

# SHIELDS SAVES THE DAY

## A “What If”

### Battle of Port Republic

By Rich Hasenauer and Lowell D. Hamilton

*The Battle of Port Republic scenario was first published in the **Regimental Fire and Fury Scenario Book, Volume I**, in 2012. The scenario was presented as a historical battle, however, history is not the best venue for a fair fight. At Port Republic, the slow but inevitable build up of Confederate reinforcements will eventually turn the tide of battle, and end in defeat for the outnumbered Union forces. An effort was made to balance this scenario by including a variable game ending turn, which depended upon a die roll for an earlier arrival of Union forces under General Frémont. Historically, Frémont arrived too late to affect the outcome of the battle, but had he placed his artillery on the heights across the Shenandoah River sooner, the guns would have compelled General Jackson to call off his attack against the isolated elements of General Shields’s Division south of the river.*

*This “what if” version of the battle introduces an alternative to balancing the scenario, by veering further away from history, and allowing the unlikely possibility of General Shields marching to the sound of the guns and reuniting his division on the battlefield.*

*Note: In the following historical background, the italicized text is where we take licence with history.*

Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s brilliant Valley Campaign culminated with the Battle of Port Republic. Since March, Jackson’s foot cavalry had out-marched and out-fought the numerically superior but widely-dispersed and uncoordinated Federal forces. In the final stage of the campaign, two Union armies under Maj. Gen. John C. Frémont and Brig. Gen. James Shields pursued Jackson up the valley, intending to trap him between their converging forces. However, Jackson boldly attacked and defeated Frémont at Cross Keys on June 8, 1862, while the Federal forces were still one day’s march apart and separated by the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. Unaware that Frémont had fallen back, Shields continued to march on Port Republic.

*Shields dismissed a rumor that a large Confederate force under General Longstreet was about to attack through the mountains. Instead of remaining behind with part of his division to guard the passes, Shields obeyed orders from*



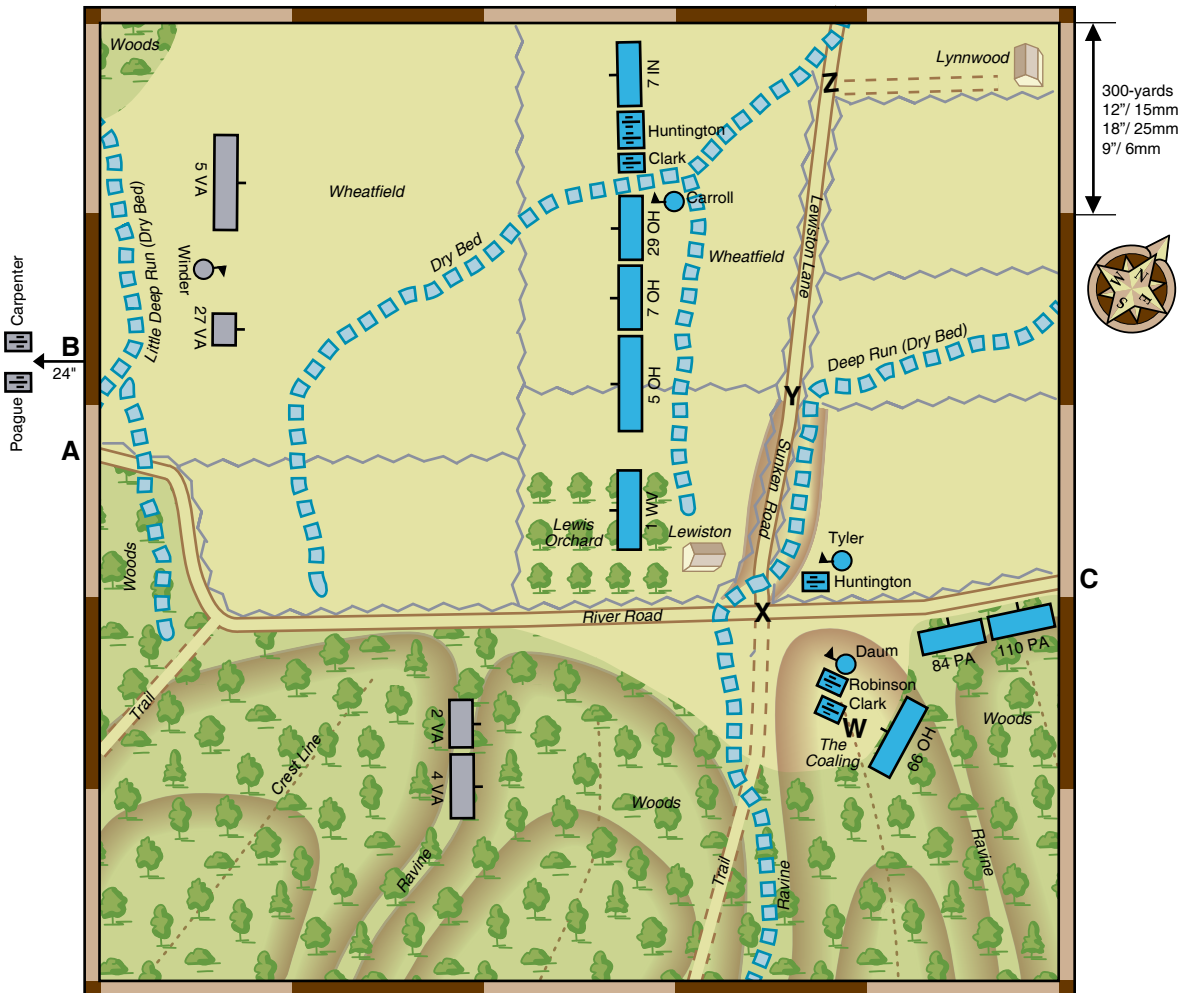
The Confederates close in on the The Coaling, unaware of the approaching Union reinforcements.

