Rolling Thunder: In the 1880s, artist Thur de Thulstrup painted Sheridan's Final Charge at Winchester, which depicted the five-brigade cavalry attack that helped decide the September 19, 1864, Battle of Third Winchester. The artwork was a fixture in Phil Sheridan's postwar office.

Sabers War and Memory: The war's largest cavalry charge sealed a Union victory and inspired postwar artists

By Jonathan A. Noyalas
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As Harriett Griffith strolled around the Stine Farm on Winchester's northern outskirts in the summer of 1861, the sight of an earthwork fortification under construction awed her. While troops labored on Fort Collier, named in honor of the Confederate lieutenant who supervised its construction, Griffith investigated every nook with her father and brother. "I have this day visited the breastworks or fortifications out on the Martinsburg Pike… Was exceedingly interested. First work of the kind I'd ever seen," Griffith penned excitedly in her journal on August 21. She continued: "It seems real strong and well built….They have completely surrounded Stine's House." Near the end of her lengthy diary entry Griffith's excitement about the visit transformed into a reflection about Fort Collier's ultimate purpose. Confronted with the reality that this earthwork fortification could at some point be attacked, that men could be killed and the families of those slain left to deal with war's tragic consequences, Griffith wrote wishfully: "Surely it is something to be remembered, but I hope it will never be used."

Throughout the conflict's first three years it seemed that Griffith's hope might be fulfilled. In a community that had already endured two battles, numerous skirmishes, and incessant occupations during that period, Fort Collier was never the scene of any major action. Troops camped in and around it at various points and Confederates from Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur's Division sought its protection on July 20, 1864, after defeat at the Battle of Rutherford's Farm, but it had up to that point avoided being the scene of any significant combat. By the war's fourth summer it seemed that Griffith's hope that Fort Collier would "never be used" might be realized.

"*Little Phil": In this 1864 photo, Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan poses with Union cavalry commanders including Third Winchester participants Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt, far left, and Brig. Gens. James Wilson and Alfred Torbert seated at right. (Library of Congress)*

But the naïve wish of the young Valley resident ended on the afternoon of September 19, 1864, as the Stine Farm—and environs to its east and west—became part of one of the most dramatic scenes to ever unfold on any of the Shenandoah Valley's battlefields when the largest cavalry charge of the war swept down the Martinsburg, or Valley, Pike and over the walls of Fort Collier. The charge not only changed the tenor of the Third Battle of Winchester and secured a major victory for the North, it also inspired great postwar works of art, as veteran troopers and infantrymen waged new battles over the memory of the engagement.

Sheridan saw an opportunity to use his cavalry in a grand charge

On that bloody September day, while infantry from Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah battled against Lt. Gen. Jubal Early's Confederates east of Winchester along the Berryville Pike, over the Dinkle Farm, Hackwood Farm, and the bloody Middle Field in the Third Battle of Winchester's opening stages, two of Sheridan's cavalry divisions—Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt's and Brig. Gen. William Averell's—tried to secure various crossings on the Opequon Creek north of Winchester, Merritt in Frederick County and Averell in Berkeley. Throughout the morning, Federal cavalry confronted varying levels of resistance from Confederates under Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge's command and elements of Maj. Gen. Lunsford Lomax's cavalry division. That morning, as Confederates defended the Opequon crossings, Early ordered Breckinridge to pull his command closer to Winchester. When Breckinridge failed to appear by about noon, Early sent Lt. Col. Alexander "Sandie" Pendleton to find him and immediately pull Breckinridge's troops closer to the city.

Third Winchester's Men of the Saddle: Tough Colonel James Kidd led the 6th Michigan Cavalry. (James H. Kidd Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan)

When Pendleton found Breckinridge and relayed Early's order, Breckinridge initially expressed his reluctance to obey. He believed that a complete withdrawal would only encourage the Union cavalry to be more aggressive. Although Pendleton may have sympathized with the Kentuckian, the

order had to be obeyed immediately as Early needed Breckinridge to bolster the army's weak right flank. Early desperately wanted Breckinridge's regiments to move "toward the right, where our forces were weakest and the enemy was making demonstrations in force." Time was of the essence not only to aid in supporting Early's right flank, but to prevent Breckinridge from being cut off by Averell's cavalry, which was thundering south toward Winchester along the Martinsburg Pike.

While moving Breckinridge might, in Early's estimation, have solved the dilemma on his right flank, "Old Jube" still understood the importance of checking Averell's and Merritt's divisions north of Winchester. Early turned to the chief of his cavalry corps, Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, and told him "to take charge of all the cavalry" north of Winchester and "check the enemy's cavalry." Now, on the ground where the Second Battle of Winchester ended in 1863 and where Ramseur met defeat at Rutherford's Farm, Fitzhugh Lee, with support from Colonel George S. Patton's brigade, had to do the unimaginable.

Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee did what he could with his overmatched Confederate cavalrymen. (Library of Congress)

As Lee formed his four cavalry brigades, about 2,000 troopers, north of Winchester "across the Martinsburg… Pike" and "concealed by an open pine forest," Lee plainly understood that success was unlikely. Although the Confederate horsemen might have appeared somewhat protected in the pine forest, the trees were so widely separated that they offered virtually no impediment to an attacking force. One Union cavalry officer who spied Lee moving into position noted that, "the forests were so open as to offer little or no hindrance to a charging column." Lee knew the ground invited a cavalry charge. "The pending disaster," Lee explained, "was from the very open nature of the country clearly perceptible," and he searched for a way to counter such an attack.

That afternoon, as Lee observed Merritt's and Averell's cavalry brigades, he simultaneously felt awe and fear. With retreat not an option and staying put undesirable, Lee believed that his only alternative was to attack the Federal cavalry to shock the Union horsemen and cause disarray. Some of the Federals he attacked, however, were not surprised. Brig. Gen. George Armstrong Custer, who commanded a brigade in Merritt's division, believed Lee did precisely the right thing. "The enemy wisely chose not to receive our attack at a halt, but advanced from the wood and charged our line of skirmishers."

West Pointer Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt made the military his career and retired in 1900. (Library of Congress)

Lieutenant Colonel Caspar Crowninshield of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry recalled that as Lee's regiments galloped toward Merritt's and Averell's skirmishers, "the whole line of the enemy's cavalry was just in front of us… Soon the Rebel Cavalry charged and drove back our skirmishers on the right and left of the road [Martinsburg Pike]." Custer admitted "our skirmishers were forced back…a short but closely contested struggle ensued." It mattered nil, however, as the Union cavalry regrouped, repulsed Lee's advance and ultimately compelled him to pull his command closer to Winchester. As Lee's regiments withdrew south toward Winchester, Early's entire force contracted to Winchester's eastern and northern edges. Confederate artillerist Milton Humphreys wrote of Early's final defensive position, which assumed the shape of an inverted L: "Our army was now two sides of a rectangle of artillery, with the main body of infantry scattered over the space within the angle… there was nothing but cavalry and very little artillery placed across the Martinsburg road to protect our left."

