

Gettysburg Day One: Taking Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill

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ABSTRACT

On July 1, 1863, parts of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had achieved a resounding tactical victory against the lead elements of the Union Army of the Potomac. Had the Confederates kept going, their next logical objective would have been the key tactical terrain features of Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill directly south and southeast of the town of Gettysburg. Instead, satisfied with their achievements, the Confederates ended the day's fighting, consolidated their gains, and waited for what the next day would bring. As it happened, both armies brought up the rest of their forces and the battle went on for two more days. Despite repeated attempts, the Confederates could not dislodge the Union forces from their defensive positions and in the end suffered, quite possibly, their most traumatic tactical and psychological defeat yet in the war.

Well after the battle and the war ended, and the full extent of the defeat realized, the debate started as to whether the Confederates could have or should have continued the fight on the first day to capture Cemetery Hill and/or Culp's Hill. Had this been achieved, the Confederates, most likely, would have won the battle and, as a result, significantly altered the trajectory of the war in their favor, or so the argument goes. To determine such an attack's practicality, this paper investigates several factors. These include the current state of the forces at hand, the known intelligence situation, and the time available at the end of the first day. Tying these all together, a coherent and detailed picture on the possibility of whether the Confederates really could have taken Cemetery Hill and/or Culp's Hill, on the first day of battle at Gettysburg, will be presented. In the end, it will show, given what the Confederates faced in the late afternoon of the first day, any attempt had little to no chance of succeeding.

Keywords: Cemetery Hill, Culp's Hill, Lee, Stuart, Ewell

Gettysburg el Primer Día: La Toma de Cemetery Hill y de Culp's Hill

RESUMEN

El 1 de julio de 1863, partes del Ejército Confederado del Norte de Virginia lograron una gran victoria táctica contra los elementos principales del Ejército de la Unión del Potomac. Si los Confederados hubieran seguido adelante, su siguiente objetivo lógico habría sido las características clave del terreno táctico de Cemetery Hill y Culp's Hill directamente al sur y sureste de la ciudad de Gettysburg. En cambio, satisfechos con sus logros, los Confederados terminaron los combates del día, consolidaron sus ganancias y esperaron lo que traería el día siguiente. Como sucedió, ambos ejércitos reunieron al resto de sus fuerzas y la batalla se prolongó durante dos días más. A pesar de los repetidos intentos, los Confederados no pudieron desalojar a las fuerzas de la Unión de sus posiciones defensivas y al final sufrieron, posiblemente, su derrota táctica y psicológica más traumática en la guerra.

Mucho después de que la batalla y la guerra terminaron, y en la medida en que se produjo la derrota, comenzó el debate sobre si los Confederados podrían o deberían haber continuado la lucha el primer día para capturar Cemetery Hill y / o Culp's Hill. Si esto se hubiera logrado, lo más probable es que los Confederados hubieran ganado la batalla y, como resultado, hubieran alterado significativamente la trayectoria de la guerra a su favor, o eso dice el argumento. Para determinar tal práctica de ataques, este artículo investiga varios factores. Estos incluyen el estado actual de las fuerzas en cuestión, la situación de inteligencia conocida y el tiempo disponible al final del primer día. Al unirlos todos, se presentará una imagen coherente y detallada sobre la posibilidad de que los Confederados realmente pudieran haber tomado Cemetery Hill y / o Culp's Hill, en el primer día de batalla en Gettysburg. Al final, demostrará, dado lo que enfrentaron los Confederados en la tarde del primer día, que cualquier intento tuvo poca o ninguna posibilidad de éxito.

Palabras clave: Cemetery Hill, Culp's Hill, Lee, Stuart, Ewell

葛底斯堡战役第一天：占领公墓山和卡尔普山

摘要

1863年7月1日，部分北弗吉尼亚联盟军已在与波多马克联邦军团的交战中取得巨大战略性胜利。如果联盟军继续采取攻势，那么其下一个目标则会是公墓山和卡尔普山的关键战略地势，它们分别位于葛底斯堡的正南部和东南部。然而，联盟军却满足于已取得的成就，放弃继续进攻，结束当日战役，巩固优势，等待第二天的到来。双方军队在接下来的两天里聚集剩余兵力继续交战。尽管联盟军不断试图进攻，但却无法将联邦军驱逐出其防御性战术，最终，联盟军在这场战役中遭受了最为惨痛的战略失败和精神重创。自此次战役和美国内战结束，联盟军战败的所有内容被剖析后，有关联盟军是否能够且本应该在战役第一天继续进攻拿下公墓山和/或卡尔普山的辩论便开始了。辩论认为，如果联盟军继续进攻一事取得成功，那么联盟军很有可能在此次战役中获胜，进而显著改变战役轨迹，使其朝着自身利益的方向发展。为确定该假设的现实性，本文调查了几个因素。因素包括：当前兵力状况、已知情报状态、和首日结束交战时可利用的时间。将这些因素串联在一起，则能连贯且详细地展现上述辩论主张的可能性。最后的结果则是，考虑到联盟军在交战首日傍晚面临的局势，任何继续进攻的战术几乎都没有获胜的可能性。

关键词：公墓山，卡尔普山，李将军，斯图尔特将军，尤厄尔将军，山

There is a debate as old as the Civil War, and ongoing even today, of whether the Confederates could have captured Cemetery Hill and/or Culp's Hill on the first day of battle at Gettysburg. Had this been achieved, the Confederates, most likely, would have won the battle and, as a result, significantly altered the trajectory of the war

in their favor. More than a few veterans and later historians have postulated this giant "what if" scenario. One famous example comes from Isaac Trimble, an unassigned Confederate general at the time of the battle, who made the spurious claim that he could have pulled it off if given only one *good regiment*.¹ However, by late afternoon of the first

day's fighting, given the condition of the Confederate forces on the battlefield at the time, the lack of intelligence they had on the enemy and the terrain, the time left in the day, and the strength of the Union position, the Confederates really had little to no chance of achieving this feat.

