

# SILENCE THOSE CANNONS

BY JOHN KIRKWOOD

*This brigade level scenario was sent in by a US reader who has recently turned his attention to the Warmaster rules for playing large scale ACW battles. His scenario is designed to be generic, useable with popular ACW rules like Fire & Fury, but does include ideas for using a downloadable set of add-on rules called ACW Warmaster from the Internet.*

## INTRODUCTION

I've been playing ACW for many years now, and like many Americans the effect that the civil war had on my nation has had a profound effect on me. Putting sentimentality to one side the horror of 'brother against brother' should never be forgotten.

Having said that, I have wargamed ACW for many years, but I do find it difficult to play real historical battles. It started during a Gettysburg game when I had the honour to play Pickett's Brigade as I stormed across the table heading straight for a stone wall packed with Union troops. I lost base after base after base and when I got across the model table my figures had been decimated. Ring any bells?

So now I find that I make games up using the real life experiences of the civil war as a background. This article is inspired by the actions of the 1st Manassas (or 1st Bull Run as many refer to it) and in particular the attempt to silence a Union Artillery position (batteries under the command of Rickett and Griffin) by Confederate troops in the latter stages of the battle.

For those of you not that familiar with the 1st Bull Run it was the first battle of the civil war and saw Major-General Irvin McDowell's Union Army march west from Washington to a place called Centerville (roughly 20 miles in 2 days) for a battle that was intended to be a swift end to the so-called

Southern rebellion.

Across the Bull Run River was Brigadier-General Pierre Beauregard's Confederate Army of the Potomac, along with the Army of the Shenandoah under the divisional command of Brigadier-General Johnston. Both armies were untested and this was to play a major part in this encounter. Both sides could have won the battle, both sides failed to hammer home their initiative when an opening was exposed and as a result poor tactics were employed.

