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THE LIFE OF GENERAL GOUVERNEUR KEMBLE WARREN

by

VINCENT J. FLANAGAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE IN COLD SPRING

> What a time of intense delight was that first sail through the Highlands. I sat on the deck as we slowly tided along at the foot of those stern mountains, and gazed with wonder and admiration at cliffs impending far above me, crowned with forests, with eagles sailing and screaming around them; or listened to the unseen stream dashing down precipices; or behold rock, and tree, and cloud, and sky reflected in the glassy stream of the river.[1]

Such was the character of the land along the banks of lower Hudson River, in that region known as the Highlands, as remembered by Washington Irving. At home in the salons of Paris, London, and Vienna, the great writer never forgot the peace and tranquility that once marked the simple rural life of the Hudson River country.[2] It was here that Gouverneur Kemble Warren was born in 1830.

Many other writers have paid tribute to the beauty of the Highlands, stressing the grandeur of its rugged heights. A contemporary of Warren once wrote nostalgically of the land of their childhood:

> Oh, sing once more those dear, familiar lays,
> Whose gliding measure every bosom thrills,
> And take my heart back to the happy days
> When first I sung them on my native hills.[3]

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[1]Pierre M. Irving, The Life and Letters of Washington Irving (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1862), I, 42.

[2]Axson Stockton, "Irving and the Knickerbocker Group," The Rice Institute Pamphlet, XX, (April 1929), p. 191.

[3]George P. Morris, Poems By George P. Morris (New York: Charles Scribner, 1853), p. 179.

In the early nineteenth century this happy region was sparsely settled. Aside from two small villages and the imposing stone buildings of the United States Military Academy at nearby West Point, the land remained an untouched preserve of nature. Opposite West Point, on the east bank of the Hudson, was the charming little hamlet of Cold Spring. Its first settlers seem to have been characterized by thrift and self-sufficiency. With few exceptions, journeys were infrequent and generally confined to an annual visit to neighboring towns, such as Peekskill, Fishkill, or Poughkeepsie. In emergencies, families apparently relied upon their own resources rather than the charity or aid of neighbors.[4]

This small village of Cold Spring owed its continued existence in the nineteenth century to an iron foundry which had been started in 1818 by one Gouverneur Kemble.[5] The eldest son of a local and prosperous businessman, Kemble had been graduated from Columbia College in New York City in 1803, but had returned to his native soil to become a member of the coterie of brilliant young men of means who surrounded the distinguished Washington Irving. During President Monroe's administration, Kemble had been appointed Consul to Cadiz. In Spain he had studied the methods utilized by the Spanish in casting cannon, and what he learned there he soon applied, to the advantage of the people of the Hudson Valley, when he

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[4]Nelson DeLanoy, "Washington's First Love" Putnam County Workshop 1954 (Putnam County Historical Society, 1954).

[5]Wallace Bruce, The Hudson (London: Blackwood & Sons, 1894), p. 129.

constructed at Cold Spring the most modern cannon foundry in the Western Hemisphere.[6] The "West Point Foundry Association" soon produced the best cannon cast in America, and its reputation became such that it received special government patronage.[7] As William J. Blake, historian of Putnam County, wrote in 1849, "It feeds all, clothes all, and supports all."[8]

Kemble also built "Cockloft Hall," an imposing house in the heart of the Highlands, and became renowned for his hospitality. All professors and senior officers of the Military Academy, situated across the river from Kemble's home, had a standing invitation to attend a sumptuous dinner every Saturday evening.[9]

As a leader of Putnam County society it was perhaps inevitable that Gouverneur Kemble should also have become prominent in political life. Cold Spring was a small oasis of Democracy in the vast desert of Whiggery which was rural New York. The voters almost invariably returned a Democratic representative to Congress. In addition, State senators and assemblymen from the Fourth Congressional district were solidly behind the "party of Andrew Jackson." During the Van Buren administration, Kemble himself served two terms as Representative for the district of Westchester-Putnam in Congress.

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[6]Gouverneur Kemble, Dictionary of American Biography, vol. X, 1933.

[7]William S. Pelletreau, History of Putnam County (New York: W.W. Preston & Co., 1886), p. 559.

[8]William J. Blake, The History of Putnam County (New York: Baker & Scribner, 1849), p. 245.

[9]Pelletreau, History of Putnam County, pp. 615-616.

He also was a delegate both to the Democratic National Convention of 1844 which nominated James K. Polk, and to the schismatic Democratic Convention of 1860.[10]

Throughout his life Kemble enjoyed the support and friendship of his neighbors of Cold Spring, especially of the prosperous Warren family. The Warrens traced their origin in America back to the early seventeenth century, when Richard Warren had joined the Pilgrims at London, ventured forth with them to the New World, and had become a signatory of the Mayflower Compact.[11] A century later a descendant, Samuel Warren, had left New England and settled near the "Patent of Nine Partners" in Dutchess County. In 1728, Samuel was a surveyor for Long Reach in Westchester County and, before his death in January of 1750, had acquired a reputation for proficiency in his chosen vocation.[12]

A direct descendant of these first Warrens of Cold Spring was John Warren, born in the Highlands in March of 1765. During his youth he had been apprenticed to learn the trade of blacksmith, and at seventeen had married Sarah Nelson, aged fifteen. John's character and disposition are clear from an event that is said to have occurred shortly after his marriage. Having asked a Peekskill merchant for credit to purchase material to make a pair of pantaloons but meeting

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[10]Gouverneur Kemble, Dictionary of American Biography.

[11]Mrs. Washington A. Roebling, Richard Warren of the Mayflower, no. 19 of 50 (Boston: Press of David Clapp & Son 1901), p. 3.

[12]Silas Constant, The Journal of the Reverend Silas Constant, Ed. Emily Warren Roebling (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1903), p. 434.

with refusal, the humiliated young blacksmith had returned home without looking elsewhere for credit. Never again during his lifetime was he to ask for goods he could not afford. His philosophy of life, passed on to his descendants, was "that the best policy for a man was to pay as he went."[13]

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, John Warren had expanded his interests beyond that of a blacksmith and engaged in land speculation in the area around Cold Spring.[14] He had also procured various tracts of land for himself. On one of these, in 1805, he built the Warren Homestead at the junction of the Highland Turnpike and the Post Road. Before his death in 1837, he had acquired a reputation for veracity, frugality, and piety. Although born in abject poverty, he died comparatively wealthy.[15]

Two of the children of John Warren were to achieve special renown and prosperity in the local affairs of the County. On April 1, 1839, Cornelius and Sylvanus Warren, together with their brother Henry, deeded land known as the Searles Purchase to John W. Brankerhoff of Fishkill in return for a consideration of 16,750.[16] This sum, divided among the brothers, obviously provided for their comforts and financed the aspirations of the family.

This Cornelius Warren, the eldest of John Warren's

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[13]Blake, The History of Putnam County, p. 235.

[14]Constant, The Journal of the Reverend Silas Constant, p. 439.

[15]Pelletreau, History of Putnam County, pp. 555-556. Blake, The History of Putnam County, p. 165.

[16]Constant, The Journal of the Reverend Silas Constant, p. 444.

seven children, became a judge of Common Pleas and later a Democratic member of Congress for one term. Brother Sylvanus was a Supervisor for Philipstown from 1835 till 1840 and, three years later, was elected as a member of the State Assembly.[17] Sylvanus was also successfully recommended in 1839 by his close friends, Washington Irving and Gouverneur Kemble, for the post of Assistant Marshal for the Southern District of New York to take the census of Putnam County. This position must have further enabled him to meet the needs of his growing family.[18]

On January 8, 1830, a boy, the fourth of twelve children, was born to Sylvanus and Phoebe Warren at Cold Spring. Named for the distinguished Gouverneur Kemble, because of the later's friendship with the family, this young Warren seems to have been especially attached to his father, and during childhood is said to have followed Sylvanus around the town as the elder Warren conducted his business.[19] Throughout the youngster's formative years the two were inseparable.[20]

When of school age, Gouverneur Kemble Warren and his younger sister, Emily, were often guests at the nearby home of General Morris, a retired officer prominent in Putnam County society. The latter's children, Ida and Georginia Morris, were close friends of the Warren children; another child,

