

THEY LED AT GETTYSBURG:

The Confederate and Union Generals

by Thomas Boeche

In **GETTYSBURG**, Avalon Hill's newest version of the Civil War's pivotal battle, generals play a very important role. With the Optional Rules 10a, 10a1, 10a2 and 10a3 in play (and I strongly recommend their use), generals are vital to movement, stacking and army organization. In order for a general to allow two combat units to be stacked in the same hex or to add an extra movement factor to combat units, the units must belong to that general's combat organization, army, corps, or (in the Army of the Potomac) wing.

With generals being vital to stacking and movement, I felt there should be some provision for their effect on combat as well. What follows is a short sketch of each general's performance at Gettysburg, with a combat factor modifier reflecting that general's ability to affect the outcome of a clash. Generals stacked with combat units during combat can have either a positive or negative effect on combat. When resolving a battle, a general's positive modifier is added to the combat unit's combat factors. Some generals have negative ratings, which will obviously be subtracted from a combat unit's combat factors. A rating of '0' does not have any effect on combat,

These ratings are, of course, open to debate. They are simply my own opinions based upon my readings and my view of the game **GETTYSBURG**. Judgment on the historical performance of any general during the fighting at Gettysburg is highly subjective. The reader, being more versed in Civil War history than I, may have different views

CONFEDERATE

Robert E. Lee: Army of Northern Virginia

Whether he was beset by heart problems, dysentery or fatigue, Lee was certainly not himself at Gettysburg. He issued his corps commanders vague orders and failed to personally coordinate or oversee his army's movements. Most historians agree that Gettysburg was Lee's worst fought battle. However, the mere presence of the legendary Lee greatly inspired his troops, so he still receives a positive rating. **Rating: +1**

James Longstreet: 1st Corps

Lee's "Old Warhorse", Longstreet was a better defensive than offensive strategist. He continually urged Lee to refrain from attacking the Army of the Potomac. Instead, he wanted Lee to shift around the Union left flank, thereby forcing Meade to attack the Confederates. Longstreet was late in launching his attack on July 2nd, but the attack was still a crushing, near-decisive blow. Longstreet did not agree with the strategy Lee followed, but he fought well. **Rating: +2**

Richard Ewell: 2nd Corps

Ewell has been blamed by many for the failure of the Confederates to win at Gettysburg on July 1st. His divisional

commanders influenced Ewell too heavily. He refused to launch a powerful attack on the Union right on July 2nd because his subordinates claimed their divisions were too exhausted from the first day's fighting. Ewell's reluctance on the 2nd forced Longstreet's attack to be, in effect, unsupported. Ewell did a poor job at Gettysburg, and he may well have cost the South a major victory. **Rating: -1**

A.P. Hill: 3rd Corps

Hill was a tenacious fighter, but was rather ineffective at Gettysburg. He did not handle the assault on July 1st particularly well, and consequently the Confederate advance was slowed by a much smaller Union force. During the fierce battles of July 2nd, the Confederate echelon attack broke down just when Hill's men were to assault the Union lines on Cemetery Ridge; Hill was simply confused by the huge, complex responsibilities of being a corps commander. Still, he made no major blunders. **Rating: 0**

J.E.B. Stuart: Cavalry Corps

We all know the story of the lost Confederate cavalry during the Gettysburg campaign. Stuart did not reach the field until the night of July 2nd. On July 3rd the Confederate cavalry was supposed to circle round behind Cemetery Ridge and disrupt the Union rear even as Pickett's Charge took place against the Union center. The Confederate cavalry instead was beaten back by Union cavalry in an action fought east of the main battlefield [see Blumberg's variant in this issue for this action], Stuart, overall, was ineffective at Gettysburg, but like Lee his mere presence served to inspire confidence. **Rating: 0**