Entering the summer of 1863, after two years of warfare, the momentum of the overall war showed signs of turning against the Confederacy. In the Eastern Theatre of conflict, primarily confined to the state of Virginia, the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV), the main Confederate fighting force, time and time again bested their principal opponent, the Union Army of the Potomac (AOTP). Led by General Robert E. Lee since June 1862, the ANV turned back the AOTP threatening their capitol of Richmond during the Peninsula Campaign (March–July 1862), utterly defeated the Union Army of Virginia at Second Bull Run (August 28–30, 1862), fought the much larger AOTP to a bloody stalemate at Antietam (September 17, 1862), threw them back with heavy losses at Fredericksburg (December 11–15, 1862), and turned an apparent defeat into an astounding victory at Chancellorsville (April 30–May 6, 1863). Despite these achievements, in the Western Theatre, mainly consisting of the area west of the Appalachians, a string of victories gained the Union control of the Mississippi River except for the town of Vicksburg. In June 1863, this last Confederate Mississippi stronghold came under siege by Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant, effectively severing everything west of

the river from the rest of the Confederacy. At the same time, around the seaboard from the Gulf of Mexico and up the Atlantic coast, Union naval forces were slowly but surely sealing off Confederate ports from the outside world. Lastly, in the Eastern Theatre, despite the overwhelming number of ANV major victories, the AOTP still remained a viable threat.

Knowing all this, Lee devised a bold plan to, once again, invade the North. By making this move, he hoped to draw the Union AOTP out from their defensive positions and deal them a decisive defeat. Lee later wrote, "It was thought that the corresponding movements on the part of the enemy to which those contemplated by us would probably give rise, might offer a fair opportunity to strike a blow at the army then commanded by General Hooker..."² Additionally, Lee hoped that the coming campaign would relieve war-ravaged Virginia of constantly supporting the opposing armies, and disrupt the Union summer campaign plans. After the dramatic victory for the Confederates at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Lee gained approval from Confederate President Jefferson Davis and began moving his army.³

On June 3, Lee stealthily withdrew the ANV from the Fredericksburg, Virginia area, and followed a route that took them west and north along the Rappahannock River, over to the Shenandoah Valley, and on up through Maryland into Pennsylvania. Initially slow to react, the AOTP, then under General Joseph Hooker, the fourth

successive Union army commander to face Lee, followed hard on the Confederate heels. President Abraham Lincoln made the objectives for the Union army very clear, "I think Lee's army, and not Richmond, is your sure objective point."⁴ With this in mind, Hooker directed the AOTP to roughly parallel the Confederate route of march, ever mindful of keeping themselves between the Confederates and the Union capitol of Washington, DC. However, during this move north, Hooker, already smarting from his ignominious defeat at Chancellorsville, and suffering the loss of confidence of the army and of the administration, threatened to resign after a squabble with the War Department over the disposition of some Union forces at Harpers Ferry. To his surprise, they readily accepted his resignation on June 28 and, once again, the President found himself appointing a new commanding general for the AOTP. This time it would be General George Meade.⁵

Initially stunned by this unexpected promotion, Meade quickly set to task and made his intent clear, "It was my firm determination, never for an instant deviate from, to give battle wherever and as soon as I could possibly find the enemy"⁶ Unfortunately for him, Meade had little intelligence passed on to him by his predecessor, as he later testified:

I had no information concerning the enemy beyond the fact that a large force under General Lee, estimated at about 110,000 men, had passed through Hagerstown, and had marched up the Cum-

berland valley ... I had reason to believe that one corps of the rebel army, under General Ewell, was occupying York and Carlisle ...⁷

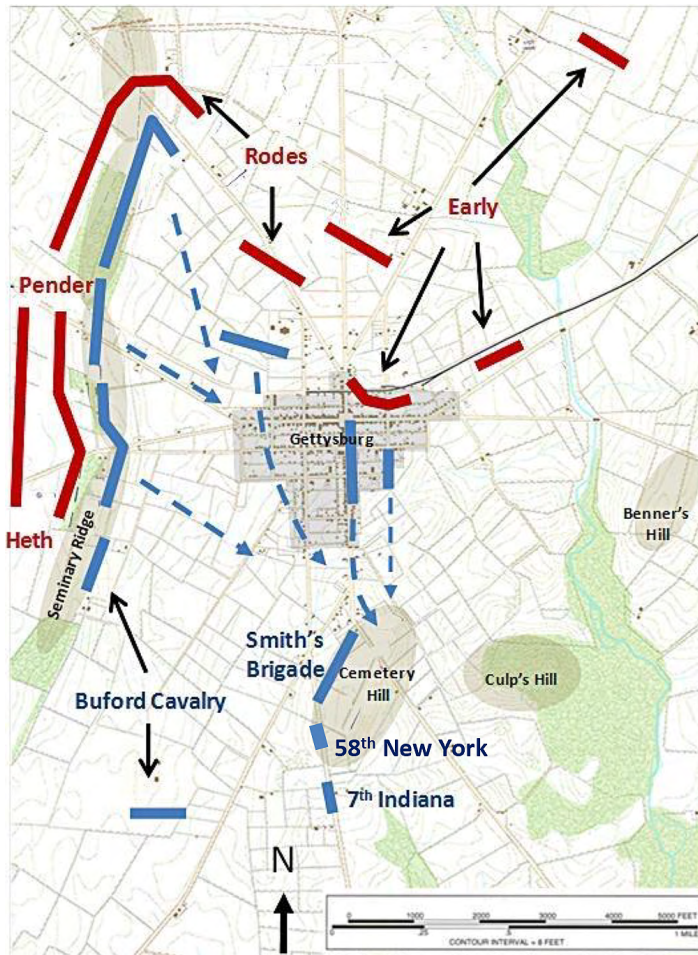
With most of the army concentrated around Fredrick Maryland, Meade decided to advance his seven infantry and one cavalry corps north along a 25 mile front in a wide arch covering the north and west approaches to Washington, DC, and Baltimore, in an attempt to locate and fix Lee's Army for battle.

Similarly, Lee had little knowledge of the Union Army's location. The primary responsibility for gathering information on enemy locations rested with the cavalry arm, and Lee had not heard from his cavalry commander, General J. E. B. Stuart, since June 24. Stuart, after effectively screening the ANV's movement up the Shenandoah Valley and on into Maryland, had taken three of his best brigades on a daring attempt to circle eastward around the Union army. Whether for fame, glory, or in Stuart's words, "...for some other point at which to direct an effective blow,"⁸ this action effectively took Stuart out of the picture until July 2nd, late into the second day of battle at Gettysburg. Lee was fully aware of Stuart's plan, and had thoroughly sanctioned it. He had not only issued orders to that effect but had also informed his corps commanders of Stuart's actions. These orders gave Stuart clear discretion to ride around the Union army, which later became a critical factor in the unfolding events of the first day's battle on July 1.⁹ Without Stuart near at hand, the first reliable report of the Union army's location ar-

rived the night of June 28 in the form of a spy. Henry Harrison, employed by Confederate I Corps commander General James Longstreet, brought word that the Union army had crossed into Maryland sooner and closer than the Confederates realized.¹⁰ Lee responded quickly by directing his far-flung units to immediately concentrate around the Gettysburg/Cashtown area.¹¹

