

**BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS—STOP 1
Germanna Ford**

Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also. The only point upon which I am now in doubt is whether it will be better to cross the Rapidan above or below him. Each plan presents great advantages over the other, with corresponding objections. By crossing above, Lee is cut off from all chance of ignoring Richmond and going north on a raid: but if we take this route all we do must be done while the rations we start with hold out; we separate from Butler, so that he cannot be directed how to co-operate. By the other route, Brandy Station can be used as a base of supplies until another is secured on the York or James River. These advantages and objections I will talk over with you more fully than I can write them.

--Grant to Meade, 30 April 1864

About 10:00pm on May 3, I received an order to prepare my battery to move immediately, and to follow the Second Brigade when it moved from camp, which I did about 11:00pm, and at daylight arrived at Germanna Ford, where I crossed the Rapidan on the pontoon bridge as soon as it was laid . . .

**--Report of Lieut. Alexander C. M. Pennington,
Second U.S. Artillery, First Brigade Horse Artillery**

The crossing of Rapidan effected.. Forty-eight hours now will demonstrate whether the enemy intends giving battle this side of Richmond. Telegraph Butler that we have crossed the Rapidan.

--Grant to Halleck, 4 May, 1:50pm



5 May, 7:00 AM
Warren's 5th Corps attacks
Griffin's division in thick
woods west of Wilderness
Tavern on Orange
Turnpike.



Wilderness METTT—STOP 1 Germanna Ford

UNION

MISSION

- To cross the Rapidan and seek and engage the Confederate Army.

ENEMY

- Confederates were respected. Army of Northern Virginia numbered 61, 000 effectives.

TROOPS

- Morale was high; supplies plentiful.

TIME

- 4 May 1864: Grant intended to “fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.”



Grant and Meade looking at a map among staff.

CONFEDERATE

MISSION

- To draw Grant into battle on choice ground , seize road junctions, defeat the Union Army and force its withdrawal from Virginia.

ENEMY

- 120,000 effectives in the Army of the Potomac, including Burnside's 9th Corps.

TROOPS

- Morale was high; supply low.

TIME

- 4 May 1864: Attack as soon as possible.

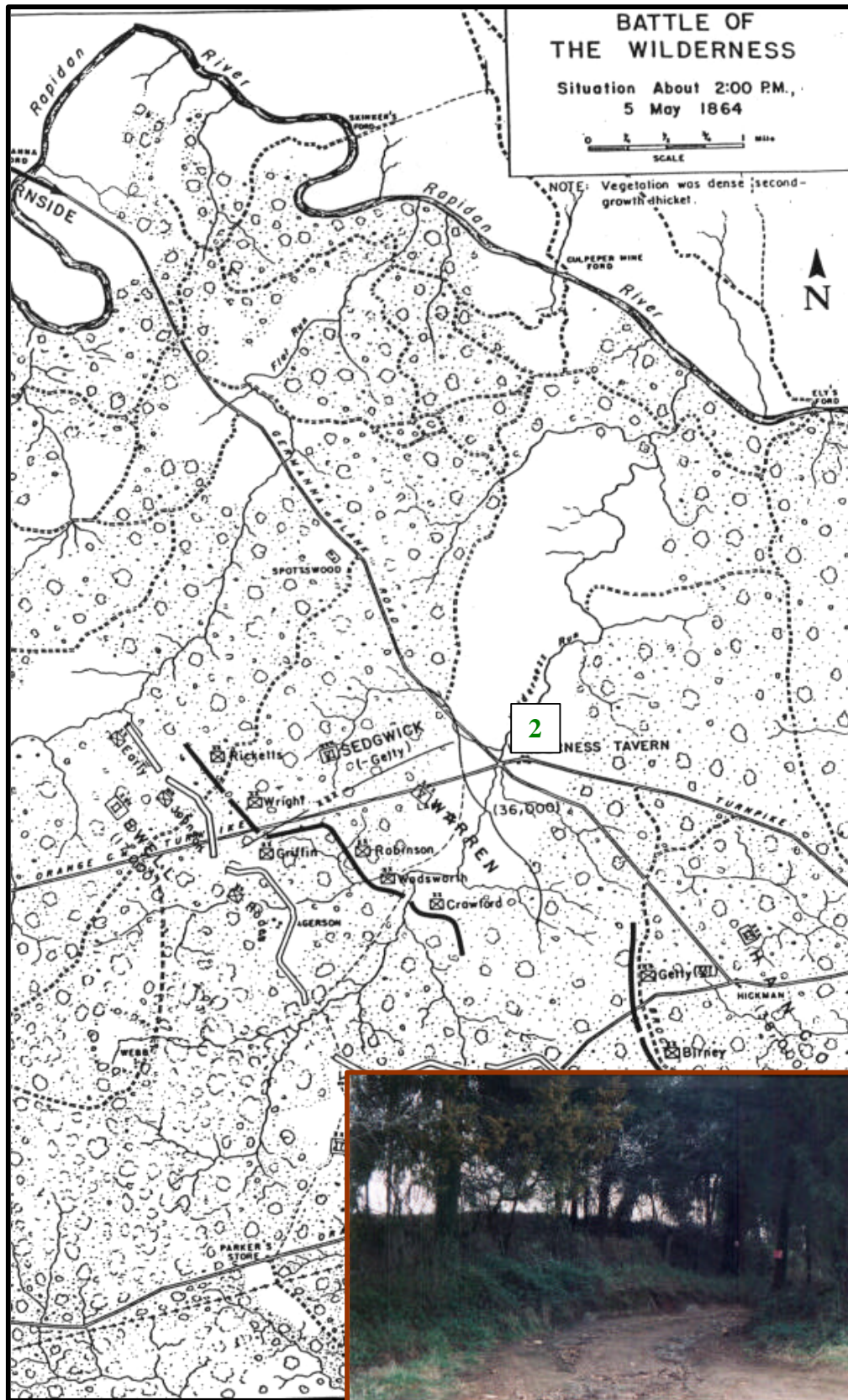
TERRAIN

- Three main roads, impassable for large armies, traversed thickly wooded, rolling hills.

Pontoon boat used in the construction of river bridges.



The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania



STOP 2—ROUTE 3 AND GERMANNA ROAD:

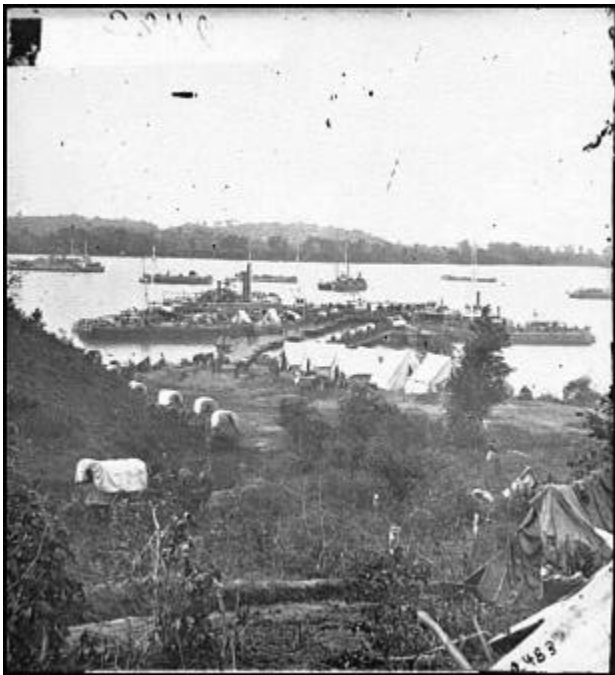
Meade adapts to changing situation

On reaching the Old Wilderness Tavern the first four batteries went into position on the high ground immediately around the Lacey House. The others were camped for the night on the east side of the Germanna plank road, about three-fourths of a mile north of the tavern.

