SPIRIT OF '61

BATTLELOG

SPIRIT61.INFO

Contents

Changes from 1.1 – Completed narratives for the Engagement at Barboursville, Skirmish at Pocatalico, Battle of Scary Creek, Skirmish at New Creek, Action at Greenbrier River, and Skirmish at Middle Fork Bridge. Updated index.

Battle Timeline

Date in 1861	Military Activity	Present-Day County
Tuesday, May 7	Engagement at Gloucester Point	Gloucester County, VA
Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19	Engagement at Sewell's Point	Norfolk, VA
Wednesday, May 22	Action at Fetterman	Taylor County, WV
Tuesday, May 28	Action at Glover's Gap	Marion County, WV
Wednesday, May 29 to Saturday, June 1	Engagement at Aquia Creek	Stafford County, VA
Saturday, June 1	First Battle of Fairfax Court House	Fairfax County, VA
Saturday, June 1	Engagement at Arlington Mills	Arlington County, VA
Monday, June 3	Action at Philippi	Barbour County, WV
Wednesday, June 5	Engagement at Pig Point	Suffolk, VA
Saturday, June 8	Action at New Market Bridge	Hampton, VA
Monday, June 10	Battle of Big Bethel	Hampton, VA
Thursday, June 13	Engagement at Romney	Hampshire County, WV
Monday, June 17	Engagement at Vienna	Fairfax County, VA
Wednesday, June 19	Action at New Creek	Mineral County, WV
Friday, June 21	Action at Righter's House	Marion County, WV
Monday, June 24	Action at Carter's Creek	Lancaster County, VA
Wednesday, June 26	Skirmish at Frankfort/Patterson's Creek	Mineral County, WV
Thursday, June 27	Skirmish at Buckhannon	Upshur County, WV
Thursday, June 27	Engagement at Mathias Point	King George County, VA
Saturday, June 29	Skirmish at Bowman's Place	Tucker County, WV
Sunday, June 30	Action at Shuter's Hill	Alexandria, VA
Tuesday, July 2	Battle of Hoke's Run/Falling Waters	Berkeley County, WV
Thursday, July 4	Skirmish at Harper's Ferry	Jefferson County, WV
Friday, July 5	Skirmish at Smith's Farm	Newport News, VA
Saturday, July 6 to Sunday, July 7	Skirmish at Middle Fork Bridge	Upshur County, WV
Sunday, July 7 to Thursday, July 11	Battle of Bellington/Laurel Hill	Barbour County, WV
Sunday, July 7 to Monday, July 8	Skirmish at Glenville	Gilmer County, WV
Thursday, July 11	Battle of Rich Mountain	Randolph County, WV
Friday, July 12	Skirmish at Cedar Lane	Newport News, VA
Saturday, July 13	Battle of Corrick's Ford	Tucker County, WV
Saturday, July 13	Engagement at Barboursville	Cabell County, WV
Sunday, July 14	Skirmish at New Creek	Mineral County, WV
Tuesday, July 16	Skirmish at Pocatalico	Putnam County, WV
Wednesday, July 17	Battle of Scary Creek	Putnam County, WV
Thursday, July 18	Battle of Blackburn's Ford	Prince William County, VA
Friday, July 19	Action at Greenbrier River	Pocahontas County, WV

War on Three Fronts
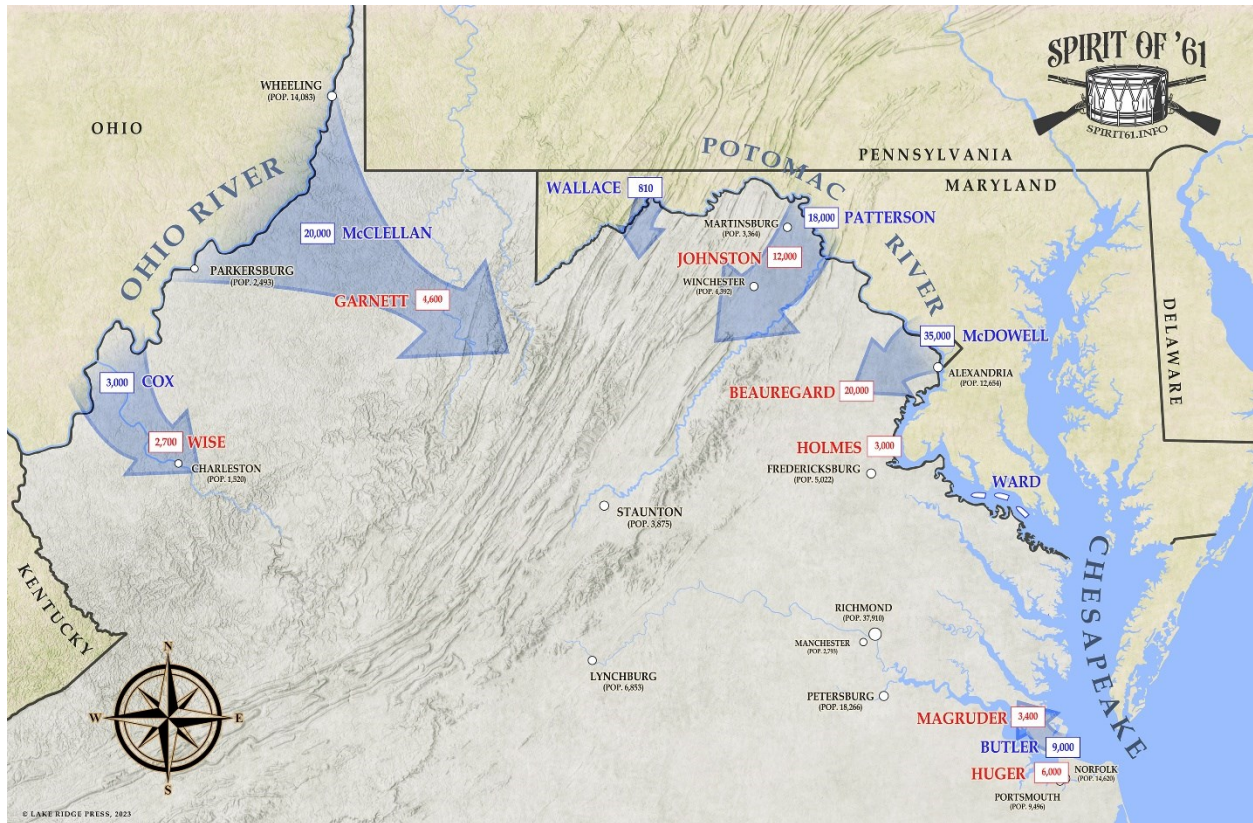
Maneuvers and battles in Virginia prior to the Battle of First Manassas, July 21, 1861, were centered around control of major waterways. Virginia had three main waterways that defined its antebellum borders: the Ohio, Potomac, and Chesapeake rivers. While the men who fought in the Civil War wouldn't have recognized these as "fronts" or used that terminology, it is a convenient way to organize the military activity in Virginia during the first few months of the war.

Most maps of the military situation in late spring, early summer of 1861 focus almost exclusively on the action in front of Washington, DC, leading directly to the Battle of First Manassas (aka Bull Run). But the Union war effort in Virginia involved thrusts from three directions: west, north, and southeast.

Approximately 23,000 men under overall command of George B. McClellan crossed the Ohio River to push deep into the Trans-Allegheny region of Virginia. 53,800 men commanded by generals Irvin McDowell and Robert Patterson pushed south across the Potomac River. And, finally, Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler commanded approximately 9,000 men at Fort Monroe, where he attempted to push up the Virginia Peninsula.

These efforts were oftentimes uncoordinated or poorly coordinated. At the onset of the war, Union war planners were saddled with a hodgepodge of volunteer regiments led by inexperienced commanders with plenty of enthusiasm and little else. Many of the experienced regular Army officers had defected to the Confederacy. While this ultimately culminated in the disastrous loss at Bull Run, Union success in western Virginia can't be discounted. McClellan's early victories allowed West Virginia to gain statehood in 1863. Elsewhere, the footholds gained around Alexandria and Fort Monroe would never be seriously challenged for the remainder of the war.

1. Chesapeake Front

1.1 Engagement at Gloucester Point
Tuesday, May 7, 1861

Gloucester County, VA

The Engagement at Gloucester Point was fought on Tuesday, May 7, 1861 between a Union gunboat commanded by Lt. Thomas O. Selfridge, Jr. and a Virginian battery commanded by Lt. John Thompson Brown in Gloucester County, Virginia.

On April 17, 1861, a majority of delegates at the Virginia Secession Convention in Richmond passed an ordinance of secession, pending the results of a popular referendum to be held on May 23. Virginia Governor John Letcher appointed Col. Robert E. Lee, recently resigned from the U.S. Army, as overall commander of the Virginia Provisional Army. Around the same time, Virginia militia captured the U.S. Gosport Navy Yard at Norfolk, Virginia along with approximately 1,085 cannon and 250,000 pounds of powder. In response, on April 27, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln extended the blockade of the seven original Confederate States to include the ports of Virginia and North Carolina. Virginia seemed to be inexorably sliding toward war.

On May 3, 1861, Robert E. Lee appointed Col. William B. Taliaferro commander of defenses at Gloucester Point on the York River opposite Yorktown, Virginia and instructed him to cooperate with Virginia Navy Capt. William C. Whittle to construct a shore battery there. On May 6, Taliaferro ordered a company of fifty men of the Richmond Howitzers with two six-pounder cannons to report to Gloucester Point to assist in the defense. They arrived the next morning.

At the same time, Union Commodore Garrett J. Pendergrast ordered Lt. Thomas O. Selfridge, Jr., commander of the converted steam tugboat USS *Yankee*, to sail up the York River and examine the fortifications at Gloucester Point. As the Yankee approached within 2,000 yards of Taliaferro's battery, it fired several shots across the Yankee's bow. The Richmond Howitzers reportedly fired 12-13 shots during the engagement. The Yankee fired six rounds from its two cannon in return, but could not elevate its guns high enough to score a hit.

There is some controversy whether any of the Virginians' shots hit the *Yankee*, but regardless, Lt. Selfridge saw the futility of continuing the engagement and sailed away after a few minutes. Neither side reported casualties. This brief exchange of fire was the first hostile engagement between Virginia and the U.S. government in the Civil War, occurring a little less than two weeks before Virginia formally seceded from the United States.

1.2 Engagement at Sewell's Point
Sat., May 18 and Sun. May 19, 1861

Norfolk, VA

The Engagement at Sewell's Point was fought on Saturday May 18 and Sunday May 19, 1861 between a Union gunboat commanded by Capt. Henry Eagle and a Confederate battery commanded by Capt. Peyton H. Colquitt in Norfolk County, Virginia.

A popular referendum to decide whether the Commonwealth of Virginia would secede from the United States was still four days away. Never-the-less, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln had extended

the naval blockade of the seven original Confederate States to include the ports of Virginia and North Carolina. On May 6th, U.S. Navy ships exchanged fire with a Virginia battery off Gloucester Point on the Potomac River.

Earlier that month, pro-secession militias had, with tacit approval from Virginia Governor John Letcher, seized the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry and the Gosport Navy Yard. Fort Monroe, near Hampton Roads at the mouth of the James River, was the only remaining federal facility in Virginia not taken. In order to prevent Union ships and troops at Fort Monroe from re-taking the naval yard across Hampton Roads, Virginia Provisional Army Brig. Gen. Walter Gwynn emplaced an artillery battery at Sewell's Point, directly facing the fort.

Saturday, May 18, 1861, Union forces observed Virginia engineers digging fortifications for the battery and sent the gunboat USS Monticello (temporarily operating under the name Star), commanded by Captain Henry Eagle, to investigate. The Monticello was armed with one 9-inch gun and two 32-pound guns. It fired several shots at the militia building the fort, to little effect.

By the next evening, May 19, three 32-pound cannon and two smaller rifled cannon from the Light Artillery Blues, commanded by Confederate Capt. Peyton H. Colquitt, were emplaced behind the works flying a Georgian flag.

The USS Thomas Freeborn, a small steam tug, came up to support the Monticello during the ninety-minute exchange. Of the 114 shots expended by the Monticello, only one Confederate cannon was struck by a shell, and there were no casualties reported. The Monticello was hit five times, causing superficial damage and injuring two crewmen.

Though minor, the engagement at Sewell's Point showed the Civil War in Virginia was underway, yet neither side knew what form that conflict would take. The next few weeks would be a crucial test.

1.3 Engagement at Pig Point

Wednesday, June 5, 1861

Suffolk, VA

The Engagement at Pig Point was fought on Wednesday, June 5, 1861 between a Union gunboat commanded by Capt. John Faunce and a Confederate battery commanded by Capt. Robert Pegram in Suffolk, Virginia.

Since April 27, 1861, the U.S. Navy had been enforcing an economic and military blockade on Virginia ports, and several small fleets of U.S. Navy ships and converted civilian vessels had exchanged fire with Confederate shore batteries in the Potomac and James rivers. U.S. Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, commanding Fort Monroe at Old Point Comfort at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, had ambitions to clear these shore batteries.

To accomplish that goal, he tasked John Faunce, captain of the converted revenue cutter U.S.S. Harriet Lane, to reconnoiter Pig Point across the Nansemond River from Newport News. Captain Faunce observed activity at the Confederate battery and sailed close to see if he could draw their fire. Fire they did, but due to shallow water the U.S.S. Harriet Lane couldn't get close enough for its own guns to be effective.

The Portsmouth Rifles, a company of infantry acting as gunners, manned the Confederate artillery. The Confederate guns struck the Harriet Lane twice, wounding five sailors. One Confederate cannon

was damaged, but none of the gunners were hurt. Seeing that nothing was to be gained by continuing the engagement, the Harriet Lane broke off and returned to port for repairs.

