

Scenario Designer Notes

The War of 1812. The Invasion of Canada to some, the Second Revolution to others. Regardless what you call it, this war has received comparatively little attention over the years. In my efforts to gather information for the creation of this game, I found out just how little information is out there on this topic (at least available in the United States and some of Canada), and how biased some of the accounts can be. I have done my best to walk a middle ground here and give fair representation to all parties involved, Americans, Native Americans, British and Canadians. If you would like to read some of the works I used to help create this game please refer to the [Bibliography](#) .

A total of 25 engagements make up the core of this game. In determining what to cover, discussions were held within the team not just to identify which land engagements played a major roll in the outcome of the war, but also which engagements could be further explored in "What If?" scenarios designed to examine possible alternate situations. For this reason, you will find scenarios representing pitched battles at places like *Longwoods (Battle Hill)*, or *Fort Detroit* where historically no full scale battle took place. Of course historical battles like *Lundy's Lane*, *Chippawa* and *New Orleans* are also well represented - normally with multiple scenarios covering the full battle as well as segments or variations on that battle.

Four campaigns and mini-campaigns are also included. Three of these represent key situations that occurred during 1812, 1813 and 1814 respectively. The 4th is a compilation of these actions representing the entire war.

A lot of discussion and speculation went in to enhancing the playability and enjoyment of this game. As much as possible historical accuracy has been adhered to, but other elements have been explored to expand on the gaming potential.

For example, every scenario included in the game has what is called a "Weather Variant". This is a scenario that represents an alternate weather condition from what happened historically. In most cases, good, clear weather days are turned into overcast, rainy days. This is done by modifying the pdt file to extend the length of dawn and dusk by 1 hour each, setting visibility at 6 hexes during that time, and then lowering movement capabilities for all units to reflect the muddy condition of the ground. In other instances, where the historical battle was fought in less than optimum conditions, the weather variant gives the player the chance to explore what the battle might have been like had the weather been more favorable.

In addition, many new game engine features have been added since the 1776 version. An auto-defense fire option makes it possible to play the game in a single phase per turn mode. In essence, enemy units will engage in "opportunity fire" against your units as they move. This greatly streamlines the PBEM process. Softer zones-of-control now permit units to move through hexes controlled by enemy ZOCs at a rate of one hex per turn. Graphics have been improved since 1776 and the player has been given the ability to create sub-maps from existing maps.

Another added feature that Curt Good and I have put forth is the inclusion of a file called "Alternate.pdt". Following are the notes relating to that special file:

The primary difference that players will note between the original PDT file and the optional alternate PDT file is that the alternate file will produce significantly higher casualties in certain circumstances. The alternate file is intended to take advantage of the nuances made possible by the scale of the game (125 feet/42 yards per hex) to more closely model actual historical lethality patterns. Players should be aware, however, that there may be a potential cost to their enjoyment of the game if they fail to adjust their tactics accordingly.

While the musket's inaccuracy was notorious, there is often a tendency to forget that once the range of engagement began to move inside 100 yards, that inaccuracy became much less of a practical factor and the lethality of massed musketry began to rise steeply. While longer ranged duels would tend to be attritional in nature, close range volleys by formed units were quite capable of ripping decisive chunks out of the enemy line at a single stroke. Accordingly, pressing an attack to very close range would usually result in one side or the other breaking rather quickly. Historically, the offensive role of artillery and skirmishers was to produce enough prior disorder in the defender's ranks to allow formed units to survive closing with the defender to the point where they could deliver decisive close range fire and break the enemy line. Of course, if the defender was still in relatively good order, the attack might be shredded by close range defensive fire and break instead, leaving behind a disconcertingly large pile of bodies.

To put it very simply, there is a vast difference between the likely consequences of engaging at 125 yards (3 hexes) and the likely consequences of engaging at 42 yards (1 hex).

Modeling this in the game, however, has its risks. An active debate began among the developers as to whether players would still enjoy a game in which units could be quickly torn apart and routed? Would this ruin the game? The alternate view was that tendency of play testers to close to adjacent hexes was more an artifact of tactics that they learned in larger scale games, and that in time players would learn to adjust their tactics to fit the realities of the smaller 42 yard hex scale. As such, the players themselves would preserve the playability of the game by becoming more judicious about their decisions regarding when it is or is not appropriate to press to very close range.

Artillery firepower is also adjusted in the alternate PDT to create a more historically accurate lethality footprint given the scale. Accordingly, players using the alternate PDT should take the following differences into account and be aware of the fact that the pattern of artillery lethality is somewhat different than that which they may have become accustomed to in larger scale games.

In contrast to the standard PDT, when using the alternate PDT, maximum artillery lethality is not achieved until range two (84 yards). This was done to represent the idea that the cone of projectiles formed by a canister round would need to travel a certain minimum distance before expanding sufficiently to achieve its maximum potential to generate casualties. (The standard PDT assumes a more rapidly expanding cone of projectiles than the alternate, and thus produces the same pattern as players may be familiar with from larger scale games -- i.e. maximum firepower is achieved at range one.) It is left to the player to decide which model is more appropriate.