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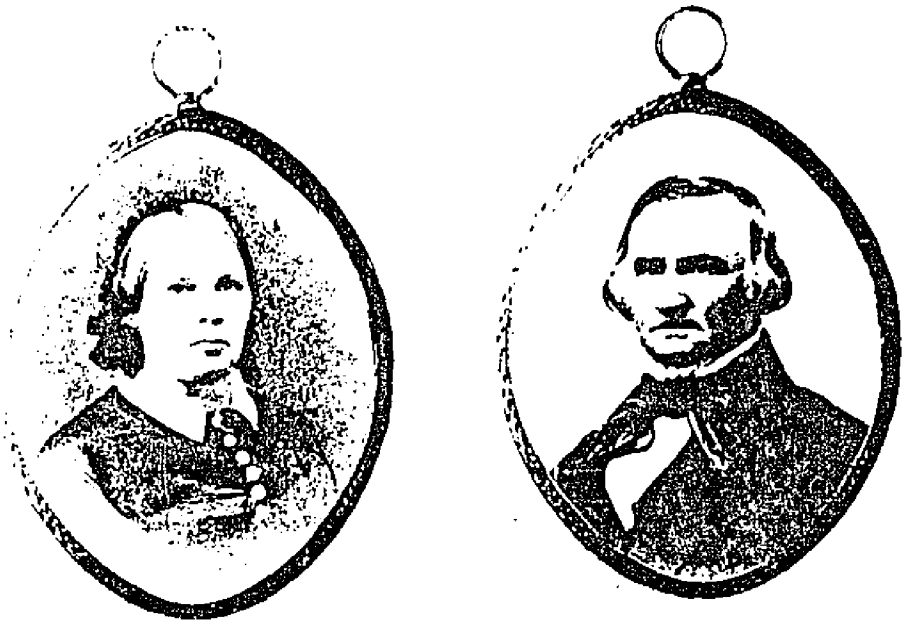
[17]Pelletreau, History of Putnam County, pp. 555-556.

[18]Gouverneur Kemble to Sylvanus Warren, November 12, 1839, The New York State Library, Albany, New York, Warren Papers, I, 17.

[19]Constant, The Journal of the Reverend Silas Constant, p. 564.

[20]Emerson Gifford Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), p. 5.



Phoebe and Sylvanus Warren

Warren Home at Cold Spring, New York

William Morris, was to be in the same class as Warren at West Point.[21]

Gouverneur Warren was to look back upon his boyhood days with deep affection. Some of his earliest recollections were of the reunions held in Cold Spring by veterans of the American Revolution. Their songs, battle cries and stories about the war nurtured patriotic feelings in the impressionable youth. "I had," he later recalled, "an unlimited faith in the greatness and goodness of our country."[22]

The Cold Spring of Warren's youth was a mixed religious community of Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, all apparently living in harmony with each other and presumably tolerant of divergent religious views. Himself raised in the Presbyterian faith, Warren accepted its basic tenets without question. Believing that the Bible was the "inspired word," he was certain of the omnipresence of God, the malignance of the devil, and the reality of miracles. These beliefs had been daily preached to him both at home and in school.[23]

As a boy, Warren was particularly impressed by the superstitions and old wives tales of the community. Stories spread by his Irish friends about the "Cry of the Banshee" and the belief that the howling of dogs signaled the approach of

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[21]Dorothy Giles, "Marshmoor and Undercliff . . ." Putnam County Workshop 1955 (Putnam County Historical Society, 1955).

[22]Warren Memo on Early Life, Warren Papers, X, 35. Most information on Warren's early life is found in a memo written by Warren in 1881 while in New York.

[23]Ibid.

death, were considered unquestioned truths. Warren later observed, "In these religious and superstitious surroundings it required a strong faith in the protection of the good God, to live serenely, and that faith was ever shaken by the reasonable apprehension that you might not be worthy of his care." This fear was reinforced in the boy by his religious teachers who, in a frenzy, would implore God's succor to prevent their charges from being plunged into the bottomless pit. "I often think," Warren once observed of his youth in Cold Spring, "that in the perilous battles and scenes of my life, I never felt the danger of the situation to be equal to what I had to stand up to in my childhood." When fourteen, he still looked with horror upon the town's shoemaker's reference to the Book of Jonah as an "unbelievable fish story."[24]

As a child, Warren was praised for his gentleness; he was known at home as "the tender-hearted boy." This trait was to remain with him throughout his life, and during the bloodiest days of the Civil War he would often write his brother William about the carnage of the battlefield. In one of his letters he once observed: "I do not feel it much in my own person, but I sympathize so much with the suffering around me that I can hardly endure it."[25]

Warren was not a strong child, and during his early years was afflicted with chicken-pox, whooping cough, diptheria,

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[24] Ibid.

[25] John B. Fiske et al., Dedication Services at the Unveiling of the Bronze Statue of Maj.-Gen. G.K. Warren, at Little Round Top, Gettysburg, Pa., August 8, 1888 (Brooklyn: Press of Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Printing Department, 1888).

measles, and scarlet fever. Such epidemics of childhood carried away three of his brothers and sisters and so weakened his own constitution that, during the remainder of his life, he was to complain constantly of the effects of one ailment or another. Because of constant illness, the boy was for long periods of time confined to the family home. He took this opportunity to do a great deal of reading; and because his early demise was feared, read many books of a religious nature. By his fifteenth birthday he was well versed in Holy Scripture.[26]

The decade 1835-45 was one of missionary excitement in the United States, and young Warren contributed many a penny from his limited resources to aid this worthy cause. This interest led to an intense fascination with foreign travel; by the age of fourteen he had also read many works on adventure among the American Indians, and tales concerning life on the high seas.[27]

Throughout life Warren was to be most generous in his praise of the hard-working citizens of Cold Spring and the effect they had had upon his early life:

> The people among whom I grew were all industrious and all producers. They worked hard but cheerfully and did almost everything for themselves. I saw the fruits of all kinds of labor, used on the spot and a surplus accumulate, in houses, churches and schoolhouses - roads to /sic/ and I learned to love labor, for its benificent results - a comparatively few poor wretches being evidently so from idleness & debauchery. This latter exceptional few made virtue appear so lovely by contrast. For it was a pure

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[26]Warren Memo on Early Life, Warren Papers, X, 35.

[27]Ibid.

and moral community as a whole in all the requirements of the decalogue.[28]

In view of his later career, it is especially interesting to note that Warren's beliefs concerning the Negro and the latter's place in American society were similarly molded in boyhood by the strict color lines imposed by the citizens of Cold Spring. "I might mention," he recalled in later years, "that in this community there were no negroes allowed. I say negroes for there was one tolerated who lived alone away from all associations; and he was under obligations to the community to not allow another one to come and settle. The color line thus wisely regulated itself."[29] At no time during his life were Warren's racial beliefs to change. Never a reformer but rather a product of his times, he had apparently been taught to believe that the Negro was innately inferior and unable to share fully in the political, economic, and social life of the nation.

During his fifteenth year, young Warren was sent to Kinsley's School near West Point in preparation for entrance into the Military Academy. His basic views on life had already been shaped. As he later remarked, he took with him from Cold Spring "a pure firm religious faith in which Providence ruled the universe," and "a patriotism so strong that I could not love my country too much."[30]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF AN OFFICER

As Gouverneur Kemble Warren prepared to enter West Point, the institution was just entering its golden age. Long neglected in Congressional appropriations, after August, 1845, under the able leadership of its new Superintendent, Captain Henry Brewerton, Congress improved morale by granting each cadet twenty-four dollars per month to defray personal expenses. Further outlays, for the expansion of facilities, were forthcoming when the United States became involved in a war with Mexico. Because of this conflict the nation soon discovered that what it had previously considered waste - the creation of an army officer caste system - could yield rich rewards on the battlefield.[1]

The instructional staff at the Academy consisted of civilian professors in charge of subject areas, who in turn had regular army officers assigned to them as assistants. The latter were selected for a term of four years from former graduates of West Point who had already gained practical experience on the Western prairies.[2]

Admission requirements for West Point in Warren's

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[1]Edward C. Boynton, History of West Point (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1863), pp. 245-247.

[2]Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War In America, (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1875), I, 18.

time were not particularly rigorous. At the time of entering the Academy a prospective matriculant had to be over sixteen and under twenty-one years of age and free from any physical infirmity, disease or impediment that might render him unfit for active service in the United States Army. In addition, each applicant had to be recommended for admission by his Congressman. A prospective candidate was required to read and write well, perform basic mathematics with ease and know the rudiments of geography. It was expected that a cadet could not be "transparently stupid or inherently bad," and expect to be retained at the Point.[3] Obviously Warren qualified on all points.

