

FREEMAN'S FARM 1777

RULES AND HISTORY



1. INTRODUCTION

The British looked to end the rebellion in America in a decisive campaign with three armies converging in Albany, New York, splitting the colonies in two. With a large and well-trained force moving south from Canada, Sir John Burgoyne moved inexorably - if slowly - down the Hudson. His old colleague, Horatio Gates, was there to meet him with an American army determined to halt further progress.

By the end of the Saratoga campaign Burgoyne's entire army was dead, wounded, or captured. Worse was to follow, with the French soon joining the war. Yet it might have played out very differently...

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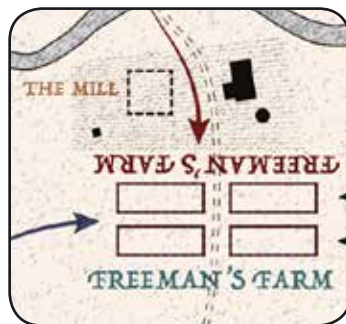
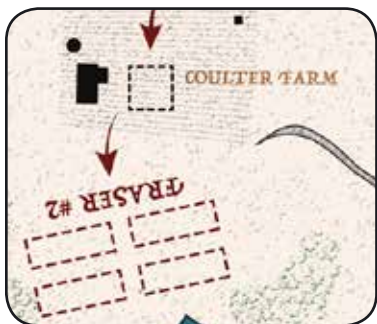
2. GAME BOARD

The game board represents the Freeman's Farm battlefield, and the positions of the American and British formations. Each formation is named for its commander and represented by wooden troop markers – rectangles for infantry, circles for artillery.



Arrows show where named formations may move on the battlefield when they are activated and under certain conditions. Note that the movement locations have a dotted line and a formation name that can move to it and occupy it. The one exception is the Freeman's Farm. This movement location can be occupied by various formations from both sides, but may only be occupied by one formation at a time.

Two key locations on the game board are Coulter Farm and The Mill. The occupation of these two locations is with skirmishers, represented by a cube of the color of the side occupying it. Occupying these positions provides benefits and are a condition of moving some formations.



3. TWO PLAYER AND SOLITAIRE RULES:

The following rules are focused on the two-player version of the game. For rules specific to the solitaire version see the back of this booklet.

4. GAME COMPONENTS

4.1 FORMATION CARDS:

Each side (American and British) has a set of Formation cards corresponding to the formations on the game board. Formation cards provide a list of Commands a formation may use when activated by an Activation card. It also shows how many dice it rolls in combat, modifiers it may use under certain conditions and how many times it may be activated.

On the player Formation cards the Commands are choices of actions. For the solitaire opponent the Command Sequence is a hierarchy of actions. Only one Command action may be selected per activation. A formation's morale is tracked using a cube at the top of the Formation card.

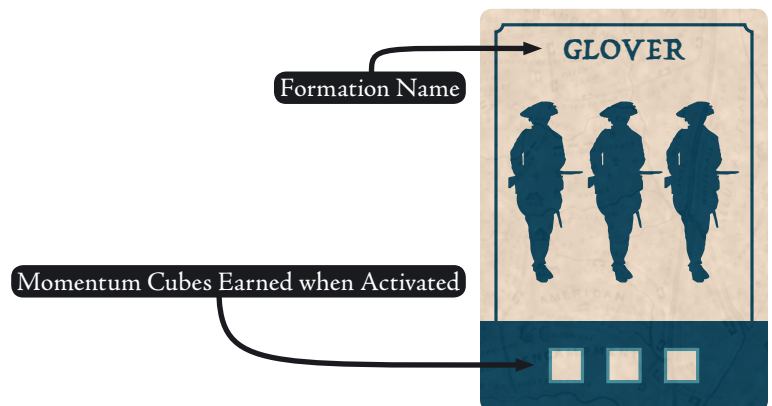
When formations are activated they reduce their morale by 1 and may have their morale reduced during combat. Once formation morale reaches 5 it must conduct a Morale Test to see if breaks and is removed from the game.



Example of a British Formation Card

4.2 ACTIVATION CARDS:

Each side has its own deck of Activation cards. When played, these cards activate the formation named. Activation cards also simultaneously generate Momentum equal to the cubes shown on the bottom of the card. The player acquires the total of Momentum cubes shown from the common pool and adds to his own pool. Solitaire opponents do not receive Momentum cubes when playing their Activation cards.



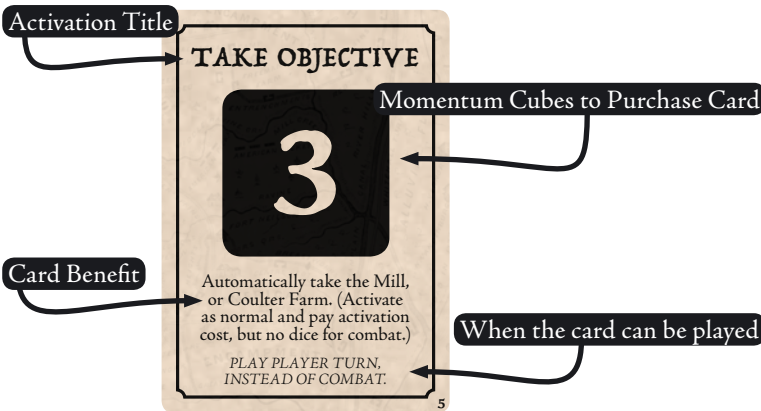
An Activation card for a formation that is destroyed/broken still collects Momentum cubes and bonus Momentum cubes when played. It also fulfills the requirement to play an Activation card (one must be played each turn), and a player can still play (some) Tactics cards and may still be able to purchase a new one.

