

*Musket  
Battles  
Solitaire* <sup>TM</sup>

Beta 0. 01

Copyright © 2026



## Introduction

Hidden blocks, hidden Reserves and a random move sequence create a lot of realistic fog of war uncertainty. Musket Battles does a great job but players still know way too much compared to the real world. You know which battle you are fighting. You know what the goals for both sides are. You have a complete and detailed breakdown of the Order of Battle for both sides. You know exactly when and where all those reinforcements will arrive. Compared to what officers face in the real world, this looks comically absurd.

These rules give you a good way to play solitaire but more importantly, they strip away all of this unrealistic, God like knowledge. You will have to learn to fight like real officers do: in unknown engagements.

## Expectations

First, lets set some proper expectations. Wargamers already know how to play games solitaire. It's easy. You just play both sides to the best of their ability. What should they do in this situation, knowing what they would know? Try to be fair to both sides. We don't really need a 'solitaire' system to move every piece and make every possible decision for the Opposing Force in the game. Systems that try to do that, become overly complex, slow, and cumbersome.

This system won't try to answer every possible decision for the enemy like: how many rounds to fight, when and where to unpack, rally, alter, etc. You will still need to run the enemy force as you would normally in a solitaire game. Given what they know now, what is the best move for them to make?

Instead, this system will make all the big strategic decisions for the enemy and keep them hidden from you. You will have to assess the strategic situation and form a plan to counter it, as the battle is unfolding. How many more reserves do they have? What is their intent? Etc.

## Randomness

You pick the mission randomly but the enemy orders are not just randomly thrown together. Each mission is a militarily sound and valid, strategic attack plan, thought out and created by a real human. The OB composition and march routes make sense and fit together as a coherent plan. The OBs may vary from history but they are not just randomly thrown together. They are historically plausible alternatives that could have potentially happened. We have anchored

them all in the historical reality of the operational situation. So you most likely won't be fighting the 'historical' Gettysburg but you will be fighting a Gettysburg that could have very easily gone down that way. So in a sense, yes, it is 'historical'.

## Orders

You **MUST** use our optional rules for orders. This is what runs the enemy. It would not be fair if your forces didn't fight under the same restrictions. You can download Order Sheets off our site for free. They are posted on our Blog.

## Setup

You play the defender. This system runs the attacking side. Setup your historical forces as shown by the scenario. Draw up initial orders for your troops in their location.

Note that this effectively fixes your forces in position until something happens, right? Your HQs won't be able to write any new orders until they have knowledge of the enemy: they can see or hear them.

Randomly select a set of Mission Orders to use for this battle. The Mission Orders are a collection of pdf files, all in 1 folder for this battle. Each enemy column will have 2 pdf March files: **Route** and **Order**. Go ahead and open all of these pdf files at once. You should see just the cover page for each file.

DO NOT scroll down to check out the whole file. That will ruin your game! You **ONLY** scroll down to reveal the next page, when the time comes in the game.

These files are named for the historical columns. For example, at Gettysburg, you will see: Longstreet, Hill, Ewell & Stuart. Note that the actual forces in those Columns maybe different. So instead of Hill, Heth and Pender in Hill's Column, you may run into Jackson, AP Hill and Ewell! You will find out who they really are as you start fighting them.

*Note: We recommend playing each mission only once. Real generals didn't get to fight the same battle over and over again until they got it figured out.*

## March files

### Route of March

This file shows you **where** the Column will move. Only scroll down to the next page when you need their next move.

### Order of March

This file shows their order of march:

**Who** is in the column. Only scroll down to the next page when you need to see their next group of forces.

## Marching

Start pulling chits and playing as normal. Remember that your forces can only react to what they could know and also only after they have orders.

*For example, at Gettysburg, the ground is dry. Buford can see Hill's column approaching off the map. Therefore, Buford can move down the pike to intercept Hill's column IF he gets picked to move first.*

*At Germantown, the ground is wet and there is fog. Howe can't see any approaching Colonial columns. If the Colonials attack Cliveden, THEN Howe can issue new orders moving north to react to that. Howe cannot send units out to intercept the approaching columns on his flank because he has no knowledge of those yet.*

When you pull a chit for an enemy column, scroll down to the next page on their Route file. This reveals where they enter and their orders: where they march to. Move that HQ along that route, to that location. Their forces are kept hidden on their Reserve Card.

The numbers indicate the sequence of activity. They are NOT pegged strictly to the turn number. You should scroll down to the next page only after the last one has been achieved and that Column needs to move again. If you achieve the march but still have most of your movement left, go ahead and scroll down to the next page.

*For example: while marching down the road, Sullivan runs into a British unit in Cliveden. Their route is blocked and they are unable to complete the rest of their march. Sullivan will deploy their Advanced Guard off their OB and then attack Cliveden. Clearing their route might take several turns of combat. Once it is cleared and Sullivan is ready to move, THEN scroll down to see Sullivan's next move.*

If the next page shows the same position, that means they hold in place for another turn.

## Revealing Enemy Forces

The units in enemy columns remain unknown to you as they march. Every enemy column has something in it. There are no 'dummy' columns with no units.

