

AN ESSAY ON GENERAL LONGSTREET'S PROPOSED FLANKING MANEUVER

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One of the most persistent controversies surrounding the Battle of Gettysburg is Lieutenant General James Longstreet's advice to General Robert E. Lee that the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) should disengage and effect a wide strategic flanking movement around the Army of the Potomac (AOP). Chances are almost everyone reading this article has been involved in a discussion of the battle where this topic arises. Proponents of the move think that it might have resulted in a Confederate victory and even ended the war. Critics argue that the move was a bad idea for a number of reasons, and that General Lee's decision against the move was sound militarily.

Curiously, although each side is adamant about its position, few offer analysis of the proposed move to explain why it was good or bad. Worse, proponents offer no details on how the move would happen or how it would be successful: its objective, route, and timetable for instance. Most arguments refer to well-known valid generalities such as the lack of cavalry or the bad roads. Some descriptions, such as that in Jeffrey C. Hall's *The Stand of the Union Army at Gettysburg* refer to the move with generic terms such as a flanking movement or by a map showing a large curved arrow from the Confederate position passing through Fairfield south to Emmitsburg thence east with no definite end point. (1)

This essay tries to supply some of the details of what such a move might have entailed. These details include both contemporary knowledge and hindsight.

This article distinguishes between the *strategic* flanking movement proposed by General Longstreet and the *tactical* flanking movement around Big Round Top proposed by Major General John Bell Hood later on July 2. Although the two types are listed among the move-to-the-right options, they are actually different, and each has its own set of distances, movements, logistics, and time scales. Glenn Tucker in *Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg* has an entire chapter on General Longstreet's flanking proposal, and covers

both the strategic and tactical options. (2) Scott Bowden and Bill Ward in *Last Chance for Victory*, give a good analysis of General Lee's five options for the morning of July 2 with special emphasis on the southward strategic flanking movement. (3) Combining these two sources presents a detailed analysis of all the options. This essay concentrates on only the strategic flanking movement east of South Mountain around the proximate Federal left: it does not cover a flanking movement involving a return to the west side of South Mountain.

Published opinions on General Longstreet's suggestion run the gamut. Tucker writes that "Longstreet should not have been discredited for holding a contrary--and, as it developed, a superior--view." (4) Harry W. Pfanz in *Gettysburg: The Second Day* writes that it "made a lot of sense in the abstract." (5) Douglas Southall Freeman in *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command Volume 3: Gettysburg to Appomattox* refers to lack of cavalry and "days of delay" in a move to the right; he proposes no route. (6) Jeffrey D. Wert in *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier, A Biography*, writes, "Longstreet's proposal of a vague flank movement was impractical, and Lee rightly dismissed it at the time." (7) Finally, Bowden and Ward call it Lee's "worst choice." (8) One can guess that personal opinions are similar.

Some disclaimers are warranted. This essay does not suggest that General Lee actually considered all of these points; rather, it suggests to the modern critic items to consider in judging his decision on the flanking movement. That decision was to not do it. General Lee himself never left a complete list of reasons he chose to stay and fight, and this essay does not try to fill that void. Nowhere does this article impugn the generalship of General Lee or General Longstreet nor does it overplay the generalship of General George G. Meade, commander of the AOP. None of the points presented suggest that the ANV was in any way substandard or inferior at that point during this campaign or the war. Such inapt suggestions would undermine the usefulness of the list. Finally, rather than trying to determine who is "correct," it is useful to study this discussion objectively between General Lee and General Longstreet as a disagreement between professionals who regarded each other highly: General Lee, the commander,

seeking advice from his most trusted lieutenant, and General Longstreet, the proven, loyal subordinate, offering his best analysis and opinion to his superior.

The scene has become classic. Early on July 2, 1863 General Lee and General Longstreet view the Federal line from Seminary Hill, and they discuss the next move after one day's unexpected fighting on July 1. General Longstreet, commander of the First Corps, studied the Federal position, and he suggested to General Lee that it was too strong and that the army should disengage and move to the right. This would allow the ANV to find a suitable defensive position to force the AOP to attack it. General Lee also studied the Federal position and had conferred with his other corps commanders, Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell and Lt. Gen A. P. Hill, Second Corps and Third Corps, respectively. From this, he decided against the move: the rest of the battle ensued. The controversy lives to this day.

