

Welcome to “**CHARGE!**”

This is the official newsletter of the Johnny Reb Gaming Society, an international association of miniature wargamers who use regimental-level rules such as the *Johnny Reb* gaming rules developed by John Hill. The newsletter will provide a quarterly forum for exchanging information regarding the rules, original wargaming scenarios written with JR in mind, and historical articles of general interest to the regimental ACW gamer.

US membership in the society is \$20 per year, which will partially cover the cost of assembling, printing, and mailing the newsletter. Dues are payable via money order or personal check, which must be made out to Deborah Mingus (society treasurer and secretary). Our mailing address and e-mail address are as follows:

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We welcome your submissions of articles, scenarios, advertising, and related information, as well as letters to the editor. The copyrighted name Johnny Reb is used by written permission of John Hill.

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Coming attractions in **CHARGE!** #18

Plum Point Bend naval scenario! Product reviews and more infantry scenarios! The return of Burkhard Schulze's column from Germany! Andy Mac's popular painting guides!

From the Editor's Desk

When one thinks of the Civil War, often the first images are of grand infantry charges sweeping across open farm fields, of ragged battle lines slugging it out in woods, or of mounted cavalymen struggling to the death in hand-to-hand combat. For many ACW buffs (and miniature wargamers), what does not immediately come to mind is the riverine and coastal warfare: every bit as bitter, but often not as bloody or high in publicity as the fights of the foot soldiers and cavaliers.

Civil War infantrymen were often generically nicknamed as “Billy Yank” and “Johnny Reb.” Far less often heard today is a similar period designation for sailors—“Jack Tar.” In this issue of *Charge!*, we proudly present what we believe is the most comprehensive bolt-on rules for *Johnny Reb 3* for riverine and coastal warfare and combined operations – **Sgt. Chris Maes**' new *Jack Tar* rules addition.

Chris has taken a fresh look at naval warfare and in these pages presents his initial playtest version of Jack Tar. He invites the membership of the Johnny Reb Gaming Society to give these rules a try and to provide feedback and suggestions directly to him. Adding ships, gunboats, transports, and the like to traditional ground-based JR3 gaming expands the overall utility of the rules set, and enables the gamer to use marines, sailors, riverside and coastal batteries, and other miniature models in combination with those regiments of infantry and cavalry.

Also in this issue is a classic reprint of **Brian Scherzer**'s overview of the various types of carbines used during the Civil War, a few of which found their way onto ships. The carbine was the primary long-arm of the cavalry on both sides of “the late unpleasantness,” and Brian's interesting article provides the gamer with a short description and history of each major (and the minor) manufacturers of this weapon.

We welcome to the ranks of our writers and contributors **Jonathan Coulter** of Virginia. Jon is an owner and principal of Old Dominion Game Works, which has a prominent presence at most HMGS-East wargaming conventions. They sell lines of miniatures, as well as publishing rules sets such as *Mein Panzer* and others. Among their titles is *American BattleLines*, which includes an edition specific to the American Civil War for regimental-level gaming. Jon presents his interpretation of the Battle of Belmont, one of U.S. Grant's early fights.

American Civil War Carbines

An Overview

Brian Scherzer



The carbine, almost exclusively used as a cavalry weapon, was a major factor in the improvement of Union mounted forces from 1863 until the end of the war. The repeating carbine, especially, was responsible for the dramatic turnaround in performance of Union cavalymen over Confederate troopers. Considering the importance of these weapons, it is surprising to note how little attention they get in wargaming literature. While this short article does not pretend to be the final word on the subject, information on nineteen types of carbines is covered, including (when possible) effective range for firing, units known to have been issued the weapons, and the numbers of each carbine model produced for use with the armies during the war years. The following is an alphabetical listing of all carbines known to be used during the Civil War.

BALLARD CARBINE: The wartime carbines were produced by Ball & Williams between 1862 and 1866, with those manufactured prior to 1864 being .54 caliber and those made in 1864-65 being .44 caliber. The .54 caliber "Old Model" was 38" long and weighed 7 pounds, while the 1864 model (.44 cal.) was 37 ¼" in length with a weight of 6 3/8 pounds. The sight was graduated to 500 yards, the maximum realistic range for any accuracy at all, although effective ranges were more like 150-200 yards. Tests showed that the Ballard could fire up to 18 rounds per minute, although not accurately aimed. The Federal Ordnance Department purchased 1,509 carbines, all being the .44 cal. variety. However, Kentucky state troops used as many as 18,500 of the weapons (.54 cal.), and it is known that the 13th Kentucky Cavalry and the 30th Kentucky Mounted Infantry were armed with Ballards.