1.4 Skirmish at New Market Bridge
Saturday, June 8, 1861

Hampton, VA

The Skirmish at New Market Bridge was fought on Saturday, June 8, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. George W. Wilson and Confederate forces commanded by Lt. Col. Charles C. Lee and Maj. James H. Lane in present-day Hampton, Virginia. Though relatively minor, it played a crucial role in shaping Union General Benjamin Butler's flawed understanding of Confederate positions on the Peninsula, leading to missteps in the subsequent Battle of Big Bethel.

After the Virginia Secession Convention passed its ordinance of secession in May 1861, Union forces steadily reinforced Fort Monroe, a federal stronghold located at the tip of the Virginia Peninsula between the James and York rivers. Fort Monroe remained the only federal property in Virginia not seized by the Confederates, and President Abraham Lincoln was determined to avoid another loss like that of Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

On May 22, Brigadier General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts assumed command of the Union troops at Fort Monroe. Known for his aggressive leadership, Butler quickly sought to expand the Union's foothold on the Virginia Peninsula. By the end of May, his forces had occupied the nearby towns of Hampton and Newport News. In response, Confederate Colonel John B. Magruder ordered Montague's Battalion, supported by artillery and cavalry, to occupy the area around Big Bethel Church, along the road from Hampton to Yorktown.

Major Edgar B. Montague became concerned that a Union force was planning to outflank him. He relayed his fears to Magruder, then fell back to a Colonial-Era tavern called the Halfway House. Magruder responded by sending Colonel Daniel Harvey Hill's 1st North Carolina Infantry Regiment to meet this potential threat. Although Montague's fears were unfounded, when Hill began fortifying around Big Bethel Church along the Northwest Branch of the Back River on June 7, he inadvertently set the stage for a Confederate victory in the Battle of Big Bethel three days later.

Meanwhile, Union Colonel Joseph B. Carr's 2nd New York Infantry Regiment was foraging for supplies outside Hampton, venturing up to New Market Bridge over the Southwest Branch of the Back River, about five miles from Hill's fortifications. Some of Carr's men were baking bread at an abandoned house when they received word that Confederate cavalry were in the area. Carr dispatched two companies, led by Captain George W. Wilson, to investigate. The group split into two: Company E, under Wilson, advanced toward Little Bethel Church, while Company G took the Back River Road.

Hill's scouts reported that a group of Union soldiers was ransacking the house of Henry C. Whiting, located a short distance east of Little Bethel. Hill called for volunteers to address the threat, and Lieutenant Frank N. Roberts of Company F stepped forward. Hill also directed Major George W. Randolph of the 3rd Company, Richmond Howitzers, to support Roberts' 34-man detachment with a single cannon and placed Lieutenant Colonel Charles C. Lee in command of the group.

Shortly after Lee's group set out, a local citizen rushed into the Confederate camp and informed Hill of a second Union party, this time spotted on the Back River Road. Hill dispatched Major James H. Lane, along with Company E of the 1st North Carolina and one cannon from the Richmond Howitzers, to confront them.

The Old Dominion Dragoons (likely the cavalry Carr's men had spotted) joined Lee's group along the road. From a distance, they observed Wilson's company of New Yorkers at Whiting's farm. Lee ordered the cannon forward. Private Edward C. Gordon of the Richmond Howitzers wrote in his diary: "They saw us pretty soon and started to run! We pursued them until we got within about 400 yards... Venable sighted, and gave the command, 'fire.' The shell struck right by the side of the retreating part, but, O! horrors, it didn't burst."

The Dragoons chased down one New Yorker, Daniel A. Mooney, and captured him. Mooney's name later appeared on casualty lists for the Battle of Big Bethel, but he was, in fact, alive. Wilson's company retreated across New Market Bridge and rejoined the rest of their regiment.

Major Lane's group skirmished with Company G of the 2nd New York along the Back River Road. This encounter, though brief, was more of a stand-up fight than the earlier engagement, with Confederates firing "in real squirrel hunting style." Lieutenant John M. West, commanding the howitzer, had a bullet pierce his hat. The Confederates captured Private George Mason as the New Yorkers again retreated across New Market Bridge. A civilian later reported helping transport a cart full of wounded Union soldiers into Hampton, though no Union accounts corroborate this claim.

The presence of the 2nd New York discouraged any further Confederate pursuit, and both sides returned to their camps. Colonel Hill credited this skirmish with provoking the Union attack at Big Bethel. Butler, possibly due to confusion from the skirmish, mistakenly believed that the Confederate headquarters was at Little Bethel, which contributed to the failure of his plan two days later.

1.5 Battle of Big Bethel
Monday, June 10, 1861

Hampton, VA

The Battle of Big Bethel was fought on Monday, June 10, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Peirce and Confederate forces commanded by Col. John B. Magruder and Col. Daniel Harvey Hill in Hampton, Virginia. It resulted in a Confederate victory with 86 total casualties.

Big Bethel was one of the first pitched battles of the American Civil War. After the Virginia Secession Convention passed its ordinance of secession in May 1861, Union forces steadily reinforced Fort Monroe, a federal stronghold located at the tip of the Virginia Peninsula between the James and York rivers. Fort Monroe remained the only federal property in Virginia not seized by the Confederates, and President Abraham Lincoln was determined to avoid another loss like that of Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

On May 22, Brigadier General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts was assigned command of the Union troops at Fort Monroe. Known for his aggressive leadership, Butler quickly sought to expand the Union's foothold on the Virginia Peninsula. By the end of May, his forces had occupied the nearby towns of Hampton and Newport News. In response, Confederate forces under Colonel John B. Magruder constructed a mile-long line of entrenchments along the Northwest Branch of the Back River, near the churches of Big and Little Bethel, to block further Union advances.

Butler and his aide, Major Theodore Winthrop, devised a plan for a nighttime surprise attack, to be led by Brigadier General Ebenezer Peirce. Colonel Abram Duryee's 5th New York Infantry Regiment was ordered to march from Camp Hamilton in Hampton after midnight, with Colonel Frederick

Townsend's 3rd New York Infantry Regiment providing support. Additional forces, including the 1st Vermont, 4th Massachusetts, and 7th New York regiments, moved out from Newport News along with several artillery pieces.

To prevent confusion during the night operation, Butler designated "Boston" as the watchword for all Union columns and instructed the troops to wear white rags or handkerchiefs on their left arms for identification in the darkness. However, a key miscommunication occurred: Captain Haggerty, the messenger responsible for relaying these orders, failed to inform Colonel John W. Phelps at Newport News of these precautions.

Early on the morning of June 10, Townsend's regiment, led by General Peirce, advanced as planned and approached the 7th New York from behind. Unfortunately, Colonel John A. Bendix of the 7th New York mistook Peirce's men for Confederate cavalry, and the situation was worsened by the fact that the 3rd New York regiment wore gray uniforms, similar to Confederate forces. In the confusion, the 7th New York opened fire, causing 21 casualties and sending many soldiers into a panicked retreat. This friendly fire incident was exactly the disaster Butler had hoped to avoid.

Although Union forces eventually regained order, the gunfire had alerted the Confederate troops to the impending attack. The Confederate defense, commanded by Colonel Daniel Harvey Hill's 1st North Carolina Regiment and supported by the Richmond Howitzers under Major George W. Randolph, withdrew to their trenches, bracing for the assault.

The battle continued throughout the morning and into the afternoon, with Union forces launching several attacks on the Confederate earthworks. However, the Union troops—demoralized by the earlier friendly fire incident—were inexperienced, exhausted, and facing a well-entrenched enemy. Major Winthrop was shot and killed while leading one of the final charges, and Lieutenant John Trout Greble, a regular Army officer, was killed while preparing to withdraw his artillery.

Before the Battle of Big Bethel, Confederate forces in Virginia had largely been on the defensive, retreating from Union advances. The capture of Alexandria and the hasty Confederate retreat from Philippi had been widely reported in the press, boosting Union morale. However, the Confederate victory at Big Bethel marked a turning point, as they decisively repelled the Union forces. The Union suffered 18 killed, 53 wounded, and five missing, while Confederate casualties were much lighter, with only one killed and nine wounded.

After Big Bethel, only a few small skirmishes occurred on the Virginia Peninsula that summer, and major military operations in the area ceased until the following year.

1.6 Action at Carter's Creek
Monday, June 24, 1861

Newport News, VA

The Action at Carter's Creek was fought on Monday, June 24, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Lt. Daniel L. Braine and Confederate forces commanded by Capt. Isaac Currell in present-day Lancaster County, Virginia. The brief exchange of fire resulted in a Confederate victory when the Union landing party was driven off with two casualties.

On April 27, in response to the capture of Harpers Ferry Arsenal and Gosport Navy Yard, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln extended the naval blockade of seven original Confederate States to include the ports of Virginia. Flag-Officer Silas H. Stringham's Atlantic Blockading Squadron, which included the screw-steamer USS *Star* (*Monticello*), patrolled the Chesapeake Bay, boarding and searching ships and

engaging with Confederate shore batteries at Gloucester Point, Sewell's Point, and Pig Point. In late May, the *Monticello* was damaged during the Engagement at Sewell's Point and was sent back to Washington, D.C. for repairs.

Meanwhile, Confederate volunteers quickly formed companies in Virginia's Tidewater region, erecting forts and batteries at strategic points along the coastal waterways. Companies from Virginia's Northern Neck—a peninsula between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers—formed the 40th Virginia Infantry Regiment, commanded by Col. John M. Brockenbrough. Since a regiment typically consisted of only 10 companies, some units were left waiting for assignment. One such unit was Currell's Company from Lancaster County, commanded by Capt. Isaac Currell.

On June 13, the *Monticello* returned to Fort Monroe under the command of Lt. Daniel L. Braine. Ten days later, on June 23, Flag-Officer Garrett J. Pendergrast ordered Lt. Braine to intercept a blockade runner near Smith Island. While sailing up the Chesapeake, the *Monticello*'s pilot informed Braine of a steamer called the *Virginia* that could be captured near the mouth of the Rappahannock River. Braine decided to take a brief detour on June 24, but the *Virginia* was nowhere to be found.

The *Monticello*'s pilot then mentioned that a local Unionist named William Gresham, who lived near the mouth of Carter's Creek on the Northern Neck, might have useful information. A landing party of 18 armed men, led by Master's Mate Lewis A. Brown and Assistant Surgeon Heber Smith, went ashore in the steamer's launch—a small craft armed with two swivel guns and a rowboat. While speaking with Gresham, about 30 men from Currell's Company, led by Adjutant Henry S. Hathaway, opened fire from behind bushes and trees along the shore.

Brown later reported, "I heard a man on the stoop say that there was a company of well-drilled volunteers in the vicinity, and on my turning about I saw a company of armed and uniformed men stealing along the shore as if to cut off our retreat. I immediately ordered a retreat to the boat and fired off our carbines, many of which missed fire…"

The Union landing party immediately ran for their launch, leaving the rowboat behind. While wading through the shallow water, Assistant Surgeon Heber Smith and Quartermaster August Peterson were wounded (Peterson later died at Fort Monroe). The launch crew returned fire with their carbines and swivel guns.

Once the landing party was safely back aboard the *Monticello*, Lt. Braine ordered his gunners to fire on Gresham's house, causing severe damage. There were no reported Confederate casualties, and the *Monticello* returned to Fort Monroe empty-handed.

1.7 Skirmish at Smith's Farm
Friday, July 5, 1861

Newport News, VA

The Skirmish at Smith's Farm was fought on Friday, July 5, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. William W. Hammell and Confederate forces commanded by Lt. Col. Charles D. Dreux in present-day Newport News, Virginia. This failed ambush turned into a debacle for the Confederates when Dreux was killed.

Following the Battle of Big Bethel, Union and Confederate forces on the Virginia Peninsula settled into a stalemate behind their fortifications. Both armies occasionally sent patrols into no man's land to forage for supplies or scout for enemy activity, but neither was strong enough to dislodge the other.

Newly promoted Confederate Brig. Gen. John B. Magruder, commanding the Hampton Division, assigned the 1st Louisiana Infantry Battalion to guard Young's Mill, supported by a section of artillery from the 3rd Company, Richmond Howitzers, and cavalry from the Catawba Troop of Halifax County. Lt. Col. Charles D. Dreux of the 1st Louisiana took command of the camp.

On July 4th, Independence Day, Dreux hosted a barbecue for his men, providing a generous supply of whiskey. He also welcomed Colonel Lafayette McLaws, the commander of Confederate forces at Yorktown, as a guest. Dreux gave a rousing speech, making it clear he did not intend to wait passively at Young's Mill for the enemy. "This is our day, and we will have it," he was said to have remarked.

Later that evening, during a meeting with his captains, Capt. William Collins of the Catawba Troop informed Dreux that Union troops were frequently seen at the home of Nelson Smith, located along the James River, about four miles to the south. Capt. Robert C. Stanard of the Richmond Howitzers suggested they take a detachment and set up an ambush, a plan Dreux wholeheartedly endorsed. Some sources claim that the idea for the ambush originated with Dreux himself. Regardless, the plan was set: after midnight, they departed with 100 infantry, 20 cavalry, and one howitzer.

As they neared a wooded lane running perpendicular to the main Warwick Road, near Smith's Farm, Dreux positioned the howitzer down the lane, with the cavalry behind it and the infantry deployed on either side. They were ordered not to attack until the Union troops had passed. However, as sunrise approached with no sign of the enemy, Dreux grew impatient and sent scouts down the Warwick Road to determine their location.

Meanwhile, Capt. William W. Hammell and 25 men of Company F, 9th New York Infantry, had bivouacked a few miles outside their camp at Newport News Point. Shortly before dawn, they resumed their march northward. After about two miles, they were alerted to the Confederate presence when a Confederate private fired prematurely—some say at a snake—prompting Hammell's men to spread out and return fire.

Capt. Collins reported, "The first information I received of the approach of the enemy, a gun was fired to our left, on the main road, and was immediately followed by another, and, with a short pause, the firing was again commenced about the same point, which was kept up regularly, the balls cutting around very near myself and men."

