

SIXTY-ONE/SIXTY-FIVE

Company Level Rules for the American Civil War



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INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was the largest conflict ever fought on American soil. Over the course of 1,489 days of War, 10,000 shooting engagements took place; which means an average of about 7 per day. By the end of the war in April of 1865 (the last engagement actually took place at Palmito Ranch, Texas on May 12, 1865) the Union army had some 1,034,000 soldiers in service. The war that both sides had expected to end "before the summer of 1861 was out" (Lincoln's first call for volunteers had a 90-day term) dragged on for four long years and took a heavy toll on both the North and the South.

The armies that clashed at the First Battle of Bull Run may be defined as amateurs at best; the vast majority of the soldiers (as well as many leading generals and officers) having little or no fighting experience. Wealthy families from Washington, DC went by carriage to "see the battle" bringing their picnic tables and binoculars. However, as soon as the battle was over it was clear to almost everyone – in Blue or in Gray – that the war was not going to be a simple "few weeks" affair. In 1861, the horrors of the Siege of Vicksburg; the scorched-earth Atlanta Campaign of 1864; the prison camps; still remained unimagined and unthinkable. By April of 1865 they would be the grim reality. The American Civil War – from a military standpoint - began as a remnant of Napoleonic warfare (George B. McClellan, the future Army of the Potomac commander, wrote in a tactics manual published in 1861: "*the strength of cavalry is in the spurs and saber*") and ended with the advent of trench and submarine warfare as well as the destruction of enemy resources as a strategic task, quite comparable to WWII air raids.

Between 1861 and 1865 the firepower of the individual soldier escalated profoundly. The 3-4 rounds per minute achievable by an inexperienced soldier armed with a muzzle-loading musket evolved into the 30 rounds per minute of a breech-loading repeating carbine or Henry rifle. Effective range increased more than 5 times as well.

All this said, the American Civil War represents – for the scholar and the wargamer alike – a period full of events and unique leaders and personalities which

are often reflected in many strategic, operational, and tactical games on the market.

We chose to focus on the basic unit of the regiment (the company) and the parts that compose it (the Squads, officers, and NCOs).

We hope you will enjoy '61-'65.

Organization

During the ACW, Union and Confederate Armies were organized in the same way.

At the higher levels of command was the Corps: made up of 2-3 Divisions, each of 3 or more Brigades. The Brigades were formed from several Regiments (also called Battalions) and each Regiment comprised 10 Companies identified with letters from A to K. The Company (abbreviated as "Coy"), with a theoretical paper strength of 100 men was commanded by a Captain and had the following composition:

2 Platoons, each commanded by a Lieutenant and comprising:

2 Sections, each commanded by a Sergeant and comprising:

2 Squads, each commanded by a Corporal.

We talk about paper strength because full strength Regiments (1000 all ranks) were quite rare. By the end of the war many Confederate Regiments could barely muster 200 men of all ranks.

What You Need to Play

To play '61-'65, you need at least three six-sided dice (d6), one average die (dA), 30 to 98 miniatures per player (in any scale), three measuring sticks (7,5 cm, 12cm and 18cm) and a gaming table of 90cm x 120cm (for 28mm figures) Some scenic material to represent hills, trees, fences, and buildings will make the table more realistic and attractive. If you do not have such elements, color-coded cardboard templates will do as well.

The average die is a six sided die without a "one" or "six. There are two sides with a 3; two sides with a 4; one side with a 2; and one side with a 5. You can find it in any gaming store or online from any dice manufacturer (to locate online dice manufacturers we suggest www.dicecollector.com as a good starting point).

Length of a Game

Once you know the rules, a game can be played in under two hours.

Game Scale

During playtesting, we initially used 15mm miniatures on round bases and then we moved to 28mm miniatures on square (2cm) bases. While we feel that the latter solution is better from a visual standpoint, any scale or basing system will work with these rules.

All ranges are expressed using the following measurements: Short (S), Medium (M), and Long (L). Each corresponds to a measuring stick (see below). This is the measuring system used in all Ganesha Games rulesets. If you already have the sticks from another of our games you're good to go.

One model represents a single soldier.

If you play with 15mm miniatures: the table should be at least 60x90cm and the measuring sticks should be 50mm, 80mm, and 120mm. For larger scales: (1/72, 20mm, or 28mm) we recommend a 90x120cm table and measuring sticks of 75mm, 120mm and 180mm. For 40mm or larger scales: the playing area should be at least 120x180cm and the sticks 100mm, 160mm, and 240mm.



GAME TERMS

The Squad

In '61-'65, players command a company composed of several Squads.

The basic unit in '61-'65 is the Squad: a group of 4-8 single-based soldiers in base to base contact with each other.

Standard Squads comprise 6 soldiers. Squads of 4 or 5 soldiers are small, and Squads of 7 or 8 soldiers are big.

Three or less soldiers are not enough to form a Squad. So if a Squad sees its number reduced to three or less during combat, the soldiers are immediately removed from where they are and placed on the friendly table edge (in a spot chosen by the owning player) until they are rallied by their Captain.

Each Squad is described in game terms by a profile. Here is an example:

Veteran Infantry

Quality 4 Combat 2

Weapons Musket

Special Rules None

Quality (Q): the sum of a Squad's skill, determination, reaction capability, initiative, drill, and morale. Quality is used to activate the Squads and for Morale tests: you roll dice trying to equal or beat your Squad's Quality score. In other words, a Q4 Squad must roll a 4, 5 or 6 to get successes. Rolling a 1, 2, or 3 means a failure.

Some Squads or Officers can have a Q =? i.e., their Quality score is unknown to the player and they react differently each turn. Every time a player wants to activate a Squad with Q? (or has to perform a Morale test with it), the player rolls an average die together with the chosen number of Activation or Morale dice. The average die determines the Quality score of that Squad for that test only, and it includes the Leader bonus. If the Squad is out of command, increase the average die result by 1.