--Report of Col. Charles S. Wainwright, First New York Light Artillery, commanding Artillery Brigade

During the night I sent instructions to Wadsworth to form in line northeast and southwest, and go straight through, and orders were to attack next morning at 4:30 o'clock with the whole army, General Burnside being expected to be up by that time to take part. With the rest of my force I prepared again to attack [Gen] Ewell in conjunction with part of the Sixth Corps. The hour of attack was changed to 5 a.m., and at precisely 5 a.m. May 6 the fighting began.

--Journal of Maj. Gen. G. K. Warren, U.S. Army Commanding Fifth Corps



United States Army Wagons and transports arriving at Belle Plain, VA to supply the Army of the Potomac.



**George Meade
1815-1872**

The victor of Gettysburg, George G. Meade does not rank with the great leaders of the Civil War in part because of his eclipse in the last year of the conflict by the presence of Grant with his army, and a journalistic silence. He graduated from West Point in 1835, and served a year in the artillery before resigning. After some difficulty in finding employment he reentered the army in 1842 and earned a brevet in Mexico. Serving on a survey of the Great Lakes at the outbreak of the Civil War, he received a volunteer brigadier's star in the first summer of the war and was assigned to the division of Pennsylvania Reserves. Meade was chosen to relieve Hooker in command of the army only three days before Gettysburg.

Wilderness METTT—STOP 2 Germanna Road

UNION

MISSION

- To engage and destroy the Army of Northern Virginia.

ENEMY

- Ewell's II Corps had approximately 15,000 effectives.

TROOPS

- Union troops were well-rested, well-fed, and morale was high.

TIME

- 4-5 May 1864.

CONFEDERATE

MISSION

- To defeat the Union Army, hold strategic road junctions, and protect Richmond

ENEMY

- Warren's V Corps numbered approximately 20,000.

TROOPS

- Rebels were confident.

TIME

- 4-5 May 1864.

TERRAIN

- Roads were the only means of moving armies; dense underbrush in the woods.