With Early's army hugging that thin line near Winchester's boundaries Sheridan saw an opportunity to use his cavalry in a grand, traditional charge, something that had never occurred before in the conflict. "The ground… was open, and offered an opportunity such as seldom had been presented during the war for a mounted attack," Sheridan observed. Although Sheridan believed the flat, open terrain north of Winchester and the broken condition of Early's army invited a massive cavalry assault, Averell did not concur. Averell's men had been in the saddle for already 15 hours that day, fighting and chasing Confederates from Berkeley County, W.Va., south to Winchester. Through one of his aides Averell explained to Sheridan that his division "had been chasing the rebels in from Martinsburg and Bunker Hill… [our] horses couldn't move faster than a walk."

Brigade commander Brig. Gen. George Custer was beloved by his men. "We swear by him. His name is our battle cry," said Colonel Kidd. (Library of Congress)

Sheridan cared little for that complaint, however, and ordered the attack. "Tell… [Averell] to charge," Sheridan snapped, "I don't care…for horse flesh today." Additionally, Averell believed that Maj. Gen. George Crook's corps had already secured victory with its attack, therefore making the cavalry assault needless. "It became at once visible," Averell wrote, "to both armies that we had gained the day." Averell, who wrote his report of Winchester after Sheridan removed him from command following the Union victory at Fisher's Hill several days later, harbored significant animosity against "Little Phil" and used the report to try and diminish Sheridan's reputation, which rose significantly in Winchester's wake. An irate Averell believed that "the broken ground, intersected by deep ditches and high embankments… gave the enemy a chance to save his left flank. Opposed by stubborn infantry and well-handled artillery our cavalry on such ground could make but slow progress."

If Wesley Merritt harbored similar concerns he didn't share them with Sheridan. At about 3 p.m., as Merritt peered across the open

ground to his front and gazed at the Confederate line facing north, he too believed the setting perfect for a massed cavalry charge. “At this time (3 p.m.) the field was open for cavalry operations such as the war has not seen,” Merritt wrote, “such as all good cavalry officers long to engage in.”

As Averell’s and Merritt’s cavalrymen readied themselves for this hammer blow, some troopers reflected on the joy they felt that for the first time in the conflict, cavalry was being used for its proper purpose. Colonel James H. Kidd was ecstatic that he would be involved in “the first… proper use of this arm…in a great battle.” Other troopers, too, were impressed with the advance’s martial air. The scene of regimental bands playing, flags flapping in the breeze, and sabers glistening in the late afternoon sun inspired Custer.

Slash Deficit: Tactical and firearm changes often forced Civil War troopers to keep their sharp blades in their scabbards. The saber-driven Union attack at Third Winchester that overran Fort Collier and its supporting earthworks, depicted by artist James Taylor, was a rarity. (The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio)

Gazing at the line of troopers Kidd estimated extended “more than half a mile from Averell’s right to Merritt’s left” Custer wrote, “This… furnished one of the most inspiring as well as imposing scenes of martial grandeur ever witnessed on a battlefield. No encouragement was needed to inspirit either man or horse.”

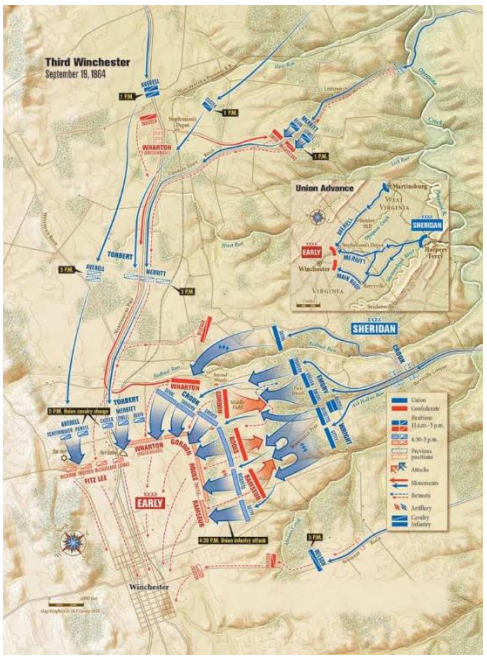
As the cavalry advanced one could not clearly discern where one regiment or brigade ended and another began. In Custer’s estimation the men were “so closely connected that a separate account of the operations of a single brigade or regiment is almost impossible.” Although moving as one mass, each brigade had a particular point of the Confederate line facing north to assault. While Averell’s two brigades aimed at Confederate positions west of the Martinsburg Pike, Merritt’s brigades focused on points in the Confederate line on or to the east of that important transportation route.

The sabers glistening in the late afternoon sun inspired Custer

For three years Fort Collier had stood silently on the eastern edge of the Martinsburg Pike. Now on the afternoon of September 19, 1864, Fitzhugh Lee’s command, elements of Breckinridge’s infantry, and Captain George Chapman’s artillery sought its protection as Union cavalry descended “like a besom of destruction” from the north. As troopers from Colonel Charles Russell Lowell’s brigade advanced toward Fort Collier the fire from Chapman’s artillery initially stymied them. “A withering fire staggered the head of his column,” Merritt remembered. Soon, however, the 3rd U.S. Artillery unleashed a furious barrage—one that wounded both Lee and Chapman (Chapman’s wound proved mortal). Now,

Lowell's brigade, as Merritt explained, "dashed down, broke through the enemy's lines, and swept it away in confusion…it was a noble work well done."

Once the Confederate line began to crack under the weight of the assault some Confederates fled as fast as possible from the field, while others determined to stay and fight regardless of how desperate the situation. Merritt observed: "Many of them threw down their arms and cried for mercy; others hung tenaciously to their muskets, using them with their muzzles against our soldiers' breasts." Merritt even observed some Confederates taking "refuge in a house" and shooting "through the doors and windows." Whether or not this was Stine's home located in Fort Collier's interior is unknown.



While Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan's infantry attacked the right flank of Lt. Gen. Jubal Early's army, 8,000 Union troopers thundered down the Martinsburg Pike and overwhelmed the Confederates holding Fort Collier and the Star Fort. (Map Graphics © DFL Group 2018)

Two days after the battle a correspondent for the *New York Daily Herald* recognized that the cavalry assault proved the battle's significant moment. "Above the roar of artillery, musketry and cheers, and the fierce yells of the contending armies," the Herald observed, "could be distinctly heard the shrill notes of the cavalry bugle, sounding the charge which was the death knell of Early's army." Put simply, the Herald unequivocally concluded that the cavalry assault "secured us the victory."

