

Battle Field of Gettysburg
By
Amanda Coward
Sam Rosen Elementary
5th grade

SUMMARY OF CONTENT:

- *The battle of Gettysburg is considered the “Turning tide” in the Civil War.
- *In this lesson, students will explore the battle and the implications of it.

OBJECTIVES:

- *Understand battle field maps
- *Learn military terminology
- *Understand the strategy used in winning a battle in the Civil War
- *Develop a plan of how the South could have won the battle using a different strategy

TEKS/TAKS:

5.25A, 5.25B5.25C, 5.26D

TIME REQUIRED:

1 to 2 class periods

MATERIALS:

Battle field maps of Gettysburg
Story of Gettysburg Battle
Description of Military terms

PROCEDURES:

(This is to be done after you have discussed the Civil War in depth)

In Groups: Students will be given a battlefield map of the Gettysburg Battle on July 1-3, 1863. They will also be given the story of what happened at the battle. They will be taught how to read the map and what the military terminology means. After they have learned these concepts, they will be given the task of developing another strategy (or plan) that General Lee could have used to defeat General Grant at the battle. They will then present their plan in a presentation to the class using any materials that they come up with.

ASSESSMENTS:

*Students will present their presentations and have to justify how they developed their strategy

* TAKS question:

Formal: After the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, where was the next significant battle?

- a. Petersburg
- b. Harper's Ferry
- c. Antietam
- d. Harrisburg

Informal: Take another battlefield that we have discussed in our study of the Civil War and develop another strategy that could have helped the losing side to win that

battle.

The Battle of Gettysburg

On Wednesday, July 1, 1863, the Battle of Gettysburg began as a skirmish between Confederate soldiers who were sent out to look for supplies from town and Union soldiers who were keeping a look-out on the enemy's movements. Two days later, the Battle of Gettysburg became the battle that changed the course of the Civil War. Gettysburg was the only major battle fought on Northern soil.

On the first day, the Confederates routed the Union Army in the fields north and northwest of the town. The Federal army retreated through the streets of Gettysburg and regrouped on Cemetery Hill located south of town. Had the southern army pressed on, the Union army would have met disaster. But since the Confederates suffered heavy casualties themselves and not knowing the size of the Union army, they waited for re-enforcements to arrive. In doing so, this allowed time for the Union army to send for re-enforcements themselves and set up a defensive battle line in the wooded hills south of town. By the time the battle was in full force, approximately 70,000 Confederates and 90,000 Federals converged at Gettysburg.

After heavy fighting on the second day, there was no change in the battle positions for either army. So on the third day, the Southern army decided on an all-out charge on the Federal position, which came to be known as "Pickett's Charge". Approximately one hour later, the Southern army retreated back to their original positions. This began a slow two year defeat of the Confederate army and the end of the Civil War.

Printed in U.S.A.
Copyright White Rose Printing Co. 1992
Designed & Illustrated by Eric Stambaugh

Published by
White Rose Printing Company
237 South Court Street
York, PA 17403
1-800-441-3346 prepress@whiterose.cc

from: *The Battle of Gettysburg Fun & Facts Coloring Book*



The Battle Of Gettysburg

July 1-3 1863

In July of 1863, General Robert E. Lee's Army Of Northern Virginia of 75,000 men and the 97,000 man Union Army Of The Potomac under General George G. Meade met, by chance, when a Confederate brigade sent forward for supplies observed a forward column of Meade's cavalry.

Of the more than 2,000 land engagements of the Civil War, Gettysburg ranks supreme. Although the Battle of Gettysburg did not end the war, nor did it attain any major war aim for the North or the South, it remains the great battle of the war.

Here at Gettysburg on July 1, 2, and 3, 1863, more men actually fought and more men died than in any other battle before or since on North American soil.

Day 1

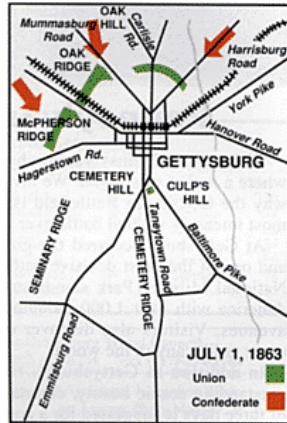
In June, Robert E. Lee decided to take the war north. He planned to destroy the railroad bridge at Harrisburg, then "turn my attention to Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Washington as may seem best for our interest." After the long march north, Confederate troops were spread from Chambersburg, through Carlisle, and into York.