According to Union accounts, at that moment, Lt. Col. Dreux stepped into the road and shouted, "Stop, stop for God's sake stop—you're shooting your own men!" If true (though Confederate accounts do not mention this), Dreux may have mistaken Hammell's men for his own scouts, as they were far fewer in number than the large force he had expected. Hammell hesitated briefly, as the Louisianians' uniforms resembled those of the 1st Vermont Regiment, but he then ordered his men to resume firing. Sgt. Peter J. Martin took aim with his rifle and fatally shot Dreux in the side.

The dense woods made visibility poor, and it seemed to the Confederates that fire was coming from all directions. In the chaos, Capt. Stanard ordered the howitzer to be limbered up and moved to cover the main road. The cavalry, misinterpreting this as a signal to retreat, surged forward, spooking the horses pulling the howitzer. The inexperienced driver lost control of the team, and the horses only stopped after the short skirmish had ended.

Realizing they were outnumbered, Hammell ordered Company F to retreat. Despite Confederate claims to the contrary, no Union soldiers were wounded in the fight. For the 1st Louisiana, however,

the loss of their beloved "Charlie" Dreux was devastating. Dreux became the first field-grade Confederate officer killed during the Civil War, and thousands attended his funeral procession in New Orleans.

1.8 Skirmish at Cedar Lane

Friday, July 12, 1861

Newport News, VA

The Skirmish at Cedar Lane was fought on Friday, July 12, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Lt. Oscar von Heringen and Confederate forces commanded by Maj. John Bell Hood in present-day Newport News, Virginia. This minor skirmish resulted in a Confederate victory, with all casualties occurring on the Union side.

Following the Battle of Big Bethel, Union and Confederate forces on the Virginia Peninsula settled into a stalemate behind their fortifications. Both armies occasionally sent patrols into no man's land to forage for supplies or scout for enemy activity, but neither was strong enough to dislodge the other.

On July 5, 1861, a failed ambush near the farm of Nelson Smith resulted in the death of Confederate Lt. Col. Charles Dreux, commander of the 1st Louisiana Infantry Battalion. Dreux was the first Confederate field officer killed in the war, and his death was mourned throughout the South, especially in his hometown of New Orleans.

Eager for revenge, Confederates camped at nearby Young's Mill sought an opportunity for action. Commanding the Confederate cavalry in the area was 30-year-old Maj. John Bell Hood, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. On the morning of July 12th, Hood led a mixed force of 125 men from the Old Dominion Dragoons, Charles City Troop, Dinwiddie Cavalry, Cumberland Light Dragoons, Mecklenburg Dragoons/Boydton Cavalry, and Black Walnut Dragoons, which collectively formed the nascent 3rd Virginia Cavalry Regiment. Hood and his men rode toward Union lines near the southern tip of Newport News, "looking out for a fight."

Meanwhile, 36 men from Company E of the 7th New York Infantry Regiment had received permission to leave Camp Butler to gather firewood. The 7th New York was composed primarily of German-born immigrants from New York City, many of whom spoke little English. The regiment, known as the "Steuben Guard" in honor of Revolutionary War hero Baron von Steuben, had been involved in a friendly-fire incident during the Battle of Big Bethel when it mistakenly fired on the 3rd New York Infantry, which was wearing gray uniforms similar to those of the Confederates.

As the foraging party gathered firewood, a group led by 36-year-old Lt. Oscar von Heringen decided to venture deeper into the woods, moving closer to Confederate lines. They were spotted by Hood's scouts near Cedar Lane and Nelson Smith's farm sometime before noon. They were motivated to act outside their orders, it was said, by boredom and a desire to avenge their defeat at Big Bethel. Lt. Frederick Mosebach stayed behind with the rest of the party.

Hood mistook von Heringen's patrol for an ambush and sent a detachment of 30 men, mostly from the Mecklenburg Dragoons, who were armed with Sharps breech-loading carbines, through the thick woods to confront them. Flanking von Heringen's group, Hood's men surprised Mosebach's party, and a sharp skirmish broke out. Mosebach ordered his men to flee toward Nelson Smith's house.

In Hood's account, he recalled, "The enemy having been driven from cover in a very rapid and disorderly flight in the direction of Captain Smith's house, on the banks of James River, I then ordered

a charge, and the detachments … dashed gallantly down upon them, taking the flying enemy prisoners."

Von Heringen's patrol was cut off, and most of his men surrendered. The rest of Company E straggled back to camp. In total, von Heringen, Mosebach, nine privates, a mule, and a cart were captured. Four Union soldiers were killed, one mortally wounded, and several others wounded. The Confederates suffered no casualties, except for an injured horse.

Later, after the surviving men of Company E returned to camp, Lt. Col. Edward Kapff led 200 men from the 7th New York to the scene of the skirmish, but they found only scattered remnants of the battle.

2. Ohio Front

2.1 Tygart/Cheat Valleys

2.1.1 Action at Fetterman
Wednesday, May 22, 1861

Taylor County, WV

The Action at Fetterman occurred on Wednesday, May 22, 1861 between members of the secessionist Letcher Guard commanded by Cpl. Daniel W. S. Knight and unionist Grafton Guards commanded by Lt. Daniel Wilson in Taylor County, West Virginia.

John A. Robinson (1830-1898), a merchant and postmaster, organized the Letcher Guard, named after Virginia Governor John Letcher, in early May 1861. Thirty-two men mustered in at Fetterman, a small town north of Grafton along the Tygart Valley River, for a period of one year on May 13, 1861.

Grafton was a railroad town and predominantly unionist in sentiment. Around the same time pro-secession forces were organizing in Fetterman, attorney and newspaper publisher George R. Latham (1832-1917) organized the Grafton Guards in answer to President Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers.

On the night of May 22, 1861, three members of the Letcher Guard, George E. Glenn, Daniel W. S. Knight, and William Reese, were on picket duty along the Northwestern Turnpike at Fetterman Bridge over the Tygart Valley River. Lt. Daniel Wilson and Thornsbury Bailey Brown were returning from a recruiting rally for the Grafton Guards in nearby Pruntytown when they attempted to cross the bridge.

The pickets ordered them to halt, but they ignored the warning. According to some accounts, Brown fired his pistol and struck Knight in the ear. The pickets returned fire, killing Brown. Daniel W. S. Knight was accused of firing the fatal shot, and was formally charged with Brown's murder, though he was acquitted.

The Grafton Guards were not formally sworn into federal service until May 25th, but Thornsbury Bailey Brown is widely considered to be the first Union soldier killed in combat during the Civil War.

2.1.2 Action at Glover's Gap
Tuesday, May 28, 1861

Marion County, WV

The Action at Glover's Gap occurred on Tuesday, May 28, 1861 between irregular secessionist militia commanded by Stephen Roberts and a detachment of Company A, 1st Virginia Infantry (Union) commanded by 2nd Lt. Oliver R. West in Marion County, West Virginia.

By the time Virginia voters ratified the decision of its secession convention on May 23, 1861, Richmond had been named the Confederate capital and militia units were mobilizing. As commander of all Virginia forces, Robert E. Lee directed Col. George A. Porterfield to proceed to Grafton and organize the troops in northwestern Virginia. That area was heavily unionist in sentiment, and only several hundred recruits could be found.

Faced with the prospect of invasion by overwhelming numbers, Porterfield ordered bridges along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and Northwestern Virginia Railroad be destroyed. Several were, and in response, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, commander of the Department of the Ohio, invaded western Virginia with 3,000 volunteer troops under the overall command of Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Morris.

Opposing them were Porterfield's approximately 800 poorly trained and equipped militia gathered at the town of Grafton. Porterfield retreated to Philippi as the Union army advanced. According to author Fritz Haselberger, Porterfield sent detachments, including one commanded by 65-year-old Capt. Stephen Roberts (misnamed Christian), to further disrupt the railroad and cut telegraph lines.

Roberts' detachment succeeded in causing enough mischief that Col. Benjamin F. Kelley, commanding the advanced federal units, sent 2nd Lt. Oliver R. West of Company A, 1st Virginia Infantry (Union) to apprehend them and protect the railroad bridge at Glover's Gap. West captured a handful of insurgents, then, on the morning of May 28th, came upon Stephen Roberts and his band at Glover's Gap.

Roberts swore he would not be captured "by all the Federal troops in western Virginia" and raised his rifle, but it misfired. West's troops returned fire and Roberts was killed. His company fled into the hills.

Not much is known about Stephen Roberts, and his status as a combatant is disputed. According to some sources, he was the first Confederate officer killed during the Civil War. At a time when volunteer officers were elected by their units, Roberts may well have considered himself captain of a company. Author Fritz Haselberger indicated that Col. Porterfield had overall control of Roberts and his men.

Union assistant quartermaster Charles Leib, as well as contemporary newspaper articles, stated that Stephen Roberts was leader of a local band of Marion County secessionists that disbanded after his death. Porterfield may have been in communication with them, but they were not formally sworn into service. In that case, Stephen Roberts was a civilian when he died and not a "Confederate officer".

2.1.3 Action at Philippi
Monday, June 3, 1861

Barbour County, WV

The "Battle" of Philippi was fought on Monday, June 3, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Morris and Confederate forces commanded by Col. George A. Porterfield in Philippi, Virginia during the American Civil War. The engagement, which was among the first land actions of the Civil War in Virginia, was a Union victory that encouraged Western Virginians to secede and form their own pro-Union state. It resulted in less than 13 total casualties.

By the time Virginia voters ratified the decision of its secession convention on May 23, 1861, Richmond had already been proclaimed the Confederate capital and militia units were mobilizing. As commander of the Department of the Ohio, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan invaded western Virginia under the pretext of protecting unionists there. Western counties would later vote to secede from Virginia and form the state of West Virginia.

McClellan sent 3,000 volunteer troops into western Virginia under the overall command of Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Morris. Opposing them were approximately 800 poorly trained and equipped militia

commanded by Col. George A. Porterfield gathered at the town of Grafton. Porterfield retreated to Philippi as the Union army advanced. Morris divided his force into two columns, which converged on Philippi and the Confederates camped there.

Before dawn on June 3rd, the Confederates were sheltering from the rain in their tents and were almost taken completely by surprise, if not for a local woman firing her pistol at the Union troops. They broke and ran with Morris' men in hot pursuit, leading Northern journalists to call the fight the "Races at Philippi".

Col. Benjamin Franklin Kelley, who would later become commander of the Department of West Virginia and a major general, commanded the Union 1st Virginia Infantry Regiment and was seriously wounded in the fight, though his men captured the abandoned Confederate baggage train. Kelley was one of the first Union officers wounded in the war.

Confederate forces lost approximately eight killed or wounded in their ignominious defeat. Union casualties amounted to five wounded. Though a minor skirmish, the Union victory at Philippi was consequential in three ways: it made Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan famous, which ultimately catapulted him to command of the Military Division of the Potomac on July 26, it encouraged Unionists in western Virginia to form their own state government, and it encouraged the first Union advance on Richmond that ultimately ended in failure at the First Battle of Bull Run.

2.1.4 Action at Righter's House
Friday, June 21, 1861

Marion County, WV

The Action at Righter's House (aka Coon Run) was fought on Friday, June 21, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. David F. Cable and Virginia cavalry commanded by Capt. John Righter in Marion County, West Virginia.

In late June 1861, the 20th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment (3 Months) led by Col. Thomas Morton was headquartered at Fairmont, Virginia along the Tygart River and Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Marion County. Its mission was to protect that strategically important railway connecting Washington, DC with the Midwestern states.

Company I of the 20th Ohio was stationed in the town of Mannington, approximately 13 miles west of Fairmont along the B&O Railroad. Its commanding officer, Capt. David F. Cable, had received several reports from "persons of the highest respectability" that a group of rebels were camped at Coon's Creek (or Coon Run) and assembled for drill at the residence of a man named Peter Baker Righter, a well-known secessionist, near the Marion/Harrison County line.

Peter B. Righter and John Righter lived on either side of Coon Run in what is today the community of Francis, two miles east of West Fork River and the town of Enterprise in Marion County. Peter B. Righter was a wealthy farmer, and his son John would become a Confederate captain commanding Company No. 4 of the Virginia State Rangers in 1862 (he later commanded Company D, 19th Virginia Cavalry in 1863). But in that early summer of 1861, his troop was an ill-trained local militia.

On June 20th, Capt. Cable took a detachment of 27 men to Shinnston, approximately 13.5 miles south of Fairmont along the West Fork River in Harrison County. There they found several local guides to

lead them to Righter's farm. Cable left ten men in Shinnston as a guard and apparently rejected assistance from the local Unionist Home Guard. At around 3am on the morning of Friday, June 21st, Capt. Cable, 17 of his men, and two or three locals arrived at Righter's House.

A guide approached the house and encountered a man on guard duty. Both returned to their respective sides and reported what they had seen. Capt. Cable arrayed his men in a semi-circle around the house and knocked on the door. Someone blew a horn, and firing erupted from the house and a nearby orchard. Several men, including a local guide, John Nay, were wounded. Cable ordered his men to withdraw to a nearby house where he sent for reinforcements.

In a letter to the *Wheeling Intelligencer*, Capt. Cable said four of his men were severely wounded, and they killed four of the enemy and wounded six. He took seven prisoners. One of the prisoners, Banks Corbett (or Corbin) was shot and killed trying to escape. When they returned to Righter's House at daylight, it was abandoned. The Union soldiers confiscated anything of military value, then set fire to the house.

"It is a terrible retribution on a man who lived like a prince, and could have continued to do so, but for an inborn deviltry and sympathy for ruffianism and treason, which has thus worked his ruin," the *Intelligencer* editorialized. Peter Righter was arrested by Union troops in May 1862, but President Andrew Johnson granted him a full pardon in 1867.

Like many early skirmishes, newspaper reports of the Action at Righter's House were exaggerated and full of hearsay and inaccuracies. It was just one of many tragedies to play out in northwestern Virginia as neighbor turned against neighbor.

