Blueprint for Glory, Part II: The May 1863 Reorganization of the Army of Northern Virginia

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Blueprint for Glory, Part II

The May 1863 Reorganization of the Army of Northern Virginia

CHARLES NORVILLE

Gen. Robert E. Lee was disappointed in May 1863 as he pondered his recent victory at Chancellorsville.¹ To be sure, his Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) had just won an impressive victory over tremendous odds—the greatest disparity of strength Lee had yet faced. But the victory had come at a high cost. Lee's nearly 13,000 casualties constituted a loss of 22 percent of his effective strength and included the irreplaceable commander of half his infantry—Lt. Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson.² And although bloodied, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker’s defiant Army of the Potomac (AOP) had escaped back across the Rappahannock River where Lee could not get at it. If left alone, the Federals would rebuild and come back stronger than ever.

Lee realized that such pyrrhic victories as the one at Chancellorsville could not be sustained by the increasingly manpower-strapped South. As he had previously noted in a January 1863 letter to Secretary of War James A. Seddon, “The lives of our soldiers are too precious to be sacrificed in the attainment of successes that inflict no loss on the enemy beyond the actual loss in battle. Every victory should bring us nearer to the great end which it the object of this war to reach.”³ Yet Lee had just won a costly victory that met neither of the criteria stated above. He needed a decisive victory before the conflict turned into a war of attrition that he knew the South could not win. To attain a war-ending victory, Lee needed to maneuver the Army of the Potomac from behind its unassailable position on the Rappahannock and well away from the refuge provided by the defenses of Washington. Once accomplished, Lee could engage it at a time and place of his own choosing and destroy it, forcing Washington to sue for peace, and effectively ending the war.

Lee was offered the opportunity to do just that in the wake of his victory at Chancellorsville, as sixty of Hooker’s infantry regiments were due to muster out of service in May, June, and July, offsetting some of the disparity in strength between the two armies. If Lee could retain the initiative seized at Chancellorsville to exploit a weakened Army of the Potomac, that elusive decisive victory might yet be attained. But to do so would require additional combat strength drawn from less threatened areas of the Confederacy and a more flexible army organizational structure that was better suited for the kind of offensive campaign Lee envisioned. Reorganization, the third over the past year, was called for.

I. The Army of Northern Virginia—1862–1863

Lee had begun molding the newly styled Army of Northern Virginia into a force that was better suited to his style of leadership shortly after assuming

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¹ Lee to Secretary of War James A. Seddon, “At Chancellorsville we gained another victory; our people were wild with delight—I, on the contrary, was more depressed than after Fredericksburg; our loss was severe, and again, we had gained not an inch of ground and the enemy could not be pursued.” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 52 vols. Richmond, VA: 1876–1959, Reissued on CD-ROM, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1991, 4, 153–154.


command on June 1, 1862. He had initially organized the army, as had his predecessor Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, by splitting it into informal groupings of divisions or “wings” commanded by Maj. Gens. James Longstreet and Thomas J. Jackson as well as several independent division-echelon commands. The “wing” arrangement became more formal in July 1862 as Lee carried out his first army-wide reorganization in the aftermath of the Seven Days Campaign. He placed all infantry divisions, under either Longstreet (five divisions) or Jackson (four divisions). At the time, the army also included an oversized cavalry brigade and an army artillery reserve of four battalions—the first higher echelon artillery formations fielded by either side in the war. Subsequently, a cavalry division—the first in American history—was created on July 28 and newly promoted Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart was named to command it. The army fought all subsequent battles during the summer and early fall of 1862 in this configuration.

A second reorganization occurred in the wake of the Maryland Campaign in September and October 1862. Infantry brigades were redistributed to better balance the army’s divisions, regiments were shuffled to eliminate some of the mixed-state brigades, and a number of promising officers were promoted to fill the division and brigade command vacancies that resulted from the heavy summer fighting. A comprehensive reorganization of the artillery arm was also carried out in October that solidified the divisional artillery battalions and consolidated batteries. The two “wings” were officially re-designated as corps on November 6, 1862, with Longstreet commanding what now was styled the First Corps and Jackson commanding the Second. The army that fought at Fredericksburg in December 1862 and Chancellorsville in May 1863 was the result of this second reorganization.

Lee was hamstrung at Chancellorsville by the absence of Longstreet and three of his divisions with their eleven brigades and accompanying artillery battalions which had been detached to collect supplies in Southside Virginia. This left Lee with only twenty-eight of his army’s thirty-nine infantry brigades. Longstreet returned to the army following the Chancellorsville Campaign, but four of his brigades were retained in North Carolina and near Richmond for the capital’s defense despite Lee’s strong objections.

Further, Lee had to detach most of his artillery and cavalry during the winter of 1863 to place their horses closer to sources of fodder, thereby reducing the logistical burden on his already badly strained supply infrastructure. All but twelve of the army’s artillery batteries were sent to camps from twenty to thirty miles south of Fredericksburg after January 1, 1863. Most were able to rejoin the army in time for Chancellorsville, but a number of horses had to remain behind being too weak to work. Similarly, two cavalry brigades were forced to winter far from the army, leaving only two brigades close enough to the army to participate in the Chancellorsville Campaign.

4 OR, 11.3:568–69, 571.
6 Five US regular artillery regiments existed and a small number of Federal volunteer artillery regiments were raised but none of these ever fought in the field as units. Rather, their constituent batteries were dispersed throughout the army. Confederate artillery battalions fought as units when conditions were conducive or as smaller entities (batteries or even sections) as circumstances demanded.
8 Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, II, 250–282.
9 Two division commanders, Hood and Pickett, were promoted to major general on October 10, 1862. A total of twelve officers were promoted to brigadier general on November 1, including G. T. Anderson, Cooke, Course, Doles, Gordon, Iverson, Lane, Paxton, Posey, Ramseur, J. Robertson, and Thomas. One other infantry brigadier had been promoted in September (Colquitt) and two in October (Law and Nichols), OR, 19.2:618–19, 621, 628–29, 633–34, 643–44, 683–84, 698–99. Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray: The Lives of the Confederate Commanders, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 6–7, 61, 63–58, 64, 74, 111, 147, 172–75, 233–25, 239–30, 236–37, 244–45, 251–52, 261–62, 305–06.
10 The Confederate Congress passed a law on Sept. 18, 1862 authorizing the creation of army corps of two or more divisions and establishing the rank of lieutenant general. The army was reorganized over the next seven weeks from September 18 to November 6. The result was announced in Special Order 234 on November 6. OR, 19.2:643, 698–99; Joseph L. Harsh, Sounding the Shallows: A Confederate Companion for the Maryland Campaign of 1862 (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000), 51–52, 86–87.
11 OR, 1.2:1538–45.
13 OR, 1.2:5789–94.
15 Sears, Chancellorsville, 53–55.
16 Sears, Chancellorsville, 35.
Gen. Joseph E. Johnston formed the army into divisions, but was slow to carry out further organization. Library of Congress.
Lee Ponders a Third Army Reorganization

Lee had been contemplating a third reorganization even before Chancellorsville. The two infantry corps system used so successfully in 1862 had shown weaknesses and had grown increasingly hard to handle given the rapidly changing conditions of the war’s eastern theater. As Lee observed in a post-Chancellorsville letter to President Davis, his two army corps were too unwieldy for effective battlefield command and control:

I have for the past year felt that the corps of this army were too large for one commander. Nothing prevented my proposing to you to reduce their size but my inability to recommend commanders. Each corps contains, when in fighting condition, about 30,000 men. These are more than one man can properly handle and keep under his eye in battle in the country that we have to operate in. They are always beyond the range of his vision, and frequently beyond his reach. The loss of Jackson from command of one-half the army seems to me a good opportunity to remedy this evil.17

Lee clearly recognized that the span of control of his two corps commanders was too large—especially given the broken and heavily wooded nature of the terrain in Northern Virginia. He probably also harbored doubts as to whether an officer of sufficient ability could be found to replace Jackson in command of half the army. With Davis’ concurrence, Lee reorganized his army into three infantry corps of approximately 20,000 men each, even as he sought both to augment his army from less threatened sectors and the return of his missing brigades.18

Several thoughts must have been foremost in Lee’s mind. First, he would need infantry corps large enough to be self-sufficient, capable of independent operations, and able to deliver heavy blows or conduct tenacious defenses while still being compact enough to march rapidly and mass quick-

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17 Lee to Davis, May 20, 1863, OR, 25:2:810.
artillery reserve was abolished.

Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson’s five-brigade division was transferred from the First Corps to the new Third Corps. Anderson had ably commanded a South Carolina brigade in Longstreet’s division during the early stages of the Peninsula Campaign. When Longstreet assumed his informal “wing” command for the Seven Days, Anderson, as the senior brigadier, filled in as his replacement at division command. His status became official in July when he gained promotion to major general.20 The division’s composition underwent several changes over the summer of 1862. By the time it fought at Antietam in September it contained the five infantry brigades it would have at Gettysburg. Anderson’s brigades, including one each from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia, were battle-hardened, cohesive, and well-seasoned. His sixth brigade, the Virginians commanded by Brig. Gen. Louis Armistead, was transferred to Pickett’s Division during the September-October reorganization.21

The new Third Corps was also given a division from the Second Corps. A.P. Hill’s six-brigade Light Division was organized on the Peninsula on May 27, 1862, the day after he had been promoted major general.22 Shortly thereafter, Hill and his division

II. Lee Reorganizes—The Third Corps, ANV is Created

Lee transformed his army between May 7 and June 6, and he did so with minimal changes to his highly cohesive infantry brigades and divisions. To accomplish the transition from two army corps to three, Lee took one infantry division each from the First and Second Corps to serve as the basis for a new Third Corps. He also organized an additional division and an artillery battalion to flesh out the new corps.19 Under the new structure, artillery battalions moved around to even out the artillery assets in each corps with each division including an artillery battalion. The three corps were each assigned two battalions as a corps artillery reserve and the army

19 OR, 25:2:800.

20 Anderson was promoted brig. gen. on July 18, 1861, and maj. gen. on July 14, 1862. Warner, Generals in Gray, 8–9.
22 OR, 11.3:554–55, 567; Warner, Generals in Gray, 134–35. Hill first referred to his command as the “Light Division” on June 1, 1862, not because it was small in size but to honor the fast-marching, hard-fighting Light Division in the Duke of Wellington’s Peninsula Army during the Napoleonic Wars.
distinguished themselves in sanguinary fighting during the Seven Days. Hill quarreled with Longstreet in the aftermath of the campaign and to ease tensions, Lee forwarded the division to Jackson's command in central Virginia in July 1862. On August 9 the Light Division arrived on the field at Cedar Mountain in time to turn looming defeat into victory for Jackson. Similarly, Hill, marching with five of his brigades from Harpers Ferry, arrived on the field at Antietam just in time to help turn back an attack by Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's Ninth Corps that saved Lee's army. Throughout, the Light Division remained compositionally unchanged from its original organization.

The Light Division was transferred to the Third Corps under the May 1863 reorganization. Two of its infantry brigades were detached to form the nucleus of a new division and its oversized artillery battalion became one of the Third Corps' two reserve battalions. In return, the Light Division received a newly organized battalion. The division's four remaining brigades, including one each from Georgia and South Carolina, and two from North Carolina, had endured minimal organizational change since their initial formation a year earlier. Organizational stability at all echelons had created a highly cohesive veteran formation with a record of battlefield prowess and success that was second to none in the army.

The newly created Third Corps division was built around the nucleus of two former Light Division brigades—the mixed Alabama and Tennessee brigade of Brig. Gen. James J. Archer and a Virginia brigade that had been commanded at Chancellorsville by Brig. Gen. Henry Heth, but would soon be again under the command of its senior colonel. Two green brigades recently assigned to the army and commanded by Brig. Gens. James J. "Johnston" Pettigrew and Joseph R. Davis were assigned to the new division as was the former artillery battalion of Anderson's division. To complete the new division's organization, a supply infrastructure, division trains, and medical apparatus were assembled from scratch.

Johnston Pettigrew had commanded a brigade on the Peninsula before being wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines the day before Lee took command of the army. Believing his wound to be mortal, he would not allow himself to be taken to the rear. Pettigrew awoke a prisoner in a Union hospital, recovered, and was exchanged in August. He was assigned a newly formed brigade in eastern North Carolina in September 1862. In May 1863, the brigade was ordered to join Lee's army but had to drop off the 44th North Carolina at Hanover Junction on the way, which was detached for local security duties for the remainder of the campaign. The brigade (minus the 44th) joined Lee's army with 2,744 officers and men, making it the army's largest, despite its missing regiment. The brigade had seen no combat beyond skirmishing.

Joseph Davis was the nephew of Pres. Jefferson Davis. He entered the army shortly after Mississippi seceded and he served briefly in the 10th Mississippi without seeing any combat before transferring to his uncle's staff in Richmond. His rise thereafter was rapid due to his uncle's influence and he was assigned and assigned a newly organized brigade in North Carolina in January 1863. The brigade was created from two Mississippi regiments that had seen extensive combat with the ANV and two new regiments—one each from Mississippi and North Carolina—that had seen no fighting at all. The brigade participated in the Suffolk Campaign before being assigned to the ANV in May 1863 but had seen no action beyond skirmishing.