But not all the Federal veterans of Winchester agreed. William Haroff, a private in the 126th Ohio Infantry, part of Maj. Gen. Horatio G. Wright's Sixth Corps, may have thought the three infantry corps that fought with Sheridan were overlooked when he penned a postwar poem simply titled, The Battle of Winchester, September 19th, 1864, which ignored the cavalry's critical role. The poem, published weeks after the battle, heaped all credit for Sheridan's victory on Crook's, Wright's, and William Emory's corps. "We charged the Rebs' position and nobly won the day/Crook's boys, with Wright's and Emory's, were also in the fray." Fifty-one years after the battle Thomas H. M'Cann a veteran of the 90th New York, part of Emory's Nineteenth corps, simply excluded the cavalry's important role in a chapter he penned about Sheridan's 1864 Shenandoah Campaign in his *The Campaigns of the Civil War*. In describing the final advance at Winchester, M'Cann wrote that "at 4 p.m. the final attack was made… the 6th and 19th Corps rushed… and in a short time Early saw his whole left wing giving away in disorder—thus the battle was won for the Blues."

Not all infantry veterans sought to minimize the cavalry's role during the battle. The 8th Vermont Infantry's George Carpenter was

among those who was amazed at the scene of five brigades of Union cavalry charging. "In solid columns," Carpenter penned in the regimental history published in 1886, "with drawn sabers flashing in the sun… [the] troopers… burst at a gallop upon the surprised enemy. It was like a thunder-clap out of a clear sky, and the bolt struck home."

Merritt's and Averell's veterans seemed to monitor much of what was published about the fight. Whenever an infantry veteran failed to properly credit the cavalry, the former horse soldiers possessed no qualms about using articles in The National Tribune, like "A Blast From a Cavalryman's Bugle," to note that excluding cavalry from any discussion of the Third Battle of Winchester, or any of Sheridan's victories in the Valley for that matter, was "like giving the play of Hamlet, with the character of Hamlet left out."

Children's textbooks used the cavalry attack as an exemplar of courage

Although some of Sheridan's veterans might have downplayed or ignored the significant role cavalry played in the battle, Merritt's and Averell's troopers had little to fear as their late afternoon assault emerged as one the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign's two most iconic moments—Sheridan's ride at Cedar Creek being the other. Children's textbooks and popular histories of the conflict penned in the half-century after the war used the cavalry attack at Winchester as an exemplar of courage and patriotism. Authors such as Charles Carleton Coffin, a correspondent whose wartime musings offer great insight into the Army of the Potomac's campaigns, wrote of the charge in his Freedom Triumphant published in 1890, "thousands of horsemen were now riding across the fields….The sun, descending the western sky, glints from the gleaming sabres of the cavalrymen. The earth trembles beneath the hoofs of the horses… the Union cavalry was in good condition." Five years earlier, poet Henry Horton mused in his "Sheridan's Battles in the Shenandoah" that the "Cavalry… with movements deft/And swift and strong, smote Early's dazed men so/That they recoiled dismayed beneath the blow."

The cavalry assault's romanticism proved too strong to resist for the chromolithograph publishing firm of Louis Prang & Co. In the mid-1880s Prang published a series of 18 images depicting battles scenes. Six portrayed naval actions, six illustrated battles in the Western Theater, and the remainder provided snapshots of significant moments in the east. Among the six scenes chosen to represent the war in the east was "Sheridan's Final Charge at Winchester" painted by Swedish-born Thur de Thulstrup. Captain Theodore F. Rodenbough, wounded in the assault and depicted in the painting astride a brown horse next to Lowell mounted on a white steed, believed it an excellent depiction. "I heartily congratulate you upon the fidelity with which you have reproduced the scene as I remember it," Rodenbough wrote in a letter to Thulstrup after the painting's release in 1886. He continued in admiration, "you have attained an exceptional degree of realism in the composition of your picture."

Conspicuous Pride: By 1864, the Federal cavalry in the Eastern Theater was more than confident in its abilities. This badge, developed that year, was worn by many of the men of Sheridan's Cavalry Corps. Some variants of the badge were simple, while others, like this one, were elaborate and cost more. (Heritage Auctions, Dallas)

Even Sheridan, who cared little for Thulstrup's depiction of his famed Cedar Creek ride released the same year, admired the depiction of the cavalry assault. Amid all of the items proudly displayed in Sheridan's office in the War Department was Thulstrup's portrayal of the charge. A journalist who visited Sheridan in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1888 noted the painting seemed to hold prominence among all of the "large cases filled with curious pottery, Indian blankets, bows, arrows, clubs and other things" as Sheridan displayed Thulstrup's work on "a small easel just beyond… [his] desk."

Twenty-four years later, Thulstrup completed another depiction of the cavalry assault for the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in Pittsburgh, Pa. The painting, which a correspondent for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette described as "a decorative canvas of unusual power and beauty," focused on "Col. James N. Schoonmaker leading a cavalry charge against 'Star' Fort."

The cavalry charge also took center stage in a 1913 film adaptation of Bronson Howard's play The Greater Shenandoah, which first hit the stage three years after Thulstrup's initial painting. Advertisements for the film, which ran about 30 minutes, touted as one of its main features "the awe-inspiring Battle of Winchester with charging cavalry."

While at times Merritt's and Lowell's veterans might have felt their efforts at Winchester slighted, authors, artists, and playwrights solidified it as one of the conflict's most iconic moments. In the end then Wesley Merritt's official report of the battle proved not only informative, but prophetic when he wrote that the assault was indeed "a theme for the poet" and a "scene for the painter."

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National nonprofit leads effort to preserve Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War land and celebrates 50,000 acres saved

Jim Campi & Nicole Ryan, American Battlefield Trust **January 11, 2019**

(Washington, D.C.) — The American Battlefield Trust, the premier national

battlefield preservation organization, celebrated another landmark year of historic land conservation. With the help of generous donors, alongside strategic partnerships with government officials and nonprofit groups across the country, the Trust protected more than 2,783 acres of battlefield land in 9 states in 2018, preserving in perpetuity sites rooted in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. The year's successes marked a historic milestone as the Trust surpassed 50,000 total acres saved.

"Undoubtedly, 2018 will be remembered as a year of transformative and monumental victories for battlefield preservation," said Trust President James Lighthizer. "The land we saved will forever serve as a living memorial to America's brave soldiers and our nation's history, now protected for generations to come. We are grateful beyond measure for another year of generous support, because every penny raised and every acre saved is an investment in our national treasures and helps us continue the ongoing race to save our hallowed grounds."

Working closely with willing landowners and preservation partners, the Trust completed 32 transactions at 25 battlefield sites, including Appomattox Court House, Va.; Brandy Station, Va.; Brandywine, Pa.; Brice's Cross Roads, Miss.; Camden, S.C.; Carthage, Mo.; Cedar Creek, Va.; Champion Hill, Miss.; Chancellorsville, Va.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Cold Harbor, Va.; Corinth, Miss.; Fort Donelson, Tenn.; Glendale, Va.; Malvern Hill, Va.; Hanging Rock, S.C.; New Market Heights, Va.; North Anna, Va.; Prairie D'Ane, Ark.; Princeton, N.J.; Rappahannock Station, Va.; Second Deep Bottom, Va.; Shiloh, Tenn.; Trevilian Station, Va.; and Yorktown, Va. The Trust also facilitated the establishment of a national monument at Camp Nelson, Ky.