In analyzing any event, it is important to distinguish between what the participants knew and what hindsight now tells us. For instance, for Bowdon and Ward, in *Last Chance for Victory*, this is a major theme. They analyze each decision by what participant knew and *not* by the result, and offer insights as to how History might view certain decisions were an outcome different. For instance, they suggest that had the AOP lost the battle, General John Reynold's decision to send in two corps piecemeal on July 1 might be deemed a major cause of the Federal defeat. The Federal victory, however, obscures the beating taken by the First and Eleventh Corps, and it is rarely mentioned as a bad tactical choice. (9)

This distinction between contemporary knowledge (for clarity, what General Lee knew) and hindsight (for clarity, what we know) is important, and it means this: Judge General Lee only by what he knew. Judge your own opinion and that of others by hindsight: modify your opinion as required. Further, the analysis presented herein should serve as an example of what a position should entail when proposed. For example, it is one thing to say blithely, "Well, suppose that General Lee decided to move West of South Mountain?" and another to say, "General Lee could have moved West of South Mountain, and here are possible positions, routes, timetable, and possible Federal reactions."

The difference between the two statements is not small; rather, it is a chasm. The first statement is mere speculation and the stuff of unsubstantiated "what-ifs." Most of these seem to exist solely to reclaim victory for the losing side whether North or South, and they provide no substantive historical insight as to what actually happened. The second statement involves analysis which affords the true historical analyst ample opportunity to reconsider the original proposition if its details show it to be untenable.

Here then, is a list of considerations in analyzing General Lee's decision to not heed General Longstreet's advice:

Lack of Stuart's Cavalry. This point is so basic as to be axiomatic. General Stuart's ride around the AOP and more important, out of contact with Ewell's corps, affected every aspect of the ANV's operations during this period: reconnaissance, screening, mapping. Even the report of the AOP's proximity came not from Stuart, but from General Longstreet's paid spy, Harrison. Lesser known impacts are the location of Pickett's division 30 miles behind away from the battle to guard wagons and the use of the already small staffs of General Lee and others for reconnaissance and messenger duty, both normally cavalry tasks. General Lee was so painfully aware of this that on July 1, he asked almost every messenger reporting to him if he heard of General Stuart's whereabouts, an embarrassing situation for an army commander.

Federal Convergence. Before General Lee's order to concentrate, the ANV, minus Stuart, is spread out from Chambersburg to York. When General Lee learned of the AOP's location and marching speed from Longstreet's paid spy Harrison, he immediately ordered the ANV to concentrate near Cashtown or Gettysburg. Thus, it is the AOP's surprise (to General Lee) rapid approach and apparent concentration that force General Lee to concentrate quickly his army. The military principle of concentration of force would dictate this regardless of who was the Federal commander.

Federal Competence. When General Lee learns that General George Meade is now the Federal commander, having replaced General Joseph Hooker, he says two things about Meade: that he will make no mistake, and that he will take advantage of any Confederate mistake. No contemporary has offered an interpretation of this statement, so History must take it at face value. As such, it sounds as if General Lee is giving Meade a

pretty good grade, knowing Meade from the Old Army and from his current war record, and that he thinks that Meade is someone to take seriously. (10)

As for the army, there were several indications that the AOP was to be taken seriously. The Battle of Brandy Station on June 9 showed a competent and confident Federal cavalry; since then, it had dogged the Confederate advance, fighting a number of battles along the way. It was clearly doing its job, and well. Federal infantry fought bravely (Fredericksburg) and well (Antietam). Bad or indecisive generalship caused Federal defeats, and not the fighting qualities of the Union soldier. Confederate generals knew the fighting qualities of their Federal counterparts—Hancock, Sedgwick, and Hunt for example. Meade's appointment as commander indicated to General Lee at least, that this was an able complement to a good army.

Likewise, on July 1, even though the ANV defeated two Federal corps, the latter had fought well almost all day long. Then in mid-afternoon, after fighting all day and being outnumbered and outflanked, the Federal army retreated to positions stronger than those held by the Confederates. History concentrates far too much on the late afternoon retreat, commonly called a "rout," and ignores the entire day's fighting. Pfanz, in *Gettysburg: The First Day*, places total casualties at roughly 9,500 for the Federals and 6,500 for the Confederates. (11) General Lee could only estimate the Federal numbers, but he might have had some idea of his own losses as reported to him from his generals even though his orders were to avoid a general engagement. Although slightly askew between defender and attacker, the numbers should tell the modern historian that although the Federals retreated at day's end, they inflicted damage on the ANV.