2.1.6 Skirmish at Buckhannon
Thurs., June 27, 1861

Upshur County, West Virginia

The Skirmish at Buckhannon occurred on Thursday, June 27, 1861 between a patrol from the Churchville Cavalry commanded by Capt. Franklin F. Sterrett and unionist Home Guards commanded by Col. Henry F. Westfall in Buckhannon, Upshur County, West Virginia.

As Virginia's secession appeared all but certain in the spring of 1861, Virginia Provisional Army commander Robert E. Lee sent Col. George A. Porterfield to what was then Northwest Virginia to organize the state militia. Popular sentiment in the region was decidedly pro-Union, however, and recruits were hard to find. Lack of basic supplies, uniforms, and weapons compounded his problem. He only gathered a few hundred poorly trained men.

Towards the end of May, Porterfield sent Lt. Col. Jonathan McGee Heck (1831-1894), an attorney from Marion County, (West) Virginia, to Richmond to explain, in person, the dire situation they faced. Heck was in Staunton gathering reinforcements and supplies during the Philippi disaster. When Heck returned to the Northwest, Confederate forces had a new commander in the form of Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett. Garnett placed Heck in command of the 25th Virginia Infantry Regiment and ordered him to fortify Rich Mountain.

On June 26, Lt. Col. Heck took his men and wagons and marched toward Buckhannon, looking for supplies. Buckhannon, population 427 in 1860, is the seat of Upshur County. It is located along the

Buckhannon River and Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike. The Turnpike was a vital transportation route from the Shenandoah Valley to the Ohio River. Buckhannon, approximately 23 miles east of the Confederate camp on Rich Mountain, became a kind of no man's land between Confederate forces and Union forces camped at Philippi and Clarksburg.

According to Heck, he left camp with 20 wagons and 300 men, including the Churchville Cavalry commanded by Capt. Franklin F. Sterrett. They stopped for the night five miles outside Buckhannon. The cavalry rode out ahead of the infantry, and as they approached a mill on the outskirts of town, they were fired on by 25 men concealed in ambush in a thick wood. Heck named the Union commander as Col. Henry F. Westfall. Westfall, in his diary, wrote "Col. W. defeated the Southerns at Ridgeway's Mill," possibly referring to Watson Westfall, a different militia leader with the same last name.

Westfall's men were hidden in a wood with thick underbrush, so it was difficult for Sterrett to dislodge them. They eventually withdrew, and Sterrett pursued, capturing Arthur G. Kiddy and James L. Jennings on the Clarksburg and Buckhannon turnpike. The pair were taken to Staunton in chains. Although Heck doesn't name them, he did write "We arrested two men."

Heck purchased provisions in town and seized several barrels of salt pork the Union Army had left behind. As the Confederates withdrew on the 28th, the Home Guard continued to snipe at them from concealed positions, wounding a horse but otherwise causing no damage. There were no casualties on either side.

2.1.5 Skirmish at Bowman's Place

Sat., June 29, 1861

Tucker County, West Virginia

The Skirmish at Bowman's Place (aka Hannahsville, aka Action at Cheat River) was fought on Saturday, June 29, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. Hiram Miller and Confederate forces commanded by Lt. Robert McChesney in present-day Tucker County, West Virginia.

It had been over a month since Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan invaded northwestern Virginia, and every week, additional volunteer regiments arrived to reinforce him. It had been over three weeks since Confederate forces fled from Philippi. Their commander, Col. George A. Porterfield, was replaced with Robert E. Lee's adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett. He proceeded to fortify positions at Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain in Barbour and Randolph counties to guard the two main mountain roads leading into the Shenandoah Valley.

As Maj. Gen. McClellan maneuvered his forces into position in front of Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain to confront Garnett, pro-Union delegates in Wheeling declared secession illegal and agreed to form a Restored Government of Virginia to represent the state in Washington, DC. It appointed Francis H. Pierpont governor. Toward the end of June, counties under Union control held elections for new delegates to the Restored Government.

In Randolph and Tucker counties, Dr. Solomon Parsons, a delegate to the Wheeling Convention, was the only candidate.

The 2nd Rockbridge Dragoons, led by Capt. John R. McNutt and Lt. Robert McChesney, were camped with Brig. Gen. Garnett at Laurel Hill. On the night of Friday, June 28, 1861, Lt. Robert McChesney and nine picked men rode northeast toward St. George, then seat of Tucker County, along the Cheat River on a scouting mission and to disrupt the election.

Detached companies of the 15th and 16th Ohio Infantry Regiments and the 1st Virginia (Union) were stationed around Rowlesburg guarding the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 18 miles north of St. George. In early June, Capt. Hiram Miller of Company H, 15th Ohio Infantry Regiment, hauled away a secession flag fluttering over the courthouse in St. George. Now his unit returned to make sure the election went smoothly.

The next morning, Saturday, June 29th, Lt. McChesney and his men, with a handful of local Home Guards, proceeded to St. George, where they found the vote had already taken place. They traveled north along a mountain road following the Cheat River toward the residence of Adam H. Bowman, an attorney, which was being used as a polling place.

Capt. Hiram Miller got word of their approach and prepared an ambush. Company H was concealed on either side of the road and allowed McChesney and his small troop to advance deeper into their trap. McChesney (or someone in his party), however, noticed the soldiers and turned to escape. Shots rang out. Lt. McChesney was mortally wounded, and three of his men were wounded and escaped. It was said Capt. Miller shot the young Confederate officer.

One man from the 15th Ohio, Pvt. Nathan O. Smith, was killed, and one wounded. Smith was the first combat death in his regiment.

Col. James Irvine of the 16th Ohio ended up with Lt. McChesney's personal effects, which he returned to the lieutenant's family. He wrote: "I will, therefore, not speak of it further than to say that he bore himself gallantly, and my sympathies were greatly enlisted for him when he fell. What should have been our common country, lost a brave and gallant man."

In the opening weeks of the American Civil War, even two dead soldiers seemed like a heavy toll, and both fallen men were mourned back home as martyrs for their cause. In the intervening years, however, small events like the Skirmish at Bowman's Place have largely been forgotten. Even at the time, the skirmish had no bearing on the outcome of that larger campaign, and no after action report was even written about it—at least not one published in the official records.

2.1.7 Skirmish at Middle Fork Bridge
Sat., July 6 to Sun., July 7, 1861

Upshur County, WV

The Skirmish at Middle Fork Bridge was fought on Saturday, July 6 and Sunday, July 7, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. Orris A. Lawson and Col. Robert L. McCook and Confederate forces commanded by Col. Jonathan McGee Heck and Maj. Nathaniel Tyler in Upshur County, West Virginia. Although the Union forces faced setbacks on the first day, the skirmish ultimately ended in their favor, paving the way for a decisive victory at Rich Mountain four days later.

Following the Confederate retreat from Philippi in early June, Brigadier General Robert S. Garnett took command of Confederate forces in northwestern Virginia. Garnett organized disassociated

companies into regiments and fortified positions at Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain in Barbour and Randolph counties, aiming to guard the two main mountain roads leading into the Shenandoah Valley.

On June 21, Major General George B. McClellan, 34 years old and head of the Military Department of the Ohio, entered Virginia at Parkersburg to personally assume command of Union forces in northwest Virginia. He arrived in Grafton on June 23 and remained there for nearly a week, addressing supply and logistical challenges.

On June 26, Garnett ordered Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan McGee Heck to lead a portion of his 25th Virginia Infantry Regiment, along with all available wagons, to the town of Buckhannon for a foraging expedition. Buckhannon, the seat of Upshur County, lay along the Buckhannon River and the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike, a crucial transportation route from the Shenandoah Valley to the Ohio River. Heck stationed pickets at the covered bridge over the Middle Fork River, halfway between Buckhannon and Camp Garnett on Rich Mountain, to provide early warning of any Union approach from that direction.

Upon hearing that Confederate troops had occupied Buckhannon, McClellan quickly left for Clarksburg, where he ordered his quartermasters to prepare 100 wagons. However, assembling the wagons proved challenging, and transportation issues remained unresolved even as Union regiments began advancing into Upshur County. Not a single ambulance was available should the troops encounter trouble.

The 9th Ohio Infantry Regiment, led by Colonel Robert L. McCook, reached Buckhannon on the evening of June 29. Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans soon arrived with the 8th and 10th Indiana and 19th Ohio Regiments. By the time elements of Brigadier General Newton Schleich's brigade, including the 3rd and 4th Ohio Regiments, arrived on July 2, the Union troop presence in Upshur County nearly equaled the local population. Schleich was a politician known more for his vulgarity than military prowess.

On July 5, without McClellan's approval, Schleich dispatched a mixed scouting party of 50 men from the 3rd Ohio, led by Captain Orris A. Lawson, to scout Middle Fork Bridge. The party halted five miles from the bridge and set up camp. Shortly after midnight, Lawson led his men over two miles upstream, crossed the river, and attempted to sneak up on the Confederate pickets sheltered in the covered bridge. These pickets consisted of Captain Francis Sterrett's Churchville Cavalry and ten men from the Pendleton Rifles.

Sentinels spotted the Union troops sneaking through the brush, prompting both sides to open fire simultaneously. According to one Ohio soldier, the shooting was "hot as Hell." Corporal Samuel R. Johns was killed, and six others were wounded. Realizing his forces were outnumbered and had lost the element of surprise, Lawson retreated with the wounded, leaving Johns' body on the field. The brief yet intense firefight also left three Confederate soldiers wounded.

Angry over Schleich's costly error, McClellan the next morning, July 7, ordered Colonel McCook to take the 4th and 9th Ohio Regiments, Loomis's Michigan artillery battery, and Burdsall's Dragoons to secure Middle Fork Bridge. The Confederate pickets stationed at the bridge fired a few shots at the advancing Union troops before retreating up the turnpike to alert their comrades. McCook's men discovered and buried Johns' body before setting up camp.

Meanwhile, Lt. Col. Heck sent Major Nathaniel Tyler of the 20th Virginia Infantry with Company G (the Hampden-Sydney Boys) from his own regiment and Company A (the Upshur Grays) of the 25th Virginia, totaling about 160 men. Along the way, they encountered a local woman who warned them

of nearby federal cavalry. Upon reaching the vicinity of the bridge, they saw two Union infantry regiments and an artillery battery in a defensive position.

After exchanging a few volleys, Major Tyler wisely chose to withdraw to their fortified position on Rich Mountain. There were no casualties on either side, though Captain John C. Higginbotham of the Upshur Grays later remarked, "I got my pants and boot-legs riddled with bullets, but without serious injury."

Securing Middle Fork Bridge removed the final barrier between McClellan's army and the Confederate stronghold on Rich Mountain. By the morning of July 9, McClellan's advance units had reached Roaring Creek, from where they would launch a flanking attack two days later, overwhelming the Confederate defenders at Rich Mountain.

2.1.8 Battle of Bellington/Laurel Hill
Sun., July 7 to Thurs., July 11, 1861

Barbour County, WV

The Battle of Belington (Laurel Hill) was fought from Sunday, July 7 to Thursday, July 11, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Morris and Confederate forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett in Barbour County, West Virginia during the American Civil War. The battle was technically a draw, but defeat at Rich Mountain on July 11 compelled Garnett to abandon his fortified camp at Laurel Hill.

Following an ignominious Confederate defeat at the Battle of Philippi in early June, Brig. Gen. Garnett took command of Confederate forces in western Virginia and fortified two key mountain passes: one at Laurel Mountain leading to Leadsville and the other at Rich Mountain to Beverly. Lt. Col. John Pegram commanded a smaller force at Camp Garnett in Rich Mountain, while Garnett stayed at Camp Laurel Hill with 4,000 men.

Garnett knew his prospects for victory were slim. "I don't anticipate anything very brilliant–indeed I shall esteem myself fortunate if I escape disaster," he wrote. His pessimism would be tested on July 7, when Brig. Gen. Morris arrived with his 3,500-man brigade and made camp in nearby Belington (where he soon received reinforcements, bringing his total to 4,000). The two sides skirmished for several days. Morris' orders were to "amuse" his opponent and prevent him from reinforcing Rich Mountain.

Accounts of the battle vary, but it involved both infantry and artillery duels. A Confederate soldier wrote to the *Richmond Daily Dispatch*: "The company had no sooner taken their proper place, when they opened briskly on the foe, which was returned as briskly; but few of the return shots did any execution…," and "During the latter part of the day the enemy fired a number of bomb shells, grape-shots and balls in the direction of our troops, playing havoc with the trees and shrubbery…"

Another Confederate, George P. Morgan, recorded in his journal: "Early in the morning the enemy made his appearance near our fortified camp (near Laurel Hill) and were promptly repulsed by the 1st Georgia regiment with the loss of one wounded on our side and several killed on theirs. The day was principally occupied in skirmishes, in which nearly all our forces were engaged, but with the loss of only one man on our side."

Ambrose Bierce, a Union soldier in the 9th Indiana Infantry and later an accomplished author, remarked: "A few dozen of us, who had been swapping shots with the enemies' skirmishers, grew tired of the resultless battle, and by a common impulse – and I think without orders or officers – ran forward into the woods and attacked the Confederate works. We did well enough considering the hopeless folly of the movement, but we came out of the woods faster than we went in – a good deal."

Casualty estimates from these five days of fighting are hard to come by, since contemporary accounts tended to exaggerate, but the number of killed and wounded may have been as high as two dozen on either side. Confederate forces held out until the 11th, when they slipped away under cover of night to avoid being surrounded.

2.1.9 Skirmish at Glenville
Sun., July 7 to Mon. July 8, 1861

Gilmer County, WV

The Skirmish at Glenville was fought on Sunday, July 7, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Col. John M. Connell and Confederate forces commanded by Col. Robert Alexander Caskie in present-day Gilmer County, West Virginia.