Towns across southern Pennsylvania were being "explored" for much needed supplies to continue the Southern offensive. While looking in Gettysburg, Pettigrew's brigade spotted Buford's cavalry on a ridge a mile west of town.

The Battle of Gettysburg Pennsylvania began on July 1 with Confederate troops attacking that Union cavalry division on McPherson Ridge, west of town. Out-numbered, the Union forces managed to hold, and even drive the Confederate army back, after the addition of John Reynold's Infantry division (and Reynold's subsequent death on the front lines).

They prevailed until afternoon, when they were overpowered by additional southern troops, and driven back through town. In the confusion, thousands of Union soldiers were captured before they could rally on Cemetery Hill, south of town.

Long into the night Union troops labored over their defenses while the bulk of Meade's army arrived and took positions.

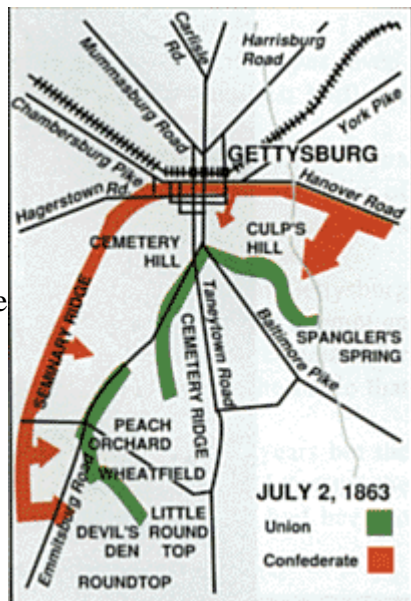


Day 2

On July 2, the battle lines were drawn up in two sweeping arcs. The main portions of both armies were nearly a mile apart on two parallel ridges; Union forces on Cemetery Ridge in the famous "fish hook", facing Confederate forces on Seminary Ridge to the west. Lee ordered an attack against both Union flanks.

On the south, James Longstreet's thrust on the Union left broke through D.E. Sickles' advance lines at the Peach Orchard, left the Wheatfield and Plum Run (now known as Bloody Run) strewn with dead and wounded, and turned the rocky area called the "Devils Den", at the base of Little Round Top, into a shambles. Only a very observant General G. K. Warren saved Little Round Top for the Union, when he saw that the strategic hill was unmanned.

ultimately proved right on East though they were southern slope of frequent lack of prove the downfall had only known that away from taking the had moved through the attack on

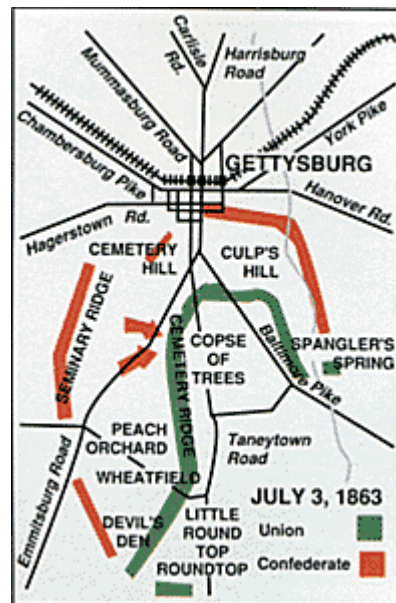


To the north, R. S. Ewell's attack futile against the entrenched Union Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill, even able to take possession of the Culp's Hill on one occasion. The effective communication would of the Confederacy this day. If they were only a few hundred yards Unions supply trains...if only Rodes the streets of Gettysburg to aid in Cemetery Hill...

Day 3

On July 3, Lee decided to press the attack to the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. At 1 in the afternoon, the southern artillery opened a bombardment that for a time engaged the massed guns of both sides in a thundering duel for supremacy, but did little to soften up the Union battle lines.

