

Staff Ride

Monocacy National Battlefield

January 2025

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"History sharpens the vision of the skilled commander. By taking in the events and lessons of the past, he can assess his present readiness for war and prepare himself and his subordinates for the challenges of future battles."

~ (Former) Army Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono

Staff Ride Tour Overview

STOP 1 – Monocacy National Battlefield / Key Locations & Realizing the Threat

STOP 2 – Thomas Farm / Taking the Initiative

STOP 3 – Gambrill Mill / Aftermath of Saving Washington

STOP 4 – Gambrill Mill / In the Company of Heroes / Stand #1 on Gambrill Mill Trail

STOP 5 – Gambrill Mill / Resilient Defense / Stand #2 on Gambrill Mill Trail

STOP 6 – Monocacy National Battlefield Museum – Individual Review of Exhibit on the 2nd Floor



The Battle of Monocacy Staff Ride examines the events surrounding the Battle of Monocacy that shaped and important stage of the Civil War conflict. Conducting the Battle of Monocacy Staff Ride using this guide allows the modern Soldier and Commander to incorporate 6 stops at the Monocacy National Battlefield and examine the strategic setting of events prior to the battle, the operational lead into the battle itself, the events of the battle on 09 July 1864, and the aftermath of the battle. This Staff Ride provides talking points and is designed to use a Battlefield Informational Handout in conjunction with group discussions to examine the above elements in context of Army Doctrine of Principles of War and Warfighting Functions, intelligence and realizing the threat, recognizing strategic locations and lines of communications, employing sound decision making, the application of taking the initiative, maximizing available resources, lessons in leadership, and resilience despite setbacks. A variety of resources were used to research and build this Staff Ride guide and have been listed to provide additional context for further use by the reader.

STOP 1 – Monocacy National Battlefield Visitor Center

Strategic Setting at Monocacy Junction

(Handout #1 – Grant’s Plan and Lee’s Last Counter) Grant was put in charge of the entire Union military in 1864 and put together a pressuring campaign to crush Confederate resistance. Aided by the capture of Vicksburg, Mississippi after the Union victory at Gettysburg in 1863, Grant planned to capitalize on a weakened Confederate army. Grant moved south in a war of attrition to capture Richmond, but General Lee continued to block his advance. In summer 1864, Grant moved his entire force south surrounding Petersburg to threaten Richmond from the South. As the Siege of Petersburg began, the Union and Confederate armies dug in and General Lee weighed his dwindling options. Even more pressing, Union General David Hunter was raiding the Shenandoah Valley and destroying Lee’s agricultural and industrial war base. General Hunter lived off the land and destroyed large sections of the Virginia Central Railroad, even burning down Virginia Governor Letchner’s home and Virginia Military Institute (VMI) on June 12, 1864. As Hunter moved toward Lynchburg, an important manufacturing and rail-hub supporting Richmond, Lee sent General Jubal Early to defend it. Lee tasked Jubal Early to defeat Hunter, secure the Shenandoah, and, if possible, attempt to threaten Washington to relieve some of the pressure General Grant was applying to Petersburg. General Early successfully defended Lynchburg from 17 - 18 June 1864 and, using a ruse, convinced General Hunter that he faced a larger force than he did. During the night, rail cars moved constantly behind rebel lines, and the noise of towns people cheering gave the illusions that additional confederate troops were arriving. General Hunter, low on ammunition and supplies as his extended supply line in the Shenandoah was attacked by confederate raiders, withdrew on the night of 18 June. Instead of withdrawing north and remaining in the Shenandoah valley, General Hunter mistakenly withdrew into West Virginia, by way of Charleston, Parkersburg and then to Cumberland, West Virginia. Additionally, General Hunter did not inform General Grant or War Department Chief, General Halleck of his withdrawal from the Shenandoah Valley via West Virginia. General Hunter provided an operations report to HQ on 08 June and didn’t provide an update to his whereabouts until 05 July. The confluence of these factors opened the door to General Early to take the initiative and the brass in Washington had limited insight into the enveloping situation in the Shenandoah Valley.

<https://www.shenandoahatwar.org/david-hunter>

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/lynchburg>

<https://libguides.vmi.edu/archives-research-guides/Hunter>

https://www.vmi.edu/media/content-assets/documents/archives/HuntersRaid_UnionOperations_ReportText.pdf

https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

(Handout #2 – Principles of War / Warfighting Functions) Let’s review some of the Principles of War and Warfighting Functions as these will be present in our discussion on the Staff Ride today.