The preserved battlefield land includes this eastern bridge abutment of the Valley Pike, which spanned Cedar Creek, as well as the pike's original 1830s roadbed. The Valley's lifeline, the road was "macadamized" and nearly weatherproof, an engineering marvel of its day. When the Union army counterattacked in the afternoon, the tract saw "wild confusion" as a large part of Jubal Early's fleeing army crossed the bridge under fire from Union batteries. American Battlefield Trust

The mid-year acquisition of a 13-acre tract at Cedar Creek — where Union troops gained control over the Shenandoah Valley — pushed the Trust over the 50,000-acre threshold. Just one day prior to this transaction, the Trust celebrated another critical success with the purchase of the 15-acre Washington's Charge Site on the Revolutionary War battlefield at Princeton, N.J., where Gen. George Washington personally led a valiant charge against British troops. And, while all successful land preservation efforts are priceless, the Trust undertook our second largest project ever with the $5.65 million acquisition of 49 acres at Yorktown, Va., the famed Revolutionary War surrender site. To date, the Trust has saved more than 1,000 acres of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefield land.

Acreage saved is an important benchmark in battlefield preservation; however, safeguarding America's most storied sites simply would not be possible without the Trust's extensive fundraising efforts. Throughout 2018, the Trust launched appeals to save battlefields in Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, as well as a notable $3.5 million campaign to save 18 acres on Seminary Ridge in Gettysburg, Pa. The property on Seminary Ridge witnessed fierce fighting on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg and is among the most historically significant land at Gettysburg still in private hands.

The Trust also continued promoting greater appreciation and understanding of our nation's defining conflicts through innovative educational programs and digital offerings. The nonprofit's redesigned battlefields.org website received 8.8 million visits and 16.5 million page views, with visitation from every country in the world. Trust-created videos also received nearly 5 million views across a variety of platforms, with history lovers spending approximately 18.5 million minutes watching Trust content.

To further support history education in our nation's schools, the Trust welcomed approximately 200 K-12 educators to the 18th annual National Teacher Institute, where teachers learned new techniques and tools to teach students about U.S. history in engaging ways. The Trust also encouraged education outside the classroom with its Field Trip Fund, which crossed a threshold in 2018 by sending its 20,000th student to experience battlefields and historic sites in person. The fund was in its fourth year when it reached the milestone.

Class field trip sponsored by the Civil War Trust's Field Trip Fund.

"While acreage and fundraising have their roles in preservation, we must educate and inspire the generations who will become future stewards of our land and history," said Lighthizer. "Our hallowed grounds are an exceptional place for learning and, by getting kids outside, we can encourage greater learning and spark interest in exploring American history. For those who may not otherwise have exposure to battlefields, these trips are rewarding and life-altering, and the Trust is proud of our role in the education of America's young people."

The Trust's preservation work in 2018 would not have been possible without the dedication of government partners, including the American Battlefield Protection Program; National Park Service; Adams County, Pa; Arkansas Historic Preservation Program; Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site (N.C.); Birmingham Township, Pa.; Boyle County Fiscal Court (Ky.); Brandywine Conservancy (Pa.); Chester County Preservation Partner Program (Pa.); City of Chattanooga, Tenn.; City of Franklin, Tenn.; Fauquier County, Va.; East Bradford Township, Pa.; Frederick County, Md.; Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Hanover County, Va.; Jasper County Commission (Mo.); Jessamine County

Fiscal Court (Ky.); Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission (W.Va.); Kentucky Heritage Council; Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund; Lancaster County, S.C.; Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland Environmental Trust; Maryland Heritage Areas Authority; Maryland Historical Trust; Mercer County, N.J.; Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Municipality of Princeton, N.J.; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources; NOVA Parks (Va.); Oklahoma Historical Society; Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Prince William County, Va.; South Carolina Conservation Bank; South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Tennessee Historical Commission; Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; Virginia Department of Historic Resources; Virginia Department of Transportation; Virginia Outdoors Foundation; Virginia Land Conservation Foundation; Washington County, Md.; and Wilkes County, Ga.

Numerous organizations also contributed to these successes, including the Agricultural Stewardship Association; Averasboro Battlefield Commission; Battle of Franklin Trust; Brandy Station Foundation; Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art; Brice's Crossroads National Battlefield Commission, Inc.; Central Maryland Heritage League; Central Virginia Battlefields Trust; Franklin's Charge; Friends of Cedar Mountain Battlefield; Friends of Perryville Battlefield; Friends of Shiloh National Military Park; Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign; Friends of Wilderness Battlefield; Georgia Battlefields Association; Georgia Piedmont Land Trust; Gettysburg Foundation; Herndon Foundation; HTR Foundation; Katawba Valley Land Trust; Kettle Creek Battlefield Association; Land Conservancy of Adams County; Land Trust of Virginia; Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust; Lyndhurst Foundation; Manassas Battlefield Trust; National Parks Conservation Association; National Park Foundation; Natural Lands Trust, Inc.; Nevada County Depot & Museum; Ozark Regional Land Trust, Inc.; Petersburg Battlefields Foundation; Piedmont Environmental Council; Princeton Battlefield Society; Richmond Battlefields Association; Riverview Foundation; Save Historic Antietam Foundation; Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association; South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust; Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association; The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area; Trevilian Station Battlefield Foundation; Volgenau Foundation; Watson-Brown Foundation; and Williamsburg Battlefield Association.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 50,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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Robert E. Lee - A Digital History Collection. This collection is specially designed to provide sources for any

person interested in the life and career of Robert E. Lee, including re-enactors, roundtable members, writers, historians, university libraries, historical societies, researchers, and Civil War Publishers. (From Civil War Digital https://www.civilwardigital.com)

Letter from Robert E. Lee to Winfield Scott, written two days after his meeting with Francis Blair where he refused command of the Union Army. In this letter Lee explains his reasoning behind his resignation from the U.S. Armed Forces.

Arlington, Washington City, P.O
20 Apr 1861
Lt. Genl Winfield Scott
Commd U.S. Army

Genl, Since my interview with you on the 18th Inst: I have felt that I ought not longer to retain any Commission in the Army. I therefore tender my resignation which I request you will recommend for acceptance. It would have been presented at once but for the struggle it has Cost me to separate myself from a Service to which I have divoted all the best years of my life, & all the ability I possessed. During the whole of that time, more than a quarter of a century, I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors & the most Cordial friendships from any Comrades. To no one Genl have I been as much indebted as to yourself for kindness & Consideration & it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation. I shall carry with me, to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kind Consideration, & your name & fame will always be dear to me. Save in the defense of my native state shall I ever again draw my sword. Be pleased to accept any more [illegible] wishes for "the Continuance of your happiness & prosperity & believe me

Most truly yours

R E Lee

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Home Sweet Home: Michigan troops, likely the 22nd Michigan Infantry, used this camp before leaving the Wolverine State to fight. The 12th Michigan would be especially hard hit during the war, suffering a total of 432 casualties.

