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Gettysburg Day One

Taking Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill

DOUGLAS R. KLEINSMITH

There is a debate as old as the war that is ongoing even today about whether the Confederates could have captured Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill on the first day of battle at Gettysburg. The argument implies that had the Confederates achieved this feat, they would have won the battle and possibly turned the tide of the war in their favor. This remains one of the giant what-ifs of the war, voiced by more than a few veterans and subsequent historians. One famous example comes from Isaac Trimble, an unattached Confederate general at the time who made the spurious claim that he could have pulled it off if given only one *good regiment*.¹ However, by late afternoon of that first day, given the condition of the forces immediately available, the lack of intelligence they had on the enemy and terrain, the time left in the day, and the strength of the Union forces, the Confederates had little to no chance of achieving this feat.

The first day of Gettysburg was a classic meeting engagement. Parts of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) collided with advance elements of the Union Army of the Potomac (AOP) in piecemeal fashion throughout July 1, 1863. By late afternoon the Union forces were badly beaten and retreating from their advance positions. If the Confederates had kept going, the next logical objective for them would have been the key tactical terrain features of Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill on the south and southeast side of the town. Instead, they pulled up short, consolidated their gains, and waited for

what the next day would bring. After two more days of battle, the Confederate army could not dislodge the Union army and in the end suffered, quite possibly, its worst tactical defeat yet in the war.

After the dramatic victory for the Confederates at the Battle of Chancellorsville in early May 1863, Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the ANV, gained approval for another attempt at invading the North. On June 3 Lee stealthily withdrew his army from the Fredericksburg area and took them west and north along the Rappahannock River, over to the Shenandoah Valley, and north through Maryland into Pennsylvania. Slow to react initially, the Union AOP followed hard on the Confederate heels. The Union army roughly paralleled the Confederate route of marching, ever mindful of keeping themselves between the Confederates and Washington, DC.

George G. Meade, newly appointed commanding general of the Union AOP, did not know the exact location of Lee's army. With most of the army concentrated around Fredrick, Maryland, Meade decided to advance his seven infantry and one cavalry corps north along a wide twenty-five mile front covering both Washington, DC, and Baltimore. Similarly, Lee had little knowledge of the Union army's location. He had not heard from his cavalry commander, J. E. B. Stuart, since June 24. The primary responsibility for gathering information on enemy locations rested with the cavalry arm. Stuart effectively screened the ANV's movement up the Shenandoah and on into Maryland. He then took three of his best brigades on a daring attempt to circle eastward around the Union army. Whether for fame,

¹ Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, vol. 2, *Gettysburg to Appomattox* (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1944), 94–95.

Richard Ewell. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

glory, or in Stuart's words, "for some other point at which to direct an effective blow,"² this action effectively took Stuart out of the picture until July 2, late into the Battle of Gettysburg. This would become a critical factor in the unfolding events of the first day's battle on July 1.³

The first reliable report of the Union army's location arrived the night of June 28 in the form of a spy. Henry Harrison, employed by Confederate First Corps commander James Longstreet, brought word that the Union army had crossed into Maryland sooner and closer than the Confederates realized.⁴ Lee responded quickly. He directed his far-flung units to immediately concentrate around the Gettysburg and Cashtown area.⁵

² U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), ser. 1, vol. 27, part 2, 692 (hereafter cited as *OR* and followed by the volume, part, and page numbers, with all subsequent citations referencing series 1).

³ Synopsis of the campaign leading up to the battle derived from Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign* (New York: Touchstone, 1997); Donald C. Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell: A Soldier's Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Harry W. Pfanz *Gettysburg: The First Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Noah Andre Trudeau, *Gettysburg: A Testing of Courage* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

⁴ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox* (New York: Mallard Press, 1991), 346–47.

⁵ *OR*, 27.2:307.