Entering the Military Academy, however, was one thing; accepting the rigors of long hours of study, the discipline and jibes imposed by upper-classmen, and the physical exhaustion of marches and encampments, was quite another. Housed five in a room that was but ten feet by twelve, the cadets were roused at 5 A.M. for roll-call and given fifteen minutes to wash and put their room in order, and then breakfasted on the leftovers of yesterday's dinner. The day of academic classes and drill that followed was so exhausting that many cadets fainted away under the strain. Lights went out at 10 P.M. During winter months, these youths studied the art of fencing, practiced horsemanship in a riding hall, and gained skills in military drill, in addition to attending classes. With the coming of

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[3]Boynton, History of West Point, pp. 266-267; Glenn Tucker, Hancock The Superb (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960), p. 29.

better weather in June, the cadets left their barracks for the encampment where they were able to simulate the activities of a military campaign.[4] There they developed skills in the utilization of field artillery, the building of fortifications, the construction of pontoons, and the deployment and maneuvering of small bodies of troops.

The sciences comprised the heaviest part of the academic curriculum at West Point. These consisted of a two year concentration in mathematics and one year each in physics, chemistry, and the construction of fortifications. Course work in mental and moral philosophy, two years of French, and one year each of Spanish, elementary law, and the rudiments of English grammar, completed the major part of the curriculum. Except for the study of Jomini there seems to have been little or no course instruction in military strategy or tactics. Aside from the study of fortifications, West Point, at the time of Warren's entrance as a plebe in 1846, furnished an education that was about the same as that of a technical school.[5]

During the two decades immediately preceding the Civil War, West Point was an institution distinctly representative of the middle class of American society. In the reports for 1850 one notes that two hundred and fifteen out of two hundred and forty-four parents of cadets were listed as being of 'moderate

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[4]Tucker, Hancock The Superb, pp. 31-32; Sidney Forman, West Point (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 96-97.

[5]Jacob D. Cox, Military Reminiscences of the Civil War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), pp. 177-179; Boydton, History of West Point, p. 274.

circumstances.'[6] Warren surely may be considered as one youth who exemplified the "bourgeois" nature of the United States Military Academy. After a year of preparatory education at Kinsley's Classical and Mathematical School, at the age of sixteen, he received an appointment to West Point. It was probable that the excitement engendered by the outbreak of war with Mexico was instrumental in directing him towards a military career.

Gouverneur Kemble's political influence of course had been a factor in securing the cherished appointment for Warren, but along with it had gone his godfather's stern warning! "We expect you to rank, at graduation, not lower than second."[7] Thus the lad was made to realize at an early age the reason he had been selected from among all the eligible boys of the town to represent Cold Spring at the Academy. His expected success would add to the honor of the town and its inhabitants, and no doubt to that of his benefactor, as well.

At the time of his entrance into West Point, Warren was a bit of a romanticist. His letters home indicated a love of beauty, stressed sentimentality, and indicated a strong desire to aid classmates in distress. Writing to his mother during February 1848 he noted:

> I sometimes think I am too keenly alive to the beautiful, and almost fear it will lead me away from my sterner duties. A fine piece of music, painting or poetry perfectly delight me. . .[8]

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[6]Boynton, History of West Point, p. 234.

[7]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 6.

[8]Warren to Phoebe Warren, February, 1848, Warren Papers, I, 1.

During the same academic year, Warren, trying to prevent a fellow cadet from being dismissed from the Point for drunkenness, signed and circulated a total abstinance pledge, including wine, beer, cider, and other intoxicating beverages. The pledge was particularly severe in that it forbade not only the consumption of alcoholic beverages on the post but was binding when a cadet was on leave from West Point for less than three days. While not a prohibitionist, Warren believed that a cadet's first duty was to his profession and not to "demon rum." "My principal reason for signing it," he observed, "was, that independent of it saving Bankhead, it will have the effect of making the members of our class sober men, which is far from being the case with the present first class."[9]

A major flaw in Warren's personality, evident from his earliest days at the Point, was his inability to accept a minor reproach or disappointment. As a second-classman he had applied for, and was refused, leave to visit home. Letters to his father were filled with bitterness at what he considered the arbitrary and unjustified refusal by his superiors of a request he believed reasonable. Sylvanus Warren, sage and mature, warned his son, "Who-ever lives long in this world will find disappointments to be not uncommon, for they fall to the lot of all mankind and often when they are least looked for."[10] Throughout his life, Warren seems to have displayed a great need for the

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[9]Warren to Phoebe Warren, March 19, 1848, Warren Papers, I, 1.

[10]Sylvanus Warren to Gouverneur Kemble Warren, September 21, 1848, Warren Papers, I, 1.

visible approval of his superiors. Similarly, any attempt to question his motives or to impugn his actions would be met with sullenness, explosive invectives, and continuous demands for retraction. Such unfortunate personality traits would in later years cost him dear.

At West Point, Warren was constantly conscious of grades, demerits, and class standings. Whole letters to his father were devoted to information about the many failures among classmates, and the writer's own academic and disciplinary successes. As a third-classman, he dutifully reported to Sylvanus that he retained his sixth place in drawing and, after the last mathematics examination, that he had risen one number to fourth in his class. "Speaking about demerits," he related, "I believe I have 9 for this academic year, which is considerable more than I had last. But we are more exposed this year to reports, and there is but one man above me who had less than myself, one man having at least 40."[11]

Other qualities manifested and nurtured in Warren at West Point included frugality, frankness, and a sense of personal responsibility. Shortly before graduation he wrote his father a note stating his objectives for the immediate future:

> I had come to the conclusion, prior even to the time of my furlough, that it was wrong for me to be any longer a source of expense to you, and that I ought to return

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[11] Warren to Sylvanus Warren, January 11, 1848, Warren Papers, I, 1.

> to you whatever assistance you have afforded me since I became a cadet . . . a total of $282.50.
>
> This I intend to repay you as soon as I am able, and having once fairly made a resolution, I shall keep it. The time, however, may be somewhat distant, as I shall have to incur new debts which it will be necessary to pay up first. This is starting with some weight on my shoulders; but it may lead me to contract economical habits, and keep me from needless expenditures . . . . . I cannot be happy and have nothing to do. I will therefore take it as a favor if you will allow me to afford you such assistance as may be in my power. I can at least do your writing and perhaps some other little things which will save you some trouble.[12]

Proud of his son's accomplishments at West Point, the elder Warren was quick to respond:

> I am happy to assist you in any way to make the time alloted to you during your furlough as agreeable as possible . . . I feel a sensation of pride running through my breast, to think that I have a son like you. The full satisfaction I feel as to your past conduct, I lack words to describe; and shall you live to be a father of a family, you will then know the anxiety of a parent for their children, and the high satisfaction when they do what you have done to make yours happy.[13]

Warren excelled in mathematics, philosophy, French, drill, and military science. In accordance with the expectations of family, friends, and above all Gouverneur Kemble, he was graduated July 1, 1850, second in a rather undistinguished class of forty-four. At graduation, Warren ranked first in his class in minerology and geology, third in ethics and third in infantry tactics, and seventh in artillery practice.[14] At age twenty, he was the youngest in his class.

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[12]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, May 8, 1850, Warren Papers, I, 1; Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, pp. 6-7.

[13]Sylvanus Warren to Gouverneur Warren, Warren Papers, I, 1.

[14]Memo on Class Standings, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, III; Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 7.

Cadet G. K. Warren

G. K. Warren

Of his fellows only Eugene Carr, Adam J. Slemmer, Robert Ransom, and Charles S. Winder were to make even a moderate reputation in military service during the years to come.[15]

Upon graduating from West Point neophyte second lieutenants were able to maneuver small bodies of troops, construct fortifications, and draw maps and military plans; however, despite the book learning of the classroom and the theoretical exercises in field service, cadets were truly able to prove their worth only when assigned to a regular army unit in the field. When the "new officer" faced a problem that the army manuals did not resolve, he could only use his ingenuity to prove his value to the service.

Because of his high standing at the Point, Warren was immediately commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers, the prestige unit of the Army. Given the traditional six months post-graduation leave, he used the opportunity to seek an assignment that would enable him to further his military career. Journeying to Washington, D.C., in October, 1850, he met Captain Andrew A. Humphreys, an officer about to embark on an expedition to the Mississippi Delta in order to survey the banks and bed of the lower Mississippi River. The purpose of the survey was to prevent the further flooding of the delta region. Intrigued by the scope of the project, Warren quickly agreed to become an

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[15]Augusta B. Bernard, Reminiscences of West Point (East Saginaw, Michigan: Evening News Printing and Binding House, 1886), Appendix.

assistant to Humphreys, while the captain promised that he would request the lieutenant's appointment as his second in command.[16] Despite the fact that Warren was still on leave, he remained in Washington for several weeks to aid Humphreys in drawing tracings of the approaches to New Orleans by the Mississippi and its bayous.