It had been two months and 11 days since Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan invaded northwestern Virginia, and additional volunteer regiments arrived weekly to reinforce him. It had been over a month since Confederate forces fled from Philippi. Their commander, Col. George A. Porterfield, was replaced with Robert E. Lee's adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett. He proceeded to fortify positions at Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain in Barbour and Randolph counties to guard the two main mountain roads leading into the Shenandoah Valley.

As Maj. Gen. McClellan maneuvered his forces into position in front of Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain to confront Garnett, he spread his forces across what was then northwestern Virginia, protecting vital transportation routes and providing legitimacy for the fledgling Unionist Restored Government of Virginia in Wheeling.

Members of the 17th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, led by Col. John M. Connell, initially enlisted for three months in and around Lancaster, Ohio in April 1861. They were sent to Parkersburg, Virginia (today, West Virginia) along the Ohio River to root out secessionist militias in Jackson County. In early July, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan attached the 17th Ohio to Brig. Gen. William S. Rosecrans' brigade. They then marched approximately 94 miles east to Buckhannon, to guard supply trains.

As elements of the 17th Ohio were moving through the small town of Glenville along the Little Kanawha River, 42 miles west of Buckhannon, they were attacked by the 1st Cavalry Regiment, Wise Legion commanded by Col. Robert Alexander Caskie. Glenville, population 398 in 1860, was the seat of Gilmer County.

Accurate reports of the skirmish are difficult to find, but evidently it continued the next day. Connell's men were able to get a scout through to Buckhannon, and Maj. Gen. McClellan sent the 7th and 10th Ohio regiments to relieve them. The Confederates, realizing they were about to be outnumbered and with no reinforcements of their own in sight, hastily withdrew. There were no reported casualties on either side.

2.1.10 Battle of Rich Mountain
Thursday, July 11, 1861

Randolph County, WV

The Battle of Rich Mountain was fought on Thursday, July 11, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. William Rosecrans and Confederate forces commanded by Lt. Col. John Pegram in Randolph County, West Virginia during the American Civil War. The battle was a Union victory, routing Confederate forces in western Virginia and resulting in approximately 340 total casualties, mostly Confederate.

Soon after Virginia seceded from the Unites States in May 1861 and joined the Confederacy, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, as commander of the Department of the Ohio, invaded western Virginia under the pretext of protecting unionists there. These western counties would later vote to secede from Virginia and form the state of West Virginia.

Following an ignominious Confederate defeat at the Battle of Philippi in early June, Confederate Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett fortified two key mountain passes: one through Laurel Mountain leading to Leadsville and the other through Rich Mountain to Beverly. The smaller force, consisting of 1,300 men and four cannon at Camp Garnett in Rich Mountain, was commanded by Lt. Col. John Pegram.

McClellan brought 5,000 men and eight cannon within two miles of Camp Garnett, where he permitted Brig. Gen. William S. Rosecrans and approximately 2,000 men to conduct a flanking attack, guided by a 22-year-old local unionist named David Hart. On the afternoon of July 11th, Rosecrans' men surprised, assailed, and eventually overwhelmed the Confederate rearguard on Hart's family farm.

Pegram realized he was nearly surrounded, so he ordered a quick retreat under cover of darkness. Pegram and Garnett were separated, and Pegram and his men surrendered. Three hundred Confederates were killed or wounded at Rich Mountain. In contrast, Union forces sustained 46 casualties at Rich Mountain and up to 53 at Corrick's Ford. McClellan was widely praised for his victory and was given command of the Military Division of the Potomac on July 26, 1861.

2.1.11 Battle of Corrick's Ford
Saturday, July 13, 1861

Tucker County, WV

The Battle of Corrick's / Carricks Ford was fought on Saturday, July 13, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. Henry Washington Benham and Confederate forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett in Tucker County, West Virginia during the American Civil War. The battle was a Union victory, routing Confederate forces in western Virginia and resulting in approximately 670 total casualties, mostly Confederate.

Soon after Virginia seceded from the United States in May 1861 and joined the Confederacy, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, as commander of the Department of the Ohio, invaded western Virginia. On June 3, he sent Confederate militia fleeing from the town of Philippi, and in July, he smashed a Confederate force at Rich Mountain.

Following defeat at the Battle of Rich Mountain, Confederate Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett attempted to retreat from his camp on Laurel Hill to Beverly, but was misinformed about a Union presence there and fled northeast toward the Cheat River. "They have not given me an adequate force," Garnett lamented. "I can do nothing. They have sent me to my death." His words would be prophetic.

On July 13th, Garnett arrived at Corrick's Ford on the Cheat River with 4,500 men. As they crossed, Union Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Morris' brigade attacked, and while looking for another route to escape across the river, Garnett was shot and killed. His army abandoned its wagons, cannon, and supplies and fled.

Twenty Confederates were killed or wounded at Corrick's Ford, including Garnett, who was the first general officer to fall in battle during the Civil War. Six hundred went missing and probably deserted. In contrast, Union forces sustained 53 casualties at Corrick's Ford. McClellan was widely praised for his victory and was given command of the Military Division of the Potomac on July 26, 1861.

2.1.12 Action at Greenbrier River
Friday, July 19, 1861

Pocahontas County, WV

The Action at Greenbrier River was fought on Friday, July 19, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Sgt. William D. Gault and a Confederate irregular unit in present-day Pocahontas County, West Virginia. The ambush, along with similar actions by Confederate guerrillas, not only inflicted heavy casualties but also paralyzed Union forces on Cheat Mountain, halting their advance and effectively creating a stalemate until the fall.

The death of Brigadier General Robert S. Garnett and the crippling of the Army of the Northwest at Corrick's Ford temporarily ended organized Confederate resistance in northwestern Virginia. A flurry of letters and dispatches from Confederate commanders urged someone to hold Cheat Mountain Pass, but the 14th Indiana Infantry Regiment secured it first. Cheat Mountain, strategically positioned astride the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike about 80 miles northwest of Staunton, gave the Union uncontested control of more than 10,000 square miles of Trans-Alleghany Virginia.

Under Colonel Nathan Kimball, the 14th Indiana began constructing Cheat Summit Fort (also known as Fort Milroy) on July 16 at the 4,000-foot summit of Cheat Mountain. They were soon joined by Captain Cyrus O. Loomis' Battery A, 1st Michigan Light Artillery, and Captain Henry W. Burdsall's Independent Company of Ohio Cavalry, also called Burdsall's Dragoons.

In northwestern Virginia, where most residents were Unionists, the Union Army was welcomed with recruits, supplies, and intelligence. However, resistance stiffened as the troops moved deeper into the interior. Virginians unaffiliated with formal military units began harassing Union forces by cutting telegraph wires and sniping from mountain crags and dense forests.

This guerrilla activity became so pernicious that on June 23, Major General George B. McClellan issued an open letter condemning such tactics. He warned that anyone firing on sentries or pickets, burning bridges, or harassing Unionists "will be dealt with in their persons and property according to the severest rules of military law."

By July 19, 1861, Confederate Brigadier General Henry R. Jackson reported from Monterey that the "*débris* of General Garnett's command are constantly pouring in." To counter Union advances, Jackson formed a composite unit of cavalry and militia under Major Alexander C. Jones of the 44th Virginia

Infantry, a Virginia Military Institute graduate. Their mission was to patrol the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike near Cheat Mountain and monitor Union movements. A group of 80 riflemen were to "annoy the enemy from the hills and bushes."

That same day, a seven-man patrol from Burdsall's Dragoons, led by Sergeant William D. Gault, rode south along the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike toward the Greenbrier River. On the south side of the Greenbrier's East Fork stood Travellers Repose, a well-known inn and post office marking the no man's land between Union and Confederate positions.

Turning back north, the patrol approached the bridge over the Greenbrier River's West Fork near modern-day Durbin. Just north of the bridge was a rocky outcrop known as Hanging Rock. Unbeknownst to the patrol, approximately ten Confederate guerrillas, likely Major Jones' riflemen, were hidden in the wooded hills nearby. Among them was 47-year-old Ewing C. Devier from Highland County.

As the river was low, Burdsall's Dragoons crossed downstream from the bridge and stopped to water their horses. The hidden riflemen opened fire, killing Sergeant Gault and wounding Privates Seeley E. Mensch, William A. Kennedy, and Bernard Straight. Kennedy reportedly was shot in the hand while raising his carbine to return fire. After the war, historian William T. Price wrote a florid account of the incident based on Devier's 1862 recollection, inaccurately claiming six or seven horsemen were killed, including two who died in each other's arms.

Brigadier General Jackson also exaggerated the ambush's success, reporting that "[The enemy's] scouts have been roaming the country on this side of it, and yesterday a party of nine of them were taken in ambush by a party of our scouts, who killed seven of them and wounded the eighth." In reality, after firing a few shots, the bushwhackers melted into the wilderness, not staying to verify the number of dead or wounded.

Two uninjured dragoons remained with the wounded while the third raced back to Cheat Mountain to report the ambush. Colonel Kimball immediately dispatched Lieutenant Nathan Willard and 50 men from Company E ("Crescent Guards") along with a wagon to recover the casualties. The regiment's surgeon, Joseph G. McPheeters, met the returning party on the road and escorted Private Mensch to a house where he tried to make him comfortable. Despite the efforts, Mensch, who had been shot in the back, died shortly after midnight.

In the long term, the Greenbrier River ambush had little strategic impact, though it made Union forces more cautious about advancing further until the fall. Just days later, news of the Union defeat at Bull Run led General Winfield Scott to recall McClellan to Washington, D.C., with Brigadier General William Rosecrans replacing him. No more battles occurred in northwestern Virginia until late August.

2.2 Kanhawa Valley

2.2.1 Skirmish at Barboursville
Saturday, July 13, 1861

Cabell County, WV

The Skirmish at Barboursville was fought on Saturday, July 13, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Lt. Col. George Neff and Confederate forces commanded by Col. Milton J. Ferguson

and Capt. Albert G. Jenkins in Cabell County, West Virginia. It began favorably for the Confederates but ultimately was a Union victory when the Confederates fled the field.

As his campaign to secure northwest Virginia got underway, 34-year-old Maj. Gen. George Brinton McClellan (1826-1885), head of the U.S. Military Department of the Ohio, hesitated to send troops into the Kanawha River Valley. Local Unionists assured him that they could keep secessionists at bay, but when former Virginia governor Henry A. Wise established a base camp near Charleston with around 2,700 Confederate troops, McClellan had to act.

At the beginning of July, Wise occupied Ripley, south of Ravenswood on the Ohio River, with a small force. However, he withdrew on July 8 after the 21st Ohio crossed the river to confront them. Up to this point, the opposing armies had several near-misses and close brushes, but no actual fighting. That was about to change.

McClellan ordered Brig. Gen. Jacob Dolson Cox, Jr. (1828-1900) to take command of the 1st and 2nd Kentucky (U.S.) and 12th Ohio Infantry regiments and proceed to Gallipolis, Ohio on the Ohio River. The 1st and 2nd were Kentucky regiments in name only. They consisted almost entirely of Ohio volunteers, led by a few Kentucky officers. In Gallipolis, they met up with the 21st Ohio Infantry. Cox also brought along an under-strength regiment, the 11th Ohio, two cannons, and a small contingent of cavalry. In total, he commanded around 3,000 men.

Cox divided his small army into three columns. The 1st Kentucky (U.S.) crossed at Ravenswood, Cox and the Ohio regiments crossed at Point Pleasant at the mouth of the Kanawha River, and the 2nd Kentucky (U.S.) seized Guyandotte. These columns were tasked with dispersing any Confederate troops in their respective areas and then proceeding to Red House on the Kanawha River, where they would unite to confront Wise at Charleston.

U.S. Congressman Albert Gallatin Jenkins (1830-1864) resigned from Congress in 1861 and was elected captain of a cavalry company in Cabell County called the Border Rangers. Jenkins, who owned a plantation near Guyandotte, was well-respected in the community. Following the Union occupation of Guyandotte, Jenkins and his Border Rangers rode to nearby Barboursville, located at the confluence of the Mud and Guyandotte rivers, to reinforce a poorly organized local militia. The Sandy Rangers, led by Captain James Corns, joined them.

Around or shortly after midnight on July 13, Col. William E. Woodruff of the 2nd Kentucky (U.S.) roused his men and ordered Lt. Col. George W. Neff to take most of Companies A, B, D, F, and K on a spoiling attack against nearby Barboursville, where he believed the Confederates were gathering for an offensive. The 316 men were to march silently in the early morning and surprise the enemy. However, delays and unfamiliar terrain meant they didn't reach their destination until after sunrise, despite being only six miles away. The Confederates were ready for them.

The Confederate camp and defensive position were on a ridge, now known as "Fortification Hill," overlooking the covered bridge over the Mud River. The ridge was steep and bisected by a cut for the unfinished Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. The Confederate militia, armed with a variety of weapons including muskets, shotguns, squirrel rifles, and pistols, had also removed some bridge planks to make crossing more difficult.

As the Union force approached, the Border Rangers, who had been watching the road, withdrew. When Neff's men came within range, the militia on the hill "opened a murderous fire upon us. From every tree, bush, and stone, rifle and musket balls were literally showered upon us. On a hill, southeast of the bridge, their main body formed in beautiful order, the front rank kneeling and the rear rank standing, and loaded and fired in rapid succession."

A few Union soldiers were hit, and the rest sought cover in and around the covered bridge. It took quick thinking by Lt. Col. Neff to turn the tide. When he failed to get Company K moving, he turned to Capt. Alfred J.M. Brown and Company A, who fixed bayonets and clawed their way up the ridge. The surprised Virginia volunteers began to falter. They fired one last volley as the Federals reached the summit, then broke and fled. Several Confederates injured themselves as they fell into the railroad cut.

Neff's triumphant troops marched into town with flags waving, gathered discarded weapons and equipment, and raised the Stars and Stripes over the courthouse. It was a hard-fought victory. One Union soldier was killed outright, two were mortally wounded, and 13 others were injured. The extent of Confederate casualties is unknown, but James Reynolds was mortally wounded, and at least two others were injured.