When one of your units can spot an

enemy HQ, carefully scroll down to the next page of their Order file. You will see: “Advanced Guard”, and then a number of blocks. Place that number of enemy blocks down on the map at that location. This is what you can see of their force now. The rest of their units are further back in reserve.

Continue to play with these unknown blocks until you contact with them for combat. When this happens, carefully scroll down to the next page to reveal which exact units those blocks are. As you place these real blocks, you should deploy them to best fit the situation: place the strongest blocks to meet the biggest threat, etc. Not necessarily in the exact order listed on the card.

*Use some common sense here. For example, what if they attack you with an artillery unit? Well, artillery can't attack. So have the artillery bombard first, and then the other units attack, right? This system won't try to spell out every little detail like this for you.*

Scroll down to reveal more troops as the enemy needs them. When the enemy moves, look at their situation. Are they outnumbered? Do they need to commit more troops to achieve their objective? If they do, then scroll down to reveal their “Main Body”. If that's not enough, reveal the “Rear Guard”. Place those blocks on the board behind the enemy's front line. Use them as needed. Play them to the best of your ability as if you were in charge of that command and side. Support, rally, filling a hole in the line, etc.

If the enemy needs to rally check their Rear Guard to see if they have a Baggage Train to deploy.

The last page on the Orders shows the real Commander's name. This is the true HQ.

## Mission Fail

A solitaire system can't predict and be ready for any possible development. If it did, it would be too unwieldy to use. That doesn't mean it's broken or worthless.

When it comes time to move an enemy column and their orders don't make sense, then stop. It's time to adapt.

For example, the enemy column is marching down a road to a destination south. You cleverly maneuver to appear on their exposed flank to the east. Do not just blindly march the enemy south according to their orders, ignoring your known threat because that's what their orders say.

What should you do in this situation? The most sensible reaction for the enemy

is to stop, turn and deploy against the known threat on their flank, right? After that threat has been neutralized, then they would likely resume their official movement orders to proceed south, right?

This is a common problem and key concept for officers in real war. This isn't a 'broken game'. This is the best part!

There is a time delay from when the orders are written to when you get them. As a result, orders often won't make any sense but not following orders is also insubordination, so what do you do?

The guideline from Prussian Kriegsspiel for this is:

*If your commanding officer was here on the field with you now and could see and know, what you see and know now, would he still order you to move as he did? No? Ok, then if he was here now, and knew what you know, what would he most likely want you to do in this situation?*

This is your answer. Don't blindly march your robot into a wall because orders said so. The worst that can happen here, is you finishing out the rest of the game in regular solitaire mode. This is still a very fun and interesting game. Many great lessons to learn and explore here. What happens when 1 column has to break from orders but the others have no idea what happened? The rest all continue according to the plan.

All of this points to key and critical lessons on military science. How do we make plans that do not easily break down? How do we adjust and respond when they do? What actions can we take to potentially disrupt the enemy's plan?

Mission Fails like this are where we learn the most. Understanding how these dynamics fit together and when they break down are a crucial part of what made generals like Alexander, Hannibal and Napoleon so great.

(Note that in many ways, the core foundation of Blitzkrieg theory evolved from this. It started with Prussian Kriegsspiel.)

## Variable Reinforcements

The enemy reinforcements are unknown and controlled by this system. Your reinforcements follow the historical schedule but you can vary them:

1. You can let them come in as they did historically.
2. You can delay them a turn. You can keep delaying them turn after turn, so that they never arrive if you want. Why would you want to do this? Because your goal is to defeat the enemy with a minimal use of

force. So for example, if you bring in the whole army to beat 1 enemy Corps, you lose, even though you hold the field.

3. You can also speed them up 1 turn. Reinforcements that arrive 1 turn early could suffer losses: Roll 1 bad effect die for each unit:

- 0 is undamaged and arrives this turn.
- 1 takes 1 hit but arrives this turn.
- 2 takes a hit and arrives next turn.

## Variable Victory

If both sides commit 2 or more Corps, the battle is Large. Regular rules determine victory: whoever holds the field.

If both sides only commit 1 Corps, the battle is Small. Same victory rules apply.

## Delaying Action

Attacker brings 2 or more Corps but the Defender only uses 1 Corps.

**Major Victory:** Defender can stay on the field, without breaking till nightfall.

**Minor Victory:** Defender can stay on field, without breaking through turn 6.

## Pinning Action

Attacker only brings 1 Corps but the Defender commits 2 or more Corps.

If the Defender starts with 2 Corps, they can turn this into a Small battle if 1 Corps does not engage and leaves the field before turn 5.

**Major Victory:** Attacker can stay on field till nightfall.

**Minor Victory:** Attacker can stay on field through turn 6.

Corps in the Army of the Potomac in the American Civil war very were small. For that army, treat a wing as a 'Corps'.

Take force size into account. For example, at Gettysburg, the Rebels attack with Hill and Ewell. That is 3 Corps but they both only had about half their strength for the first day. So effectively, the Rebels used 1 Corps. Reynolds fought with I and IX Corps. So this would be a small battle for day 1. During the night, both sides committed more and escalated to a Large Battle.