By the middle of November, 1850, Warren received orders to report to New Orleans. Realizing that he might be away for several years, he took the long way around via Albany, Buffalo, and Cold Spring. Staying at home for but a short time to say farewell to family and friends, he left for New Orleans, reaching that city toward the close of the year.[17]

The New Year found Warren becoming established in the Creole city. Bad weather delaying official business, the one-time country lad saw about familiarizing himself with the customs and traditions of a sophisticated Southern society. His personal journal revealed his ready acceptance of the life of a Southern gentleman:

> Wed. Jan 1, 1851 - Morning cold and cloudy. At 9 A.M. started to go hunting. Got as far as woods back of Bouligny commenced hailing lasted near an hour & turned to rain continued all day making it very disagreeable out doors. Ret'd to N.O. called on Mrs. Todd, and the Palfreys before dinner . . . Took dinner at the Florence house, drank wine with most of

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[16]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, October 21, 1850, Warren Papers, I, 1.

[17]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, December 20, 1850, Warren Papers, I, 1. Warren was impressed by the climate in the Southern city. In a letter to his father he commented that, while people in Cold Spring were "going about with red noses and cold fingers," the weather in New Orleans was if anything too warm.

> my acquaintances present. Saw for a few min. after tea Miss Estelle. . . Made no resolves.

Again on Tuesday, January 7th, he recorded in his diary, ". . .Ev'n soiree at F. house - Very pleasant danced with three Mrs. & one miss. Champ. supper retired 1 o'clock. Had chill fever feeling early in ev'n all disappeared."[18] The latter remark was characteristic of Warren; his journals, diaries, and letters home were filled with complaints about the weather and the adverse effect it had upon his health. One malady after another struck the young officer, and yet, he was always able to gain sufficient strength to call upon various young ladies, to attend cotillions and parties, and to seek companions to join him in the hunt.

Judging from Warren's physical appearance, one might not expect him to have been very appealing to the opposite sex. He was short, of slight build, dark complexioned, and had small piercing black eyes, while his head was crowned by a shock of straight black hair. At first meeting, people often took him for an Indian.[19] It is likely that what he considered "flirtations" on the part of Southern belles was nothing more than friendship and hospitality shown towards a young officer far from home.

While Warren's social life prospered at New Orleans,

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[18]Warren, Journal for 1851, entries for January 1, 7, 1851.

[19]Charles S. Wainwright, A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright 1861-1865 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), pp. 338-339.

his religious devotions suffered. Though not drawn to any one sect, he attended church on Sunday during his early months in New Orleans. One week he attended services at an Episcopal Church; several weeks later he heard a Catholic mass. As time passed his attendance at church grew less frequent, and the greater part of his free time on Sundays was spent at the hunt.[20]

Towards the end of January, with clearer weather, Warren was able to begin placing tide gauges and making soundings along the lower Mississippi. The first gauge he placed at Fort St. Philip, eighty miles below New Orleans.[21] During the next two months he was kept busy erecting gauges at Baton Rouge, Carthage, Donaldson, and countless other places along the delta. Working long hours under the scorching sun he drove himself and his men in an effort to complete as much work as possible in the shortest possible time.[22]

Yet, even during these busy months his mind turned constantly towards thoughts of romance. In a short note to his mother in March 1851 he said, "Baton Rouge is a nice place, last night we took a walk with several pretty young ladies." In the privacy of his journal he confided, "Saw a pretty creole at J. Laune's. Set me thinking about

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[20]Warren, Journal for 1851, entries for March 23, and April 19, 1851.

[21]Warren, Journal for 1851, entry for January 25, 1851.

[22]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, February 4, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 1.

other things than my work. Kept me awake nearly all night."[23]

The young lieutenant was most anxious for Captain Humphreys to be pleased with his performance of his duties. His journal for Tuesday, April 8th related, "Wind high. I was only man whose party worked. Did 4 ½ miles largest day's work yet made by either party. . ." A letter dispatched to his father shortly afterwards further emphasized his feeling toward his superior: "I am getting to like Captain Humphreys more and more every day, and one cause is, I expect, he appears so well pleased with me. . . ."[24] Words of praise from Humphreys motivated him to even greater efforts. Under the captain's eye he performed successful experiments in testing the velocity of currents in several of the bayous, and during evening hours took great care to sketch the topography of the area for future reference.

In early March, Warren was engaged in a river mapping expedition. Letters home relate his great enthusiasm for the work he was performing, and his personal satisfaction with the profession he had chosen when he had entered West Point, five years before. On March 3, 1851, he wrote Sylvanus,

> The flat boat in which we live is a strongly built scow with a cabin placed the whole length, the whole much resembling a canal boat. Government furnishes with the same fare that it does the men, anything extra being at our own expense. It is a great life

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[23]Warren to Phoebe Warren, March 24, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 1; Warren Journal for 1851, entry for March 8, 1851.

[24]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, May 17, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 1; Warren, Journal for 1851, entry for April 8, 1851.

> after all. I have nothing important to care for, scarcely any crosses, and am put to but little expense . . .[25]

During the first week of May the strain of hard work began to tell. Severe rheumatic pains in his chest and shoulder confined him to bed. A doctor prescribed an extensive period of rest. Following this advice, Warren traveled to Mobile, Alabama for a short vacation. Though he called this city a "pretty place," he appeared to have been bored with his role of tourist. Within a very few days he reported back to his post at New Orleans to continue his labors.[26]

Shortly after Warren's return, Humphreys fell seriously ill, and the work which had been progressing rapidly slowed down. With time for himself once more, Warren was able to give his attention to a personal matter which had been troubling him since his graduation from the Academy a year earlier. "Near a year and a half ago," he wrote his brother William, "I promised you that I would return to father certain money and assistance rendered me at West Point. With this you will find a summary of the amount and a check to cancel it. I entrust with you the pleasure of so doing." In the letter Warren placed a bank draft for $340 to be deposited to the account of Sylvanus Warren in the New York Exchange Bank.[27]

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[25]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, March 3, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 1.

[26]Warren, Journal for 1851, entries for May 5, 13, 1851.

[27]Warren to William Warren, June 24, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 1.

Given the opportunity, the young officer resumed the social escapades he had abandoned months earlier because of the burden of official duties. Visiting the small Louisiana town of East Pascagoula, Warren (by his own estimate) was an immediate social success. At this time he boastfully informed his father, ". . . I have won quite a reputation for dancing, and can have for partners any lady I wish. My success here at the south quite astonishes me. [T]hree weeks ago I knew no one now I am better acquainted than I am in Cold Spring . . ."[28]

Under the heat and humidity of a Southern summer, Captain Humphreys' illness grew worse. The delta survey, so dependent upon his guidance, ground to a halt. The War Department, fearing for the life of Humphreys in cholera ridden New Orleans, recalled the expedition before it had completed its work. Depressed by this news, Warren reacted poorly to suggestions that he exchange field work for a desk job at West Point. In a letter to Sylvanus on July 25, 1851, he expressed his opinion on this subject with a candor that was remarkable for its insight into the problem:

> A letter rec'd from Will this morning, told me that Prof. Church was going to apply for me to come to West Point in his department . . . I should like very much to be at W.P. in Prof C's department but I think it would be much better for me to keep away from there for four or five years, <u>as far as concerns my reputation in my Corps</u>. Some of the young officers there I never could associate with at that place. I disliked them when there, and do still, as I find I am not by any means alone. . . .[29]

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[28]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, July 15, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 1.

[29]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, July 25, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 2.

The young officer realized that his advancement in the Corps of Topographical Engineers was to be found in the field rather than in teaching at the Military Academy. To be assigned to an assistant professorship at the Point prior to making a reputation for himself as a first-rate military engineer, would condemn him to obscurity, academic vassalage, and what was worse, being passed over for promotion. Many an officer in the peacetime army had served his country faithfully for twenty or thirty years only to be retired as a first lieutenant or captain. Warren was wise to recognize that he had to refuse the offer of a position in the mathematics department at the Point.

On August 1, 1851, Warren embarked on the passenger-ship Union for New York. The serenity of the voyage across the Gulf of Mexico revived his flagging spirits, and his journal for August 3rd recounted the exhileration he experienced when he saw a school of porpoises racing the Union. These friendly creatures were a beautiful shade of green as they swam through the water; they turned all shades of the rainbow when they leaped from the water to get ahead of the ship.[30] This chance encounter, reinforced by the knowledge that he would soon see his family and friends, caused him once more to grow optimistic about his future.