Confederate Convergence. At the start of July 2, only Stuart's cavalry and Longstreet's corps were not assembled with the army, but were on their way. Thus, at great effort and casualty, the ANV was concentrated. Static, non-cavalry surveillance indicated that the AOP was also concentrating, and that it did not appear to be leaving. Unlike Chancellorsville, no opportunity availed itself to General Lee on the morning of July 2 to disperse the ANV, especially because Stuart's cavalry was not available to supply the required information on terrain, enemy location and strength, and so forth. General Lee knew that two Federal corps were already in the area and not moving, the 1st

and the 11th, but he basically had no firm idea where were the other five corps. It would be easy for a competent engineer like General Lee to start with the scout Harrison's reported map locations of the other corps and to extrapolate their arrival times. Moving the army southward with five Federal corps unaccounted for (and no cavalry to find them), opened the possibility that the ANV could run into them piecemeal on unfavorable ground under unfavorable circumstances. (This being the reason he concentrated the army in the first place.) At this point, therefore, General Lee knew where both armies were, and with no cavalry, that was the best he could ask for.

Water. The importance of water cannot be overestimated. In 1863, local water supplies were limited to streams and wells, there being no major river nearby. Using a figure of 2,500 for the population of the town, the encampment of both armies, with a combined total of around 150,000 men and thousands of animals, increased the human drain on the local water supply by sixty-fold. (12) Local water stocks would be used up quickly, and streams would quickly be fouled by the effluent of about 200,000 more mammals. (For comparison, today, the *entire* population of Adams County is about 90,000.) Combine this with the developing AOP supply line originating at Westminster, and it is clear that staying in the area for an extended duration was not a good option. (13) General Lee, therefore, had to decide quickly.

Weather. This is truly hindsight because scientific weather forecasting did not exist in 1863, and it would not for another 70 years or so. Neither General Lee nor General Meade had insight, capability, or advantage here. Weather impacts all military operations, but the weather after the battle, known to historians, must be considered for its impact on possible army positions during a proposed move. The July heat and humidity affected both armies equally. This should be clear to historians from the number of Union stragglers on the march north and by the slow, dusty march of General Hood's and General Lafayette McLaws's divisions on the afternoon on July 2. The record shows also that it did rain heavily on the night of July 4 a few hours after the retreat began and on the night of July 7, and that these were torrential rains. (14) It is for historians to consider the effect that these unpredicted storms would have had on projected dispositions of the ANV spread out in a wide maneuver south.

The Radial Roads. The most obvious cartographic feature of the town is the radial road network. Eleven roads enter as if from all points of the clock, and one can imagine easily both commanders viewing the town as a good convergence point. At the start of July 2, the Federals controlled firmly the Taneytown Road and Baltimore Pike south and east of town. The Emmitsburg Road was under Federal influence: divisions were using it to approach the town and cavalry patrolled it, but it was not safely behind Federal lines as were the two aforementioned roads. The Confederates controlled the rest. Also, three of these roads were improved, all-weather roads: Baltimore, Chambersburg, and York. (15) Of these, the Confederates controlled the last two. All Confederate-controlled roads, however, were the wrong roads for a move to the right, at least in the Gettysburg area. Worse, the next major road around the clock from the Emmitsburg Road is the Fairfield (or Hagerstown) Road (Modern PA Route 116) which leads west southwest. Thus, the converging road network that served both armies so well in the approach to the town now worked heavily in the AOP's favor because it controlled the roads that General Lee needed for a southward flanking movement. (Remember that this essay covers only a flanking movement east of South Mountain.) In addition, the positions of the armies relative to the town and the roads meant that Meade could respond to a Confederate flank attempt easier than General Lee could make it.

The position of the Federal VI Corps is an example of the Federal advantage here. The largest corps in the AOP, it arrived on the Baltimore Pike [Modern PA Route 97] on mid-afternoon of Jul 2. Its position on that road behind Big Round Top is normally counted as one of the potential obstacles to the success of General Hood's proposed envelopment around that hillock, but it also applies to Longstreet's proposed turning movement. Had General Lee decided on Jul 2 to disengage the ANV to swing south and east, then no Confederate attack occurs on Jul 2. The VI Corps then occupies miles of the Baltimore Pike through Littlestown, and this road is one of the three improved, all-weather roads radiating from town. An early move to set up the ANV for this southward maneuver is to disengage General Ewell's II Corps from its position northeast and north of town. With no threat from the north and with the ANV moving to the south and east, the powerful and well-lead VI Corps is in good position on a good

road southeast of town to move southwest, south, or southeast, as needed, to dispute the Confederate movement directly or on the flank.

