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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From the Editor’s Desk

Welcome to Issue #33 of Charge! Debi and I continue to be thankful and appreciative of the wonderful support from the regimental ACW gaming community over the past several years that we have published this newsletter.

As we push ahead into yet another new year, we renew our call for articles, scenarios, painting guides, figure conversions, scratch-building structures, strategy, and anything else of interest and utility to gamemasters and gamers. Robert Sweeney has provided an index to issues #1 to #30; we now look ahead to the next 30 issues!

This issue features an excellent scenario by Dr. David R. Steinheimer of Houston, Texas. Labadieville was a battle fought in Louisiana and it makes for an excellent and well balanced wargaming scenario. We welcome David to our ranks of scenario authors.

George Anderson contributed a fine little scenario for Deserted House, a winter-time battle in Virginia that took place 149 years ago this January.

I have included a small scenario for the Battle of Haw’s Shop, another scenario that is easy to play with a small group or one-on-one.

Of particular interest to many subscribers will be Lowell Hamilton’s very interesting article on converting Johnny Reb scenarios (all three versions) to Regimental Fire & Fury. Lowell will occasionally in the future be contributing original scenarios for RFF which can be used for many other regimental-level ACW gaming systems.

John Hill answers more questions regarding Johnny Reb rules interpretations, and he also contributes information with co-author Todd Davis on a new Shiloh board game they have designed. It looks great, and should be a very worthy addition to the library of wargaming titles.
Ask John Hill

Q – In preparation of next year’s mega-game weekend in Antwerp, Belgium, which will tackle the Battle of Stones River with the focus on the first day, I am analyzing the map and came to the following, for me, strange conclusion (based on 15mm scale distances):

- In open terrain, infantry in battle line can move up to 6 inches, which in real distance would correspond to 300 yards in 20 minutes, or 900 yards per hour speed.
- It is a known fact that when stepping out, the infantry in line, crossing the field at Gettysburg, moved at 100 yards per minute, which would correspond to 6,000 yards per hour speed.

I find this discrepancy rather big. I can understand that 6,000 is too high a number, but in my opinion 900 is too low.

What am I missing?

A – One of the hardest “known facts” a wargame designer has to deal with is how to reconcile theoretical marching speeds with actual marching speeds under battlefield conditions. Nothing moves as fast as the field manual states. There are a multitude of little delays which all add up to the inevitable friction of war.

These can be the time it takes a brigadier to decide what he wants to do or waiting for the divisional commander to define the mission.

And then there is the time lag in the transmission and clarification of orders in an era before radios. Finally, once the line steps off, there will be the frequent stops to realign the regimental line and then to realign the larger brigade line. Only when the final charge order of “At the Double Quick...” will the line be moving at the often quoted speed of 100 yards a minute—which is 3.4 miles per hour. Of course, once that final order is given there is no stopping for realignment, and the regiment will quickly dissolve into disorder.

Hence, when taking into account all those little frictions, my analysis suggests that the speed of 100 yard a minute for a formed line might be approached—but, only in a charge move. So looking at a twenty-minute JR III charge turn—there would be 6 inches of line movement (300 yards) plus a three-dice charge bonus. Assuming an average 3-dice roll of about 11 (another 550 yards) that means that our line—when ordered to charge—would have covered 850 yards in twenty minutes or 2,550 yards per hour. That is still less than the theoretically projected speed of 6,000 yards per hour—but not that far off if we consider the old adage that “in war, everything takes twice as long as expected.”

Finally, before we get too wrapped up in calculating historical time and distance equations, we should consider Dr. David Martin’s cautionary comments about “time” in his seminal work Gettysburg July 1 in which he notes that, “One of the most frustrating aspects of attempting to study a battle is giving absolute time to events. Soldiers often lose track of time during a battle, and an activity that seemed like a few minutes to one man may have seemed like an hour or more to another. Not everyone carried watches, and those that did, did not always keep them wound or accurate. In short, those that had watches were not necessarily in synchronization with anyone else.”