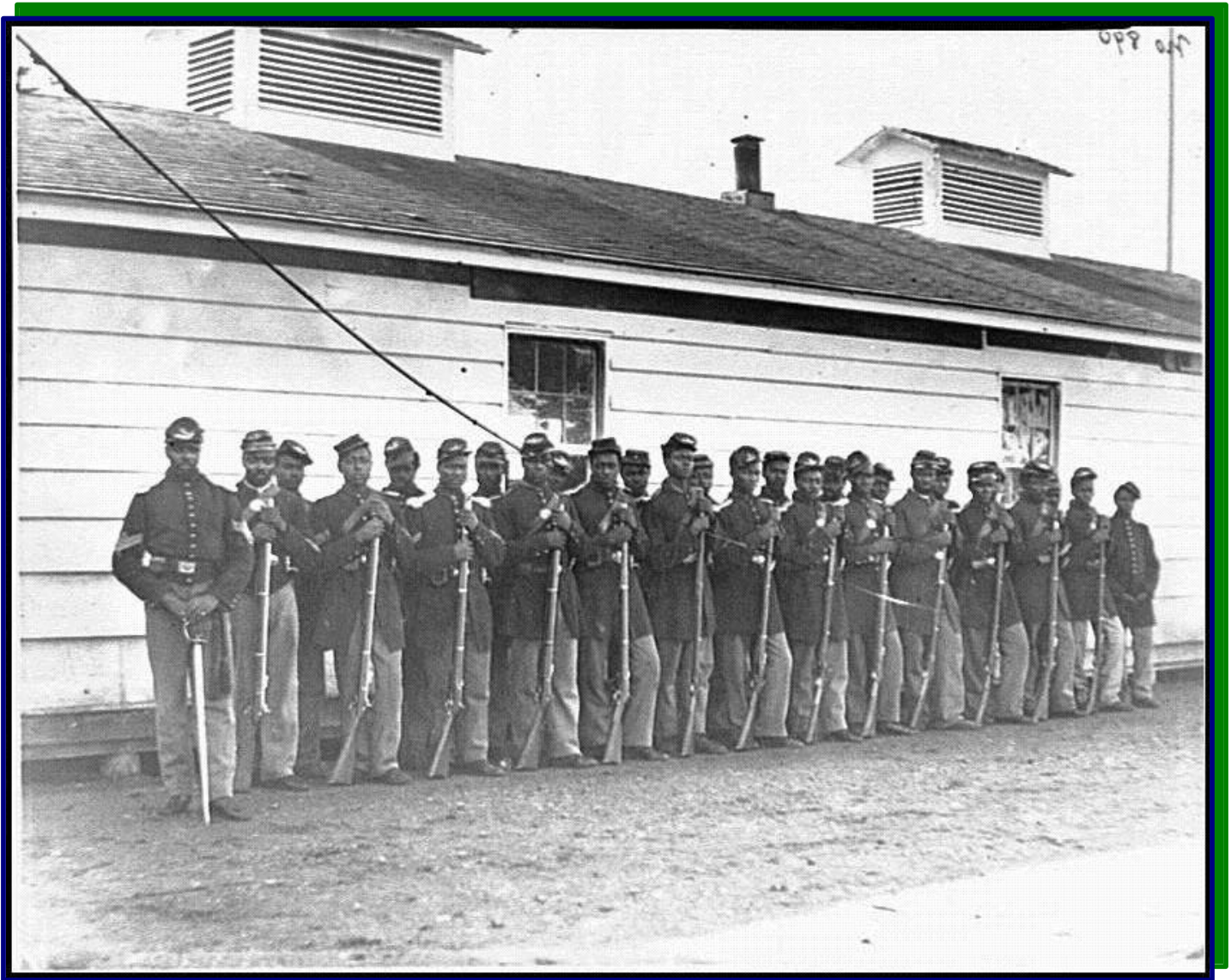


**Warren,
Gouverneur
Kemble 1830-82**

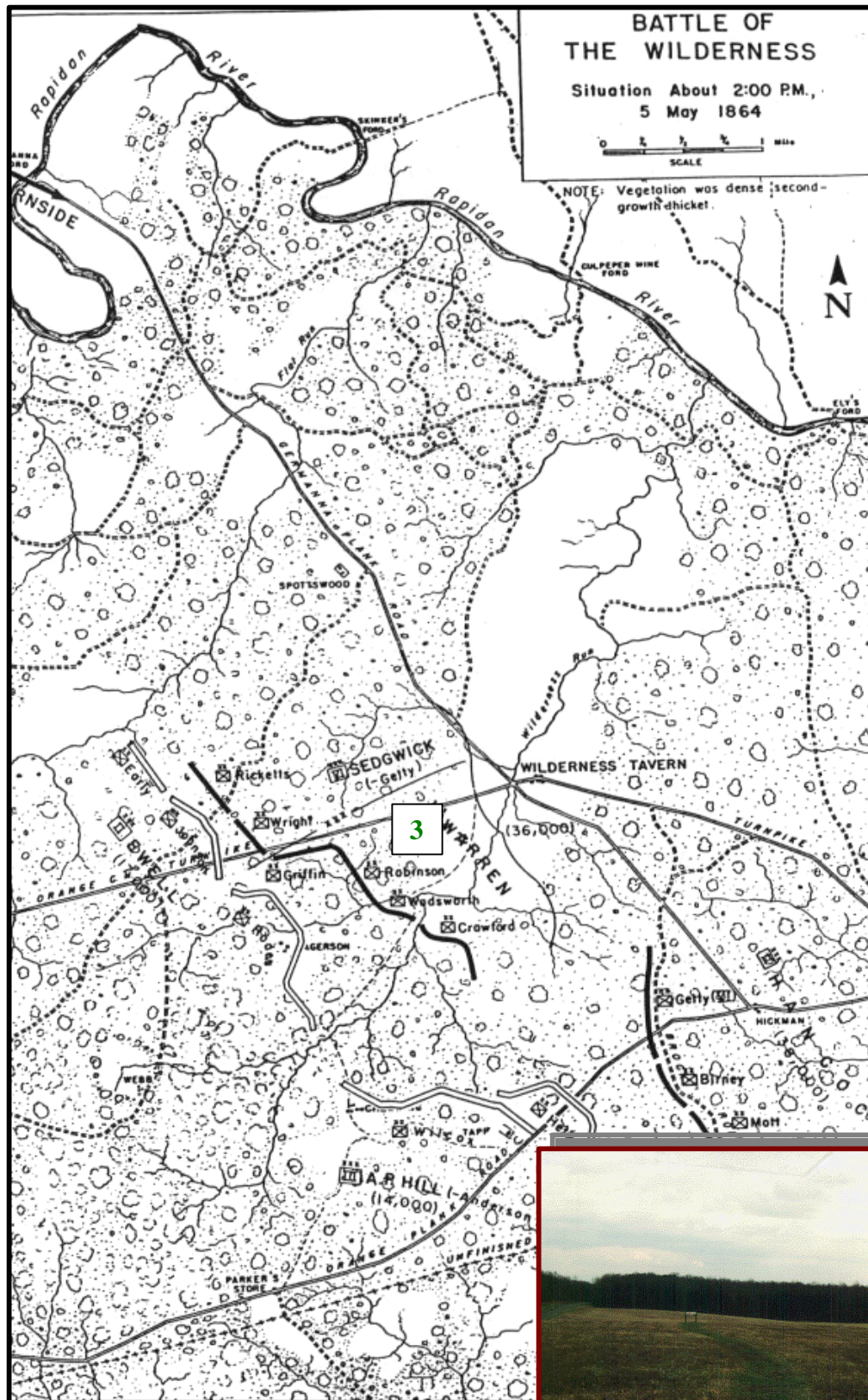
Before the war he participated in a Mississippi Delta survey, supervised rapids and canal improvements, taught mathematics at West Point and fought Native Americans. Appointed Brigadier General in September 1862 and made Chief Topographical Engineer for the Army of the Potomac in 1863. There is a monument to him on Little Round Top, where he distinguished himself on the second day of the battle. For the remainder of the war he commanded the V Corps, participating at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Bethesda Church, Cold Harbor and Petersburg to name just a few. During the battle of Five Forks, however, he was summarily relieved by Sheridan. Fourteen Years later he was exonerated. Regardless, his professional career was destroyed and he died a broken man.

The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania

During the Wilderness Campaign, the Army of the Potomac fielded black troops for the first time. Confined to Burnside's 9th Corps, the United States Colored Troops, as they were then designated, mainly guarded wagon trains. Yet, as Union commanders grew more confident in the black troops' value, they were used much more extensively in combat situations.



The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania



STOP 3—SAUNDER’S FIELD: Union Perspective

The 140th New York Zouave Regiment, the 146th New York, and the 91st and 155th Pennsylvania were heavily engaged in the middle of Saunder’s Field. Smoke and guns blazing created mass confusion as Ewell’s troops poured lead into the oncoming Federals. One northerner said that “Many dashed directly into the enemy fire in a belief that they were going to the rear.” Another remembered that “Officers lost control of their companies and utterly bewildered, rushed hither and thither, looking for their men.” The 140th’s organization, meanwhile, was virtually destroyed.

Another recalled Saunder’s Field: “The incessant roar of the rifle; the screaming bullets; the forest on fire; men cheering, groaning, yelling, swearing, and praying! All this created an experience in the minds of the survivors that we can never forget.”

Soon after, the Yankee line, disorganized and beaten, broke. A veteran of the 83rd Pennsylvania confessed that “we ran almost every step of the way back and when we got there we laid down on our backs and panted like so many hounds which had just come back in from a ten hours’ chase after a gang of foxes.”

Yet, despite these set-backs, reinforcements and entrenching allowed the Union army to regroup and hold their line for the rest of the 5 May.

STOP 3--UNION METTT

MISSION

- To engage and defeat the Confederates forces.

ENEMY

- Ewell’s II Corps, 15,000 effectives

TROOPS

- Warren’s Corps and Sedgwick’s Corps were seasoned and fought with courage even under murderous fire.

TIME

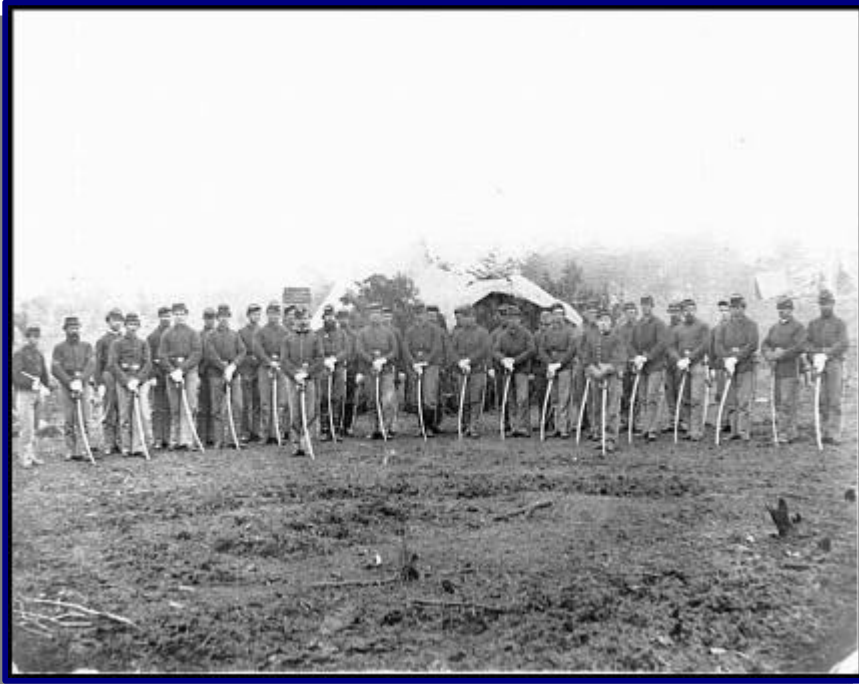
- Morning to afternoon of 5 May.