Then came the climax of the Battle of Gettysburg...with a salute from Longstreet, General George E. Pickett, in a desperate attempt to recapture the partial success of the preceding day, spearheaded one of the most incredible efforts in military history...a massed infantry assault of 15,000 Confederate troops across the open field toward the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. One mile they marched, while being pounded by artillery and rifle fire. Through it all, Pickett's men reached but failed to break the Union line, and the magnificent effort ended in disaster. The tide of the Confederacy had "swept to its crest, paused, and receded." In 50 minutes, 10,000 in the assault had become casualties, and the attack - forever to be known as Pickett's Charge - was now history.



July 3 3:00 PM



3:30 PM



[Click to enlarge](#)

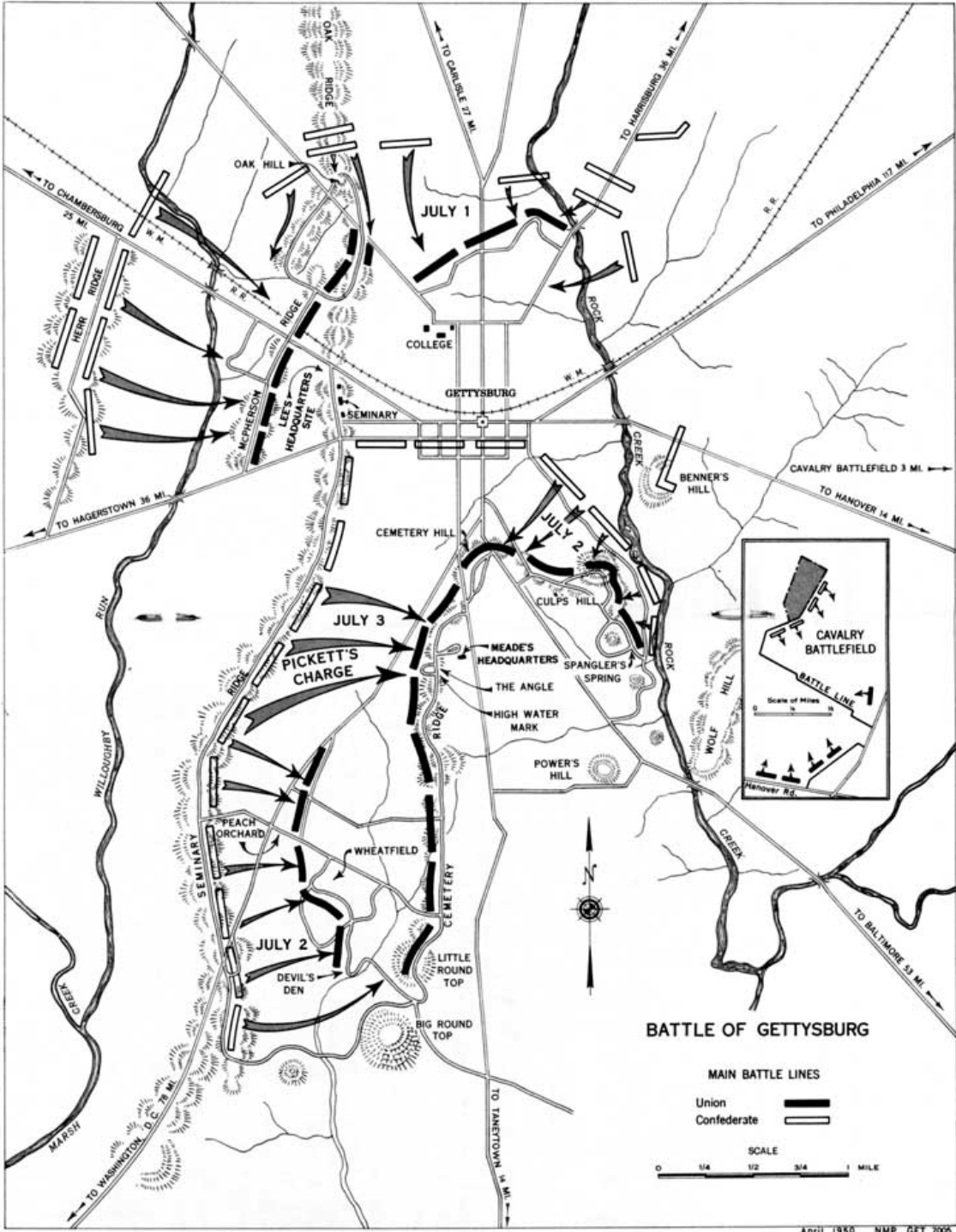
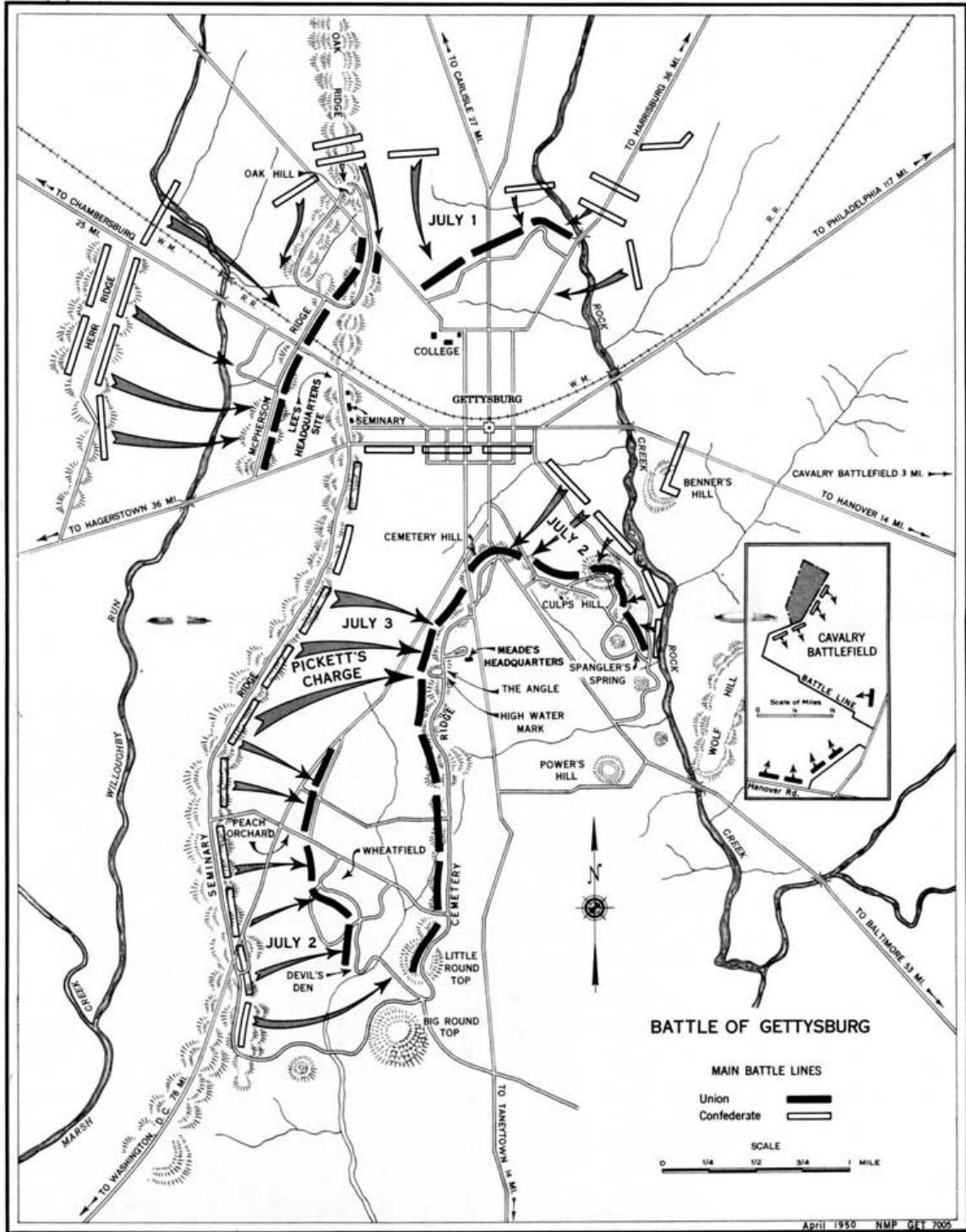
3:45 PM



With the failure of Pickett's Charge, the battle was over - the Union was saved. Lee's retreat began on the afternoon of July 4. Behind him, this small town of only 2,400 was left with a total (from both sides) of over 51,000 casualties. Over 172,000 men and 634 cannon had been positioned in an area encompassing 25 square miles. Additionally, an estimated 569 tons of ammunition was expended and, when the battle had ended, 5,000 dead horses and the other wreckage of war presented a scene of terrible devastation.