The immediate consequence of this small skirmish was that it cleared the way for the 2nd Kentucky (U.S.) to rejoin Brig. Gen. Cox's main body along the Kanawha River in time for the Battle of Scary Creek four days later. Cox called it "a very creditable little action."

2.2.2 Action at Pocatalico
Tuesday, July 16, 1861

Putnam County, WV

The Action at Pocatalico was fought on Tuesday, July 16, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Col. Charles A. De Villiers and Confederate forces commanded by Col. John N. Clarkson in Putnam County, West Virginia. It ended in a draw, with minimal casualties.

As 34-year-old Maj. Gen. George Brinton McClellan (1826-1885), head of the U.S. Military Department of the Ohio, began his campaign to secure northwest Virginia, he was initially reluctant to send troops into the Kanawha River Valley. Local Unionists assured him they could manage the secessionist threat, but when former Virginia governor Henry A. Wise established a base camp near Charleston with around 2,700 Confederate troops, McClellan was compelled to take action.

In early July 1861, Wise briefly occupied the town of Ripley in Jackson County but withdrew after the 21st Ohio crossed the river to confront him. Despite near-misses between the opposing forces, no fighting had occurred yet. McClellan ordered Brig. Gen. Jacob Dolson Cox, Jr. (1828-1900) to take command of Union troops in the area and "Drive Wise out and catch him if you can."

To accomplish this task, Cox had the 1st and 2nd Kentucky (U.S.) and the 11th, 12th, and 21st Ohio Infantry regiments, along with two brass rifled 6-pounder guns and a small cavalry unit—totaling about 3,000 men. Cox divided his forces into three columns to advance into the Kanawha Valley, with orders to reunite at Red House and confront Wise at Charleston. On July 13th, the 2nd Kentucky engaged and scattered a small Confederate force at Barboursville, delaying its arrival.

That same afternoon, Cox arrived at Red House with four companies of the 11th Ohio, the 12th and 21st Ohio regiments, and four cannon (two without caissons or cannoneers). Red House was approximately 31 miles up river from his starting point at Point Pleasant. The following day, Col. Jesse S. Norton took Companies F, G, and H of the 21st Ohio on a reconnaissance mission along the south bank of the Kanawha River to the mouth of Scary Creek. There they encountered the Kanawha Riflemen, Putnam Border Rifles, Bailey's Company, and a section of artillery. The Confederate artillery fired warning shots and Norton's men retreated.

Meanwhile, half of the 1st Kentucky (U.S.) arrived at Red House, commanded by Lt. Col. David Alexander Enyart, and that evening Cox sent them and the remainder of the 21st Ohio to reinforce Norton. Shortly after they departed, however, due to darkness and inexperience, a misinterpreted order resulted in a friendly-fire incident that left three dead and several wounded.

From Red House, Cox's next destination was the mouth of the Pocatalico, seven miles upriver. The Confederates burned the bridge over the Pocatalico, but at that time of year the river was so dry that it was easily forded. Confederate vedettes contested the advance. "The progress thus far has been steady, but for the last day it has been in the face of constant skirmishing," wrote Cox. Thomas Vandyne/Vandine of Company H, 11th Ohio was wounded in the hip and died a few weeks later.

The 11th Ohio was first to reach the west bank of the Pocatalico River on the 16th along with Capt. Charles S. Cotter's two rifled 6-pounders, and they began scouting the area for a campsite. General Wise's aide-de-camp, Col. John N. Clarkson, and Capt. John P. Brock's and Capt. Albert J. Beckett's cavalry companies were picketing on the east side of the river.

Evidently, as a portion of the 11th Ohio descended the large hill overlooking the Pocatalico, Clarkson spotted them and determined to drive them off. He divided his force, leaving one half at the base of the hill, and charged with the other half. "I proceeded to the hill near the Mouth of the Polka … and then came into contact with some three hundred of the enemy which we charged with success killing eight of the enemy agreeable to the best information I could receive, and routing the remainder, driving them to their camp without any loss to my command…" Brock reported.

Few, if any, Union accounts of this incident exist. Cox does not mention it in his published reports and a brief description appearing in the *Cincinnati Daily Times* is far less dramatic. It read, "Soon after the Eleventh halted a company of rebel horsemen, acting as scouts, came to the river bank opposite and poured a volley of balls into their camp, without, however, injuring anyone. The Eleventh returned fire, emptying one saddle…"

It's unlikely any Union soldiers were killed or wounded without it being mentioned in the press. On the Confederate side, one private was wounded in the hand, one horse killed, and several horses were wounded.

Never-the-less, Wise reiterated Brock's version of events in a report to Richmond, bragging that all he needed was more arms and ammunition and "I will drive them into the Ohio River and across…" The next day, Wise's men would win a significant victory at Scary Creek, but his imagined offensive would never materialize. Wise evacuated Charleston on July 24th.

2.2.3 Battle of Scary Creek
Wednesday, July 17, 1861

Putnam County, WV

The Battle of Scary Creek was fought on Wednesday, July 17, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Jacob D. Cox and Confederate forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Henry A. Wise in Putnam County, West Virginia. It resulted in a Confederate victory, but ultimately had no affect on the overall campaign. Union forces captured Charleston a week later after Confederates withdrew from the Kanawha Valley.

In early July 1861, 34-year-old Maj. Gen. George Brinton McClellan (1826-1885), head of the U.S. Military Department of the Ohio, aimed to expel former Virginia governor Henry A. Wise and his "Wise Legion" from the Kanawha River Valley. Wise had established a base camp near Charleston with roughly 2,700 Confederate troops, conducting several reconnaissance missions in the surrounding area. He arrested Virginia unionists and posed a threat to McClellan's ongoing operations farther north.

To confront Wise, McClellan turned to Brig. Gen. Jacob Dolson Cox, Jr. (1828-1900), who commanded a force of about 3,000 men, including the 1st and 2nd Kentucky (U.S.) and the 11th, 12th, and 21st Ohio Infantry regiments, along with two cannons and a small cavalry unit. Cox divided his troops into three columns, ordering them to converge at Red House before advancing on Charleston.

On July 13, the 2nd Kentucky engaged and scattered a small Confederate force at Barboursville. Later that afternoon, Cox arrived at Red House—about 31 miles upriver from his starting point at Point Pleasant—with four companies of the 11th Ohio, as well as the 12th and 21st Ohio regiments and four cannons (two without caissons or cannoneers).

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Henry A. Wise sent Lt. Col. George S. Patton with approximately 900 men to Camp Tompkins at the mouth of the Coal River. Patton, however, determined that the bluffs overlooking Scary Creek, three miles downriver, would make a much better defensive position. He moved the Kanawha Riflemen, Putnam Border Rifles, Bailey's Company, and Hale's Kanawha Battery into place above Scary.

On July 14, Col. Jesse S. Norton led Companies F, G, and H of the 21st Ohio on a reconnaissance mission along the Kanawha River's south bank, reaching the mouth of Scary Creek. Confederate artillery fired warning shots, prompting Norton's men to retreat. That evening, when half of the 1st Kentucky (U.S.), under Lt. Col. David Alexander Enyart, arrived at Red House, Cox sent them along with the remaining 21st Ohio troops to reinforce Norton. However, in the ensuing darkness, a misinterpreted order led to a friendly-fire incident, resulting in three deaths and several injuries.

Over the next two days, Cox consolidated his position near the mouth of the Pocatalico River, a tributary of the Kanawha. On July 16, the 11th Ohio briefly skirmished with Confederate cavalry. The following morning, Cox dispatched Lt. Col. Carr B. White of the 12th Ohio on a reconnaissance toward Scary Creek. White's men exchanged fire with Capt. Andrew R. Barbee's Putnam County Border Rifles before withdrawing to report their findings.

Cox authorized Col. John Lowe of the 12th Ohio to lead his regiment, along with Cotter's Independent Battery and George's Independent Company of Ohio cavalry, to dislodge the Confederates from Scary Creek. At the last moment, he added Col. Norton and two companies of the 21st Ohio, given Norton's familiarity with the area. After the battle, Cox faced criticism for not allowing Norton to bring his entire regiment.

Simultaneously, Lt. Col. Patton received news that Union troops had returned to Scary Creek. Patton gathered two cavalry companies and the Kanawha Artillery to reinforce the three infantry companies already stationed at Scary Creek. En route, local women presented Capt. Albert G. Jenkins' Kanawha Border Rangers with a flag. Patton's reinforcements arrived just in time.

Lowe's Union forces approached Scary Creek along two roads that merged below the Simms House. The battle began around 2 p.m. with an artillery duel between Cotter's Battery and the Kanawha Artillery. Union rifled guns, known for their accuracy, destroyed one Confederate cannon, killing Lt. James C. Welch. To preserve his remaining artillery, Patton ordered it to cease firing.

Confederate Capt. James W. Sweeney's small infantry company from Wheeling, (West) Virginia occupied a cluster of buildings across the burnt bridge on the north bank of Scary Creek, firing on Union troops through the windows. After George's cavalry made an ineffectual attempt to dislodge them, Col. Norton personally led an infantry attack supported by a devastating barrage from Cotter's Battery. Sweeney's men fled, but as they did, Cotter's Battery ran out of ammunition.

The Union forces devised a plan for Lt. Col. White to lead a bayonet charge with two companies of the 21st Ohio, while Maj. Jonathan D. Hines and a detachment from the 12th Ohio attempted a flanking maneuver by crossing Scary Creek upstream. However, Hines' detachment became tangled in dense underbrush, and those who managed to cross the creek failed to join the main attack.

White succeeded at the bridge, driving the Confederates back and wounding Lt. Col. Patton severely. Command then fell to Capt. Albert Jenkins, who rallied his troops. Reinforcements soon arrived, including the Sandy Rangers, Kanawha County militia, and an additional cannon, tipping the scales back in the Confederates' favor. Col. Norton was wounded and captured, and the Confederates reclaimed the bridge.

Exhausted and short on ammunition, Col. Lowe ordered a retreat, covered by the remaining troops of the 21st Ohio, whom Cox had belatedly ordered forward. Misinterpreting the withdrawal, Jenkins briefly pulled his men back, leaving the battlefield temporarily deserted. When the Confederates realized their mistake, they returned and set nearby buildings ablaze to prevent their use by Union forces.

It was after sundown. Observing the smoke from the fires, Col. Charles A. De Villiers of the 11th Ohio and several officers of the 2nd Kentucky—Col. William E. Woodruff, Lt. Col. George W. Neff, Capt. George Austin, and Capt. John R. Hurd—mistakenly assumed that Lowe had won. They crossed the river to greet who they thought were their fellow compatriots, only to be captured by Jenkins' Confederates and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond.

The defeat at Scary Creek stunned Cox's command. Seven officers, including three colonels, were captured, with 15 men killed and over 35 wounded and 11 captured or missing. The loss, combined with a shortage of supply wagons, delayed further Union advances by nearly a week. Confederate casualties included four dead, twelve wounded, and four captured. Wise tried to follow up on the victory, but discretion was the better part of valor. He ultimately chose to withdraw from Charleston on July 24, retreating to Gauley Bridge to avoid being cut off by advancing Union forces to the north, who had recently captured Cheat Mountain.

3. Potomac Front

3.1 Upper Potomac

3.1.1 Engagement at Romney
Thursday, June 13, 1861

Hampshire County, WV

The Engagement at Romney was fought on Thursday, June 13, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Col. Lewis "Lew" Wallace and Confederate forces commanded by Col. Arthur C. Cummings in Hampshire County, West Virginia.

Col. Lew Wallace, commanding the 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment, was a bit of an aberration. He was a lawyer and friend of Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton, and would go on to write the novel *Ben Hur* (1880). His regiment, styled in French-inspired "zouave" jackets, were originally stationed in Cairo, Illinois, but Wallace used his political connections to get his men transferred closer to the action.

The 11th Indiana was sent to guard the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Maryland, across the Potomac River from Virginia. It technically fell under Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson and the Department of Pennsylvania but operated independently. It arrived in Cumberland, Maryland on June 10, 1861. Patterson gave Wallace leeway to "capture or rout" armed insurgents in the area, and he was happy to oblige.

Wallace heard a body of secessionist forces were camped in Romney, Virginia, 21 miles south along the South Branch of the Potomac River. These were two companies from the 33rd Virginia Infantry Regiment: the Potomac Guards and Independent Greys (Company A and F) under Col. Arthur C. Cummings, and the Hampshire Riflemen, which later became Company F, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment.

Five hundred men from the 11th Indiana proceeded by train the night of June 12, then plodded along rough mountain roads the next morning. The 21-mile trip turned into an 87-mile slog. Confederates had advanced notice of their arrival and were posted on a hill behind the bridge Wallace's men would have to cross to enter Romney.

Despite multiple defensive advantages, including two artillery pieces mounted on the high ground and the difficulty of attacking across a river, the 11th Indiana executed the movement flawlessly suffering only one superficial wound. Wallace personally led several companies to flank the hill, but before they could get into range, the Confederates melted into the flood of Romney's pro-secession residents leaving town.

Though Wallace pledged not to harass any unarmed citizens, his men did destroy the printing press and offices of the *South Branch Intelligencer*. Satisfied, Wallace withdrew his troops the next day. Confederate Col. Turner Ashby and his cavalry occupied Romney by June 17th, leading to another skirmish at Frankfort and Patterson's Creek.

3.1.2 Action at New Creek
Wednesday, June 19, 1861

Mineral County, WV

The Action at New Creek was fought on Wednesday, June 19, 1861 between Confederate forces commanded by Col. John C. Vaughn and Union Home Guard commanded by Capt. Horace Resley in Mineral County, West Virginia.

