

Designer's Notes for "Long Roads to Richmond" and "Disrupt Their Plans"

When I started this module I was faced with a choice. The areas where combat took place (the Peninsula & the Valley) were already modeled in two excellent games (OTR & SIV). I could do one of two things: 1) Try to create a "blend" of the two games, with one comprehensive rule system, or 2) Use the two systems in the two areas, and try to make as seamless as possible a "split" somewhere in between. Both have their problems. With the second option, there's always the concern that there will be combat around the "split" line, and players will be able to use the differing rules in the two areas for some sort of gamey advantage; plus the fact that you have to remember two different sets of rules. On the other hand, if I went with the first option, the two games have some significant differences. SIV uses brigades with division leaders, while OTR uses divisions with corps leaders; plus the tactical values for SIV units are one higher than those in OTR, and several of the leaders have higher tactical values in SIV. So a "blend" would necessarily change the way the games were played. Since the two existing games are well balanced and simulate the campaigns very well, I decided to take the second option, and build my module around them.

With that in mind, the main added portion of this module relates to the Department of Washington (the DC garrison and McDowell's I Corps). The Union leadership (except for, of course, McClellan) wanted a heavy garrison for Washington while McClellan was away down on the Peninsula. Since the rules in OTR for releasing McDowell simulate this very well, I just added onto these rules. McDowell's movement restrictions in this module allow his units (unless released) to move only around DC and down to Fredericksburg; anything further would allow him to move near the Valley and keep Jackson from attempting a raid. Once portions of McDowell's force are released, the Union player has a choice. Historically, the Union siphoned off troops from the Valley and tried simply to contain Jackson's

force – to the extent that Banks was down to two brigades when Jackson attacked with two divisions on May 23. The Union player can attempt this (although it will probably be to a lesser extent), or he has the option of sending McDowell into the Valley and dealing with Jackson once and for all. Either way, the Union player's objective should be to place as large a force as possible in front of Richmond at the earliest date. Historically, the force McClellan ended up with in front of Richmond was not enough to defeat the Army of Northern Virginia.

Of course, the extra map area brings up the other large addition to the game: the threat of a deep raid by the Confederate forces in the DC area. Realistically, although the forts around DC are relatively weak in this game, the large garrison should prove a deterrent in all games but those in which the Union player lets Jackson get between his forces and the Capitol. In this case, though, if the Confederate player can get into DC, he can do serious damage, not only in the area but to McClellan's army. If he is able to destroy the Arsenal, Navy Yard, and the DC depot, he can all but halt McClellan's offensive operations for about a month, as the AoP recovers from the logistical nightmare. However, one difficulty for Confederate forces in Union territory will be supply. Lee's invasion of Maryland several months later was a gentleman's invasion; all supplies taken were paid for. At this point there was still hope that Maryland might be wooed into the Confederacy. Any raid by Jackson would have followed the same principle, so if the Confederate player is moving fast, attempting to evade a pursuing Union force, he will be hard pressed to find forage for his troops. A serious invasion of Maryland is probably not a good idea unless the Confederate player knows where he'll be able to supply his army – or unless there are no other choices left. The VP benefits are huge if the Confederate player can pull it off successfully.

My intent on this game has been to make it playable, even though it uses more maps than any other module up to this point. With that in mind, the chances are very slim that all of the maps will be used at once. In general, both *On to Richmond* maps will be used, and a couple others,

depending on where Jackson's forces are. The other maps can be laid aside after the units on them have been noted. Of course it's more fun to see where everyone is with relation to everyone else – but most of us don't have that kind of room (myself included)!

On "Disrupt Their Plans", I wanted to make a game for those who wanted to give Jackson more opportunity but didn't want to play the whole OTR campaign alongside. The end result is a game where the Confederate player's overall objective is not to take the offensive, except in a limited way, because his force is too limited, but instead to detain as many Union troops for as long as possible – that is, to "Disrupt Their Plans". The Union player, on the other hand, should either try to keep the lid on the Confederate forces, while boosting McClellan's forces, or, if he thinks he can do more good by keeping the troops in his department, force Jackson out of the Valley and remove the threat permanently.

In both games, there should be plenty of opportunity for "grand strategy" – so go ahead and try to change history!

- Mike Belles