Thus the new Third Corps was created with two solid, veteran divisions and one that included two veteran and two green brigades. To these would be added a reserve of two artillery battalions to complete the corps' organization. Two divisions had been subordinated to the new corps and one of those had lost two brigades, but otherwise, they re-

mained intact. Most importantly, the eleven highly cohesive veteran brigades of those two divisions remained compositionally unaltered. Units at the crucial brigade echelon that were accustomed to working together, had fought together, had come to rely on and trust each other, and were commanded by familiar officers remained intact without disruption.

The new division was another story. The division commander would be new to that level of command, and both he and his staff officers would have to learn their enlarged duties and responsibilities. Mistakes would occur. Friction not found in veteran organizations would be inevitable for a while, but things would improve with time. The two veteran former Light Division brigades remained intact, but they had been grouped with two new brigades that had yet to see combat. The green brigades would develop their own cohesion as they endured combat and added shared experiences to their records. Meanwhile, they had the example of veterans to emulate. The division's four brigades would have to learn to operate together and come to rely on each other, and that too would take time. All that said, it does seem ironic that this, the least cohesive division of the least cohesive corps in the ANV would be the first to make contact with the enemy at Gettysburg, drawing both armies into a battle at a time and place that neither wanted.

The creation of a new corps-echelon command did not stop there. Moving existing pieces around to create new tactical formations was the easy part and constituted only the tip of the iceberg. The new corps commander would have greatly enlarged responsibilities to master. He would be accorded unaccustomed levels of responsibility, discretion, and independence for which nothing in his experience as a division commander would have prepared him. During operations, he might very well find his corps physically separated from, and acting independently of, the rest of the army. He might be entrusted with the responsibility for independent or semi-independent operations requiring initiative, resourcefulness, decisiveness, self-restraint, and sound judgment—sometimes in succession or even all at once. With a third of the army under his command, a good day on the job might ensure victory, while a bad day could spell disaster for the army.

The new corps commander would bring his former division staff with him, but the increased responsibilities would require additional headquarters personnel—officers, adjutants, inspectors, copyists, and couriers, to name but a few. Corps quartermaster, ordnance, and commissary apparatus would have to be created. Corps trains would have to be organized and horses, wagons, and teamsters found to transport the impedimenta of war. A medical service with doctors, ambulances, and medical supplies was also required. In short, the entire infrastructure required to support, supply, and sustain 23,000 men, eighty-four cannons, and hundreds of horses and mules in the field had to be built largely ex nihilo.

The First Corps
Longstreet's First Corps, having already lost the two brigades of Brig. Gen. Robert Ransom's Division and two of Pickett's five brigades in returning to northern Virginia, now lost Richard Anderson's Division to the reorganization. Longstreet, now minus nine brigades, was left with the eleven brigades in the divisions of Maj. Gens. Lafayette McLaw, John B. Hood, and George E. Pickett's three remaining brigades.

McLaw's Division was nearly identical to the one he had led at Antietam, nine months before Gettysburg. The September-October reorganization completed its formation by homogenizing its brigades with regiments from the same state. Brig. Gen. Thomas Cobb was mortally wounded while defending the stone wall at Fredericksburg and was replaced in command by the brigade's senior colonel, William T. Wofford of the 18th Georgia, who was subsequently promoted brigadier general in January 1863. Otherwise the division remained unchanged and in the familiar hands of experienced and trusted officers.

Maj. Gen. John B. Hood's Division was a more recent creation, although he had been commanding

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27 Ex nihilo, from Latin, meaning “out of nothing.” Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 172.
28 Two Virginia regiments were transferred from Semmes’ Brigades and were replaced, one-for-one, by two veteran Georgia regiments. Wofford’s Brigade lost one North Carolina regiment but gained two veteran Georgia units—a regiment and a battalion. Kershaw’s South Carolina Brigade lost no units and was augmented by one veteran regiment and one veteran battalion while Barksdale’s Mississippi Brigade remained unchanged having already achieved its final organization prior to the Seven Days. One battery was also transferred from McLaw’s artillery battalion, reducing it to four. OR, 19.1:803–10; OR, 21.1:538–45; OR, 25.1:789–94.
29 Wofford along with three brigadiers was promoted on January 17, 1863. Warner, Generals in Gray, 56, 345–44.
division-sized formations since July 1862. By June 1863, Hood was considered by many to be the best division commander in the army. The division was formed during the September-October 1862 reorganization by merging Hood’s two-brigade division with two brigades from David R. Jones’ division.

Hood’s command at Second Manassas and Antietam had included his former command, the crack Texas brigade, Evander Law’s mixed-state brigade, and an artillery battalion. To these were added the veteran Georgia brigades of George T. Anderson and Henry L. Benning. Those brigades had remained compositionally unchanged since before the Seven Days. A final tweak in January 1863 gave Law three Alabama regiments from the Second Corps in exchange for his North Carolina regiments to create an all-Alabama command. An artillery battery was also added to the division’s artillery battalion in April. Alone among Hood’s brigades, Law’s was the only one that had never fought as a unit, although Law himself had been in brigade command since before Seven Pines in May 1862 and all five of his regiments were experienced and well-seasoned. Hood’s division missed the Chancellorsville Campaign, being on detached duty with Longstreet near Suffolk, but returned to the army intact and eager for action.

Like Hood’s, Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett’s division was on detached duty and missed the Chancellorsville Campaign. Unlike Hood, Pickett had to detach two brigades near Richmond while on route back to the army. Neither would rejoin the division prior to its return to Virginia in mid-July.

Pickett had been promoted to Brigadier Gen, on January 14, 1862 and commanded his Virginia brigade on the Peninsula and during the Seven Days as part of the Longstreet/Anderson division, at Second Manassas as part of James Kemper’s division, and at Antietam in David R. Jones’ division. Pickett’s division was created at the same time as Hood’s during the September-October reorganization and Pickett was promoted major general on October 10, 1862. He was assigned the veteran Virginia brigades commanded by Brig. Gens. James Kemper, Richard Garnett, Louis Armistead, and Montgomery Corse, the South Carolinaan brigade of Micah Jenkins, plus an all-Virginia artillery battalion. Although a skilled and successful brigade commander, Pickett frequently seemed out of his element at division command. Longstreet’s assistant adjutant general noted that, “Taking Longstreet’s orders in emergencies, I could always see how he looked after Pickett, and made us give him things very fully; indeed, sometimes stay with him to make sure he did not go astray.” As the Gettysburg Campaign began, Pickett had never actually led his division into combat despite having commanded it for nearly eight months.

Due to the continuity of a solid and well-established command structure, supply apparatus, and compositional stability of the three remaining divisions, Longstreet’s was perhaps the most cohesive of the three corps. Longstreet had proven himself to be a superb combat commander, capable of delivering sledgehammer blows, although he was at times a bit slow. Longstreet’s staff officers were among the very best in the army and were well schooled by long experience in the performance of their duties. His division and brigade commanders were competent and experienced. The loss of two divisions would not affect the three that remained and Pickett, although short two brigades, still had sufficient combat power to be effective. Having missed the heavy fighting at Chancellorsville, Hood’s and Pickett’s divisions had full complements of officers, and their soldiers were anxious to get back into the fight. And, although McLaws’ division had been bloodied in hard fighting at Chancellorsville, none of its brigade commanders had become casualties. Five ably-led veteran artillery battalions rounded out the corps and stood ready to provide

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32 Law was promoted brigadier general to date from October 3, 1862, making him the division’s senior brigadier. Warner, Generals in Gray, 174–75.
33 These were Brig. Gen. Montgomery Corse’s Virginia Brigade and Brig. Gen. Micah Jenkins’ South Carolina Brigade. Bowden and Ward, Last Chance for Victory, 36–38; Coddington, Study in Command, 19–21.
The Second Corps

The Second Corps, Stonewall Jackson's former command, was likewise reduced to three divisions. It retained the division of Maj. Gen. Jubal A. Early, the leaderless Stonewall Division, and the division formerly commanded by Maj. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill.39

Early's division had been Maj. Gen. Richard S. Ewell's until he was wounded at the Battle of Groveton on August 28, 1862, resulting in the loss of a leg. Brig. Gen. Alexander Lawton assumed command of the division for three weeks until he was wounded at Antietam, leaving Early in command as the senior surviving brigadier. Early remained in command through Fredericksburg and was finally promoted and officially appointed as the division's commander in January 1863.40 The division was formed in early 1862 with three brigades. By the time it moved into central Virginia in July, Early was in command of the division's largest brigade. A fourth brigade was added in time for Antietam, completing the division's macro organization. The final compositional changes were carried out in early 1863 as three regiments were traded with Evander Law's First Corps brigade to give Brig. Gen. Robert Hoke a brigade made up entirely of North Carolina regiments, the other brigades having achieved their final compositions earlier. The division went into action at Chancellorsville with three veteran brigades of long standing including Brig. Gen. William Smith's Virginians, Harry T. Hays' Louisianans, and John B. Gordon's Georgians, as well as Hoke's Brigade of veteran Tarheel regiments that had not previously fought together as a unit.41 When the smoke cleared, Hoke had been wounded.

Stonewall Jackson's former division lacked a commander entering the May 1863 reorganization, as did each of its four veteran brigades. The division had been led by a succession of generally unfortunate brigadiers since the Seven Days including Charles Winder, killed at Cedar Mountain; William B. Taliaferro, wounded at Second Manassas; William E. Starke at Chantilly, John R. Jones (incapacitated) followed by Starke (mortally wounded) at Antietam, Taliaferro at Fredericksburg, and Raleigh Colston at Chancellorsville. Chancellorsville had been particularly disastrous to the division's leadership. The division's performance was tepid and lacking in the aggressiveness that had characterized it in past conflicts. As a result, acting division commander Colston was transferred from the army following the battle. The division had also sustained a number of severe blows at brigade echelon. Brig. Gen. Elisha Paxton was killed at the head of the Stonewall Brigade, Brig. Gen. Francis Nichols was wounded while leading his Louisianans, Brig. Gen. John R. Jones was relieved of the command of his brigade of Virginians, and the remaining brigade, Colston's mixed Virginia and North Carolina command, was now under the leadership of its senior colonel.42

The nucleus of three of the division's brigades had been present in the Shenandoah Valley more than a year before. A fourth brigade was added in the aftermath of the Seven Days, and the division fought from Cedar Mountain to Chancellorsville with that organization. A final tweak involving three regimental exchanges took place in April 1863, but the composition of the division had remained essentially unchanged for nearly a year.43 A division commander and four brigadiers would be required to bring the division's leadership team back to strength.

The other leaderless Second Corps division had been commanded by Maj. Gen. D. H. Hill prior to his assignment to North Carolina in January 1863. The division could trace its lineage back to shortly before the Battle of Seven Pines, by which time it already contained the nucleus of four of its five constituent brigades. Its fifth brigade was added prior to the Seven Days, by which time four of the brigades had been homogenized with regiments from the same state, including Alabama, Georgia, and two from North Carolina. The division remained behind near Richmond when most of the rest of the army moved north to confront Maj. Gen.

38 Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 130.

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Georgia brigade from the division and sent it to North Carolina in May 1863 in exchange for a large, inexperienced Tarheel brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. Junius Daniel. Daniel had served as the colonel of the 45th North Carolina on the Peninsula. He was promoted and commanded a brigade during the Seven Days that was not engaged other than being shelled at the Battle of Malvern Hill. Afterwards, Daniel’s Brigade was transferred to North Carolina where it had remained.

The heavy fighting of the past year had taken a toll on the storied corps of Stonewall Jackson. Most of the command vacancies were filled by the time the army left the Rappahannock in June. New to command would be the corps commander, two of three division commanders, and five of thirteen brigade commanders. However, twelve of the corps’ thirteen brigades were veteran formations with proud histories and traditions of success. Rounding out the corps’ organization were five veteran artillery battalions. All told, the corps boasted nearly 22,000 officers and men and seventy-eight cannons.

In summary, the result of the May 1863 reorganization was a three-corps structure in which each corps contained three infantry divisions of four or five infantry brigades and one artillery battalion each. Each corps also had a reserve of two artillery battalions. At full strength, each corps commander would have thirteen infantry brigades and five artillery battalions at his disposal. The reorganization created three large, powerful corps of roughly equal size and combat capability. The new corps structure gave their commanders a more compact and flexible organization while still retaining sufficient infantry and artillery strength to permit them to operate and fight effectively in an independent role. Eight of nine infantry divisions and thirty-two of thirty-seven infantry brigades were veteran formations—many of long standing. Two of the others were recently transformed brigades that

John Pope’s Federal army in the Second Manassas Campaign. Rejoining in time for the Maryland Campaign, the division fought hard at the passes in South Mountain on September 14 to buy a day for Lee to concentrate his army along Antietam Creek, losing Brig. Gen. Samuel Garland who was killed. Assigned to the center at Antietam, Hill’s troops held the sunken road (a.k.a. Bloody Lane) against ferocious Federal attacks until being forced back, losing Brig. Gens. Roswell Ripley (wounded) and George B. Anderson (mortally wounded).

