



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### For further reading on the Cavalry:

Coddington, Edwin B., The Gettysburg Campaign, A Study in Command, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1968

Longacre, Edward G., The Cavalry at Gettysburg: A Tactical Study of Mounted Operations during the Civil War's Pivotal Campaign, 9 June-14 July 1863, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1988

McPherson, James, Battle Cry of Freedom, Oxford Press, 1988

Sears, Stephen W., Gettysburg, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston & New York, 2003

Trudeau, Noah Andre, Gettysburg, A Testing of Courage, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2002

Tucker, Glenn, High Tide At Gettysburg, The Campaign in Pennsylvania, Bobbs-Merrill Co., New York, 1958

Wert, Jeffrey D., Gettysburg Day Three, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2001

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/soldierlife/cavalry.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettourt/main-ms.htm>



Insignia of the US Cavalry

## East Cavalry Battlefield



GETTYSBURG  
NATIONAL MILITARY  
PARK



1st, 5th, 6th & 7th Michigan Cavalry  
Custer Avenue, East Cavalry Field

## TO BEGIN YOUR TOUR

From the Traffic Circle in the center of Gettysburg, follow York Road to Pennsylvania Route 116 East, exactly 3.5 miles. Turn left (watch for on-coming traffic) at the brown National Park Service sign "East Cavalry Field" and stop at the second monument: **Battery M, 2nd US Artillery (Pennington's) (Stop 1)**

*"If you want to see a good time,  
join the cavalry!"*

The role of the cavalry at the beginning of the Civil War was very limited. Horsemen of both armies were initially limited to patrolling and scouting, guarding supply trains and railroads, and providing escorts to generals. They were only used in battle as shock troops, a tactic which dated back to the Romans. A favorite jibe from the infantry was: "Did you ever see a dead cavalryman?" The foot soldiers believed the cavalry to be "dandies on horseback" who never saw much fighting and always had the easy life. Certainly, the dash and spirit of the more flamboyant cavalry leaders provided the newspapers with many stories of harrowing rides and gallant duels in the saddle.

Southern troopers commanded by General J.E.B. Stuart had the grandest reputations of being the best horsemen, ready to ride on a raid at a moments notice or rush to the front to do battle just as the tide was beginning to turn. Of course, truth was very different from the romantic descriptions of newspapermen. Soldiering on horseback was a hard life with plenty of danger. The cavalry's military role had dramatically changed by 1863 and the armies were making use of their horse soldiers in more combat situations. Cavalry divisions were utilized by commanders as advance scouts and as a mobile fighting force. These new strategies culminated in the largest

cavalry battle of the war fought on June 9, 1863 at Brandy Station, Virginia. Brandy Station was the opening clash of the Gettysburg Campaign.

Union troopers of General John Buford's Division opened the Battle of Gettysburg against Confederate infantry of General Heth's Division on July 1st. The cavalrymen were limited by their numbers and the moderate range of the carbines they carried, but were able to deter the Confederate skirmishers for a few hours until Union infantry arrived. While the armies did battle around Gettysburg, cavalry units skirmished in Hunterstown, Pennsylvania, and on several roads east of town.

Confederate cavalrymen traveled lighter than their Union counterparts and were not usually armed with the more modern carbines. Short, muzzle-loading carbines were more common in southern regiments, including imports from England. Some Southern troopers preferred to leave their sabers behind and carried extra pistols instead of sabers, for close work. Southern arsenals attempted to mass produce breech loading carbines, even making copies of Union carbines made by the Sharps Rifle Company. Attempts at mass production of the weapon failed and southern cavalrymen relied upon a varied stock of captured and imported arms.

On July 3, 1863, in an effort to threaten the Union Center, Confederate General Jeb Stuart attempted to lead his Cavalry troops around Gettysburg from west of town in a sweeping arc to behind the Union line. This would be known as the battle of East Cavalry Field.



2nd US Horse Artillery, Battery M  
Commander: Lt. A.C.M Pennington, Jr.  
Custer Avenue, East Cavalry Field

#### **STOP 1- Battery M, 2nd US Artillery (Pennington's)**

On the morning of July 3rd, this ground was occupied by four Michigan regiments and a battery of horse artillery under the command of newly promoted Brigadier General George A. Custer. After a battle at Hunterstown the previous evening, Custer was ordered to this position to toward the right flank of the Union army at Gettysburg and secure the important intersection of the Low Dutch and Hanover Roads just off to your right. Custer's four regiments were soon reinforced by the arrival of General David Gregg's Second Cavalry Division, which took position on Custer's left along the Hanover Road.

Around noon, Gregg received word from General Meade that Stuart was seen moving towards the Union right flank with a large force of cavalry with the intention of attacking the rear of the army.

At the same time, Gregg received another order directing Custer to rejoin his division at the opposite end of the Union line near the Round Tops.