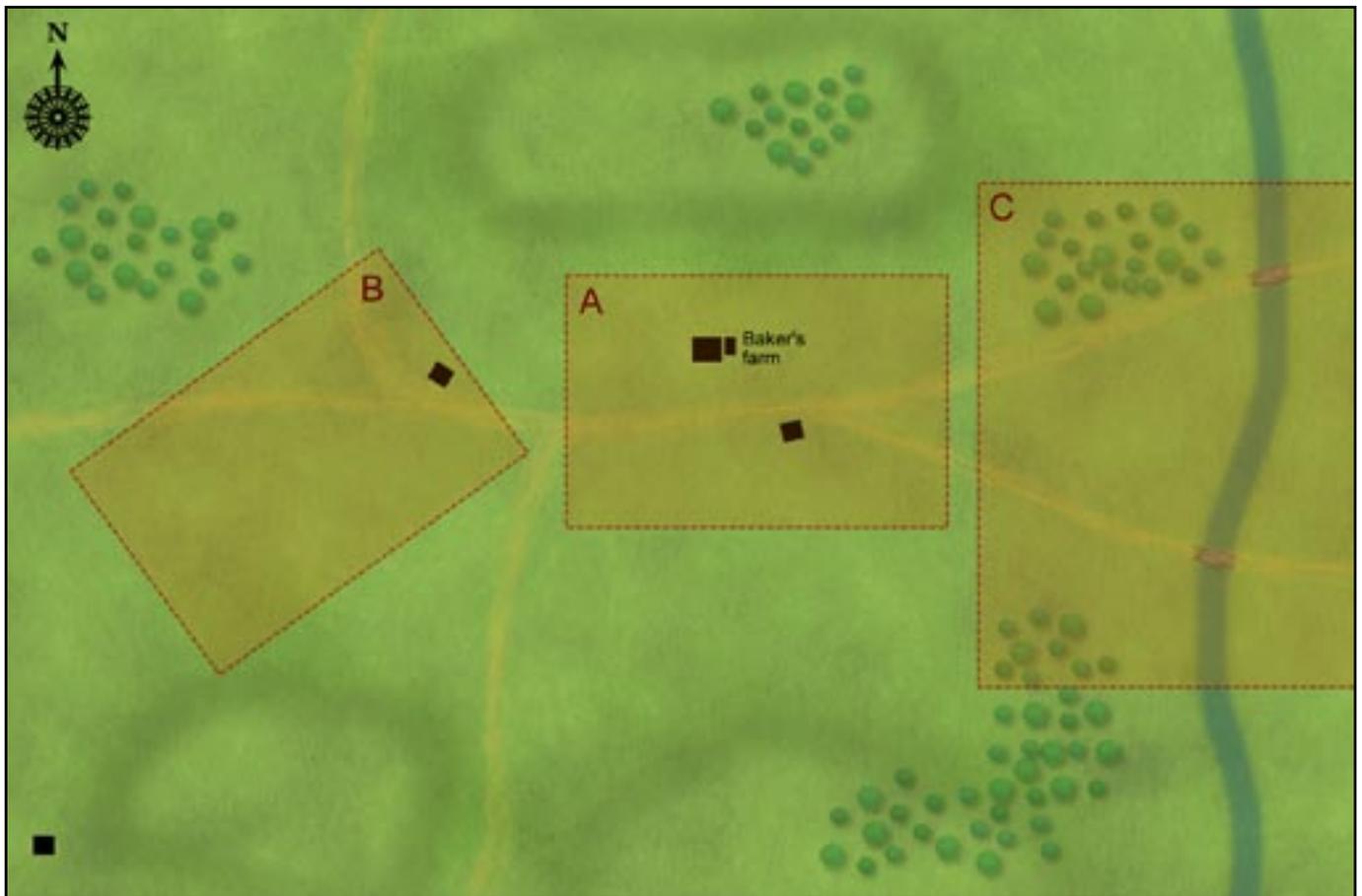
## ARMY BREAKDOWNS

The federal forces under McDowell were organised into five divisions and commanded by Hunter, Heintzelman, Runyan, Miles and Tyler. There were around 30,000 troops in the federal force and within it were some rather colourful units, such as the 11th New York Fire Zouaves, 79th New York Highlanders and a battalion of US Marines.

As structure goes the Confederate force was disorganised with an unwieldy command structure. In essence this force was composed of two 'armies' which can be broken down into thirteen or so independent Brigades. The key commanders involved across the Southern Armies are Longstreet, Jackson, Bartow, Bee, Smith, Jones, Stuart, Kershaw, Early, Cocke, Holmes, Ewell and Bonham.

The disposition of these two armies more or less added up to the





*TACTICAL MAP: The map above is loosely based on the 1st Bull Run but with a few major changes. In the scenario included in this magazine we focus on Section A, around Baker's Farm. Ground scale is not that important for this map but if it interests you then Section A would be roughly 2 miles by 1 mile.*

same as McDowell's federal force.

### WHY WARMASTER?

It is an odd state of affairs that brought me to using the Warmaster add-on rules. I'm a Fire & Fury player, always have been, and always will be, but my current crop of gaming buddies are not really into historical gaming, they are more science fiction and fantasy biased. About 8 months ago I tried to get them to play a civil war scenario, but to no avail.

Then around Christmas a random search of the Internet threw up a set of rules called ACW Master and at three pages they give a nice feel of the civil war to what are primarily a set of fantasy battle rules. After tweaking them a little I was ready to 'try again' with my friends. It worked – they knew the Warmaster rules - admittedly used to playing Orcs or Dwarves with them - but dropping Union and Confederate stats on them worked fine.

I also drew up a crib sheet, sort of a 'How To' guide to tactics of the period and they seemed happy. I'd say we play Warmaster ACW 2-3 times per month now.

I am actually working on my own ACW rules for Warmaster and when completed I will submit them to Wargames Journal.