With the two opposing armies in motion looking for each other, first contact occurred just outside the town

of Gettysburg on June 30 when General Henry Heth's Confederate Division of General Ambrose Hill's III Corps spotted elements of General John Buford's Union cavalry division. The next day, July 1, Heth's division proceeded at a deliberate pace toward Gettysburg to deal with the Union horse soldiers. Instead of just cavalry, to his surprise, Heth ran into the lead elements of the AOTP. Both sides then began to feed forces into the battle as they arrived throughout the day. By late afternoon, the battle had reached its most critical



Map 1. Situation on the First Day between 4:00 and 5:00 pm

point as the Union I and XI Corps forces tried to hold their positions west and north of Gettysburg. General Jubal Early's Division of General Richard Ewell's II Corps, advancing from the north and northeast, had successfully gained the right flank of the Union XI Corps forces, and caused them to retreat through the town of Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill with the Confederates following close behind. At the same time, the Union I Corps, holding the Seminary Ridge line, gave way. The weight of Ewell's other division under General Robert Rodes, in conjunction with Heth's Division and the added reinforcements of General Dorsey Pender's Division, forced the Union I Corps to conduct a contested retreat, joining the remnants of XI Corps on Cemetery Hill as shown in Map 1. In the ensuing fighting within the town, confusion reigned and the Confederates took many thousands of Union soldiers prisoner.

The Confederates had achieved a resounding tactical victory for the day, and the Union I and XI Corps suffered tremendous losses. Had the Confederates kept going, their next logical objective would have been the key tactical terrain features of Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill directly south and southeast of the town. Instead, satisfied with their achievements, they ended the day's fighting, consolidated their gains, and waited for what the next day would bring. Confederate casualties were also high, and most of their forces engaged had been severely degraded. As it happened, the battle went on for two more days. Despite repeated attempts, the ANV could not dislodge the AOTP from

their defensive positions and in the end suffered, quite possibly, their most traumatic tactical defeat yet in the war.¹²

Well after the battle and the war ended, and the full extent of the defeat realized, the debate started as to whether the Confederates could have or should have continued the fight on the first day to capture Cemetery Hill and/or Culp's Hill. The loudest criticism naturally came from the Confederates themselves. As mentioned in the beginning, Confederate General Trimble strongly advocated that the two hills, particularly Culp's Hill, were there for the taking, if only they made the effort. Others, such as the aide-de-camps for Confederate division commander General Edward Johnson, arriving late on the scene of the first day's battle, saw apparent inaction on the part of Ewell and lamented, "Oh, for the presence and inspiration of Old Jack for just one hour,"¹³ referring to the recently deceased General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Similarly, Confederate brigade commander General John Gordon, having been in the thick of the first day's fighting, recorded long after the war ended that:

From the situation plainly to be seen on the first afternoon, and from facts that afterward came to light as to the position of the different corps of General Meade's army, it seems certain that if the Confederates had simply moved forward, following up the advantages gained and striking the separate Union commands in succession, the victory would have been Lee's instead of Meade's.¹⁴

Agreeing with this premise, Confederate division commander Early had urged an immediate advance “before the enemy should recover from his evident dismay.”¹⁵ Even Meade himself believed that had the Confederates immediately advanced and occupied Culp’s Hill, given the condition and numbers the Union had to oppose them at the time, the Union army would have been forced to evacuate the field.¹⁶ Sheer numbers were certainly in the Confederates favor. By late afternoon, they had brought into action 26,364 troops and suffered 4,844 casualties while the Union forces brought in a force of 20,617 troops and suffered 8,383 casualties.¹⁷ With perfect hindsight, and 100% intelligence, it’s easy to make claims on what should or could have been done. However, any fair examination must be made from the context of what was known at the time and the reality of the current situation.

Understanding the situation in the late afternoon of the first day begins with investigating whether the Confederates commanders even had the authority to take Cemetery Hill or Culp’s Hill. At the beginning of the battle, Lee had placed his commanders under discretionary orders to handle enemy forces if encountered, but not to bring on a general engagement.¹⁸ Heth did his level best to adhere to the intent of these orders when he first approached the town of Gettysburg early in the morning of the first day. After sending in only half his division, and receiving a severe drubbing by the lead elements of the Union army, he pulled back, deployed the rest of his division, and awaited further developments. As noted earlier,

Ewell, on the other hand, after learning of Heth’s encounter immediately changed his direction of march and headed for Gettysburg.¹⁹ Reaching the battlefield midday, he came upon Union I Corps forces positioned to his front and XI Corps forces emerging out from the north side of Gettysburg. Ewell’s forces easily swept the Union XI Corps aside owing mainly to the opportunistic arrival of Early’s Division square on their flank. The Union I Corps was an entirely different matter. Exercising his discretion to engage, Ewell deployed Rodes Division to attack in support of Heth. Seeing Ewell’s forces attacking, Hill and Heth convinced Lee (who had arrived on the scene) to also join Ewell in an effort to dislodge the Union forces facing them.²⁰ By 4:30 pm, after encountering determined opposition, the combined Confederate forces of Heth, Pender, and Rodes drove the Union I Corps forces from their positions, and sent them retreating to Cemetery Hill.²¹

Once the Union forces were swept from their forward positions and Gettysburg secured, corps commanders Ewell and Hill ended the discretionary part of their orders and reverted back to their previous instructions not to bring on a general engagement. Although they exceeded orders upon arriving at the battle, they now determined that there was no justification for continuing the fight once Gettysburg had been taken. Nevertheless, Lee, watching the retreat of the Union forces from his position on Seminary Ridge, thought it only necessary to press the enemy to secure Cemetery Hill and sent a change of orders to Ewell “... to carry the hill

occupied by the enemy, if he found it practicable ...”²²

With the idea of possibly continuing the attack cleared by the Commanding General, a number of factors had to be taken into consideration to determine the “practicability” of executing such a maneuver. These include the current state of the forces at hand, the known intelligence situation, and the time left in the day.