BURNSIDE CARBINE: Invented in 1856 by Ambrose Burnside (who later led the Army of the Potomac), the Burnside Carbine was the first weapon purchased by the government that used metallic

cartridges. During the Civil War, there were four different models, each an improvement in some way over the others. The fourth model was 39 ½" long and 7 pounds, 2 ounces in weight. The maximum range was about 500 yards, with the actual effective range extending out to 200 yards. The Union forces purchased a total of 33,031 Burnside carbines for the war effort. The author could not find any information on the rate of fire. Some of the cavalry units known to have used this carbine were the 1st New Jersey; 1st Michigan; 3rd Indiana; 5th, 6th and 7th Ohio; 3rd W. Virginia; 13th, 14th and 18th Pennsylvania; 14th and 21st New York; and the 2nd, 12th, 14th and 16th Illinois.

E. G. LAMSON CARBINE (BALL & PALMER):

E. G. Lamson bought the factories and assets that allowed them to manufacture and provide to the government two different carbines—the Palmer and, later, the Ball carbines. The .50 cal. Palmer was the lightest of all ACW carbines, being 36" long and weighing only 4 ½ pounds. It had some initial problems: the rifling grooves had no effect because of a smaller cartridge used by the Federals. However, in a test conducted at West Point in 1863, an improved .32 cal. Palmer was fired 12 times at a target 336 yards away, with all shots hitting the target within a 3-foot pattern. The Palmer was found to produce good results at a rate of fire of 15 shots per minute. The Ball Repeating Rifle was produced too late in the war to be counted as a wartime weapon.

GALLAGER CARBINE: The Gallager Carbine, patented in 1860, was manufactured in Philadelphia. In the patent, inventor Mahlon J. Gallager of Savannah, Georgia, claimed that his carbine was a superior weapon because of the easy removal of a spent cartridge from the breech. However, the mechanism was flawed, and cartridges frequently had to be removed by prying them out. Even so, the cost was low enough that the government procured 17,728 of the .50 cal. weapons, each being 39 ¼" long and weighing 7 lbs., 8 ounces. Of the 50 officers who tested the Gallager, 40 rated it as totally worthless. Effective range seems to have been about 130 yards. Cavalry units that used the weapon included the 3rd West Virginia; 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th Ohio; and the 13th Tennessee.

GIBBS CARBINE: The Gibbs Carbine had a very short lifespan during the war, but left an unusual footnote in history. Based on the same principles as the Gallager Carbine, this .52 caliber weapon was 39" long and weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces. Only slightly more than 1,000 had been delivered from the

factory in New York City by July 1863. On July 13, the New York Riot occurred, and rioters assaulted the building. At first, 34 policemen armed with Gibbs Carbines guarded the factory. They shot 3 rioters before being ordered to another area, at which point the mob burned the factory down, effectively ending the career of the Gibbs Carbine. The few soldiers in the field that used the weapon were not very impressed.

GWYN & CAMPBELL CARBINE: Also known as the Cosmopolitan, there were 3 separate models of this carbine in use by the end of the war—the Cosmopolitan and the Gwyn & Campbell types 1 & 2. Each design was only slightly different, and all used linen .32 caliber cartridges. While the Type 1 G&C carbine had sights graduated out to 900 yards, none of the models had an effective range more than 200 yards, but they could be fired with steadily diminishing results up to 500 yards. The weapon was 39" long and weighed 6 lbs., 9 ounces. A total of 9,342 carbines of all models were sold to the government. Cavalry units using the weapon included the 2nd and 3rd Arkansas; 5th, 6th and 16th Illinois; 3rd and 4th Indiana; 4th and 8th Iowa; 2nd, 6th and 14th Kansas; 10th, 12th, 14th and 40th Kentucky; 4th and 8th Missouri; 5th and 8th Ohio; 7th Tennessee; and the 3rd Wisconsin.