With the two opposing armies in motion looking for each other, first contact occurred just outside the town of Gettysburg on June 30 when Henry Heth's Confederate division of A. P. Hill's Third Corps spotted elements of John Buford's Union cavalry division. The next day, July 1, Heth's division proceeded at a deliberate pace toward Gettysburg to deal with the Union horsemen. Instead of just cavalry, Heth ran into the lead elements of the AOP. Both sides fed forces into the battle throughout the day as they arrived. By late afternoon, the battle had reached its most critical point. Jubal Early's division of Richard Ewell's Second Corps had successfully gained the right flank of the Union Eleventh Corps forces and caused them to retreat through the town of Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill with the Confederates following close behind. In the ensuing fight within the town, confusion reigned and the Confederates took prisoner many thousands of Union soldiers. At the same time, the Union First Corps holding the Seminary Ridge line gave way. The weight of Ewell's other division under Robert Rodes with Hill's added reinforcements of Dorsey Pender's and Heth's divisions forced the Union First Corps to conduct a contested retreat joining the remnants of the Eleventh Corps on Cemetery Hill (see map 1).⁶

The Confederates had achieved a resounding tactical victory for the day and turned their attention to consolidating their gains, resupplying their ammunition, tending to casualties, and processing prisoners. They awaited the arrival of the rest of the army and prepared themselves for what the next day would bring. At the time, this seemed the best and most prudent course of action. The need to continue the fight and press on to Cemetery Hill was not a concern. Once again, the ANV had bested their AOP adversary and there was no reason to believe the next day would not see similar achievements.

It was after the battle was over and the full extent of the defeat was realized that the debate went on as to whether the Confederates could have or should have continued the fight on the first day in order to capture Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill. The most critical discussion naturally came from the Confeder-

⁶ Synopsis of the first day's battle derived from Coddington, *Gettysburg Campaign*; Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*; Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*; and Trudeau, *Gettysburg*.

Map 1. Early's division advances into Gettysburg on July 1. Map by Phil Laino.

ates themselves. As noted above, Confederate general Trimble strongly advocated that Cemetery Hill was there for the taking, if only the effort be made. Confederate division commander Early urged an immediate advance “before the enemy should recover from his evident dismay.”⁷ Arriving on the scene late, the aides-de-camp for Confederate division commander Edward Johnson, seeing apparent inaction on the part of Ewell, would lament, “Oh, for the presence and inspiration of Old Jack for just one hour!”⁸ Meade himself believed that had the Confederates immediately advanced and occupied Culp’s Hill, given the condition and numbers the Union had to oppose them at the time, the Union army would have been forced to evacuate the field.⁹

Sheer numbers were certainly in the Confederates’ favor. By late afternoon they had brought into action 25,350 troops and suffered 4,900 casualties while the Union forces brought in a force of 20,617 troops and suffered 8,400 casualties.¹⁰ With perfect hindsight and 100 percent intelligence, it is easy to make claims on what should or could have been done. However, any fair examination must be made from the context of what was known at the time.

The first part of investigating whether the Confederates could have taken Cemetery Hill or Culp’s Hill is to understand the situation in the late afternoon of the first day. Confederate commanders were under discretionary orders to handle enemy forces if encountered but with a firm understanding not to bring on a general engagement.¹¹ Heth did his level best to adhere to the intent of these orders when he first approached the town of Gettysburg. After sending in only half his division and receiving a severe drubbing by the lead elements of the Union army, he pulled back and awaited further developments. Ewell, on the other hand, after learning of Heth’s encounter, immediately changed his direction of march and headed for Gettysburg.¹² Reaching the battlefield, he came on Union forces positioned to his front and also emerging from

Gettysburg. Exercising his discretion to engage, he deployed his forces to attack in support of Heth. Seeing Ewell’s forces attacking, Hill and Heth convinced Lee (who arrived on the scene) to also join in the attack.¹³ By 5:00 p.m. the Union forces were driven from their positions and retreating to Cemetery Hill.¹⁴

Once the Union forces were swept from their forward positions and Gettysburg secured, the corps commanders Ewell and Hill ended the discretionary part of their orders and reverted back to their previous instructions not to bring on a general engagement. Although he exceeded orders upon arriving at the battle, Ewell determined that there was no justification for exceeding the orders now that Gettysburg had been taken. At the same time, Lee, watching the retreat of the Union forces from his position on Seminary Ridge, thought it only necessary to press the enemy to secure Cemetery Hill and sent orders to Ewell “to carry the hill occupied by the enemy, if he found it practicable.”¹⁵ Ewell acknowledged receipt and set about to comply.¹⁶

After the idea of possibly continuing the attack had been cleared by the commanding general, a number of factors had to be taken into consideration to determine the “practicability” of executing such a maneuver. These include the current state of the forces at hand, the known intelligence situation, and the time left in the day.