Not in the Holiday Spirit: A fight before Christmas in remote Middleburg, Tenn.

By George Skoch
JANUARY 2019 • AMERICA'S CIVIL WAR MAGAZINE

About mid-morning on a “Warm and Plesent” Christmas Eve in 1862, Union Colonel William H. Graves peered through field glasses at what looked to be “three brigades” of Confederate cavalry or mounted infantry maneuvering through fields and scattered timber just east of Middleburg, Tenn. The 26-year-old Graves commanded the 12th Michigan Infantry garrison there. Only 115 officers and men comprised his ranks in town. The balance of his command occupied small guard posts along the Mississippi Central Railroad, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant’s main avenue of supplies for his first offensive against the Rebel bastion at Vicksburg, Miss.

Young Graves knew the odds were heavily stacked against him when he spied an enemy horseman approach under a flag of truce. “I met the bearer a short distance in front of my block-house,” he recalled.

“Who is in command?” demanded the enemy rider, a cavalry staff officer.

“I am,” Graves replied. In a holiday spirit, perhaps, Graves had been “playing ball” with some of his men earlier that morning and wore a plain fatigue coat without any sign of rank. His pants were carelessly tucked into his boots.

The Confederate surveyed Graves “from head to foot” and then demanded “an unconditional and immediate surrender in the name of Colonel Griffith commanding [the] Texas brigade.”

Big Expectations: The 12th Michigan’s national battle flag. Julie Bretschneider, a 12th soldier’s wife, hand-sewed the flag and included the edict: “Michigan expects every man to do his duty.” (Peter Glendenning/Michigan Capitol Committee and the Save the Flags Program)

“I did not like the manner of the bearer of the flag,” Graves recalled. “He appeared pompous and overbearing…” Graves replied that he “would surrender when whipped, and that while he was getting a meal we would try and get a mouthful.”

“That is what you say, is it?” replied the flag-bearer.

“That is what I say,” returned Graves.

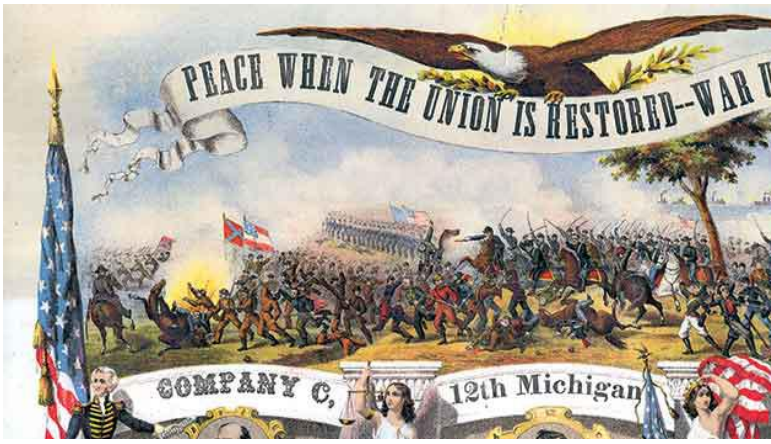
At this, the gray-clad rider abruptly wheeled his mount and spurred back to his lines. Graves hurried over to a crude breastwork his men had fashioned of thick wood planks. The gritty colonel had scarcely joined his men inside the rough timber strongpoint when bullets began to fly.

The 12th Michigan had already faced its share of adversity before coming to Middleburg early in November 1862. Mustered into United States service nearly a thousand strong on March 5, 1862, the regiment was assigned to the Army of the

Tennessee at Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., part of Everett Peabody's 1st Brigade in Brig. Gen. Benjamin M. Prentiss' 6th Division. The Wolverines' campsite was among the first targets hit during the massive Confederate assault that opened the Battle of Shiloh on April 6. "[W]e were drove back," a Michigan private lamented, "they took all of our clothing." Later that day, the 12th was in the vortex of combat in the Hornets' Nest "amid the most dreadful carnage."

After the battle, minus the fresh clothing and camp equipment that had fallen into enemy hands, the regiment suffered through days of wet, chilly weather. Diarrhea and dysentery swept its ranks. When the Federal army under Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck began to advance on Corinth, Miss., in late April, the 12th's regimental surgeon reported that "just over three hundred men were able to go forward."

The regiment also had suffered under the frightful leadership of Colonel Francis Quinn. A political appointee lacking military and social skills, Quinn abused subordinates and enlisted men alike. The regiment's quartermaster, a Quinn selection bent on personal gain, also neglected the soldiers' welfare. In a July 1, 1862, report about the regiment, corps commander Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand wrote, "They are undisciplined, disorganized, and deficient in numbers."



Seeing the Elephant: This painting, part of a more comprehensive postwar poster honoring Company C of the 12th Michigan, shows the men in action. (Mary Pennington Collection/Archives of Michigan)

When word of the regiment's plight reached the Michigan state capital, Governor Austin Blair fired a sharp telegram to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Blair condemned Quinn as "the worst colonel I ever saw [who] has made more trouble than all the rest put together." The specter of court-martial compelled Quinn and others of his staff to resign. Command of the 12th Michigan then passed to Lt. Col. William H. Graves.

The battle-tested Graves had served as captain in the 1st Michigan Infantry (a three-month unit) and had been wounded July 21, 1861, while on the firing line at First Bull Run. Described as "kind yet firm, sympathetic and brave," Graves quickly revived the 12th Michigan. He led the regiment to Bolivar, Tenn., arriving by July 18, 1862.

The seat of Hardeman County, Bolivar perched on a bluff where the Mississippi Central Railroad spanned the Hatchie River. The once-picturesque town was now a fortified supply hub and hive of military activity for the Union advance in western Tennessee.

Bolivar was also home to a bustling "contraband" camp, with hundreds of freedmen employed to erect fortifications around the cantonment. "[T]heir faces were the only pleasant ones we saw when we entered the town," recalled Samuel H. Eells, the 12th Michigan's hospital steward. "[T]hey come into the camp every day bringing corn-cakes, pies, buttermilk, eggs and etc." Eells' conduct with the former slaves would take a disturbing turn in weeks to come.

The importance of Bolivar to Grant's advance in western Tennessee and northern Mississippi made the town a prime target. A mix of Confederate regular and partisan forces preyed on the tenuous rail network. "Every foot of the railroad had to be vigilantly watched to prevent it from being torn up," noted a Federal soldier. "One man with a crow-bar…could remove a rail…and cause a disastrous wreck…" Within days of the 12th's arrival at Bolivar, mounted gray raiders struck the depot at Hickory Valley, only 10 miles south of town, leaving it "a smouldering ruin."

Graves shifted his men from one hot spot to another as guerrilla activities dictated. Even shuttling to new locations via the very railroads they guarded became risky. On September 24, "a bunch of the 12th Michigan…were frightfully crushed and mangled…" when the rails suddenly parted for an undetermined reason and the flatcar they were riding "was torn to splinters."