Three colonels—Alfred Iverson, George Doles, and Stephen Ramseur—were promoted on November 1, 1862, joining Brig. Gens. Robert Rodes and Alfred Colquitt in brigade command. The full complement of brigadiers was present at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. However, an exchange of brigades took Alfred Colquitt’s veteran

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47 Warner, Generals in Gray, 66–67; Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 164.
49 Six of the nine infantry divisions had four subordinate infantry brigades. However, one division in each corps contained five brigades. These were First Corps: Pickett’s division; Second Corps: Rodes’ division; Third Corps: Anderson’s division. As noted above, two of Pickett’s brigades remained in Virginia when the army moved north, leaving Longstreet with only eleven brigades during the campaign. OR, 27:2:289–91.
consisted entirely of solid, veteran regiments. Only three were new to the army and inexperienced.

At the head of the army with five major campaigns now under his belt, Lee had learned to wield his veteran formations and subordinate commanders with boldness and deftness. Both officers and men understood how Lee operated and what he expected of them as a result of having served under him for over a year. And, they trusted him implicitly. An officer on Longstreet’s staff later noted that “[W]hen the men move in the Army of Northern Virginia they think they are doing the proper thing, whether it be backward or forward, and if all the success anticipated is not secured, at all events it is not Lee’s fault.” The army’s unabated record of success over the preceding year inspired that trust. Maj. Thomas Elder of the 3rd Virginia Infantry had previously noted that “Lee continues to grow in the confidence and esteem of our soldiers and people. Our troops idolize him, and . . . I cannot find terms adequate to express my admiration of him. . . . He is, beyond doubt, much the ablest man engaged on either side in this war. . . . I am glad to know I am serving my country with some degree of usefulness in this hour of trial. To have served during the war in General Lee’s army is indeed . . . a subject of honest pride.”

III. Leadership, Command Vacancies, and Replacement Commanders

In addition to adjusting the army’s organization after assuming command in 1862, Lee immediately sought to fill command vacancies and to secure promotions for the most deserving officers. Lee had found some of his army’s leaders wanting during the Seven Days and he began to divest himself of their services shortly thereafter. Lee did not oppose the transfer of officers he considered incompetent or unfit, and actively advocated for the transfer of others. Working closely with Pres. Jefferson Davis, Lee sought to promote officers whose performance seemed to justify higher command responsibilities to fill the vacancies thus created.

Officer casualties also tended to be heavy in Lee’s army where commanders were expected to lead from the front. The constant attrition of combat leaders, particularly in the infantry, was an ongoing problem as reflected in a letter Lee wrote to Maj. Gen. John Hood, “I agree with you in believing that our army would be invincible if it could be properly organized and officered. There never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led. But there is the difficulty—proper officers—where can they be obtained?”

To replace transferred or fallen officers, Lee recommended men for promotion who took good care of their troops, were good disciplinarians, who were aggressive in combat, and whenever possible, were men with professional military training and experience. Lee also liked to promote officers who were known to the men they would command, preferably from within the same brigade or division. With brigades organized along state lines, there was also that affiliation to consider. Finally, to be promoted in Lee’s army also required a degree of luck in that a deserving officer had to survive long enough to prove himself worthy of promotion. Conversely, Lee sought to replace officers who ignored the condition of their men, were poor disciplinarians, were lacking in judgment or personal courage, were overly cautious, or were too fond of the bottle. Lee was not a commander who willingly entrusted the lives of his men to unsatisfactory officers when he could avoid it.

By Chancellorsville, Lee had had a significant hand in the appointment of both corps commanders, eight of ten division commanders, and all but ten of thirty-nine infantry brigade commanders. The leadership team of the Army of Northern Virginia was very much of his own creation and he meant to

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52 Lee assumed command on June 1, 1862, and on the very next day, wrote to Jefferson Davis requesting the promotion ofCols. James J. Archer, James L. Kemper, and Ambrose R. Wright to brigadier general. Lee to Davis, June 2, 1862, OR, 11:2:569–70.
54 Freeman, II, 702.
offered up the names of Longstreet and Jackson for corps command to President Davis. In the same note, Lee added his third choice in the event that one of the others was found unacceptable, stating, “I consider A. P. Hill the best commander with me. He fights his troops well and takes good care of them.”

Among the other candidates, Richard Anderson was competent and capable of hard fighting but was not the strongest choice among those being considered, though he would serve adequately if required. One of Longstreet’s staff noted of Anderson that “His courage was of the highest order, but he was indolent. His capacity and intelligence excellent, but it was hard to get him to use them.”

Stuart, though he had led the Second Corps competently at Chancellorsville following Jackson’s wounding, was of much greater value to the army as head of the cavalry arm. And Hood, although promising, had only been a major general since October and needed additional seasoning.

D. H. Hill had been serving in North Carolina since January 1863 and, though a tenacious fighter, his relations with Lee had become somewhat strained over his carping and irascibility as a division commander and his more recent reluctance to part with troops to augment Lee’s army for the coming campaign. Longstreet, who had feuded with A.

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58 Lee to Jefferson Davis, October 2, 1862. OR, 19:2:643.
59 Anderson was later brought back from the Third Corps to command the First Corps after Longstreet was wounded in the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864. Warner, Generals in Gray, 8–9.
60 Sorrel, Recollections, 128.
61 Hood was promoted Maj. Gen. on October 10, 1862. Warner, Generals in Gray, 142–143.
62 Lee’s Lieutenants, II, 694–95.
P. Hill in the wake of the Seven Days, would write long after the war was over that “General D. H. Hill was the superior of General A. P. Hill in rank, skill, judgment, and distinguished services.” However, it is unclear as to whether Longstreet offered any objections to A. P. Hill’s promotion at the time.

McLaws, the senior major general still with the army, was quietly competent when closely supervised, but had made several errors when operating independently during the Maryland and Chancellorsville Campaigns. If Longstreet, his corps commander, advocated for McLaws’ promotion to corps command at this time, there is no extant record of it. Longstreet would later relieve him of command during the Knoxville Campaign, but McLaws was subsequently exonerated and restored to command. After a bitter fight in which Longstreet threatened to resign if McLaws were reinstated in command of his former division, McLaws was given a command in Georgia. Writing after the war, an embittered Longstreet would attribute the non-selection of D. H. Hill, a North Carolinian, and McLaws, a Georgian, to the fact that they were not Virginians. To suggest that Lee would decline to appoint any officer he deemed best qualified for the command of a third of his army over something as frivolous as his native state seems absurd in retrospect.

Lee forwarded the names of Ewell and A. P. Hill to Pres. Davis for promotion to lieutenant general and command of the Second and Third Corps, respectively. Lee noted that Ewell was “an honest, brave soldier, who has always done his duty well.” Hill, Lee wrote, “I think upon the whole, is the best soldier of his grade with me.” Davis and the Congress concurred and the appointments were made.

**Division Command Vacancies**

Lee found himself with four important division command vacancies to fill as the army reorganized. In the Second Corps, D. H. Hill’s division had been without a commander since January, and as strange as it seems, no replacement commander had been assigned to Jackson’s former division since Stonewall had assumed wing command more than a year earlier. In the Third Corps, A. P. Hill’s ascension to corps command left the Light Division in need of a replacement and the newly organized division also needed a commander.

Four officers were appointed to fill the division vacancies. Two of these newly promoted officers, Maj. Gens. Robert Rodes and William D. Pender, would write long after the war was over that “General D. H. Hill was the superior of General A. P. Hill in rank, skill, judgment, and distinguished services.” However, it is unclear as to whether Longstreet offered any objections to A. P. Hill’s promotion at the time.

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63 *Battles and Leaders*, III, 245.
61 *Warner, Generals in Gray*, 204–05.
64 *Battles and Leaders*, III, 245.
65 *Battles and Leaders*, III, 245.
66 *OR*, 25.2:810.
had previously commanded brigades in the divisions they were now assigned to lead. Each had compiled an excellent combat record as a brigade commander during the preceding year.67 As the absent D. H. Hill’s senior brigadier, Rodes had commanded his division at Chancellorsville where his performance seemed to warrant promotion. Pender had a reputation as a brigade commander that was second to none in the army and was A. P. Hill’s handpicked successor to command the Light Division.

Two other officers, Maj. Gen. Edward Johnson and Brig. Gen. Henry Heth, were both new to their divisions. Johnson was new to the ANV, having previously served under Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley where he had only recently recuperated from a severe ankle wound received at the Battle of McDowell in May 1862. Previously promoted to major general in February 1863, Johnson was assigned to command the Stonewall Division.68 Heth was also relatively new, having been with the ANV only long enough to command a brigade in the Light Division at Chancellorsville. Heth’s promotion to major general would not be confirmed until February 1864, but when it finally was, it was backdated to May 24, 1863. To Heth was entrusted the Third Corps’ newly organized division.69

Brigade Command Vacancies
Lee also had eleven brigades in the Second and Third Corps without commanders that resulted from casualties, promotions, resignations, or transfers. These posed a more serious problem, according to historian Douglas S. Freeman, because “for the first time, attrition at the level of brigade command was threatening dangerously the organization of the Army. Some of the most reliable, veteran regiments of the entire army might be rendered ineffective because they would not be well led.”70

One of these vacancies resulted when Brig. Gen. E. F. Paxton was killed in action while leading the Stonewall Brigade at Chancellorsville.71 At Jackson’s own request, Col. James A. Walker of the 13th Virginia’s division was promoted to command the storied brigade, even though he had never served in it.72

A second vacancy in the Stonewall Division occurred when Brig. Gen. John R. Jones left the army during the Battle of Chancellorsville with an ulcerated leg and was promptly relieved of command. His brigade, which had previously been commanded by Jubal Early, was given to Lt. Col. John M. Jones who was at the time serving on Early’s division staff. Jones was subsequently promoted to brigadier on May 15, 1863.73

The third Stonewall Division vacancy was created when Brig. Gen. Raleigh Colston was transferred from the ANV following his poor performance in temporary command of Jackson’s former division at Chancellorsville. The place at the head of his brigade was filled by the appointment of Brig. Gen. George H. Steuart who was new to the ANV. Steuart had previously seen service in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign until being wounded at the Battle of Cross Keys on June 8, 1862. He was returning to service following nearly a year of convalescence.74

A longstanding command vacancy in Jubal Early’s Division had resulted when Brig. Gen. Alexander Lawton had been wounded at Antietam, leaving his senior colonel in command during his lengthy convalescence.75 Meanwhile Col. John B. Gordon of the 6th Alabama, a Georgian from Rodes’ Alabama Brigade, had also been wounded at Antietam and was undergoing a lengthy convalescence of his own. Shortly after his return to the army at the end of March 1863, Gordon was assigned as acting commander of Lawton’s Brigade which he led into battle at Chancellorsville just three weeks later. Gordon and the brigade distinguished themselves and Lee petitioned Richmond for a brigadier generalcy for Gordon to date from May 7. Lee wanted to return Gordon to command Rodes’ former brigade, but in this he was thwarted. By this time, it was clear that Lawton would not return to command his brigade and its officers unanimously asked that Gordon be

72 James A. Walker had previously succeeded A. P. Hill in command of the 13th Virginia Infantry. He was promoted to brigadier general on May 15, 1863. Walker had previously challenged Jackson to a duel while a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute. Warner, Generals in Gray, 319.
73 Warner, Generals in Gray, 164–65.
74 Steuart was promoted brigadier general on March 6, 1862. Warner, Generals in Gray, 58–59, 290–91; Tagg, Generals of Gettysburg, 272–73.
75 Warner, Generals in Gray, 175–76.
assigned in his stead. Faced with such enthusiasm, Lee was forced to accede.76

Three additional vacancies resulted when William Pender, Robert Rodes, and Henry Heth were promoted from brigade to division command. Pender’s place was filled by the promotion of Alfred M. Scales of the 13th North Carolina, the senior colonel in that brigade and an able officer.77 Foiled in his attempt to place John Gordon in command of Rodes’ Brigade, Lee was less sure of the next most senior regimental officer, Col. Edward A. O’Neal of the 26th Alabama. Lee recommended his promotion, which was delivered to Lee’s headquarters dated June 6, 1863. However, it was decided to observe O’Neal during the ensuing campaign and promote him later if he demonstrated sufficient ability to operate effectively at that level. His poor performance at Gettysburg prompted Lee to rescind his recommendation.78 Finally, no suitable commander could be found for Heth’s former command and by default, the brigade was left in the care of its senior officer, Col. John M. Brockenbrough of the 40th Virginia, who had commanded it without distinction for much of the preceding year and under whose leadership discipline had suffered.79

Three other brigadiers, Robert F. Hoke, Francis R. T. Nicholls, and Samuel McGowan, had been wounded at Chancellorsville and their places could not be filled until it was known whether they would return to service with the army.80 A fourth brigadier, Edward A. Perry, came down with typhoid fever shortly after Chancellorsville and required a lengthy convalescence prior to returning to command. The senior colonels in these four brigades would temporarily fill the vacancies pending the return or appointment of permanent commanders.81