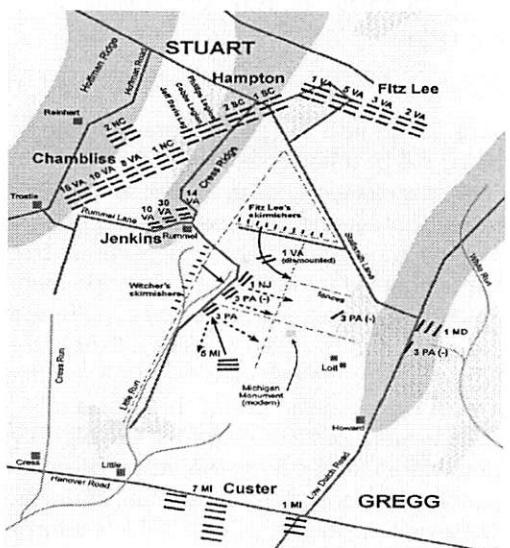
With this vital intersection not being vacated by Custer, Gregg moved Colonel John B. McIntosh's four regiments forward to occupy the crossroads. McIntosh soon ordered the 1st NJ Cavalry Regiment and the 3rd PA Cavalry to a wooded area around the Lott Farm, the white barn about one half mile to your front, to watch for Stuart's arrival. It was about 1:00 PM.

**Proceed ahead 1.3 Miles following the brown and white East Cavalry Field signs to Stop 2.**

#### **STOP 2 - 1st NJ Cavalry Monument**

Discovering no sign of Stuart, the 1st NJ Cavalry moved forward around 2:00PM from the Lott House to this position to investigate Rummel's Woods. (this wooded area is beyond the stone farmhouse to your right front.) Within moments, dismounted Confederates from General Albert Jenkins Virginia Brigade appeared from behind the Rummel house and barn, formed a line and opened fire.

Union reinforcements from McIntosh's Brigade joined the NJ men and extended the line of battle to the left (across the road) and right of the monument. Soon the Union troops exhausted their ammunition and began to withdraw. They were replaced by the 5th MI Cavalry from



Custer's Brigade armed with new 7-shot repeating rifles. Gregg, upon his own initiative, had Custer recalled when the fighting began.

Several attempts were made by the Confederates from Rummel's Woods to charge the retreating Union cavalry, but they were driven back by the repeating rifles. After the battle, John Rummel dragged 30 dead horses from the farm lane immediately behind the monument.

**Proceed to Stop 3 - 0.7 miles**

#### **Stop 3 - Cress Ridge (Army of Northern Virginia - Stuart's Horse Artillery Marker -Beckham's & McGregor's Battery)**

From this commanding position on Cress Ridge, General Stuart prepared his cavalry and artillery to attack the rear of the Union army after the breakthrough of Pickett's Charge. Until then, Stuart arranged his 19 regiments, numbering 5000 in a line behind and to the northeast of Rummel's Woods to keep them hidden from enemy scouts.

Soon after the battle opened around the Rummel house, Stuart sent several of his regiments, one or two at a time, in mounted charges across the fields to drive back the Federals. The attacks failed. By late afternoon Stuart launched Fitzhugh Lee's and Wade Hampton's Brigades from this wood-line with sabers and pistols drawn in the last great mounted charge of the day. Throughout the fighting, Confederate cannons kept up a heavy fire to prevent the enemy from capturing the ridge. The bronze and iron tablets located along this line further describe the fighting.

**Proceed 0.3 miles to the CSA Fitzhugh Brigade Monument and turn around in the small lot.  
Proceed from the turn around 1.3 miles to STOP 4 - Michigan Cavalry Brigade Monument**

On this stretch of open ground halfway between the opposing lines, the last charge by Lee's and

Hampton's 3600 horsemen was defeated. As the compact lines of horsemen crossed these fields heading for the Union positions along the Hanover Road (Stop 1), they were attacked on 3 sides by McIntosh's and Custer's 3200 men.

As you face the Michigan Cavalry Brigade monument, the Union cavalry charged into the Confederates from your left front and right and broke their formations in bloody hand-to-hand combat. Unable to withstand these furious attacks upon their front and flanks, the Confederates soon retreated to Cress Ridge. The heaviest fighting of the day was over.

A Union officer recalled, "As the charge was ordered the speed increased, every horse on the jump, every man yelling like a demon.. As the opposing columns drew nearer and nearer, each with perfect alignment, every man gathered his horse well under him and gripped his weapon the tighter." A Confederate officer in Lee's Brigade described the fighting as "hand to hand, blow for blow, cut for cut, an oath for oath, it seemed as if the very furies from the infernal regions were turned loose on each other."

**Several hundred yards to your left front across the tour road is the Gregg Cavalry Shaft erected in 1884. It is the only monument that commemorates the services of both Union and Confederate cavalry at Gettysburg.**

After almost 2 hours of continuous fighting the contest for the Lott and Rummel Farms had been decided. Stuart fell back onto Cress Ridge and remained there until nightfall. Gregg, although outnumbered, was able to stubbornly resist the best of the Southern cavalry and protect the Union flank.

The Union had 254 casualties, the Confederates lost 181. But July 3rd, 1863 had proven the Cavalry could win victories.