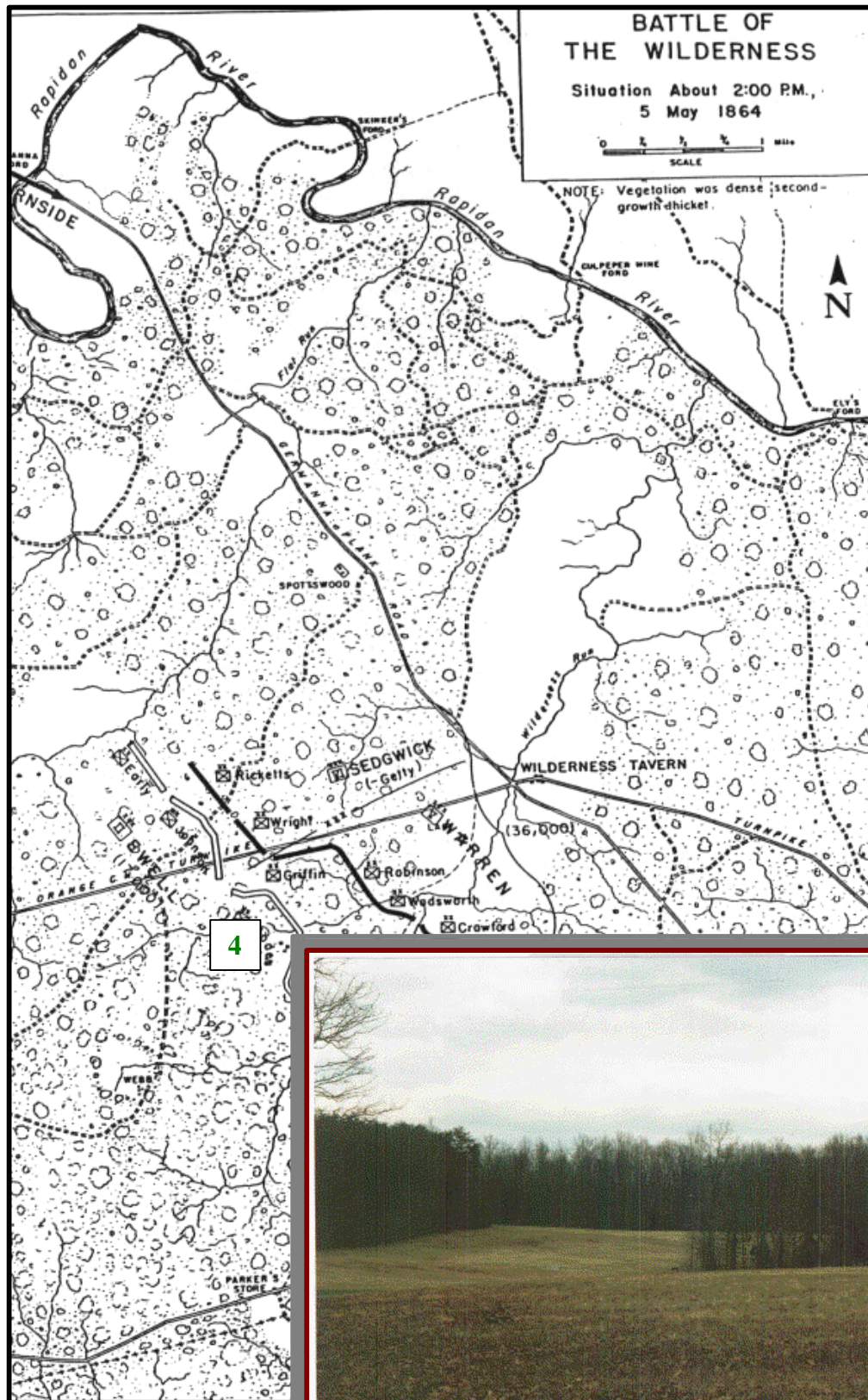
**Burnside, Ambrose
Everett
1824-1881**

After service in Mexican and Indian wars, he resigned in 1853 to manufacture firearms in Bristol, R. I.; invented breech-loading rifle (1856); Maj. Gen. (1855-1857); treasurer of Illinois Central R.R. in 1861. Entered Civil War as Col. of 1st R. I. Volunteers; commanded brigade at 1st Bull Run and promoted to B.G. Twice he refused offer to command Army of Potomac. His undistinguished leadership of McClellan's left wing at Antietam was the main reason for Lee's escaping annihilation. Again offered command of Army of Potomac, he accepted only on the urging of other generals who did not want Hooker to have the position. Relieved of command after Fredericksburg, for which failure Burnside publicly

A detachment from the 3rd Pennsylvania Cavalry



admitted blame, he consented to remain in the army in subordinate positions. As commander of the IX Corps he fought in the Battle of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Totopotomoy, Bethesda Church. He was again relieved of command for mishandling troops in the Petersburg mine assault. After the war he was successful in engineering and managerial work with several railroads; Elected Governor of R.I. in 1866; then served as US Senator from that state until his death.



STOP 4—SAUNDER’S FIELD: Confederate View

I posted the Twenty-second nearly parallel with the road, and the Thirty-second Massachusetts on the right, refused. Here we engaged the enemy, who came out of a wood on the opposite side of a clearing in our front. We there remained under a rather severe fire, which we returned, until about 3 p.m., when we were relieved and returned to the position first occupied by us in the morning.

--Report of Colonel William S. Tilton, 22nd Massachusetts.

. . . the enemy fell suddenly upon Jones' right flank and front, broke his brigade, and drove it back upon Battle's, which it disordered. Daniel's brigade, of Rodes' division, and Gordon's, of Early's, were soon brought up and regained the lost ground, the latter capturing, by a dashing charge, several hundred prisoners and relieving Doles, who, though hard pressed, had held his ground.

--General Richard S. Ewell, Commanding General of the Confederate II Corps at Saunder’s Field.

STOP--4 CONFEDERATE METTT

MISSION

- Stop the Union advance and force a withdrawal back across the Rapidan.

ENEMY

- Warren’s 5th Corps, Sedgwick’s 6th Corps—about 35,000 men.

TROOPS

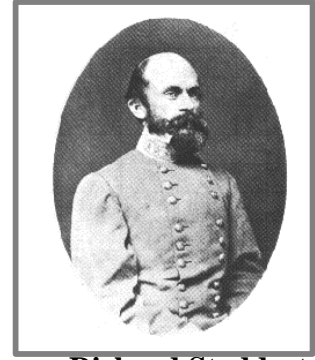
- Ewell’s 2nd Corps, Hill’s 3rd Corps—about 20,000 men.

TIME

- Morning to afternoon of 5 May.

TERRAIN

- One of the few open fields in the midst of the Wilderness.



**Richard Stoddert
Ewell
1817-72**

He served on the frontier, in the Mexican War (1 brevet), and in Indian fighting before resigning 7 May 1861 as Capt. Commissioned Col. C.S.A., he took over the camp of cavalry instruction at Ashland and on 17 June 1861 was appointed B.G. C.S.A. He commanded the 2d Brig. at 1st Bull Run and was promoted Maj. Gen. 23 Jan. 1862. In the Shenandoah Valley he commanded his division under Jackson at Winchester and Cross Keys and went with him to the Peninsula where he fought in the Seven Days’ Battles. He also fought at Cedar Mountain, 2nd Bull Run, and lost his leg at Groveton. He returned to duty 23 May 1863 as Lt. Gen., in command of II Corps.