HALL CARBINE (U.S. MODEL 1843): The Hall Carbine was the first carbine introduced in the world, with the first weapons being sold in 1834 to the 1st Regt. of U.S. Dragoons. Being a smoothbore, the government had many of the carbines rifled for .58 cal. cartridges. The weapon was neither accurate nor efficient, leading all 21 officers who tested the weapon to rate it as either poor or worthless. The range was considered too short, and the carbines often fouled after only a few shots. The 2nd and 9th Illinois Cavalry were armed with Hall Carbines, but many of the troops apparently found other arms.

JOSLYN CARBINES (MODELS 1855, 1862 AND 1864): All of the carbines manufactured by Joslyn were of the .54 cal. single-shot variety. The first model was 38 1/4" long, weighing in at 7 lbs., 4 ounces. The 1862 model, being a rim-fire weapon, was 38 7/8" long and weighed 6 pounds, 10 ounces. A total of 11,261 Joslyn Carbines were purchased by the government, even though officers who tested the guns did not like them. The range was similar to most carbines of the period, but the breechblock tended to blow open when the weapon was fired. An additional problem was that Spencer cartridges fit poorly in this gun. Cavalry units issued the Joslyn were the 4th and

8th Indiana; 1st N.Y. Dragoons; 19th N.Y.; 13th Tennessee; 9th Pennsylvania; 3rd West Virginia; 1st Wisconsin; 1st Nebraska; 1st Nevada; and the 11th Ohio.

LINDNER CARBINE: Only 892 Lindner Carbines were purchased during the war, and the only use of the weapon in combat was by the 1st Michigan Cavalry in the Shenandoah Campaign and, later, at the Second Battle of Bull Run. The troopers exchanged their Lindners for Sharps Carbines in late 1862, ending the brief debut of the weapon during the Civil War.

MAYNARD CARBINE: An extremely accurate and well liked weapon, the Maynard was found in some quantity in arsenals in the Southern states at the beginning of the war. Coming in two varieties, the .35 cal. and the .50 cal., this weapon was a good performing gun. The inventor, a dentist named Dr. Edward Maynard, held a demonstration for the government in 1859 where he fired 237 rounds (at a rate of 12 rounds per minute) at a 3 ft-by-6 ft. target placed 200 yards away—and "never missed." The weapons were light, but the .50 caliber carbine had a bit too much of a kick to it. Not used by Union forces very much because of the late delivery (1864-65) of the weapons, Confederate cavalrymen used them to great advantage. The 9th and 11th Indiana; and the 11th Tennessee were known to have been issued Maynards during the war.

MERRILL CARBINE: The Merrill Carbine seems to have been either loved or hated, depending on who was reviewing the weapon for the Ordnance Dept. Survey of Weapons. I have chosen to use the ratings of the 91 officers who helped to conduct the weapons trials. They rated the Merrill as generally a poor choice (72 of the officers rated it as "fair" to "worthless," with only 19 calling it "best" or "good"). However, General George Stoneman liked the carbine and asked for many of his cavalry troops to be armed with it. Using a paper cartridge of .54 caliber, the Merrill Carbine was 37 3/8" long and weighed 6 pounds, 8 ounces. There does not seem to be a record of its effective range. Cavalry units known to have carried the 14,255 Merrills purchased by the government were the 27th Kentucky; 1st, 5th, and 18th New York; 1st New Jersey; 7th Indiana; 1st and 3rd Wisconsin; 11th, 17th and 18th Pennsylvania; and the 1st Delaware.

REMINGTON CARBINE: This weapon has been listed in several books covering Civil War carbines, but the actual orders from the government were not

received until the war was over, so this carbine will not be reviewed.