The first factor takes into account what forces the Confederates had available and their condition to make such an assault. Hill made the contention that none of his divisions, currently on the field in the late afternoon, were in any condition to make the effort. Hill believed the enemy defeated, and was content with the gains his men had made. In his official report, he stated, “Under the impression that the enemy were entirely routed, my own two divisions exhausted by some six hours’ hard fighting, prudence led me to be content with what had been gained, and not push forward troops exhausted and necessarily disordered, probably to encounter fresh troops of the enemy.”²³ Ewell made similar observations of his divisions stating, “On entering the town, I received a message from the commanding general to attack this hill, if I could do so to advantage. I could not bring artillery to bear on it, and all the troops with me were *jaded by twelve hours’ marching and fighting ...*”²⁴ Additionally, Ewell’s division commanders both presented reasons for not using their divisions. Although Early had urged an immediate advance, he com-

plained that his command had been doing all the hard marching and fighting and was not in condition to make such an assault.²⁵

The condition these commanders referred to was the state of disorganization and exhaustion their troops had incurred after marching and fighting since early morning. An analysis of their forces shows they, in fact, spoke accurately. This analysis takes into account two areas to assess the fighting condition of each Confederate brigade at the end of the first day; first, the hours each brigade spent marching and fighting, and second, the casualties they sustained.

The base tactical maneuver element for Civil War Armies was the infantry or cavalry brigade. Brigades had from three to five regiments, usually commanded by colonels for the Union, and brigadier generals for the Confederates. The average brigade strength coming into the Gettysburg battle had 1,421 men for the Union and 1,550 men for the Confederates. Two to three brigades for the Union, and four to five brigades for the Confederates made up a division, usually commanded by brigadier generals or major generals. Two to four divisions for the Union, and three divisions for the Confederates made up a corp. Major generals commanded corps for the Union, and lieutenant generals for the Confederates.

The problem with associating a condition level to a brigade based on a number of hours spent marching and fighting comes from the fact that no real scale of measure exists that says X hours of activity equals X level of exhaustion.

However, a reasonable comparison can be drawn from the experiences of participants in modern-day U.S. military training events. The U.S. Marine Corps requires infantry battalions to hump (road march) with full kit a distance of 25 miles regularly. This effort takes seven to eight hours to complete, at the end of which the unit has become extremely played out with generally little energy left to conduct activities of any major exertion. The debilitating effects of military road marches come from not just the distance traveled and equipment carried, but also from weather, and the development of an erratic pace that inevitably produces an accordion effect.²⁶ These conditions were prevalent, if not exacerbated, for the Civil War soldier as well. Writing after the war, Private Carlton McCarthy of the ANV, captured the conditions of a road march on a typical hot summer day:

In summer time, the dust, combined with the heat, caused great suffering. The nostrils of the men, filled with dust, became dry and feverish, and even the throat did not escape. The “grit” was felt between the teeth, and the eyes rendered almost useless. There was dust in eyes, mouth, ears, and hair. The shoes were full of sand, and the dust, penetrating the cloths, and getting at the neck, wrists, and ankles, mixed with perspiration, produced an irritant almost as active as cantharides.²⁷

When long lines of troops conduct road marches, an accordion effect

often times occurs. This happens when the front part of the column slows down and speeds up for whatever reason, sending a ripple down the line that causes other parts of the column to stop in place and then sprint to catch up. The longer the line, the more pronounced the effect. As McCarthy explains:

When large bodies of troops were moving on the road, the alternate “halt” and “forward” was very harassing. Every obstacle produced a halt, and caused the men at once to sit and lie on the roadside where shade or grass tempted them; about the time they got fixed they would hear the word “forward!” and then have to move at increased speed to close up the gap in the column.²⁸

Even pausing for a rest had its downside, “Sitting down for a few minutes on a long march is pleasant, but it does not pay; when the march is resumed the limbs are stiff and sore, and the man rather worsted by the halt.”²⁹ Now, as it was then, “As the men tired, there was less and less talking, until the whole mass became quiet and serious. Each man was occupied with his own thoughts. For miles nothing could be heard but the rattling and jingling of canteens and accoutrements, and the occasional “Close up, men—close up!” of the officers”³⁰

Marching and fighting are two very different activities, but participation in direct combat, while not necessarily the same exertion of physical

energy as a road march, does have a similar exhausting effect as marching when taking into account mental stress and anxiety. In combat, all five senses become acutely heightened, and actions become automated. Confederate soldier Sam Watkins describes one such encounter:

There was no excitement but we were moving along as if on review Soon we are thrown into line of battle A thug, thug, thug; the balls are decimating our men ... the two lines meet ... the deadly crash of battle ... the blaze of smoke and fire. The earth trembles The enemy is checked ... whipped and driven from the field ... 'Attention! By the right flank, file left, march! Double quick!' and we are double quicking, we knew not wither, but that always meant fight.³¹

Exhaustion from this experience does not become apparent until the first significant pause in action, at which point the accumulated effects of physical and mental exertion come crashing down all at once, much like after a long road march.³² Taking this into consideration,

marching hours and fighting hours can be equated on a one for one basis, and when combined together, give fairly accurate assessment on the state of condition of a particular force. Using this analogy, the condition of the Confederate forces can be gauged by looking at the number of hours each brigade spent marching and fighting calculated from the time the unit broke bivouac to the time it stopped fighting that day, not including any sort of down time.³³

For analyzing the effects of casualties sustained, we again have the benefit of modern U.S. military parameters. The U.S. military considers a unit neutralized (unit temporarily out of action) if it sustained 10% casualties, and destroyed (unit permanently out of action) if it sustained 30% casualties.³⁴ While these measures may not directly translate to Civil War experiences, it does provide a reasonable starting point to assess units.

Taking the number of active hours for each brigade that fought on the first day and the modern U.S. military casualty percentages as a base, we can assign a standard stop-light color code to illustrate a state of condition for each brigade as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Active Hours and Casualty Stop Light Color Code

Active Hours	Casualty Percent	Color Code	Condition
0-3	0-9	Green	Good
4-6	10-29	Yellow	Moderate
7+	30+	Red	Poor

Table 2. Status of Confederate Brigades Late Afternoon of the First Day

Division	Brigade	Start Strength ^a	First-Day Casualties	Active Hours ^b	Percent Casualties	Combat Ready Assessment
II Corps (Ewell)						
Early	Hays	1,292	67	9	5.2	Fair
Early	Smith	802	0	9	0.00	Fair
Early	Avery (Hoke)	1,242	182	9	14.7	Poor
Early	Gordon	1,807	532	9	29.4	Poor
Rodes	Daniel	2,157	579	9	26.3	Poor
Rodes	Iverson	1,380	903	9	65.4	Poor
Rodes	Doles	1,319	219	9	16.6	Poor
Rodes	Ramseur	1,023	139	9	13.5	Poor
Rodes	O'Neal	1,685	328	9	19.5	Poor
III Corps (Hill)						
Heth	Pettigrew	2,576	434	10	16.9	Poor
Heth	Brockenbrough	968	124	10	12.8	Poor
Heth	Archer	1,193	203	10	17.0	Poor
Heth	Davis	1,707	286	10	16.8	Poor
Pender	Perrin	1,512	265	8.5	17.5	Poor
Pender	Lane	1,730	301	8.5	17.4	Poor
Pender	Thomas	1,244	0	8.5	0.00	Fair
Pender	Scales	1,347	298	8.5	17.5	Poor

^a Petruzzi and Stanley, *The Gettysburg Campaign in Numbers and Losses*, 126–34.

