



Across A Deadly Field: Regimental Rules for Civil War Battles

By John Hill

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Manassas, Shiloh, Gettysburg, Atlanta, and Petersburg are just a few of the many large scale Civil War battles that gamers enjoy simulating on the tabletop.

Up until now, CW (Civil War) games have either taken a regimental approach for a more tactical game or a brigade-level view for a more grand tactical game - and gamers have plenty of both regimental or brigade level CW rule sets to choose from. However, both approaches have drawbacks. The pure regimental approach - such as in Johnny Reb - can make it difficult to fight a very large battle, while the brigade approach often fails to capture the unique feel of the CW where the actions of one regiment - such as the 20th Maine at Little Round Top - could turn a battle. Across A Deadly Field offers a game system that enables gamers to fight large battles in a relatively compact space, yet maintains the regimental focus and flavor appropriate to the conflict.

Across A Deadly Field uses a scale that can be described as a "telescoped" version of Johnny Reb III - with twice the ground and figure scale, and has individual regiments and batteries as the base element of maneuver:

- Ground Scale: 1" = 100 yards
- Time Scale: 1 turn = 20 minutes
- Regiment Scale: Two stands/bases per regiment
- Figure Scale: 1 figure = 60 men
- Gun scale: 1 gun = 1 battery

The big advantage of this approach is that the gamer is not required to rebase any figures from his existing Johnny Reb army, allowing for much easier conversion from the older game to Across A Deadly Field. The existing four-stand regiments become two different regiments of two stands each - his miniature army has, for gaming purposes, just doubled. This will hold an appeal for many gamers - they can either recreate smaller engagements in half the space that would once have been needed, or can game huge battles on a table that would once have only accommodated a small skirmish. In essence, Across A Deadly Field offers two games with a single, consistent basing system.

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Editorial Review

Review

“In the field of tactical wargame designs, few designers have had as much impact as John Hill. His Squad Leader broke the mold for how tactical combat is portrayed on the gaming board. And his Johnny Reb set a standard for Civil War gaming. Now with Across a Deadly Field, Hill makes it possible for large scale Civil War games to be played out in a relatively small space, using existing Johnny Reb figures.” *?Bring Your A-Game*

“Now tabletop wargamers can re-create this perilous period...Its versatile, regimental-level rules make it possible to refight any clash with military miniatures in various scales, from early skirmishes at Ball's Bluff and Big Bethel to monumental and decisive set-piece battles like Gettysburg. This 144-page, hardcover book was penned by American John Hill, designer of the 'Johnny Reb' series and a member of the Wargaming Hall of Fame. Whether a would-be general is a beginner or a veteran, Across a Deadly Field facilitates fast-paced and action-packed wargaming 'where even a single regiment can make the difference between victory and defeat.'” *?Toy Soldier & Model Figure Magazine*

About the Author

In the field of tactical wargame designs, few designers have had as much impact as John Hill. In the 1970s, John started his own company to design and publish tactical and operational games that broke from traditional wargame mechanics. Realizing that he preferred designing wargames over running a business, John sold the company and became a freelance wargame designer. From then on, John's designs for Avalon Hill, SPI, SDC and others became noted for their innovative approaches to simulating unique tactical situations. In 1977, John designed Squad Leader for Avalon Hill. Squad Leader broke the mold for how tactical combat was portrayed on the gaming board, and its impact is still felt today. The first freelance wargame designer inducted into the Origins Hall of Fame, John is perhaps best known for his Johnny Reb rules for the Civil War. After 25 years, Johnny Reb - now into its third edition - remain as popular as ever. In the 1980s, John's flair for innovative tactical simulation brought him to the attention of the Government's Defense and Intelligence communities and, for the next 16 years, he worked as a senior military analyst. Following a final four year tour at Los Alamos National Laboratory, John retired from government work and returned to gaming, updating and republishing many of his older designs and, once again, exploring new directions in tactical simulation. The author lives in Santa Fe, NM.

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Leslie Marcellus:

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