The Confederate army that staggered back from the fight at Gettysburg was physically and spiritually exhausted. Lee would never again attempt an offensive operation of such proportions. Meade, though he was criticized for not immediately pursuing Lee's army, had carried the day in the battle that has become known as the High Water Mark of the Confederacy.

The war was to rage for two more terrible and tormenting years but the Confederacy never recovered from the losses of Gettysburg. And through the deepening twilight of Confederate military might, all who had been to Gettysburg would remember.





<http://www.nps.gov/gett/gettour/armorg.htm>

Gettysburg National Military Park

Virtual Tour

Army Organization during the Civil War



A company of Union soldiers at ease.
(Library of Congress)

To the non-military buff, the organization and terminology used for Civil War armies can be very confusing. The "Army of the Potomac" was the main Union army in the eastern theater of the war and the "Army of Northern Virginia" was the main Confederate force. Remarkably, both of the armies that fought the Battle of Gettysburg were organized in a similar fashion including a structure of corps, divisions, and brigades. But what were these different organizations and how did they all fit in to one huge force?

The Federal government and the Confederate government both had war departments, which oversaw the organization, supply, and movements of their respective armies. Civil War-era armies were organized according to military manuals including those adopted by the Federal War Department prior to 1861. Because the war had to be fought over a large area of the South, the Union and the Confederacy both had several armies, each fighting in different "theaters" or sections of the country. Each army was a structured organization that included a general headquarters, infantry, artillery, cavalry, signalmen, engineers, quartermaster and commissary departments. The largest single organization of an army was a **corps** (pronounced "core"). The Union Army at Gettysburg had seven infantry corps and a cavalry corps, each commanded by a major general. The Confederate Army had three infantry corps, each commanded by a lieutenant general. Typically, a Confederate corps

was much larger than a Union corps. A corps included three infantry **divisions** and an **artillery brigade** in the Union army or an **artillery battalion** in the Confederate Army. The Army of the Potomac had distinguishing symbols called *corps badges* to signify one corps from another. The badges were actually small cloth cut-outs shaped like crosses, spheres, stars, and quarter moons, and made in three different colors- red, white, and blue, each color specific to a division of the corps. Confederates had no corps badges or particular symbols for their organizations.

The infantry **division** was commanded by a major or a brigadier general and composed of two to four infantry **brigades**. The brigade, commanded by a brigadier general, was composed of four to six **regiments**, and was the primary organization used by commanders in battle. A brigade with good officers and good training was a formidable fighting force and often advanced or defended positions in cooperation with fellow brigades. It was common practice for a brigade commander to send forward most of his regiments and hold one in reserve. The Confederate War Department made attempts to have brigades composed of regiments from one singular state or state affiliation, such as General Joseph Kershaw's brigade which was all South Carolina regiments. The Union Army did not always make such conscious choices, though there were some brigades which acquired interesting nick names due to their ethnic origin or locality from which they hailed.

For the infantryman, his regiment was the most important unit. Led by a colonel, Lt. colonel and major, a full strength regiment numbered over 1,000 officers and men. Attrition due to disease and battle losses meant considerably lower personnel in each regiment by the time of the Battle of Gettysburg, where some regiments mustered only about two-hundred. A regiment was divided into ten companies of 100 men each at full strength. One company was divided in half as two platoons. One company was led by a captain with two lieutenants who each commanded a platoon. Platoons were divided into squads, led by a sergeant or corporal. Regiments fought in a "battle line" or in some cases a "skirmish line", which was a general open rank tactic used to feel out the strength of an enemy force.