The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania

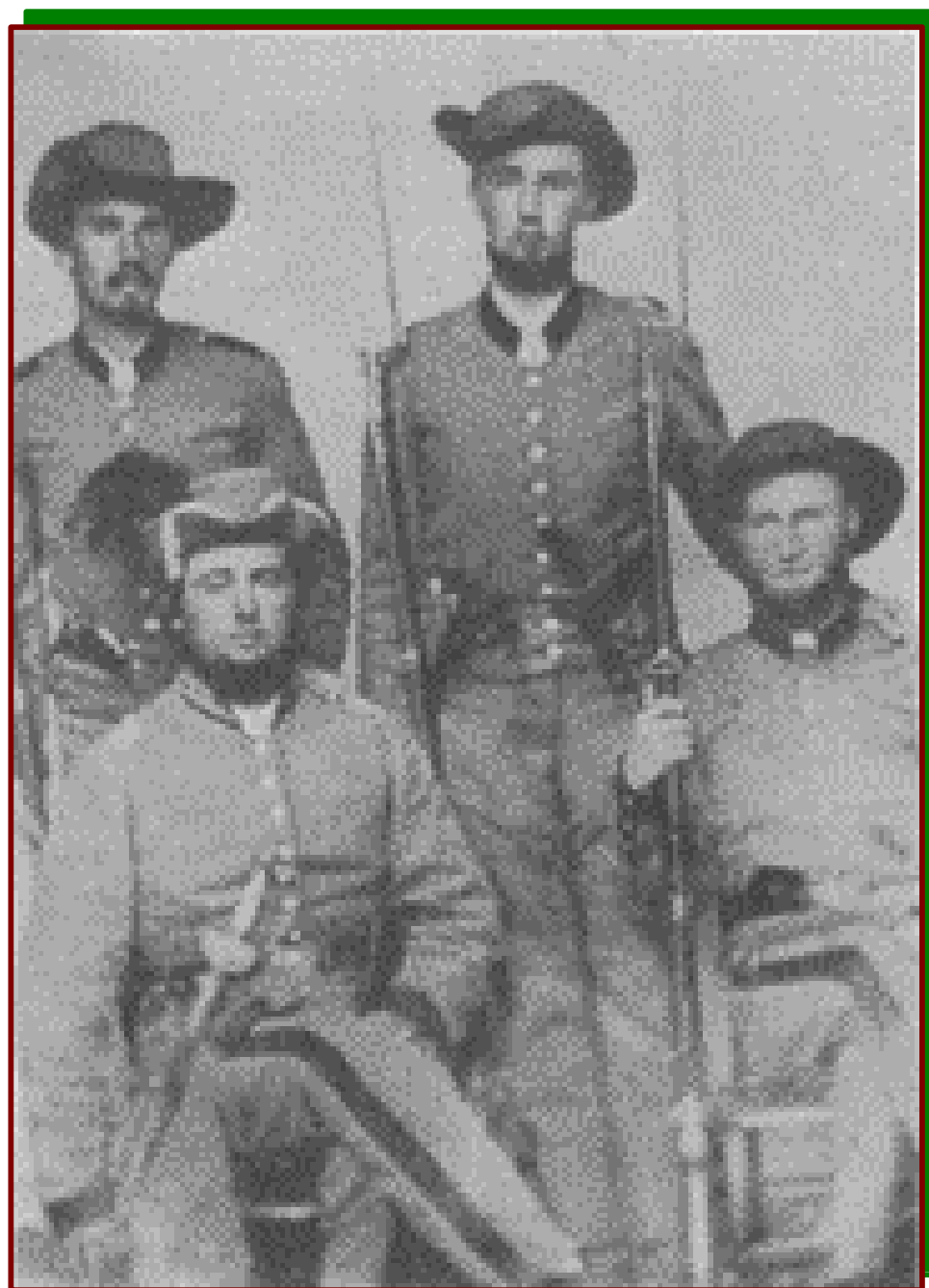
Though wounded at Kelly's Ford, he led his Corps at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania until a fall from his horse at the "Bloody Angle" left him unfit for further field service. Given command then of the Dept. of Henrico, he took over the defenses of Richmond. On the retreat to Appomattox, he was captured at Saylor's Creek 6 Apr. 1865 and was not paroled until 19 Aug. of that year. "The character *sui generis* of Lee's Army," said historian Douglas S. Freeman. When he returned from convalescent leave-having acquired a wife in the interim-he soon showed an inability to make the transition from a closely controlled division commander under Stonewall Jackson to a corps commander under Lee's discretionary orders.