### SCENARIO – THE ATTACK ON BAKER'S FARM

The real battle started at 06:30 near to the 'Stone Bridge' and progressed through the day until federal attacks ran out of steam around 16:00. Without going into too much detail the real battle ended up with the exhausted federal force fleeing back towards Washington on the Centerville Road, encountering civilians who had left the city with picnic baskets to watch the 'main event'.

What I have done is abstract the main real life battlefield, changing

locations and features, adding new ones and I have provided a Main Battlefield Map and then a zoomed in Scenario Map. The Scenario Map is designed for use with 10/15mm figures and forms a gaming table that is 6' x 4' in size and corresponds to the rectangle marked **A** on the main map.

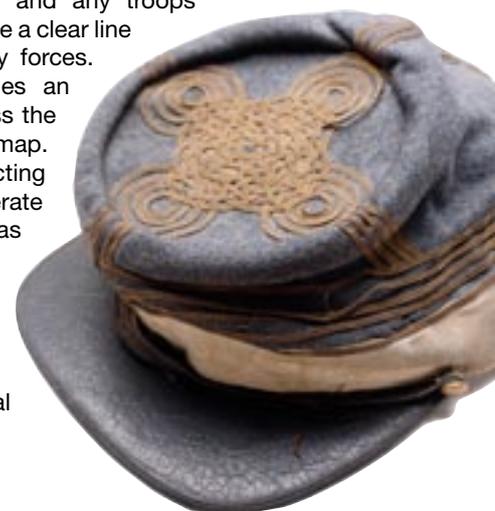
**Editorial Note:** John sent us three scenarios and we have included one in this article. The other two scenarios will be arriving as free downloads from the Wargames Journal web site during June.

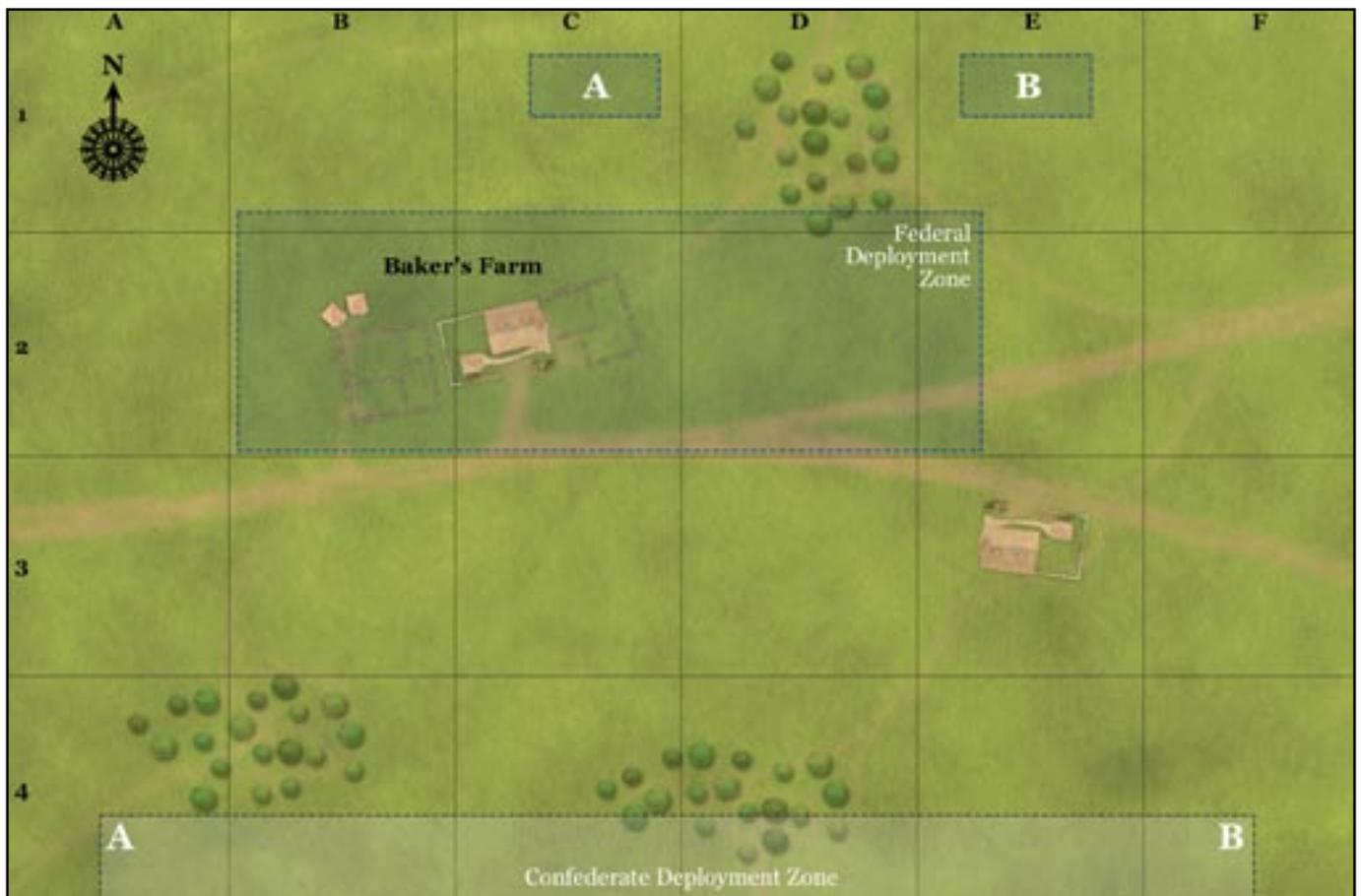
This game centres on the Baker's Farm which I have designed to be the central point of the overall battlefield. In the real battle the Stone Bridge was a key location, but I find that games where one side needs to cross a river often end up being dull and laborious. So I've taken the river away and added some terrain that is easier to game in/around.