On June 11, 1861, Union Col. Lewis "Lew" Wallace, commanding the 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment at Cumberland, Maryland, attacked several companies of ill-trained militia at Romney, Virginia (today West Virginia) along the South Branch of the Potomac River. The Confederates fled in disorder. This,

and the threat of McClellan's army coming over the mountains from the west, led Confederate Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Johnson to withdraw his small Army of the Shenandoah from Harper's Ferry south to Winchester, fearing he was in danger of being surrounded.

To counter Wallace's presence in the area, Johnson sent Col. Ambrose Powell Hill with the 3rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment and Hill's own 13th Virginia Infantry Regiment to re-occupy Romney. They arrived sometime on the night of June 15th.

"I have positive information that there will be four thousand rebel troops at or in Romney to-night, who swear they will follow me to hell but what they will have me," Wallace wrote frantically. Their actual number was likely around 1,500.

On the night of Tuesday, June 18, 1861, Col. John C. Vaughn took two companies from the 3rd TN and two from the 13th VA and marched 18-miles northwest to New Creek (today, Keyser) on the North Branch of the Potomac River. New Creek was also located along the strategically important Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. A.P. Hill gave Vaughn instructions to disburse whatever Union forces were there and burn the bridges over the river.

When Col. Vaughn arrived at New Creek around 4am on Wednesday, June 19th, he claimed to observe 200 to 300 armed men with two pieces of artillery on the north bank of the Potomac. In truth, the "Cumberland Continentals" defending the bridge hardly consisted of a modern-day platoon. They numbered between 28-40 men privately raised by the B&O Railroad and fielded one 6-pounder Gun and an old 4-pounder.

To avoid capture, the poorly-trained militia spiked their two cannon, fired their muskets, and skedaddled, wounding a private from Company I, 3rd TN. The Confederates captured the guns and the unit's flag, then burned the bridge and returned to Romney.

In Cumberland over the following days, Wallace prepared his men to fight and evacuate if necessary. He staged their wagons filled with baggage on the main road going north to Pennsylvania, then arrayed his regiment for battle when scouts reported a rebel force coming toward Cumberland from Romney. "There were a number of curios in my camp, relics of the late raid, and I did not relish the thought of making contributions of the kind in return, not even a handful of beans," he wrote in his memoir.

The enemy unit turned around four miles away, however, and the anticipated battle never arrived. In a few days, the 11th Indiana would be tested again, but another inconsequential skirmish would do little to change the fortunes of war in that corner of northern Virginia.

3.1.3 Skirmish at Frankfort/Patterson's Creek
Wednesday, June 26, 1861

Mineral County, WV

The Skirmish at Frankfort and Patterson's Creek (aka Kelley's Island) was fought on Wednesday, June 26, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Col. Lewis "Lew" Wallace and Confederate forces commanded by Lt. Col. Turner Ashby in Mineral County, West Virginia.

In mid-June, Col. Lewis "Lew" Wallace, commanding the 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment, arrived in Cumberland, Maryland across the Potomac River from Virginia with a mission to guard the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. His 11th Indiana routed a Confederate force out of Romney, Virginia on June 11, then withdrew.

Confederate reinforcements under Col. Ambrose Powell Hill arrived in Romney on June 15, then proceeded to burn the railroad bridge at New Creek. On June 19, two companies of Confederate cavalry arrived in Romney commanded by Col. Angus W. McDonald, Sr. to relieve them. Hill's infantry left on the 21st.

These troop movements alarmed Wallace and his men, who were outnumbered and far from reinforcements. His nearest support were Pennsylvania Reserve units who had orders not to leave their state. To gather intelligence about what he was up against, Wallace instructed his men to commandeer horses, but they only found thirteen in "fair" condition.

Meanwhile, McDonald's cavalry was busying itself around Romney. Lt. Col. Turner Ashby led a company called the "Mountain Rangers" from Fauquier County. On the morning of Wednesday, June 26, 1861, Lt. Col. Ashby and his younger brother, Cpt. Richard Ashby, set off on two different missions. The elder Ashby took nine men on a scouting mission toward Patterson's Creek Depot, while the younger Ashby set off with 19 men to arrest a local Unionist. Not finding him at home, Richard Ashby split his force and took the smaller squad toward Patterson's Depot.

Lew Wallace's scouts, led by Cpl. David B. Hay, were also on the move that day. His troop of thirteen mounted infantrymen headed from Cumberland east to Frankfort's Ford along the Potomac River to ascertain if any enemy cavalry were there. They ran into Richard Ashby and his squad near the mouth of Dan's Run, approximately three miles southeast of Patterson's Creek. A sharp fight erupted. Most of the younger Ashby's men managed to get away, but Richard was mortally wounded and left for dead. Cpl. Hay was also wounded.

The Hoosiers rode back toward Cumberland and stopped to rest on a small island (called Kelley's Island or Kelly's Island) in the Potomac River at the mouth of Patterson's Creek. Lt. Col. Turner Ashby, joined by two scouts who heard the firing earlier, located the federals and charged headlong through the shallow water. It was a fatal mistake. Ashby's horse was shot out from under him, two of his men were killed, and several wounded (Lew Wallace greatly exaggerated the number of Confederate cavalry and their casualties).

Wallace sent two companies to help, and the Confederates withdrew. Later, Turner Ashby found his younger brother's body and became a changed man–sullen with a burning desire for revenge. He would also die in battle, on June 6, 1862.

This was the last skirmish for the 11th Indiana in Virginia. In July, the regiment joined Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson's army north of Winchester, Virginia, returned to Romney July 11-13th, then proceeded home to Indianapolis to be mustered out and re-organized as a three-year regiment in early August.

3.1.4 Battle of Hoke's Run/Falling Waters
Tuesday, July 2, 1861

Berkeley County, WV

The Battle of Hoke's Run (Falling Waters/Hainesville) was fought on Tuesday, July 2, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson and Confederate forces commanded by Col. Thomas J. Jackson in Berkeley County, West Virginia during the American Civil War. The battle was a tactical Union victory, though it allowed Confederate forces to concentrate and achieve victory at the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21. Hoke's Run resulted in 114 total casualties.

After the Commonwealth of Virginia formally seceded on May 23, 1861, Union troops moved to secure territory bordering Maryland and Washington, DC. Confederate Col. Thomas J. Jackson's 4,000-man brigade was ordered to delay the Federal advance toward Martinsburg, then a town in Virginia (today, West Virginia). On July 2, 1861, Union Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson crossed the Potomac River with two brigades totaling approximately 8,000 men.

Jackson, who would go on to earn the nickname "Stonewall" and become one of the Confederacy's most famous generals, deployed his men and four artillery pieces in Patterson's path just south of Falling Waters. A brief fight erupted, Col. J. J. Abercrombie's brigade turned Jackson's right flank, and Jackson fell back. After two miles, Patterson broke off pursuit and ordered his men to make camp.

Though Jackson retreated and Union forces occupied Martinsburg, Jackson's stubborn delay convinced Patterson he was outnumbered and he withdrew to Harpers Ferry several days later. Union forces lost nine killed, 17 wounded, and 50 captured to the Confederates' 91 killed or wounded. The skirmish at Hoke's Run allowed Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's Army of the Shenandoah to slip away and reinforce P.G.T. Beauregard on July 21st at the First Battle of Bull Run, which turned the tide of that battle in favor of the Confederates.

3.1.5 Skirmish at Harper's Ferry
Thursday, July 4, 1861

Jefferson County, WV

The Skirmish at Harper's Ferry was fought on Thursday, July 4, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Maj. William Atterbury and Confederate forces commanded by Capt. John Henderson in present-day Jefferson County, West Virginia. The skirmish was technically a draw, as both sides withdrew without gaining an advantage; however, all the casualties were on the Union side.

Following the capture of Harper's Ferry Arsenal by Virginia militia in April, Harper's Ferry became the assembly point for the growing Confederate Army of the Shenandoah. By the time Confederate Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston superseded Col. Thomas J. Jackson in command on May 23rd, the Confederate forces had swelled to approximately 10,000 infantry and cavalry. Additionally, Col. Angus W. McDonald, Sr.'s 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment was tasked with patrolling a broad area, stretching from Harper's Ferry to the headwaters of the Potomac River.

On June 10th, Colonel Charles Pomeroy Stone, commander of the newly formed 14th U.S. Infantry Regiment, was ordered to lead several volunteer infantry regiments and battalions on an expedition westward along the Maryland side of the Potomac River. The goal was to disrupt pro-Confederate supply lines from Baltimore and hinder any Confederate attempts to control the Potomac River crossings. Stone's force consisted of around 2,500 men, including the 9th New York State Militia Regiment (not to be confused with the 9th New York Infantry Regiment stationed on the Virginia Peninsula).

Meanwhile, the Confederate high command debated the feasibility of defending Harper's Ferry, which was situated between mountains at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers. Ultimately, Johnston decided it was untenable, and between June 13-15, he evacuated his army south to Winchester, destroying the bridges across the Potomac in the process. McDonald's cavalry remained behind to monitor Union movements across the river.

By early July 1861, the lead elements of Stone's expedition reached Sandy Hook and Maryland Heights, directly across from Harper's Ferry. Among them were Companies A and C of the 9th New York State Militia Regiment, commanded by Major William Atterbury. On the morning of July 4th, Independence Day, a volunteer picket post, composed of men from Companies A, C, E, and G under the command of Lieutenant William P. Galbraith, noticed a Confederate flag fluttering in the eerily quiet town. Believing it was deserted, they decided to cross the river in a small boat to remove the flag.

The men accomplished their mission, but they were mistaken about being unopposed. As they crossed back to the Maryland side, approximately 25 Confederate soldiers from Captain John Henderson's dismounted cavalry appeared from windows and the ruins of the railroad bridge, opening fire with deadly accuracy. Henderson's company, mustered in Charles Town on June 26, 1861, primarily consisted of recruits from Jefferson County, (now West) Virginia—the same county where Harper's Ferry is located.

Atterbury rushed to the scene with Companies A, C, and sixteen men from Company G. He reported later that evening, "On arrival, found the enemy posted about the trestle-work and behind the abutments of the bridge on the Virginia shore and in some of the buildings along the river. Opened fire on them, but ascertaining that the muskets of the command were not effective at that distance, and the enemy being armed with rifles or rifled muskets, ordered the command to retire."

The skirmish lasted about 30 minutes before both sides withdrew. Two Union soldiers were killed and two wounded, with no casualties among Henderson's command. Tragically, Frederick Roeder, a local baker and known Unionist, believed it was safe to venture outside to assess the aftermath, but Atterbury's men still anxiously overwatched the town. As he stepped into the open, a bullet ricocheted off a building and mortally wounded him.

On July 18, 1861, the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment crossed the river and occupied Harper's Ferry. The town remained under Union control until October of that year.

3.1.6 Skirmish at New Creek
Sunday, July 14, 1861

Mineral County, WV

A second Skirmish at New Creek was fought on Sunday, July 14, 1861 between Confederate forces commanded by Capt. Macon Jordan and Union forces commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas L. Kane in modern-day Mineral County, West Virginia. The skirmish was a Union victory. Confederates retreated back to their base at Romney, and New Creek Station remained in federal control for the remainder of the war.

In early July, Colonel Lewis "Lew" Wallace and his 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment, stationed in Cumberland, Maryland, along the Potomac River, were ordered to join Major General Robert Patterson's army north of Winchester, Virginia. The 11th Indiana counter-marched to Romney from

July 11-13, then proceeded home to Indianapolis to be mustered out and re-organized as a three-year regiment in early August.

Meanwhile, the 13th and 5th Pennsylvania Reserve Regiments and Battery A, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery were encamped at Camp Mason & Dixon just north of the Maryland border for two weeks debating the constitutionality of Pennsylvania state troops entering Maryland. On July 7, the departure of Wallace's regiment left Cumberland and key points along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad vulnerable to attack.

At the request of General Winfield Scott, Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin ordered the troops at Camp Mason & Dixon to advance and protect Cumberland. The 13th Pennsylvania Reserve Regiment, nicknamed the "Bucktails" for the deer tails they wore on their hats, was led by Colonel Charles J. Biddle and later became the 42nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

Opposing them was Colonel Angus W. McDonald, Sr.'s 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, tasked with guarding and patrolling the area from Harper's Ferry to the headwaters of the Potomac River. McDonald's over-strength regiment, containing more than a dozen companies, had already skirmished with Wallace's Indiana Zouaves and Colonel Charles P. Stone's Maryland expeditionary force.

On Friday, July 12, Colonel Biddle received word that rebels had destroyed train cars and two trestle bridges over George's Creek on the Maryland side of the Potomac River, north of Piedmont. Early the next morning, Biddle moved his regiment and the 5th Pennsylvania Reserves, led by Colonel Seneca G. Simmons, 20 miles south by rail. They disembarked at the remains of the Potomac River bridge north of New Creek Station (present-day Keyser), which the Confederates had destroyed on June 19.

From there, Lt. Col. Thomas L. Kane led 40 men from Companies H and I of the Bucktail Regiment and two members of the Cumberland Home Guard on foot to New Creek Station. That night, Kane and his men took shelter in a stone house belonging to Mr. William Armstrong on the road to Romney, while the two Cumberland men slept on the station platform.

Just before sunrise on July 14, Captain Macon Jordan's Company, joined by part of the Letcher Brock's Gap Rifles and the Mountain Rangers, around 85 to 100 men in total, rode into New Creek from Piedmont. Private Richard Black of the Brock's Gap Rifles dramatically charged his horse onto the station platform, surprising the two members of the Cumberland Home Guard. One was taken prisoner, and the other, William Kelly, was killed.

Hearing the commotion, Lt. Col. Kane sent a squad to investigate. His men hid in a meadow of tall grass, fired a few shots at Jordan's Confederate soldiers, then retreated to the stone house. The Confederate cavalrymen formed up and charged the house, but the Bucktails, renowned for their marksmanship, opened fire from the windows. "They came up in fine order, but broke and ran on receiving a fire which was reserved till they were ready to dismount," Kane wrote. Lieutenant Reuben L. Booten, Pvt. William L. Miller, and two horses were killed, with an unknown number wounded.