^b Unit start times were derived from H. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The First Day*, 149; and the reports of Ewell OR, vol. 27, pt. 2, 444; Rodes OR, vol. 27, pt. 2, 552; Early OR, vol. 27, pt. 2, 468; Heth OR, vol. 27, pt. 2, 637; Pender's Assistant Adjutant General OR, vol. 27, pt. 2, 656 (Pender was mortally wounded in the battle).

^c Does not include the 11th Mississippi who joined the brigade in the late evening. OR, vol. 27, pt. 2, 649.

^d Does not include the 1st SC Rifles who were assigned to guard the division wagon train. OR vol. 27, pt. 2, 661.

Taking the two assessment areas in combination, we can make a final assessment for each of the Confederate brigades as shown in Table 2.

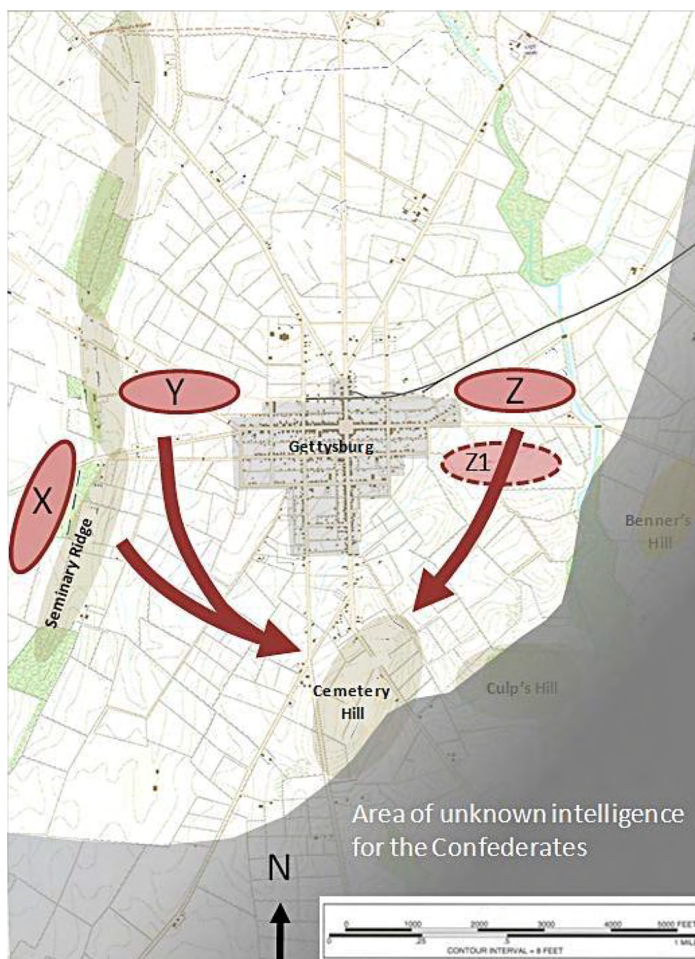
This shows that by late afternoon of the first day's battle, every Confederate brigade had enough active hours to put them in a red (poor condition) state, and the only brigades that sustained less than 10% casualties were two of Early's brigades and one of Pender's. Combining active hours and casualty percent together, the results show that of the units on the immediate battlefield, only the brigades of General Harry Hays, General William Smith, and General Edward Thomas, amounting to around 3,271 troops, were anywhere near in shape to execute another attack. Of these three, Smith's brigade was covering the York Road eastern approaches from suspected, but unconfirmed, Union reinforcements, and Thomas' brigade was held in reserve well west of Seminary Ridge. Only the brigades of Hays and Colonel Isaac Avery were close enough to continue attacking without pause on the Union forces assembling on Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill. All other brigades would have had to move from their current location to positions from which to launch a continuing attack. Ideally, these positions would be close by and have a direct line of approach to the objective. The selection of these positions would also be heavily influenced by the second factor of intelligence; what was known of the enemy and the suitability of the terrain.

Leading up to the battle, and throughout the first day, no Confederate

commander had any idea of the Union army whereabouts.³⁵ All day long, the unexpected appearance of Union infantry units continually surprised the Confederates. Without adequate reconnaissance, the Confederates really did not know what was on Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill, or what lay behind them. This lack of information resulted mainly from the Confederate's poor use of their cavalry arm. As mentioned earlier, Stuart, the main person in charge of Confederate cavalry operations, was busy with three cavalry brigades riding around the Union army, which took him away from his primary duties. Another brigade was operating well west of Gettysburg, and two others were three or four days ride away in Virginia covering the Confederate army's line of communications. Only one brigade (General Albert Jenkins commanding) rode in support of Ewell's Corps, but most of its regiments did not arrive on the battlefield until 5:00 pm, and then, for reasons not fully explained, was never employed in an active capacity.³⁶

Consequently, by late afternoon of the first day's battle, other than what they could directly observe, the Confederates were still largely ignorant of what they faced, both in terms of enemy and terrain, south and west of Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill (Map 2). This situation drove further doubt into the minds of Confederate commanders on whether they should or could attack. Hill would note, "The want of cavalry had been and was seriously felt."³⁷

East of Gettysburg, as alluded to earlier, the lack of enemy intelligence



Map 2. Potential Attack

would bleed off Confederate forces needed elsewhere. As Ewell discussed the situation with his commanders shortly after they entered the town, a report came from Smith's brigade of possible Union forces approaching on their extreme left flank. Although the report seemed doubtful, Ewell diverted both Smith's and Gordon's brigades to counter this perceived threat, essentially taking them out of supporting distance for any follow-on attack.³⁸ As shown in Table 2, Smith's brigade constituted one of the three fair condition Confederate

brigades remaining after the fighting on the first day.

On the Union side, their cavalry under Buford had good intelligence on the Confederates. Cavalry, in addition to locating and tracking enemy units, also performed the duties of screening their forces from the information collection activities of the enemy. Buford's cavalry division effectively screened likely approaches and presented a strong deterrent against Confederate reconnaissance or maneuver in these unknown areas as shown in Map 2.³⁹

By their actions, the Union cavalry prevented the Confederates from gaining knowledge on the exact nature of the AOTP forces and terrain they were facing.