The Battle of Oldtown Creek
Photos by Roger Mark

The scenario is from John Hill’s Bermuda Hundred series. Watch for a “how to” article from Roger!
The Battle of Labadieville (or Georgia Landing), Louisiana
October 27, 1862
By Dr. David R. Steinheimer

“They soon came thicker than was amusing.”
Soldier of the 13th Connecticut Infantry commenting on Rebel artillery rounds

BACKGROUND
By the autumn of 1862, the war in Louisiana was going badly for the Confederacy. New Orleans had fallen on the 24th of April, after Flag Officer David Farragut’s fleet had forced its way past Forts Jackson and St. Philip on the Mississippi River below the Crescent City. By mid-May, Baton Rouge and Natchez, Mississippi were in Federal hands. With the situation in New Orleans stabilizing, Major General Benjamin “Beast” Butler (those of us from New Orleans know him as “Spoons” Butler, because to his “liberation” of the family silver from several of the city’s most prominent homes), the Federal commander of New Orleans and the Department of the Gulf, could turn his attention toward expanding the area under his control. In mid-October, a three-pronged attack was launched into south-central Louisiana with the goals of capturing Brashear City (now Morgan City) and reopening the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad. General Butler entrusted command of the northern arm of the offensive to Brigadier General Godfrey Weitzel, who was to strike west from New Orleans to Donaldsonville, then down Bayou Lafourche (pronounced LA-FOOSH, stressing the “F”) to the town of Terrebonne and then west to Brashear City.

Confederate Major General Richard Taylor, newly appointed to command the District of Western Louisiana, was intent on defending Brashear City. Guessing Butler’s plan when gunboats carrying Weitzel’s 4500 Union troops left New Orleans on the 24th of October and moved up the Mississippi to Donaldsonville, Taylor dispatched Brigadier General Alfred Mouton with an ad-hoc mixture of troops to delay the Federals along Bayou Lafourche. Butler had chosen the Lafourche as a natural corridor between Donaldsonville and Terrebonne, while Mouton saw the bayou as an ideal place to slow up Weitzel’s force. Mouton’s troops straddled the bayou and prepared to receive the Yankees at the tiny settlement of Georgia Landing, two miles north of the village of Labadieville. Weitzel left two companies of the 12th Connecticut Infantry, one section of Carruth’s Massachusetts Battery, and the 1st Louisiana Cavalry (USA) as a rearguard at Napoleonville as he moved south along the Lafourche. The New England troops met Mouton’s pickets some thousand yards north of the Texas Plantation road.

THE WARGAME
The scenario begins at 11 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. with the beginning of the Confederate withdrawal. Brigadier General Alfred Mouton, though in overall command, was incapacitated by severe rheumatism. Colonel Leopold Arman of the 18th Louisiana Infantry exercised de-facto command on the west bank of the bayou in place of Mouton, who remained behind the lines making strategic decisions. If you wish to reflect this in your game, Arman should be rated average +1, and placed with the 18th Louisiana. Lt. Colonel Franklin Clark of the 33rd Louisiana Infantry, average +1, initially held command on the east bank. The inability to communicate across the bayou renders both Northern and Southern commands disjointed, though Weitzel had the forethought to bring a floating bridge with his column. Weitzel’s small party of engineers, assisted by large numbers of runaway slaves that had been drawn to the Union force, cut through the levees and emplaced the bridge when it became obvious that a battle was brewing.