The first factor takes into account what forces were available to make such an assault and their condition. Both corps commanders (Ewell and Hill) made the contention that none of their divisions currently on the field in the late afternoon were in any condition to make the effort. Ewell stated, “On entering the town, I received a message from the commanding general to attack this hill, if I could do so to advantage. I could not bring artillery to bear on it, and all the troops with me were *jaded by twelve hours’ marching and fighting*.”¹⁷ Ewell’s division commander Early complained that his command had been doing all the hard marching and fighting and was not in condition to make a move.¹⁸

7 Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 343.

8 “Old Jack” is a reference to their former, now-deceased commander, General “Stonewall” Jackson. Henry Kyd Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall* (Marietta: R. Bemis, 1995), 239.

9 General Meade to Col. G. G. Benedict, in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 3, *The Tide Shifts* (Edison: Castle, 1995), 413–14.

10 J. David Petruzzi and Steven A. Stanley, *The Gettysburg Campaign in Numbers and Losses* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2012), 100–114, 126–34, and 137.

11 OR, 27.2:444

12 Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 304.

13 Freeman, *Lee’s Lieutenants*, 87–88.

14 Henry J. Hunt, “The First Day at Gettysburg,” in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:282–84.

15 OR, 27.2:318.

16 Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 308.

17 OR, 27.2:445, emphasis added.

18 Trudeau, *Gettysburg*, 257.

Hill believed the enemy had been defeated and was content with their gains: “Under the impression that the enemy were entirely routed, my own two divisions exhausted by some six hours’ hard fighting, prudence led me to be content with what had been gained, and not push forward troops exhausted and necessarily disordered, probably to encounter fresh troops of the enemy.”¹⁹

The condition these commanders were referring to was the state of disorganization and exhaustion their troops were in after marching and fighting since early morning. An analysis of their forces shows they, in fact, were speaking accurately. This analysis looks at two areas to assess the fighting condition of each Confederate brigade at the end of the first day. These two areas are the hours each brigade spent marching and fighting and the casualties they sustained.

The problem with associating a condition level to a unit based on a number of hours spent marching and fighting is that there is no real scale of measure that says x hours of activity equals x level of exhaustion. However, a reasonable comparison can be drawn from the experiences of participants in a former modern-day U.S. military training event. In the Marine Corps, an infantry battalion used to be required to hump (road march) with full kit a distance of twenty-five miles. This effort took seven to eight hours to complete, at the end of which the unit was extremely played out with generally little energy left to conduct activities of any major exertion.²⁰

This example can be used to help gauge the condition of Confederate forces by looking at the number of hours each brigade spent marching and fighting. Marching and fighting are two very different activities, but participation in direct combat, while not necessarily the same exertion of physical energy as a road march, does have a similar exhausting effect as marching when mental stress and anxiety are factored.²¹ In this way, marching hours and fighting hours can be equated on a one for one basis and, when combined together, give an idea of the state of condition of a particular force.

¹⁹ *OR*, 27.2:607

²⁰ Author’s personal observation from participation in the experience as a career marine officer. These observations are also supported by Col. Terry M. Lockard, USMC, retired, and Col. Frank R. Boynton, USMC, retired, interviewed by author, August 31, 2014.

²¹ Drawn from the author’s personal direct combat experiences and from Lockard and Boynton interviews.