*his superior, General Irvin McDowell, to advance with his units within supporting distance of one another. However, the muddy road condition hampered movement and his command became strung out. On the morning of June 9, 1862 only two of his brigades, under the tactical control of Brig. Gen. Erastus B. Tyler, were near their objective as Jackson began to concentrate his force to attack this isolated Union force.*

Port Republic is located at the junction of the North and South Rivers, which merge to form the South Fork of the Shenandoah. Heavy rains had swollen the rivers. A bridge spanned the North River, but the South River only could be crossed by a makeshift bridge of planks laid over several wagons lashed together and resting on the river bed. This crossing created a bottleneck that forced Jackson to commit his troops piecemeal.

Tyler’s line of battle stretched across the river bottomland, with his right flank resting on the South Fork and his left anchored on a spur of commanding ground called The Coaling – where the locals produced charcoal from burnt wood – at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Federals repulsed then counterattacked the first Confederate brigade to arrive on the field under Brig. Gen. Charles Winder, but the pressure on Tyler began to mount as more Rebel reinforcements made their way across the river. A Confederate flank attack through the wooded foothills, led

## Port Republic Scenario Map



by Brig. Gen. Richard Taylor's Louisiana Brigade, overran the Union battery on The Coaling.

Outnumbered and in an untenable position, Tyler was about to sound the retreat, *when suddenly Shields appeared on the road at the head of a column of mud-spattered troops. Deploying at the double quick, the Federal infantry counterattacked. Surprised by this sudden turn of events, the Confederate attack stalled.* Meanwhile, Fremont, who cautiously advanced after Jackson withdrew from Cross Keys and burned the bridge over the North River, arrived on the heights across the river, only to watch the Confederates withdraw.

*Unable to win a clear victory at Port Republic,* Jackson marched east to reinforce Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia defending Richmond against Gen. George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac.

### The Scenario

The scenario covers the entire Battle of Port Republic. It can be played by two Union players and two to three Confederate players, takes between four and five hours to

play, and requires a 5-ft. by 5-ft. gaming area when using 15mm figures.

### Terrain

Terrain should be laid out as shown in the scenario map. Terrain effects for the scenario are as follows:

**Elevations.** The wooded high ground that spans the south edge of the table is the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Each hill is represented as a two-level elevation marked by a crest line and separated by ravines. The hills slope continuously upward toward the southern edge of the table and also toward each crest line.

Crest lines block line of sight. A stand must be located within 1" of a crest line to see beyond it. Units and leaders must move at the rough ground rate to move up or down slope. Defending both on higher ground and in woods is not a cumulative modifier in charge combat; the defending unit receives only the +1 for favorable ground.