The nature of the known terrain also influences the selection of any sort of possible attack position and avenue of approach to Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill. The town of Gettysburg alone presented the greatest obstacle to tactical movement. Gettysburg's built up areas, with constrictive alleys and streets, funnels troop movement into very lucrative kill zones, especially for artillery. The town buildings also obscure line of sight, which greatly hampers command and control. Furthermore, Culp's Hill presented its own challenges. Its north and northeast faces were, and still are, very wooded and rocky, and climb for 100 feet at an almost sheer angle (Figure 1), necessitating a move further around to the south and eastern sides to gain a position from which to assail the hill. The Confederates took this very approach when they eventually did attack Culp's Hill the evening of the second day, and early morning the third day of battle. This made Cemetery Hill a better objective to assault from a terrain perspective. Even so, from Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill, Early observed that the ground was rugged and crossed by stones and plank fences. Early assessed his brigades could not advance directly from the town to advantage⁴⁰ and, if they made an assault, they would have had to go in on the left of the town and strike the eastern face of Cemetery Hill with Gettysburg on the right and Culp's Hill on the left.⁴¹



Figure 1. View from the top of Culp's Hill looking north. The heavily wooded terrain falls almost straight down from here.

Factoring the conditions of enemy intelligence and terrain leaves three potential positions for launching an attack. The first two are Seminary Ridge, and an area directly west of Gettysburg (Positions X and Y in Map 2). An approach from these positions has the town on the left, an open field on the right flank, and strikes the west side of Cemetery Hill. The third position, just east of the town, turns west in front of Culp's Hill to strike the east side of Cemetery Hill (Positions Z and Z1⁴²), much like Early described above and how the Confederates eventually attacked Cemetery Hill the evening of the second day. Selecting positions any further from these runs up against unknown terrain and enemy, and would cause additional delay to start an attack not only because of the additional reconnaissance required, but also the necessity of moving to positions further away. This leads to our third factor: Time.

Night was fast approaching. The sun would set at 7:41 pm, and darkness (End of Evening Nautical Twilight or EENT) would fall at 8:55 pm.⁴³ Night fighting in the Civil War proved difficult and hazardous at best. Commanders commanded and controlled their maneuvering forces primarily by line of sight. With restricted visibility, they had a hard time seeing their units, and ran a high risk of mistaking friend for foe. The Confederates were only too aware of this problem having just lost one of their top commanders, “Stonewall” Jackson, to a night time friendly fire incident at the Battle of Chancellorsville.

To make an attack, the Confederates would first have to conduct a leader’s reconnaissance and issue new orders to subordinates. Lee did send new orders to attack Cemetery Hill, if practicable,⁴⁴ and Ewell promptly acted by conducting a quick reconnaissance. He determined he could make an attack if Hill supported him from the west, and sent off a messenger to Lee to request this support. Lee, after conferring with Hill, sent back that there would be no support from Hill, and urged Ewell to attack with II Corps alone.⁴⁵ This back and forth between Lee and Ewell illustrates the time involved just to initiate an attack, mainly because horseborne couriers were used as the primary mode of communication. Lee, in his position on Seminary Ridge, and Ewell, in the town of Gettysburg, were almost a mile apart. Composing each message, traveling the distance back and forth, and locating the principal recipient (or verbalizing it to the courier until he thoroughly understood it) took time. A

simple exchange of two or three messages could easily take an hour.

At the same time, units would have to reorganize, including disengaging from their current activities of resupply, prisoner processing, recovery of the wounded, and disentangling themselves from places like the town itself. They would then have to deploy to a suitable attack position, and finally traverse the actual approach route. Along with the message traffic described above, these pre-attack activities could take two or more hours to complete. As an example, the Confederate attacks throughout the first day’s battle all took around 2–3 hours to develop from the time they deployed their forces into attack formations, to the time they finally began engaging the enemy Union forces.⁴⁶ A theoretical best-case timeline for getting an attack off against Cemetery Hill or Culp’s Hill might look as illustrated in Figure 2. With this in mind, Ewell soon concluded that he could not carry off an attack on Cemetery Hill.

Other Confederate forces continued to arrive late on the scene, but again, running out of time plagued them. Ewell, after determining the unsailability of Cemetery Hill, sent off two of his aid-de-camps to scout Culp’s Hill. The two reported back that the hill was unoccupied. This seemed odd, given that Union commanders had posted the 7th Indiana on its summit not long after its arrival on the battlefield.⁴⁷ In any event, Ewell decided to occupy Culp’s Hill with his third division under Johnson just arriving onto the battlefield. However, running into traffic from oth-

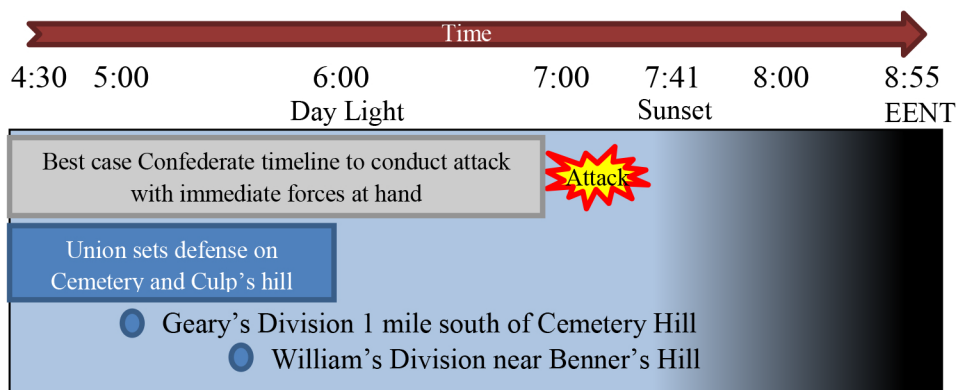


Figure 2. Timeline following the end of hostilities on the First Day's battle.

er units, Johnson's division only reached Gettysburg around 7:00 pm, which prevented him from reaching a position to make a move onto Culp's Hill until well past dark. When they finally did, their scouting parties ran into a Union ambush, signaling that Union forces had, in fact, secured Culp's Hill, thus prompting Johnson to suspend operations until the next day. Additionally, the division of General Richard Anderson of Hill's III Corps had also just come up, but was immediately placed in reserve owing to the uncertainty of the situation and the late hour.⁴⁸

Aside from time, and the practicality of executing such an attack, the Confederates also had to contend with the known Union forces themselves. The remnants of the Union I Corps and XI Corps had made their way to Cemetery Hill, and began to rally starting around 4:30 pm.⁴⁹ Both General Oliver Howard and the recently arrived General Winfield Hancock began sorting the units out, and placing them in defensive positions. Hancock would report that between 5:00 and 6:00 pm,

these defensive preparations were complete.⁵⁰ Using the same methodology to assess the condition of Confederate forces, Table 3 shows that most of the I Corps and XI Corps of the Union army were in poor shape. The exceptions were Colonel Orlando Smith's brigade left in reserve on Cemetery Hill, as well as the 7th Indiana Regiment⁵¹ of General Lysander Cutler's brigade and the 58th New York Regiment of Colonel Wladimir Krzyzanowski's brigade, both of whom came up late after conducting rear guard duties earlier in the day. All together they totaled of 2,273 infantry in **good** condition.