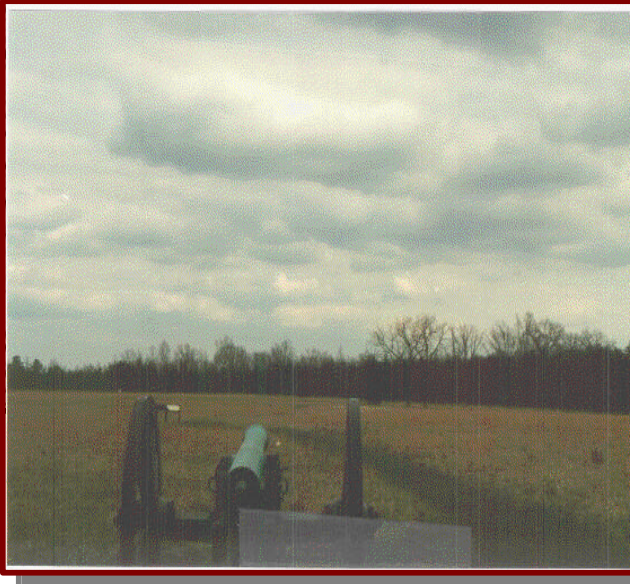
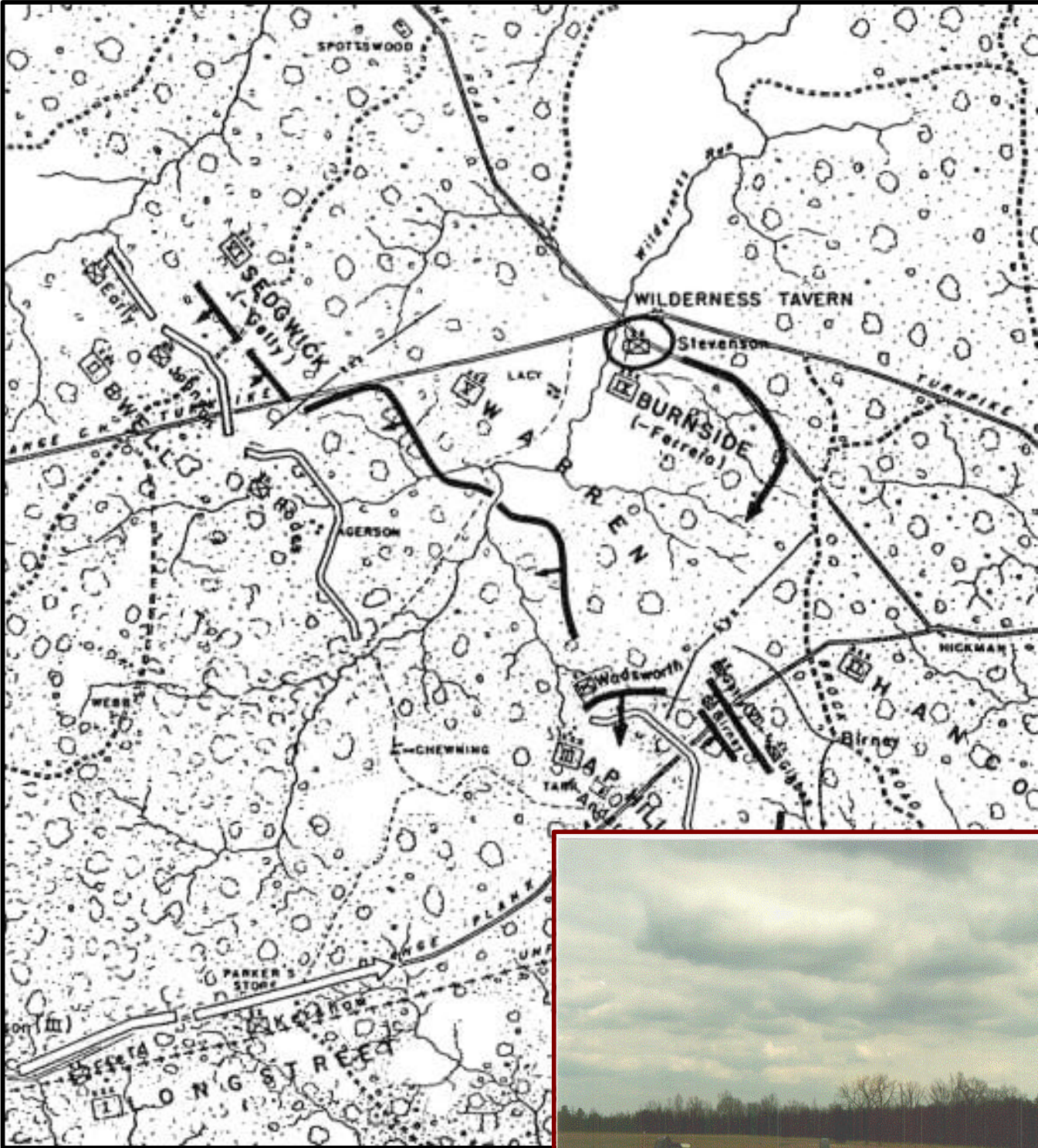
A Confederate Battery from Georgia at drill.

The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania

The Penn Brothers fought in the 42nd Virginia, Jones Brigade. Clockwise from back left is John S. Penn, William A. Penn, Joseph G. Penn, and Thomas G. Penn.



The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania



STOP-5 LEE TO THE REAR, SIR!!

May 6, the entire army attacked the enemy at daylight. This brigade advanced on the plank road in two lines...The enemy had fallen back a short distance during the night, and when met was driven back nearly a mile farther...Soon, however, the advance was checked, and the enemy fought with great desperation. The tide of battle turned.

--Report of Lewis Grant, commanding Second Brigade Vermont

Lee was responsible for the change in fortune on the sixth. He personally rallied his troops and managed to greet Longstreet's Corps as it arrived on the field: "Who are you, my boys?" he cried as they came up in rear of the line of bucking guns.

"Texas boys!" they yelled, gathering now in larger numbers, and Lee knew them: Hood's Texans, his old-time shock troops, now under Brigadier General John Gregg - the lead brigade of Field's division. Longstreet was up at last.

"Hurrah for Texas!" Lee shouted. He took off his wide-brimmed hat and waved it. "Hurrah for Texas!" No one had ever seen him act this way before, either on or off the field of battle. And presently, when the guns ceased their fuming and the Texans started forward, they saw something else they had never seen: something that froze the cheers in their throats and brought them to a halt. When Gregg gave the order, "Attention, Texas Brigade! The eyes of General Lee are upon you. Forward... march!" Lee rose in his stirrups and lifted his hat. "Texans always move them," he declared. They cheered as they stepped out between the guns. "I would charge hell itself for that old man," a veteran said fervently. Then they saw the one thing that could stop them. Lee had spurred Traveller forward on their heels; he intended to go in with them, across the field and after the bluecoats in the brush. They slacked their pace and left off cheering. "**Lee to the rear!**" began to be heard along the line, and some of them addressed him directly: "Go back, General Lee, go back. We won't go unless you go back." He was among them now, flushed with excitement, his eyes fixed on the woods ahead. They stopped, and when an attempt by Gregg to head him off had no effect,



**Ambrose Powell Hill
1825-1865**

Known for his red battle shirt and his hard-hitting attacks at the head of the famed Light Division. He resigned as a First Lieutenant on 1 March 1861 and join the South. He took part in the Seven Days, distinguishing himself. At Chancellorsville he was on Jackson's famed march around the Union left flank. When Jackson was wounded, Hill took command of the Corps but was wounded carrying his chief to the rear. At the end of the month he was given command of the new Third Corps, which he led to Gettysburg where suffering from a now unidentified illness, he put in a lackluster performance. He relinquished command temporarily after the Wilderness and missed Spotsylvania completely. On 2 April he was shot and killed by a group of Federal soldiers.

The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania

a sergeant reached out and took hold of Traveller's rein, bringing the animal to a halt. "Lee to the rear! Lee to the rear!" the men were shouting. But his blood was up; he did not seem to hear them, or even to know that he and they were no longer in motion. At this point a staff colonel intervened. "General, you've been looking for General Longstreet. There he is, over yonder." Lee looked and saw, at the far end of the field, the man he called his war horse. For the first time since he cleared the line of guns he seemed to

become aware that he was involved in something larger than a charge. Responding to the colonel's suggestion, he turned Traveller's head and rode in that direction.

METTT—STOP 5—“Lee to the Rear!”

UNION

MISSION

- To drive the Union off the field.

ENEMY

- A.P. Hill's III Corps supported by Longstreet's I Corps—28,000 effectives.

TROOPS

- 34,000 troops at Widow Tapp Farm.

TIME

- Attack began in earnest with the arrival of Longstreet's Corps around 10:00 am. Engagement lasted most of the day until late afternoon of May 6.

CONFEDERATE

MISSION

- To drive the Confederates from the field; later to holding its position.

ENEMY

- Hancock's 2nd Corps—20,000 men.

TROOPS

- A.P. Hill's Corps--13,000; Longstreet's Corps—about 15,000 men. Lee's presence heightened the rebels' elan.

TIME

- Morning to afternoon of 6 May.

TERRAIN

- Widow Tapp Farm was yet another isolated field inside the Wilderness.