Instead of drawing from the top of your Activation draw deck you can spend 5 Momentum cubes to get the formation you want. (If it's in the deck.)

4.3 TACTICS CARDS:

There is a deck of Tactics cards that are used by both sides. These cards are "purchased" by using Momentum cubes from a player's own pool of cubes. When purchased, Tactic cards should be kept face up. These cards are single use, unless their effect is stated on the card as 'Ongoing'.

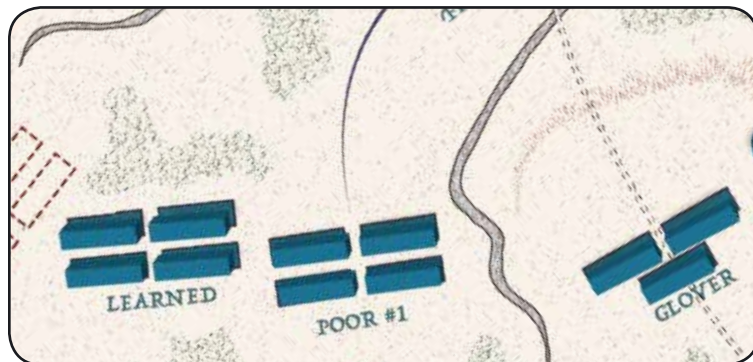
Any number of Tactics cards may be played when the cards allow it. But only one Tactics card can be purchased per player turn. At any time you can 'cash in' any 3 Tactics cards for 1 Momentum cube. The solitaire opponent does not use Tactics cards.



4.4 FORMATION MARKERS ON THE GAME BOARD:

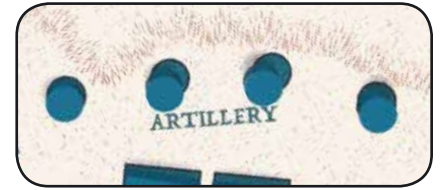
◆ TROOPS MARKERS

Troops within formations are represented by wooden blocks. These blocks are placed in the named formation locations indicated on the game board by a solid color. Blue for American formations, Red and Green for British.



◆ ARTILLERY MARKERS

Artillery formations are represented by wooden discs. These discs are placed where indicated by solid colors on the game board. The British artillery is represented by red round markers, and the Phillips Formation card. It is activated by the Phillips Activation cards when played and may move. The American artillery is represented by the blue round markers and the American artillery formation card. It is activated by Activation cards from Glover/Paterson/Nixon. When they choose a Command to activate American Artillery these formations pay the activation/maintaining momentum costs. American Artillery may not move.



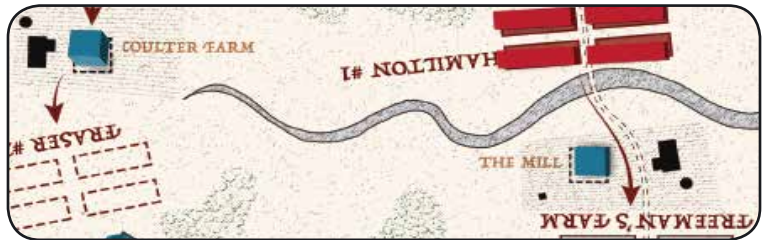
Any formation that has run out of markers on the game board is considered destroyed - which matters for victory purposes - (exception: Breymann formation is not considered destroyed if it has no markers in it).

A formation, once destroyed, may never be reassembled, even by moving reinforcements back into it.

Note: formation locations outlined with a dotted line on the game board do not start with blocks or discs in them. These are locations for possible future movement.

◆ SKIRMISHERS CUBES IN COULTER FARM AND THE MILL:

Blue and red cubes represent the skirmishers that occupied these locations during the battle. As possession of the location changes the color of the cube placed there is changed. The American skirmishers start the game in possession of both locations and blue cubes are placed there.



◆ MOMENTUM CUBES:

The black cubes in the game represent Momentum generated and used by both sides. A common Momentum cubes pool is created near the game board. Momentum cubes are earned by activating formations and are used for acquiring Tactics cards. Players take or return Momentum cubes to the pool as these actions occur. The solitaire opponent does not use Momentum cubes.



5. GAME SET UP:

Decide who will be the British, and who will be the Americans. Red and green markers and cubes are used for British forces (green represent their German allies), and blue markers and cubes are used for American forces.

Place the 5 British Formation cards face up on the British player's side of the table. Place a British cube at the highest value on the Morale Track of each card that has a track.

Place the Burgoyne card face up next to the British formations.

Place the 6 American Formation cards face up on the American player's side of the table. Place an American cube at the highest value on the Morale Track of each card that has a track.

Place both the Arnold and Gates cards face up next to the American formations.

Shuffle the British Activation card deck, and deal the top 6 cards to the British player. He selects 3 for his starting hand and returns the other 3 to his Activation card draw deck. Reshuffle the British Activation card deck and place face-down.

Shuffle the American Activation card deck, and deal the top 6 cards to the American player. He selects 3 for his starting hand and returns the other 3 to his Activation card draw deck. Reshuffle the British Activation card deck and place face-down.

Shuffle the Tactics card deck, and put the top 3 cards face up in a tableau so both players can see them. Place the remainder of the deck – the draw deck – face down.

