of the hill on the Union right flank swung right to counter the Confederate cavalry movement.

3 dice were rolled. (Cavalry roll 3 dice at one hexagon range only.)

I,I,S

One Confederate cavalry base was removed for the S result.



The cavalry then retired to the rear slope of the hill.

#### Confederate turn 4

Counterattack. This allows the same option as the enemy just played, but with left and right flanks reversed. Both cavalry units, with General Stuart, swept around the Union right flank to attack the Union cavalry. 3 dice were rolled for the initial contact. A,I,F = 1 retreat.

The Union cavalry retreated.

The Confederate cavalry, with General Stuart attached, took the ground which the Union cavalry vacated. (If a General is with a victorious unit, they may occupy a hexagon left empty by the destruction or retreat of the enemy.)



#### Union turn 5

Battle and Hold Position. Choose one sector. All units may fight but not move. (Turning to face the enemy is not considered as movement.)

The Union cavalry recovered and with help from the right flank infantry unit counterattacked the Confederate cavalry.

Infantry attack. 4 dice rolled. I,C,A,S for 2 hits.

Cavalry attack. 3 dice rolled. I,S,F for 1 hit and 1 retreat. The Confederate cavalry was eliminated for one Victory Point, leaving General Stuart alone.



#### Confederate turn 5

Coordinated Advance. This allows activation of two units in each sector.

The remaining cavalry unit moved to join General Stuart and attack the Union right flank infantry.

The leftmost infantry unit advanced towards the farm.

In the centre one infantry unit moved forwards while the artillery fired in support.

On the right flank both infantry units advanced.

Artillery firing. 3 dice at 3 hexes. I,I,F

The infantry unit to the (Union) left of the farm was destroyed for 1 Confederate Victory Point.

The infantry unit that advanced in the centre fired at long range with 1 die, rolling I.



The left flank infantry had no target, but their cavalry rolled 3 dice against the enemy infantry: **I,I,S** for 3 hits.



On the right flank the infantry fired with one die each at long range. **S** for 1 hit, then **F** for a retreat.

An overview of the battlefield after this action.



#### Union turn 6

Attack - Left Flank.

Three infantry units advanced on the left flank and fired At the Confederate infantry and artillery.

Left flank unit at 3 hexes = 2 dice.

C,S for one hit.

Next unit at 3 hexes = 2 dice.

A,S for one hit.

Next unit vs the artillery at 3 hexes on a hilltop (-1 die) = 1 die.

I for no hits.



#### Confederate turn 6

Assault - Right Flank

Supported by the artillery, two units advanced on the right, targeting the centre unit on the Union left.

Artillery. At 3 hexes, 3 dice.

A,C,S for one hit.

Left infantry unit at two hexes, 3 dice.

I,S,S for 3 hits. The enemy unit was eliminated for 1 VP.

Right infantry unit targets Union leftmost infantry at two hexes, 3 dice.

A,I,F for one hit and a retreat.





### Union turn 7

#### Attack - Right Flank

The Union cavalry and the remains of the infantry brigade on the right flank counter-attacked the Confederate cavalry.

Infantry at one hex, 4 dice.

A,A,I,C for 1 hit.

Cavalry at one hex, attacking uphill, 2 dice.

A,S for one hit, eliminating the unit for 1 Victory Point



### Confederate turn 7

#### Assault - Right Flank

The two infantry units moved forwards again, supported by the artillery.

Artillery fire at 3 hexes, 3 dice.

C,I,S for two hits.

Infantry at 2 hexes, 3 dice.

I,I,I eliminated the enemy brigade for 1 Victory Point.

Right flank infantry at 2 hexes, 3 dice.

C,F,F for two retreats.



### Union turn 8

Probe - Left Flank. A Probe order allows activation of two units in the specified sector.

The Union tried to stop the outflanking manoeuvre on their left.

The retreating unit was halted, turned and moved back into the line while a supporting unit from the left centre moved across in support.

Shooting

Leftmost infantry at 3 hexes, 2 dice.

I,S for 2 hits, eliminating the rightmost Confederate Brigade for 1 VP.

Second unit at 2 hexes, 3 dice.

A,S,F for one hit and one retreat.



### Confederate turn 8

Assault - Center

Five Infantry Brigades advanced towards the farm in the centre, supported by the artillery on their right flank.