The Transverse Roads. Coddington, in *The Gettysburg Campaign*, states that the radial roads were connected by lateral roads forming “weblike complex of highways.” He states further that the network of roads and the open terrain “would lend themselves to rapid military maneuver for offensive operations,” but does not specify tactical or strategic operations. (16) To be clear, there was in 1863 (or today for that matter) no beltway around Gettysburg like I-495 around Washington, D.C. Instead the transverse roads linking the 11 radial roads are mostly farm lanes. According to an 1858 map, they are disjointed and not plentiful. (17) Bowden and Ward describe them more accurately (as is covered below) as “small overland trails that would have slowed the march rate of the army to a crawl.” (18) Whereas they were fine for local farm needs, one must question their ability to support an army of 70,000 men plus wagons and animals in a movement requiring speed.

A study of these roads in the crucial area between the Fairfield Road and Emmitsburg confirms why General Lee’s choice to not move south might have been the better option. Two ways, singly or together, exist to perform such a study:

1. Transfer the 1858 roads to a modern local road map, and travel those roads documenting their features. (In this case, the modern map was from a local real estate company, so any map serves.)
2. Use an internet map tool that includes roads, terrain, and satellite views.

The authors performed the first method in the Fall of 2008, and used the second method when required for follow-up. Because the 1858 map has no road names, the modern road names are used. In addition, the map ends at the Pennsylvania-Maryland border just south of the small town of Greenmount, Pennsylvania. Emmitsburg is just south of the state line, so within the limit of the available map, Greenmount is close enough to Emmitsburg to suffice. For the analysis, it is helpful to break up the area of interest into three rough sections:

- The Chambersburg-Gettysburg-Greencastle triangle, called here the Logistical Triangle, seven miles long between Chambersburg and Greencastle with the other two sides being about 20 miles each.
- The Cashtown-Gettysburg-Fairfield triangle, called here the Tactical Triangle, which is the eastern part of the first triangle, about eight miles on each side.
- The Fairfield-Gettysburg-Greenmount triangle, called here the Southern Triangle, Fairfield to Gettysburg, eight miles apart, Gettysburg to Greenmount, seven miles, Fairfield to Greenmount, six miles. Greenmount is just north of the border Pennsylvania-Maryland border from Emmitsburg.

Relative to a southward maneuver, features of this area are:

1. There is no direct road south from Gettysburg. Within the Logistical Triangle, the straightest and most direct routes (with fewer stops and dog legs) run west or southwest. The best of these is the Fairfield Road (Modern PA Route 116). From the Cashtown Road (Modern U.S Route 30) leading southwest are Herr's Ridge Road (two miles from Gettysburg) and Knoxlyn Road (three miles from Gettysburg) both lead southwest and both intersect the Fairfield Road, at three and six miles, respectively.

North of the Fairfield Road intersection, the Knoxlyn Road branches west onto Knox road, and this ends at Carroll's Tract Road in Ortanna about three miles north of Fairfield. At this point looking west is a mountain running southwest to northeast from Fairfield. It can be found on a map easily because west of town the railroad line from Gettysburg curves to the southwest, and these tracks (and Carroll's Tract Road) follow the mountain. (This track, by the way, is the modern extension of the rail line in the "unfinished railroad cut" at the time of the battle.) This mountain eight miles west of Gettysburg represents the westernmost limit of the maneuverability of the ANV within the Logistical Triangle, and it must be considered in any discussion of a move to the south. Carroll's Tract Road enters Fairfield eight miles southwest of Gettysburg. Within this area, the roads are of varying grades, with some stretches being steep enough to make slow going for men, wagons, or artillery.

From Knoxlyn road, two roads lead southeast, Blackhorse Tavern and Knoxlyn-Ortanna. They intersect at the Fairfield Road within a half mile of each other, with the

Blackhorse Tavern Road being the more eastern of the two and crossing the Fairfield Road. The Knoxlyn-Ortanna Road ends there. Herr Ridge Road ends at the Fairfield Road one half mile east of Blackhorse Tavern. Within a mile, therefore, three roads converge at the Fairfield Road--from west to east, Knoxlyn-Ortanna, Blackhorse Tavern, and Herr Ridge--with only one road, Blackhorse Tavern, leading southeast into the Southern Triangle. Proponents of the move must address the potential for a bottleneck here. An alternative, but farther, route to the Fairfield Road is the aforementioned Knoxlyn-Knox-Carroll's Tract Route, which has a length of about eleven miles.