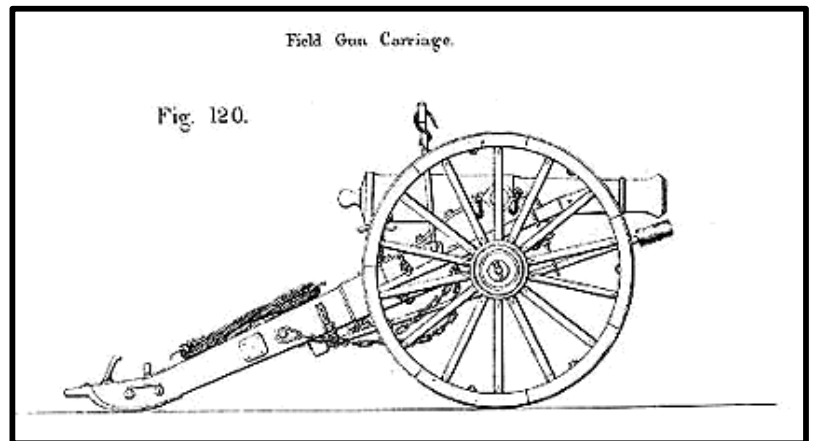
CIVIL WAR ARTILLERY

Name	Tube Length	Tube Weight	Bore Diameter	Range	Material
Six-Pounder, M1841	60 inches	884 pounds	3.67 inches	1520 yards	Bronze
Light 12-pounder, M1857	66 inches	1227 pounds	4.62 inches	1620 yards	Bronze
10-pounder Parrott, M1861	78 inches	890 pounds	2.9 inches	2000 yards	Cast Iron
20-Pounder Parrott	89 inches	1750 pounds	3.67 inches	2100 yards	Cast Iron
3-inch ordnance rifle	73 inches	816 pounds	3.0 inches	1850 yards	Wrought Iron



The 20-Pdr Rifled had a 3.67 bore and an effective range of 2100yds. A trained Union crew could fire approximately two rounds per minute.

The 6 Pdr was the most common artillery piece used by both the Union and Confederacy.



SORREL'S ATTACK, 6 MAY

On the morning of the 6th, General W.S. Hancock's corps faced southwest, six regiments to the right of the Orange Plank Road, eight regiments to the left. Directly in their front stood Longstreet's Confederates who were newly arrived, fresh, and eager. The fighting of the morning had generally stabilized. Yet, 'Old Pete,' as Longstreet was called, noticed an opportunity to break the Yankees in his front.

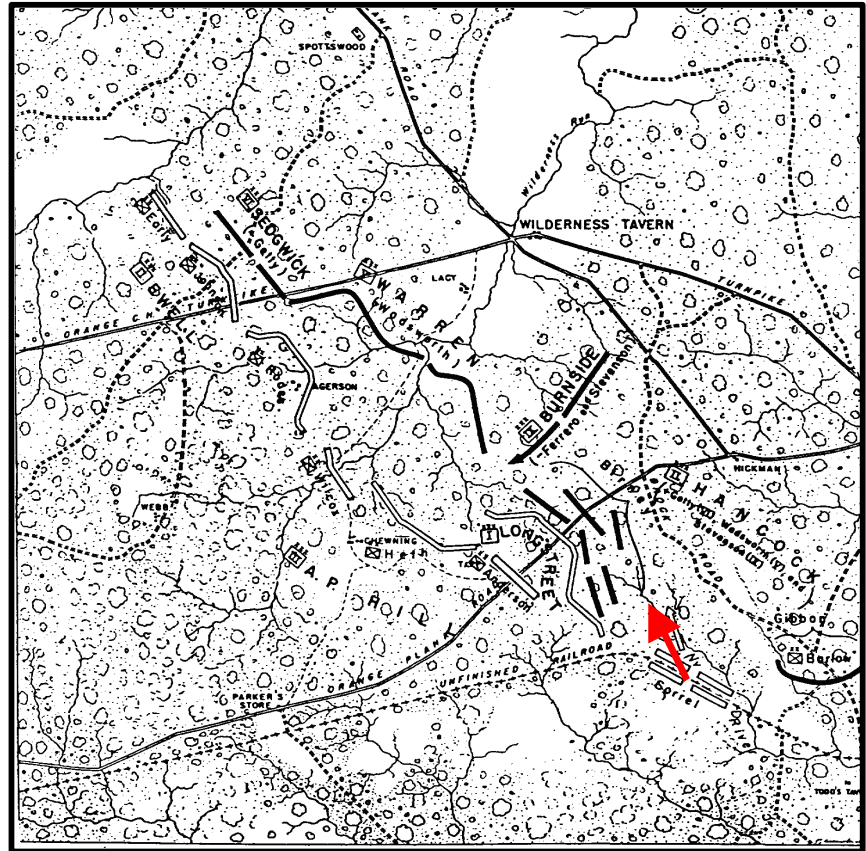
On Longstreet's right were about four brigades of rebels who had lost cohesion and were essentially withdrawn from the main battlefield. Also on the right was an unfinished railroad line covered by the woods. Longstreet pulled one of his subordinates aside, Lt. Col. G. Moxley Sorrel and said, "Colonel, there is a fine chance of a great attack by our right." Twenty-six years old, eager, and dependable, Sorrel went quickly to work.

According to Longstreet's instructions, Sorrel moved to the right and gathered as many idyll Confederates as he could find and lined them up on the railroad bed. In all, Sorrel found about four brigades—Stone's, Mahone's, Wofford's, and Anderson's.

One federal officer said that the Confederates seemed "like an army of ghosts rising out of the earth." The Yankees had little choice but to withdraw or be captured. Despite their munitions advantage—the Federals carried repeating Spencers—nothing seemed to slow the Confederate surge.

Lt. Col. Charles Weygant of the 124th New York admitted that "I might as well have tried to stop the flight of a cannon ball by interposing the lid of a cracker box."

General Hancock admitted to Longstreet after the war that "You rolled me up like a wet blanket."