Shooting. Artillery at the brigade to the right (Confederate viewpoint) of the farm.

At 4 hexes, 2 dice.

C,C for no hits.

Left infantry brigade against the farm. At 2 hexes vs farm (-1 die), 2 dice.

S,S for two hits.

Right infantry brigade against the farm. At 2 hexes, 2 dice.

I,F for one hit and a retreat.

Centre brigade vs the artillery.

At 3 hexes, 2 dice.

C,C for no hits.



#### Union turn 9

Attack - Center

The artillery unlimbered to fire on the advancing Confederates while two Infantry brigades were brought up to the left of the farm.

Artillery at 3 hexes vs hill top (-1 die), 2 dice.

A,I for one hit.

Infantry brigade firing at the nearest Confederate brigade.

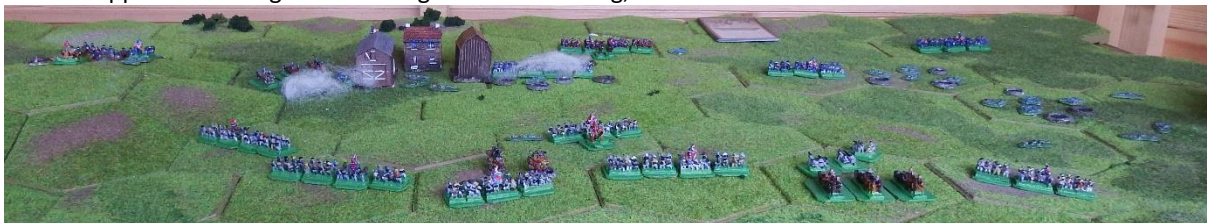
At 2 hexes, 3 dice

C,I,F for one hit and one retreat.

The retreat result was negated by the presence of General Jackson. (An attached general may ignore one flag)



Here I stopped for the night. Resuming the next morning, here is an overview of the battlefield.



#### Confederate turn 9

Attack - Center

The unit led by General Jackson attacked the infantry to the (Confederate) right of the farm, supported by the artillery, while a second brigade moved to the left of the enemy artillery and attacked the battery from the flank.

Shooting - artillery, at 3 hexes. 3 dice rolled C,,I for 2 hits.

Shooting - infantry vs infantry at 1 hex. 4 dice roll A,C,S,F for 1 hit and a retreat. The Confederates, with General Jackson, took the ground.



Infantry shooting at artillery at 1 hex. 4 dice.  
C,I,I,F for 1 retreat.



#### Union turn 10

Battle Cry. With this card you roll as many dice as cards in your hand (6 dice), and activate the units rolled.

Sabers count for nothing, while flags may activate any unit or general.

I,I,I,S,S,F = 3 Infantry units and one unit of choice.

The cavalry attacked the lone Confederate General Stuart on their right flank.

3 dice rolled I,A,S so the General was killed. One more Victory Point for the Union.

On the left flank two depleted infantry units advanced to fire on the backs of the Confederate unit on the side of the hill. One at 2 hexes and one at 3 hexes.

3 dice rolled C,C,F for one retreat.

The Confederates reached the hilltop and were now out of effective range of the second unit.



In the centre the Union Zouave brigade fired at the advancing Confederate brigade. At one hex, 4 dice, rolling I,I,I,C for 3 hits and eliminating the brigade, leaving the general alone.



Score now 5:3 to the Union.

#### Confederate turn 10

Leadership. This card enables an unattached General to move, or gives a combat bonus to any unit with a general attached.

General Jackson rode back to join the infantry on the ridge in the centre.

#### Union turn 11

Attack - Right Flank

The artillery unlimbered and opened fire on the leftmost Confederate unit, then a flank attack was launched with the remaining depleted Infantry unit and a sweeping rear attack from the cavalry unit.

Artillery shooting at 2 hexes: 3 dice.

Roll I,I,C for two hits.



The Cavalry attacked with 3 dice rolling 1,1,A. The Confederate unit was eliminated. With this the Union side won the battle.

As can be seen from the final view of the battlefield below, the Confederates still held a strong consolidated position on the ridge while the Union troops were scattered and depleted, but with the casualties suffered and the loss of general Stuart, they decided to withdraw. What would be the effect of the loss of Stuart in this opening battle to the Confederate cause?