The number of hours for each brigade that entered the battle on July 1 was calculated from the time it broke bivouac to the time it stopped fighting that day, not counting any sort of downtime.²² The marching and fighting hours were combined and assigned a standard stoplight code to illustrate the state of exhaustion a unit would incur having exerted this effort. Using the modern U.S. military example as a base, the color codes were assigned as follows:

<i>Hours</i>	<i>Color Code</i>	<i>Condition</i>
0–3	Green	Good
4–6	Yellow	Moderate
7+	Red	Poor

The next area measured is the effect of casualties sustained. The U.S. military considers a unit neutralized (unit temporarily out of action) if it sustained 10 percent casualties, and destroyed (unit permanently out of action) if it sustained 30 percent casualties.²³ While these measures may not directly translate to Civil War experiences, it does provide a reasonable starting point to assess units. Using these modern U.S. military percentages as a base, a standard stoplight color code was again assigned to illustrate the state of casualties incurred by each brigade:

<i>Percent</i>	<i>Color Code</i>	<i>Condition</i>
0–9	Green	Good
10–29	Yellow	Moderate
30+	Red	Poor

Combing these together, table 1 shows that by the late afternoon of day 1, every Confederate brigade was in a red exhaustive state, and the only brigades that sustained fewer than 10 percent casualties were three of Early’s brigades and one of Pender’s. Taking the two assessment areas in combination, a final assessment can be presumed for each of the Confederate brigades. The results show that, of the units

²² A general pause in the fighting occurred between 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 115–30.

²³ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 6-30: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Observed Fire* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 4–9; Department of the Army, *Field Manual 6-40: Field Artillery Manual Cannon Gunnery* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), C-4.

Jubal Early. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

immediately available, only the brigades of Avery, Hays, Smith, and Thomas, amounting to around 4,500 troops, were anywhere near in shape to carry on an attack.

Had the Confederates designated an attack force, presumably from these four brigades, positions from which to launch the attack would have to be found. Ideally, these positions would be close by and have relatively decent protection from the fire of Union artillery gathering on Cemetery Hill. The selection of these positions would be influenced by the second factor—intelligence, or what was known of the enemy and the suitability of the terrain.

As mentioned earlier, in the Civil War, primary responsibility for providing intelligence on enemy locations fell to the cavalry. In addition to locating and tracking enemy forces, they also performed the duties of screening their forces from the intelligence gathering activities of the enemy. Leading up to the battle and throughout day 1, none of the Confederate commanders had any idea of the whereabouts of the Union army.²⁴ All day long, the Confederates

were continually surprised by the unexpected appearance of Union infantry. Without adequate cavalry reconnaissance, the Confederates really did not know what was on Cemetery Hill or behind it.

This lack of intelligence was mainly the result of Stuart's ride around the Union army, which took him away from his primary duties. Union cavalry had vastly improved in the years leading up to Gettysburg and had dogged Stuart throughout his ride.²⁵ Their aggressive pursuit denied Stuart visibility on the main Union force and kept him out of the picture until late on the second day. At the same time, Union cavalry at Gettysburg under Buford had good intelligence on the Confederates and masked the movement of Union forces approaching the battlefield. By their screening actions, the Union cavalry prevented the Confederates from gaining knowledge on the exact nature of the AOP forces and terrain they were facing.

By late afternoon on July 1, other than what they could directly observe, the Confederates were still largely ignorant of what they faced, both in terms of enemy and terrain, south and west of Cemetery Hill (see map 2), driving further doubt into the minds of Confederate commanders on whether they should or could attack. Hill would note, "The want of cavalry had been and was seriously felt."²⁶ Buford's cavalry division, screening the approaches southwest of Cemetery Hill, presented a strong deterrent for reconnaissance or maneuver in that area.²⁷ West of Gettysburg, the lack of enemy intelligence would bleed off Confederate forces needed elsewhere. As Ewell was discussing the situation with his commanders shortly after they entered the town, a report came of possible Union forces approaching on the Confederate extreme left flank. Although the report seemed doubtful, two brigades were diverted to counter this perceived threat, essentially taking them out of supporting distance for any follow-on attack.²⁸

The nature of the known terrain also influences the selection of any sort of possible attack position and avenue of approach to the enemy. The town of Gettysburg was the greatest obstacle to tactical

²⁵ Gen. George A. Custer's Gettysburg report, August 22, 1863, in *Michigan in the War*, ed. Roberts (Lansing, MI: W. S. George, State Printers and Binders, 1882), 582–84.