Two additional brigadiers returned to the army in May 1863 following lengthy absences and one new brigade commander put in his first appearance with the army. The former were Brig. Gens. Junius Daniel and James J. Pettigrew, both of whom had fought on the Peninsula in 1862. The latter was Brig. Gen. Joseph Davis who had seen no combat at all. These officers were added to the army’s roster when their untested commands were transferred from North Carolina for the ensuing campaign. Daniel’s Brigade was assigned to Rodes’ division in a one-for-one swap for Alfred H. Colquitt’s veteran Georgia brigade.82 Pettigrew’s and Davis’ brigades were assigned to Heth’s Division. These large commands constituted three of the army’s four largest brigades at Gettysburg. Together, they added nearly 7,500 green troops to Lee’s army.83 In exchange for the two inexperienced brigades, the veteran brigades of Brig. Gens. Micah Jenkins and Robert Ransom were held in southern Virginia and North Carolina.84 Lee protested the substitution of tried ANV brigades for green ones in a note to Maj. Gen. D. H. Hill, noting, “The plan you propose of exchanging your full for its [the ANV’s] reduced brigades I fear will add but little to its real strength. It would increase it numerically but weaken it intrinsically by taking away tried troops under experienced officers and replacing them with fresh men and un instructed commanders. I should therefore have more to feed but less to depend on.”85

The Confederate government was unwilling to dictate a solution to the problem and the various commanders were left to work things out as best they could among themselves. In the end, faced by D. H. Hill’s intransigence, Lee was unable either to prevent the substitutions or to obtain the return of his missing brigades. The impact of an additional 10,000-plus veteran infantry on the outcome of the campaign can only be surmised, but in view of the narrowness of the margin of defeat at Gettysburg, it might well have been decisive.86

77 Alfred M. Scales had previously been colonel of Dorsey Pender’s former regiment, the 13th North Carolina Infantry. He was promoted to brigadier general on June 13, 1863. Warner, Generals in Gray, 268–69.
78 Warner, Generals in Gray, 226.
79 Tagg, Generals of Gettysburg, 347.
80 McGowan and Perry would eventually return to service with the army.
81 These were Cols. Isaac E. Avery of the 6th North Carolina (Hoke’s Brigade/Early), David Lang of the 8th Florida (Perry’s Brigade/Anderson), Abner Perrin of the 14th South Carolina (McGowan’s Brigade/Pender), and Jesse M. Williams of the 2nd Louisiana (Nicholls’ Brigade/Johnson), Tagg, Generals of Gettysburg, 267–68, 281–82, 322–23, 350–31; Gottfried, Brigades of Gettysburg, 496, 557, 584, 641.
82 OR, 25:281.
83 Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 164, 174–75.
84 Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, II, 710–11.
85 Lee to D. H. Hill, May 16, 1863; OR, 18:1206.
86 The following units were detached from the Army of Northern Virginia prior to or during the Gettysburg Campaign: Robert Ransom’s division (5,095); from Pickett’s division (3,853); from Early’s division (743); from Heth’s division (400); from Rodes’ division (1,711); from Stuart’s cavalry division (approx. 1,500).
Leadership Analysis and Summary

In summary, the post-May 1863 reorganization ANV was officered by men of experience and talent, selected for their proven abilities on many battlefields, and possessing the requisite rank to discharge their responsibilities. In addition, Lee, all three corps commanders, and all ten division commanders were graduates of a military academy, and thirty-one of forty-four infantry and cavalry brigade commanders (70 percent) were professionally trained, had pre-war military experience, or both. In the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg, the army commander, seven of eight corps commanders (88 percent), and twenty-two division commanders (82 percent), and thirty-four of fifty-nine brigade commanders (58 percent) had pre-war military experience. Overall, 78 percent of Lee’s commanders at echelons above regiment had pre-war professional experience as compared to 67 percent in Meade’s army.88 At echelons below brigade, the ANV advantage was even more pronounced due to the presence of numerous military academies and schools with military curriculum below the Mason-Dixon Line as contrasted to only one north of it.88

Although pre-war professional training and experience was no guarantee of proficiency or competence, all other things being equal, it was better to have a professionally trained officer in charge than one who was not. In addition, both the officer selection and the weeding out processes were more stringent in the ANV than in the AOP. And, whereas Lee had a very high degree of influence in the selection and appointments of nearly all of his brigade, division, and corps commanders, George Meade had a hand in none of his.

Aside from professional training, Confederate commanders at brigade echelon and above also tended to be much more experienced in command than their Union counterparts. For one thing, Lee’s army was organizationally more stable. At the crucial brigade echelon for example, the thirty-seven ANV infantry brigade commanders averaged 8.6 months of brigade command experience prior to Gettysburg, which is nearly twice the average AOP brigade command tenure of 4.8 months.89

Greater officer stability and longevity meant that more commanders also had prior combat experience at their current level of command. In a typical engagement over the fifteen months preceding Gettysburg, the ANV entered battle with an average of nearly 70 percent of its commanders having previously led units into battle at their current level of command. At Gettysburg, this average was actually exceeded. In contrast, only about half of the AOP’s commanders had led units of similar echelon into prior combat during the same period.90 Whereas, prior experience did not ensure competence, the learning curve was steep for new commanders at all echelons and a longer duration in command provided officers with both more hands-on experience and more time to master their craft.

The ANV also had a higher ratio of officers to enlisted men (or a smaller span-of-control) in all three service arms and at all echelons below brigade, as well as a higher ratio of officers to guns in the artillery arm.91 These more favorable ratios facilitated battlefield command and control with the result of potentially greater combat efficiency and flexibility, especially in the smoke and noise of nineteenth century combat.

IV. Unit Retention and Experience

In the early days of the war, Confederate authorities were concerned for the safety of the capital at Richmond, given its proximity to Washington, and many of the first regiments raised by the various states were sent to northern Virginia to defend it. These early regiments, being among the first raised, contained a disproportionate number of off-


89 Compiled from Warner, Generals in Blue; Warner, Generals in Gray; Tagg, Generals of Gettysburg; Krick, Lee’s Colonels; Sifakis, Confederate Compendium; Dyer, Union Compendium.

90 Compiled from Warner, Generals in Blue; Warner, Generals in Gray; Tagg, Generals of Gettysburg; Krick, Lee’s Colonels; Sifakis, Confederate Compendium; Dyer, Union Compendium.

91 Ratios of officers to men in the ANV were, Infantry: 1:10; Cavalry: 1:14; Artillery: 1:18; officers to cannons: 1:0.8. In the AOP, the ratios were, Infantry: 1:14; Cavalry: 1:17; Artillery: 1:13; officers to cannons: 1:1.5. Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses.
ficers and men with various forms of prior military experience or training. By virtue of their experience, they often became commissioned or non-commissioned officers—positions from which they were able to impart their knowledge to their fellow enlistees. Their companies and regiments benefited from their experience and expertise in a way that units recruited later, after the pool of such men had dried up, would not be able to match. There was truth in the belief among soldiers that low numbered regiments (those organized earlier in the war) were better than the higher numbered ones organized later.

Lee and the ANV were the beneficiaries of this. With a disproportionate number of men with pre-war military education and experience in its regiments, martial proficiency was gained earlier and the potential pool of officers was deeper than in either the other southern armies or the AOP. Moreover, these men and the highly cohesive units they helped to build would not be mustering out of the army and taking their experience and expertise with them.

In the initial call to arms in spring 1861, most Confederate regiments had been mustered in for twelve months. By spring 1862, virtually the entire army was due to muster out. The Confederate Congress acted to pass the first Conscription Act in American history on April 16, 1862. Under its provisions, military personnel due to muster out of service would be drafted and returned to their former units if they did not voluntarily re-enlist first.

The Conscription Act had the effect of keeping experienced and proficient soldiers and officers in the ranks. As a result, most Confederate units remained fairly stable and quickly gained considerable experience in camp, in the field, and in battle—experience that was not lost to the army due to the expiration of terms of service as was so often the case in the Federal armies. The result was a veteran army comprising a high percentage of experienced, hardened, and highly cohesive units. The Act also had the effect of bringing a large number of recruits into the ranks for the duration of the war. After all, it was far better to enlist voluntarily than to bear the stigma of being a conscript.

By May 1863, the average infantry regiment in Lee's army had greater longevity and considerably more campaign and battle experience than did its average Federal counterpart. Two factors largely accounted for this. First was the Confederate Conscription Act, which kept southern regiments in service long after they would ordinarily have mustered out. The longer a unit served, the greater the number of campaigns and battles in which it was available to participate and the greater the experience it would accumulate. Second, with fewer units available overall, each Confederate regiment was required to shoulder a larger share of the war's burden than its much more numerous Federal counterparts.

As a result, 170 (78.7 percent) of the approximately 216 infantry units that had served with the ANV and predecessor commands since the start of the war were still with the army at Gettysburg, contrasted with 238 of at least 407 AOP regiments (58.4 percent). The ANV figure above would approach 88 percent if the nineteen regiments in the detached brigades of Pickett's and Ransom's divisions were included. Bottom Line—the composition of the army at its most basic level had remained largely unchanged since its inception with a remarkably low turnover rate.

Based on muster records, the average ANV infantry regiment at the start of the Gettysburg Campaign had 21.8 months of military experience as compared to a still respectable average of 18.3 months for the average AOP regiment. Perhaps more importantly, there were very few green regiments in Lee's army. Of the 170 ANV infantry regiments and battalions, a total of 167 (98 percent) had at least twelve months of military service prior to Gettysburg, whereas only three of Lee's infantry regiments had served for less than a year. In contrast, sixty-five of the 238 Federal regiments in Meade's army (27.3 percent) lacked a year of service at the start of the campaign.

Greater longevity also translated into more campaign and battle experience for Lee's regiments. In
fact, at an average 5.4 campaigns, an ANV regiment had a nearly two campaign edge over its Federal adversaries, which on average had participated in 3.7 campaigns. In addition, a total of sixty-six Federal regiments (27.7 percent) had participated in two or fewer campaigns as compared to only fourteen Confederate regiments (8.2 percent).95

Similarly, Confederate regiments had, on average, a greater amount of combat experience than their Union counterparts. The average ANV regiment at the start of the Gettysburg Campaign had fought in 8.8 battles whereas the average AOP regiment had been engaged in a still respectable 5.9 engagements. However, at the less experienced end of the spectrum, a total of fifty-six Union regiments (23.5 percent) had participated in two or fewer battles as compared with only nine Confederate regiments (5.3 percent). By every measure, Lee’s regiments were more experienced and battle-hardened than their northern counterparts.96

Brigade Continuity

Just as regiments coalesce as fighting units over time, so do higher echelon formations—especially brigades. Brigades were the primary maneuver element on Civil War battlefields. Leadership and organizational stability at brigade echelon was crucial to the creation and maintenance of highly cohesive units. As might be expected given regimental longevity, Confederate infantry brigades tended to have a significantly higher degree of compositional and leadership stability than their northern counterparts, resulting in higher unit cohesion and greater combat effectiveness.

Confederate brigade organizational practice early in the war had followed one of two paths. Some regiments were brigaded with others from the same state prior to leaving for the front. These brigades tended to retain their original regiments for the duration, perhaps adding additional units from the same state as the war progressed. Other regiments were brigaded with whatever units were available after they arrived at the front. This latter practice resulted in a number of mixed brigades with constituent units from several states.

In keeping with the Doctrine of States’ Rights, President Davis thought brigades consisting of regiments from the same state would promote a healthy competition based on state pride. Further, they would vest the people at home with a sense of pride and ownership in the laurels garnered by “their” brigades. Davis ordered the army’s brigades reorganized on a state basis early in October, and again in November 1861.97 Lee’s predecessor, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, had reluctantly begun the process but had been generally slow to comply with the president’s wishes. The elimination of mixed state brigades was only partially completed before Lee assumed command.

Lee continued the process but the operational tempo of the summer and early fall of 1862 slowed progress toward that end. By the end of the Seven Days, the army still contained fourteen mixed-state brigades.98 By Antietam, the number had been reduced to eleven, by Fredericksburg to seven, and by Chancellorsville, only three remained.99 With the recent addition of Joseph Davis’ mixed brigade in May, all but four of the thirty-seven Confederate infantry brigades at Gettysburg contained units from the same state, and in three of those cases, this was due to the lack of sufficient units from Maryland, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Texas to constitute full brigades.100

That said, the majority of Lee’s brigades achieved their ultimate organizations early in the war. The Stonewall Brigade, for example, had already reached its final composition by early summer 1861. The brigade’s battlefield prowess is legendary, and is attributable in large measure to the fact that its composition remained stable for so long. Similarly, the brigade commanded at Gettysburg by Brig. Gen. Richard Garnett already comprised four of its five regiments at First Manassas (July 21, 1861). Other early-war brigades contained the nucleus of their ultimate organizations in the form of two or three regiments that learned to live, work, and fight

95 Campaigns considered for this analysis include First Manassas, Peninsula, Shenandoah Valley, the Seven Days, Second Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Suffolk, and “Other.” Compiled from Dyer, Union Compendium; Sifakis, Confederate Compendium.

