

## **Rockford AAR – a seriously long and largely inaccurate view from the saddle**

Submitted by Cpt. Daniel Murphy 3dLD / Brvt Major of Cavalry Rockford campaign

### **Saturday:**

I think we had a total of 17 dragoons in our camp, including the 3dLD led by yours truly, the 4thLD led by Capt. Nick Serafino and the Belsunce Dragoons led by Bob Alegretto and Sergeant Bill Rose, plus, 4 troopers with the 17thLD riding British under Jess Philips.. The Belsunce Dragoons decided to galvanize in the interest of balancing the forces and graciously rode British.

The scenario was for the Brits to take the low field between 11:00 and 1:00. At 12:45 we were supposed to attack and drive them off. Only problem there was there were no Brits in the low field at 12:45. We waited and waited some more and then went up the first of three defiles into an upper field where gunplay wasn't allowed but sabre play was.

The event started off with the lamest sabre charge ever in the history of reenacting! All my fault of course but I was just trying to make something happen. Overly embarrassed, I retreated down to the main field behind an artillery piece. Then as Bert said, "Someone flipped the switch" and it was on. I saw a few Indians running through the trees on the hill side of the field, three deer popped up out of nowhere and went running, Ed's horse decided this was a bad place to be and then the sh\*t hit the fan!

Brit Infantry came streaming down the hill through the brush and trees like someone had opened a flood gate. They wisely stayed in the tree line so charging them was out of the question. I was feeling a lot like Swiss cheese when Col. Healy rode up to me and asked me if I could hold the position..... "Uh no," was the reply, or something to that effect , "Not without infantry or some guns." Col Healy rode off and I thought I was going to get some serious help. Problem was Col. Healy was guarding three defiles. Most of his available infantry was already posted. The Americans were also supposed to lose the battle and no one can ever say Col. Healy can't follow a script! We did get one, maybe two, I can't really remember, companies of lights and another gun which I threw on what had quickly become our left flank. The Brits continued to press. I was just seeing the first opportunity for a charge on the enemy Infantry when Lt. Alegretto showed up with the King;'s Horse - all of it. We were smoked, stewed and screwed.

More infantry came pouring in from both sides. There were a series of charges and counter charges by the dragoons on both sides but there really wasn't a chance for the Americans to recover in the face of the British infantry. Well done Brits.

Col. Healy made repeated requests for me to stop the onslaught but there just weren't many openings. We did make one successful charge against a company of British Infantry and forced them to retire but what we really needed were flame throwers. Lacking that, we fell back and I felt a very, very small victory in not letting our left flank get rolled up. Truth be told, the 3dLD hadn't seen that many casualties since Eutaw Springs!

It turned into an infantry fight and we fell back to the barn. We did manage to make a successful charge on the British high command and lucked into routing another Brit

infantry company but by then it was pretty much over and we lit out as our Infantry made a final stand that basically got them all killed - I'm not really sure about that... I may have been back in camp drinking a beverage by that point. The weight of command is simply unbearable at times.

### **Saturday night:**

I'll just say that our regimental attorney has advised that I don't say anything.... BUT... the Vienna Boys Choir... they don't need to worry about a 3dLD album being released anytime soon.

### **Sunday:**

After getting whipped on Saturday we gallant 3dLDs decided to switch sides. The 3dLDs galvanized and fell in with the 17<sup>th</sup> LD. I know, I know, some ancestors are spinning in their graves.

The battle started out with us trying to hold that same first defile against the American horse. There was a series of charges and we had some infantry support which was a great help. We also had a guidon bearer for the first time. It's wicked cool to be able to fall back on your own colors, well done Dale! After a series of charges back and forth we saw American infantry coming through the trees on our left and fell back to the lower field.

We lost Col. Vogley by design. With the 17<sup>th</sup>'s help we were able to make a charge against the 4<sup>th</sup> Legionary corps infantry which ended in a sort of draw but stopped their advance and then the infantry came up in numbers and we fell back to support the second defile leading to the barn. The American foot and horse was there in force and it seemed like we made ten charges in as many minutes. The King's artillery and infantry played a large part in these fights and the American cavalry was eventually forced to retire.

Then the battle shifted again and we fell back to the far side of the barn to support our native provincials. These "injuns" could really move and they set a trap for some American rifleman and we were able to make a successful charge. After that the battle was about over, our horses were spent, the size of the field had shrunk, and the weight of command was weighing heavily again. With my trooper's welfare foremost in my mind, I grew thirsty and ordered a retreat for beverages rather than watch the demise of the Crown forces.

I'd like to thank everyone for a great weekend, the scenario planners and site hosts did a great job and I enjoyed riding for both Bob Healy and Mike Grenier. We 3dLDs had a great time and would come back anytime.

To everyone in the saddle, well done boys, it was a privilege to lead and a pleasure to ride with every single one of you.

**Your Ready Servant,**

**Cpt. Daniel Murphy 3dLD / Brvt Major of Cavalry Rockford campaign**