DEPLOYMENT
Initial deployment is as shown on the map. The weather had been very wet and bitterly cold for the preceding week, dropping to just below freezing at night and causing very heavy frosts in the mornings. Gale force winds had battered the area on the 25th and 26th, and though this had moderated by the early hours of the 27th, the temperature for that day and several more to come was extremely cold, especially for South Louisiana. Weitzel, the 12th and 13th Connecticut, the 75th New York, and the artillery arrive at point “A” at 11:15 a.m. The 2nd Louisiana Cavalry was divided into two battalions, 100 on the west bank and 140 on the east bank, but optionally can be kept together in one body on either side of the
bayou. Historically, the 33rd Louisiana fought together as a single regiment, but at the discretion of the player, the regiment’s two battalions may fight separately on the same or opposite sides of the bayou. Both sides may shift forces across the bayou, the Federals with their floating bridge, which cannot be moved during the scenario, and the Confederates via the bridge at Labadieville. The Rebels must allow for a round-trip march of four miles, meaning a unit will be off the board for at least 45 minutes. Orders being sent across the bayou by either side must use the bridges. All cavalry begins mounted.

**TERRAIN**

All woods are light. The levees, other than at the cuts for the floating bridge, are eight feet high at their apexes and quite steep on both faces and should be treated as rough terrain. The swampy area and the sugarcane field are also rough, automatically disordering troops. The cane field is impassable to cavalry or mounted officers/couriers. The sugarcane was 10-12 feet high and hides any unit within it, as well as restricting the unit’s vision of objects outside the field. The bayou is unfordable, being at least ten feet deep, twenty feet wide, and very muddy. Rebels on the east bank have thrown up hasty works in their front. The open fields on both sides of the bayou from the cane field south are wet from recent rains and they have thawed from the previous night’s frosty weather. The fields are thickly strewn with thorn bushes, trees felled by the winds of the last two days, and stumps and are all therefore broken terrain. The drainage ditch which runs along the Texas Plantation road is two to three feet deep and is broken terrain and will cause any unit crossing it to automatically go into disorder.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS**

For the Federals, the object is to destroy Mouton’s force while not allowing the push toward Brashear City to be slowed. Therefore, a decisive victory would be to inflict 40% casualties or more and force a disorderly Rebel retreat off of the southern edge of the map prior to 3:30 p.m. A marginal victory will be to force the Confederates to retreat off the northern edge of the map at any time during the game. A marginal victory will be simply to hold the Federals at bay until 3:30 p.m. and then make an orderly withdrawal.

**ORDER OF BATTLE**

**Union**

**Reserve Brigade, Army of the Gulf**

Brig. Gen. Godfrey Weitzel, average +2
75th New York Infantry, 300 men, RM, average. (Lt. Col. Willoughby Babcock)
12th Connecticut Infantry (8 cos), 340 men, RM, average. (Maj. Frank Peck)
13th Connecticut Infantry, 600 men, RM, average. (Col. Henry Birge)
8th New Hampshire Infantry, 400 men, RM, average. (Col. Hawkes Fearing)
Co. B, 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry Battalion, 100 men, BLC, average. (Lt. Salon Perkins)
1 Battery, Maine Light Artillery, 4x12lb JR, 1x12lb N, average. (Capt. G.W. Thompson)
6th Massachusetts Light Artillery (2 sections), 4x12lb N, average. (Capt. William Carruth)

**Confederate**

**Mouton’s Brigade, Army of West Louisiana**

2nd Louisiana Cavalry, 240 men, RM, average. (Col. William Vincent)
18th Louisiana Infantry, 240 men, RM, average. (Col. Leopold Arman)
Crescent Regiment (24th Louisiana Infantry), 140 men, RM, average. (Col. George McPheeters)
33rd Louisiana Infantry, 600 men, SB, average. (Lt. Col. Franklin Clack)
Terrebone Parish Militia, 100 men, SB(p), green. (Col. John Bisland)
Battery H, 1st Mississippi Light Artillery, 2x6lb SB, 2x12lb Howitzers, average. (Capt. George Ralston)
Semmes’ Confederate Battery, 4x6lb SB, 2x 6lb JR, average. (Capt. Oliver Semmes)

**THE BATTLE AND AFTERMATH**

About 11 a.m., the Massachusetts cavalry encountered Mouton’s pickets on the west bank of the Lafourche and the Northern infantry began driving them in. As the Union troops advanced towards the Texas Plantation road, the Rebel...