With this article, it’s twice in a row that we have immediate follow-up on an S&T game. Wilson’s Creek was one of those games that for no particular reason had more than its share of minor fluffs associated with it. As Richard will relate, some historical data never made it through the sketch map stage into the art department, and some of the counters grew warts when it was finally printed. Ever since you found out that Price had planned to march yesterday to the Dug Springs fiasco, “Tell General Rains I will come to the front myself directly!”

You are Ben McCulloch, just sitting down on this 10 August 1861 morning to a fresh, piping hot breakfast of corn bread, lean beef, and coffee. Your mind drifts a bit to the events of the last several days. General Stirling Price, at whose HQ you are dining this morning, and his rag-tag “army” have been totally unmanageable. Ever since you finally got Price to relinquish command over the combined force, it has been a constant battle to keep them in step with your disciplined, well-equipped regulars. It was not ten days ago that you found out that Price did not obey your instructions about leaving all unarmed men behind at the start of this campaign. Extra mouths to feed that cannot be provided any firepower are a drain you can ill afford on your 10,000 man army.

Then, several days ago, Rains Brigade of the Missouri State Guard was sent out to recon the Union strength while your army was camped near Dugs Springs. Despite your order not to attack and the reaffirmation of that order by your able second in command, Colonel McIntosh, Rains’s men charged the enemy and were summarily thrashed by General Nathaniel Lyon’s Union regulars. So complete was the rout that they stampeded through the center of your camp. That action precipitated the rout of other MSG units. The entire camp was in disarray. Totally disgusting!

Recently, Price has pressed you to attack Springfield, Missouri, where the Union army is known to be. You were in favor of maneuvering the enemy out of Springfield rather than attack the fortified camp. You had planned to march yesterday to the outskirts of the town and attack this morning, but the wet weather postponed that strategy. You assumed, of course, that even though the army was resting “on their arms,” ready to move at any hour, each command would select sentries to protect the army from a surprise attack. Hmmmm.... Damn that Price!

Suddenly your consciousness is jerked back to the present by a tap on the arm by McIntosh who has sighted a fast moving and excited rider. It is Colonel Snyder, General Rains’s Chief of Staff. Almost breathless, he announces, “Lyon is approaching with 20,000 men and 100 pieces of artillery. They are at this moment within a mile of Rains’s camp.” After putting down a piece of cornbread, you reply laughingly, “Oh, pshaw! That’s another of Rains’s scares,” alluding to the Dug Springs fiasco. “Tell General Rains I will come to the front myself directly!”

Colonel Snyder rides off and you ask General Price to pass you a second helping of beef. Within two or three minutes, another officer rides up and reports, “Rains is falling back before overwhelming numbers and needs instant and heavy reinforcements.” You again express disbelief, remarking, “Oh, nonsense! That cannot be true. The Union army is in Springfield.” Glancing up from the table, however, you, McIntosh, and Price see a great crowd of men on horseback, some armed, others unarmed, mixed in with wagons and teams and lead horses, all in dreadful confusion, scampering over the hill and rushing toward you — clearly a panic-stricken mob. Moments later, you hear the report and see the muzzle flash of Union artillery from the direction that the mob is fleeing. Then, in response, you hear enemy guns 180° to the south. As you quickly grab your saber and mount your horse, you hear General Price order the “long roll” alert to be beaten out by the staff drummer. The Battle of Wilson’s Creek has begun.

**[27.0] THE HISTORICAL SCENARIO**

**COMMENTARY:**

In the actual battle, the Rebels succeeded in holding off the Union surprise attack from Bloody Hill and wiped out Sigel’s encircling force. However, the Confederates were unable to dislodge the Union force on the summit of Bloody Hill. The Federals left the field because they were nearly out of ammo, not due to a successful Rebel attack. In this scenario, the Confederates have a decided advantage and will usually be the victors.