- From your perspective, what were some mistakes General Hunter made in the Shenandoah?
(Over-extended his supply line; Intelligence Gaps; Gave the initiative away by leaving the theater of operations; Did not communicate)
- What examples of Principles of War or Warfighting Functions can we glean from this case study?
(Simplicity - Importance of clear concise communication in maintaining Command and Control; Security – understand Shenandoah was left undefended; and Movement and Maneuver – needs to be advantageous to friendly forces...not the enemy)

Seizing the Opportunity

General Early took his 15,000 troops north into the Shenandoah Valley and found he had an opening to attack Harper's Ferry and potentially move further into Maryland. Awaiting further orders from Lee, General Early decided to capture the Union Army's depot at Martinsburg, WV as his army was lacking provisions, most notably shoes. Union General Franz Sigel withdrew his 6,500 troops from Martinsburg, WV to Harper's Ferry and linked up with General Max Weber to defend Maryland Heights at Harper's Ferry. Early moved into Maryland at Shepherdstown and rested his worn-out army at the abandoned battlefield of Antietam where the Confederates raided supplies, most notably shoes. Early sent General McCausland's cavalry to Hagerstown, MD on 06 July to ransom the town. Because of the Union's consolidated forces at this key strongpoint, Early was distracted with the capture of Maryland Heights at Harper's Ferry from 03 to 06 July. After orders from General Lee were received on 06 July, General Early bypassed his fixation on Harper's Ferry, destroyed the Potomac River Bridge, and crossed his remaining force over the Potomac River at Shepherdstown. Early also divided his army to ransom Middletown, and Frederick, MD.

https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf
<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>
<https://www.visitfrederick.org/civil-war-trails/attack-on-washington/middletown-ransom/>

Why Harper's Ferry?

(Handout #3 – Harper's Ferry and Early's Delayed Campaign to DC) Harper's Ferry was an extension of the defense of Washington as a gateway to the Shenandoah Valley and an open door to threaten Washington. It was both a key defensive point AND a strategic offensive location. The B&O Railroad crossed the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry and was a key logistics hub for moving troops west and south through the region. It would be at the focus point of three confederate invasions of the North (1862 / 1863 / 1864) and four union invasions of the south (1861 / 1862 / 1863 / 1864). Whoever held Harpers Ferry could either protect Washington, D.C. or threaten it. The town of Harpers Ferry exchanged hand 8 times in the first 3 years of the Civil War, with July 9th 1864 being the last time the town would be under Confederate control, remaining occupied by the Union army for the rest of the war. Maryland Heights was a major Union fort that overlooked the town outfitted with major artillery. In 1864, General Early raided Union supplies in the town and spent four days maneuvering attempting to take Maryland Heights, worried that Union forces would attack from the rear when he entered Maryland. Union forces eventually dislodged the Confederate occupiers by bombarding the town. Ironically, Harper's Ferry would later become the base of operations for General Philip Sheridan as he marched south through the Shenandoah in 1864; destroying much of the area to deny the Confederates wartime supplies (food, clothing, etc.).

<https://www.nps.gov/hafe/learn/historyculture/maryland-heights.htm>
NPS Video - Dennis Frye, former Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on the role Harpers Ferry played during Jubal Early's 1864 campaign in the Shenandoah Valley.) <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=97A0803F-CD46-111C-CEEC1189858D7235>

Recognizing Strategic Locations and Lines of Communication

- How did Harper's Ferry contribute to the defense of Washington? (Geographically important due to its strategic position; main railway hub)
- Did the union Army defend it properly? (Yes, via its defensive positions on Maryland Heights; No, via Hunter's departure to Parkersburg, WV after the Battle of Lynchburg)
- Should Early have attacked Harper's Ferry at all? (Depends – he didn't know that there were limited Union troops between him and Washington. He needed supplies so that became a prioritized military objective. Since Lee's directed objective was attack DC or Baltimore, he should have not delayed 4 days attacking Harper's Ferry. The 4-day delay at Harper's Ferry allowed for Union reinforcements to reach Washington, DC.)
- How did Early contribute to his own delay? (Distracted with ransoming towns; too many objectives; Early attacking Martinsburg, WV led to General Sigel falling back to Harper's Ferry Maryland Heights and it could not be taken)
- What lessons can be learned from this discussion for the military decision maker today? (Understand Commander's Intent, Have a clear understanding of key operational and strategic objectives; conduct COA Analysis (Step 4) and COA Comparison (Step 5) of MDMP - consider pros and cons of alternative Courses of Actions (COAs)

