

LAST FULL MARCH

The Battle of Trevilians Station



LAST FULL MEASURE

The Battle of Trevilians Station

After the bloody repulse at Cold Harbor on June 3, Grant decided on a new strategy. Since May 4, the Overland Campaign had consisted of major battles; the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, Totopotomoy Creek, and Cold Harbor, followed by a period of stalemate, and then a maneuver around Lee's right flank in an attempt to draw him away from his entrenchments and into the open. Each maneuver brought the Union armies closer to the Confederate capital, but the main objective was not Richmond, but the destruction of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia; as the goal established by Grant and President Lincoln.

Grant's new strategy was to march his army to the south, cross the James River, and seize the rail hub of Petersburg. This would cut off the supply lines to the ANV and Richmond, forcing the city's evacuation, and probably inducing Lee to attack in a manner favorable to Grant. The plan required secrecy because the army would be vulnerable while crossing the river and Grant sought to reach Petersburg before the city's defenses could be improved beyond the small force that was currently there. As a diversion, Grant ordered a cavalry raid under Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan on June 5 northwest toward Charlottesville. The raid had two objectives; First, it would draw the Confederate cavalry away from the area so the infantry corps could disengage from Lee's army at Cold Harbor and move toward the James. Second, the Union cavalry would tear up the Virginia Central railroad west of Richmond, cutting off Lee's supplies from the Shenandoah Valley. Sheridan was ordered to destroy the railroad bridge on the Rivanna River, just east of Charlottesville, and destroy the trackage from there to Gordonsville, then turn back and destroy the track all the way to Hanover Junction, near Richmond.

Just after Grant issued the orders for the raid, he learned of Maj. Gen. David Hunter's victory at the Battle of Piedmont in the Shenandoah Valley against Brig. Gen. William E. "Grumble" Jones. This was an opportunity for Hunter to travel east from Staunton to meet Sheridan at Charlottesville, and form a combined threat to Lee from the west. Grant modified Sheridan's orders to wait for Hunter near Charlottesville, and then detach a brigade to cut the James River Canal.

Sheridan and his two cavalry divisions left their camps north of Cold Harbor at 5am on June 7th. They crossed a pontoon bridge at New Castle over the Pamunkey River and headed northwest, with Gregg's division in the lead and Torbert's following. The weather was hot and enormous clouds of dust billowed over the march. On the first day, the column marched only about 15 miles. Numerous horses collapsed under the strain, and following the convention Sheridan used in his May raid to Yellow Tavern and Richmond, they were shot and left at the side of the road. Although there were 125 wagons following Sheridan's column, the men were issued only three days rations and were expected to feed themselves and their horses along the way; so dismounted foraging parties were spread out along the route. On the second day, with Torbert's division in the lead, the Federals made better progress, covering the 25 miles to Pole Cat Station on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad. The Union column was plagued not only by the heat and humidity of the Virginia summer; but skirmishing with irregular mounted raiding parties also delayed the advance.

Confederate scouts passed word of Sheridan's movements to Hampton on the morning of June 8, correctly guessing that the Union targets were the railroad junctions at Gordonsville and Charlottesville, he would have to move quickly to block the threat. He ordered his own division to assemble at 2am on June 9th and directed Fitzhugh Lee to follow them as rapidly as possible. Although the Federals had a two-day head start, the Confederates had the advantage of a shorter route (about 45 miles versus 65) and terrain that was more familiar to them. On June 9th, the first anniversary of the Battle of Brandy Station, they walked at a slow, deliberate pace, covering nearly 30 miles through Yellow Tavern, up the Telegraph Road, and then following the route of the Virginia Central Railroad to Bumpass and Fredericks Hall Stations.

By the evening of June 10th, both forces had converged around Trevilians Station, named for Charles Goodall Trevilian, who owned a plantation house near the train station. The Confederates camped in four locations immediately south of the Virginia Central on the Gordonsville Road, from just west of Trevilians Station east to Louisa Court House. The Federals crossed over the North Anna River at Carpenters Ford and camped at locations around Clayton's Store.