Army Organization Comparison Chart:

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

1 Corps = 3 Divisions

1 Division = 3 Brigades

1 Brigade = 4 to 5 Regiments

1 Regiment = 10 Companies (1,100 officers and

ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

1 Corps = 3 Divisions

1 Division = 4 to 5 Brigades

1 Brigade = 4 to 6 Regiments

1 Regiment = 10 Companies (1,100 officers and

men)

1 Company = 2 to 3 Platoons* (100 officers and men)
(* depending on military organization manual)

1 Platoon = 5 Squads (1 officer & 50 men)

men)

1 Company = 2 to 3 Platoons* (100 officers and men)
(* depending on military organization manual)

1 Platoon = 5 Squads (1 officer & 50 men)

For the infantryman, his regiment was the most important unit. Led by a colonel, Lt. colonel and major, a full strength regiment numbered over 1,000 officers and men. Attrition due to disease and battle losses meant considerably lower personnel in each regiment by the time of the Battle of Gettysburg, where some regiments mustered only about two-hundred. A regiment was divided into ten companies of 100 men each at full strength. One company was divided in half as two platoons. One company was led by a captain with two lieutenants who each commanded a platoon. Platoons were divided into squads, led by a sergeant or corporal. Regiments fought in a "battle line" or in some cases a "skirmish line", which was a general open rank tactic used to feel out the strength of an enemy force.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, there was a standing force of "regular" units in the United States Army. State militias were called into service, but there was a need to Federalize these units so that they could muster pay from the United States government and serve outside of state borders. Each state was given a quota of "volunteer regiments" to be raised for service lasting from three months to three years. The South faced a similar dilemma. Southern states raised and supplied the Confederate armies with volunteer regiments. By 1863, many of the regiments in both armies had been in service since 1861 and were still composed of mostly volunteer soldiers, though the first "conscripts" or men required by state law to serve in the military defense of a state, had begun to appear in Southern units. A regiment's flag, or "regimental colors", were painted with the regiment's number and state affiliation, usually followed by "VOLUNTEER INFANTRY". The term volunteer was a symbol of pride for soldiers on both sides.

The most widely used manual for small units (regiments) was *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics For The Exercise and Maneuvers of Troops When Acting As Light Infantry Or Riflemen*, written by William J. Hardee. The manual specified the proper placement of officers, the rank and file, the manual of arms, basic marching orders, and other requirements. His manual was re-written for Confederate use in 1861 when Hardee resigned his commission from the United States Army and joined the Confederacy. Other manuals of organization and drill were used, but "Hardee's Tactics" continued to be the most popular and widely used manual throughout the war.

The **artillery** was usually organized by regiments as well, except that each company was called a **battery**. A battery consisted of over 100 soldiers, armed with six cannon per battery. Confederate batteries were smaller, some having only four cannon. Batteries

were assigned independently from their regiments to specific artillery brigades (Union) or battalions (Confederate) or to the artillery reserve of an army. Both of the armies had an **artillery reserve** which was an organization of extra batteries to be placed where needed. The Union army had one large artillery reserve force. The Confederate army had one reserve group per corps, but the number of guns was still smaller than the number of Union cannon.

A **cavalry** regiment was organized in a similar fashion to the infantry and artillery. Ten to twelve companies or "troops", made up one regiment. The regiment was divided into three **battalions**, each composed of four companies. A company was divided into "squadrons" for easy maneuvering on the field. The cavalry regiment was much more expensive to sustain while in service due to the amount of equipment carried by each cavalryman (carbine, saber, pistol, belt set, and equipment for the soldier's mount) and the requirement for horses and their care.

Both armies also had a compliment of quartermaster, engineer, and signal units as well as supply wagons organized as "trains". An army on the march was usually followed by miles and miles of wagons loaded with the equipments of war including food, ammuniton, and medical supplies. At the top of the organizational list was the Army Headquarters. The commanding general required a personal staff to dictate orders and keep records of army movement. There were also clerks and assistants. The commanders of armies also had the privilege of a headquarters cook. Every army headquarters usually had a large compliment of staff officers, couriers, and a headquarters guard, which included an infantry battalion and a cavalry escort.

For additional information on the soldiers of 1863, visit our [Civil War Soldier Life](#) pages.

| [The Battle Begins](#) | ["A most terrible day..."](#) | ["I will strike him there."](#) | [The Last Full Measure](#) |
| [The Battle of Gettysburg in Detail](#) |
| [Army Organization](#) | [US Order of Battle](#) | [CS Order of Battle](#) |
| [Voices of Battle](#) | [Camp Letterman](#) | [The Great Reunion](#) | [Tour Home](#) |



[Gettysburg National Military Park Virtual Tour](#) **National Park Service**
[Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
97 Taneytown Road
Gettysburg, PA 17325