Another difference between the standard PDT and the alternate in the area of artillery effectiveness is that greater allowance has been made in the alternate PDT for the *depth*

of the canister footprint, especially with respect to larger caliber loads. The higher firepower values associated with canister reach out further and drop off more slowly. This means that the alternate PDT tends to make artillery more effective overall, and particularly more effective in the 84 to 250 yard range band (2 to 6 hexes). Once again, the player is advised of the potential increase in casualties to be expected when employing the alternate PDT and is cautioned to adjust his tactics and expectations accordingly.

Note that if you are contemplating a game with another player as opposed to a solitaire situation, both players must employ the same PDT file in order for the game to function. The procedure for substituting the alternate PDT file for the original is as follows.

Start a new game, we will assume it is a PBEM (Play-by-email) game. Without selecting PBEM Encryption save the file and close the game. Then go into Windows Explorer or My Computer and browser to your game directory. Find your new game file (in this example we are going to call it game.bte)

Open the game file by double clicking on it. If you have never done this before a window will pop up asking you what program to use to open the file. Choose "Notepad" and click ok.

A new window will pop up and you will be looking at the contents of the PBEM file. It will look something like this:

```
----- PEM Header -----  
1 0 -1 -1  
3  
The Battle of Fort Meigs, May 5th, 1813  
1813 5 5 7 45 0 0 10 24  
10 20 20  
10 20 20  
-200 -100 100 200  
2 2 0 0 20223 0  
49 23  
Fort Meigs.map  
Fort Meigs.oob  
Fort Meigs.pdt
```

The line we are concerned with is the bold one above. The game is currently looking at the **Fort Meigs.pdt** file. We are going to change that to **Alternate.pdt** once you do that you can save and close the file. You are ready to open the game back up and start playing again. Your opponent already has the Alternate.pdt file in their directory so no modification is necessary on their end.

The reason it is suggested that you make the modification to the PBEM file is, it only effects your current game. If you make the change to the .scn file before starting the game, and then forget to change it back afterward, every subsequent game you start will pull the Alternate.pdt file and your opponents may not want to use that.

A lot of time and effort has been put into this game, and both myself and the design/testing team hope you enjoy it thoroughly. Keep an eye on the HPS web site (<http://www.hpssims.com/>) for patches and expansion packs (new maps, oob's, campaigns, etc.) and also stop in to my Scenario Design Center (SDC) at - <http://www.hist-sdc.com/> I will be posting detailed information to assist scenario designers in the near future (for sub map creation, image mapping, etc.)

Rich Hamilton
March 6, 2001
Richmond, Virginia

Major Reference Works

The U.S. Army in the War of 1812 (An Operational and Command Study)

2 volume set, by Robert S. Quimby - c.1997

ISBN - 0-87013-441-8

The War of 1812

By John K. Mahon - c.1972

ISBN - 0-8130-0318-0

Amateurs, To Arms! (A Military History of the War of 1812)

By John R. Elting - c.1991

ISBN - 0-306-80653-3

Field of Glory (The Battle of Crysler's Farm, 1813)

By Donald E. Graves - c.1999

ISBN - 1-896941-10-9

Red Coats & Grey Jackets (The Battle of Chippawa, 5 July 1814)

By Donald E. Graves - c.1994

ISBN - 1-55002-210-5

Where Right and Glory Lead! (The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 1814)

By Donald E. Graves - c.1993

ISBN - 1-896941-03-6

The Incredible War of 1812 (A Military History)

By J. Mackay Hitsman (Updated by Donald E. Graves) - c.1965

ISBN - 1-896941-13-3

The War of 1812 (A Forgotten Conflict)

By Donald R. Hickey - c.1989

ISBN - 0-252-06059-8

While Washington Burned (The Battle for Fort Erie, 1814)

Joseph Whitehorne - c.1992

ISBN - 1-877853-18-6

The Battle of Sackett's Harbour, 1813

By Patrick A. Wilder - c. 1994

ISBN - 1-877853-22-4

The Iroquois in the War of 1812

By Carl Benn - c.1998

ISBN - 0-8020-8145-2

Minor Reference Works

Remember the Raisin! (with Notes on Kentucky Veterans of the War of 1812)

By G. Glenn Clift - c.1961

ISBN - 0-8063-4520-9

The Battle of Fort George

By Lt. Col. Ernest Cruikshank, V.D. - c.1990 (Niagra Historical Society)

ISBN - 0-941967-10-7

Guidebook to the Historic Sites of the War of 1812

By Gilbert Collins - c.1998

ISBN - 1-55002-290-3

American Campaigns

By Matthew Forney Steele - c.1946

The Wars of America - Vol. I

By Robert Leckie - c.1968

The War of 1812

By Harry L. Coles - c.1965

American Battlefields

By Hubbard Cobb - c.1995

ISBN - 1-56852-151-0

Fort Meigs (War of 1812 Battleground)

By Larry Nelson - c.1999

ISBN - 0-87758-025-1