

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!** #31

Another great *Regimental Fire & Fury* scenario
from Lowell Hamilton!

Interview with Rich Hasenauer.

At least 2 JR3 scenarios! Product reviews and
more!

From the Editor's Desk

Hopefully you have had a safe winter, one in which you had a chance to catch up on your historical reading and wargaming. Perhaps you finally made a dent in that mountain of unpainted figures or play-tested that Civil War scenario you have wanted to try for so long?

For me, winter has been spent researching yet another manuscript and polishing my biography of Confederate Gov.-Gen. William "Extra Billy" Smith of Virginia, who played a role in influencing senior command decisions on Day 1 at Gettysburg.

This month's issue of *CHARGE!* features some interesting rules suggestions from the designer of the Johnny Reb gaming system, New Mexico-based John Hill. He offers some perspectives on the ideas of long-range artillery fire in Johnny Reb 3 and simulating in the rules mechanics as smoke envelops the battlefield. Try out his optional rules in your next game.

Here in south-central Pennsylvania, several controversial issues continue to make headlines as I write this note. The Gettysburg casino/no casino battle has divided the residents, in some cases bitterly. Vandalism and accidents involving battlefield monuments continues to be a problem, and there is still considerable disagreement in some quarters between battlefield preservationists / restorers and certain groups and individuals dead-set against further tree-cutting on the Military Park's land.

For the record, I am opposed to the casino and in favor of the continuation of the battlefield (a project that also involves the planting of trees and orchards to replace now missing historical woodlots and fruit trees. The recent cuttings at Spangler's Meadow / Powers Hill, and West Confederate Avenue have added to the historical interpretation of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Scott L. Mingus, Sr.
York, Pa.

An Interview with Ivor Janci

Graphic Artist, Wargamer, Rules Author, Publisher
Wheaton, Illinois

Q – *When you were a child, what were your favorite military-related playthings?*

A – Oh brother, Scott, now you have me digging back into the cobweb-covered areas of my brain. Let's see (pause to part the cobwebs)... I barely remember, at the age of five I think, receiving a Christmas gift from my parents of a Marx playset that had approximately 54mm tall American Civil War plastic soldiers in bright blue or soft, dove grey colors. I can picture one advancing soldier with the rifle across his belly with a droopy bayonet. Aren't these figurines (Marx re-issues) being made today by Barzo or similar manufacturer?

I'm not sure if there was a fort and maybe some Indians (American native types) in the play-set. But there were a lot of toy soldiers in that set. This was about the time when the American Civil War Centennial was being celebrated, and there were a few ACW-oriented TV shows, e.g., *The Gray Ghost* and *The Americans*, plus the Disney productions, such as *Johnny Shiloh* and the *Great Locomotive Chase*, and the always entertaining, John Ford-directed *The Horse Soldiers* [Ed. note: see page 23].

About a year or two later, I received as gifts a couple of small play-sets of ACW painted soldiers made by a veteran company called Britains, Ltd. There were maybe four or five figurines; one charging officer pointing with his sword, with his head to the side as if he's yelling words of encouragement to his men, a couple of privates firing their rifled-muskets, etc., but more importantly, each set had a model cannon made out of metal that really fired (with the aid of a spring in the barrel)! And the ammo was steel rods about the size of a number 2 pencil lead. Today, that type of toy is probably banned as a hazard, but back then it was what a boy general needed to support his troops.

Besides toy soldiers, I had the Johnny Reb Cannon by Remco. It was no higher than my knees, and only shot plastic roundshot. Wearing my soft felt blue kepi (I was a Federal since I was born in the northern part of the Land of Lincoln), I marched up and down our yard with that cannon, singing *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (and probably shot the cannonballs at our pet Labrador).

By the mid-1960s, the Marx & Britain soldiers stood down when I spied at a local hobby store two boxes

of ACW plastic soldiers in the model-railroading scales of HO/OO. Now, I know that you, Scott, and several others reading this who are close to my age, will guess correctly that these were the Airfix imports from the United Kingdom. My father bought both boxes for me at the low price of 50 cents each (each box that is, not each toy soldier which is what we pay these days)! Those soldiers saw many a campaign, both indoors and outdoors, and eventually became the first table-top wargame figurines to be used with a set of commercially available miniature wargame rules set.