Hampton was informed that Sheridan's force would approach the railroad from the direction of Clayton's Store and knew that there were two roads leading south from that crossroads, both through thick woods; one led to Trevilian Station and the other to Louisa Court House. Hampton split his divisions across the roads to converge on the enemy at the crossroads, planning to push Sheridan back to the North Anna River. Hampton took two of his brigades (Butler's and Wright's) with him from Trevilians Station, leaving Rosser's brigade on his left, to prevent flanking. Fitz Lee's division was ordered to advance from Louisa Court House and take up the right flank.

Meanwhile; Sheridan started his advance. Torbert's brigades under Merritt and Devin moved down the road towards Trevilians Station while Custer's advanced toward Louisa Court House. The first contact occurred on the Trevilian Road as the pickets of the 4th South Carolina Cavalry of Butler's Brigade skirmished with Merritt's advanced guard. Hampton dismounted his men and pushed the skirmishers back into the thick woods, expecting Fitzhugh Lee to be arriving on his right any time; however, Hampton was severely outnumbered and he was forced back. Wright's Brigade joined in the close-quarter fighting in the thick brush, but after several hours they too were pushed back within sight of Trevilians Station.

On the right flank, Fitzhugh Lee encountered Custer's brigade where Wickham's Brigade fought briefly with the 1st and 7th Michigan Cavalry and then withdrew. Lee led Lomax's Brigade directly toward Trevilian Station and Wickham came up via Louisa Court House on their rear. Meanwhile, Custer led his brigade on a more direct road southwest to Trevilians Station finding it totally unguarded, and occupied only by Hampton's trains; caissons, supply wagons, containing ammunition and food, and hundreds of horses. Custer ordered the 5th Michigan Cavalry to charge and capture the prize. The Michiganders captured 800 prisoners, 90 wagons, six artillery caissons, and 1,500 horses, but this left Custer separated from Sheridan, and in their pursuit of the fleeing wagons, they lost a number of their own men and much of their bounty. One of Wright's regiments, the 7th Georgia, got between Custer's force and Trevilians Station until the 7th Michigan charged and drove them back.

Hampton learning of the threat in his rear area, called Rosser's Brigade from the left flank and to the station. This, coinciding with Lee's approach from Louisa Court House and Wright's and Butler's brigades from the north; Custer found himself nearly surrounded. He withdrew eastward along the Gordonsville Road, taking his cumbersome spoils with him; to be harassed by a Confederate battery on a hill north of the station that opened fire as soon as his men came into range; while charging cavalry overwhelmed his right flank.