Put the Momentum cubes by the side of the board. This forms the common momentum cubes pool. Players begin the game without any Momentum cubes.

6. SEQUENCE OF PLAY:

There may be up to 15 rounds in the game. Each round consists of one turn for each player.

6.1 EACH PLAYER'S TURN HAS THE SAME PHASES:

1. Play Activation Card
 - 1.A Option – Countermand Activation with General
2. Pay Activation Cost
3. Optional: Play Tactics Cards
4. If combat selected as a Command, Roll Combat Dice
 - 4.A Optional: Maintain Momentum
5. Apply Results
6. Optional: Purchase Tactics card
7. Draw Activation card

The British player takes the first turn in a round.

Then the American player takes their turn in a round.

The British player then begins the second round.

Play continues until all Activation cards have been played, ending the game.

STEP 1 — PLAY ACTIVATION CARD

From your hand of three Activation Cards choose and play one card, which activates one specific formation. Check the Formation card to see the Command choices you have, which will be either to engage in combat, or move along a track and engage in combat, to reinforce another formation, or to activate another formation. Select one Command. You must play one card on your turn of the round.

◆ MOMENTUM CUBES:

Each Activation Card says which formation is activated, and has Momentum icons on it (1-3).

Play the Activation card (discard it, face-up into a discard pile) and receive the relevant number of Momentum cubes into your pool. Activation cards played for Broken/Destroyed formations still provide Momentum cubes.

◆ MOMENTUM CUBES BONUS:

In addition, if the Activation card just played matches the same number of Momentum icons as the previous two consecutive Activation cards played by the same player, then the player receives +2 cubes this turn.

For example, if an Activation card with 2 Momentum icons is played, and the two previous, consecutive Activation cards also have 2 icons on them, the player will receive 2 Momentum cubes for the card, and 2 more for the bonus. The previous cards must be consecutive to qualify for this bonus.

You only see the benefit of the extra Momentum once for the same set of 3 icons. Activation cards played for formations that are broken/destroyed still receive a Momentum cube bonus, if applicable.

◆ NO TARGETS BONUS:

If you have no options - all your legitimate targets, as outlined on the Formation card are broken/destroyed - then you receive Momentum cubes, and bonus cubes if any - but you pay no Activation cost, and, in addition, you receive +2 additional Momentum cubes.

STEP 1.A — OPTIONAL: COUNTERMAND ACTIVATION WITH A GENERAL

You can countermand an Activation card played and, instead of activating this formation, you can use your General Burgoyne card (if the British player) or General Arnold or General Gates card (if American player). The original Activation card is still spent, but the commander cards have certain other benefits.

A commander card that countermands the activated formation replaces that Activation card. The Activation card is spent, and the player receives no Momentum tokens for it, and no Momentum token bonus either. But they do receive Momentum tokens from their commander card - and a Momentum tokens bonus if applicable.

The Arnold and Gates cards have certain restrictions that Burgoyne doesn't. See the cards for details.

STEP 2 — PAY ACTIVATION COST

Getting formations to do what you want expends them and risks their implosion. Whenever a formation is activated you must decrease its Morale by 1 (adjust the marker on the formation card) OR remove a formation marker (remove one of the wooden markers from the board).

Note: Countermanded activations, and Tactics cards have various effects, which may mean that there is no penalty to pay.

STEP 3 — PLAY TACTICS CARDS

You can play any Tactics card you have previously purchased (with Momentum cubes). In the first turn you won't have any Tactics cards, or any Momentum cubes. (Note: some of these cards must be played before rolling any dice, others can be played at other times. Check each card for details.)

STEP 4 — ROLL THE COMBAT DICE

Each unit rolls a different number of dice, depending on who it is and the specific context. Check its Formation card for details. Combat results are taken on the Attacking Formation or Defending Formation.

Double 1's - Remove 1 Attacker marker

Double 2's - Reduce Attacker Morale by 1

Single 3 - Attacker gains 1 Momentum cube

Double 4's - Reduce Defender Morale by 1

Double 5's - Reduce Defender Morale by 1

Double 6's - Remove 1 Defender marker

Note: casualty and morale hits need two matching numbers to register. A single 3 provides 1 momentum cube for the Attacker.

STEP 4.A — OPTIONAL: MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

Optional: cash in 3 Momentum cubes to reroll any or all dice again (erasing or delaying the current results for this turn).

OR

Optional: reduce the active formation's morale by 1, OR remove one of its markers from the game board to reroll any or all dice again (erasing or delaying the current results for this turn).

STEP 5 — APPLY RESULTS

When all the rolling has ceased for the round apply the results, as outlined above. (You can't collect Momentum cubes while rolling to allow you to cash them in and re-roll - you only apply the results once you've stopped all the rolling.)

STEP 6 — OPTIONAL: PURCHASE TACTICS CARDS

Players can choose to purchase one face-up Tactics card, if they can afford it.

Each Tactics card has its own cost, shown in the center of the card. That is how many Momentum cubes must be paid by the player buying the card. He does this by returning to the game pool the amount of Momentum cubes required to acquire that Tactics card.

Each time a Tactics card is purchased a new card is drawn from the top of the Tactics draw deck and placed face-up in the empty space left by the card just purchased.

If a player buys no card at the end of their turn, the card to the far right is moved to the discard pile, the remaining other two cards are shunted one space to the right, and a new card is drawn from the top of the Tactics deck and placed, face-up to the left of the other two cards.