Starting at the Fairfield Road in the Southern Triangle, Blackhorse Tavern Road ends at Millerstown Road. Taking this east intersects the Emmitsburg Road at the Peach Orchard. This intersection is within sight of Little Round Top and Federal left where General John Buford's cavalry bivouacked the night of July 1, and from which Colonel Thomas Devin sent patrols out on the Emmitsburg Road. (19) Also, on the morning of July 2 units of the Federal Third Corps were on the Emmitsburg road. (20) With the potential for a bottleneck and discovery, this option, therefore, does not appear to be a good one. The maneuver route might need to be west of this conjunction.

Continuing southeast from Carroll's Tract Road near Fairfield, one has two choices of parallel southeast roads: Water Station Road about one-half mile to the west and Bullfrog Road to the east. Both end at or near the Emmitsburg Road (Modern US Route 15) near Greenmount at about 8 miles and 7 miles south of Gettysburg, respectively. The total travel distance from Gettysburg through Ortanna and Fairfield to Greenmount is thus about 17 miles. This spot is still three miles west of a line drawn directly south from Gettysburg, using the modern village of Barlow (and the modern Greenmount-Barlow Road) as the reference point. A mile-long section of Bullfrog Road between McGlaughin and Pumping Station Roads was steep enough that our car switched automatically into second gear, indicating that it might not be a good road for wagons or artillery drawn by animals. Despite the steep grade, to get directly south of Gettysburg using this route entails 17 miles from behind the Confederate lines to near Emmetsburg. At an assumed speed of 2 miles/hour (for a corps-sized unit), this represents a minimum

eight-hour detour for the entire army to march just to arrive at the first moderately clear area.

According to a campaign map in Coddington (Map 1), a road existed between Emmitsburg to Taneytown and thence to Westminster (Modern MD Route 140), but getting there involves moving and maneuvering the ANV through the areas described above. (21) In addition, had General Lee followed Longstreet's advice and moved on the morning of July 2, much of the areas described above would have been un-scouted and unmapped, making such a move into the unknown unattractive, especially with a large, competently led Federal army one mile away with easy access out of town on the radial roads south.

The geographic result, then, is that east-west road movement in this area (required by the ANV) is difficult, but that north-south movement (required by the AOP) is easier. Meade could therefore respond to Lee's movements easier than Lee could make them.

2. Concealment is not guaranteed. Prior to its concentration, the ANV was well concealed behind the Blue Ridge for most of its journey north. Units of the Second Corps east of Harrisburg were more in the open than those starting from Harrisburg and extending to the southwest, but with the AOP in Maryland, this was no problem. Competent cavalry on either side could determine quickly the location of the opposing forces. For example, General Buford's troopers needed only a few hours on June 30 to determine accurately the disposition of the ANV in the immediate areas from the west to the east of town. It is difficult to imagine three divisions of Federal cavalry becoming suddenly idle, inert, or ineffective such that a move of the entire ANV a few miles south would go unnoticed.

Within the Tactical Triangle west of Knoxlyn Road one is concealed adequately from ground observation (such as cavalry) from the east. East of Knoxlyn Road, from the Wheatfield Road to Emmitsburg, all roads leading east or southeast from the Fairfield Road are in fairly flat terrain, and all must end at or cross the Emmitsburg Road. East of the Emmitsburg Road from Greenmount is also flat and conducive to unfettered north-south movement, as discovered by Federals marching toward the town before the battle.

In this area between the Emmitsburg Road and the Taneytown Road, there appear to be two or three east-west roads, the modern Greenmount-Barlow Road for instance, all of which appear as non-linear farm lanes with turns enough (to service the local farms) to extend the three-mile linear distance to about four or five miles. Proponents of the move must consider the flat, open terrain here, the lack of Confederate cavalry, and the presence of Federal cavalry in the Emmitsburg area on the morning of July 2 relative to the routes available.