As you can see from the Scenario Map the farm is located centrally on the tabletop and any troops located within the farm have a clear line of the sight to the enemy forces.

The location also provides an excellent field of fire across the main roads that cross the map. With federal guns inflicting heavy damage on Confederate units the command has been given that this key battlefield position should be taken.

Seeing the shift in emphasis the federal





**SCENARIO A MAP:** This game is designed for a 6' x 4' gaming table and as you can see the Federal Troops start the game deployed in and around the farm complex. The two shaded areas at the top are for reinforcements and you should use the table inside the text to generate a random arrival point. The Confederate Forces arrive anywhere within the grey shaded area at the bottom of the map and reinforcements will arrive at Point A or B.

commanders have moved the 1st and 3rd Divisions to reinforce the batteries and the battle now has a new focal point in the centre. My other two scenarios deal with the left and right flanks respectively.

This scenario starts at 12:30 with Confederate units moving/firing first and will run until 16:00. If no decisive victory has happened then just tot up the points of the destroyed units and you have a winner. I would say that each Turn of the game should represent 30 minutes of fighting.

### BASING THE FIGURES

Warmaster uses a simple 40mm x 20mm structure and generally has three stands of figures to a unit. Most historical rules (such as Johnny Reb or Fire & Fury) do not use a basing size like this. F&F, for example, uses 1" by 1" or possibly 1" by 3/4" for 15mm scale figures. The easy way around this with Warmaster is to use six stands of infantry to form a unit composed of three 2" x 1" stands.

Cavalry should be used as skirmish and not shock cavalry (well I think so) and used as mobile fire teams, not as mobile battering rams!

### FEDERAL ORDERS OF BATTLE AND INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

The federal army is a simpler beast to work out and is composed of five divisions. This game will use the 1st (Tyler) and 3rd (Heintzelman) Divisions and they will be deployed as follows:

#### 1st Division

4 x Infantry  
2 x Rifled Artillery

1 x Brigade Commander  
1 x Divisional Commander

#### 3rd Division

3 x Infantry  
1 x Smoothbore Artillery  
1 x Brigade Commander

**Reserves: 1 x Cavalry and 2 x Infantry**

### CONFEDERATE ORDERS OF BATTLE AND INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

So where do I start? This game is intended to represent the Army of the Potomac and several non-brigaded units, such as the Thirtieth Virginia Cavalry, Seventeenth/Eighteenth/Nineteenth Virginia and Seventh/Eighth Louisiana Infantry.