Arriving in New York on August 7th, Warren took lodgings at the Astor House, and spent the next two days

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[30]Warren, Journal for 1851, entry for August 3, 1851.

visiting acquaintances, making needed purchases, and attending the opera. On August 9th he caught the afternoon train from New York to Cold Spring. His immediate assignment was merely to await orders from the War Department for future service.[31] On leave, Warren renewed old friendships with neighbors he had known all his life. Shortly after arriving home he journeyed across the Hudson to visit his former professors and training officers at West Point. With friends he fished for pike and hunted rail with a newly purchased gun. But even at home Warren could not totally relax; his need for gainful employment led him to spend part of his time tracing maps of Balire County, Louisiana, a district he had partially surveyed during his sojurn in the delta.[32]

In September, Warren traveled to Philadelphia to visit the still grievously ill Humphreys. He took the opportunity to stop at the Army Engineer Office to inquire of the need for a topographical engineer. To his chagrin he was retained at the office and spent the next two months in the city, admittedly doing a great deal of "nothing."[33]

With winter approaching, and Captain Humphreys' health greatly improved, Warren expected that he would again be dispatched south to complete the work so successfully started the previous year. However, his stay in Philadelphia was

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

extend far beyond his expectations. Because of lack of funds the delta survey was curtailed, and Warren was sent to serve the winter at the Army Engineer Office in Louisville, Kentucky. Ordered to report at once, he did not even have the opportunity to visit his family before leaving for his new assignment by packet on December 9th.[34] Reaching Louisville six days later, he recorded in his journal that the trip had been uneventful, except that along the way, thieves had robbed one passenger of $200.[35]

Upon his arrival in Louisville the young officer engaged rooms at the Galt House and immediately reported to the head of the Engineer Office, one Colonel Long. He was put to work copying routine reports, a task that occupied the remainder of the year, much to his disgust.[36]

Despite several periods of illness during his stay in Louisville, Warren was enthusiastic about life in Kentucky, where society reminded him of the pleasant days he had enjoyed the year before. In a letter to his father he observed,

> New years day I made a great many calls in this ville in company with Lt. Abert & Harry Long and besides being thus regularly introduced into society enjoyed myself very much. . . Tomorrow is my 23d birthday, and the public are preparing to celebrate it in grand style!!!. . .
> But the fact is nevertheless, the sovereign people of Louisville are going to make a grand parade on the 8th of January and fight the Battle of New Orleans over again . . .[37]

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[34]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, November 20, 1851, and November 26, 1851, Warren Papers, I, 2.

[35]Warren, Journal for 1851, entry for December 15, 1851.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, January 7, 1852, Warren Papers, I, 2.

Warren's work at the office was light, not taking more than four hours a day, this enabled him to continue attending the parties that the society people of Louisville were constantly giving to wile away the damp, cold winter.[38]

During this period Warren was totally absorbed in social affairs, and like many other Americans in the pre-Civil War period showed little interest in the political events of the day. Threats of civil strife, disputes between slave and free states over the territory gained in the Mexican War, and abolitionist agitation did not interest him. Writing to his father from Louisville during May 1852, he confessed,

> . . . The presidential contest interests me not at all, but we are closely watching the proceedings of Congress in reference to the appropriations. The whole army is very like a water mill in a drought, almost completely idle. The officers and men are employed and kept on duty, but in our corps for instance it is in doing things that would be left undone if there was a more active employment . . .[39]

If presidential elections did not mean much to him the well being of the family did. As the eldest of Sylvanus Warren's children, he viewed with distress reports of sickness within the family and was always ready to offer advise to his parents to prevent the recurrence of the illness that already claimed the lives of several brothers and sisters. Warren remembered his own sickly childhood and wished, if possible, to spare his younger brothers and sisters the

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[38]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, February 1, 1852, Warren Papers, I, 2.

[39]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, May 22, 1852, Warren Papers, I, 2.

sufferings of winter illness.[40]

Between July 1852 and June 1853, there is little of interest recorded in Warren's Journal. He received a sixty day leave in July 1852, and when he returned to Louisville from Cold Spring he resumed his task of copying official reports. During the long year he won the respect of his bureau chief, Colonel Long, and as time went on, the colonel gave Warren greater responsibilities, such as allowing him to correct reports and plottings of other engineers in the district. In March, 1853, Long gave him the additional assignment of journeying to New Orleans to sell some public property at auction.[41]

Just as the lieutenant was beginning to fear that he would be tied to a desk for the remainder of his military career, Colonel Long, in June 1853, ordered him to Davenport, Iowa, to make a survey of the rapids of the Upper Mississippi. From then to the following December, Warren was busily engaged in taking soundings at Davenport, Dubuque, Keokuk, and a host of smaller communities. With the aid of local pilots he was able to survey and plot the most dangerous reaches of the Upper Mississippi. The nature of the work was so important that Senator A.C. Dodge of Iowa visited Warren to urge him to complete his improvements at the earliest

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[40]Warren to Phoebe Warren, January 12, 1852, Warren Papers, I, 2.

[41]Warren, Journal for 1852, and Journal for 1853, numerous entries for the years 1852 and 1853.

possible moment.[42]

By herculean efforts, Warren was successful in making the upper reaches of the Mississippi safer for navigation. He determined the position of reefs and jagged rocks, placed flagstaffs and buoys in position to mark safe channels through the rapids, and completed reports and charts enabling pilots to bypass natural hazards that had previously restricted use of the great waterway.[43] After his work was completed in December, Warren returned to Louisville where he received orders to report, without delay, to Washington, D.C. for further assignment.

The discovery of gold in California, with the rush of prospectors, settlers, merchants, and adventurers to the Far West, made it imperative that transportation facilities be developed as soon as possible to bind the rapidly expanding nation together. Under pressure from numerous special interest groups, Congress demanded action, and placed the entire problem in the hands of the Corps of Army Engineers. Warren's old friend and benefactor, Captain Humphreys, had been charged with finding a solution to this problem, and it was he who had requested Warren's reassignment to Washington to aid him in the task of determining which of the four proposed railroad routes would be the most practical for connecting the

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[42]Warren, Journal for 1853, entries for period June to December, 1853.

[43]Ibid.

river ports of the Mississippi with the new American communities on the Pacific Ocean.[44]

As chief assistant to Humphreys, Warren fulfilled two functions in Washington. Aiding his superior in investigating the many problems associated with the construction of such a vast undertaking, he categorized reports sent to Washington by army engineers in the field, and determined comparative costs for the construction of each of the proposed routes, thus aiding Humphreys in the preparation of the official report. Moreover, Warren was given personal responsibility for the preparation of a general map of the entire area covered by the surveys. He assiduously examined all possible sources of information in his desire to learn the precise nature of the vast continent west of the Mississippi River. Accounts of Spanish explorers, Christian missionaries, mountain men and contemporary army officers such as John C. Frémont and John Pose were analyzed by Warren until he had a clear picture in his mind of the exact nature of every mile of terrain covered by the railroad surveys. This map, with all its detail, was not completed by Warren for several years because of other pressing duties. When it was finished and included within the final edition of the Pacific Railroad Reports, it proved so valuable that it became a standard reference for explorers and cartographers for many years to come.[45]

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[44]Henry L. Abbot, "Gouverneur Kemble Warren", Science March 7, 1884.

[45]Ibid.; Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 20.

Warren's valuable work in the Pacific Railroad Office was suddenly halted on April 20, 1855, when he received an unexpected order from the Adjutant General's Office that was to change the entire course of his life. By War Department Special Order Number 72, Warren was instructed to repair as soon as possible to St. Louis and report to General W.S. Harney, commander of the Sioux Expedition.[46] This order caught Warren by surprise. He realized that his reassignment would probably mean that he would see his first military action, a prospect that appealed to him. At the same time, he considered his work in Washington of such importance that he believed its completion should not be delayed by other service. His inquiries into the matter brought peremptory orders to report to General Harney as soon as possible.

Warren had completed his apprenticeship. During four long years at West Point, and during the first five years of his active service, he had always served as an assistant to a superior officer. First, under the guidance of Captain Humphreys, and later under the paternal watchfulness of Colonel Long, he had perfected his talents as a topographical engineer. Now, with his new assignment on the western frontier, he would be able to exercise his own judgment, assert his own individuality, and initiate actions free from the restrictions of immediate superiors.

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[46]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 20; Warren, Journal for 1855. An entry for April 21, 1855 noted that Warren received this important order the day after it was issued on April 20th.