On July 1, General Daniel Sickles left two brigades and two batteries in Emmitsburg to guard the Federal left and rear. (22) From June 28 to July 2, Colonel Ulric Dahlgren and a small patrol probed behind South Mountain as far as Waynesboro and Greencastle. And on the same day, a reserve cavalry brigade was assigned to Emmitsburg. (23) The point is that the Southern Triangle had plenty of Federal forces present throughout the battle so that it is highly probable that any large-scale Confederate maneuver would have been detected readily. In addition, on July 2, General Buford was granted a refit, although his losses from the previous day were small. His two brigades departed from the Federal left for Westminster in the morning, and encamped the night in Taneytown. (24) It is difficult to imagine a better place than Taneytown or Westminster for General Buford's division to be placed to cover the Federal left against a grand Confederate swing south and east. It is unknown of course how much of these deployments General Lee was aware of on the morning of July 2, but it is clear that by plan or by accident, ample Federal forces were in the area proposed by the move to detect it.

3. An Extensive Timetable Comes into Play. At some point, the discussion must shift to time. Armies on the march were limited by the roads, by topography, and by both the biological speed of humans and animals and the biological ability of humans and animals to carry (or pull) loads. There is no slashing, high-speed, blitzkrieg-type movement here. With no radio, communications are restricted similarly.

For instance, had General Lee decided on the morning of July 2 to move south and then east, he would have to address his supply line. Without modification, it would extend along the two northern sides of the Logistical Triangle and then curve southwest

to south to east either 11 or 17 miles depending on the route. With this northern arc already 27 miles in length, this would mean a supply line arcing north and south 38 to 44 miles for an army moving south and east. It is inconceivable that a commander of General Lee's ability would attempt such a maneuver resulting in a circuitous supply with a minimum pointless length of about 40 miles just to get directly south of town. Proponents of the move must address this supply line and the time required to modify it.

For instance, shifting to Fairfield-Waynesboro involves moving a large subset of up to 40 miles of wagons from Gettysburg to Waysneboro backward to go through Waynesboro. If General Lee decided to re-route his supply line as described above, some wagons would continue forward, and some wagons would have to turn back through the Cashtown pass to travel along the southern leg of the Logistic Triangle. Planning such a move of both army and supplies would take some time. Upon deciding which wagons would go where, orders would be required to the corps commanders and then to the quartermasters and then to the wagons. At a liberal speed of four miles/hour, it would take couriers a minimum of five hours to inform the wagons at the midpoint of 20 miles. Planning the move, writing the orders, and informing the participants would therefore take the better part of the day to reach the farthest wagons. This means that such a maneuver south could not start until the evening of July 2 or the morning of July 3 at the earliest. Once informed of the plan, affected wagons along the upper arc of the Logistical Triangle must be turned around and sent on their way back to Waynesboro. (It might be useful to imagine how quickly such a logistical re-alignment could occur *today* with instantaneous communication and mechanized vehicles on the 1863 roads. Given all this, it would *still* require a number of hours to plan and effect with the limitations of the routes outlines above.)

Switching to fighting units, on the morning of July 2, Longstreet's First Corps was spread from Chambersburg to Cashtown meaning that the southern leg of the future Confederate battle line was not yet in place. Only the Second and Third Corps were deployed in an arc west to north to east of the town. The Cashtown Road therefore contained Third Corps wagons and two divisions of the First Corps, and it would be required for crossing of the Third Corps and much of the Second Corps to enter the

Tactical Triangle directly behind the north-south Confederate line. Very little of the ANV was south of the town where Longstreet's flanking movement required them to be. General Lee and his corps commanders and staff would have to plan this too. With the AOP one mile away, a phased withdrawal of the northern units south would occur. In addition, the wounded from the previous day's fighting would require attention: if ordered to move, Confederate army surgeons must perform triage to determine who should be ordered back, and arrangements made to load them on wagons and send them home.

Luckily, History has examples to evaluate these moves. One measure is the march of General Longstreet's two divisions from the Cashtown Road on July 2. Starting at Herr Ridge, General McLaws used mainly the farm lanes to reach the assigned assembly area south of the Third Corps positions instead of traveling off-road as Colonel E. P. Alexander's artillery had done. Because of the countermarch to avoid detection, the entire distance of two to four miles took between four and five hours, and was "not easy," largely because McLaws stuck to "farm lanes or very poor public roads." (25) Coddington calls this trek "a comedy of errors such as one might expect of inexperienced commanders and raw militia." (26) In addition, this movement without cavalry to scout and screen serves as a "laboratory" for a proposed flanking movement without cavalry.