Players can never examine this deck to see what cards are coming.



STEP 7 — DRAW NEW ACTIVATION CARD

Players draw the top card of their Activation deck and bring it into their hand, ready to make a decision next turn on which formation to activate.

Play then switches to the other player.

Note: When both players have expended all their Activation cards the game ends (if it hasn't ended already).

7. FORMATION MORALE TEST

A Morale Test must be taken the instant the Morale marker of a formation moves down to a box with a 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1. A Morale Test is not taken if the Morale marker moves back 'up' the scale, from a 3, to a 4, for example.

A passed Morale Test means play continues - it doesn't halt an attacker's attack to take a Morale Test that's passed.

A failed Morale Test results in the formation becoming Broken (unless prevented by a Tactics card, or a Commander's ability.) A failed morale rally test cannot use cubes/units/morale to re-roll.

8. COMMANDERS

Commanders' different abilities are listed on their cards. Unless reactivated (through the 'Back in the Saddle' Tactics card) they can only be used once per game. But they do have a variety of abilities, including the ability to immediately 'rescue' a formation that has failed a Rally Test.

Once 'Back In The Saddle' is purchased it can be kept until it is possible to expend it.

A general cannot perform a saving roll for a formation with 0 morale - that is an automatically broken formation.

9. HOW TO USE FORMATION CARDS:

When Formations are activated they reduce their morale by one (paying activation cost). Alternatively, they may remove one of their troop or artillery markers from the board.

9.1 MOVING FORMATIONS:

Formation card Commands list where formations can move to under certain conditions. An activated formation move Command must be selected to move a formation. When moving, all the formation's markers remaining on the game board are moved from its current location to the new location. No formation can ever enter a location where another formation already is.

For example, the British Riedesel formation is active and decides to move from its position on the game board, Riedesel #1. Based on its available commands, it may move to Riedesel #2 and attack the American formation Poor or move to Riedesel #3 and have no combat. It moves to Riedesel #3 by moving all of its markers in Riedesel #1 to Riedesel #3.

9.2 COMBAT WITH FORMATIONS:

Formation card Commands list when formations can have combat and with what opposing formations under certain conditions. An activated formation combat Command must be selected to have combat with another formation. When combat is chosen as the Command, the attacking formation rolls its combat dice, after applying any modifiers, to determine combat results. (Some Commands also allow formations to move and engage in combat.)

For example, American formation Learned is activated and decides to attack British formation Fraser. Fraser is located at Fraser #1 and The Mill is controlled by the Americans. During its combat die roll, Learned will roll 5 dice for his formation plus 1 extra die for the American control of The Mill.

9.3 REINFORCING FORMATIONS:

Formation card Commands list when formations can reinforce other formations under certain conditions. An activated formation reinforcement Command must be selected to reinforce another formation. When reinforcing, the reinforcement markers of the activated formation on the game board are moved to the current location of the formation being reinforced and only to vacant marker spaces.

For example, the American formation Glover is active and decides to use some of its troop markers (it has 3) to reinforce. His commands allow him to reinforce either Poor or Paterson. Poor's formation has had two markers removed from earlier combat. He decides to reinforce Poor. Two markers are moved from Glover's formation on the game board to Poor's formation on the game board.

10. OBJECTIVE LOCATIONS:

Coulter Farm and The Mill are the objection locations on the game board. The Americans control and occupy Coulter Farm and The Mill to start the game. This is shown by the blue skirmisher cube in each objective location box. Coulter Farm and The Mill will always either be controlled by the American player (with a blue skirmisher cube) or by the British player (with a red skirmisher cube). Neither objective can be without a cube at any point.

If American skirmishes are destroyed they are immediately replaced by British skirmishers, and vice versa.

Attacks on the objectives are always directed towards a specific formation. If enemy skirmishers are present, the first double 6 will remove them and they are replaced by skirmishers from the attacking side. Morale losses are still inflicted on the corresponding enemy formation.

For example, the British can take Coulter Farm and The Mill by attacking the formation related to the objective location, Learned for Coulter Farm and Poor #1 or Poor at Freeman's Farm (or Glover if Poor is eliminated) for The Mill. Those formations will take any morale loss, but the first of any casualty loss always comes from the skirmisher cube in the objective location - whereupon the 'ownership' passes automatically to the British who replace the American blue skirmisher cube with a British red skirmisher cube.

10.1 COULTER FARM:

If American skirmishers are present at Coulter Farm Fraser cannot enter Fraser #2.

If Fraser occupies the objective at Coulter Farm, the next turn his formation activates he moves to Fraser #2.

Learned cannot take the Coulter Farm objective if Fraser is at Fraser #2.

If Learned is broken/destroyed and still holds Coulter Farm with skirmishers it passes into control of the British. Place a red cube there.

If Fraser is broken/destroyed Coulter Farm is automatically controlled by the Americans. Place a blue cube there.

10.2 THE MILL:

If American skirmishers are present at The Mill then no British formation may enter Freeman's Farm, and vice versa.

It's not possible for the British to move into Freeman's Farm unless the Mill is British.

If Poor is broken/destroyed and still holds The Mill with skirmishers it passes into control of the British. Place a red cube there.

If Poor is broken/destroyed The Mill is automatically controlled by the British. Place a red cube there.

If Hamilton is broken/destroyed The Mill is automatically controlled by the Americans. Place a blue cube there.

11. SKIRMISHERS:

There is no limit to the number of times skirmishers can be destroyed and replaced by opposing skirmishers over the course of a game.