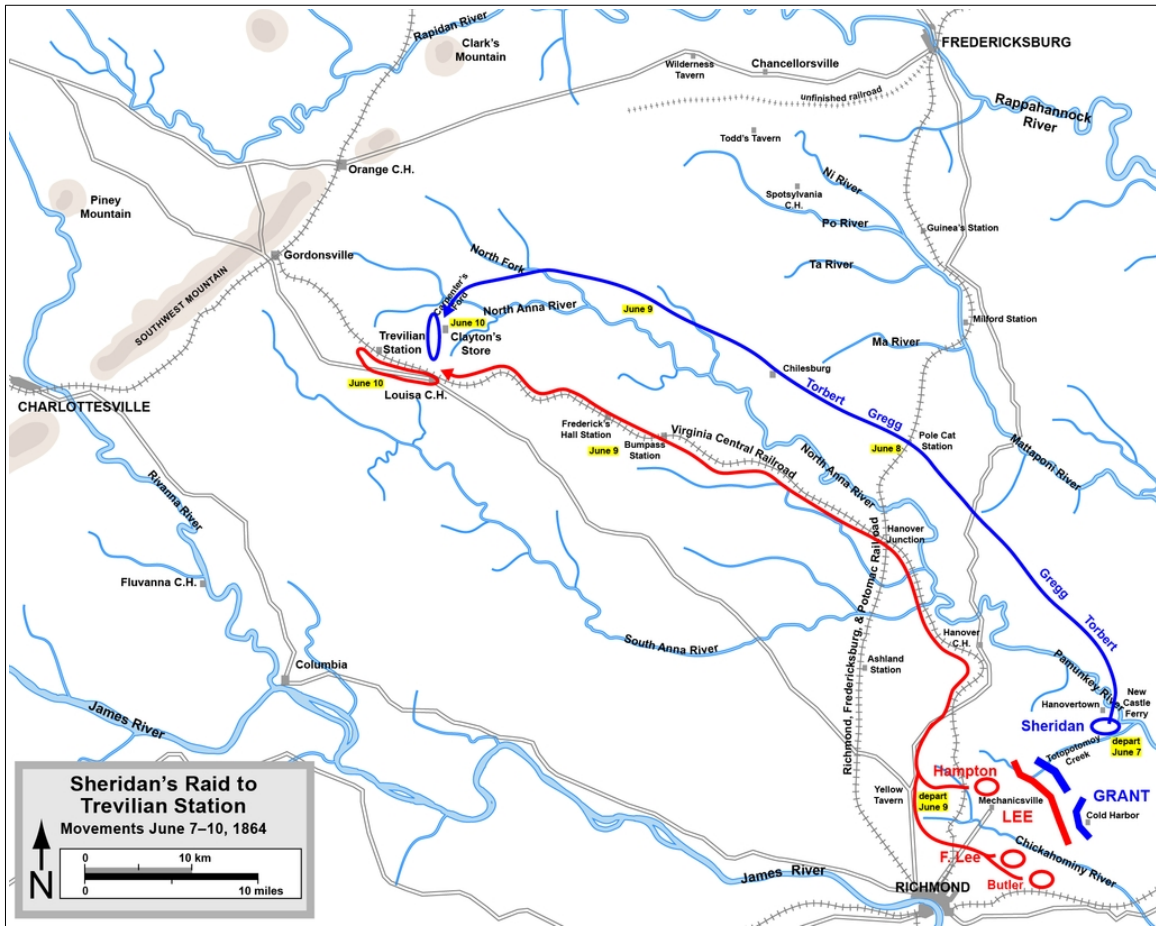
Custer's brigade was now virtually surrounded, in an ever-shrinking circle, as every side was charged and hit with shells. Sheridan could hear the firing from Custer's direction and realized he would be needing help. He charged with Devin's and Merritt's brigades, pushing Hampton's men back all the way to the station, while Gregg's brigade was ordered onto Lee's right flank, pushing him back. Hampton fell back to the west, Lee to the east, and the battle ended for the day with the Federals in possession of Trevilians Station. Custer's brigade suffered 361 casualties, including more than half of the 5th Michigan.

During the night of the 11th, Fitzhugh Lee maneuvered south and west to link up with Hampton west of Trevilians Station. Sheridan learned that General Hunter was not headed for Charlottesville as planned, but to Lynchburg. He also received intelligence that a Confederate force under Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge had been sighted near Waynesboro, effectively blocking any chance for a further advance, so he decided to abandon the raid and rejoin the main army at Cold Harbor.

On the 12th, as Sheridan prepared to withdraw to the east. Gregg's division destroyed Trevilians Station, several railcars, and about a mile of track to the east of the station; while Torbert's division tore up track to the west of it. Concerned about the Confederates in close proximity near his flank, about 3pm, Sheridan sent Torbert's three brigades, supported by Davies's brigade of Gregg's division, on a reconnaissance west on the Gordonsville and Charlottesville roads. They found Hampton's entire force in an L-shaped line behind some log breastworks at the Ogg and Gentry farms, two miles northwest of Trevilians.

Torbert launched seven assaults against the apex and shorter leg of the "L", but his brigades were repulsed with heavy losses. Fitzhugh Lee detached his division from the line and Wickham's and Lomax's brigades moved to attack the Union right flank. The fighting finally ended about 10 pm, with both sides still in place. Late that night, Torbert withdrew. Sheridan, burdened with many wounded men, about 500 prisoners, and a shortage of ammunition, withdrew.