**Ravines.** Units and leaders must move at the rough ground rate to enter or exit a ravine. In charge combat, the defender

receives a +2 for a strong position if the attacker charged across or out of a ravine.

**Woods.** Woods are rated rough ground for movement. Line of sight through woods is reduced to 4". Firing stands suffer a -1 modifier for a target in partial cover when firing through woods, or a -2 if the target is in extended line. In charge combat, a unit defending in woods receives a +1 modifier for favorable ground.

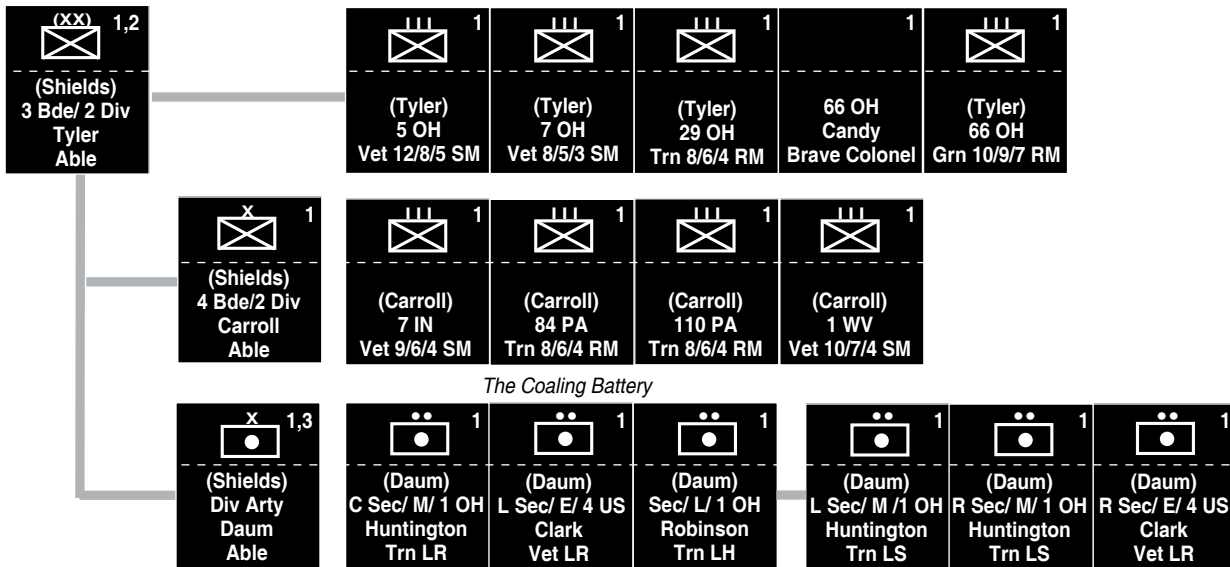
**Orchard.** The orchard is a minor wooded terrain feature that does not block line of sight. It is rated broken ground for movement. Firing stands suffer a -2 only when firing at a target in extended line located in the orchard. The orchard

does not provide a cover modifier for units in other formations, and it has no defensive modifier in charge combat.

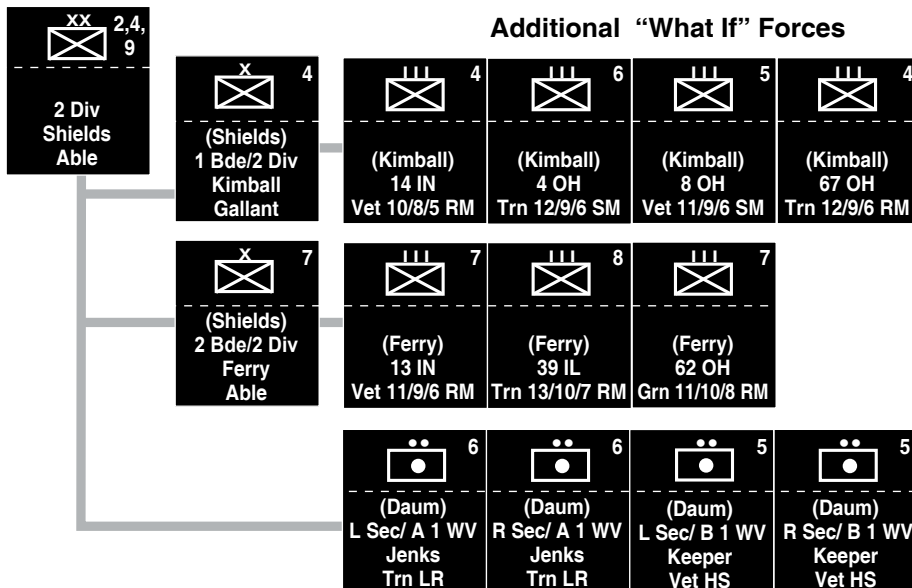
**Dry Stream Beds.** The dry stream beds are rated broken ground to cross. They have no effect upon line of sight or combat.