96 A total of thirty-one engagements in which each side had at least 5,000 men engaged were considered for this analysis. The Confederate average would increase if the Battle of Second Winchester, fought by the Second Corps on June 14–15 while en route to Gettysburg, was included. None of the Federal units that fought at Second Winchester were present at Gettysburg. Compiled from Dyer, Union Compendium; Sifakis, Confederate Compendium.

97 OR, 5:960–61.
98 OR, 11:2:483–89.
100 OR, 27:2:83–91; Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 133, 152, 175, 177.
together early on. To these would later be added veteran regiments transferred from other brigades or newly raised regiments from their home states to complete their organizations. By the latter part of the Peninsula Campaign, twenty-four of the army's thirty-seven brigades had already achieved something very close to their final organizations. The result was a very high degree of organizational stability at the crucial brigade echelon from an early date.

One way to quantify the compositional stability of the various brigades is to work backward from July 1863, expressing the number of constituent regiments present at each previous period as a fraction of its Gettysburg composition. For example, a five-regiment brigade at Chancellorsville would have a continuity factor of 1.0 (100 percent) if it exactly matched its subsequent Gettysburg composition. If only four of the five regiments were assigned to that brigade at Fredericksburg, the continuity factor would be four-fifths or 0.8 (80 percent). Again, if only three of the five Gettysburg regiments were present with the brigade at Antietam, the continuity factor for that battle would be three-fifths or 0.6 (60 percent) and so on. When averaged together, a comparison with the average of the brigades in the AOP is possible.

The continuity factor as it is being used here is not a reflection of how many regiments were in a particular brigade at each earlier period, but rather of how many of the regiments in that brigade at Gettysburg were part of the same brigade at earlier stages of the war. The averages for both armies over the preceding fifteen months are summarized in Table 2.101

As one might expect given the greater regimental longevity and campaign and battle participation, the ANV exhibited greater organizational stability at the crucial brigade echelon. An important difference that is not evident on the table above is the fact that when veteran ANV brigade compositions changed, they frequently involved one-for-one swaps with other veteran brigades. So, while the composition of brigade was altered, the new unit(s) assigned were often just as experienced as the ones they replaced. In contrast, Federal compositional changes were more likely to result from the mustering out of the army of veteran regiments at the expiration of their terms of service and their replacement (if any) by green regiments. If the longevity and combat experience of the replacement regiments were considered, the ANV brigade figures would be even more impressive, whereas those of the AOP would suffer still further by comparison.

The experience and cohesion of Lee's veteran soldiers could offset the disparity in numbers and often did. However, the difficulties of a numerical deficit are magnified when a smaller army is operating offensively against a larger one. Further, the burdens of both a smaller population and industrial base magnify the problem over time, making the outcome of a war of attrition nearly inevitable in the end. As Lee noted in a June 1863 letter to Confederate President Jefferson Davis:

Conceding to our enemies the superiority claimed by them in numbers, resources, and all the means and appliances for carrying on the war, we have no right to look for exemptions from the military consequences of a vigorous use of these advantages. . . . While making the most we can of the means of resistance we possess . . . it is nevertheless the part of wisdom to carefully measure and husband our strength, and not expect more from it than in the ordinary course of affairs it is capable of accomplishing. We should not, therefore, conceal from ourselves that our resources in men are constantly diminishing and the disproportion in this respect between us and our enemies, if they continue united in their efforts to subjugate us, is steadily augmenting.102


102 Lee to Davis, June 10, 1863; OR, 27:3:880–82.
Cohesion and Confederate Infantry Performance
Throughout the reorganization Lee was careful not to upset the conditions conducive to the creation and maintenance of highly cohesive units—particularly at the crucial brigade echelon. He avoided splitting up veteran formations with a history of working together and he ensured continuity of leadership by promoting and retaining familiar officers from within his brigades and divisions wherever possible. He also tried to fill vacancies promptly to allow new commanders time to grow into their new duties and responsibilities. Above all, he did not tolerate officers who did not take good care of their men or who led them incompetently in battle.

To recount the performance of Lee’s highly cohesive veteran infantry brigades at Gettysburg would require a book. One example will suffice to illustrate the cohesion and combat proficiency of the army’s veteran infantry. This was never demonstrated more fully than during the July 2 attack of Hood’s and McLaws’ Divisions on the Federal left at Gettysburg—an attack Lt. Gen. James Longstreet described as “the best three hours fighting ever done by any troops on any battlefield.”

Hoods’ and McLaws’ attack exemplifies the offensive spirit of Lee’s army and the effectiveness of his veteran brigades despite their failure to fully achieve their intended objective. Confederate artist, Col. Edward P. Alexander, summarized the attack thus:

To express it as briefly & as nearly as I can find the exact figures, our two divisions’ 13,000 infantry with 62 guns took the aggressive against a strong position & captured it, fighting successively for three hours against 40,000 infantry & 100 guns, & holding the ground gained. I think that a greater military feat than the partial success gained by Pickett’s charge, where the infantry fighting was scarcely a half hour. But both events illustrate the superb capabilities of our army at Gettysburg. . . .

The eight brigades that constituted these two divisions engaged at least sixteen brigades from six divisions of the Federal Third, Fifth, and Second Corps supported by the artillery brigades of the Third and Fifth Corps, augmented by additional batteries drawn from the Artillery Reserve. The Confederates attacked, outnumbered and out-gunned, over broken and difficult terrain, against an enemy ensconced on good defensive ground, and amply supported by superior artillery with good fields of fire. Despite these disadvantages, the two divisions inflicted 58 percent more casualties than they sustained, drove the defenders from the Peach Orchard, Devil’s Den, and the Wheatfield, and nearly took Little Round Top as well.

The disparity in casualties is even more significant when it is remembered that as the attackers, the Confederate infantry would have inflicted the vast majority of the casualties sustained by both the Union infantry and artillery units they opposed whereas Confederate casualties would had been inflicted by both the Union infantry and artillery. In other words, Union infantry inflicted a significantly smaller percentage of the total loss sustained by the Confederates than that inflicted by Longstreet’s infantry.

Again, one example will suffice to illustrate the superior combat power of a well-led, highly cohesive veteran brigade. The contributions of Brig.

Table 3. Relative Strengths in the Gettysburg Campaign.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army Totals</th>
<th>AOP</th>
<th>ANV</th>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Union %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Personals</td>
<td>112,812</td>
<td>79,880</td>
<td>+32,932</td>
<td>+41.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infantry Personals</td>
<td>86,660</td>
<td>61,414</td>
<td>+25,172</td>
<td>+26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry Personals</td>
<td>14,590</td>
<td>11,519</td>
<td>+3,071</td>
<td>+26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery Personals</td>
<td>8,403</td>
<td>6,867</td>
<td>+1,536</td>
<td>+22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cannons</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>+92</td>
<td>+32.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Strength figures indicate soldiers with each army in the field during the campaign rather than numbers engaged at Gettysburg. Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 16–117, 129–201.
Blueprint for Glory, Part II

Gen. William Barksdale’s Mississippi Brigade of McLaw’s division on July 2 have been summarized in a recent work on the battle as follows:

Barksdale’s four regiments had completely wrecked or shattered 13 Federal infantry regiments— one third of the entire infantry complement of Sickles’ Third Corps. By the time the Mississippian had reached their deepest point of penetration, they had captured at least nine cannons and several caissons and limbers, and had knocked out of action the equivalent of five artillery batteries (essentially an entire Yankee artillery brigade). 106

Barksdale’s Brigade and the rest of McLaw’s and Hood’s brigades remained combat effective and capable of further action following their July 2 attack. The history of Gettysburg is replete with Confederate brigades that endured heavy combat on one day and then engaged again later in the battle. The brigades of Pettigrew, Davis, Brockenbrough, Archer, Scales, Lane, Avery, Hays, Wilcox, Lang, and Law—more than a quarter of Lee’s 37 brigades— were engaged on two days at Gettysburg. Only one of those (Brockenbrough’s) was rendered ineffective and incapable of further combat following a single day in action.

In the end, the superiority of the ANV’s infantry arm offset to a large degree their opponent’s numerical superiority, superior artillery, and terrain advantages, and turned what should have been an easy defensive victory for the AOP into a hard-fought contest, ultimately decided by only the slimmest of margins on July 1 and 2.

V. Lee’s Long Arm—The Artillery

The field artillery (also called “light” artillery) was the smallest of Lee’s three combat arms but was by no means the least important. The ANV at Gettysburg had about 8.5 percent of its personnel strength in the artillery arm, as compared to 77 percent for the infantry and 14.5 percent for the cavalry. 107 However, when firing canister rounds at ranges of 300 yards or less, each of its 280 cannons could generate firepower equivalent to an infantry company volley and unlike the infantry, artillerymen could engage targets at ranges of a mile or more.

Artillery personnel strength likewise does not take into account the logistical “tail” for each of the army’s seventy artillery batteries, which included four cannons, ten limbers, four caissons, one battery wagon, one battery forge, and sixty horses or mules. Added to this was a significant but unknown number of ordnance wagons sufficient to transport approximately 200 rounds of ammunition per cannon along with their teamsters and draught horses or mules. On the march, a Confederate artillery battalion of four batteries occupied approximately 1.2 miles of roadspace, not counting ordnance wagons. 108 Not an insignificant drag on mobility by any standard, but one the army willingly tolerated.

Not surprisingly, it was in the artillery arm that the organizational structures of the ANV and AOP differed most. After all, the industrialized North had a greater capacity for producing its own cannons and associated equipment, had a larger population base from which to draw personnel, contained a larger pool of draught animals, and possessed a vastly superior logistical infrastructure capable of equipping and supplying units in the field. Added to these was the fact that the US Regular army contained five artillery regiments at the beginning of the war, which provided a cadre of experienced artillerists from which to draw for the training and instruction of volunteer batteries.

Civil War historians, including many veterans of the war, are nearly unanimous in the opinion that the Federal artillery arm early on established a reputation for excellence and generally dominated its gray counterpart in most engagements. 109 To be sure, Confederate artillerists were equal in intelligence and ability to Union gunners, and often held their own, but the gray cannoneers labored against a host of organizational, technological, and industrial disadvantages including:

- Union batteries were 50 percent larger than their Confederate counterparts;
- The inability of southern industry to replace obsolescent cannons with modern types;

106 Barksdale’s Brigade comprised the 13th, 17th, 18th, and 21st Mississippi Regiments. Bowden and Ward, Last Chance for Victory, 318.
109 For example, see Coddington, Study in Command, 14.
Brig. Gen. William N. Pendleton served as Lee’s chief of artillery although many doubted his competence. Library of Congress.
Artillery Batteries

The basic unit in the artillery arm was the battery—the command echelon equivalent of a company in the infantry or cavalry and were accordingly commanded by captains. Batteries were subdivided into sections of two cannons, each commanded by a lieutenant. Federal batteries generally had three sections whereas Confederate batteries usually had only two.

Most ANV artillery batteries were organized in the spring and summer of 1861 with an additional slate of recruitment of new units in the spring of 1862. As a result, Lee’s artillery arm was both experienced and mature by the summer of 1863, with an average battery service time of twenty months. However experience alone could not make up the significant organizational and technological deficiencies inherent in the southern artillery system.

Lee, and his Chief-of-Artillery, Brig. Gen. William N. Pendleton, had the opportunity to address two of the arms’ major organizational shortcomings during the October 1862 and April–May 1863 artillery reorganizations, but failed to do so. One had to do with the number cannons each battery contained. The other had to do with the types of cannons with which each battery was equipped. Confederate batteries, more often than not, contained two or more different types of guns.

Size Matters—Four-Gun Batteries vs. Six

In contrast to Federal batteries, which were generally organized with six cannons, the general shortage of cannons in 1861 compelled most Confederate batteries to initially be equipped with whatever was available in state or captured Federal arsenals. Many batteries had only four cannons, although some had as many as six, and others had fewer than four, depending on the availability of ordnance.

Attempts were made to standardize the number of cannons in each battery during the first two artillery reorganizations. Four-gun batteries placed the gray artillerists at a 50 percent firepower disadvantage when dueling with Federal six-gun batteries. It was found through experience that six-gun batteries provided an optimal volume of fire and produced greater organizational efficiencies. One author elaborated on the advantages of the larger batteries noting:

Each army also had control of designing it artillery organization. The Army of Northern Virginia, for example, chose to form batteries containing four guns, even though there was greater efficiency in batteries containing six guns. The Union army’s six-gun batteries needed fewer command personnel, they contained a larger pool of trained artillerymen to draw from or interact within the unit during operations, and they required less duplication of administrative duties. Six-gun batteries also provided more flexibility in firepower and possessed a greater ability to share ammunition by having two more guns with their accompanying limbers and caissons.

The South was already starting to experience difficulties in replacing worn out horses and mules and in feeding those already in service by late 1862. So acute was the shortage that the number of draught animals used to draw cannons, limbers, and caissons was reduced in the ANV from six per team to four, increasing the workload of each ani-
mal with a corresponding increase in the number of broken down horses. The failure rate was further exacerbated when fodder was in short supply. So serious was the shortage of horses and ordnance that nineteen batteries were eliminated in the October 1862 artillery reorganization, with their men, horses, and ordnance being distributed to the remaining batteries. The shortage of draft animals and the increasing problems of providing and transporting sufficient fodder for the army’s horses forced Lee to disperse most of his artillery and cavalry units away from the army to areas where they could be more easily fed and cared for during the winter of 1862–63.