Another example is the Confederate retreat. After Pickett's Charge on July 3, it took about 24 hours for the first wagons to move on the retreat route for the wounded up the Cashtown Road. Of course, the number of wounded on July 3 was much larger than on July 1, but this is another indicator that finite, extended time is required for such moves: they are not instantaneous. The first ambulances left on the Cashtown Road by 5:30 p.m. on July 4, and the first retreating army units of the Third Corps left the area on the Fairfield Road on July 4 after dark. (27) These moves therefore took about a day to start, but because they were traveling on diverging roads from the town, they involved less coordination than funneling the entire army south. The ANV executed its retreat with the assistance of Stuart's cavalry and with a Federal army across the field equally spent from three days of fighting. Neither of these conditions would be true on July 2.

The move-to-the-right discussion starts and ends with Stuart's cavalry. It arrived on the afternoon of July 2, and all indications are that both men and horses were exhausted. (28) Replacement mounts were not plentiful, and those animals returning from the trek required considerable rest, feeding, and care. (Compare this to General Buford's cavalry division which, as previously written, was approved for rest and refit at Westminster. Such was the quality of the Federal supply system.) Although the Confederate cavalry performed well covering the ANV's retreat from July 4 until July 14, it is correct to ask if Stuart's divisions could be ready quickly for a continuation of an offensive campaign of indeterminate duration. Of course, on the morning of July 2 General Lee still had no contact with Stuart, and he had no idea when it would occur. Proponents of the move must address the condition of the Confederate cavalry, and the time required to restore it to an operational level for another extended campaign of unknown duration.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After a relatively easy three-week campaign with almost no substantive Federal interference, the ANV was stretched out in a poor position to meet the fast-moving AOP. General Robert E. Lee, upon learning of the Federal positions from a spy (and not from General Stuart) solved brilliantly the immediate problem of concentrating his army to meet the threat. In doing so, it not only concentrated in a relatively short two days, but did it so well that it outmaneuvered two Federal corps on July 1 and dealt them serious damage. For a number of reasons not covered in this essay, at the end of a day's hard fighting, the AOP controlled the high ground, and units of both armies were still moving to the area.

In the early morning of July 2, General Stuart's cavalry was still absent, and the ANV was still concentrating. For whatever reasons, General James Longstreet was the only corps commander advocating that the army disengage and swing wide to the south and east. Although General Lee valued General Longstreet as a commander, he disagreed, and he chose instead to not make that maneuver, indicating that he would stay and fight. The question is not who was "right" or "wrong"; rather, the question is

whether General Lee's decision was militarily sound *based on what he knew on the morning of July 2*.

The evidence indicates that it was sound militarily based on its own merits. Further, the analysis presented herein shows that a strategic maneuver south and east would be difficult based largely on geographic and logistical decisions not generally investigated. The battle having started, daybreak presented few options and many unknowns. General Lee chose the course which, in his mind, minimized the unknowns with the primary mission of defeating the opposing army. In short, staying put presented General Lee with fewer problems, less risk, and more control than in making the move.

This conclusion, however, has limits. First, stating that General Lee's decision was sound does not mean that General Longstreet was "wrong." The efficacy of the choice-not-taken can never be proved, and neither should the accusation of "incorrectness" be made. This essay does not do so.

Second, an assumption of this essay is that History should judge decisions based on what the participants knew when they made those decisions and to filter out the effects of hindsight on those decisions. Concluding that General Lee's decision was sound does not mean it caused the defeat or that it caused other decisions in that battle. It is one of a sequence of decisions and actions, each of which sets the stage for the next. After deciding to not maneuver south (or north for that matter), General Lee could have attacked, awaited a Federal attack, or retreated. It is irresponsible to blame other decisions or actions, good or bad, on this singular decision. As an extreme, fabricated example, to ascribe the Confederate brigade deployment in Pickett's Charge to General Lee's decision on July 2 is to ignore all intervening events, and this is not good historical analysis. Yet, some believe that the decision to ignore Longstreet's advice led naturally to the defeat, and this extension is no more valid than the previous example.

The hope is that Lee's decision presented herein receives proper historical and analytical analysis, free from speciousness, forlorn hope, and blame. As such, deeper analysis beyond that presented herein is welcome, if not for historical precision (which should be the goal), but to give General Lee overdue recognition for performing his duty properly on the morning of July 2, 1863.

REFERENCES

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