**CASES:**

**[27.3] UNION DEPLOYMENT**

When playing the historical scenario, the Union units are deployed in the following hexes and the facing of the units is determined by the Union player. The formation is indicated by the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Mounted</th>
<th>Dismounted</th>
<th>Limbered</th>
<th>Unlimbered</th>
<th>Routed</th>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LYON: 2641**

**STURGIS: 2641; Plummer: 2441 L; 2 Mo: 2742 C; Kan c: 2542 D; 1 US D: 2542 D**

**SIGEL: 1004; 3 Mo: 0905 C; 5 Mo: 1004 C; 1 US Ic: 1309 D; 2 US Cc: 1104 M**

**ANDREWS: 2641; 1 Mo 1: 2640 L; 1 Mo 2: 2640 L; Steele: 2647 C**

**DEITZLER: 2641; 1 Io 1: 2644 C; 1 Io 2: 2645 C; 1 Kan 1: 2541 L; 1 Kan 2: 2541 L; 2 Kan 1: 2642 C; 2 Kan 2: 2643 C**

**BATTERIES: Totten: 2641 L; Backoff: 1008 L; DuBois: 2646 L**

**[27.2] CONFEDERATE DEPLOYMENT**

**McCulloch: 1926; 1 Ark Ic: 2216 R/M; 1 Ark 2e: 2516 R/M; 3 Kt 1e: 1819 R/M; S KT 2e: 1923 R/M; 2 Ark c: 1829 L; 3 La 1: 1528 L; 3 La 2: 1529 L; 3 Ark 1: 1428 Ln**

**PEARCE: 1525; 1 Cav 1: 2414 R/M; Carroll c: 1525 D; 3 Ark 2: 1526 L; 4 Ark 1: 1424 L; 4 Ark 2: 1426 L; 5 Ark 1: 1424 L; 5 Ark 2: 1524 L**

**PRICE: 1926; Rains: 1937; Hunter c: 2435 D; McCowan c: 2635 D; Peck c: 2835 D; 1 MSG 1: 0925 C; 1 MSG 2: 1025 C; 1 MSG 3: 1026 C; 1 MSG 4: 1027 C**

**PARSONS: 1824; Kelley: 1824 L; Brown: 2513 R/M**

**CLARK: 1726; Burbridge: 1726 L; Major: 2213 R/M**

**SLACK: 1727; Hughes: 1727 L; Thornton: 1827 L; Rives c: 2433 D**

**McBride: 2025; Wingo: 1925 L; Foster: 2026 L; Campbell: 2025 D**

**BATTERIES: Guibor: 1825 UL; Woodruff: 1732 UL; Reid: 1622 UL; Bledsoe: 1024 L**

**SUPPLY WAGONS: Wagon 1: 1530; Wagon 2: 1629; Wagon 3: 1729**

**[27.3] SPECIAL RULES**

**[27.31] During the Confederate Player-Turn of Game-Turn One, only the Confederate leaders may move voluntarily. The Confederate unit in hex 2433 must make a Morale Check at the start of the Confederate Movement Phase and performs rout movement if necessary.**

**[27.32] During Game-Turn One, all Union units north of hex XX10 may move (all of Lyon’s Division plus independent) and all Union leaders may move. Sigel’s force cannot move except Sigel himself on Game-Turn One.**

**[27.33] The Confederate cavalry units which begin play already routed may not rally until the Confederate Rally Phase of Game-Turn Four. These units were routed before the time frame covered by this scenario and were considerably disorganized. Union units do not get the movement bonus in this scenario; delete Section 24.0.**
The supply wagons and Pearce’s Brigade may not move till Confederate Game-Turn Four.

The alert rules (Section 22.0) are not used in this scenario, and all Confederate units are already alerted at the start of the game.

The Confederate units are deployed in the hexes and formations listed in Case 27.2.

Victory conditions are the same as those used in Option #3. See Section 26.0 of Wilson’s Creek Exclusive Rules.