UNION

George G. Meade: Army of the Potomac

Meade took command of the Army of the Potomac only days before the Battle of Gettysburg. "Old Snapping Turtle" did turn in a cool, calm, impressive performance there however. There are some indications that Meade wanted to pull back after the fighting on July 2nd; however he was persuaded to make the decision to stand and accept Lee's last, best shot, Meade was not a spectacular leader, but here he did a good job. **Rating: +1**

John Reynolds: I Corps

Reynolds was one of the Union Army's best and brightest commanders. He had been offered the job of commander of Army of the Potomac, but turned it down. He decided early that the Union must make a stand at Gettysburg and helped set up the defensive lines on July 1st. Tragically, he was killed early in the morning by a Confederate sharpshooter near McPherson's Woods. Because he was present at Gettysburg for such a short time, it is impossible to give an honest rating for his battle performance. Although, had he lived, I am sure he would have performed brilliantly. **Rating: 0**

John Buford: 1st Cavalry Division

An excellent cavalry tactician, Buford bought enough time on the morning of July 1st for the I Corps infantry to reach the

scene. Buford's men stood up to great odds and dealt a sharp blow to A.P. Hill's Confederates. **Rating: + 1**

Winfield Scott Hancock: II Corps

"Hancock the Magnificent" probably did the best job of all the generals commanding corps at Gettysburg. When he arrived on the field on July 1st, the I Corps and XI Corps had been shattered and driven back. Hancock took command and established the strong Union lines on Cemetery Hill and Cemetery Ridge.

On July 3rd, Hancock's men stood firm and repulsed Lee's last gamble-the charge on the center. Hancock certainly saved the Union army on July 1st, and he was vital to the Union success at Gettysburg on July 3rd. **Rating: +2**

Daniel Sickles: III Corps

Sickles was always a controversial figure, He was a political general (having been appointed), but he was a fearless fighter. At Gettysburg, he advanced his men away from the main Union line along Cemetery Ridge into an exposed position that he thought was more defensible. Sickles' move put the III Corps out of touch with the Union troops on the ridge and left the crucial Round Tops exposed, Sickles fought bravely, but his poor generalship led to the virtual destruction of the Union III Corps, **Rating: -1**

George Sykes: V Corps

Sykes was a competent general, but nothing more. He was a rather plodding, uninspiring leader who had been nicknamed "Tardy George" for his caution and slow pace. His V Corps played an important part in the defense of the Union left on July 2nd. Gettysburg was just another day of work for Sykes. **Rating: 0**

Oliver Howard: XI Corps

Howard was a very indecisive general at Gettysburg. He was left in command of the field on July 1st when Reynolds was killed. Confusion then reigned over the Union army until Hancock arrived and took charge later in the day. To his credit, Howard managed to rally the broken I Corps on Cemetery Hill, but it was largely his fault that the Union Army had earlier fallen apart so dramatically on July 1st. **Rating: -1**

Henry Slocum: XII Corps

Slocum was another steady, competent, unspectacular leader. His men held Culp's Hill, a crucial point in the Union line. The XII Corps fought a splendid action on Culp's Hill, thanks mainly to the leadership of Brigadier General George S. Greene. After ferocious attacks and counterattacks on July 2nd and 3rd, Culp's Hill was firmly in Union hand-no thanks to Slocum. **Rating: 0**

John Sedgwick: VI Corps

Sedgwick was one of the most beloved commanders in the Army of the Potomac. He was a good soldier and a gallant leader. But at Gettysburg his VI Corps was used mainly as a reserve and did not see extensive action. **Rating: 0**

Alfred Pleasanton: Cavalry Corps

Pleasanton helped turn the Union cavalry into a respectable fighting force that could stand up to the best the Confederates had to offer. Pleasanton himself was an able commander, but he did little to distinguish himself at Gettysburg. **Rating: 0**

David Gregg: 2nd Cavalry Division

Gregg was a superb cavalry commander, in charge of the Union horsemen who formed the extreme right wing of the Union position. On July 3rd, he met and defeated J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry east of the town. He served the important role of keeping the Union rear secure. The battle did much for his reputation. **Rating: +1**