The Army of the Potomac was formed from six Brigades (1 through 6) and four artillery batteries plus an assorted number of non-brigaded units and cavalry. How I equate this to the battlefield and this scenario is as follows:

1 x Rifled Artillery  
2 x Smoothbore Artillery  
1 x Cavalry  
6 x Infantry  
2 x Brigade Commanders  
1 x Divisional Commander

**Reserves: 3 x Infantry**

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## SPECIAL RULES

Troops should be deployed as per the map and each player should take note of the location that their reinforcements could arrive at. Now for the harsh bit: not all reinforcements will arrive; sometimes they get lost or killed in battle. From Turn 3 each player can dice for a reinforcements at the start of the turn. Roll a D6 and on a 5 or a 6 they are in luck and can roll on the Reinforcements table:

The following table should be consulted to see when and where these units arrive:

### Reinforcements (roll 2D6)

2-3	Nothing arrives – troops are lost this turn
4-5	All units arrive at Point A (1-3 on a D6) or Point B (4-6)
6-7	Choose 1 unit to arrive at Point A
8-9	Choose 2 units to arrive at Point B
10-11	Lose a unit from your reinforcements, opponent gets to choose
12	Lose them all – they're all dead

### Command Bonus Dice Rolls

In Warmaster you roll two command dice to see if you can motivate your troops into doing something. This can be very amusing when you watch an entire army fail its command dice rolls and not do anything.

There is also a Blunder Chart which allows a unit to do something kind of stupid if a double 1 is rolled. This is huge fun to use and one of the mechanics inside Warmaster that I enjoy playing.

However, what I wanted to add to the rules is a Bonus Table that is rolled upon when a double 6 is rolled. This represents that euphoric moment when a truly ingenious commander convinces his men to do something incredible. Roll 2D6 and consult this table and make a note of the outcome:

2-3	Sorry, mistake. Nothing exciting happens today
2-4	Forward Men, Forward and Engage. This commander receives a +1 bonus to his command rating for 3 turns.
5-6	Veteran Troops. The unit in question is infused with military prowess and for the next (D3 turns) can re-roll its first attack dice of a combat round.
7-8	The Colours Lads, protect the Colours! This unit will receive +1 hit per stand for the first round of combat.
9-11	Now that's made me ANGRY!! Re-roll all shooting or close combat dice. Use only once.
12	Heavens Above ... OK, so you rolled 2 natural 12s in row – you deserve some battlefield luck, soldier. Roll twice on this table. If you roll this again forget it! Two of these bonuses is enough.

## SUMMARY

My first choice for ACW rules is, and always will be, F&F and it would take a large carrot to tempt me away from sticking with these superb game mechanics. But the Warmaster rulebook does present a simple tool that can be used to bring large scale ACW games to a new audience. When you add the ACW Master PDF to this rulebook you get a fast play game of ACW.

I'm a firm believer that the joy of rules comes from the



playing of the game, getting loads of miniatures out onto the tabletop and having plenty of fun. Not from working through 6 so-called 'Fast Play' sheets to figure out that your unit didn't inflict any wounds on the enemy.

So that is about it from me. I hope you enjoy the game and also look out for the other two scenarios (which are marked B and C on the tactical map) which I'm told will be made available for free download from the Wargames Journal web site sometime during June 2006.

At the same time we will be making our own ACW add-on rules for Warmaster available. We are working on versions that allow a stand of figures to represent a battalion or brigade and will use multiple bases, beyond the common three stands to a unit that Warmaster employs, to represent larger historical units.

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