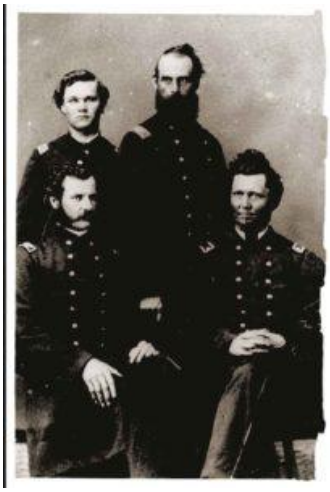
Soon after the accident, the regiment was on the move again. Toting three-day rations, the Wolverines trudged southeast with Maj. Gen. Stephen Hurlbut's division at daylight on October 4. They moved to the sound of "heavy firing" from the fighting at Corinth. "Marched all day went for miles," wrote Private Clark Koon of Company G, "[and] had a squrmish with the Rebles Advance killing thre and taking 40 prisioner [sic]."

The Michiganders covered more than 20 miles that day as General Hurlbut struck units of Confederate Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn's Army of West Tennessee near Pocahontas, Tenn. Van Dorn was on the run after the Confederate retreat at Corinth when the Federals confronted his troops at Davis' Bridge over the Hatchie River.

Koon recalled the next morning's contest at the crossing:

"[W]e got down to the river…while the rebles wer throwing their shells over us When Gen Hulburt came up to Col Graves and sayed who will volenteer to cross the Brig for their is non will go Col Graves sayed his 12 Mich would if the Dr L. [Dear Lord] stands before them and over we went while the Enemy was pouring their Grape & Canister over us but we Gained the hights and in less then a [h]our the field was ours."

The 12th Michigan was praised for its "prompt, fearless, and energetic conduct" at Davis' Bridge, but there were 570 Union casualties and Van Dorn had managed to escape.



In Command: Colonel William Graves (left, seated) and his successor Lt. Col. Dwight May (right, seated) posed for this photo during the war. Graves' brother, Phineas, stands on the right. (United States Army Heritage and Education Center)

On the heels of the Union victories at Corinth and Davis' Bridge, Grant drove deeper south. By November 4, bluecoats occupied key transport centers at La Grange and Grand Junction, Tenn. That same day, the 12th Michigan occupied Middleburg, Tenn.

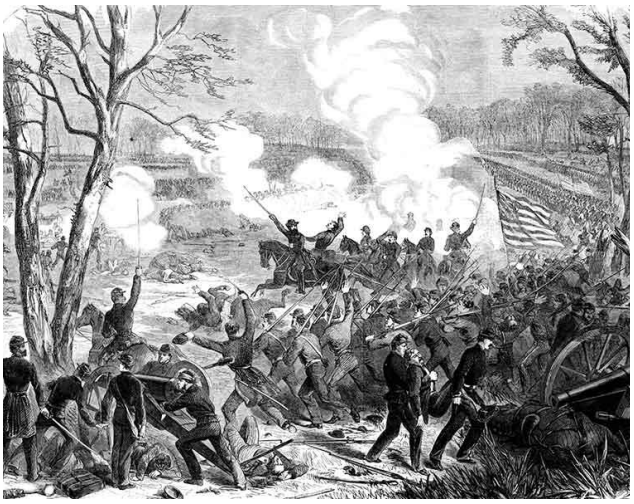
A Methodist Church, a brick hotel, and a two-story "brick store, owned…by a near relative of President James K. Polk" formed the heart of Middleburg. A post office, "a number of log stores, a small woolen mill…blacksmith shops, several saloons," and various dwellings extended the town along the main road. Beyond the settlement, a lattice of woodlots and farmland covered rolling countryside. Cotton was the main crop in the region. Bales were loaded on railcars from a sturdy wooden platform close to town.

Graves made it clear to his men that they would be staying at Middleburg for a while. They were responsible for guarding the rails seven miles north to Bolivar and three miles south to the town of Hickory Valley—an occupation that produced mixed feelings. A bitter townsman recalled, "Soldiers stacked their arms about the log school house…while the pupils were inside reciting." Another chronicler bemoaned the 12th "as devilish a lot as ever came South." Eells, however, helped out by tending to civilian patients, noting, "The doctors here are a poor set…"

Eells, though, resorted to some extreme medical practices while in Middleburg. In an upper room of the Methodist Church serving as regimental hospital, the medical staff routinely kept a cadaver "or two." The corpses were obtained from Bolivar's contraband camp, where Eells revealed, "they are dying at the rate of three or four a day." In a letter home on November 25, Eells admitted he was "going into dissection pretty strong" to enhance his surgical skills.

Meanwhile, the bulk of Grant's army pressed into northern Mississippi. By December 3, Grant established his main supply depot at Holly Springs, 20 miles south of the border. Each southward step Grant took increased the risk to Middleburg and other posts on his railborne lifeline.

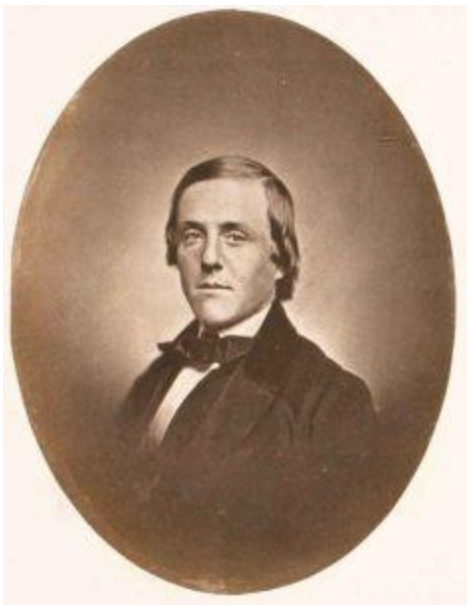
Graves received a blunt directive from his district commander, Brig. Gen. Jeremiah C. Sullivan, on December 3: "[G]uerrilla bands are moving with intention of burning railroad stations, tanks, and bridges…attack will be sudden but must be repelled." Possibly in response to this dictate, Graves had loopholes cut in the walls of the hotel and store. Barricades went up at windows and doors. And the cotton-loading platform beside the railroad was converted to a rude fortification. Planks were "taken from the top," an officer recalled, "and put around the sides." The double timbers were then cut to accommodate the regiment's Austrian rifle-muskets, and a "small log house formerly used for a grocery" became a strongpoint.



First Fight: At the Battle of Shiloh, shown here, the 12th Michigan bore the brunt of the Rebels' initial attack in Fraley Field, about 5 a.m. April 6, 1862. (Harper's Weekly April 26, 1862/Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection/Brown University Library)

In mid-December, Federal works at Middleburg and elsewhere were put to the test when Rebel forces launched concerted efforts to stop Grant.

