

## ● WDS/JTS OOB's Explained

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## ●Ken Miller's CWB OOB File Explained

This is a primer for those who are interested in modifying the OOB file or creating new ones for their own scenarios. This was put together by me and contains information I have collected over 20 years of playing the HPS/JTS/WDS Civil War Battles games. With the transfer of the rights to the John Tiller Civil War Battle series to Wargame Design Studios in 2021 they are now the distributor of the games. Most of this information is relevant to all versions but anything beyond Version 2.0 of the games is only relevant to the JTS/WDS versions.

This is not an official WDS help file so if you discover something in this document that is not correct you can contact me at krmiller\_usa at yahoo dot com.

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## ●What is the OOB File

The .oob file contains the army organizations for the HPS/JTS/WDS CWB games. It lists all the units for both players in the game. This information is then used in the Scenario Editor to place the units on the map, set them as reinforcements or leave them out if they are not used. The Scenario Editor then uses the units position in the oob file as a means of saving it's information to the scenario file. The unit's position in the oob is also used in the save game files to save the positions, data and status of units when the game is saved.

Beginning with Corinth 1.02 the HPS CWB games had the .oob files locked out so that only the original files would work within a particular game engine. With the release of the JTS Overland game the .oob files were opened up. Currently those games that have been updated to version 2.0 or higher allow .oob files other than the stock files to be loaded.

## ●Creating and Modifying a OOB File

Before modifying a oob there are several things you want to keep in mind.

- 1. You do not want to modify the existing oob files.**
- 2. You want to make sure your opponent is aware of the changes you make and agrees to them before starting a game.**
- 3. It is easier to modify an existing OOB file than creating one from scratch.**

Wait a minute, you just said I shouldn't modify an existing oob file!

Yes, but what you can do is open an existing oob file with a text editor, you can use Notepad or WordPad both of which come with most pc's or any other straight text editor provided you remember to look for .txt files when opening the .oob file and make sure you save the file with a .oob extension. You do not want to use Word to work on any of these files as the way it saves the file will cause problems when the game engine attempts to use it. This is because of the way Word saves spaces and tabs in its files.

**Once you open the file the first thing you want to do is to save it under a new name.**

Using the Save As function in the File menu you can use the original file name and add a number or letter to it such as Antietam\_1A.oob or give it a name that indicates what game it is for and your initials such as Antietam\_KM1.oob. It will already have a .oob extension this way and you should not have any problems with the file. Or you can give it a name that indicates what game it is for, or what scenario you plan to use it in and your initials such as Antietam\_KM1.oob.

The other thing you can do that will not cause a problem in game play is change the unit picture or the 3D icon number. These only affect what you see on your computer while playing the game. These values have no effect on how the game works and would make no notable changes to game play. This would require having knowledge of the how unit picture and 3d icon files work which is explained when we get to that information.

## ●OOB File Structure

The army organizations for the HPS/JTS/WDS CWB games are found in the \*.oob files. So far in all the games the Union Army is listed first then the Confederate Army.

The original .oob files had an outline format with indents showing the various levels in the commands. The newer versions have stopped that practice which I believe is unfortunate as I thought it made it easier to keep track of the Begin and End functions which is the area that most often leads to problems in an oob.

You will note that each formation, defined as any organization above the unit level and can be comprised of leaders, units and subordinate formations, has the word "Begin" directly under the formation's title line. The Formation continues until you see the word "End".

The "Begin" and "End" can be widely separated.

The example below is taken from JTS Gettysburg file Gettysburg1.oob and is a shortened version of the file for demonstrating the make-up of the file. I've shown part of the Union 1st Corps and left out the Confederate forces except to show where they would be located and that the first line must indicate it is a Confederate formation. I have inserted indents to show how the Begin – End sequence works.

At the top of the file is the version number. To the best of my knowledge the current version number is 3 in all the games. Then the Order of Battle (oob) begins.

3

Union A A of the Potomac

Begin

L 4 5 41 MG G G Meade

U 42 3 C C 60 213 Oneida N.Y. Co

B Provost Guard

Begin

L 2 4 1 BG M R Patrick

U 148 4 I R 26 98 93d New York

End

C 1st Corps

Begin

L 5 5 3 MG J F Reynolds

U 57 6 C C 220 220 L 1st Me. Cav

D 1st Div (Wadsworth)

Begin

L 3 5 4 BG J S Wadsworth

B 1st Bde (Meredith)

Begin

L 3 5 8 BG S Meredith

U 100 6 I R 158 146 Brigade Guard

End

B 2d Bde (Cutler)

Begin

End

S 300 4 Division Train

End

D 2d Div (Robinson)

Begin

L 3 5 9 BG J C Robinson

End

D 3d Div (Doubleday)

Begin

L 2 5 12 MG Doubleday

End

B 1st Corps Arty Bde

Begin

End

End (rest of the army continues in the same manner)

End

1Confederate A A of Northern Va

Begin

L 5 6 144 Gen Robert E Lee

End

Union S 300 36 Supply Wagon

Confederate S 300 38 Supply Wagon

The list above is just to give you an example of how the OOB file is organized and to emphasize the importance of the proper structure.

