

### **3dLD AAR – 2011 Mount Harmon, MD (long and hopefully controversial)**

**Submitted by Dan Murphy**

Let me start by thanking our hosts. Mt. Harmon is a beautiful old plantation perched over the Sassafras River and surrounded by water on three sides. The ground around the house is a series of undulating pastures with more relief than we typically play on but I found it particularly well suited for using cavalry.

The cavalry brigade was formed in two troops. The 1<sup>st</sup> troop was made up of the 3d Light Dragoons (white coats) while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Troop was made up of multiple colors and impressions with members from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Dragoons (blue), 4<sup>th</sup> Legionary Corps (green) and the Spanish Dragoons (red and white). Major Bob Healy (4<sup>th</sup> LC) held command of the brigade. Saturday morning we had an excellent sword drill with the 2<sup>nd</sup> troop and then watered the horses and ourselves before the main event.

Our first task for Saturday's battle was to find the enemy light infantry. I posted carbines forward and we soon spotted the enemy on a far hill with open flanks. Major Healy quickly rode over and told me to engage them at once. We charged in a narrow column down into a muddy swale and back up through a gap in the works where we reached better ground and were able to gain some speed. We crested the hill, spurring for the enemy left flank as a Hessian Grenadier (?) platoon was in the process of refusing the same. The race was on and the Grenadiers won, they fired a volley and we wheeled about and reformed. Major Healy now came over and asked that we charge the British once again in an effort to move the British – the Major's popularity was steadily dropping among the 1<sup>st</sup> troop. However, orders are orders and we made a second charge but Jaegers were now supporting the flank of the Grenadiers and well anchored on a thicket of blackjack, needless to say the second charge ended with the success of the first.

Our own light infantry was now on the scene and the British began to advance. We haunted the British left flank hoping for an opening but the Grenadiers and Jaegers were too expert in the movements for us to gain an opening.

Major Healy then pulled us back to face a new threat on our left rear and we formed a single rank in a hollow before a large rising hill. To our left I saw our own infantry moving forward and heard rashes of musketry as they engaged what I guessed was a large body of enemy troops. I sent carbineers Joel Anderson, Stuart Lilie and Josh Underwood forward and they reported a British brigade was formed on the far side of the hill with three guns. Capt. Allegretto with the 2<sup>nd</sup> troop now fell in on my left in the hollow and Major Healy waved us forward. We broke into a trot, lifting out of the hollow and as we reached a hand gallop I looked across our front to see the prettiest line of moving cavalry I have ever witnessed! We crested the hill with swords aloft and the first troop rolled over a flank company before spilling into the rear flank of the main enemy line.

As we rallied back and rode off, the enemy found some cartridges and fired at our retreat. After directing us to make that charge Major Healy was nothing short of a rock star in the eyes of the 3dLD/1<sup>st</sup> troop and he could have easily borrowed twenty dollars from each and every one of us on the spot! I will say something now about infantry and cavalry playing together. I realize this is a growing process and we are all learning how to interact with one another, BUT, after making a successful charge such as we did without receiving a volley, **THE INFANTRY SHOULD GIVE GROUND!!** You don't have to fall down or take casualties – in fact we saddle types would prefer you didn't - but that line didn't move or change its dressing even after its flank was crushed. All we in the saddle ask is that the part of the line hit should retreat a 100 yards or so. You can then re-advance if you choose. In the meantime the rest of the line will be exposed and commanders will have to decide what they are going to do to exploit or defend a now truly dynamic situation. Installing such simple, safe rules will allow for a far better experience and actually raise the bar so we can experience true combined arms tactics. I don't mean to criticize what took place at Mt. Harmon; my intent is to illustrate the experience so we can make changes for the future. We are all good enough to raise the bar and enhance the hobby!!

Major Healy next ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> troop to ride over and cover the left flank of our line. When we arrived we saw a party of 17<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons and charged them, our numbers being higher, we forced them to give ground but they did check us from gaining the rear of their line and I called the troop back to rally behind the cover of our own infantry.

While reforming a rifleman called to us and said there was a party of enemy troops to our rear along the tree line running out from the river, I asked him what sort of troops and he replied, "Not ours!" Major Healy had warned me of a possible marine attack that morning and so we wheeled to investigate, as we approached the tree line we saw a pair of British sailors pop up out of the brush and begin running across a long pasture. Never had I wanted a fox horn more than at that moment and we gave chase across the field yelling at these surprisingly "fleet" footed sailors. We closed on their heels as they made the beach and the troop drove after them with Sgt. Harrelson leading the way to capture a single mast boat loaded with provisions.

We returned to the fight and made another charge on the 17<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons, this time gaining the enemy rear and then "swarming" the British 40 Light Infantry at the walk/trot before retiring. I let my troop get a little too close on this occasion and I apologize. One member of the 40<sup>th</sup> certainly didn't mind at all and gamely thrust his musket skyward which in turn drew a tap from one of my troopers. I take full responsibility for this charge, however, no one was hurt and in my opinion no man or mount was ever in true danger. We rode back to another convenient swale and held there in reserve. We made another charge on that same flank, gained the enemy rear and turned back about without making contact. We again reformed in a swale and waited until the enemy began driving across our front when I spotted a battalion of infantry with an open flank and made another charge. Capt. Allegretto with the 2<sup>nd</sup> troop had likewise spied the same opportunity from higher ground. Hit front and rear, the enemy battalion was most grievously handled and once more we fell back in reserve on our army's left flank.

I sent the carbineers out hunting and the battle soon wound to a close as our infantry's ammunition was exhausted; ever game, our infantry delivered a valiant bayonet charge yet despite this sacrifice it had but a temporary effect on the enemy advance and we quit the field and watered our mounts.

I would like to point out the men of the 3dLD/1st troop; Al Underwood, Josh Underwood, Joel Anderson, Stuart Lilie, Bob Hoskins, Burt Puckett, Cpl. Ron Crawley, and Sgt. Ed Harrelson. They were all simply outstanding in their discipline, swordplay and horsemanship; Ron and Ed especially so as they took care of the dressings and made it easy for me to keep my eyes on the field and the enemy. It is an honor and a pleasure to command the 3dLD. I wish I could have fought on Sunday but 11 hours is a long pull and we had to make it home for the drudges of Monday.

I respectfully remain, Y.M.H.O.S.

*Captain Daniel Murphy*

3dLD