

Easy Civil War
Rules!
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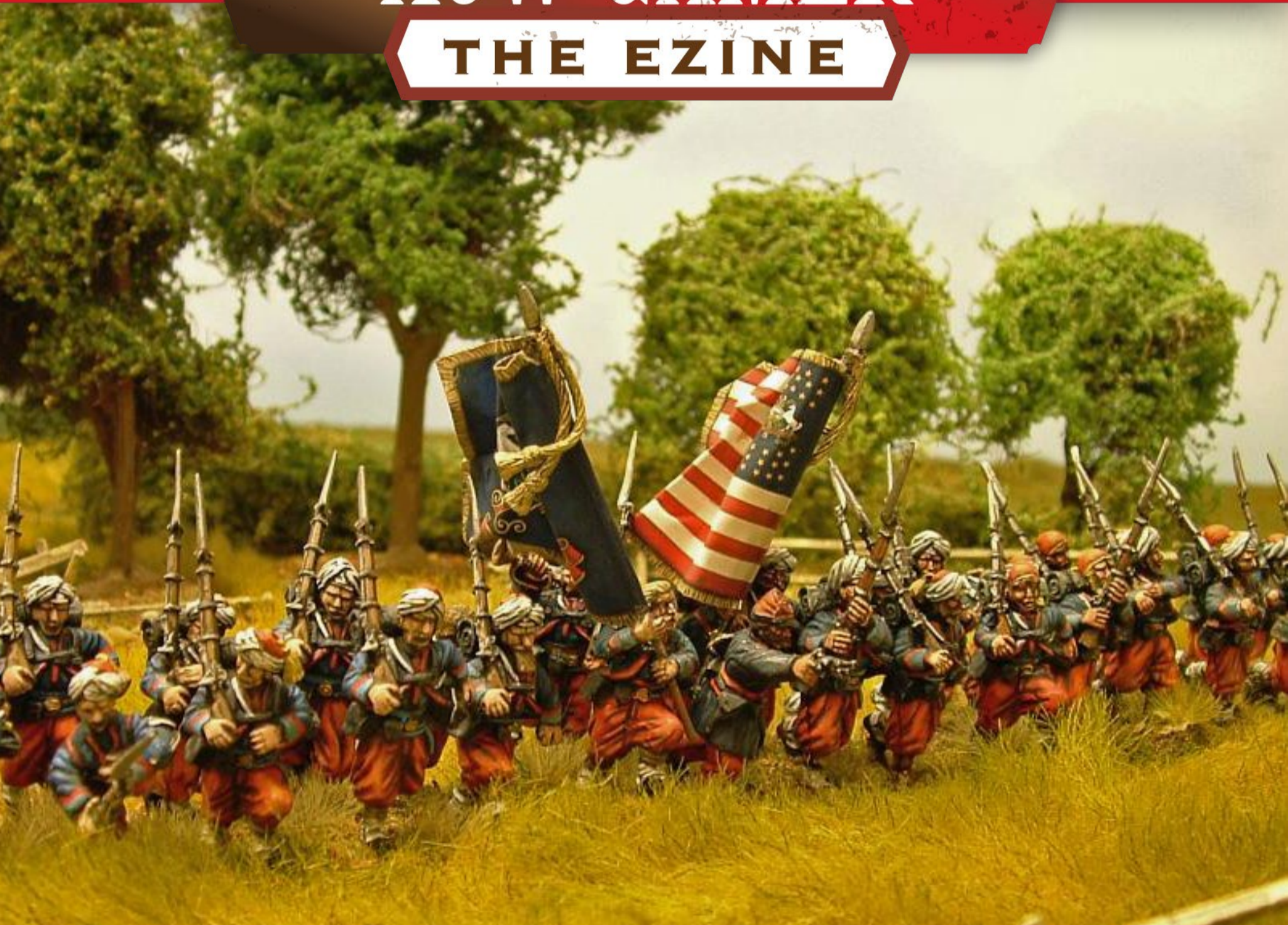
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ACW GAMER

THE EZINE



**BIOGRAPHIES! TUTORIALS! RULES!
REVIEWS! AND LOTS OF ACW ACTION**

ACW GAMER

THE EZINE

Spring 2015

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Cover photo: A regiment of 28mm Union Zouaves from the collection of Alan Sheward

Above: A 15mm Confederate firing line by Cory Ring.