- 1 Formation
- 2 Begin
- 3 Leader if any
- 4 Subordinate Formations or Units
- 5 End

Subordinate Formations use the same structure.

**Note** although you can subordinate one command to another you cannot put a higher level command under a lower level. The formations cannot violate the order shown below but formations can be placed under those of the same or higher level as shown above.

**Do not leave any blank lines, the game engine reads a blank line as the End of File for the OOB.**

## ●Formations

Each of the formation levels must be prefixed by a particular letter as shown below.

- A Army
- C Corps/Wing
- D Division
- B Brigade

You may omit levels if you wish. However, with the missing link in a chain you may jeopardize the Morale/Command bonus that is handed down from senior to junior leaders and eventually the units themselves. See the User Manual for an explanation of these. The name after the formation letter can be any text.

In the Murfreesboro.oob the corps are referred to as wings but still designated by a C.

The one limitation on names I have found is that the name should not contain more than 19 characters. This is because the name is displayed centered in the unit display box and it has 19 spaces. If you exceed 19 characters both ends of the name will be cut off making it difficult to read.

## ●Units

In addition to the Formations individual units within the command also have letter prefixes.

L - Leaders

U - Units, these can be Infantry, Cavalry, or Artillery as will be covered later.

S - Supply Wagons

G – Gunboats

## ●Leaders

Below is a typical leader and an explanation of what each character in the line means.

L 4 5 41 MG G G Meade

L – This indicates it is a Leader.

MG G G Meade - The leaders rank and name. Once again you do not want to exceed 19 characters or the name will not fit in the unit display box as noted above.

4 - This is the officer's Command Rating, this rating is used in determining whether or not the officer is "In Command" and can pass along a Command Bonus to his subordinate leaders and units for recovering from being Disrupted.

5 - This is the officer's Leadership Rating, this rating is used in assisting routed units stacked with the officer to rally. If this number is higher than the units Morale it is used as the Morale Base for the Rally attempt.

41 - This is the pointer to the leaders.bmp file that indicates where the leader's picture is located in the file.

The leaders.bmp file is located in the Info folder of the game and consists of a series of pictures that begin with picture 0 in the upper left corner then count left to right on each row.

There are 12 pictures located on each row so the first row contains pictures 0-11. The second row starts with picture 12 on the left and rows continue till the end of the file. If a number is used outside the limits of the file no picture will be shown.

## ●Infantry – Cavalry – Artillery Units

Below are typical unit lines and an explanation of what each character in the line means.

U 288 6 I R 96 11 19th Ind

U 42 3 C C 73 0 Oneida (NY) Co

U 2 5 A T 32 10 (A) 2nd, Me Lt

Using the Infantry unit's values.

U – indicates this is a Unit.

288 - This first number indicates the number of men in the unit if it is Infantry or Cavalry (42) or the number of guns (2) if it is an Artillery unit.

6 - This is the Class rating for this unit with 6=A and 1=F.

I - This indicates the first unit is an Infantry unit, the second one (C) is Cavalry and the third (A) is an Artillery unit. There are several other letters used here occasionally. H indicates a Horse Artillery unit giving it a higher movement rate than foot artillery. There are also two other letters used in some oob files for Infantry units, M for Militia units and S for Sharpshooters. To the best of my knowledge these are for historical information purposes only and have no effect on the unit's abilities unlike the Napoleonic games where different units have different abilities.

R - This is the Weapon that the unit is armed with, in this case the 19th Indiana is armed with a Rifled Musket. There is a list of the various letters used by the game engines and the corresponding weapon in the PDT Explained.pdf file.

96 - This is the pointer to the units.bmp file that indicates where the unit picture is located in the file. Like the leaders.bmp file this file consists of a series of pictures that begin with picture 0 in the upper left corner but are located in the Map folder.