The presence of Buford's Division on the battlefield also has to be taken into consideration. In the first day's battle, Buford had already conducted a brilliant delaying action that allowed Union follow-on forces time to get on the battlefield, meet the Confederates, and effectively defend the terrain. Throughout the day, his cavalry also posed a threat to the Confederate flanks, at times forcing their infantry into defensive postures that slowed

Table 3. Status of Union Brigades Late Afternoon on the First Day

Division	Brigade/ Regiment	Start Strength ^a	First-Day Casualties	Active Hours ^b	Percent Casualties ^c	Effectiveness Assessment
I Corps (Reynolds)						
Wadsworth	Meredith	1,814	1,183	7	65.2	Poor
Wadsworth	Cutler ^d	1,566	964	7	61.6	Poor
Wadsworth	7 th Indiana Rgt	434	0	3	0.0	Good
Robinson	Paul	1,547	1,042	7	67.4	Poor
Robinson	Baxter	1,447	690	7	47.7	Poor
Rowley	Biddle (Rowley)	1,353	964	7	71.3	Poor
Rowley	Stone	1,315	855	7	65.0	Poor
XI Corps (Howard)						
Barlow	von Gilsa ^e	920	190	9	20.6	Poor
Barlow	Ames	1,333	324	9	24.3	Poor
Steinwher	Coster	1,215	562	8	46.3	Poor
Steinwher	Smith	1,644	0	4	0.0	Good
Schurz	Schimmelfennig	1,683	671	9	39.9	Poor
Schurz	Krzyzanowski ^f	1,229	646	9	52.6	Poor
Schurz	58 th New York Rgt	195	0	4	0.0	Good
First Cavalry Division (Buford)						
Buford	Gamble	1,596	102	7.5	6.4	Fair
Buford	Devin	1,108	25	3	2.3	Good

^a Petruzzi and Stanley, *The Gettysburg Campaign in Numbers and Losses*, 100–114.

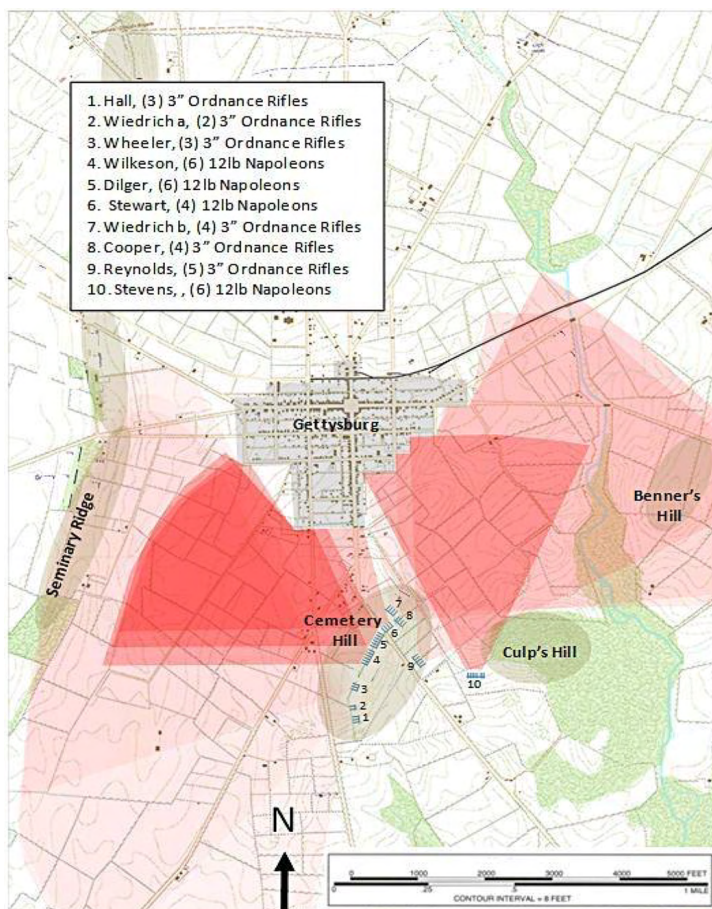
^b Unit start times were derived from H. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The First Day*, 70; Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, 262; and the reports of Doubleday OR, vol. 27, pt. 1, 244; Wadsworth OR, vol. 27, pt. 1, 265; Howard OR, vol. 27, pt. 1, 701.

^c Day 1 casualties were determined by estimating the casualties sustained by the units on Days 2 and 3 through a comparative analysis of other units and subtracted from their reported total casualties.

^d Not including the 7th IA who joined the brigade later in the day.

^e Not including the 41st NY who joined the brigade in the late evening.

^f Not including the 58th NY who joined the brigade later in the day.



Map 3. Union Artillery Positions Late Afternoon of the First Day

their advance. As the Union I Corps and XI Corps retreated, they covered their withdrawal, and denied the Confederates any sort of information collection, or reconnaissance of terrain beyond what they could see from their main lines.⁵² Buford's two brigades were in fair to good shape and immediately available to meet any Confederate continuation of the attack.

While these Union units consolidated and recovered, Union reinforcements continued to rapidly close on the battlefield. After some initial confusion on when and where to proceed, General

Henry Slocum's XII Corps of two divisions approached the battlefield from Baltimore Pike, which led into Gettysburg from the southeast. One division, under General Alpheus Williams, had actually made it to Benner's Hill ready to attack it when they were called back to Baltimore Pike around 5:30 or 6:00 pm⁵³ (this force went undetected by the Confederates and did not cause the diversion of Ewell's two brigades mentioned earlier). The other division, under General John Geary, reported in place at 5:00 pm about one mile south of Cemetery Hill.⁵⁴ Contrasting these re-

inforcements against the timeline illustrated in Figure 2, by the time the Confederates could strike Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill (between 7:00 and 7:30 pm), the AOTP had 19,295 men in place, or within easy supporting distance as early as 5:00 or 6:00 pm. This included 2,273 I Corps and XI Corps good condition infantry immediately on Cemetery Hill and Culp's hill, Geary's 3,948 infantry in close proximity, William's 3,415 infantry looming off to their left flank, and Buford's 2,646 cavalry division close at hand off their right flank, notwithstanding 7,013 survivors of the I Corps and XI Corps. Additionally, the longer the Confederates took to get their forces in motion, the longer the Union forces had to recover from their day's exertion, gradually mitigating the impact of hours spent marching and fighting.