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Welcome to the ACW Gamer: the Ezine

The Electronic Magazine dedicated to wargaming the American Civil War on the tabletop.

As many of you may know, since the last issue of **ACW Gamer**, I was a passenger in an automobile accident that killed the driver; a friend of mine. The accident was weather related and involved another vehicle and left me in the ICU. When word of my accident got out, I received the well wishes and support of many in the wargaming community. I was humbled by this out pouring of concern from my fellow wargamers - many who I have only met through the internet. It also illustrated to me that this hobby is as much about the people who are involved in it as it is about miniatures. It is this fraternity of gamers that make **ACW Gamer** possible and it is this fraternity to whom I am grateful to for their prayers and thoughts during a dark time.

I continue to heal and I hope to see you all again at conventions and game days.

This issue of **ACW Gamer** brings some treats for its readers starting with a complete Civil War rule set by Don Lowery. It also features a tutorial on how to paint the Iron Brigade, a continuation of Fredrick Adolphus's series on Confederate Uniforms and look at a Company D miniatures. Company D is producing a new Civil War miniature line covering an usual theater of the War. Also in this issue, Larry Reber shows us how to create custom 15mm figures and shares one of his custom ordered dioramas with us. Finally, **ACW Gamer** friend and mentor, Scott Mingus, offers a biography about his Civil War ancestor, John Sisson.

Enjoy and happy gaming!

Stephen M. Huckaby
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Colors of Confederate Clothing

Part II

By Fred Adolphus

Last issue, Fred Adolphus discussed the many shades of Gray that made up the uniforms of the Confederate Armies. This issue, Fred talks “butternut!”

Perhaps the most iconic Confederate color is “butternut.” It may be the most misunderstood, as well. Butternut connotes the brown color common to domestically dyed fabrics. The term “butternut” originated in the North, where it encompassed a color, a type of homespun cloth, and a people. As numerous Southerners moved to southern region of Illinois and Indiana in the mid-nineteenth century, native Northerners called them “butternuts” for the butternut-dyed, rough homespun cloth they wore. Later, in the Civil War, they called Confederate soldiers “butternuts” using the same criteria: Southerners wearing rough-textured, brown-colored cloth. The nickname applied regardless of whether the color was intentionally home-dyed brown, or factory dyed gray that had faded to brown. It applied equally to homemade citizens garb, or to factory made uniforms, as long as the fabric’s texture resembled a “rough, homespun” weave. Any of the Southern-made cassinets, jeans and satinets might have resembled homespun to a Northerner. By the end of the war, the term “butternut” came to describe its color: a light tan to a light brown color, depending on how the fabric had been dyed.

Before the war, Northern home dyers used the walnut hulls and bark of the white walnut, or butternut tree (common to the North). The ingredients yielded colors from a light to medium, yellowish brown color. The more concentrated the dye, the darker the resulting color. Butternut dye was not used commercially, however, being

used exclusively for homespun cloth. Southerners more often obtained dyestuffs from the eastern black walnut tree (more prevalent in the South), using its hulls to dye their homespun clothing. The tannins in the hulls acted as a mordant, making the resulting color resistant to fading. The shade most commonly obtained for homespun cloth was a light to medium, warm brown color. This distinctive, colorfast brown color is commonly seen in the homemade, citizen clothes sent to Confederate soldiers from their families.

By contrast, factory-dyed fabrics, which generally ended up as army-cut uniforms, had its own distinctive brown shade, once it faded from gray. This color ranged from oatmeal to light tan to grayish tan or dark tan. Confederate Captain John Esten Cooke unwittingly described the fading process of Confederate gray dye to brown when he commented on a Confederate corporal, “...clad in gray, or rather brown, for the sun had scorched his good old uniform to a dingy hue.”⁶ A Northern newspaper described what may have been this in-between, partly faded color as “brindle,” noting that Confederates at Fort Donelson had “uniforms of all shades of colors, gray, brindle, and butternut, the last predominating.”⁷ Union soldiers frequently described the Confederate’s use of this color. One remarked that the Confederate dead at South Mountain were dressed in “... coarse butternut colored uniforms...very ugly in appearance but well calculated to conceal them from our troops...”⁸ A