²⁶ OR, 27.2:607.

²⁷ Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 309–10.

²⁸ Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 311; Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 97.

²⁴ Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 342.

TABLE 1. Status of Confederate brigades, late afternoon day 1

<i>Division</i>	<i>Brigade</i>	<i>Start Strength^a</i>	<i>Active Hours^b</i>	<i>Percent Casualties^c</i>	<i>End Strength</i>	<i>Final Assessment</i>
Second Corps (Ewell)						
Early	Hays	1,292	9	4.80	1,230	Moderate
Early	Smith	802	9	0.00	802	Moderate
Early	Avery	1,242	9	5.00	1,180	Moderate
Early	Gordon	1,807	9	26.73	1,324	Poor
Rodes	Daniel	2,157	9	16.18	1,808	Poor
Rodes	Iverson	1,380	9	55.65	612	Poor
Rodes	Doles	1,319	9	14.18	1,132	Poor
Rodes	Ramseur	1,023	9	23.75	780	Poor
Rodes	O'Neal	1,685	9	14.12	1,447	Poor
Third Corps (Hill)						
Heth	Pettigrew	2,576	8	21.97	2,010	Poor
Heth	Brockenbrough	9,68	8	20.87	766	Poor
Heth	Archer	1,193	8	20.12	953	Poor
Heth	Davis ^d	1,707	8	25.13	1,278	Poor
Pender	Perrin	1,878	8	29.29	1,328	Poor
Pender	Lane	1,730	8	15.84	1,456	Poor
Pender	Thomas	1,244	8	0.00	1,244	Moderate
Pender	Scales	1,347	8	18.26	1,101	Poor

^aPetruzzi and Stanley, *Gettysburg Campaign in Numbers and Losses*, 126–34.

^bUnit start times were derived from Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 149; and the reports of Ewell in OR, 27.2:444, Rodes in OR, 27.2:55, Early in OR, 27.2:468, Heth in OR, 27.2:637, and Pender's assistant adjutant general in OR, 27.2:656. Pender was mortally wounded in the battle.

^cDay 1 casualties were determined by estimating the casualties sustained by the units on days 2 and 3 through a comparative analysis of other units and subtracted from their reported total casualties.

^dMinus the Eleventh Mississippi, who joined the brigade later in the evening well after the end of the first day's fighting. OR, 27.2:649.

movement. Gettysburg's built-up areas with constrictive alleys and streets funneled troop movement into very lucrative targets especially for artillery. The town also obscured line of sight which greatly restricted command and control. Culp's Hill was, and still is, very wooded and rocky. Its north and northeast face is almost a sheer climb for one hundred feet. From Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill, Early observed that the ground was rugged and crossed by stones and plank fences. He assessed that he could not advance directly from the town to advantage and that, if an assault were made, it would have to go on the left of the town on the eastern face of Cemetery Hill with the Gettysburg on the right and Culp's Hill on the left.²⁹

²⁹ Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 343; Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 101; Trudeau, *Gettysburg*, 261; Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 310.

Factoring the conditions of enemy intelligence and terrain leaves three potential positions for launching an attack. The first two are either Seminary Ridge or an area directly west of Gettysburg (positions X and Y on map 2). The approach from these positions has the town on the left and an open field on the right flank and strikes the west side of Cemetery Hill. The third is just east of the town and turns west in front of Culp's Hill to strike the east side of Cemetery Hill (positions Z and Z1³⁰). Selecting positions any farther from these runs up against unknown terrain and enemy and would cause additional delay to the start time of an attack. This leads to our third factor: time.

Night was fast approaching. The sun would set

³⁰ One of Early's brigades (Avery) succeeded in gaining cover from a low ridge in this area. OR, 27.2:469.

Map 2. Confederate options and field of view on the afternoon of July 1. Map by Phil Laino.

