

Garrard's Tigers at Gettysburg July 2, 1863

James H. Hillestad highlights a flamboyantly attired Union regiment in the Civil War

No Northern state provided more men for the Union war effort than New York.

In the autumn of 1862, with the Federal army hard-pressed and with its ranks depleted by battle and disease, the Empire State answered the call for volunteers. The 146th New York (Zouave) Volunteer Infantry Regiment was formed. Commanded by a veteran West Pointer, Colonel Kenner Garrard, the regiment became known as "Garrard's Tigers."

At Gettysburg on July 2, the 146th was in the 3rd Brigade (2nd Division, 5th Corps), commanded by Brigadier General Stephen H. Weed. The regiment stormed up the slopes of Little Round Top, where it deployed along the Union line on a high bluff.

As soon as the regiment took its position, the men went down the forward slope and stationed themselves behind rocks and boulders. They were instructed by Colonel Garrard to erect a rough stone wall to afford better protection for themselves. The Confederates attacked vigorously, advancing for a considerable distance up the slope in a final effort to take the hill.

The bitter conflict was carried on tenaciously. Soldiers used the butts of guns, bayonets, and even stones as weapons. Directing their efforts was Brigadier General Kemble Warren, who assumed command of the defense of Little Round Top.

The 146th was supported by the 10-pound Parrott rifles of Lt. Charles Hazlett's 5th U.S. Artillery battery which

fired directly over their heads at the oncoming Confederates.

The Union defense of Little Round Top held, with due credit to the role of Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and the 20th Maine. Regrettably, both Lt. Hazlett and General Weed lost their lives in the defensive action.

During the Civil War, the 146th engaged in 23 battles and was present at the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox.

Zouaves

The Zouaves of the French Army were originally recruited in the 1830s from native North African troops, but were soon made up entirely of Europeans. They enjoyed a reputation of reckless bravery on the battlefield.

As members of an elite unit, they were



IMAGES CLOCKWISE

Author's Diorama of Little Round Top, 30" x 60"

General Kemble Warren directs the Union defense

Set #142 French Zouaves

Set #191 Turcos. This set of eight figures first appeared in 1915 as a repaint of set #142 and continued until 1941

Firing from behind boulders, the 146th repels the Confederate assault

The Confederates launch their attack

View looking up at the summit of Little Round Top at the 146th New York monument and the statue of General Kemble Warren



The first Union officer to die in the war was a Zouave. And a Union soldier, a Zouave, was the war's last fatality.

W. Britains set #142 French Zouaves (circa 1870 with white turban) first released, 1905 with oval base, updated to square base, 1908.

bound together by their distinctive dress. The Arab-inspired short jacket, baggy trousers and fez were key parts of their identity. Their uniform was designed for warm climates and, being loose, for rugged terrain. However, the uniform proved to be a fatal drawback as the vivid colors made Zouaves easy targets on the battlefield.

It was the Crimean War that brought widespread recognition to the Zouave soldier. In 1859, the first American Zouave unit was formed.

The original Zouave French African soldiers wore loose and baggy trousers, a short open jacket and for headgear a red fez and turban. The jacket was dark blue, trimmed in red. The vest was also dark blue. A blue waist-sash topped red pants.

American Zouave uniforms ranged from copying almost exactly the original style to modifying it so thoroughly as to be Zouave in name only.

Such was the case of the 146th Regiment. Their uniform was based upon the "Tirailleurs Algériens," or Turcos, of the French Army. The Turcos were native Algerian troops rather than Frenchmen. The 146th received their "zouave" uniforms in June 1863. The uniform consisted of a sky blue zouave jacket with

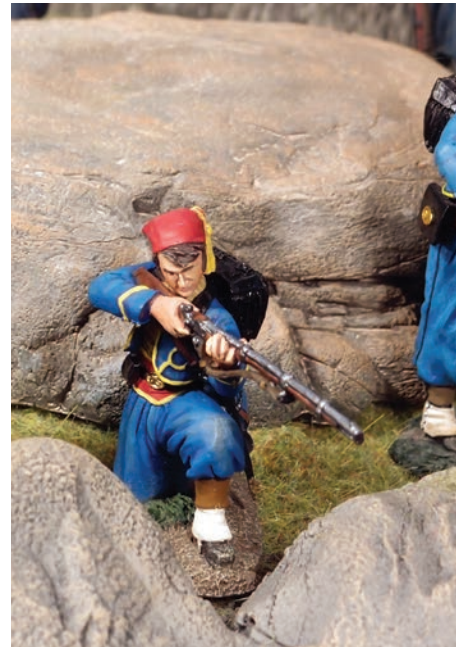
yellow trimming, sky blue pantaloons, a red fez with a yellow tassel, and a ten-foot long red waist sash.

A feature of American Zouave units was the light infantry tactics and drill they employed. They emphasized open-order formations with several feet between soldiers, rather than the customary close order, with its characteristic "elbow-to-elbow" spacing. They moved at double-time rather than marching to a stately cadence. And they lay on their back to load their rifles rather than standing upright. To fire, they rolled over prone or sometimes rose on one knee.

U.S. General George McClellan, who as an observer saw the French Zouaves in combat in the Crimean War, praised them "as the finest light infantry that Europe can produce."

In 1860, The New York Times offered the following: "If the Zouaves should be deprived of their ammunition, they would fight with the butt end of their guns, if they should lose their guns, they would throw stones, and if there were no stones, they would indulge in fistiana."

During the course of the Civil War, more than 50 Zouave regiments were formed, mostly in the North. 🏰



A Note on the Diorama

The terrain for the Little Round Top diorama is an innovative touch from W. Britain. Crafted by Creative Director Ken Osen, it is designed to be modular. There are two end sections, each 18 inches long, and a 22-inch center section.

I used additional rocks, boulders and trees to customize the terrain base. The scenic backdrop, also a product of the multi-talented Ken Osen, complements the topography.

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