Union colonel commented that at Donelson, "...the deadened leaves of the oak shrubs were almost identical in color with the brown jeans uniforms of the enemy and rendered it almost impossible to distinguish their line until a fire revealed it."⁹ Occasionally, factories purposely dyed their yarn brown, but this was rarely the case. Phillip Dangerfield Stephenson, 13th Arkansas Infantry, described the uniform he was issued by the State of Arkansas in September 1861 as being, "...of coarse brown cloth, butternut color... dirt color."¹⁰

Finally, a common myth regarding butternut has to be dispelled: that cadet gray preceded butternut in usage due to the Confederate manufacturing deteriorating as the war dragged on, compelling factories to dye uniform cloth butternut, at which time butternut brown eclipsed the regulation cadet gray color. In point of fact, the exact opposite is true. Prior to the arrival of imported dark cadet gray kersey and the Southern industry's manufacture of

light cadet gray, the butternut color predominated early in the war. As imports and better quality domestic fabrics became available in greater quantities, cadet gray gradually predominated by the end of the war. However, as the Confederate industrial base expanded towards the end of the war, domestic fabrics made a strong "come-back," which ensured that a quantity of faded butternut uniforms would be used to the very end. By early 1865, however, the average Confederate soldier in the Army of Northern Virginia, the Mobile Garrison or the Trans-Mississippi was more likely to have been clad in imported, cadet gray kersey than in domestic, butternut jeans.



Above: The homemade clothes of Burton Marchbanks, 30th Texas Cavalry, reflect the warm, medium-light brown shade rendered when walnut hulls were used to home-dye fabrics and yarns. Artifact courtesy of the Layland Museum of History, Cleburne, Texas.



Above: The light tan color of Francis M. Freeman's Richmond jacket is typical of that encountered in domestically-dyed, Southern factory cloth. The jacket appears to have been light gray (remaining nap color), but faded in the sunlight. Freeman served with the 2nd Battalion, Georgia Infantry. Artifact courtesy of The Cannonball House, Macon, Georgia.



This front and rear image depicts Charles Herbst's early war, butternut frock coat. Herbst served with Company I, 2nd Kentucky Infantry. The coat is representative of an intentionally brown-dyed, factory cloth, something less often produced in Southern factories. Artifact and image courtesy of Mike Cunningham.

About the Author

Fred Adolphus has been a Confederate uniform buff since early childhood. He got hooked on them by playing with Marx, Britain and ring-hand plastic figures. His passion for uniforms grew to researching and writing about them, to include the book, "Imported Confederate Uniforms of Peter Tait & Company, Limerick, Ireland." Readers may visit the author's website, www.adolphusconfederateuniforms.com, and read the numerous research articles available there. They can also purchase his book through the website, Amazon or Ebay.

Foot Notes:

- ¹ *Official Records, War of the Rebellion, Navy Series I, Volume 20*, pp. 658-661, Seizures of 4 and 5 November 1863, reports of 6 November 1863.
- ² National Archives, Record Group 109, *Confederate Citizens and Business file for the firm Young, Winston & Orr*: This firm manufactured for the military "Cadet" and "Steel mix" jeans and cassimere from 1861 to 1863, and they made jackets from both colors and fabrics. See also Lipman & Koppel Contract, 6 Oct 1862, specifications required 20,000 yards of imported "good steel grey colored satinet cloth."
- ³ See the files of Young, Winston & Orr in Note ii.
- ⁴ Jones, J.B., *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate Capital, Volume I*, J.B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1866: Jones notes that "Crenshaw's gray" woolen was selling for \$28.00 per yard on 1 Feb 1863 compared to "coarse jeans" woolen at \$4.00 per yard, p. 252; Crenshaw's woolen factory destroyed by fire, p. 324.
- ⁵ Chance, Joseph E., *The Second Texas Infantry: From Shiloh to Vicksburg*, Eakin Press, Austin, Texas, 1984, p. 24, note 4.

Next Issue

Issue 8 of ACW Gamer
will be published on 15 July 2015.

Featuring:

- Part III of Confederate Uniform Colors
- *Battle of Chattanooga* Video
- Cavalry Operations



*Confederate Medical Corpsmen evacuate the wounded
by Sören Christensen.*

See his blog at <http://www.blackpowdergames.blogspot.se>

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