If both Poor and Glover are eliminated any American skirmishers in the Mill are automatically removed, and replaced by British skirmishers.

If Hamilton is eliminated and Riedesel is not in Freeman's Farm or Riedesel #2 any British skirmishers are automatically removed, and replaced by American skirmishers.

11.1 OCCUPYING FREEMAN'S FARM:

Freeman's Farm is a unique location as either the American and British formations may occupy it. Yet only one formation may occupy it at a time.

If Hamilton captures the objective of The Mill, the next turn his formation activates he moves to Freeman's Farm (if unoccupied by the American formation Poor) and has combat.

For the purposes of British attacks Poor is considered to be in Freeman's Farm if there are American skirmishers present in The Mill. But, for the purposes of American attacks, Poor is in Poor #1 unless the formation has actually moved to Freeman's Farm.

12. HOW TO WIN

The game may last 15 rounds based on the 15 Activation cards played by each side. If, by the end of the final round the British player has not achieved victory, the American player wins.

If, at any time, either side breaks, or destroys 3 (or more) of the enemy's formations they automatically win and the game ends immediately

A formation is broken if its Morale score is reduced to 0, or if it fails a Morale Test, and is not subsequently rallied.

A formation is destroyed if it has no more wooden markers (blocks for troops, discs for artillery) remaining on the board. Exceptions: Breymann's formation is not destroyed for victory purposes if it has no markers left, and it cannot be broken, because it, like the American Artillery formation, has no morale track, so cannot fail a Morale Test. However, the American Artillery formation can be destroyed by removing all of its discs from the board.

13. SOLITAIRE PLAY:

In the solitaire game choose a side that you, as the player, want to play. Use the player version of the Formation cards for the side selected. Play that side just as you would in a two-player game, following all rules, including Activation, Momentum cubes, Tactics cards and combat dice rolls.

13.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO PLAYER AND SOLITAIRE GAME:

The solitaire opponent does not receive or use Momentum cubes nor can it buy or use Tactics cards.

Note: some Tactics cards are not useful against a solitaire opponent. They will cycle through the tableau.

The solitaire opponent side does not receive a "hand" of Activation Cards. Instead, its deck of 15 Activation Cards is shuffled and the entire deck is placed face down. This becomes its Activation draw deck. In the solitaire opponent turn in a round flip the top card from its Activation draw deck. That is the formation your opponent Activates this turn.

The solitaire opponent uses the "Solitaire Edition" version of the Formation cards for its side. When activated, these cards have a hierarchy of Commands that are followed in the sequence listed until one of the Commands is playable.

For example, when a solitaire opponent has a formation activated, if the first Command (#1) cannot be played then the second (#2) is played, and if it is unplayable, then the third (#3) is played and so forth. If no Command is playable then the solitaire opponent's turn for the round is over.



13.3 HOW TO WIN IN THE SOLITAIRE PLAY:

Victory conditions are the same as the two-player game (break/destroy 3 formations) with one exception; if, by the end of the final turn your side as the player has not achieved victory, then the Solitaire Opponent side wins.

14. HISTORICAL SUMMARY AND DESIGNER NOTES:

14.1 THE SARATOGA CAMPAIGN

The clashes in Lexington and Concord (April 18, 1775) then Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775) demonstrated that the insurrection in the colonies was becoming serious. The crisis deepened for the British when an American army invaded Canada, captured Montreal, and laid siege to Quebec at the end of the year. But in the new year the siege of Quebec broke down and only Benedict Arnold's efforts at Valcour Island (October 11, 1776) helped stabilize the strategic situation, ensuring the critical Fort Ticonderoga remained in American hands. In New York and New Jersey Washington suffered a series of defeats at the hands of General Howe. Perhaps the capture of Washington that summer might have effectively ended the rebellion then. Perhaps too, without Washington's audacious victories at Trenton (December 26, 1776) and Princeton (January 3, 1777) the flames of the rebellion might again have spluttered out.

The British were aware they needed to end the rebellion soon. The plan of 1777 may be one of the most contentious aspects of the entire war - certainly for the British. A better coordinated plan might have been the last chance to end the war before international interference came to a head - when French, Spanish, and Dutch efforts to support the rebellion and profit by doing so would switch to being more overt. The blame for the disjointed Philadelphia and Saratoga campaigns ultimately lies somewhere between Generals Howe and Burgoyne, Lord George Germain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies (effectively the minister tasked with running the war), George III, and perhaps the Prime Minister, Lord North. Their predicament was assuredly exacerbated by logistics (it was over 3,000 miles from Montreal to London, and wind, tides, and contemporary maritime technology meant it was roughly one month west to east across the Atlantic, and roughly three times that east to west - so orders might not just be delayed, but also become confused). It was exacerbated too by poor intelligence - overestimating the loyalist support in New York, and by a persistent propensity to underestimate the American capabilities in the field and the support for a break with the Crown. None of this was helped by a sense shared by many - including Howe - that this wasn't even a war the British ought to be fighting - the situation should never have been permitted to deteriorate this far. Indeed there was nothing inevitable about this conflict. A softer line with the colonists at a few key junctures might have defused the situation and prevented war - and there the spotlight glares most on George III and Lord North.