Confederate Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, responsible for defending Vicksburg, first blocked Grant's progress just below Oxford, Miss. He then launched three mounted brigades—3,500 men—under Van Dorn 30 miles behind the Federals. The architect of the raid, Lt. Col. John S. Griffith, commanded the 1st Texas Brigade; Colonel William H. "Red" Jackson led a small brigade of Tennesseans; and Colonel Robert "Black Bob" McCulloch had a regiment each from Missouri and Mississippi.



On the Job Training: Hospital steward Samuel Eells, who didn't survive the war, enhanced his surgical skills while in Middleburg. (Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum)

Van Dorn surprised and obliterated Grant's main supply base at Holly Springs on December 20. After reducing $1.5 million worth of Yankee goods to cinders, the raiders galloped north that night. The next day, they cut telegraph wires, ripped up rails, and attacked isolated Union outposts. Many of the Rebels were garbed in captured blue overcoats. "The men rode…in high glee," recalled one raider.

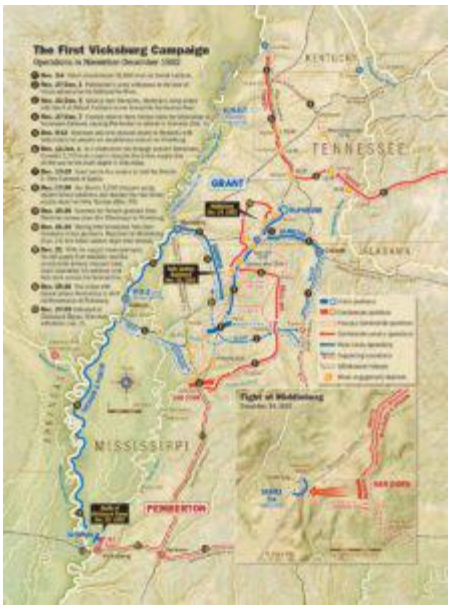
When December 22 dawned, Van Dorn's jubilant horsemen were across the Tennessee state line. Skirting the Yankee strongpoint at Grand Junction, Van Dorn harassed enemy posts at La Grange, Moscow, and Somerville. The next evening, the Confederates bivouacked along Clear Creek, five miles northwest of Bolivar. "It was said," wrote a Tennessee cavalryman, "we would repeat the Holly Springs business at Bolivar…and there spend a jolly Christmas."

At Middleburg on December 22, Graves sent a note to Colonel John W. Sprague, in temporary command at Bolivar, warning "that a large force of rebels are marching on this way." He also put the 12th Michigan on alert. Enemy cavalry was prowling. Despite the warning, Koon penciled in his diary the next day that "John Ploof"—from Koon's Company G——was "taken pris and Perrowled."

On Christmas Eve, Koon and Companies D, E, G, and K of the 12th "got reddy for the Reb again at 5 A.M." They stockpiled water and extra munitions in their crude wooden redoubt. When tensions eased somewhat, Graves joined his men in a game of baseball, and Lt. Col. Dwight May of his staff left for Bolivar to attend a "military commission."

About two miles from town, May saw horsemen approaching, clad in blue overcoats. Alerted by the "suspicious movements" of the riders, and the "peculiar gait" of their mounts, May reined his horse to use his field glasses for a closer look. That drew gunshots from the strangers and shouts for him to halt. May promptly reversed course and galloped back to Middleburg.

May had run smack into an advance party of Van Dorn's troopers from Bolivar, donned in uniforms they had pilfered from Holly Springs. After discovering that Bolivar had been reinforced overnight by Union Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson's brigade of cavalry and was now too well-fortified for direct assault, Van Dorn instead feigned an attack before sunrise and passed through the western outskirts of town. He had also dispatched a strong column under Colonel Griffith to strike directly at Middleburg.



Waylaid Plans: To capture Vicksburg, Grant hoped to move south from Grand Junction, Tenn., and follow rail lines across Mississippi. Van Dorn responded with a relentless 10-day raid of the area, his lone setback coming at Middleburg (inset) on Christmas Eve—four days after he wrecked Holly Springs. (Map Graphics © DLF Group 2018)

May, on a fresher horse, reached Middleburg well ahead of Griffith's advance riders and sounded the alarm. Michigan riflemen scrambled to their prepared positions while the quartermaster "sent his teams and such stores as could be thrown on the wagons out of the way." Grabbing his field glasses, Graves hurried to a nearby rise for a better look. "[T]he Rebles have come at last," Koon scribbled in his diary.

Graves trained his glasses on the sparse December landscape east of Middleburg, when "the enemy appeared in line of battle as infantry." He soon spotted the enemy envoy approaching on horseback with white flag in hand, "thinking, I suppose, they had a sure thing on us." As soon as their brief,

fruitless meeting ended, Graves "double-quicked it to the block-house."

During the parley, a long line of Texans with skirmishers out front had worked their way up the gentle slope from bottomland east of the Mississippi Central tracks. They moved steadily over bare fields and through groves of evergreens and leafless oak trees to the top of the rise. A broad "open space intervened" in the face of Union strongpoints. It was "the prettiest line of battle in action I saw in the whole war," wrote a Rebel observer. They opened fire as they came forward.

"The enemy advanced until I fired a musket," Graves wrote, a reference to the signal upon which his men were to fire. What "seemed a living sheet of flame" to one Texan suddenly erupted from the well-concealed Union defenses. A "leaden hail" poured from the cotton platform breastwork beside the railroad embankment while rifle fire erupted from the fortified buildings in Middleburg, which overlooked the tracks. "Our men sunk away like stubble before a fire," recalled a Texan.

After that first volley, "the enemy broke up in confusion," recalled Graves, "and sought log buildings and ditches." The shaken Rebels regrouped and began trading shots with the stubborn bluecoats. Noted a Union correspondent: "[T]he enemy tried several times to draw us out of our fortifications."

Confederate storming parties scurried over the no man's land in the face of destructive fire from troops ensconced in what one Southerner termed their "miniature forts." Graves' men repulsed each sortie in turn. "[W]e was whare thay couldent get at us," a defender recalled, "[T]hay said that the yankeys craled in a hoal."

Grant's Thorn: Success at Holly Springs helped Earl Van Dorn restore his image, severely damaged by his losses at Pea Ridge and Corinth earlier in 1862. (Heritage Auctions, Dallas)

At least one civilian was caught in the crossfire. William W. Casselberry, overseer on a local plantation, was in the store when the fighting suddenly erupted. With seven children at home, including a 1-year-old, the Christmas Eve morning sojourn to town may have been for gifts. During a lull in the battle, he was peering through a window when a gunshot shattered a pane. Glass shards flew in all directions, slightly wounding Casselberry. He spent the rest of the battle crouched in a hallway.

Gunshots also took a mounting toll on attackers. "[W]e were pushed forward," grumbled one Lone Star Confederate, "without even knowing where or how the enemy was situated, or what their strength." Another Confederate labeled the Middleburg assaults "useless and reckless." One Unionist claimed several attackers "came in to surrender themselves as prisoners."