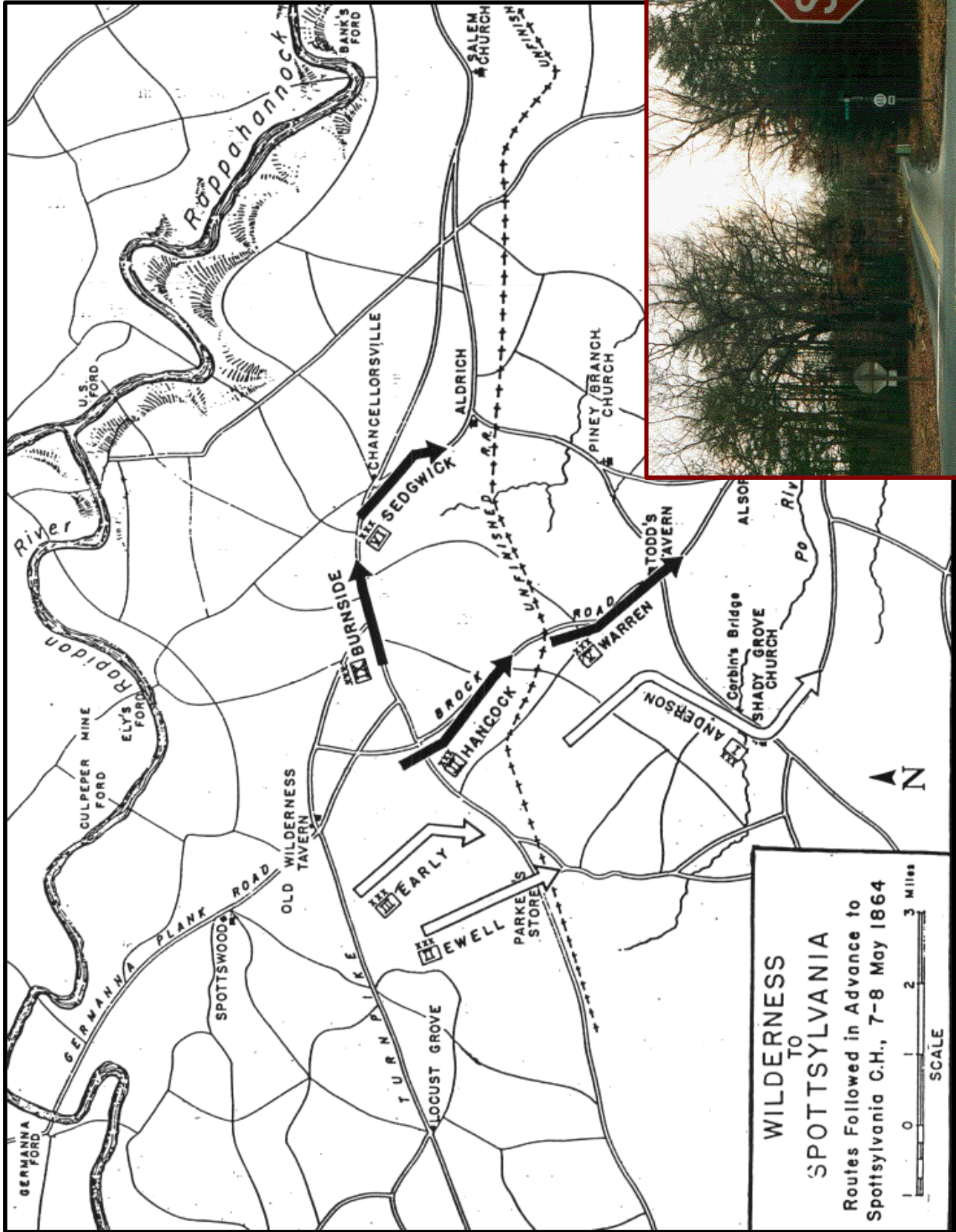


The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania

General U.S. Grant's temporary headquarters during Spotsylvania.



The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania



The Space and Missile Defense Command

FROM THE WILDERNESS TO SPOTSYLVANIA

Had there been daylight the enemy could have injured us very much in the confusion that prevailed

--Grant to Edwin M. Stanton after the Wilderness.

"I am heartily tired of hearing what Lee is going to do."

--Grant to his Staff

GRANT'S VIEWS AFTER THE BATTLE

Lee dealt Grant a blow in the Wilderness—he turned both Federal flanks, and managed to push the Northerners back nearly to their starting point. Grant took 17,500 casualties in comparison to Lee's 7,000.

But Grant was not persuaded to give up. He intended to keep hitting Lee, unlike any other eastern commander before him.

In fact, when a subordinate was asking what the Lee would do next, Grant quipped, "I am heartily tired of hearing what Lee is going to do. Some of you always seem to think he is suddenly going to turn a double somersault, and land on our rear and on both our flanks at the same time. Go back to your command, and try to think what we are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do."

Grant pulled back and then turned his men south. The spirits in the army rose and the men began to sing as they marched because they were not whipped after all. Lee, meanwhile, anticipated Grant's movement. He intended to take the important crossroads at Spotsylvania Courthouse. As Grant's Corps moved down the Brock Road, Lee's men, who knew the country well, made a path south through the woods that enabled them to arrive at the courthouse first.

When the northerners approached Spotsylvania, they soon found the Confederate Army entrenched behind abatis the likes of which few soldiers had ever seen. The Confederate line was like a horseshoe with the open end facing south. But Grant intended to hit them, no matter where they were.

LEE'S VIEWS AFTER THE BATTLE

Lee was marching too, by then, having divined once more his adversary's intention. That morning, after riding the length of his Wilderness line and finding it strangely quiet in contrast, that is, to the fury of the past two days, when better



**Richard H. Anderson
1821-1879**

He served on the frontier, in Mexico under Hardee, and as Capt. 2d Dragoons (1855) with the Utah Expedition. He succeeded Beauregard 27 May 1861 as commander at Charleston. He joined Bragg's Army of Pensacola in Aug. 1861 and was ordered to take command in E. Fla. (Dept. of Florida) in Apr. 1862. but Anderson almost immediately went to Va. and led the 2nd brig., 2nd div., of Longstreet's forces at Williamsburg, Seven Pines, and the Seven Days' battles. He was left to watch McClellan's withdrawal from the Peninsula. Maj. Gen. 14 July 1862, he took over Huger's div. to join Lee. In I Corps he fought at Crampton's Gap, Antietam (W.I.A.), Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. In III Corps for the Gettysburg

The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania

than 25,000 men had been shot or captured, blue and gray, along that four-mile stretch of tangled woodland he drew in on the far left to talk with Gordon, who supposed from Grant's lack of aggressiveness that he was about to retreat. **“Grant is not going to retreat,” Lee told him. “He will move his army to Spotsylvania.”** Surprised, the Georgian asked if there was any evidence that the Federals were moving in that direction. "Not at all, not at all," Lee said as he turned Traveller's head to ride back down the line. "But that is the next point at which the armies will meet. **Spotsylvania is now General Grant's best strategic point.**”

There was, as he said, no indication that Grant was moving. But he had negative evidence that when Grant did move, as obviously he would have to do, in lieu of assaulting the Wilderness entrenchment's, before he used up the supplies in his train - it would not be back across the Rapidan. Ewell had sent word, shortly after sunup, that the Federals were dismantling their pontoon bridges at Germanna, and though Ely's Ford was still available it seemed unlikely that they would give up. That left Fredericksburg as a possible escape route, and, in fact, there were reports from cavalry scouts that wagon traffic was heavy in that direction. But there was also a report from Stuart, waiting for Lee when he got back to the Widow Tapp's, that the Union cavalry had returned to Todd's Tavern that morning, in strength enough to drive the Confederate horsemen out and hold the place against all efforts to retake it. Todd's Tavern was down the Brock Road, midway between Grant's present position and Spotsylvania, which lay in the angle between Richmond, Fredericksburg, the Potomac, and the Virginia Central railroads and offered an excellent approach to Hanover Junction.

Grant knew he could end the war if he could place his army between Lee and Richmond. Lee knew this and intended to outmaneuver Grant. Whichever army arrived at Spotsylvania first would seize the initiative.

Campaign, in the Wilderness he was detached to I corps and on 6 May 1864 succeeded his old chief Longstreet was W.I.A. Anderson led I corps at Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and in the battles around Richmond, becoming Lt. Gen. 31 May 1864. When Longstreet returned to duty on 19 Oct. Anderson was put in charge of part of Richmond's defenses. But in the last days of the war he took the field again, this time as a division commander in the rear guard action ending in annihilation at Saylor's Creek, 6 Apr. 1865. Anderson escaped capture, but being without a command he was relieved of duty and authorized to go home. He died relatively young, in his 57th year, after failing as a planter on the ancestral home, “Hill Crest,” in Sumter County, S.C., and enduring poverty that reduced him virtually to day labor.