Q – *What were your favorite Civil War books and authors as a youth?*

A – Now it's coming back to me easily (see, you're making me think). I remember two books from my early youth: *Rifles for Watie* and *The American Heritage History of The Civil War*. The latter of the two is important because of the illustrated maps of the battles. These are the painted maps by David Greenspan that had the birds-eye view of the battles, with depictions of miniature soldiers, cannons, wagons, timberclads, etc. If I had to point to anything to fostering my interest in miniature wargames, I'd say it was these maps.

Q – *How did you get started in the hobby of miniature wargaming?*

A – Back in the late 60s there was a wonderful store in downtown Chicago, that my grandfather and I visited, that primarily sold, arguably, every magazine published in the world at that time. There I found a British magazine called *Meccano*, which catered to the model hobbyist I believe. But upon thumbing through it, I found an article from a series authored by Charles Grant that had wargame rules with photographs of scenes made with Airfix WW2 miniatures and Roco Minitanks. I was hooked. No more throwing marbles or shooting steel rods at toy soldiers, but measuring with rules, and throwing dice.

So, whenever I could get into Chicago, I'd get the next issue of *Meccano* magazine to learn more rules. Later, I'd find a hardback book titled *The Wargame* which had the rules that Mr. Grant serialized in the magazine. From this resource, I found that there was a magazine from England, titled *Miniature Warfare*, that I just had to subscribe to. In the pages of this quarterly magazine, were ads for miniature wargame rules, such as *1863*, the first set of commercially available ACW miniature wargame rules that I bought and used.

1863 used the rather unique system, at the time, of basing multiple figurines on a base, at a ratio of 1 figurine to 33 real men. There were three figurines, all in one row, with only the outer two being affixed to the base. Several bases touching in a row would be a regiment in line of battle. The middle figurine was left loose, so that a player could temporarily remove the figurine, space the bases of a regiment apart about half a base width or so, and the middle figurine would then be placed in between two bases to make an extended line!

Besides the above, I used a set of rules for medieval warfare that were a lot of fun. They were titled *Chainmail* by authors Perrin and Gygax. But then, right after college, I discovered 15mm Napoleonic, as well as a set of Napoleonic rules, *Empire*, 1st edition, written by Scotty Bowden. I learned that he had written another set of rules for the ACW period, called *JEB!* which was soon replaced by Bowden's and Getz's *Stars N Bars*. For two decades we played with those rules in their various editions.

By the late 70s, with the help of a friend and one-time high school teacher of mine, Earl Kyle, we gathered a few local comrades and became a group of guys who were meeting regularly. Of course, back then, the periods of warfare were limited to a handful. We played ACW, Napoleonic, and ECW (whereas the WW2 miniatures were in "mothballs" and wouldn't be played again with fervor by me until late 2007).

Q – What is your favorite wargame (board or miniature) and why?

A – I don't think that I have a favorite game, but I could state that currently I'm very interested in WW2 again. I use an obscure set of rules called *Storming the Reich*, that are reminiscent (at least in relative complexity) of the Charles Grants rules from 40 years ago. One of the aspects of gaming that I like to credit is creating an interest in a historical period for me. I've learned so much about the Second World War that I didn't know, be it uniforms, armor camouflage, tactics, etc. Same with the recent writings about the ACW regarding tactics, musketry and terrain, and more.

Q – Tell us about your Civil War miniatures collection—scale, type and number of figures, accessories, painting style, basing, etc.

A – I've two scales for land warfare during the ACW: 22mm mix of figurines by Italeri, RSM, and Musket Miniatures based for tactical and grand-tactical games, and 28mm for skirmish gaming using

the *Brother Against Brother* rules. My collection of 28s is mostly Perry, Sash and Saber, Mark Fenlon, Firing Line, and a few Old Glory, mounted singly. As to number of figurines, I haven't counted, but if you'd ask Frani, my wife, she'd simply say "a lot".

Most, if not all, of my buildings and terrain, for the tactical/grand-tactical scale, were wonderfully made and/or painted by Doug Kline of Battlefield Terrain Concepts. For the 28mm scale, my terrain and buildings were done by the excellent model-maker, Herb Gundt, of HG Walls. I highly recommend both Doug and Herb, and credit them for making the tabletop games look great!

For riverine or sea warfare, I have the excellent 1/600 scale line of iron/ timberclads and sailing ships from Toby Barrett's Thoroughbred Models.

Q – What are your favorite gaming conventions, and why? Least favorite?