**Designer Notes**

Overall, the game developed very smoothly. It seems to be a real Player’s game. It allows the Union Player many options of strategy and tactics, while the Rebel Player’s reaction techniques are tested to the limit. Both Players must be adept at offense as well as defense. Most of my design material came from source number six in my bibliography and from my personal correspondence with Mr. Edwin C. Bearss.

The biggest problem in designing the game was that the TSS system was revised after my initial design was submitted to SPI. From that revision, two problems arose. First, the map had to be scrapped. My geological survey map made creation of another map easier than anticipated, but unfortunately I did not ask to approve the final version of the map before blind-testing was initiated. I say “unfortunately,” because most of my errata did not get onto the final printed map. The original map was filled with steep crest hexes. While they, as well as other corrections, did not get onto the map, I found that during the play of the game the many contour changes achieved the same result. Brush hexes were the second problem. The area around Wilson Creek abounds with large oak trees and considerable dense undergrowth. However, none of this type of terrain deterred artillery from firing to various contour levels as desired: hence the rule that ignores brush hexes for artillery fire but retains a modified woods hex for infantry fire.

My next big hassle was the alert rules and the variable Union entry options. As originally conceived, my alert rules just did not provide the flavor of attacking an unsuspecting enemy camp. Tom Hudson, the SPI game developer, really coalesced the surprise attack situation with the many Union entry options. The entry options are actual avenues of attack that Union General Lyon had contemplated using. The only change that I had to make in the alert rules was the deletion of the possible loss of horses due to the Rebel camp being alerted during the Confederate Player-Turn. There is no historical fact to base that rule on. In the actual battle, all of the Rebel cavalry and other pockets were routed from Sharp’s cornfield by Sigel’s guns, and somehow the Rebs managed to escape to the woods with their horses.

The ammo balance between the two sides was the last hurdle. The Union army used many pockets with ammo and percussion caps just before leaving Springfield to attack the sleeping Rebel camp. The Rebels, on the other hand, had been carrying about 25 rounds average per man since the campaign started two weeks before the battle. To add to the Rebels problems, Price’s army of Missourians was equipped with smoothbores, while McCulloch’s men were equipped with Springfield rifles from the Little Rock arsenal. The Union force had a common weapon also from the Springfield. My dilemma was that if I increased the chances of the Rebel ammo depletion, then in game strategy it would greatly benefit the Union Player to sit and wait for the Rebs to ammo themselves and then attack. I decided to leave ammo depletion at normal for the Confederate Player and decrease the chance for the Union Player while changing the original victory conditions. Only half a point was awarded to each Union strength point still on the map with a line of communications, instead of a full point. The game balanced out nicely during the play-testing.

There were many people who aided my effort in the design of Wilson’s Creek. I first wish to thank Jim Dunnigan for listening to my comments in a seminar at Origins ’79 and then enlisting me to make this game for SPI. Tom Bennett has given me constant and tireless support on this game. He was primary blind-tester in the early stages of the game’s design. Finally, the entire group of the Pioneer Valley Military Strategy Club of Springfield, Massachusetts, was immeasurably helpful in blind-testing the final version of Wilson’s Creek.

**Bibliography**

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4. *A Southern Record: The History of the First Louisiana Infantry*, by W. H. Tunnard, copywritten 1866
7. *An Account of the Battle of Wilson Creek or Oak Hills*, by Holcombe and Adams, copywritten 1961
8. *General Nathaniel Lyon and Missouri in 1861*, by James Peckham, copywritten 1866

**Addenda**

[22.5] (correction) Confederate Cavalry Panic.

Delete reference to case 22.32. Confederate cavalry cannot loose their horses if they are alerted in the Confederate Player-Turn.

**Game Scale (addition)** The game scale is 125 yards from hexside to hexside. Each Strength Point represents 100 men or 1 gun. Each Game-Turn represents twenty minutes.