SHARPS CARBINE: This famous weapon was first produced during 1849-50 in Pennsylvania. Two later models, the "New Model 1859" and the "New Model 1863" were the types used during the war. The Sharps Carbine was widely used, with 5,800 being purchased by the government in 1861, 17,134 in 1862, 22,205 in 1863, 25,039 in 1864, and 7,152 being delivered in 1865, for a total wartime purchase of 77,330 weapons. Both models used during the Civil War were .52 caliber and 39 1/8" long, weighing in at a hefty 7 lbs., 12 ounces. Field officers who responded to an 1863-64 Ordnance Dept. survey about the weapon overwhelmingly shouted its praise. Of 422 officers, 215 considered it the best arm in the service, 199 rated it as "good," and only 8 mere rated the Sharps as "fair" or "poor." The Battle of Gettysburg showed the intense ability of this gun to stop an enemy. General John Buford's cavalry, 5 regiments of which were armed with the Sharps Carbine, threw back Confederate infantry attacks on the first day until Union infantry reinforcements came to the rescue. The rate of accurate fire was ten rounds per minute at up to 600 yards, although 300 yards was considered to be the effective fire range. The Confederates also had access to some Sharps Carbines, with 5,200 of the guns being manufactured between 1862 and 1864. Some of the Union cavalry units issued the weapon include: 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th Illinois; 1st California; 5th and 6th Ohio; the 1st through 6th U.S. Regulars; 1st Michigan; 3rd and 13th Pennsylvania; 1st and 2nd Massachusetts; 5th Iowa; and the 20th New York. While many more regiments obtained the Sharps Carbine, my research could not come up with their names.

SHARPS & HANKINS CARBINES: There were three distinct models put out by the Sharps & Hankins factory, none of which saw much use during the war. Of the 1,468 S&H carbines purchased by the government, 500 went to the Union Navy, and many others were of a fairly experimental nature. The differences between the models were primarily connected with the release and breech-frame mechanisms. The Sharps & Hankins model that debuted in 1863 was timed at a rate of fire of 14 rounds in 1 minute, 40 seconds. One very short model (slightly over 33" in length) was tried out for cavalry usage, but was manufactured too late in the war to make any impact in the field. The 9th New York Cavalry and the 11th New York Volunteer Cavalry are known to have been issued the special short-barreled carbines.

SMITH CARBINE: In 1860, a board of officers met at the Washington Arsenal to conduct tests on weapons that were being considered for future purpose. The carbine that generated the most raves was the Smith, being considered the simplest to operate and the most durable for cavalry use. This .50 caliber weapon was 39 1/2" long and weighed 7 pounds, 8 ounces. Taking either a foil and paper cartridge, or one of rubber, the Smith was not the most accurate, the fastest loading, or the carbine that could extend a shot out over great distance. It was, however, reliable, and the troops that were issued the weapon rated it highly. A total of 31,002 were purchased for the war. Units known to have been given the carbines include the 1st Massachusetts; 6th and 9th Ohio; 1st Connecticut; 7th and 17th Pennsylvania; 7th and 11th Illinois; and the 3rd West Virginia Cavalry regiments.

SPENCER CARBINE: This carbine was the royalty of the Civil War period. Capable of firing 7 rounds within 10 seconds, the Spencer Repeating Carbine really did much to change the fortunes of the Union mounted regiments. Brig. Gen. James W. Ripley, Chief of the U.S. Ordnance Department, being a typical myopic bureaucrat, refused to believe that such an advanced weapon could actually be of value on the field. Nonetheless, the Federal government procured more than 95,000 of these repeaters because of the insistence of President Lincoln, who personally tested the Spencer. This gun used a copper rim-fire cartridge that was easily loaded with a maximum of 7 rounds. The Blakeslee cartridge box, patented in 1864 by Col. Erastus Blakeslee of the 1st Connecticut Volunteer Cavalry, gave troopers much more firepower capability than before. This cartridge box was capable of holding up to 13 "tubes" of 7 cartridges each, giving the Union cavalryman an additional 91 rounds at his fingertips. Being effective at up to 400 yards, Confederate reports of battles fought against units armed with the Spencer often grossly exaggerated the number of enemy combatants involved. The Spencer carbine was effective not only in a defensive mode, but also in the attack, because troops armed with it could fire on the run without needing to reload. Units armed with this weapon were too numerous to mention, but Custer's Michigan troopers made good use of the carbine at Gettysburg and other battles.

STARR CARBINE: Better known for its revolvers, the Starr Arms Company also produced a carbine that started the war as a percussion weapon and ended up, with only slight modifications, as a rim-fire carbine. The .54 caliber Starr Carbine was 37 5/8" long and