CHAPTER III

EXPLORING THE NEBRASKA TERRITORY

The Sioux Expedition of 1855 in which Warren served as staff engineer was motivated by the Grattan Massacre (the slaughter of Lieutenant J.L. Grattan and twenty-nine men of the Sixth Infantry by the Bois Brulés and Ogallalla Sioux). Dispatched from Fort Laramie to the lodges of the Bois Brulés to seize an Indian who had killed a white man's cow, Lieutenant Grattan demanded the surrender of the culprit by Black Beaver, chief of the Bois Brulés. The chief refused, since the perpetrator was an Ogallalla who was a guest in his camp. Fighting started when Lieutenant Grattan, who was drunk, ordered his men to open fire. The first volley killed Black Beaver. In retaliation for the loss of their chief the Indians killed all but one soldier who managed to escape.[1]

A large punitive expedition was gradually collected by General William S. Harney at Fort Kearney. Given carte blanche to take all actions necessary against the hostile Sioux, Harney gathered troops and experts in many military skills to insure the success of his well-planned movement. Warren's extensive knowledge of the topography between the

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[1]L.U. Reavis, The Life and Military Services of Gen. William Selby Harney (Saint Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1878), pp. 250-251. The "Massacre" took place on August 19, 1854.

Upper Missouri and the Platte River made him a valuable addition to the expedition and he was detached from the Pacific Railroad Survey to serve on Harney's staff.[2]

For three weeks, from April 21st to May 12th, 1855, Warren was kept busy completing his activities in the Pacific Railroad Survey Office. Shortly thereafter, realizing that he faced the possibility of death in the forthcoming campaign, he journeyed once more to Cold Spring to take leave of a devoted family that he might never see again. On May 17th he went over to West Point to a parade and on the following day left Cold Spring at 9 A.M. for New York, where he boarded an Erie Railroad train for St. Louis, arriving at 2 A.M. on May 23rd. Later that day he met with Harney. Since the general had no immediate orders for him, the impatient junior officer was forced to mark time for two weeks, having no chores other than to purchase needed engineering tools.[3]

Finally, on June 7th, Warren received his orders. Instead of being directed to report to the headquarters of the punitive expedition at Fort Kearney, he was assigned to temporary service at Fort Pierre, an isolated post on the upper reaches of the Missouri River. Boarding the boat Clara, he began an unpleasant journey lasting more than five weeks to reach Fort Pierre. The boat's pilot was

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[2]Warren's knowledge of this area was second-hand, and gained through the preparation of the Pacific Railroad Survey map.

[3]Warren, Journal for 1855.

incompetant and on more than one occasion the Clara, buffeted by heavy winds, went aground. In addition, the delivery of cargo to several small posts further delayed its up river progress. It was a travel-weary Warren who reached his destination early on the morning of July 16, 1855.[4]

For the next three weeks Warren was assigned the duty of surveying the land in and around Fort Pierre. While this work had considerable merit, he was apprehensive that he might miss his first military encounter if Harney moved as planned against the Indians. Realizing that any attempt to descend the river by boat to St. Louis and then to start anew for Fort Kearney would be futile, Warren worried about the circumstances that had placed him in this remote post, and devised a plan to reach Harney by striking out overland southward from Fort Pierre to Fort Kearney - - a project frought with danger because it would require a journey through unexplored Indian-infested wastelands. One might consider this decision to have been rash, but Warren, after investigation, calculated the odds and decided to take the risk. In his official report, he offered an extensive apology to justify what many officers at Fort Pierre considered an act of insanity. "When I was preparing for the undertaking," Warren reported,

> and had secured a party of six persons, exclusive of Mr. Carrey and myself, I was counselled most earnestly by my brother officers not to make it, and the commanding

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[4]Ibid.

> officer at Fort Pierre thought seriously of interposing his authority as my military superior to prevent so "rash" an attempt, which presented to him nothing but a prospect of my certain destruction. The route was known to lead through the country of the Brulés, (supposed to be our worst enemies,) and nothing was known as to their position or intention. We would, also, it was said, meet the Poncos and Pawnees, and neither would hesitate to rob, or even "wipe out" a party as small as mine, well knowing the offence would be charged upon the Brulés. Moreover, much of the route was wholly unknown and untravelled, and there was no estimating the obstacles and delays we might encounter. My intention, however, had not been formed without due consideration of these things, and careful conversation with the men of the country. The weather was as yet too warm, it being the first of August, for the war parties to have formed, and it was the season for making "sweet corn," so that the Indians would likely be thus engaged. The party was made up of the most experienced prairie men; four of them being half-breed Dacotas, and we were well armed; we were determined to be constantly on our guard, and to travel in the night if we came in the vicinity of an enemy; no fire was to be lighted at night, nor tent pitched. Mr. Galpin, of the Fur Company, assured me he did not believe I would meet an Indian, and the result verified his prediction. We saw fresh trails of the Poncos on L'Eau qui Court, and of the Brulés in the Sand Hills, and some deserted Pawnee camps on Loup Fork, but no Indians. We performed the journey in fifteen days. I was thus enabled to carry out the instructions under which I had gone to Fort Pierre to participate in the campaign under General Harney, and perform the duties required of me as topographical engineer of the expedition.
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> I hope this explanation will free me from any charge of having acted with rashness and imprudence.[5]

Lasting more than two weeks, this journey was the first indication that Warren was to be more than just another army-post desk officer. His fertile mind, adventurous nature, and scientific outlook led him, on this and later occasions, to seek opportunities to delve into the unknown. Arriving at Fort Kearney on the Platte River on August 22nd, Warren reported

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[5]Gouverneur K. Warren, Explorations in the Dacota Country in the Year 1855 (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, Senate Printer, 1856), p. 21.

to General Harney.

Harney's orders were to take all measures necessary to protect the frontiers of Kansas and Nebraska against Sioux depredations, and to safeguard the wagon train routes leading from the Missouri River to the Far West. To carry out these instructions an expedition left Fort Kearney on August 24th and for one week advanced without incident in a northwesterly direction towards Fort Laramie. The troops traveled at such a leisurely pace that Warren was able to explore several of the many valleys of the Platte.[6] Then, about noon of September 2nd, Harney received information that a large body of Brulés under Little Thunder were encamped opposite Ash Hollow near a meandering creek known as Blue Water. Summoning his officers to obtain their opinion, General Harney devised a plan to attack the Sioux the following day. A mounted force, consisting of three companies of dragoons and one of artillery were to be sent out of camp the next morning at 3 A.M. and would endeavor to gain the enemy's rear while five companies of infantry were instructed to advance directly upon the Indian camp beginning at 4 A.M.[7]

Early the following morning, acting under Harney's orders, Warren moved out to the right. Finding a prominent height, he reconnoitered the enemy's position, where he discovered that a large force of Indian braves occupied all

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[6]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 24.

[7]Warren, Journal for 1855, entry for September 2, 1855.

the high ground in the immediate vicinity of the army's left front. Indian scouts soon discovered his presence; seeing that nothing further could be accomplished by remaining at his isolated post, he returned to camp and reported his observations to his superiors.

In order to gain precious minutes for his mounted force to move into position, Harney had already proposed through an interpreter that he would be willing to talk with Little Thunder. The Indian Chief had agreed and a lengthy but inconclusive discussion ensued. Returning to camp in time to hear a part of this conversation, which he faithfully recorded in his journal, Warren noted that Little Thunder admitted that there were bad braves in his camp, but explained that he had done all that could be done to maintain peace. But Harney rejected this argument and denounced the Sioux for their slaughter of the Grattan Party and other war-like acts. Upbraiding Little Thunder the general demanded that the Indians should come out and fight. At this point the Indians, discovering the presence of the dragoons in their rear, broke off the conversation. Harney now ordered an immediate attack. The infantry regiments advanced, driving the Indians before them. Since most of the Sioux were mounted and the infantry was not, Little Thunder and his braves were soon able to outdistance their pursuers. As they fled, however, they encountered the mounted dragoons, who gave chase, killing between eight and twelve braves and capturing many others.[8]

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[8]Warren, Journal for 1855, entry for September 3, 1855.