Realizing the Threat

The North's initial reaction to General Early's attack on Harper's Ferry was beset by confusion. Both General Grant and his Chief of Staff, General Halleck, initially failed to recognize a sizeable Confederate force had moved north from Petersburg. There had been no confirmed reports of a large Confederate force departing the Petersburg front, and/or any news from General Hunter's Union Army of the Shenandoah, who had failed to tell his superiors that he fell back to West Virginia after the Battle of Lynchburg. General Halleck had continued to forward Grant the reports he received from General Sigel of rebel activity along the Potomac River, but Grant thought that Hunter could contain the threat. Fortunately for the Union, John W. Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad, received reports from railroad employees regarding confederate movements in the Shenandoah valley since June 29, 1864 – eleven days prior to the battle. "The B&O was one of the nation's most important railway because it linked Washington, D.C., to the rest of the Union, and allowed soldiers to move quickly into Virginia as well as the Western Theater of operations." As Garrett recognized the concerning information, he notified Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. No action was taken. After additional reports of Confederate activity remained unheeded, Garrett personally delivered the news to General Lew Wallace at his Baltimore HQ on 02 July while the Confederates were still south of the Potomac.

https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/john_w_garrett.htm

https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

Intelligence

What kind of intelligence do you believe was collected at the time?

- Observation by cavalry / scouts, reporting from spies, informants, or prisoners of war (HUMINT)
- Intercepting message traffic such as signaling flags or telegraph messages (SIGINT)
- Local newspaper (first forms of OPEN SOURCE – OSINT) detailed military activities
- The newly formed Military Aeronautics Corps, Army of the Potomac used 8 balloons for aerial reconnaissance (the first employment of GEOINT). Balloonists would observe battlefields and report via telegraph line to Union Commanders on the ground. Balloonists could tell enemy positions but revealed little about his strength or intentions; usually providing a rudimentary battlefield common operating picture providing an overview of how a battle was unfolding.

Intelligence was conducted by individual Commanders. While recognized as an important aspect of warfare it was still an emerging field. However, some early forms of organization were employed. In 1863, the Bureau of Military Information (BMI) filled a critical intelligence need for the Army of the Potomac under Colonel George Sharpe. The BMI took over intelligence previously handled by Allen Pinkerton who often provided Union Army of Potomac Commander, General George B. McClellan with overestimated reports of enemy troop numbers. This often impacted McClellan's decision making resulting in overcaution and delays waiting for reinforcements. The newly formed BMI under Sharpe relied on "agents and dedicated cavalry scouts who collected information and then fused with data received from other sources, including reconnaissance balloons, intercepted telegraph messages and flag signals, and other Union cavalry units, to create a more comprehensive intelligence picture. Sharpe was one of the earliest champions of what is known today as all-source intelligence analysis." In 1864, General Grant promoted Sharpe to Brigadier General and relied on him as an advisor for the rest of the war.

<https://www.intelligence.gov/evolution-of-espionage/civil-war/union-espionage/allan-pinkerton>

<https://www.intelligence.gov/evolution-of-espionage/civil-war/union-espionage/bureau-of-military-information>

- What were some reasons Washington did not initially understand the threat of Early's invasion? (Poor Coordination between elements; Lack of intelligence)
- From what we discussed about realizing the threat in reference to Monocacy, what are some takeaways in analyzing threats today that Commanders faced in the Civil War? Analytical Bias; Information overload; Over-reliance on one source of information; Paralysis by Analysis; Timely dissemination and Relevancy of information)
- How can Commanders today ensure intelligence can assist their mission to protect the warfighter? Fused All-Source / Assessments (Provide the "So What") vs. Information / Common Operating Picture)

STOP 2 – Thomas Farm / Taking the Initiative

Operational Setting:

After receiving the reports from B&O Railroad president, John Garrett, General Wallace evaluated his options. Wallace was the newly appointed commander of the Union Army's Middle Department and VIII Corps as of March 1864. The Middle Department area of responsibility extended from Baltimore to the Monocacy River. General Wallace was uncertain whether the Confederate intended to attack Baltimore or Washington; however, he concluded that Monocacy Junction, the western boundary of his department, provided the best point of defense. "The principal roads from Frederick to Washington and Baltimore crossed the Monocacy river just two miles apart" and the strategic B&O railroad bridge was at this location. Wallace's plan was simple, delay the Confederates to buy time for Union reinforcements to arrive in DC. On 05 July, "with no direction from his confused superiors, Wallace quietly began to move his ragtag army of 2,300 men to the junction" via rail with Garrett's help. While he was moving his small army via railway, Wallace informed General Halleck of his plan. Both Wallace and Garrett provided updates to DC regarding the developing situation, with Garrett reporting directly to President Lincoln while the battle was underway. Leadership became increasingly aware of the threat Early posed, as Wallace commanded the only union forces between the capital.

https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/john_w_garrett.htm

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

"Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.," Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005. https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

Maximizing Available Resources

While enroute to Monocacy Junction and setting up his defense, Wallace acquired new forces sent to the area. On 07 July, Wallace was reinforced by 230 troopers of the 8th Illinois Cavalry commanded by Colonel Clendenin. "Clendenin was dispatched by Major General Augur, Department of Washington Commander to investigate the loss of communication with Harper's Ferry." Wallace gladly accepted the reinforcements and wisely leveraged his new cavalry unit as a reconnaissance force sending them to Middletown and Frederick to harass Confederate forces and provide intelligence. This application initially slowed General Early's advance and masked the strength and disposition of Wallace's forces. Unknown to Wallace, Grant dispatched General James B. Ricketts's Third Division, VI Corps, on 06 July to bolster the defenses of Washington. They arrived by boat at Locust Point, Maryland (near Baltimore) on 08 July and two brigades (some 3,400 battle-hardened veterans) were transported by B&O Railroad to join Wallace. Wallace then used these troops to form the core of his defensive position at Thomas Farm. Wallace's rag-tag army had some 6,200 men that included a mix of battle-hardened veterans and militia with 100-day orders. After determining that General Early was in nearby Frederick, MD, Wallace ordered militia to guard the Stone (Jug) Bridge to the north, several nearby fords, and placed 350 skirmishers of the 10th Vermont forward to protect the covered bridge and B&O railroad bridge at Monocacy Junction.

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

"Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.," Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005. https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

Taking the Initiative in Operational Context

- How did Wallace take the initiative? (Listened to B&O Reports; Evaluated the Situation; Communicated Clearly to Halleck; Communicated clearly to Grant; Took Action by Moving Out)
- How did Wallace maximize the use of the limited resources he had? (Defended Several Key Positions Effectively; Used delayed blocking defensive tactics; employed skirmishers and veterans in-depth; synchronized the withdrawal of forces)

(Handout #4 - Monocacy Battlefield Map) “Wallace was facing about 17,000 battle hardened Confederates with superior cavalry and artillery.” On July 7th, General McCausland, who had been dispatched by Early to ransom Hagerstown, returned with only \$20,000 misunderstanding Early's directive to collect \$200,000. This ended up distracting Early on 08 July when the Confederates entered Frederick. Early spent most of 09 July ransoming Frederick for the full \$200,000. Per General Lee's directive, General Early had detached General Johnson's cavalry brigade to harass Baltimore and help facilitate / support a confederate prison break at the Point Lookout Prison south of Baltimore on the Chesapeake Bay peninsula. Because General Early dispatched his cavalry on a separate raiding mission, Early was unsure of the size of the Union force he faced as he advanced toward Monocacy Junction on the morning of 09 July. Early's lack of focus resulted in his troops attacking piecemeal toward the Union defense at Monocacy Junction. Confederate General Ramseur led the advance along the Baltimore Pike and was engaged by union skirmishers. When Ramseur noted the enemy's position was too strong at the covered bridge and railway bridge, another route was investigated by General McCausland's cavalry to the south. When General Wallace determined that McCausland's 1,000 troopers crossed Monocacy River at the Worthington-McKinney Ford, he ordered the covered bridge burned. At 1100 hours, McCausland, now at Worthington Ford, assembled dismounted cavalry in a battle line and walked through a field of waist-high corn. McCausland chose not send skirmishers and failed to see Union General Ricketts's troops concealed in a prone position behind the fence. As the cavalymen approached within 125 yards of the fence line, the hidden Union soldiers stood up and fired. The Confederate line collapsed sending them reeling toward the riverbank. McCausland reformed and attacked again at 1400 hours pushing the union line forward from Worthington Farm to Thomas Farm. Wallace counterattacked with Ricketts and fierce fighting enveloped the Thomas Farm wresting it from Confederate hands. At 1400 hours, General John B. Gordon's division forded the river as McCausland and the Confederates retook Thomas Farm. General Early, distracted in Frederick, MD, finally rejoined the battle and the Confederates counterattacked with Gordon division pushing the attack forward. The fighting at Thomas Farm was fierce and the wavering Union battle line broke, but reformed at the Georgetown Pike, stubbornly giving minimal ground. Finally, the confederates attacked in echelon force and General Wallace commanded the union forces at 1630 hours to retreat toward Baltimore. The delay had costed the Confederates a full day. During the fighting roughly 2,200 men had been killed, wounded, captured, or were listed as missing (900 Confederate, 1,300 Federal). The confederates won the battle and the five local banks from the city of Frederick advanced the \$200,000 the Confederates demanded, imposing a financial burden the city would not completely repay until 1952. The money did little to reinvigorate the confederates, as they camped at Monocacy National Battlefield among the wounded worn out by the stiff union defense, long marches, and summer heat.

"Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.," Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005. https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf <https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

"The Battle of Monocacy July 9, 1864," Monocacy National Battlefield Staff, National Park Service, Department of Interior, Western Maryland Interpretive Association (WMIA), 2010.

Lessons in Leadership

Poor Examples

- How would you evaluate Early's use of the "intelligence" Warfighting function at Frederick, MD and the subsequent Battle of Monocacy? (*Poor – He dispatched General Johnson's cavalry to harass Baltimore and support an operation with minimal impact... the confederate prison break at the Point Lookout Prison. Because General Early dispatched his cavalry on a separate mission, Early was unsure of the size of the Union force he faced as he advanced toward Monocacy Junction on the morning of 09 July; Additionally, he could not capitalize on the minimal troops manning the defense of Washington.*)
- How does the relationship between intelligence and operations play out for General Early in the Battle of Monocacy? (*The Strategic, Operational, and Tactical relationships of intelligence and operational impact. Early's failure to gather accurate intelligence impacted him operationally in that he failed to understand the strategic situation to capitalize on minimal troops between his army and Washington. His pursuit of other objectives not central to supporting the Commander's prioritized objective (take Washington), resulted in operational delays. The lack of intelligence gathering impacted General McCausland and Rodes tactically in their maneuvers on 09 July 1864, resulting in casualties and a delay that contributed to not achieving the main objective (take Washington).*)
- How did General Early maintain Command Control at the Battle of Monocacy? (*Early did not maintain adequate Command and Control and was distracted by ransoming Frederick, MD. Effectively, General Early delegated his Command and Control role to his individual operational Commanders and this led to delayed employment of his forces as the battle commenced.*)

Good Examples:

- How would you evaluate Wallace's use of the "intelligence" Warfighting function at the Battle of Monocacy? (*Good – Sent Clendinen's cavalry ahead to ascertain the size of the confederate force. Listened to Garrett's reports of Confederates movements from Harper's Ferry into Maryland).*)
- How does the relationship between intelligence and operations play out for General Wallace in the Battle of Monocacy? (*Wallace was keenly aware of his Department and correlated this "operationally" to the Garrett's reports generating from the railroad. Since General Hunter had not stopped Early already, there was a realistic threat to Washington or Baltimore. Wallace understood the strategic impact of that threat and correlated that he had to 1) determine the size of the enemy force, 2) determine their objective, and 3) delay the enemy advance until*)

reinforcements arrived. This led to his operational selection of the Monocacy Junction for his defense as it was the most advantageous to meet all three of his priority objectives.

- How did Wallace maintain Command Control at the Battle of Monocacy? Shifted troops to react to confederate attacks and maximize delay-tactic defense; burning the bridge at the last moment needed. Managed the defense of the Junction despite having inferior numbers, employing his best fighting force (Rickett's) to the heart of his defense at Thomas Farm.

- Analyst Note: Wallace arrayed all available forces to defend against the confederate attack. "Wallace exhibited high moral courage by continuing to contest the ground rather than retreat. As Wallace later recalled, one thought in particular hardened his resolve, "an apparition of President Lincoln, cloaked and hooded, stealing like a malefactor from the back door of the White House just as some gray-garbed Confederate brigadier burst in the front door." ... The high casualty rates on both sides were indicative of the superior morale and courage of both sets of combatants."

"Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.," Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005.

https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

STOP 3 – Gambril Mill, Battle of Monocacy (1864) / Aftermath of Saving Washington

The next day, General Early continued marching towards Washington, but hundreds of his men fell out due to the intense summer heat. Early covered 20 miles and camped at Rockville, MD on the evening of 10 July. On 11 July 1864, the front elements of the exhausted rebel force arrived at Fort Stevens in Northwest Washington, DC. "Panic spread through the capital and preparations were made to evacuate President Lincoln and his cabinet from the city." The same day, General Grant's reinforcements were arriving by ship in southern DC and were racing through the city to defend the ramparts of forts surrounding the city. Early ended up being only a few hours behind Grant's reinforcements. Wallace's delayed defense at the Battle of Monocacy had achieved its objective. The delay allowed union reinforcements to arrive, making a successful assault on the capital's defenses untenable. General Early probed the Washington defenses and skirmished at Fort Stevens on 12 July 1864. A curious President Abraham Lincoln looked on from a parapet at Fort Stevens as confederate sharpshooters engaged exposed troops. A captain scolded President Lincoln telling him "Get down, you damn fool, before you get shot!" and Lincoln would go down as the only sitting President who was under direct fire by an armed enemy combatant. Early, realizing he could not take Washington, retreated to the Shenandoah. The impact of the battle at the Monocacy was succinctly summarized by General Grant in his memoirs. "If Early had been but one day earlier he might have entered the capital before the arrival of the reinforcements had sent. Whether the delay caused by the battle amounted to a day or not, General Wallace contributed on this occasion, by the defeat of the troops under him a greater benefit to the cause than often falls to the lot of a commander of an equal force to render by means of a victory."

"Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.," Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005. https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf
<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

Organizational Issues:

On 07 August 1864, General Grant created the Middle Military Division (a Strategic Command) which oversaw the separate geographical military commands incorporating the Departments of Washington, Susquehanna, West Virginia, the Middle Military Department, as well as The Army of the Shenandoah. In late September 1864, the Department of Pennsylvania was transferred to the Middle Military Division. General Philip Sheridan was placed as its Commander. Previously, the Union had created the Military Division of the Potomac in 1861 and comprised the Departments of Washington and Northeastern Virginia to coordinate the defense of Washington at the outset of the Civil War. However, in August 1861 the Military Division of the Potomac was discontinued and individual Departments (geographic commands) were shuffled and reorganized as new commanders and armies were created or consolidated. The constant shuffling of geographical departments created command, control, and coordination issues with ill-defined boundaries or command responsibilities that became blurred in military operational activities or within Higher HQ command priorities that would transcend state lines or departmental borders. These issues were especially apparent to the precursory events to the Battle of Monocacy and contributed to General Early's ability to traverse the Shenandoah Valley to threaten Washington. Grant replaced General Hunter with General Philip Sheridan to command the Army of the Shenandoah and oversee the Middle Military Division. Sheridan led the 1864 Shenandoah Campaign in the fall that destroyed much of the Confederate war production in the Shenandoah and secured "The Valley." The consolidating of bureaucratic departmental structure of geographic commands overseen by a strategic command ensured better coordination and unity of effort which supported future union military campaigns that led to the defeat of the Confederate states.

<https://americancivilwarhighcommand.com/organisations-and-commands/overview-of-union-organisations/union-organisations-departments/>
"Shenandoah Valley Campaign March – November 1864," Raymond K. Bluhm Jr., Center for Military History (CMH) Pub 75-14, 2014.

https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/075/75-14/cmhPub_75-14.pdf

<https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/interesting-facts.htm>

"Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.," Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005. https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

- **Interesting fact:** (The Thomas House held an important meeting later in the War in August 1864. General Grant stayed with the Thomas family and used their home to hold a "council of war." At this meeting, General Grant rearranged the ill-defined union "Military Departments" set up to manage the security of Maryland and West Virginia. This rearrangement was based on inefficient coordination between General Hunter and defense of Washington responding to Early's invasion.) https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/thomas_farm.htm

Lessons in Leadership

- How did Early show poor application of the principles of war? (Poor simplicity – plan was too complicated with different objectives...resulted in poor coordination and delayed completion of priority objectives; Did not support Unity of Command effectively – Did not understand the relationship of time and tactical initiative – wasted time at Harper's Ferry and delayed in ransoming towns)
- How did Early use the War-Fighting Principles in the Battle of Monocacy? (Poor application of Mass and Maneuver – his army attacked piecemeal across the Monocacy and allowed Wallace to apply sound tactics to defend delay his movement toward Washington; Lack of Intelligence –

Poor confederate intelligence resulted in unneeded casualties as McCausland attacked blindly at Thomas Farm expecting to encounter only untested militia)

- **Analytical Note:** “The costly battle at the Monocacy might have been completely avoided and Wallace's forces outflanked or routed had Early not detached General Johnson's cavalry brigade to threaten Baltimore and Point Lookout. Johnson, a Frederick native, and his cavalymen could have led the Confederate force around Wallace's troops via the Buckeystown Road to the North or fords nearer the mouth of the Monocacy.”

“Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.,” Army History, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005.

https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

- How did Wallace successfully use the Principles of War in Setting Up the Defense of Monocacy: (Unity of Command, Objective, and Simplicity – used all available forces to employ delay-tactic defense; Mass and Maneuver – Troops were grouped at key locations to maximize effectiveness)
- How did Wallace use the Warfighting Functions in Setting Up the Defense of Monocacy: (Objective – used all available forces to employ a delay-tactic, burned the bridge to deny the enemy their objective; Simplicity and Communication – Troops understood their objectives – hold to the last possible moment).

Stop 4 – In the Company of Heroes / Stand #1 on Gambrill Mill Trail

Overlooking the Monocacy River in view of the Railroad Bridge

(Handout #5 – Medal of Honor Recipients at Monocacy) The brave men that defended Washington at the Battle of Monocacy were the true heroes. “At the cost of 1,294 dead, wounded, and missing, Wallace had lost the battle, but achieved the primary goal that he had set out accomplish. His meager forces delayed Early long enough to allow reinforcements to reach the defenses of Washington. Two men, LT George Davis and CPL Alexander Scott, both of the 10th Vermont, received the Medal of Honor for their bravery under fire.” <https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

“The Medal of Honor is the highest award in the United States military that a soldier can be awarded for bravery or valor against an enemy. The medal was first established December 21, 1861 and created to recognize the fighting soldier since there was no existing award that did so and was only to be issued during the Civil War. In 1863, however, Congress made the award permanent. Between 1861 and 1865, 1,522 Medals of Honor were issued. Of these, 32 were issued posthumously. As the actions of Civil War soldiers have been reevaluated, there have even been some recent medals awarded. The last Medal of Honor awarded to a Civil War soldier was presented on 6 November 2014.” At the Battle of Monocacy, two Medals of Honor were awarded. Interestingly, both medals were earned by soldiers from the same regiment, the 10th Vermont Infantry. https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/medal_of_honor.htm

1st Lieutenant George E. Davis, Company D, 10th Vermont. "While in command of a small force, held the approaches of two bridges against repeated assaults of superior numbers, thereby materially delaying Early's advance on Washington." In an NPS video, the Park Ranger accounts the final withdraw across the railroad bridge as the covered bridge was burned to delay Confederate forces earlier in the day. "24 year old 1LT Davis looked back across the river and saw the 3rd Division 6th Army Corps Headquarters flag falling back. This signaled to him that he had bought enough time and it was time for his men to fall back. Falling back was difficult as Union troops were under close quarter fire transiting a railroad bridge that had railroad ties several feet apart suspended approx. 40 feet in the air. The Park Ranger accounts that the Confederates were breathing down the Union Soldiers necks and several men were even captured by Confederate forces grabbing their collar as they fled. 1LT Davis held his position all day to the last possible moment before falling back against superior forces."

<https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/photosmultimedia/monocacy-moments.htm>

https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/medal_of_honor.htm

<https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/lieutenant-george-davis.htm>

Stop 5 – Resilient Defense / Stand #2 on Gambrill Mill Trail

Overlooking the field in view of Gambrill Mill

Here the union Soldiers are retreating after their final stand at Thomas Farm against a numerically superior enemy force. There is the smoke of the burning bridge in the background and the hail of bullets flying as the union Soldiers run across the field falling back to regroup. Here is the scene for the Soldier who received the 2nd Medal of Honor at the Battle of Monocacy.

Corporal Alexander Scott, Company D, 10th Vermont

"As troops are falling back across the fields, the color sergeant of the 10th Vermont collapsed out of exhaustion. The Corporal of this color detail (who had the Vermont flag still in hand) ran back... "Under a very heavy fire of the enemy, saved the national flag of his regiment from capture." The Union Army withdrew east on the Georgetown Pike back to Baltimore, MD."