11 - This is the pointer to the 3DUnits100x.bmp file that indicates where the unit 3D icon is located in the file. This file is also located in the Map folder of the games but the number refers to the row used for this unit. Each row consists of 6 pictures except for 3DUnits100c that has 12 pictures, 6 for infantry/cavalry in line and 6 for infantry in column. There are several such files for the different units with 3DUnits100a.bmp being for unlimbered artillery, b is for mounted cavalry, c is for dismounted cavalry and as previously mentioned for infantry in line and column, it also contains the routed unit icon for both sides. 3DUnits100d.bmp is for limbered artillery and wagons, and g is for the various gunboats. Like the leaders.bmp these files have the icons for both sides. There is also a 3DUnits50x.bmp file for the zoom out 3D view.

19th Ind - This is the unit name that will appear in the Unit Box display. Once again I caution you about exceeding 19 characters in the unit name or it will not fit in the unit display box as previously noted.

## ●Supply Wagons

There are two more unit types.

S 300 36 Supply Wagon

This is a Supply Wagon as denoted by the S and the name.

The 300 is the number of supplies this unit starts out with and the 36 is it's unit picture number.

Supply Wagons are sometimes located within a formation. Other times they are placed at the end of the oob in which case they require a Union or Confederate designation in front of them. There is no difference between a Supply Wagon that is placed within a formation and one located at the bottom of the file other than the fact that the one in the formation will be highlighted when the Show Organization option is turned on. Both types will provide resupply to any units located within the supply range.

## ●Gunboats

Here you see the old and new ways to denote a gunboat (G).

Union G 4 5 p 464 10 USS Winnebago

Union G.6 4 6 < 464 10 U.S.S. Winnebago

The values for the top line are the same as those of any other unit with

4 - the number of guns,

5 - the unit class

p - the weapon type

464 - the unit picture

10 - the 3D icon.

The second line adds the change to G.6 for Forgotten Campaigns.

This was done as a way to add different armor values to gunboats. These vary from a 1 for a wooden ship or transport to a 6 for an iron clad monitor.

The change in class for this particular ship is a matter of a designer's decision.

The change in weapon ID reflects the new weapons list for the oobs, the weapons list has not been standardized and may differ from one game to another.

Previous to Forgotten Campaigns gunboats had not been placed within any formation, they were normally placed at the bottom of the .oob file with the appropriate Union or Confederate prefix as shown above.

Since Forgotten Campaigns covers the battle for Mobile and some other large naval actions the gunboats were grouped together like land units using the Army designation for the fleet and Corps for the various squadrons and flotillas. In some cases the officer commanding that part of the fleet was also added to the oob.

## ●Problems Creating and Loading an OOB File

That about covers everything you need to know about oob files except that you will probably have a problem loading your first one as most of us make a mistake somewhere along the line. If when you attempt to load the oob into the editor and you get an error message I suggest you look at the Unit Dialog box in the Scenario Editor. This is often useful when trying to find the error.

If you find the Union command is loaded but not the Confederate this will indicate the problem is somewhere in the Confederate portion of the file.

If you find a unit missing you'll notice every unit below it in the oob is probably missing too. This is an indication that the problem is in the first missing unit's line.

You can also try saving parts of the oob file and attempting to use that in the editor to narrow down the location of the problem. These tactics are especially useful when dealing with a large oob file.

## ●Changing a Scenario File to use a modified OOB

The last thing I want to cover is the easy way to change the .oob file for a scenario. This can be done without having to redo the scenario from scratch provided you have only changed the data in the lines of the oob. If you left the organization intact and have changed only unit strengths, class, weapons, picture and icon id's or names you can use this procedure.

If you have added or deleted lines in the .oob file you cannot use this procedure because of the way the scenario file is saved. The Scenario Editor uses the file to identify the units and save the data such as their location, arrival and release times, strength, FA level or other data. So if you modify the order the units appear in the file it will mess up the .scn file.

If you merely changed some pictures or modified unit class or weapons you can open the .scn file with a text editor, once again the first thing you want to do is rename the file in the same manner as was described above. To do this you use the Save As function under the File menu. After that you should have something like this displayed in your text editor.

15

Battle of 1st Bull Run (Manassas), July 21st, 1861

1861 7 21 3 0 0 0 1 38

10 20 30 2

10 20 30 2

-1000 -500 500 1000

4 4 0 0 4292 0 0

600 500

Bull Run\_sub.map

1st Bull Run.oob

Antietam.pdt

If you change the name of the 1st Bull Run.oob file in the tenth line you can then save the file, when opened it will use the new oob file you specified. Next you'll want to open it with the Scenario Editor and make a note in the Description explaining that the new scenario uses a modified oob file and maybe noting what was modified in the oob file.