However, in 1777, that ship had sailed. For the year ahead the British plan, deriving, in essence, from Burgoyne's 'Thoughts for Conducting the War' proposal sent to Germain, was to strike at

Any combat for the solitaire opponent uses the solo table for resolving its combat dice rolls (which are rolled by you.). The solitaire opponent rolls its combat dice as the attacker and whatever results from the dice are applied. The solitaire opponent has no choices for expending morale, markers, or momentum cubes for re-rolling dice. The only time dice is rerolled is if the result is a 3, which is done without paying an Activation cost.

Note that the main difference for the solo table is that die roll singles (as opposed to doubles for the player table) cause casualty and morale results for the solitaire opponent.

13.2 SOLITAIRE SEQUENCE OF PLAY:

The sequence of play for the player is the same as the two-player game when it's the player's turn in a round. When it is the solitaire opponent's turn in a round the sequence of play is as follows:

1. Play One Solitaire Opponent Activation Card (flipping it face up from the its Activation Draw Deck.)
2. Pay Activation Cost (reduce the morale of the solitaire active formation)
3. If combat selected as a Command, Roll Combat Dice (use the Solo Combat Table)
4. Apply Results
5. Remove the Tactics card on the far right of the display, draw a new card and shunt them all to the right.

The British side always takes the first turn in a round.

Play continues until all Activation cards have been played, ending the game.

◆ USING COMMANDER CARDS FOR THE SOLITAIRE PLAYER:

The first time a formation fails a Morale Test for the solitaire side, its appropriate Commander card is used to rally the formation and is then discarded.

Albany. This would decapitate the troublesome New England colonies from the rest and sever American lines of communication. It was to be achieved by converging three armies - one down the Hudson valley from Canada, another from Canada down the Mohawk valley, and another up from New York city. In the event, Howe struck at Philadelphia, so there was no major south-to-north thrust to this plan. General Clinton, whom Howe left in command in New York, was able to contribute something. But Clinton's force was just 3,000 strong - it was no substitute for the 15,000 or more Howe could have brought to bear. Without any substantial south-to-north thrust the onus fell on Burgoyne's column, marching down the Hudson - though Burgoyne himself was unaware that Howe was no longer in the campaign.

Burgoyne faced numerous logistical issues just formulating his army, but once he got it moving he met with early successes - taking Fort Ticonderoga July 6. (Arguably this might have happened earlier and the army might have made even faster progress.) He then halted at Fort Edward to bring up supplies. We ought not to underestimate the difficulty of bringing an eighteenth century army along this route. It unquestionably incurred numerous logistical headaches. Added to that, the Americans knew he was coming and helped add to those headaches. But even more critically we might consider that it wasn't the only option Burgoyne had. General St. Leger had been assigned the Mohawk valley flanking attack. But Burgoyne might have made this his main attack column. Indeed, this was the route General Carleton advocated. It was the route General Amherst had taken in 1760 - south to north - and Clinton, amongst others, considered it the easier way. Further, Burgoyne was attempting to use this army as a rallying beacon for loyalists and a way to cover the patriot cause - an approach that spoke both to desperation- the force was nowhere near as powerful as it needed to be to ensure military success - and to a British underestimation in the capabilities of opposing forces. This meant he was surrendering any notion of strategic surprise in a gambit that would ultimately advertise his presence and backfire as the relative weakness of his force was exposed. Burgoyne had won the command he had sought, but Howe's decision to target Philadelphia - in a mistaken belief that Washington would be forced to stand and fight for it, and so risk the destruction of the Continental army - would expose the plan's weaknesses. Worse, Howe had gone via the Chesapeake Bay, which was slower than the New Jersey or the Delaware Bay routes, and would guarantee there was no chance of coordinating Howe's army with Burgoyne's. Without Howe, there would now be too much riding on too narrow a hope of victory. Clinton was already well aware of this, writing while Burgoyne still marched south, "I fear it bears heavy on Burgoyne...If this campaign does not finish the war, I prophesy there is an end to British dominion in America."

Burgoyne's delay helped give General Gates the time he needed to consolidate forces around Stillwater. The British-born, former British general, who had thrown in his lot with the rebellion, had only recently taken over command of the army, after the removal of General Schuyler, who took the blame for the loss of Ticonderoga. (There is a great deal of political maneuvering around this topic as factions within Congress fought for dominance, which seems - now I think of it - ripe material for a game in its own right.) Gates was also able to put his engineer, Kosciusko, to work at Bemis Heights.

Then August brought significant American victories. First, at Bennington (August 16), when Burgoyne's vastly outnumbered detachment was utterly destroyed, constraining Burgoyne's options in terms of supply and flanking maneuvers. Then the ever energetic Arnold defeated St. Leger at Fort Stanwix (August 22), ending all the British pressure through the Mohawk valley.

Burgoyne's column finally approached Gates' assembling army in Stillwater. A bloody pyrrhic victory at Freeman's Farm (September 19) gave Burgoyne the field, but the casualties incurred crippled his army and the strategic initiative was effectively lost at this point.

The army's encampment began to take on a more permanent aspect, as redoubts began to form. Burgoyne waited for Howe and tried - with immense difficulty (and mostly failure) to send messengers through American lines to find out where Howe was. On September 20 a ciphered message from Clinton in New York reached Burgoyne through the American lines that Howe was in the Chesapeake "...with the greatest part of the army..." with Clinton clear he had too small a force "...to make any effectual diversion..." in Burgoyne's favor, but promising to "...try something..." Burgoyne (perhaps rather curiously) took this as encouragement to stay the course and to wait for Clinton's support to arrive. So Burgoyne and Gates remained opposite each other for several weeks as, on each side, fortifications were developed. But while the Americans were getting stronger as militias began to congregate, Burgoyne's army was suffering from desertions and supplies were beginning to dry up.