The results of the Battle of Trevilians Station were 1,007 Union casualties (102 killed, 470 wounded, and 435 missing or captured). Confederate casualties totaled about 830. It was the bloodiest and largest all-cavalry engagement of the war, and the largest all-cavalry fight ever on the North American continent.



Scenario 1: The Battle of Trevilians Station - June 11th 1864

Set-up:

A. Time

The game starts on the **June 11th, 5am turn**, and plays through the **8pm** turn for a one day scenario, or through the **June 12th 8pm turn** for the full battle. The Union player has the initiative on the first turn.

B. Victory Conditions

1. At the end of the 8pm turn, a victory check is made, and both players check their VP totals.
2. The player with the greater number of VPs than his opponent wins.
3. Each player gains a certain number of Victory Points (VP) for accomplishing the following objectives. Players should keep a running total in the spaces provided on the map.

Objective

- 2 for each eliminated enemy cavalry strength point.
- 4 for each eliminated enemy artillery strength point.
- 5 eliminated enemy division commander.
- 10 When playing only June 11th: the CS player gets 10 VPs each for controlling any of the following hexes at the end of the June 11th, 8pm turn: 2320, 2425, 2930. Only the CS player gets VPs for controlling a VP hex at the end of the 8pm turn.
- 10 When playing the full battle: the CS player gets 10 VPs each for controlling any of the following hexes at the end of the June 12th, 8pm turn: 1010, 1412, 1610, 2008. The VP hexes from June 11th, are no longer considered VP hexes, and the CS player can not change their status on the 12th (the control markers may be removed from the map). The CS player does retain the VP earned on the 11th in their running total. Only the CS player gets VPs for controlling a VP hex at the end of the 8pm turn.

C. Special Rules

1. Sheridan is the US cavalry corps commander, rolls against his command rating as being **in-command**, and has a normal command range for his rank. All Union units are under his command.
2. Hampton is the CS Cavalry Corps commander. While Hampton also commanded his own division, a separate commander counter is provided for it in the game. Hampton, the corps commander, rolls against his command rating as being **in-command**, and has a normal command range for his rank.

D. Reinforcements and Organization

1. Reinforcements appear according to the Order of Appearance card.
2. Normal reorganization and recovery rules apply.

E. Deployment

No Union units are set up on the map at start.

Confederate units are set-up according to the "At Start" section of the Order of Appearance card.



CAVALRY COLUMN ON THE MARCH

Scenario 2: The Battle of Trevilians Station-The Second Day - June 12th 1864

Set-up:

A. Time

The game starts on the **June 12th, 3pm turn**, and plays through the **8pm turn**. The Union player has the initiative on the first turn.

B. Victory Conditions

1. At the end of the 8pm turn, a victory check is made, and both players check their VP totals.
2. The player with the greater number of VPs than his opponent wins.
3. Each player gains a certain number of Victory Points (VP) for accomplishing the following objectives. Players should keep a running total in the spaces provided on the map.

Objective

- 2 for each eliminated enemy cavalry strength point.
- 4 for each eliminated enemy artillery strength point.
- 5 eliminated enemy division commander.
- 10 The CS player gets 10 VP each, for controlling the following hexes at the end of the June 12th 8pm turn: 1010, 1412, 1610, 2008.
Only the CS player gets VPs for controlling a VP hex at the end of the 8pm turn.

C. Special Rules

1. Torbert is the US commander, rolls against his command rating as being out-of-command, and has a normal command range for his rank. All Union units in this scenario are under his command.
2. Hampton is the CS Cavalry Corps commander. While Hampton also commanded his own division, a separate commander counter is provided for it in the game. Hampton, the corps commander, rolls against his command rating as being **in-command**, and has a normal command range for his rank.