In light of this situation, Pendleton decided to standardize at four cannons per battery. As artillery Brig. Gen. E. P. Alexander noted, “The batteries were generally composed of but four guns, which is not an economical arrangement; but as no objection was made to it, either at army headquarters or at the War Department, and as the scarcity both of horses and ordnance equipment made it difficult to get, and more so to maintain a six gun battery, it resulted in that but few six gun batteries were put into the field, and nearly every one of these was eventually reduced to four guns.”

Pendleton persisted in his efforts despite the disadvantages inherent in a four-gun battery structure and by June 1863, the battery average for the ANV was exactly four guns (280 cannons divided by 70 batteries). And, fifty-four of the army’s seventy batteries (77 percent) actually did have four cannons. The remaining sixteen batteries contained anywhere from one to six guns.

**Single Cannon Type versus Mixed Type Batteries**

Another key difference was that Federal batteries were standardized with only a single cannon type in each battery. In contrast, Confederate batteries were often initially organized with whatever cannons were at hand, sometimes resulting in odd mixtures of modern and obsolescent types of various calibers. As the war progressed and more rifled cannons became available, it was not uncommon for Confederate batteries to be organized with one section of rifled guns and one section of smoothbores. The idea was that no matter the fire mission, each mixed battery would have at least one section capable of providing the needed fires.

However, batteries equipped with multiple cannon types incurred a number of disadvantages. For example, with a mix of rifled and smoothbore cannons, a Confederate battery commander might find himself in a situation where long range fires were required. He could effectively employ his rifled guns, but the smoothbores would be of no use and would have to wait idly by. The battery commander’s available firepower would have been reduced by half, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of his unit and the impact it could have on the battle. His shorter-range smoothbore guns, which might be of use elsewhere on the battlefield, would be kept idle by the need to maintain accountability and unit integrity. Mixed batteries were at greatest disadvantage in large-scale, broad front actions where a number of batteries might be massed along a single gun line. As one author has noted, “Uniformity [of cannon types] allowed placement of batteries in order to take advantage of the ability of long-range guns to achieve oblique or crossfire and, at the same time, allowed placement of batteries to take advantage of the killing power of short range guns to stop an infantry assault. . . . When used on a broad front then, some mixed-gun batteries that remained in the main battle line of the Army of Northern Virginia were working at cross purposes, and an efficient firepower could not be acquired with the best gun placement.”

In the event that all of the guns could be used simultaneously, ammunition re-supply was compli-

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113 Sears, Chancellorsville, 33–35.

114 Over time, the shortage became acute. In March 1863, for example, the artillery arm was short 1,370 horses. The life expectancy for a horse in artillery service was approximately 7.5 months. Wise, Long Arm of Lee, 110–11, 165, 327–28, 333, 427–59.


117 Only one AOP artillery battery had more than one type of cannon during the Gettysburg Campaign. In contrast, of the sixty-eight ANV batteries for which there is data, twenty-nine (42.6 percent) contained a single cannon type, thirty-two (47 percent) contained two cannon types, six (8.8 percent) contained three cannon types, and one (1.4 percent) contained four cannon types. The composition of the other two batteries during this period is unknown. Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 66–101; Richard Rollins, “The Failure of Confederate Artillery in Pickett’s Charge” North & South, 3, no. 4 (April 2000), 26–42.

118 Cole, Artillery at Gettysburg, 275.
cated by the need to provide more than one type to each mixed battery, thereby increasing the possibility that the wrong ammunition would be delivered to some of the guns, or that appropriate types might be available for some guns but not for others. In reference to the logistical problems associated with the odd gun mix at Gettysburg, one artillery ordnance officer noted:

There is a complaint made by Lieutenant (William) Fontaine, ordnance officer, Jones’ battalion, that the ammunition of the 3-inch (banded) gun, or navy Parrott, is mixed up with 2.9-inch 10-pounder Parrott in such a way as to cause great inconvenience. Two guns were rendered unserviceable after firing 12 rounds from the shell lodging in the bore . . . Lieutenant (N. M.) Osborne, ordnance officer, Carter’s battalion, reports also that some of the 3-inch Parrott ammunition was issued to him for the 2.9-inch Parrott . . . Lieutenant (John) Selden, Jr., ordnance officer, First Virginia Artillery, also reports that he received some of the 3-inch Parrott ammunition. He reports that he could not use the Confederate States fuse with [captured] Yankee ammunition.119

In part, the problem of multiple guns types was brought about by the various methods of ordnance procurement available to the South. Guns were available at the outset of the war in the various state or Federal arsenals in Confederate possession, many of which were obsolescent or antiquated field guns or were seacoast guns that were not suitable for field service. Some guns were manufactured domestically at the few cannon foundries located in the South. Additional guns were imported through the Union naval blockade from foreign sources (primarily Britain). And, guns were captured from Union forces on the battlefield. Of these, the last source was the most important in equipping and upgrading the artillery ordnance of the ANV. Between the summers of 1861 and 1863, Lee’s soldiers captured at least 179 guns from the Federals, of which at least 121 were of the three preferred modern types (12-pounder Napoleons, 3-inch Ordnance Rifes, or 10-pounder Parrott Rifles).120

Next in importance was domestic manufacture. Although total numbers of Confederate-produced ordnance assigned to the ANV are unavailable, Lee’s Army did receive an unknown number of domestically-produced rifled guns.121 In addition, a total of five Confederate guns of foreign manufacture were used at Gettysburg including two 12-pounder Whitworth Rifles and three 12-pounder Blakely Rifles.122 Finally, most of the thirty-one obsolescent bronze smoothbores with the army at Gettysburg were acquired from pre-war arsenal stocks or were battlefield captures.123

Despite the various methods of procurement, Confederate senior artillery officers had the opportunity to obtain greater standardization of ordnance within their subordinate batteries but failed to implement the necessary organizational reforms. Jennings Wise, the chronicler of Lee’s artillery arm, indicated that Pendleton was to blame for this failure. Wise characterized Pendleton’s reluctance to correct the problem thus:

This [lack of uniform battery armament] was, of course, a glaring defect, greatly increasing the difficulty of ammunition supply and impairing the general efficiency. Theoretically it was capable of correction, but practically there were many difficulties in the way. Some batteries wanted rifles, others Napoleons, and few were willing to be armed with [obsolescent] howitzers alone. The gunners in the various batteries had become familiar with their materiel of whatever character, and the mere suggestion that uniformity of battery armament should be enforced at once raised a hue and cry on the part of all for the materiel of their individual preference. For the sake of general uniformity none were willing to waive these personal preferences. . . Believing that the good to be accomplished by unifying the battery arma-

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120 These include minimums of twenty-seven guns captured at First Manassas,}

123 These included twenty-six 12-pounder Howitzers, four 24-pounder howitzers, and one 6-pounder Gun. Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 129–201.
ments was not commensurate with the general dissatisfaction such a step would surely arouse, General Pendleton declined to raise the issue and so a great evil was allowed to exist to the very end.  

Thus, do conscious organizational choices create problems and impair efficiency on the battlefield. The problem was one that could easily have been addressed and the result would have been increased efficiency in an artillery arm already beset by so many other disadvantages.

Obsolescent Cannons

The large number of obsolescent cannons in Confederate service did not help overmatched Confederate gunners either. Shortly before the Battle of Fredericksburg, Lee had written to James Seddon, Confederate Secretary of War, concerning his inferior ordnance:

During the past campaign I have felt, in every battle, the advantages that the enemy possessed over us in their artillery. . . . The best guns for field service, in my opinion, are, the 12-pounder Napoleons, the 10-pounder Parrotts, and the approved 3-inch rifles. Batteries composed of such guns would simplify our ammunition, give us less metal to transport, and longer and more accurate range of fire. . . . The contest between our 6-pounder smoothbores and the 12-pounder Napoleons of the enemy is very unequal, and, in addition, is discouraging to our artillerists.  

Clearly Lee had felt outgunned during the campaigns of 1862. Lee specifically mentions the obsolescent bronze 6-pounder smoothbore gun but he likely also had in mind the significant numbers of antiquated bronze 12-pounder and 24-pounder smoothbore howitzers still with the army at that time. All three of these obsolescent gun types were markedly inferior to the Model 1857 12-pounder Napoleon—the standard smoothbore in Federal service. All three obsolescent gun types had shorter effective ranges and were less accurate than the much preferred Napoleons. The 6-pounders also had significantly smaller, and therefore less lethal, shell, spherical case, and canister rounds than the Napoleon. During the Antietam Campaign in September 1862, about

124 Wise, Long Arm of Lee, 571.
125 Lee to Secretary of War Seddon, December 5, 1862, OR, 21:1046–1047.
one-quarter of Lee’s guns had been the obsolescent and ineffective 6-pounders.\textsuperscript{126} In November 1862, 44 percent of Lee’s guns were still light smoothbores.\textsuperscript{127}

By 1863, the situation had been much improved through battlefield captures and a concerted effort during the winter of 1863 to recast many of the army’s bronze 6-pounders into Napoleons at the Tredegar Ironworks in Richmond. Lee’s artillerists took delivery of 49 new, Tredegar-produced Napoleons in the spring of 1863 in time for the Chancellorsville Campaign where they were used to great effect.\textsuperscript{128}

Combined with the more recent captures at Chancellorsville in May, and Second Winchester in June, Lee’s artillerists were better armed and equipped during the Gettysburg Campaign than at any time previous. That said, Lee’s long arm still contained 31 obsolescent guns—11 percent of his total artillery. Nor were these evenly distributed throughout the army’s artillery battalions. Second Corps artillerists were able to turn in the last of their obsolescent guns due to the captures at Second Winchester in mid-June. As a result, the corps’ batteries contained only the three preferred modern gun types at Gettysburg.\textsuperscript{129} In contrast, the Confederate First and Third Corps retained fourteen and fifteen obsolescent guns during the campaign, respectively, and the cavalry had two more.\textsuperscript{130}

Overall, Lee’s artillery was outgunned by a Federal artillery arm possessing 33 percent more guns (ninety-two more cannons, and none of them obsolescent). Ironically, with its higher proportion of smoothbores, Lee’s artillery arm was better suited for defensive fighting where the necessity of delivering long-range fires with accuracy is minimized and where the larger bore diameter and lack of rifling of the smoothbores made them more effective when firing canister rounds at attacking Federal infantry.

The mix of gun types in Lee’s army was also different from that of the Federals. Whereas Lee’s artillery was almost evenly split between rifles and smoothbores (49 percent and 51 percent, respectively), that of the AOP was more heavily weighted for long range fires with a 61–39 percent split of rifles to smoothbores, respectively.\textsuperscript{131} The AOP carried 228 rifles into Pennsylvania as compared to Lee’s 134, giving the Federals a potential 70 percent firepower edge in long-range artillery employment.\textsuperscript{132} Finally, whereas all of the Federal batteries on the field at Gettysburg were equipped with the three preferred modern cannon types, Lee’s ordnance officers and artillerists had to deal with ten different gun types.\textsuperscript{133}

Confederate Artillery Battalions

At the outset of the war, most artillery batteries were assigned to infantry brigades. This had the effect of dispersing the artillery’s firepower and placing it under the command of infantry officers who often were not familiar with the proper deployment and use of artillery. By the Seven Days, at least eight artillery battalions had been organized of which four appear to have been assigned to infantry divisions and four more constituted the army’s artillery reserve.\textsuperscript{134} Confederate artillery was woefully underutilized and ineffective on the Peninsula.

Following the Seven Days, additional battalions were formed as part of the general army reorganization, and these increasingly came to be assigned to infantry divisions. By the Maryland Campaign, most divisions had an artillery battalion. Longstreet maintained a corps artillery reserve of two battalions, whereas Jackson subordinated all of his batteries to his divisional artillery battalions. The army maintained a reserve of four battalions.