Fig. 1. Theoretical best-case Confederate time line to attack Cemetery Hill. A, decide to attack, conduct leader's reconnaissance, and issue new orders. B, reorganize, including untangling from the town. C, deploy to an attack position. D, approach movement to objective. Illustration by author.

at 7:41 p.m., and darkness (End of Evening Nautical Twilight, or EENT) would come at 8:55 p.m.³¹ Night fighting in the Civil War was difficult and hazardous at best. Command and control of maneuvering forces was conducted primarily by line of sight. With reduced visibility, commanders had a hard time seeing their units and ran a high risk of mistaking friend for foe.

To make an attack, the Confederates would first have to conduct a leader's reconnaissance and issue new orders to subordinates. Lee did send new orders to attack Cemetery Hill if practicable, and Ewell promptly acted by conducting a quick reconnaissance.³² He determined he could make an attack if Hill supported him from the west, so he sent off a messenger to Lee to request this support. Lee sent back that there would be no support from Hill and urged Ewell to attack with the Second Corps alone.³³ At this point, Ewell decided an attack on Cemetery Hill could not be carried off.

This back-and-forth between Lee and Ewell illustrates the time it takes just to initiate an attack. The primary mode of communication was by horse-borne courier. Lee, in his position on Seminary Ridge, and Ewell, in the town of Gettysburg, were almost a mile apart. Traveling the distance back and forth, locating the principle recipient, and composing each message (or verbalizing it to the courier

until he thoroughly understood it) took time. A simple exchange of two or three messages could take an hour.

At the same time, units would have to reorganize, including disengaging from their current activities of resupply, prisoner processing, recovery of the wounded, and disentangling themselves from places like the town itself. They would then have to deploy to a suitable attack position and finally make the move over the actual approach route. Along with the message traffic described above, these pre-attack activities could take two or more hours to complete. A theoretical best-case time line for this might look as illustrated in figure 1.

Other Confederate forces were coming late on the scene; but again, time would be their biggest detriment. Ewell, after determining Cemetery Hill was unassailable, sent off two of his aides-de-camp to scout Culp's Hill. The two reported the hill unoccupied, and Ewell decided to occupy Culp's hill with his third division under Edward Johnson just arriving onto the battlefield. However, running into traffic from other units, Johnson's division only reached Gettysburg around 7:00 p.m. and was unable to make a move onto Culp's Hill until well past dark. The division of Richard Anderson of Hill's Third Corps had also just come up but was immediately placed in reserve owing to the uncertainty of the situation and late hour of the day.³⁴ By that time, Union forces were at hand.³⁵

31 Sunset and EENT obtained from Astronomical Applications Department, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, DC, <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/index.php>, last updated January 29, 2015, accessed September 1, 2014.

32 OR, 27.2:445.

33 Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 309–10; Trudeau, *Gettysburg*, 251–56.

34 Trudeau, *Gettysburg*, 247.

35 Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 311–12; Trudeau, *Gettysburg*, 257–59.

Edward "Allegheny" Johnson. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Oliver Otis Howard. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Aside from time and the practicality of executing such an attack, the Confederates also had to contend with the known Union forces themselves. The remnants of the Union First and Eleventh Corps had made their way to Cemetery Hill and begun to rally starting around 4:30 p.m.³⁶ Both Howard and the recently arrived Hancock began sorting the units out and placing them in defensive positions. Hancock would report that between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. these defensive preparations were complete.³⁷ Using the same methodology to assess the condition of Confederate forces, table 2 shows that most

Winfield Scott Hancock. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

of the First and Eleventh Corps of the Union army were in poor shape.

The exceptions were Smith's brigade left in reserve on Cemetery Hill, the late arriving Seventh Indiana Regiment of Cutler's brigade, and most of Buford's cavalry Division.³⁸ These units were in very good shape and immediately available to meet any sudden Confederate continuation of the at-

³⁶ OR, 27.2:704.

³⁷ OR, 27.2:368.

³⁸ OR, 27.2:383.