Warren did not actively participate in this engagement. Although mounted, he was a staff officer and remained in the rear, going out with others in search of the wounded, only after the fighting had ceased. He was deeply moved by his view of the aftermath of battle. "The sight on top of the hill was heart-rending;-" he recorded with great emotion in his journal:

> wounded women and children crying and moaning, horribly mangled by the bullets. Most of this had been occasioned by the creatures taking refuge in holes in the rocks, and armed Indians sheltering themselves in the same places. These latter fired upon our men killing 2 men & wounding another of the Artillery Company. . . . Two Indian men were killed in the hole and two as they came out. 7 women were killed in the hole & 3 children, 2 of them in their mothers' arms. One young woman was wounded in the left shoulder the ball going in above and coming out below her arm. I put her on my horse. Another handsome young squaw was badly wounded just above her left knee. . . . I had a litter made and put her and her child upon it. I found another girl of about 12 years lying with her head down in a ravine and apparently dead - observing her breathe I had a man take her in his arms. . . . With this piteous load we proceeded down the hill and placing them on the bank of the Blue water, I made a shelter to keep off the sun and bathed their wounds with the stream. . . . I did not get back to camp till the last of the command, 10 P.M. . . .
>
> After getting to camp I aided to dress their wounds. I had endeavored to take a topographical sketch of the scene, but the calls of humanity prevented my doing much.[9]

The following day Warren added to his journal an incident that was characteristic of his compassionate feelings. ". . . . The wounded baby died this morning. Its mother does nothing but cry and moan, and as my tent is near the hospital it distresses

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[9] Ibid.

me greatly."[10] From the time of the Battle of Blue Water, Warren's actions were long remembered by the Indians of the region. Among them he was referred to as "the good Lieutenant."[11]

At Harney's request, Warren, on September 5th, laid out plans for a fort to be located on the site of the recent battle. Under his constant supervision, construction was begun on the post which was to be named Fort Grattan. When completed, the structure measured one hundred feet square with sod walls six feet high and three feet thick at the base. The finished fort was a tribute to Warren's ability as an engineer.[12]

The Harney Expedition reached Fort Laramie on September 16th. Its one bloody encounter at Blue Water had completely cowed the Sioux who returned to their strongholds deep in the Black Hills. Within a few days, representatives of the Crow and Arapaho nations visited Fort Laramie, professing their friendship for the white man and avowing their enmity for the Sioux. A delegation of Brulés and Ogallallas arrived at the post with the Indian agent, a Mr. Twiss, on September 22nd. Harney received them cordially, informing their leaders that if peace was to be restored they must surrender the members of their tribe who had committed

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Fiske, Dedication Services . . ., (New York: Press of Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Printing Department, 1888), p. 54.

[12] Warren, Journal for 1855, entry for September 5, 1855.

acts of violence upon the whites. He, in turn, promised to return their women and children. After discussing the offer, the Indians promised to comply and vowed that they would return to their lands and hunt buffalo in peace.

On October 23rd, Warren was directed to report immediately to Washington to make preparations for the further exploration of the Nebraska Territory the following year.[13] Back at the Army Engineer Office on the 1st of January, 1865, he spent the next three months preparing a report of the 1855 campaign. Titled Explorations in the Dacota Country it was designed to present a comprehensive picture of the routes followed by the Sioux Expedition, the land examined between Fort Pierre and Fort Kearney, and the topography along the Platte River from Fort Pierre to the mouth of the Big Sioux River.[14] In this account, Warren made observations on the potential value of the land to the United States and the necessity for the extensive settlement of the region. He wrote:

> The country north of White river is clayey; south of this stream it is sandy. This difference has an important bearing on roads through the two sections, as the former is almost everwhere impracticable in the wet seasons, while the latter is not materially injured by rain, and in some parts is improved by it. . . . The grass in the clay region, is, a general thing, superior to that in the other being finer and more nutritive; . . . Wood generally exists

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[13]Warren, Journal for 1855, entry for October 23, 1855.

[14]Gouverneur Kemble Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska and Dakota in the Years 1855 - '56 - '57 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), p. 14. Hereafter referred to as Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska.

> along the banks of all the streams where it has not been destroyed by fire, or by the Indians for forage and fuel. . . . From my observation, I think that continuous settlements cannot be made in Nebraska, west of the 97th Meridian, both on account of the unfavorable climate and want of fertility in the soil.[15]

In this last point Warren was in error. At that time, like most of his contemporaries he subscribed to the theory of the "Great American Desert" and viewed most of the western portion of the "Dacotas" as not fit for habitation by large numbers of settlers.

While writing his narrative, Warren found it expedient to prepare two maps illustrating the extent of the white man's knowledge of the Dakota Territory as of the year 1855. The first map of a part of the "Dacota country," on a scale of one to six hundred thousand, showed all explorations within the area mapped; the second, on a scale of one to three million, gave the location of the various bands of Indians inhabiting Dakota, as well as all other information on the territory that was obtained from trappers and hunters. The maps proved invaluable to Warren and others who entered the region during the next two decades.[16]

Warren conceded that his report, Explorations in the Dacota Country, had limited value because little reliable information was available concerning the geography and topography of the Nebraska Territory, west of the Missouri,

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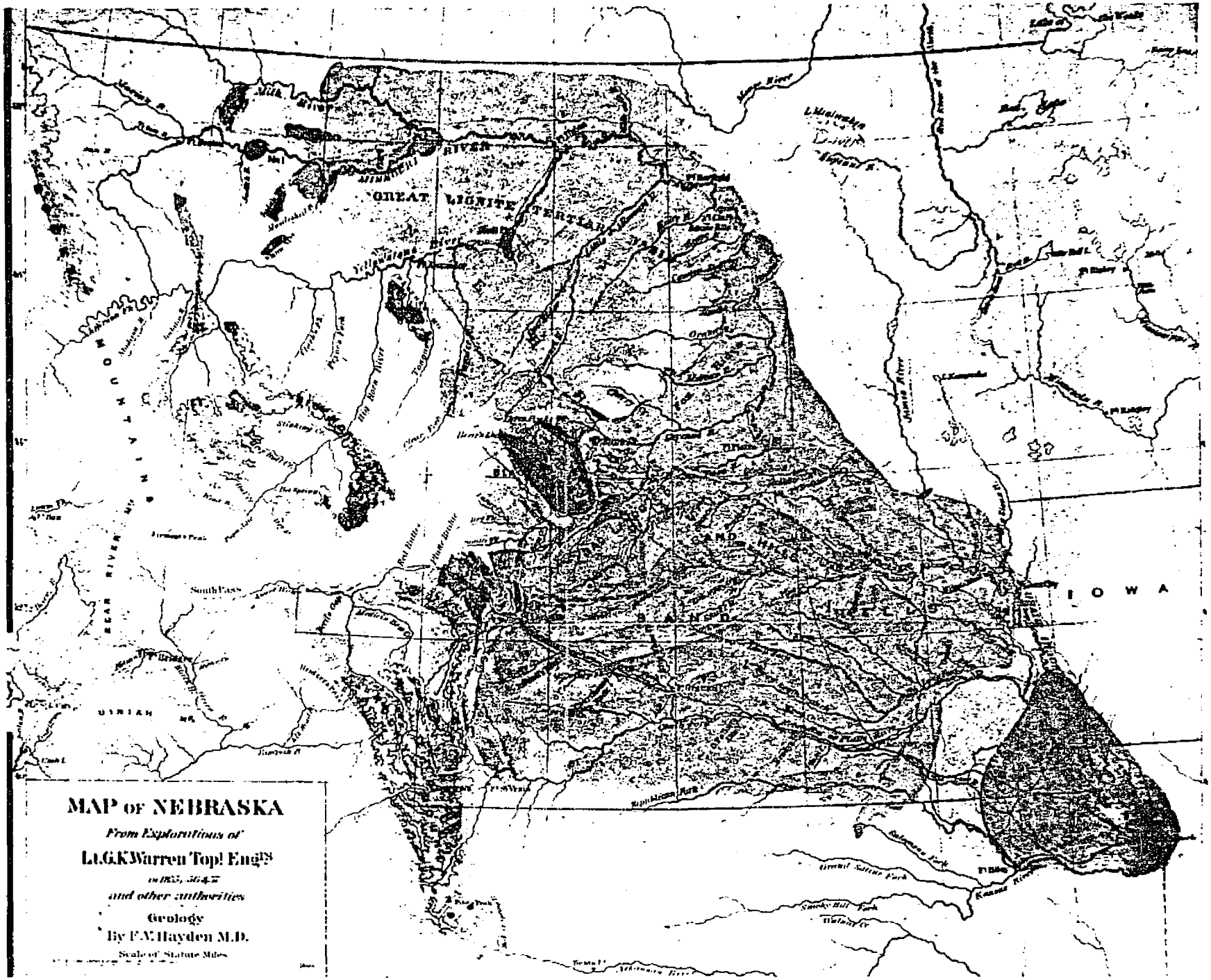
[15]Warren, Explorations in the Dacota Country in the Year 1855, pp. 5-6.

[16]Ibid., p. 20.