The fusillade echoed in Middleburg for two hours before Van Dorn arrived from Bolivar with Jackson's and McCulloch's brigades. Fourteen hundred Yankee horse soldiers led by the aggressive Grierson were barking at their heels.

Without artillery to blast the feisty garrison out of Middleburg, Van Dorn decided it was time Griffith disengaged. "After losing many valuable lives, to no purpose," a disgruntled Rebel wrote, "we proceeded on our retreat at a break-neck pace, the enemy's cavalry moving to intercept us."

Van Dorn intended to rejoin Pemberton's army near Grenada, Miss. That night his command sped southward through Van Buren and camped a few miles below Saulsbury, near the Mississippi border and more than a dozen miles from Middleburg.

When darkness halted his pursuit of Van Dorn, the tenacious Grierson bivouacked at Saulsbury. From here, the colonel sent a dispatch to Grant: "I am camped within 2½ miles of the enemy. I…will follow them to their den." Back in Middleburg an uneasy peace settled over town.

Complete Carnage: Van Dorn's surprise attack on Holly Springs lasted roughly 10 hours. Besides capturing or destroying 1.5 million dollars in supplies, the Rebels tore up crucial railroad track and burned several buildings, including a new hospital. (Harper's Weekly, January 10, 1863)

Graves reported losses from the Middleburg clash totaling six wounded, "1 since dead, and prisoners, 13." The death, though, might have been accidental. In a letter home just days after the battle, Private James Ewing, Company G, revealed, "one of the Boys shot himself and dide."

The 12th had lost sundry "camp equipage, &c…" including, "a valuable horse…[and] my overcoat, dress-coat, &c." Graves reported. "But so far as I am concerned they are welcome to all…The enemy finally left us 'monarchs of all we surveyed.'"

A reliable count of Confederate casualties wasn't possible. Some of their dead were buried elsewhere, and they "carried off quite a number of their wounded." Graves, though, was "satisfied in my own mind that the rebels loss, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, exceeds 100 men….Their loss would have been much greater had it not been for some half a dozen houses that afforded them shelter."

Grant praised "the gallant Twelfth Michigan" for its "heroic defense" of Middleburg against "an enemy many times their number." The regiment, Grant boasted, was "entitled to inscribe….Middleburg, with the names of other battle-fields made victorious by their valor and discipline."

And Mr. Casselberry? The story goes, "It was long after the last gun had been fired before he could be persuaded to get his mule and go home….[F]or days afterward, he was nervous whenever he looked out a window." One may also imagine that for years to come the Casselberry children (eventually numbering 11) were regaled with chilling

tales of their dad's experiences during the fight before Christmas.

George Skoch, who writes from Fairview Park, Ohio, is co-author of the book Mine Run: A Campaign of Lost Opportunities–October 21, 1863–May 1, 1864.

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Statement on Protecting National Parks while Providing the American People Continued Access during the Lapse of Appropriations, attributable to P. Daniel Smith, Deputy Director, National Park Service:

Date: January 6, 2019 National Park Service

"During the lapse of appropriations, the men and women of the National Park Service who have remained on duty have gone to incredible lengths to keep America's iconic national parks as accessible as possible to the American public. Thanks to the strong relationships that many national parks have built with partners across the country, a number of states, private concession companies, and park nonprofit groups have stepped up to provide over two million dollars' worth of donations and in-kind services to help over forty parks continue to provide key services for visitors.

"As the lapse in appropriations continues, it has become clear that highly visited parks with limited staff have urgent needs that cannot be addressed solely through the generosity of our partners.

"Over the last few days the Acting Secretary of the Department of the Interior David Bernhardt and the National Park Service (NPS) have explored a number of options to address the maintenance and sanitation issues that have arisen at a number of highly visited parks while keeping our commitment to the American public to ensure they have access to their lands.

"The NPS currently has funds derived from entrance, camping, parking and other fees collected from park visitors that would typically be used for future projects at parks. After consultation with the Office of the Solicitor at the Department of the Interior, it has been determined that these funds can and should be used to provide immediate assistance and services to highly visited parks during the lapse in appropriations.

"We are taking this extraordinary step to ensure that parks are protected, and that visitors can continue to access parks with limited basic services.

"In the coming days the NPS will begin to use these funds to clean up trash that has built up at numerous parks, clean and maintain restrooms, bring additional law enforcement rangers into parks to patrol accessible areas, and to restore accessibility to areas that would typically be accessible this time of year. While the NPS will not be able to fully open parks, and many of the smaller sites around the country will remain closed, utilizing these funds now will allow the American public to safely visit many of our nation's national parks while providing these iconic treasures the protection they deserve.

"Visitors should go to www.nps.gov and select "Find a Park" for additional information on access to parks and sites in a particular area."

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Partners support monument preservation at Gettysburg National Military Park

Park staff waxing the Vermont monument at Gettysburg National Military Park. NPS Photo

News Release Date: December 19, 2018

The Gettysburg Foundation and the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association (GBPA) have provided donations to match federal funds to preserve monuments at Gettysburg National Military Park. Thanks to partner support and federal funding from the Helium Act, a total of $188,129 is available to do repairs and preservation maintenance for more than 350 civil war monuments on the Gettysburg battlefield.

The Gettysburg Foundation provided $50,765 and the GBPA provided $43,300 in a dollar-for-dollar match for $94,065 in federal funding. National Park Service preservation specialists will use the funds to continue to work on more than 350 of Gettysburg's 1300 monuments, steam cleaning stone features and pedestals, re-pointing and preserving masonry, power-washing and waxing all bronze elements, and repairing and replacing missing or broken bronze features, as necessary.

The federal funding comes from the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, which provides $20 million in fiscal 2018 from proceeds from the sale of federal helium, to be used for deferred maintenance projects requiring a minimum 50% match from a non-federal funding source.

"Public private partnerships help stretch federal dollars to take care of national parks," said Ed Wenschhof Jr., acting superintendent at Gettysburg National Military Park. "We're very pleased to have the Gettysburg Foundation and the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association help us fund the care of these important monuments."

Beginning in 1863 veterans and survivors of the battle of Gettysburg preserved the battle grounds and created the commemorative features and monuments that still define the park today. The 1895 law establishing Gettysburg National Military Park authorized the federal government to preserve the "important topographic features of the battlefield" and to preserve and mark the battle positions.

Gettysburg National Military Park preserves, protects and interprets for this and future generations the resources associated with the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg, during the American Civil War, the Soldiers' National Cemetery, and their commemorations.

About the Gettysburg Foundation: The Gettysburg Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit philanthropic, educational organization operating in partnership with the National Park Service to preserve Gettysburg National Military Park and the Eisenhower National Historic Site, and to educate the public about their significance. The Foundation operates the Museum and

Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park.

About the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association: Founded in 1959, the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association, a 501(c)(3) corporation, is the oldest Civil War battlefield preservation organization in the nation. Among its many preservation efforts, in 1999, the organization acquired, restored and now operates the historic Daniel Lady Farm on Hanover Street in Gettysburg.

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