**Roads.** The River Road and the Lewiston Lane are in good condition. Units in march column, limbered guns, and leaders may move at the road movement rate. The lane to Lynnwood Farm and the trails running south into the hills are rated in poor condition. Movement along a trail is at the open ground rate.

**Port Republic Scenario  
Union "Historical" Order of Battle**



**Additional "What If" Forces**





## Order of Battle

The following numbers of stands are needed:

STAND	UNION	CONFEDERATE
Infantry	138	121
Infantry command	15	17
Artillery (gun with limber)	10	11
Army/division leader	1	2
Brigade leader	4	4
Artillery leader	1	0
Brave colonel	1	3
Total	170	158

**Union Forces.** Total stands represent a force of 6,520 men and 20 guns.

- 1) All units and leaders start on the table: division leader Tyler with the 5th, 7th, 29th Ohio, and brave colonel Candy with the 66th Ohio; brigade leader Carroll with the 7th Indiana, 84th and 110th Pennsylvania, and the 1st West Virginia; artillery leader Daum with Clark's and Huntington's batteries and 1 gun section from Robinson's battery.
- 2) Tyler is the senior ranking officer on the field and acts as both a brigade and division leader until Shields arrives (see special scenario rule).
- 3) Artillery leader Daum may only command and attach to artillery units (see special scenario rule for Massed Artillery Fire).
- 4) Enter on turn 7 at **C**: division leader Shields, brigade leader Kimball with the 8th Ohio followed by the 14th Indiana, both in march column.
- 5) Enter on turn 8 at **C**: Keeper's limbered battery followed by the 67th Ohio in march column.
- 6) Enter on turn 9 at **C**: the 4th Ohio in march column, followed by Jenk's limbered battery.
- 7) Enter on turn 10 at **C**: the brigade leader Ferry with the 13th Indiana, followed by the 39th Illinois, both in march column.
- 8) Enter on turn 11 at **C**: the 62nd Ohio in march column.
- 9) Shields is rated an able leader in this alternate history where he marches on Port Republic with his entire division :-)

Note: All Union reinforcements may delay their arrival by one or more turns and enter in any formation within 12" of **C**.

**Confederate Forces.** Total stands represent a force of 5,960 men and 22 guns.

- a) Starting units and leaders: brigade leader Winder with the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 27th Virginia.

- b) Two light rifle (LR) gun sections from Poague's and Carpenter's batteries start 24" off the table edge at **B**. The guns may limber and enter on turn 4 (see special scenario rule).
- c) Enter south of **A** on turn 3: 9th Louisiana, brave colonel Wheat with the Louisiana Tiger Battalion, and brave colonel Kelly with the 8th Louisiana, all in line.
- d) Enter south of **A** on turn 4: brigade leader Taylor with the 6th Louisiana in line.
- e) Enter north of **A** on turn 4: army leader Jackson; brave colonel Hayes with the 7th Louisiana in line, Poague's and Carpenter's batteries.
- f) Jackson served as an artillery officer earlier in his career, so he also may act as an artillery leader (see optional rule for Massed Artillery Fire on page 7).
- g) Enter north of **A** on turn 6: 48th Virginia in line and Chew's Battery. The 48th only can be under provisional command. Chew is rated as horse artillery.
- h) Enter south of **A** on turn 8: division leader Ewell; brigade leader Scott with the 44th and 58th Virginia in line.
- i) Enter north of **A** on turn 8: 52nd Virginia in line, and Wooding's Battery.
- j) Enter south of **A** on turn 10: brigade leader Walker with the 12th Georgia and 13th Virginia in line,
- k) Enter north of **A** on turn 10: 31st Virginia in line, and Raine's Battery.
- l) Enter north of **A** on turn 11: 25th Virginia in line.