TABLE 2. Status of Union brigades, late afternoon day 1

<i>Division</i>	<i>Brigade</i>	<i>Start Strength^a</i>	<i>Active Hours^b</i>	<i>Percent Casualties^c</i>	<i>End Strength</i>	<i>Final Assessment</i>
First Corps (Doubleday)						
Wadsworth	Meredith	1,814	7	65.21	631	Poor
Wadsworth	Cutler ^d	1,566	7	61.56	602	Poor
Wadsworth	Seventh Indiana	434	3	0.00	434	Good
Robinson	Paul	1,547	7	67.36	505	Poor
Robinson	Baxter	1,447	7	47.68	757	Poor
Rowley	Biddle	1,353	7	71.25	389	Poor
Rowley	Stone	1,315	7	65.02	460	Poor
Eleventh Corps (Howard)						
Barlow	Von Gilsa	1,138	7	32.60	767	Poor
Barlow	Ames	1,333	7	40.21	797	Poor
Steinwher	Coster	1,215	7	31.77	829	Poor
Steinwher	Smith	1,644	4	0.00	1,644	Good
Schurz	Schimmelfennig	1,683	7	38.86	1,029	Poor
Schurz	Krzyżanowski	1,424	7	29.00	1,011	Poor
Cavalry						
Buford	Gamble	1,596	8	6.39	1,494	Moderate
Buford	Devin	1,108	2	2.26	1,083	Good

^aPetruzzini and Stanley, *Gettysburg Campaign in Numbers and Losses*, 100–14.

^bUnit start times were derived from Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 70; Coddington, *Gettysburg Campaign*, 262; and the reports of Doubleday in OR, 27:1:244, Wadsworth in OR, 27:1:265, and Howard in OR, 27:1:701.

^cDay 1 casualties were determined by estimating the casualties sustained by the units on days 2 and 3 through a comparative analysis of other units and subtracted from their reported total casualties.

^dCutler's brigade minus the Seventh Indiana, who did not arrive on the battlefield until later in the afternoon, in time to reinforce Culp's Hill (hence the separate line for the Seventh Indiana below).

tack, particularly those coming from the approaches illustrated in map 2. Additionally, the longer the Confederates took to get their forces in motion, the longer the Union forces had to recover from their day's exertion, gradually mitigating the impact of hours spent marching and fighting.

While these units consolidated and recovered, other Union reinforcements were rapidly closing on the battlefield. After some initial confusion, Henry Slocum's Twelfth Corps with two divisions approached the battlefield from the Baltimore Pike, which led into Gettysburg from the southeast. One division, under Alpheus Williams, with 3,415 men had actually made it to Benner's Hill and was about to attack it, when it was called back to the Baltimore Pike around 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. (this force was undetected by the Confederates and was not the cause of the diversion of Ewell's two brigades mentioned

earlier).³⁹ The other division, under John Geary, with 3,938 men reported in place at 5:00 p.m. about one mile south of Cemetery Hill.⁴⁰ Contrasting these reinforcements against the time line illustrated in figure 1, by the time the Confederates could strike Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill (between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m.), 12,008 Union forces in good condition would have been in place or within easy supporting distance. Even as early as 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., the Confederates would have had to contend with 8,593 Union troops in good condition near Cemetery Hill and Williams's 3,415 men looming off to their left flank.

Lastly, and most apparent to the Confederates, was the array of Union artillery ready on Cemetery

³⁹ Troy D. Harmon, "In Defense of Henry Slocum on July 1," in *Leadership in the Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg: Papers of the Ninth Gettysburg National Military Park Seminar* (Gettysburg PA: Gettysburg National Military Park, 2002), 73.

⁴⁰ Harmon, "In Defense of Henry Slocum on July 1," 71.

Hill. The better parts of nine batteries were resupplied, set up, and covering the approaches to the hill from the east, west, and from the town. The batteries had been in the fight throughout the day and had lost eight guns out of fifty-four, mainly from capture.⁴¹ Those that remained were well manned and expertly sighted by their commanders.⁴² Map 3 graphically illustrates the area covered by these guns if the Confederates had continued the attack. The darker shades represent a greater number and heavier caliber of guns able to fire into those

Henry Warner Slocum. Courtesy of the U. S. Army Military History Institute.

areas, and the ranges equate to the distances the type of gun could reach owing to its design and the terrain.⁴³

The best counter to enemy artillery is friendly artillery. Ewell, on the east side of Gettysburg, had

⁴¹ Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 333.