A second artillery reorganization was carried out in October 1862, during which batteries were consolidated and more nearly balanced as noted above. The third reorganization took place in April 1863 and largely standardized the divisional battalions at four batteries, created reserves of two battalions.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{126} Joseph L. Harsh, \textit{Taken at Flood: Robert E. Lee and Confederate Strategy in the Maryland Campaign of 1862} (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), 73.
  \item \textsuperscript{127} Wise, \textit{Long Arm of Lee}, I, 335.
  \item \textsuperscript{128} Dew, \textit{Ironmaker}, 190.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} Six of the Second Corps’ twenty-two Parrott Rifles were actually the larger 20-pounder version, four of which had just been captured at Second Winchester in June. The other sixteen Parrots were 10-pounders. Compiled from Busey and Martin, \textit{Strengths and Losses}; Rollins, \textit{“Ordnance and Logistics,”} 50–55; Rollins, \textit{“Confederate Artillery Failure,”} 53–53; Charles S. Grunder and Brandon H. Beck, \textit{The Second Battle of Winchester, June 12–13, 1863} (Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, 1989), 65.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Compiled from Busey and Martin, \textit{Strengths and Losses}; Rollins, \textit{“Confederate Artillery Failure.”}
  \item \textsuperscript{131} Compiled from Busey and Martin, \textit{Strengths and Losses}.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} Compiled from Busey and Martin, \textit{Strengths and Losses}, 16–201; Rollins, \textit{“Ordnance and Logistics,”} 30–51.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} These included the 3-Inch Ordnance Rifle, 10-Pound Parrott Rifle, 20-Pound Parrott Rifle, 3-Inch Navy Rifle, 12-Pounder Blakely Rifle, 12-Pounder Whitworth Rifle, 12-Pounder Napoleon, 12-Pounder Howitzer, 24-pounder Howitzer, and 6-Pounder Gun. Compiled from Busey and Martin, \textit{Strengths and Losses}, 129–210; Rollins, \textit{“Ordnance and Logistics,”} 50–51.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} These formations were called batteries because they had more than two, but fewer than ten batteries. OR, 11,2,487–88.
\end{itemize}
each for the First and Second Corps, and an additional army reserve of two artillery battalions.\footnote{Special Order No. 106 dated April 16, 1863. OR, 25:2728–30.}

Once created, Confederate artillery battalions tended to retain their organizations and remained fairly stable over time. Two artillery battalions had already achieved their Gettysburg compositions by the Seven Days; two more had done so by the Second Manassas Campaign; seven by the time Antietam was fought; ten of fifteen by Fredericksburg; and, all had achieved their Gettysburg compositions by the start of the Chancellorsville Campaign. One final battalion was organized in May–June 1863, increasing the number of battalions in the army to sixteen, including a horse artillery battalion for the cavalry.

Most divisions kept their artillery battalions under the reorganization. However, with the creation of a new corps, not all existing battalions could remain where they were. All three of Longstreet's divisions kept their artillery battalions and the two battalions that had constituted the First Corps reserve since October also remained in that capacity.\footnote{All references for this section are in notes.}

In the Second Corps, Rodes' division kept its former artillery battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas H. Carter. However, Johnson's and Early's divisions swapped battalions for reasons that are not clear. John T. Brown was named the Second Corps' Chief-of-Artillery and his battalion, now under the command of Capt. Willis Dance remained as one of the Second Corps' reserve battalions. Lt. Col. William Nelson's battalion moved from the now defunct army reserve to become the Second Corps' second reserve battalion.\footnote{Under the new arrangement, Lt. Col. R. Snowden Andrews' battalion moved from Early's to Johnson's division while Lt. Col. Hilary Jones' battalion moved from Johnson's division to Early's. OR, 27:2:283–91.}

A multiple swap occurred in the new Third Corps where Lt. Col. John Garnett's battalion moved from Anderson's division to Heth's. Maj. John Lane's battalion moved from the now defunct army reserve to Anderson's division. Pender's Light Division received the newly organized battalion of Maj. Thomas Poague. Maj. William Pegram's large battalion moved from the Light Division to become one of the Third Corps' two reserve battalions while Maj. David McIntosh's battalion moved from the Second Corps Reserve to Third Corps Reserve to constitute the other.\footnote{OR, 27:2:283–91.}

Following the May–June 1863 army reorganization, a typical divisional artillery battalion had four batteries of four guns each, or roughly sixteen guns per battalion. The six corps reserve battalions were not standardized and contained from ten to twenty-four guns arrayed in from three to six batteries. The army's fifteen battalions averaged 4.1 batteries per battalion, with four batteries per battalion being the most common. The average battalion strength was 16.6 guns.\footnote{Two Confederate artillery battalions had ten guns each, one had fifteen guns, six had sixteen guns, one had seventeen guns, one had eighteen guns, one had nineteen guns, two had twenty guns, and one had twenty-four guns. The unusually large thirty-one-gun horse artillery battalion is excluded because it never operated as a coherent unit—its constituent batteries being widely dispersed with the various cavalry brigades. Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 129–201.}

General Lee and the Confederate government went to great lengths to ensure that experienced and efficient officers remained in the artillery arm by providing them with opportunities for advancement. When the first higher echelon artillery formations (battalions) were organized in 1862, the opportunity was taken to promote deserving officers. Although promotion remained slower in the artillery than in the infantry or cavalry arms, officers tended not to leave the branch in large numbers to assume higher rank in infantry or cavalry regiments as was so often the case in Federal service.

By June 1863, the army's artillery arm had a brigadier general as chief-of-artillery and all three corps artillery chiefs were colonels.\footnote{These were Brig. Gen. William N. Pendleton (ANV Chief-of-Artillery), and Cols. J. B. Walton (First Corps), J. Thompson Brown (Second Corps), and R. Lindsay Walker (Third Corps). OR, 27:2:283–291.} In addition, fifteen of the sixteen artillery battalions were commanded by field-grade officers, often assisted by a second field-grade officer (a major).\footnote{As of April 16, 1863, twelve additional majors were assigned as seconds-in-command of the army's artillery battalions. OR, 25:2655–6, 729–30.} The fifteen corps battalions were commanded at the start of the campaign by two colonels, five lieutenant colonels, seven majors, and one captain.\footnote{LT. Col. Richard S. Andrews was wounded at Stevenson's Depot on June 15 while en route to Gettysburg and his battalion was commanded at Gettysburg by Maj. Joseph W. Latimer until he was mortally wounded on July 2. OR, 27:2:283–91; Krick, Lee's Colonels, 35, 231.} At least nine additional majors served as seconds-in-command of the battalions. The cavalry's battalion was also commanded by a major. Additionally, each battal-
ion commander had a staff to assist in the administration of the unit.143

Further, the lines of command authority had been more clearly defined in Lee’s army than in the AOP. With all batteries in a division concentrated under the command of field grade officers, Confederate division commanders were able to issue orders to their subordinate batteries through their chiefs-of-artillery. This enabled division commanders to concentrate on their primary mission, that of fighting their infantry brigades, with little concern that their gunners were not being properly supervised or employed. The Confederate artillery was also integrated at division and corps levels—one echelon lower than the recently instituted Federal practice of integrating artillery brigades at the corps- and army-echelons.

Thus, during the Gettysburg Campaign, Lee’s sixteen artillery battalions comprised seventy batteries, 280 guns, and 6,855 men, efficiently organized and amply officered by men possessing ranks commensurate with their assigned levels of command responsibility.144

Lee’s army actually had a higher ratio of guns to infantrymen than the Army of the Potomac during the Gettysburg Campaign. Within the Union infantry corps, the ratio was one cannon for every 420 infantrymen, or nearly 2.4 guns per 1,000 infantry. If the guns of the artillery reserve are included, the ratio becomes one gun for every 271 infantrymen or 3.7 guns per 1,000 infantry. In the infantry corps of the ANV, the ratio was one cannon for every 247 infantrymen or 4.1 guns per 1,000 infantry.145 As the war continued after Gettysburg, Lee placed an even higher premium on artillery and the ratio of guns to infantry actually increased.

Operational Employment

The Confederate artillery battalion system worked well throughout the Gettysburg Campaign. The streamlined structure ensured that Confederate infantry arrived on the field with, and were ably supported by, “their” artillery battalion. The Confederate artillery’s ability to mass quickly on the battlefield ensured fire superiority on July 1 before the bulk of the Federal artillery could reach the field. Division and corps artillery fires were massed effectively both at Second Winchester and on all three days of battle at Gettysburg. Where breakdowns occurred, they generally did so when fires had to be coordinated across corps boundaries. In contrast to the firm guiding hand of Union Chief-of-Artillery Brig. Gen. Henry Hunt, Pendleton does not appear to have been active in assuring effective coordination across corps boundaries at Gettysburg.

Individual Confederate battalions performed well during the campaign as in the case of Jones’ and Andrews’ battalions at the Battles of Second Winchester and Stephenson’s Depot, respectively.146 However, the Confederate artillery was forced to act on the offensive during the three days at Gettysburg, which brought its deficiencies in organization, armament, and munitions to the fore. Unfavorable terrain, offensive employment, and defective ammunition combined to limit effectiveness in engaging Union infantry ensconced on higher ground and amply supported by superior artillery acting on the defensive. In attacking, Lee forced his artillery arm into a role for which it was less well suited. With its higher percentage of smoothbores, it was better situated for defensive fighting. Had the roles been reversed, Lee’s gunners would undoubtedly have given a better account of themselves.

As it was, Confederate gunners accomplished all that could reasonably have been expected of them. Nearly all Confederate infantry attacks made during the three days’ fighting at Gettysburg were launched under the cover of supporting artillery fires. Guns were advanced to support the attacking infantry whenever possible, for example, the advance of Alexander’s Battalion into the Peach Orchard following its capture by Confederate infantry on July 2. A number of authors have assessed that Confederate artillery fire was often effective—particularly during the first two days of the fighting.147 As evidence,

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143 Wise, Long Arm of Lee, 570–72.
144 Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 129–201.
145 AOP calculations are based on 86,606 infantry and 206 corps-subordinate cannons and 114 Artillery Reserve cannons. ANV calculations are based on 61,434 infantry and 249 infantry corps cannons. Compiled from Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 16–201.
146 Wise, Long Arm of Lee, 602–08. Lt. Col. Andrews was wounded at Stephens’ Depot on June 15, eliminating him from the campaign and elevating Maj. Joseph W. Latimer to the command of his battalion until that officer was mortally wounded on July 2.
147 For example, Coddington, Study in Command, 495; Gregory A. Coco, A Concise Guide to the Artillery at Gettysburg (Gettysburg: Thomas Pubs., 1998), 55–56.
they cite Union recipients of that fire who attested to its effectiveness.148

Artillery Conclusion
It is not difficult to see how Lee’s artillery could have been differently organized to more effectively support the infantry. An increase in the number of guns per battery to six, while desirable, may simply not have been feasible, but eliminating the mixed-gun batteries would have had a measurable impact on effectiveness. Pendleton had it in his power to fix what he correctly perceived to be a glaring impediment to the effectiveness of the units under his control and he chose not to act for fear of ruffling feathers among his artillerymen. Of all the organizational defects in either army at Gettysburg, the lack of uniformity in Confederate battery ordnance is the most difficult to understand and constitutes perhaps the single most debilitating liability accrued to either side during the campaign that is attributable to organizational practice.

Ultimately the tactical circumstance that forced Lee’s artillery arm to operate on the offensive exacerbated its deficiencies in ordnance, munitions, and numbers. Further, the marked superiority of Federal ordnance and the terrain which favored the defenders would likely have prevented much more from being accomplished than actually was, even under the best of circumstances. In a very real sense, any Confederate artillery failures at Gettysburg are largely attributable to the unfavorable tactical circumstances in which the batteries found themselves engaged and to the successes of the excellently handled Federal artillery.

VI. The Cavalry—The Eyes and Ears of the Army
By 1863, the cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia was a veteran and storied arm. Gray horsemen under the intrepid Jeb Stuart had literally ridden rings around the Federal army and its lackluster mounted arm for the first two years of the war. From the outset, the cavalier culture in Virginia and other Southern states offered a ready pool of trained riders and animals, and a number of militia units trained and equipped as cavalry that could be quickly mobilized and accepted into Confederate service.149 A number of southern cavalry officers had pre-war experience in the US regular cavalry, mounted infantry, or dragoons, which was used to advantage in organizing, equipping, training, and leading the newly organized mounted units.150 As a result, accomplished Confederate horsemen on blooded horses had dominated their blue rivals in the field, gathering crucial information on enemy troop movements and dispositions, screening Lee’s army from the prying eyes of the Union cavalry, and striking deep into the Federal rear, raiding almost at will for the first two years of the war. The value of the timely, accurate, and relevant intelligence provided by the cavalry to Lee’s operational successes in 1862 cannot be overstated. Neither could the value of keeping Federal commanders in the dark during Lee’s maneuvers.

From the beginning, the Confederate government, having no extant army, was more willing to authorize and accept cavalry units into service than the cost conscious Federal War Department. However, the magnitude of the need for mounted units was poorly understood even in the South and the government was initially dilatory in authorizing an adequate number of mounted formations. By the second summer of the war, the need for more cavalry units was readily apparent and the Confederate government became more willing to authorize additional units of mounted troops.151

From an organizational standpoint, the Confederates were quicker to see the advantages of massing their horsemen into higher echelon, all-cavalry units. This practice was the manifestation of a doctrine that viewed the southern cavalry as a combat arm with its own unique and independent capabilities rather than merely the handmaiden of the infantry as was often the case in northern armies.