<https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/corporal-alexander-scott.htm?fullweb=1>

Mixed Views of the Battle

"The Battle of Monocacy later became known as 'the battle that saved Washington,' however, Wallace was originally chastised for not defeating Early. As the only Confederate victory on Union soil, MG Halleck and Secretary of War Edward M. Stanton unfairly criticized Wallace for failing to achieve Union victory at the Battle of Monocacy. Even President Lincoln sent a chilly dispatch to Grant describing Wallace's defeat. Once the threat to Washington passed, however, closer examination of the battle demonstrated that Wallace's actions at Monocacy probably saved the capital. Various newspapers praised Wallace's stand. In the New York Tribune, Horace Greeley proclaimed that 'Wallace held out four hours longer than honor required.' In September Wallace and Grant had a cordial meeting, and years later, Grant later commended Wallace for his stand at Monocacy in his memoirs. On 23 September 1864 Wallace wrote to his brother that 'a defeat did more for me than the victories I've been engaged in.'" This was in stark contrast to Wallace's initial Civil War experiences."

<https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-monocacy-9-july-1864/>

Resilience Despite Setbacks

“Wallace rose through the ranks quickly and at thirty-four became the youngest man in the Union Army to achieve the rank of Major General. However, Wallace was scapegoated for the huge losses at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862, where 13,000 Union soldiers died, the largest toll then seen in the war. On General Ulysses Grant’s orders, Wallace had marched the 3rd Division of the Army of the Tennessee and its artillery through six miles of mud, only to arrive a day late to the battle. While Shiloh ended as a costly Union victory, Wallace was relieved of his command soon and sent to command the Middle Military Department a garrison away from the front lines in the defense of Baltimore / Washington. Somewhat poetically, he redeemed himself at the Battle of Monocacy, where he was able to hold off the Confederate army long enough to prevent the capture of Washington, D.C.” Wallace final act of the Civil War service was serving as member of the military commission that tried those accused of President Lincoln’s assassination and served as president of the court martial that condemned the Confederate commander who was responsible for the horrible conditions Union prisoners endured at Andersonville Prison. Wallace went on to later serve as the Governor of New Mexico and Ambassador to Turkey. However, it was the Indiana native’s talent as an author that cemented a lasting impact. “In 1880, Lew Wallace published his book: *Ben-Hur: a novel that intertwines the life of Jesus with that of a fictional protagonist, the young Jewish prince named Judah Ben-Hur, who suffers betrayal, injustice, and brutality. It has the appeal of a rollicking historical adventure combined with a sincere Christian message of redemption. The book, written in 1880, made Lew Wallace a celebrity, sought out for speaking engagements, political endorsements, and newspaper interviews. Wallace told a New York Times Reporter, ‘I would not give a tuppence for the American who has not at least tried to do one of three things...That person lacks the true American spirit who has not tried to paint a picture, write a book, or get out a patent on something... or tried to play some musical instrument. There you have the genius of the true American in those four—art, literature, invention, music.’ Since its first publication, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* has never been out of print and outsold every book except the Bible until *Gone With the Wind* came out in 1936, and resurged to the top of the list again in the 1960s. Wallace also made and played his own violins, sketched, and painted with skill, and held eight patents for various inventions, including a retractable reel hidden inside a fishing rod handle. But it was in literature that Wallace truly made his mark. He is the only novelist honored in the National Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol. With a life full of distinctions, none of Wallace’s accomplishments made such an impression as his novel *Ben-Hur*, which in its writing, transformed his life and others.”*

“Ben-Hur: The Book that Shook the World - The story behind Lew Wallace's epic,” Amy Lifson, The National Endowment for the Humanities, November/December 2009, Volume 30, Number 6. <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2009/novemberdecember/feature/ben-hur-the-book-shook-the-world>

“Crossroads of Destiny: Lew Wallace, the Battle of Monocacy, and the Outcome of Jubal Early's Drive on Washington, D.C.,” Army History, Spring 2005, Peter L. Platteborze, 2005. https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/civil_war/articles/article_from_AH61w.pdf
<https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/interesting-facts.htm>
<https://www.nps.gov/people/lew-wallace.htm>
<https://www.nps.gov/mono/learn/historyculture/lewwallace.htm>
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/lewis-lew-wallace>

Resilience Takeaways

- How did Wallace maintain resilience and how did that translate to the battlefield? (remained confident in himself...took the initiative; stayed ready to support when called upon – made wise decisions based on information available)