## Game Length

The game length can vary from 15 to 20 turns, starting with the Confederate player turn at 8:00 AM, and ends after the Union player turn 20 at 12:45 PM or earlier. Had Frémont arrived sooner, his artillery positioned on the bluffs along the north bank of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River would have compelled Jackson to call off his attack and retreat. Starting on turn 15 (11:30 AM), the Union player rolls one die at the beginning of each turn. On a die roll of 10, Frémont arrives early and the game ends.

## Victory Conditions

One side must achieve more victory conditions than its opponent to claim victory. Victory conditions are achieved by inflicting heavy casualties and greater losses on the enemy, and occupying the key positions as follows:

**Heavy Casualties.** The Confederate player achieves one victory condition if the Union forces lose 20 (25%) troop or gun stands while only Tyler's and Carrol's brigades are on the field. The Union threshold for heavy casualties increases after reinforcements arrive as follows: 32 stands after all of Kimball's Brigade arrives on turn 9, and 41 stands after Ferry's Brigade arrives on turn 11.

The Union player achieves one victory condition if the Confederate forces lose 7 (25%) troop or gun stands while only Winder's Brigade is on the field. The Confederate threshold for heavy casualties increases after reinforcements arrive as follows: 21 stands after all of Taylor's Brigade arrives on turn 4, 29 stands after Scott's Brigade arrives on turn 8, and 37 stands after Walker's Brigade arrives on turn 11.

After an army reaches its threshold for heavy casualties, all units receive a -1 modifier in subsequent maneuver checks. If the current casualties are below the new higher threshold after reinforcements arrive, the -1 modifier no longer applies until mounting casualties reach the higher threshold.

**Greater Losses.** A second victory condition is achieved and the modifier increases to a -2 after an army reaches both its heavy casualties threshold and suffers greater losses than the enemy.

**Key Position.** The Union must defend two key positions. The first is Lewiston Lane between points **X-Z**. The second is The Coaling, a non-wooded area of high ground at **W**. The Union player achieves one victory condition for each key position if at least one friendly unit occupies the position at the end of the game. The Confederate player achieves one victory condition for each key position if no enemy unit occupies the position at the end of the game.

In addition to this victory condition, each turn after all Union units are pushed out of a key position all Union units receive a -1 modifier for key position lost in subsequent maneuver checks. If all Confederate units are pushed out of a key position in a later turn, the modifier is reversed and all Confederate units suffer the -1 in subsequent checks. The -1 modifier applies only once even if both key positions are lost, and it always applies to the last side to lose a key position. It is possible for both sides to lose a key position and suffer the -1 modifier.

## Special Scenario Rules

**Command Structure.** Historically, only two Union brigades were present at Port Republic under the command of the senior ranking officer on the field, Colonel Erasmus D. Tyler. In this scenario, Tyler may only act as a divisional leader until Brigadier General Shields arrives on turn 7. Once Shields enters the table, Tyler reverts back to commanding only his brigade.

**Off-Table Artillery.** Two Confederate light rifle (LR) gun sections start unlimbered off the table edge at point **B**. The guns are subject to an in-command maneuver check each turn. The only maneuvers permitted are: pivot and fire, or only pivot, fire, or rally. Add 24" to the range measured from/to **B** when an off-table gun fire at a target on the table, or when a unit on the table fires at an off-table gun. The off-table guns are within range of The Coaling. On turn 3, one or both gun sections may limber up and enter with their

battery on turn 4 above point **A**.

**Massed Artillery Fire.** We recommend you use the optional rule on page 7 in Scenario Book Volume 1 that restricts massed artillery fire. Each battery or gun section maneuvering separately must fire at a different target. Two or more artillery units may "mass" their fire upon the same target only if the target is within the command radius of an artillery leader, in canister range, or the only available target.

**Ammunition Supply.** No units may replenish ammunition after suffering a low on ammunition effect.