Lastly, and most apparent to the Confederates, was the array of Union artillery ready on Cemetery Hill. They had the better part of nine batteries, the base maneuver element for artillery, resupplied and set up covering the approaches to the hill from the east, the west, and from the town, and one mobile battery with Buford. The Union batteries had fought throughout the day and had lost 12 guns out of 60, either from capture, breakdown, or sent to the rear.⁵⁵ Decisions made by Howard and Hancock had the 48 remaining (26—3" Ordnance and 22—12lb Napoleons) well manned and expertly sighted by their respective battery commanders.⁵⁶ Map 3 graphically illustrates the area covered by these guns had the Confederates continued their attack. The darker shades represent a



Figure 3. Union 3" Ordnance Rifle. Artillery Position 8 (Map 3) on Cemetery Hill Looking East

greater number and heavier caliber of guns able to fire into those areas, and the ranges equate to the distances the type of gun could reach owing to its design and the terrain.⁵⁷ The Union forces on Cemetery Hill had 19 guns (13—3" Ordnance and 6—12lb Napoleons) covering the eastern approaches (Figure 3), and 24 guns (eight—3" Ordnance and 16—12lb Napoleons) covering the western approaches. Buford had five guns (all 3" Ordnance) with him as he screened the area south and west of Cemetery Hill.

The best means to counter enemy artillery is with your own friendly artillery. Unfortunately, for the Confederates, their artillery arm had many disadvantages compared to their Union counterpart, particularly when it came to organization and ammunition quality. Generally, Union batteries had six guns, and Confederates had four guns. Union batteries usually had all the same

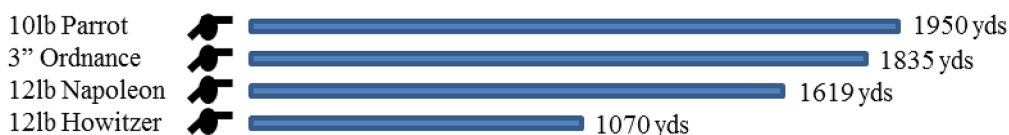


Figure 4. Ranges of Civil War Artillery Firing Shell Ammunition at 5° Elevation

gun type, whereas Confederates had a mix with many batteries having two to four different gun types in them; a readymade logistics headache. Ewell, on the east side of Gettysburg, had 32 guns of which four (one 12lb Napoleon and three 3'' Ordnance Rifles) had been put out of action by the day's fighting. Hill, on the west side, had 67 guns with one (one 3'' Ordnance Rifle) out of action.⁵⁸ However, of Ewell's remaining guns, only 11 were long-range shooting 3'' Ordnance, 10lb Parrot. Hill, likewise, had 27 long-range shooters, including 2—12lb Whitworth Rifles.⁵⁹ The rest were medium-range 12lb Napoleons (18 for Ewell and 29 for Hill), or short-range 12lb Howitzers (10 for Hill). To bring all their guns to bear would have required more than half of their guns to ride in and set up under the plunging fire effects from the Union batteries set up at higher elevations. Plunging fire essentially reduces range probable error of a projectile into a smaller pattern, thereby increasing the chances for inflicting greater casualties. The rifled guns could keep their distance, but their affect at long range (1,500–2,000 yards) would be greatly diminished (Figure 4), particularly if they had to fire at a target on a higher elevation such as on Cemetery Hill. Conversely, the height advantage of the Union batteries gave them added range in comparison to the

Confederate batteries setting up in lower elevations.

Ewell understood this, and assessed that he did not have good artillery positions to bear on Cemetery Hill from his side, other than from Benner Hill, which offered limited space to set up and too long of a range from which to shoot.⁶⁰ Lee saw this problem as well from his vantage point, and directed his artillery commander to take several artillery batteries south and west of Cemetery Hill to set up and gain enfilading fire on the Union artillery positions. This proved fruitless as he had no infantry available to protect the guns from the aggressive stance Buford's cavalry presented in that area.⁶¹ Without adequate artillery support, making an attack on Cemetery Hill would be very costly for the attacker, thus adding one more deterrent to making such an attack.

Taking all these factors together, possibly, an immediate recognition and an extraordinary effort fueled by desperation on the part of the Confederates, as well as uncharacteristic inaction on the part of the Union forces, could have given the Confederates a chance of achieving a successful attack on Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg. This desperate urgency really only became apparent well after the battle. Even so, given

what the Confederates faced in the late afternoon of the first day, any attempt had little to no chance of succeeding. First, of the 21,518 infantry available to the Confederates, they only had three brigades totaling 3,271 anywhere near in shape to make an attack, and two of these were grossly out of position. Second, because of inadequate cavalry support, they had no intelligence on what they would face in terms of both enemy and terrain, other than what they could directly see. Third, they had less than 3 hours before sunset and less than 4 hours before darkness to decide, reorganize, deploy, and conduct an attack. Last, the Union had 19,295 forces near at hand to seriously contest any attempt made, of which 12,282 were in good to fair condition.

Perhaps, the greatest cause for Confederates inaction at the end of the first day was their attitude and over-confidence. Confederate morale entering into the battle that summer peaked at an all-time high. Coming off a series of spectacular wins against a much larger and better supplied opponent, Confederate ANV soldiers put on an air of superiority that knew no bounds. General Edward P. Alexander later wrote,

... like the rest of the army generally, nothing gave me much concern so long as I knew that Gen. Lee was in command. I am sure there can never have been an army with more supreme confidence in its commander than that army had in Gen. Lee. We looked forward to victory under him as confidently as to successive sunrises.⁶²

Even Union commanders, such as General Henry J. Hunt, sensed their hubris:

The battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville raised the confidence of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia to such a height as to cause its subordinate officers and soldiers to believe that, as opposed to the Army of the Potomac, they were equal to any demand that could be made upon them. Their belief in superiority of the Southern to the Northerner as a fighter was now supported by signal success in the field.⁶³

Lieutenant Colonel James Arthur Fremantle, a British Officer attached to the Confederates during the battle, captured it the best. While sitting with a number of Confederate officers after the first day, he recorded that, "The staff officers spoke of the battle as a certainty, and the universal feeling in the army was one of profound contempt for an enemy they have beaten so constantly, and under so many disadvantages."⁶⁴

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