A – A one time it was Gen Con, when there was a good presence of historical miniature events, but by the late 80s, that convention had a downturn in such events. With Earl Kyle's urging, several of our group of gamers switched to attending Historicon. There were more than enough games to play or vendors to see. Little Wars, in a suburb of Chicago near where I live, is another convention that I attend. Though it's smaller than Historicon, there's a good presence of wonderful games and vendors.

To be honest, in the last few years, gaming conventions are not as important to me as they once were. There's a cost issue which has made attending the events a little prohibitive for me due to the economic downturn. Also, I do my shopping via vendors on the internet, or those I have a direct relationship with, so the need to shop at the shows isn't necessary. I'm not interested in collecting miniatures and playing in any new periods, and I've enough miniatures and accessories to keep me gaming. Today, I'd prefer to get some of my friends together to play a game rather than attend a convention.

Q – Which is your favorite Civil War battlefield to visit and why? How often have you been there? Your favorite spot on that field?

A – I haven't been to too many battlefields, but Manassas, Gettysburg, Antietam, and Chickamauga are the ones that I've visited more than once. I would like to visit these sites again, and especially Gettysburg because of the landscape modifications that are being done to the battlefield to bring it back

to a state that it was in during the mid-1860s. I'm not sure if I have a favorite Eastern Theater battlefield.

Since marrying Frani, who's from St. Joseph, MO, I've become more interested in the Trans-Mississippi theater of the war. Though I've yet to make it to Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge, or Prairie Grove. Plus I still haven't been to Shiloh in the Western Theater. So, I still have plenty of sites to visit, and have yet to choose a favorite.

Q – Where do you see the hobby of miniature wargaming in 5 to 10 years? What changes do you anticipate (or want to see happen)?

A – That is tough one. I've misplaced my crystal ball, but I going to go out on a limb and say that miniature wargaming will always have a following, though what percentage will be historical miniature wargaming is truly unknown. For interest in historical miniature wargaming, there has to be an interest in military history. It was easier for myself and others who are now in our "middle ages" to become interested in historical wargaming, because we had the Centennial of the ACW, documentaries on WW2, TV shows like *Combat!* and the *Gray Ghost* to influence us. And I can understand the popularity of *Warhammer* and *Sword-and-Sorcery* gaming with a younger group due to the availability of movies and TV shows for that genre. Still, there are a lot of historical books being published, as well as the Military Channel on cable TV, so the interest in history and thus historical wargaming will always be present.

Q – What are your best "in-house" rules for *Johnny Reb 3* gaming?

A – I don't have any because the friends that I game with are not *Johnny Reb* gamers. I read and admire the rules, but I'm reluctant to try to teach them to the occasional gamers that get together with me play wargames. I'd really prefer to find a simpler set of regimental-scale rules that I can learn and teach to the guys. Sometimes I wish that there would be a 'lighter' version of *Johnny Reb*. Recently, I'd purchased the *Black Powder* rules from Warlord Games, and I'm in the process of reading them.

Q – Describe your figure / structure painting style and any special techniques that you can share.

A – If I'm painting figurines, in general I prefer to have the colors of the uniform slightly brighter than

in reality. Many gamers have wonderfully painted wargame armies, but their tables are under-lit which doesn't do their miniatures justice. I use to prime my figurines black, but in more recent years I've returned to priming them white or a medium grey, so that the colors that go over them will be brighter. As for washes, I'm not as fond of that technique anymore, and prefer dry-brushing highlights. I also try to find spray paints in a color that comes close to the overall uniform color so that I can provide a base coat that doesn't have to be brushed on. This technique works best when the uniform color is the same for the pants as for the coat.

Beyond the above, I love using craft-store acrylics, with a drop of retarder to extend the drying process. The days of me using Humbrol were over with, and my respiratory system is happy about that. Once painted, I like to spray a gloss fixative, sometimes up to 2-3 coats, and then, once dry, spray on a matte varnish coating or two. I primarily use either Grumbachers or Golden's Non-Yellowing Matte Acrylic Varnish which are not Fixatives. I contend that the spray-on varnish (versus a fixative), readily available through art supply stores, has a stronger protective coating that dries extremely matte. One just has to spray it outside the house, with good ventilation if using the garage for example, due to the strong odor.

Q – What has been your best memory in wargaming?

A – Having a good time with a group of friends whether it'd be a game that I was winning or losing. (Most of the games that I've been in have had me on the losing side.) Still, to reminisce with old friends of miniature battles that had a spectacular charge or devastating rout is an ultimate joy for this old wargamer.

Thank you, Ivor, for your contributions to enriching our hobby!