D. Reinforcements and Organization

1. There are no reinforcements in this scenario.
2. Normal reorganization and recovery rules apply.

E. Deployment

1. Play is restricted to a square area bounded by the 09 hex-row on the North, the 21 hex-row in the South, the 05 hex-column on the West, and the 16 hex-column on the East, the corners being hexes 0905, 0916, 2105, and 2116. Units may enter these hexes, but not leave the area. Any units forced to retreat out of the play area are eliminated.
2. Units are set up on the map mounted or limbered unless noted otherwise below:

Officer · *artillery* [B]reastworks [U]nlimbered [d]ismounted

3. Confederate Deployment

1910.....11VA[d] [B]
1509.....**Hampton Hampton's**, Phillips[d]
1709.....12VA[d]
1808.....35VAbn[d]
1411.....**Butler** 4SCa 4SCb[d] [B]
1511.....·*Hart* [U] 5SC[d] [B]
1610.....**Wright** 20GAbn 7GA[d] [B]
1809.....**Rosser** 7VA[d] [B]
1406.....**Lomax** 5VA
1507.....**F.Lee Wickham** 1VA 2VA
1605.....4VAa 4VAb
1506.....·*Shoemaker* 6VAa 6VAb 15VA
1606.....3VA
1311.....·*Thomson* [U] 6SCa 6SCb[d] [B]
1710.....Cobbs[d] [B]

4. Union Deployment

1715.....4NY
1814.....**Custer** 6MI
1916.....7MI
1915.....1MIa 1MIb
1716.....17PAa 17PAb
1614.....**Devin** 6NY
1212.....2US,D [U] 1USa 1USb[d]
1413.....6PAa 6PAb[d]
1314.....**Torbert** 5US[d]
2015.....5MIa

Trevilians Station

June 11-12, 1864

Orders of Battle

AotP/C
Sheridan 4

C 2 US, M 3 4	C 2 US, D 3 4	C 2 US, B&L 3 4	C 1 US, H&I 3 4
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C/I
Torbert 4

C/I/1 Custer 1 MI *54	C/I/1 1 MI *44	C/I/1 5 MI *63	C/I/1 5 MI *53	C/I/1 6 MI *83	C/I/1 7 MI *83
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C/I/2 Devin 4 NY *63	C/I/2 6 NY *43	C/I/2 9 NY *43	C/I/2 17 PA *53	C/I/2 17 PA *43
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C/I/3 Merritt 1 US *54	C/I/3 1 US *54	C/I/3 2 US *64	C/I/3 5 US *84	C/I/3 6 PA *54	C/I/3 6 PA *54	C/I/3 19 NY *64
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C/2
D.Gregg 4

C/2/1 Davies 1 MA *83	C/2/1 1 NJ *43	C/2/1 10 NY *84	C/2/1 6 OH *63	C/2/1 1 PA *73
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C/2/2 J.Gregg 1 ME *84	C/2/2 2 PA *83	C/2/2 4 PA *83	C/2/2 8 PA *74	C/2/2 13 PA *83	C/2/2 16 PA *83
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ANV/C
Hampton 5

C Johnston 2 3	C Shoemaker 2 3	C Thomson 2 3	C Hart 2 3
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C/H
Hampton's 5

C/H/W Wright 7 GA 63	C/H/W Cobb's Lgn 53	C/H/W Phillip's Lgn *53	C/H/W 20 GA Btp 23	C/H/W Jeff Davis' Lgn *63
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C/H/R Rosser 7 VA 83	C/H/R 11 VA 83	C/H/R 12 VA 73	C/H/R 35 VA Btp 13
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C/H/B Butler 4 SC 53	C/H/B 4 SC 43	C/H/B 5 SC 83	C/H/B 6 SC 53	C/H/B 6 SC 43
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C/L
E.Lee 5

C/L/W Wickham 1 VA *54	C/L/W 2 VA *84	C/L/W 3 VA 53	C/L/W 4 VA 63	C/L/W 4 VA 53
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C/L/L Lomax 5 VA 23	C/L/L 6 VA 53	C/L/L 6 VA 53	C/L/L 15 VA 53	C/L/L 1 MD Btp 23	C/L/L McNulty 2 3
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