Still with no sign of Clinton, Burgoyne attempted to probe rebel defenses. This foray quickly turned into a retreat and a full scale American counterattack followed - the fight coming to be called the Battle of Bemis Heights (October 7). After a tenacious defense of Breyman's Redoubt the Americans - again aided by the energies of Arnold - broke through and, as night fell, Burgoyne was forced to retreat. Now outnumbered around 3:1, and never able to outrun Gates, Burgoyne became surrounded at Saratoga. Burgoyne was forced to surrender the entirety of his remaining army. The consequences, in North America, and all around the world, would be dramatic. As the historian Piers Mackesy has it: "The defeat at Saratoga is the clearest turning point of the war. It marked the beginning of a general war waged throughout the world..." Soon the British would be at war not only with the fledgling American state, but also France, Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Mysore in the Indian subcontinent. The British faced an existential threat, not only to the dissolution of its empire, but there were also real risks of invasion and occupation. In many respects, all things considered, the British managed the darkening situation rather well - the loss of the American colonies was amongst the least of their worries. But that's a tale for another day. Perhaps another game.

14.2 THE BATTLE OF FREEMAN'S FARM

Burgoyne had good information about the local topography. Freeman was a loyalist and the British had a good understanding of how imposing the Heights were. Burgoyne knew the American position was strong, that artillery would be bearing down on him,

and he had no wish to attempt a frontal assault. His plan was to split his forces into three attack columns. On the British right Fraser would attempt to outflank the American position, striking where the defenses were least prepared, and then attempt to roll up the line. Hamilton would push forward from the center, and Von Riedesel with Phillips and the artillery would keep to the road, pressure the American right, and see what opportunities presented themselves. Von Breymann would hold the reserve in the center. In addition to the heavily wooded area, the fog made coordinating formations problematic. Signal guns had been arranged to try to help communications, but even in this relatively small battlefield area (not much more than a mile square) with relatively small numbers of troops involved (around 7,000 British and 9,000 Americans) knowing for certain where troops were, and getting them to go where - and when - commanders wanted them to go - would, in large part, decide the outcome of the battle.

Arnold was, after some time, able to persuade Gates to allow him to take the initiative and try to spoil the British attack. This force was able to disrupt Hamilton's advance, with the rifles in Poor's and Learned's brigades - specifically those under Daniel Morgan and Henry Dearborn's command - targeting British commanders to devastating effect. As Fraser's formation attempted its maneuvers the American position around Freeman's Farm became exposed and Gates was compelled to send more troops from Poor's brigade into the battle. In turn Fraser was forced to halt his attempt to outflank as he came under increasing pressure around the cluster of farms including Coulter Farm.

At the same time the battle intensified in the center. Hamilton was locked in a constant back and forth with Poor - as British bayonet charges overwhelmed American firepower at Freeman's Farm - but at considerable cost, and American forces regrouped, and pushed the British back again. The British casualties were becoming a serious concern - most especially amongst the officers. At one point rumors of Burgoyne's own death rang out (an unfortunate officer nearby with a fleece-lined saddle had been the victim of a marksman) which added to the dissipating British morale. Burgoyne was forced to hurry Von Riedesel to the center to prevent it from collapsing. Von Riedesel arrived in time, and brought significant pressure to bear on the American center. But for nightfall the American position there might have disintegrated.

What if Fraser had succeeded in outflanking the American left? What if Arnold hadn't been able to get Gates to release the American left? Or what if Gates had agreed, but too late for Arnold to get troops into position? What if the British center had crumbled? Would Burgoyne have been forced to retreat in good order? What if the powerful British artillery had been able to get into the battle? What if, as he had at one point planned, Burgoyne had attacked the American positions first thing the next day? Burgoyne wasn't to know, but the Americans were perilously short of ammunition on the morning of September 20. This was information Gates had kept well away from his commanders - including Arnold, which may help to explain his reluctance to take the initiative. These *what ifs* have continued to fascinate historians and game designers. In many ways, Freeman's Farm is one of the most pivotal battles in Western history. If Burgoyne had won a significant victory, not the botched pyrrhic bloodbath he attained, perhaps the rebellion might have died on the vine, and today the Saratoga National Historical Park would commemorate a battle

that helped re-unify and re-align Anglo-Americans in a shared future, instead of one that drove them apart and gave rise to the new independent republic.

15. DESIGN NOTES

In the summer of 2018 Mirco Carrattieri asked me to write a chapter on history in games for his forthcoming monograph of the journal *Memoria e Ricerca* (Research and Memory). I finally got around to beginning this in November that year and settled on the subject of Saratoga. It was a mere 20 miles from my campus at RPI in Upstate New York, so seemed appropriate. I embarked on attempting to play all the published games on Freeman's Farm, Bemis Heights, and the campaign as a whole. Before too long I was becoming frustrated by the same kind of design features in the games focused on Freeman's Farm, in particular. They all gave me way more visibility of the battlefield (both of the enemy movements and those of the army I was commanding), and made the troops I commanded way more responsive than I liked. If Burgoyne, Arnold, or Gates could see what I could see, and could get their troops to respond the way I could in these games, then the battle would surely have been quite different. A game is not the same thing as a simulation, at least in the strictest sense. Yet some of the games I was playing described themselves as 'simulation games' and it seemed disingenuous to me that the remainder of these games didn't have some intention to simulate some aspect of their historical source material, at least in some small part through the filter of entertainment. Too often I felt like the designs could do a better job of addressing what to me were the key features of this battle.