⁴² Hunt, "First Day at Gettysburg," 283.

⁴³ Ranges were taken from the Confederate field manual, Ordnance Bureau, *The Field Manual for the Use of the Officers on Ordnance Duty* (Richmond: Ritchie and Dunnivant, 1862), 114, 115, and 122. Battery composition taken from Petruzzini and Stanley, *Gettysburg Campaign in Numbers and Losses*, 100–14. Battery locations taken from Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg*, 334; and from the personal investigation of the battlefield by the author.

John W. Geary. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Alpheus Williams. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Map 3. Fields of fire of Union artillery that could be brought to bear on a Confederate assault on Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill on July 1. Map by Phil Laino.

thirty guns of which four had been put out of action by the day's fighting. Hill, on the west side, had sixty-nine guns with three out of action.⁴⁴ However, these numbers are deceiving. Of Ewell's remaining guns, only nine were long-range, shooting three-inch Ordnance Rifles, or ten-pound Parrott Rifles. The rest were medium-range Napoleons or short-range howitzers. Hill, likewise, had twenty-eight long-range shooters. To bring all their guns to bear would require more than half of them to ride in and set up under the plunging fire from the Union batteries. The rifled guns could keep their distance, but their effect at long range (1,500–2,000 yards) would be greatly diminished. Ewell understood this and assessed that there were no good artillery positions to bear on Cemetery Hill from his side.⁴⁵ Lee saw this problem as well from his vantage point and directed his artillery commander to position two artillery battalions south and west of Cemetery Hill so as to gain enfilading fire on the Union artillery. This proved fruitless, as no infantry was available to protect the guns from the aggressive stance Buford's cavalry was putting up in that area.⁴⁶ Without adequate artillery support, making an attack on Cemetery Hill would be very costly for the attacker, thus adding yet another deterrent to making such an attack.

Possibly, an extraordinary effort fueled by desperation, and uncharacteristic inaction on the part of the Union forces, could have given the Confederates a chance of achieving a successful attack on Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg. However, this desperate urgency really only became apparent after the battle. Even so, given what the Confederates faced in the late afternoon of that first day, any attempt had little to no chance of succeeding. First, of the forc-

es immediately available to the Confederates, only four brigades with 4,500 men were anywhere near in shape to make an attack. Second, because of inadequate cavalry support, they had no intelligence on what they would face in terms of both enemy and terrain, other than what they could directly see. Third, they had less than three hours before sunset and less than four hours before darkness to decide, reorganize, deploy, and conduct an attack. Last, the Union had nine thousand to twelve thousand good-condition forces available to seriously contest any attempt made.

Perhaps the greatest factor against the Confederates taking action at the end of the first day was their attitude and overconfidence. They left it to the next day to beat their enemy once again. Confederate general E. P. Alexander later wrote, "Like the rest of the army generally, nothing gave me much concern so long as I knew that Gen. Lee was in command. I am sure there can never have been an army with more supreme confidence in its commander than that army had in Gen. Lee. We looked forward to victory under him as confidently as to successive sunrises."⁴⁷

James Arthur Fremantle, a British officer attached to the Confederates during the battle, captured it best. While sitting with a number of Confederate officers after the first day, he recorded, "The staff officers spoke of the battle as a certainty, and the universal feeling in the army was one of profound contempt for an enemy they have beaten so constantly, and under so many disadvantages."⁴⁸

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⁴⁴ Bert Barnett, "Confederate Artillery Operations on the First Day of Gettysburg," in *The Gettysburg Campaign and First Day of Battle: Papers of the Tenth Gettysburg National Military Park Seminar* (Gettysburg PA: Gettysburg National Military Park, 2005), 203, 211.

⁴⁵ OR, 27.2:445.

⁴⁶ Barnett, "Confederate Artillery Operations on the First Day of Gettysburg," 211.

⁴⁷ Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 222.

⁴⁸ Walter Lord, ed., *The Fremantle Diary: A Journey of the Confederacy* (Short Hills, NJ: Buford Books, 1954), 205.