Judson Kilpatrick: 3rd Cavalry Division

Nicknamed "Little-Kil", Kilpatrick was an impetuous, rash commander. It was he who ordered the disastrous Union cavalry charge on July 3rd following the repulse of Pickett's Charge, A terrible, costly decision for the Union forces. **Rating: -1**

Robert Tyler: Artillery Reserve

Tyler was an effective manager, and performed credibly with the artillery reserve, His guns did a masterful job in pounding the last Confederate charge on the afternoon of July 3rd. **Rating: 0**

Optional Union Commanders:

John Newton: I Corps

Newton was moved over from VI Corps and given command of the I Corps on July 1st after Reynolds went down. The men of the I Corps were unhappy with the selection of Newton, for they had wanted General Doubleday in command. But Meade felt Doubleday had done a poor job, so he promoted Newton. Newton did a credible job in a bad situation, although the I Corps saw little further action. **Rating: 0**

David Birney: III Corps

Birney held the left flank of Sickles' exposed III Corps on July 2nd. When Sickles was severely wounded, Birney took command. He did a solid job of holding the shattered III Corps together and extricating it. **Rating: 0**

SUMMARY

Rating the generals for combat effectiveness makes the new game of GETTYSBURG even more enjoyable, yet does not add to the complexity or the playing time, Game balance should not be affected too much by the inclusion of this new optional rule (as can be seen by the chart below). Players are free to argue and challenge these ratings, as they are only my opinion. However, you can't fairly judge them without giving the new GETTYSBURG a try; I'd urge everyone, no matter how long you've been in the hobby, to do so.

ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Lee | +1 |
| Longstreet | +2 |
| Ewell | -1 |
| Hill | 0 |
| Stuart | 0 |
| <i>(Cumulative Army Rating: +2)</i> | |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| ARMY OF THE POTOMAC | |
| Meade | +1 |
| Reynolds | +0 |
| Buford | +1 |
| Hancock | +2 |
| Sickles | -1 |
| Sykes | 0 |
| Howard | -1 |
| Slocum | 0 |
| Sedgwick | 0 |
| Pleasanton | 0 |
| Gregg | +1 |
| Kilpatrick | -1 |
| Tyler | 0 |
| <i>(Cumulative Army Rating: +2)</i> | |

Corps commanders unanimously opposed a proposed withdrawal of the Army.

Additionally, unlike their use in the game, the Army commanders did not lead assaults. Lee's threat to do so often resulted in Division commanders interceding to force him back and their units turn in a superb performance. The AOP commander's job is better described as a project manager rather than a combat leader.

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WGA Commentary: I would assert the Reynolds merits a +1 rating based on various accounts of his contribution to the first day. Reynolds aggressively force-marched the I Corp into the battle in time to justify the sacrifice of Buford's 1st Cavalry Division. This was done based on his respect for Buford's assessment without first hand verification. In a previous battle, the Cavalry made a similar stand in vain awaiting infantry support. Buford remained on station because it was Reynolds who would be first to arrive. After deploying the leading brigades into position and relaying messages to the following Union Corps on the road, he was removed from the battle, killed by a sharpshooter. The majority of the other Union Corps commanders would likely brought their units into battle at a much slower pace if their Corps were in the lead in the battle of March. In such likelihood, Buford's force would have been destroyed or previously withdrawn; yielding Cemetery Hill to the Confederates. This would most likely have yielded a different historical result. Although Reynolds presence on the battle was short, his actions made a significant impact to the course of the battle.

As the author suggested, others may have opinions on the various leaders. However it is noted the net modifiers for armies is balanced. However similar to the brittleness of its divisions, the Army of Northern Virginia is more severely impacted by leader losses than its counterpart due to the limited number, regardless of any leader modifier. Additionally the tournament rules introducing Union Wing commanders and Hancock as deputy army commander on Day 1 yields great stacking flexibility.

It is also documented in film and literature that Meade was hesitant to fight the battle at the start of the second day, but the