◆ I WOULD SUMMARIZE THESE FEATURES AS:

- » The difficulty in communicating with formations, getting them to move on time and to coordinate with other formations as intended.
- » The way momentum swung back and forth as the two armies clashed - especially around Coulter Farm and even more so at Freeman's Farm.
- » The effectiveness of American marksmanship.
- » The effectiveness (though at a cost) of British bayonet charges.
- » The British inability to bring their main artillery train to bear.
- » The static American right.
- » The dynamism of Arnold and his significance in catalyzing the American left, and the contrast with Gates on the right.
- » The importance of Burgoyne in stabilizing British troops.
- » The windows of opportunity that the battle presented to the commanders, and the difficulty in deciding when to seize them, when they were illusory, and how hard to back these opportunities.

What I felt was most absent in these games was at the very top of that list: a sense of how commanders struggled to initiate and coordinate attacks from and between their own formations, and how they also struggled to really understand the capabilities of the enemy forces opposing them, even if they could see well enough where those enemy formations were. Before even starting the

paper for Mirco I had begun to have my own design thoughts for a game I would like to play. After all, with over twenty years in the video game industry, game design was my background, and I'd grown up playing and making wargames. I applied for and won a small grant through the school of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at RPI and a couple of weeks later I'd designed a prototype that found some way of addressing all of those features of the battle - at least to some extent.

I'd recently encountered an activation concept in Turning Point Games' *Saratoga 1777 AD*, although there it wasn't card-driven. I was more familiar with this concept in the *Command & Colors* system and *Battlecry*, where it was card-driven. I decided on 'Activation cards' for each formation to ensure likely frequency of actions. By giving different formations more Activation cards than others I could ensure some formations played a bigger part in the battle. By having them come out of a shuffled deck I gave the players a sense of the uncertainty the commanders faced. But by giving players the chance to choose from a limited hand which formation to activate they had a constrained opportunity to fashion or re-fashion a strategy to their liking. Further, by designating the options available for each formation (on its 'Formation' card), and by designing a map with limited movement options. I could force players to act within historical parameters, but still give them choices to make. I'd seen a similar Formations card concept in U&P's 2015 release, *W1815*, and enjoyed it, but felt there was even more that could be done with it.

From other designs of my own I had been experimenting with several years earlier, I had come to think of morale as more than just a measure of a formation's cohesion under attack or threat of attack, or after a poor result in melee. It was also a measure of its willingness to do anything at all - to also move and even fire at range. It was fundamentally what kept a unit in a battle - provided it hadn't suffered catastrophic losses. I started to think of morale as a key resource, like the essential fuel units actually ran on. This gave me the sense that managing this resource was a critical element in the battle, just as critical as managing casualties. Indeed, if the British had managed their forces in the center better they would not have suffered the losses they did. (Easier said than done without substantial rifle-equipped forces to counter the Americans under Daniel Morgan.) Managing units, trying to gauge how hard to push them against an enemy that might also be wavering seemed to be something that could represent some of the reality for the commanders on the day.

Momentum was a concept in GMT's *Saratoga*, - and it felt to me as if there was a potential to develop it into a more overt system, and to use it as a currency underpinning other design concepts. Rerolls in combat could be made with Momentum. Tactics cards could be utilized with it. Knowing when to conserve and when to expend it could become a critical player choice.

Tactics cards were a way of not only implementing historical flavor, but also of representing some of the sense of how battles present opportunities - not all of which should be taken, just because they're there. Taking these opportunities comes at a cost - in game terms, Momentum - which might be better spent elsewhere - on maintaining an ongoing attack, for example, or reserving for a later attack still being formulated. Having a tableau of three cards face-up which re-formed each player round and cards moving closer to

the end of a 'conveyor belt' was a way of experientially conveying that sense of those windows of opportunity literally passing.

My sense from multiple playthroughs of the game is that its balance skews to being harder work for the British to win than for the Americans. The British have to work harder, push their luck more, and be more aggressive and inventive in their use of Tactics cards. I'm content to stand by this, since it reflects my view of the battle. Burgoyne had to be audacious or the Battle of Bemis Heights would doom him—if, that is, he decided to stay.

16. PLAYING TIPS

- » Don't try to do too much too soon. Allow yourself the chance to build Momentum, and then utilize it, either for re-rolls or Tactics cards.
- » But the British need to get Phillips moving. If American artillery destroy Phillips before he has a chance to destroy the American artillery a British victory relies on, most likely, eliminating Learned, Poor, and Glover.
- » Push your luck by reducing Morale to keep rerolling attacks. But keep an eye on if your opponent can exploit that formation's weakness - if your casualties are mounting or if your Morale is falling look ahead for ways to rectify those problems with reinforcements and Tactics cards.
- » Buy and use the right Tactics cards at the right time.
- » Consider what your opponent least wants you to do, and see if you can do that.
- » Use your commanders wisely.
- » Fight hard for Freeman's Farm.
- » If British, try to follow it up immediately with an activation that lets you move to Position #2 - and hope the Americans can't immediately retake it.
- » The Americans might move Poor into Freeman's Farm to make use of their marksman ability, but should be aware if Riedesel moves to #2 Poor will take casualties.

**Maurice Suckling, Saratoga Springs
(12 miles from the battlefield), February 2019.**

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