The Confederate raiders retreated south, and Kane and his men pursued them. About eight miles down the road toward Romney, near the small village of Ridgeville, they briefly exchanged fire again. Kane's force took refuge in a large stone house and awaited reinforcements. The following day, a detachment of Pennsylvania troops occupied Piedmont, and Colonel Biddle reached Kane with the remainder of his two regiments on the night of the 16th. Instead of advancing on Romney, however, they withdrew back to New Creek.

Due to Major General Patterson's advance in the Shenandoah Valley, on July 17, Brigadier General Joseph E. Johnston ordered Angus McDonald to relocate his entire regiment to Winchester,

abandoning the Romney area. McDonald's forces covered Johnston's advance to Manassas but did not participate in that battle. No further military activity would occur in that corner of Virginia until autumn.

3.2 Lower Potomac

3.2.1 Engagement at Aquia Creek
Wed., May 29 to Sat., June 1, 1861

Stafford County, VA

The Engagement at Aquia Creek was fought from Wednesday, May 29 to Saturday, June 1, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Commander James H. Ward and Virginian forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Daniel Ruggles and Capt. William F. Lynch in Stafford County, Virginia.

By the end of May 1861, there was no longer any doubt as to which side Virginia would take in the American Civil War. On May 23rd, Virginia voters ratified secession by a large majority, and the next day, Union troops crossed the Potomac River and seized Arlington Heights and Alexandria, Virginia. Several small fleets of U.S. Navy ships and converted civilian vessels had been enforcing an economic and military blockade on Virginia ports since April 27th.

Farther down the Potomac River lay Aquia Landing, the terminus point of the Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad. In mid-May, the Virginia Provisional Army and Navy erected a battery of 13 cannon at the landing and, later, on nearby Split Rock Bluff. Capt. William F. Lynch was in immediate command of the battery. They hoped to prevent Union ships from moving up the Potomac to support Washington, DC.

On Wednesday, May 30, 1861, the USS *Thomas Freeborn* commanded by James H. Ward approached the battery at Aquia Landing and fired 14 shots, to little effect. The next day, it returned supported by the smaller, 2-gun USS *Anacostia* and USS *Resolute*. The three ships exchanged fire with the battery for an hour before retiring.

Friday, June 1st, the sloop-of-war USS *Pawnee* reinforced the flotilla and pounded the shore battery with its ten guns. The USS *Pawnee* was hit nine times during the exchange, suffering minor damage and no casualties except its commander, whose face was scratched by a splinter.

After three days of bombardment, suffering from minor damage, and running low on ammunition, the Union ships withdrew to fight another day. The USS *Pawnee* remained at a distance to keep an eye on the battery.

3.2.2 First Battle of Fairfax Court House
Saturday, June 1, 1861

Fairfax County, VA

The First Battle of Fairfax Court House was fought on Saturday, June 1, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Lt. Charles H. Tompkins and Confederate forces commanded by Capt. John Q. Marr at Fairfax Court House, Virginia during the American Civil War. This small and inconclusive

battle was the first land engagement of the war with fatal casualties, resulting in 24 total dead, wounded, or captured.

On May 31, 1861, Union Brig. Gen. David Hunter ordered Lt. Charles Henry Tompkins of the 2nd U.S. Cavalry Regiment to recon Confederate forces around Fairfax Court House. Early the next morning, June 1, his 50 to 86-man force ran into approximately 210 untrained and ill-equipped Confederate militia in the village, some of whom didn't even have weapons or ammunition. The militia scattered.

Nearby, Confederate Capt. John Q. Marr attempted to rally his men, but he was shot and killed in a field west of the Methodist church. Lt. Col. Richard S. Ewell, a future Confederate general, was wounded as he emerged from a hotel, but escaped, and 64-year-old William "Extra Billy" Smith, a politician and another future general, helped him take charge. Together, their rag-tag force repelled several more Union attempts to ride through town.

Compared to battles to come, the skirmish at Fairfax Court House barely rated, but it showed neither side was willing to back down. Union forces counted one killed, four wounded, and three captured to the Confederates one killed, two wounded, and five captured. A few weeks later, Confederate forces abandoned Fairfax in the face of advancing Union troops. They concentrated around Manassas Junction, where the first major battle of the war would be fought.

3.2.3 Engagement at Arlington Mills
Saturday, June 1, 1861

Arlington County, VA

The Engagement at Arlington Mills was fought on Saturday, June 1, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Capt. William F. Roth and Capt. Michael Teagen and unknown Virginian militia in Arlington County, Virginia.

A grist mill on Four Mile Run in Arlington County, Virginia was a prominent landmark along the Columbia Turnpike, approximately four miles southwest of Long Bridge over the Potomac River and 12 miles east of Fairfax Court House. In the early morning hours of Saturday, June 1, 1861, Union and Confederate forces clashed around the Fairfax Court House grounds. The Union cavalry was forced to retreat, but not before Confederate Capt. John Q. Marr became the first Virginia officer killed in action in the American Civil War.

That night, as the Union cavalry returned to Camp Union in Falls Church, Company E of the 1st Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment was on picket duty four miles south of there at Arlington Mills along the Columbia Turnpike. Around 11p.m., Company G of the 11th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment prepared to relieve them.

Under cover of darkness, a small contingent of Virginia militia from an unidentified unit crept within eyesight of the mill and opened fire, mortally wounding private Henry S. Cornell and hitting Joseph Cushman, both of the 11th New York, in the thigh. As he lay dying, Cornell reportedly exclaimed, "Who would not die a soldier's death?"

The Union troops fired back, wounded one Confederate before the attackers melted back into the darkness. Though minor compared to the bloodbaths to come, the skirmishes at Fairfax Court House

and Arlington Mills convinced Union war planners to proceed more cautiously. They would not advance deeper into this part of Virginia until mid-June.

3.2.4 Engagement at Vienna

Monday, June 17, 1861

Fairfax County, VA

The Engagement at Vienna was fought on Monday, June 17, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert C. Schenck and Confederate forces commanded by Col. Maxcy Gregg in Fairfax County, Virginia.

On May 24, 1861, Union troops crossed the Potomac River into northern Virginia and brushed aside a token defense at Arlington Heights and Alexandria. A few days later, on June 1st, a Union cavalry patrol was chased out of Fairfax Court House and a small skirmish erupted at Arlington Mills. Though minor, these incidents convinced Union war planners to proceed more cautiously. They would not advance deeper into this part of Virginia until mid-June.

Early in the morning on June 16th, Confederate Col. Maxcy Gregg of the 1st South Carolina Infantry Regiment left Fairfax Court House with 575 men from his regiment to conduct a reconnaissance toward the Potomac River. He linked up with a cavalry troop and Capt. Delaware Kemper with two 6-pdr guns from his Alexandria Light Artillery, then scouted the area. They made camp for the evening having observed only a few Union troops.

On June 17th, Union Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell, commanding the Department of Northeastern Virginia, instructed Brig. Gen. Robert C. Schenck to send a regiment by rail to relieve the 69th New York Infantry Regiment, which had been guarding the Loudoun & Hampshire Railroad at Vienna. The Loudoun & Hampshire Railroad ran northwest from Alexandria to Leesburg and beyond.

Brig. Gen. Schenck took 697 men from the 1st Ohio Infantry Regiment and proceeded toward Vienna, leaving a few companies to guard points along the way. Companies E, C, G, and H, a total of 271 men, proceeded by rail, sitting on open platform cars.

Around the same time, Col. Gregg prepared an ambush along the railroad tracks near Vienna in case Union troops that had been observed in the area returned. Growing impatient, they formed up to march off, but just before 6pm they heard a train whistle in the distance. The ambush was re-laid.

As the train came around a curve, Kemper's two cannon opened fire. Fortunately for the Ohio volunteers, they were able to jump from the open platform cars and dive into the woods and underbrush when the firing started, but not before eight were killed and four wounded. Companies G and H bore the brunt of the ambush. The train engineer panicked, detached his engine from the disabled cars, and made a hasty getaway toward Alexandria, leaving the Ohioans to fend for themselves.

The two sides exchanged fire, but the infantry was too far away to be effective.

Growing darkness ended the engagement, and the Confederates did not pursue even though they greatly outnumbered their foes. They did take one wounded soldier prisoner and returned to Fairfax

Court House after midnight. The Ohioans returned to their camp on foot, using blankets to carry their remaining wounded. The next day, a local Unionist returned the dead to their regiment.

This was the last engagement in northeastern Virginia until the two main armies squared off along Bull Run in mid-July.

3.2.5 Engagement at Mathias Point
Thursday, June 27, 1861

King George County, VA

The Engagement at Mathias Point was fought on Thursday, June 27, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Commander James H. Ward and Confederate forces commanded by Colonel Daniel Ruggles and Colonel John M. Brockenbrough in King George County, Virginia.

t the end of May, the Union Potomac Flotilla failed to silence a Confederate shore battery near Aquia Landing on the Potomac River. Nearly a month later, Flotilla Commander James H. Ward sought to clear Mathias Point of Confederate skirmishers, who were using the woods as cover to harass passing ships with small arms fire. He was determined to keep the river open from Washington, DC to the Chesapeake Bay.

Mathias Point consisted of the southern portion of a sharp bend in the Potomac River. This 270-degree view, coupled with high ground and wooded terrain, made it an ideal place for enemy troops and artillery to threaten Union ships. Commander Ward devised a plan for a combined land and naval operation to seize the point and deny its use to the enemy. He had no idea this operation would be his last.

On Thursday, June 27, 1861, Commander Ward arrived off Mathias Point with the USS *Thomas Freeborn*, USS *Reliance*, and a company of marines commanded by Lt. James C. Chaplin. The two ships covered the landing party with steady volleys of cannon fire that drove away Confederate skirmishers.

The Union landing party immediately began fortifying their small beachhead and prepared to set fire to the nearby woods and heavy undergrowth, but Confederate reinforcements weren't far away. Confederate Col. John M. Brockenbrough summoned Maj. Robert Murphy Mayo, who marched one cavalry and three infantry companies three miles to the point and approached the shore through the thick woods.

The Union landing party was outnumbered and dove toward their boats. In an action that would later earn him the Medal of Honor, a U.S. sailor from Louisiana named John Williams was shot through the thigh while making sure every last man made it back to his boat. "Every man must die on his thwart sooner than leave a man behind," he exclaimed, referring to supports in the center of a rowboat.

Commander James H. Ward returned to the USS *Thomas Freeborn* to direct covering fire for his troops, but he was mortally wounded. Ward was the first U.S. Navy officer to be killed in action during the Civil War, and Thomas Tingey Craven succeeded him as commander of the Potomac Flotilla. The engagement at Mathias Point was the last significant action along the Potomac until later that fall.

3.2.6 Action at Shuter's Hill
Sunday, June 30, 1861

Alexandria, VA

The Action at Shuter's (aka Shooter's Hill) was fought on Sunday, June 30, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Lt. M. Robert McClennan and a Confederate scouting party in what is today part of Alexandria, Virginia. Its outcome was a Union tactical victory, with the Confederates withdrawing after sustaining casualties.

On June 18, 1861, the 4th Pennsylvania Infantry (3 months) crossed the Potomac River into northern Virginia and settled into Camp Hale, which was located about a quarter mile north of Fort Ellsworth on Shuter's Hill west of Alexandria. They immediately assumed picket duty in the area.

In late June, the Goochland Cavalry and Governor's Mounted Guard were engaged in mounted patrols around the Orange and Alexandria Railroad west of Union-occupied Alexandria. A few hours after midnight on June 30, a 14-man patrol from the Governor's Mounted Guard ran into pickets from the 4th Pennsylvania along the Little River Turnpike leading to Fairfax Court House.

When confronted, the Confederates reportedly told the Union pickets to "Go to Hell," before the Union pickets ran to the next post for help. Thus reinforced with a handful of men from Company E, they returned to confront the mounted patrol. The two sides exchanged fire, and one Union soldier was killed and another wounded. A Confederate sergeant was also killed.

The Confederate patrol reportedly fled in the face of further Union reinforcements, leaving behind several weapons. Though a tactical Union victory, the brief encounter had no effect on the strategic situation in that sector.

3.2.7 Battle of Blackburn's Ford
Thursday, July 18, 1861

Prince William County, VA

The Battle of Blackburn's Ford was fought on Thursday, July 18, 1861 between Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Daniel Tyler and Confederate forces commanded by Brig. Gen. James Longstreet in Prince William and Fairfax Counties, Virginia during the American Civil War. The battle was a Confederate victory and resulted in 151 total casualties.

In mid-July 1861, Union Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell's 35,000-man Army of Northeastern Virginia advanced into Virginia toward the railroad junction at Manassas. Standing in his way was the 22,000-man Confederate Army of the Potomac under Brig. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard. At Centreville, McDowell ordered Brig. Gen. Daniel Tyler's division to look for a crossing over Bull Run Creek at Blackburn or Mitchell's fords. At Blackburn Ford, Tyler saw only a few Confederate artillery pieces and ordered forward a single brigade commanded by Col. Israel B. Richardson.

Tyler failed to see Brig. Gen. James Longstreet's brigade hidden in the woods on the opposite shore. The inexperienced combatants subsequently slugged it out in the oppressive afternoon heat, until the 12th New York Infantry Regiment began to withdraw. After several hours of fighting, Union troops fully retreated in the face of Confederate reinforcements under Col. Jubal A. Early.

When the smoke cleared, 83 Union and 68 Confederate soldiers lay dead or wounded. The casualties paled in comparison to the First Battle of Bull Run, which would be fought nearby just a few days later. But it set the stage for what was to come. The victory raised morale in the green Southern recruits, while dampening their opponents' spirits. Bruised at Blackburn's Ford, McDowell decided to advance west and flank the Confederate army at Stone Bridge over Bull Run Creek, igniting the first major battle of the war.

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