148 OR, 221:706, 750, 752, 755–57, 891, 894.
151 The Confederacy eventually raised a total of 137 regiments, 143 battalions, and 101 independent cavalry companies during the war. Most were state units, but eleven regiments and three battalions were organized as Confederate regulars. Stubbs and Conner, Armor-Cavalry, 14–15; Stewart Sifakis, Confederate Compendium-Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, the Confederate Units and the Indian Units, 166–77.
With the arrival of January 1863, Lee was forced to disperse his mounted units due to a lack of fodder for the horses and the inability to transport sufficient quantities to keep his army’s mounts fed. Two cavalry brigades wintered far from the army—Brig. Gen. William “Grumble” Jones’ in the Shenandoah Valley and Brig. Gen. Wade Hampton’s south of the James River. Both remained absent from the army during the Chancellorsville Campaign with Hampton’s horses in particular being in no condition for service. The brigades commanded by Brig. Gens. Fitzhugh Lee and W. H. F. “Rooney” Lee wintered upstream and well downstream on the Rappahannock River respectively, and were close enough to be recalled in time to furnish Lee with his only two mounted brigades at Chancellorsville. With the appearance of the spring grass, the army’s horses regained their strength and those units still missing from the army returned in May.

Meanwhile Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, commanding the Army of the Potomac, organized a cavalry corps of two divisions in February 1863, which increased to three divisions in June. Lee declined to restructure his cavalry arm during the May 1863 reorganization. Recognizing (in retrospect) the advantages offered by the corps system, Lee would

156 Sears, Chancellorsville, 35.
create his own cavalry corps in September 1863, well after the end of the Gettysburg Campaign.

Cavalry Augmentations

Lee recognized the need for additional mounted units for reconnaissance, screening, and raiding during the upcoming campaign north of the Potomac and sought to augment his cavalry arm accordingly. With Hampton and Jones back, Stuart had four cavalry brigades and his twenty-three-gun horse artillery battalion in hand. Unfortunately, Stuart did not get along well with Jones, hence the latter’s prior exile to the Shenandoah Valley. Stuart even went so far as to offer Jones up as a replacement commander for the leaderless Stonewall Brigade to avoid having him again serve in the Cavalry Division. Jones declined.

Lee was able to procure a small cavalry brigade from North Carolina commanded by Brig. Gen. Beverly Robertson. Robertson had previously served in the army without distinction before being quietly transferred to North Carolina during the Maryland Campaign in 1862. Stuart had little regard for Robertson’s abilities, and his low opinion would be borne out during the subsequent campaign.

Two additional mounted brigades were also loaned to the army. One of these came from Southwest Virginia and was commanded by Brig. Gen. Albert G. Jenkins. Jenkins’ command had included five regiments and three battalions of cavalry and a horse artillery battery, but fearing for the security of his department, Maj. Gen. Samuel Jones decided he could not spare the entire brigade. Jenkins arrived with three regiments, two battalions, and a battery. His men were poorly disciplined, had not seen much action, and many were equipped only with infantry muskets, lacking sabers or pistols. His brigade would operate with Ewell’s Second Corps during the advance into Pennsylvania.

The other mounted brigade on temporary loan was commanded by Brig. Gen. John D. Imboden who was just back from a successful raid into West Virginia. His command of two regiments, one each of cavalry and mounted infantry, and a horse battery, would operate on Lee’s left during the march north into Pennsylvania. Both Imboden and Jenkins would come under Stuart’s command once the forces were united in Pennsylvania.

Aside from the addition of three largely untried cavalry brigades immediately prior to the Gettysburg Campaign (two of them temporary), the cavalry division of the ANV had not been reorganized since its inception the summer before. As a result, it was poorly structured for the myriad important missions assigned it during an offensive campaign in hostile territory. The two attached cavalry brigades would be under the direct command of army headquarters and the Second Corps respectively, for much of the campaign and were therefore not available to Stuart until after battle had been joined at Gettysburg.

Unlike the modernized Federal cavalry corps structure, Stuart had no facile method of assigning important secondary missions to subordinates with the requisite authority and combat power to carry them out. This organizational omission proved a severe disadvantage during the campaign—particularly during the crucial week before Gettysburg.

Light Cavalry

Although both light and heavy cavalry existed in Europe during the nineteenth century, only light cavalry units were raised during the American Civil War. Three types of cavalry had existed in the US Army only a few years before. However by 1862, their roles had been combined and were fulfilled by a generic “cavalry” regiments. The American War. Th ree types of cavalry had existed in the US Army only a few years before. However by 1862, their roles had been combined and were fulfilled by a generic “cavalry” regiments. The American Army only a few years before. However by 1862, their roles had been combined and were fulfilled by a generic “cavalry” regiments. The American

159 Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, II, 709.
160 Brig. Gen. Beverly Robertson’s Brigade in North Carolina consisted of five cavalry regiments, but only two of these, the 4th and 5th North Carolina, joined Stuart. The 7th Confederate and 62nd Georgia remained on detached service in North Carolina and the 3rd North Carolina remained on detached service on the Blackwater River. OR, 25.2:826.
161 OR, 19.2:595.
162 Jenkins arrived without the 8th and 19th Virginia Cavalry regiments or the 37th Virginia Cavalry Battalion, which were retained in French’s Department. OR, 27.3:867–68.
165 Although originally organized as light cavalry, most Civil War cavalry units increasingly operated as dragoons or even mounted infantry as the war progressed. In theory, light cavalry only fought while mounted using a curved saber, and less often, horse pistols or revolvers. Dragoons were cavalrymen trained and equipped to fight either mounted or dismounted and were equipped with both carbines and sabers for that purpose. Mounted infantry were equipped with infantry long arms, frequently lacked sabers and pistols, and used their horses primarily as a means of rapid transportation on the battlefield, dismounting to fight on foot. Paddy Griffith, Battle Tactics of the Civil War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 184–88; Langacre, Lee’s Cavalrymen, 44–49.
cavalry arm was small by nineteenth century standards. During the campaign, both sides had about 14 percent of their strength in the mounted arm as compared to the European norm of 20 percent or more during the Napoleonic wars.\footnote{Griffith, \textit{Battle Tactics}, 181.}

Light cavalry valued mobility over firepower—exactly the opposite of the infantry and artillery. Horses were used to rapidly transport cavalrymen from place to place, making the cavalry much more mobile than the far more numerous foot soldiers. The cavalry’s lighter equipment, sabers, pistols, and shorter range carbines, meant that they could not stand for long against enemy infantry. But then, they were not expected to.

In combat, cavalrymen could either fight mounted or dismounted, depending on the tactical situation. Cavalrymen were trained to fight on horseback against enemy cavalry using saber and pistol. Cavalry might also occasionally be required to delay the advance of enemy infantry. For this purpose, cavalrymen were trained to fight as skirmishers—either mounted or dismounted. Fighting in open order and under cover, a cavalry unit could delay the advance of a more powerful infantry force for a time, depending on terrain, effectively trading space for time.

However, the light cavalry’s forte was mobility, which was used in its primary duties of reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance. Once the main armies became locked in stationary combat, firepower overshadowed mobility and the cavalry reverted to its secondary roles while the infantry and artillery decided the outcome of the battle. Cavalry scouted enemy positions, guarded the flanks of the army, providing early warning of enemy attempts to maneuver around a flank, guarded supply trains and prisoners, or raided the enemy’s communications. After the battle, when the tactical situation again favored mobility over firepower, the cavalry was in its element, pursuing, screening, delaying, and scouting.

Thus, the cavalry’s most important contribution to a major battle was often made before the main armies even reached the battlefield. Knowing the lay of the land, exactly where the enemy was, which way he was moving, on what roads, and in what strength, while denying that vital information to the enemy gave a decided advantage to an army commander and placed his adversary at a relative disadvantage. The side that performed the reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance roles most effectively was not guaranteed success in battle, but having a decided intelligence edge gave a commander an initial tactical advantage over his opponent leading up to, and at the outset of, an engagement. Throughout the campaigns 1862 and at Chancellorsville, it had been Stuart’s cavalry that had provided Lee that advantage.

\textit{Cavalry Organization}

Cavalry organization was similar to that of the infantry. The basic unit in the cavalry was the company and it was commanded by a captain.\footnote{Civil War usage generally referred to cavalry companies rather than “troops” which did not become common in the cavalry arm until after its use was directed by the War Department in 1885. Stubbins and Conner, \textit{Armor-Cavalry}, 20.} As in the infantry, companies were combined to form cavalry regiments. The primary North-South organizational difference lay in the fact that Union cavalry regiments typically had twelve companies whereas their Confederate counterparts had only ten. In both armies, two companies operated together to form a squadron. In the Federal cavalry arm, two squadrons operated together to form a battalion, with three battalions forming a regiment.\footnote{Griffith, \textit{Battle Tactics}, 42.} The two extra companies in Federal cavalry regiments gave them roughly a 20-percent manpower edge in confrontations with their Confederate counterparts.\footnote{Longacre, \textit{Lee’s Cavalrymen}, 48–49. For a fuller enumeration of the disadvantages endured by the Confederate cavalry arm during the war, see Lee’s \textit{Cavalrymen}, 37–49.}

Cavalry regiments were commanded by colonels, and seconded by lieutenant colonels and majors—one each in the Confederate cavalry service. Cavalry battalions also existed in Confederate service where the term was applied to formations with anywhere from two to nine companies. Such formations were commanded by a major if they had five or fewer companies or by a lieutenant colonel if they had six or more companies.

Cavalry units were grouped together into brigades of two or more regiments and/or battalions. Unlike in the infantry where the brigade was the principal maneuver element, cavalry regiments were expected to be capable of fighting and oper-
the cavalry by the Second Corps on July 3rd and several additional artillery batteries were “borrowed” to help the cavalry cover the army’s retreat back to Virginia. Little other close integration has been documented.

Early in the campaign, Stuart’s cavalry performed its counter-reconnaissance mission successfully as the army moved toward Maryland. The Confederate cavalry still enjoyed operational superiority as evidenced by the failure of Union cavalry reconnaissance probes to penetrate Stuart’s counter-reconnaissance screen at Brandy Station, Aldie, and Upperville, even though the Union horsemen were supported by infantry in these engagements.170

Things changed for the worse on June 25 when Stuart set off with three brigades on a ride that effectively took him out of the campaign until after battle had already been joined at Gettysburg. The cavalry operated in four distinct bodies after June 25, three of which were physically separated from the main army, and each of which was charged with a different mission. Stuart had no principal subordinates to whom he could entrust important secondary missions and two of the seven cavalry brigades involved did not even come under his command until late in the campaign. From June 25 to July 2, Stuart, with three brigades, was out of position for the primary reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance missions assigned to him. At the same time, he detached the two brigades commanded by his least favorite commanders (Robertson and Jones) to guard the passes in the Blue Ridge and keep watch on the Federals in northern Virginia, where they remained beyond Stuart’s reach and were largely forgotten until too late to be of use. Jenkins’ poorly trained and equipped horsemen appear to have been used mainly as raiders and foragers and were similarly forgotten until Stuart rejoined the army.

All this was failure on Stuart’s part, but it was exacerbated, and in large measure created, by the inferior organizational structure of the army’s cavalry

170 Two ad hoc infantry brigades supported the Federal cavalry at Brandy Station (June 9) and the First Division/Fifth Corps operated in support of the Union cavalry at Aldie (June 17) and Upperville (June 21). In addition, the 12th and 15th Virginia Cavalry regiments were detached from Jones’ and W. H. F. Lee’s Brigades, respectively, following these battles and did not participate in the remainder of the Gettysburg Campaign. Robert E. O’Neill, Jr. The Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville, June 10–27, 1863 (Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1993); OR, 27:1:68–70, OR, 27:2:712–13; Busey and Martin, Strengths and Losses, 197–98.
arm. As a result, argues author Edwin Coddington (among others), the Confederate cavalry was not used to maximal effect during the campaign.171 Primarily because of the cavalry arm’s faulty organization, Lee was left in the dark and stumbled blindly into battle at Gettysburg. The reorganization of the ANV’s cavalry into a corps during the fall of 1863 shows that the lesson was learned. But it came too late for Confederate success in Pennsylvania.

Conclusion
Organizational factors were in part responsible for Lee’s decision to move north into Pennsylvania the first place (for example, the expiration of service of fifty-five Federal regiments). The superior organizational structure of the newly reorganized ANV incorporated lessons learned from past campaigns and took into account Lee’s preferred style of maneuver warfare. As a result of faulty cavalry organization, Lee approached the battlefield at Gettysburg without good intelligence on his adversaries and with no way of preventing his enemy from obtaining reliable intelligence on Lee’s own forces. Despite this, the army’s powerful but compact corps organizational structure favored Lee at the outset of the battle on July 1st when maneuver and the rapid concentration of combat power on the battlefield could still decide the issue. However, superior organization and his highly cohesive veteran brigades were insufficient to overcome the disparity in numbers, guns, and terrain once the battle became a positional one from July 2 on.

Nor were the organizational lessons of the Gettysburg Campaign lost on either Robert E. Lee or George Meade. Lee reorganized his cavalry arm into a corps in September 1863 to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in simultaneously carrying out multiple independent primary and secondary missions. In this, he emulated the reforms Joseph Hooker instituted when he created the Federal Cavalry Corps in February 1863. Similarly, Meade took the opportunity presented by the suspension of operations during the winter of 1863–64 to reorganize the AOP into three large infantry corps—each far more self-contained and powerful than previously and each capable of independent or semi-independent operations. In doing so, he emulated Lee’s 1863 reorganization. Perhaps no more fitting tribute is possible.

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171 Coddington, Study in Command, 50–86.