MAP OF NEBRASKA
From Explorations of
Lt.G.K.Warren Top! Engrs
in 1855, 1856, 57
and other authorities
Geology
By F.V.Hayden M.D.
Scale of Statute Miles
GREAT LIGNITE TERTIARY
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
BIG HORN MTS
WIND RIVER MTS
BLACK HILLS
SAND HILLS
IOWA

and the road from Fort Pierre to Fort Laramie. It was his contention that to allow this geographical ignorance to continue might one day lead to a major defeat of the United States Army by the Sioux. "The same causes that brought on the war with the Sioux," he reasoned,

> will, no doubt, continue to operate, and the time is not distant when we shall have a similar necessity of chastising the Crows and northern Missouri Dacotas, who have, as yet, seen nothing of the power of the United States, nor feel any respect for it. It seems to me, therefore, in a purely military point of view, of the greatest importance to gain a knowledge of that region, while the peaceful disposition of these tribes may permit, and before they become maddened by the encroachments of the white man.[17]

Believing that expediency alone should dictate an immediate geographic and scientific exploration of the Nebraska Territory, he suggested that the War Department make an immediate request for $50,000 to finance the proposed expedition.[18] It may be assumed that Warren was confident he himself would be given the task of completing the work he had begun the previous year.

Secretary of War Jefferson Davis was favorably impressed by Warren's official report. Struck by its logical presentation of newly acquired information and painstaking care taken to include the most minute detail, Davis suggested that Senator John B. Weller, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, consider printing it. The Secretary of War and Weller agreed that the information contained in

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[17] Ibid., p. 19.

[18] Ibid.

Warren's brief narrative would be extremely useful both to troops on the frontier and to travelers and emigrants forced to traverse the northern reaches of the Nebraska Territory. Accordingly, they ordered it printed by the government.[19]

By the first week of April 1856, Warren had completed his reports, purchased equipment, and employed assistants for another expedition to the Missouri Country commissioned by the War Department. Accompanied by his assistants, W.H. Hutton, J.H. Snowden, and F.V. Hayden, he left St. Louis for Fort Pierre aboard the steamboat Genoa on April 16th. During the journey up the Missouri the party made a careful sketch of the river northward from the southern border of Nebraska. Using the elevated pilot house as an observation post, Warren was able to gain an expert knowledge of the course of the river. With the aid of the Genoa's pilot, he determined the size and location of sandbars that obstructed the Missouri, the quality of timber along both banks of the river, and the depth and composition of the river bottom.

The first leg of the journey was uneventful as the Genoa made good speed up river. As the travelers advanced beyond the James River, however, they encountered heavy currents produced by recent spring rains, and the boat was able to make little headway. Captain Throckmorton, the commander of the Genoa, was forced to tie her to the river bank for an entire day until the Missouri calmed. Resuming

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[19] Ibid., Report of the Secretary of War, n.p.

its interrupted journey, the boat sailed for five days up stream until it struck a sandbar and went aground.[20]

Impatient to find General Harney without further delay, Warren decided to leave the steamboat and strike out overland to Fort Lookout, a camp of dragoons at the mouth of the American Crow River, where he had been informed that he might meet the general. Accompanied by a Captain Frost, sutler at Fort Pierre, and three other men, he traveled for three days and arrived opposite the army camp on the evening of the third day, only to be told that no boat was available to cross the river. After bedding down that night on the banks of the river, the next morning Warren's men attempted once more to signal the dragoons on the other side. But they failed to communicate with Fort Lookout and their provisions growing short, they decided to travel directly to Fort Pierre, eighty miles distant. Its food supply having been exhausted, the party, during the latter part of its journey, was forced to subsist almost entirely on birds killed in flight. After a forced march lasting three days, the group arrived at Fort Pierre completely exhausted and with blistered feet. Despite the arduous nature of his six day, one hundred and sixty mile journey, Warren viewed the experience with enthusiasm. "The journey," he noted in his report, "gave me an opportunity of viewing the country and its

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[20] Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 14.

appearance a few miles back of the Missouri."[21]

Warren arrived at Fort Pierre at an opportune moment. Representatives of all the Sioux tribes residing west of the Missouri, except the Ogallallas and Sichangus, were meeting in council with General Harney. The Sioux agreed to give up all the animals they had stolen and to surrender the culprits who had massacred Lieutenant Grattan and his command. At the close of the council Harney informed them that he was sending Warren with an expedition up the Missouri to make a map, and made it clear that no harm was to come to this party.[22]

Accompanied by his assistants and an escort of fifteen soldiers and two non-commissioned officers of the Second Infantry, Warren on June 28, 1856, left Fort Pierre on the American Fur Company boat, St. Mary, bound for the mouth of the Yellowstone. His assignment was to ascend the Yellowstone River as far as possible to determine what sites, if any, would be suitable for the construction of military posts. Moreover, Harney directed him to gather any and all information concerning the nature of the region bordering the river.[23]

Warren's handling of the expedition made it clear that at the age of twenty-six he not only had the qualities of leadership expected in a West Point graduate, but in addition, ability as an explorer and scientist. As he reported,

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[21]Ibid., p. 15; Warren to William Warren, May 24, 1856, Warren Papers, I, 2; Warren, Journal for 1856, entry for May 12th.

[22]Warren, Journal for 1856, entries for May 23rd and May 24th.

[23]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 15.

> While ascending the river, the sketch of it was taken above Fort Pierre, as it had been below, by Messrs. Hutton and Snowden, and observations were made by me for latitude. At Fort Union a 16-inch transit was set up, and observations taken during a whole lunation; but owing to the cloudy condition of the nights themselves, only two sets of observations were obtained on the moon and stars. The result of these gave the longitude of that post 104° 02', with a limit of error of about 10'.
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> . . . . . .
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> . . . . We left the mouth of the Yellowstone July 25, and, traveling leisurely up the left bank, reached a point one hundred miles from its mouth, beyond which it was impossible to advance with wagons along the valley of the Yellowstone without crossing to the opposite banks. Here we made a camp with the main body, and with a party of seven I proceeded, with pack animals, over a very difficult country (known as the Bad Lands of the Yellowstone) to the mouth of Powder River, thirty miles further.
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> This was the furthest point up the Yellowstone that I intended to proceed, and I was anxious to reach it and fix its position, as being a good and certain point with which any further reconnaissance could connect. . . . On returning to our wagon /camp/, we all traveled a short distance down the Yellowstone to a convenient point, where we made a boat eighteen feet long and five feet wide, by stretching the skins of three buffalo bulls over a frame made of small cottonwood and willow trees. With this vessel a small party navigated the Yellowstone to its mouth, carefully mapping the islands and bends of the river. The wagons and land party returned to the Missouri by traveling over nearly the route by which they ascended.[24]

The expedition returned to Fort Pierre in early October where the pack animals were sold and most of the escort disbanded. At this point, its leader learned of his recent promotion to First Lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers.[25] Accompanied by his assistants, Warren journeyed to

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[24] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[25] Louis H. Manarin, Major-General Gouverneur Kemble Warren: A Reappraisal, (Duke University, 1957), p. 6. Manarin's work is an unpublished masters' thesis. Warren was promoted on July 1, 1856.

Sioux City where he embarked on a steamboat for St. Louis on November 15th preparatory to continuing on to Washington. Warren could be justly proud of his accomplishments. At a nominal cost to the government of $10,000 his party had been able to sketch and chart the Missouri River from St. Louis to Fort Union on the Yellowstone, take thermometer and barometer observations of the land traversed, make a sizeable collection of the native fauna and flora of the region, and penetrate into the unexplored regions of the Yellowstone.

For months the impatient topographical engineer remained in Washington, engaged in completing official reports while anxiously hoping for a War Department directive that would once more order him into regions that few, if any, white men had ever visited. Finally on May 7, 1857 the suspense was broken. Secretary of War John B. Floyd ordered Warren to determine the best route by which a military road to the South Pass from Sioux City could be built. He was also to proceed northward and make such explorations of the Black Hills and the valley of the Niobrara River as time and circumstances would permit.[26] In this endeavor, he was given the assistance of five men all experts in their field. The expedition's surgeon was Dr. S. Moffitt; its geologist was Dr. F.V. Hayden; W.P.C. Carrington served as meteorologist and J.H. Snowden and P.M. Engel were engaged as topographers. In addition, Warren added the name

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[26]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, pp. 16-17.

of his brother Edgar to the list of assistants.[27]

From the start Warren's path to the Black Hills was beset with obstacles that would have persuaded a less dedicated man to cancel the expedition. After a trip to New York in in early May to purchase needed instruments, and a short visit at Cold Spring, he left Washington on May 25, 1857, and traveled to Sioux City, Iowa, with stops at St. Louis, Fort Leavenworth, and Omaha to procure animals and wagons, purchase supplies, and hire teamsters and other needed men. His journal clearly indicated the nature of the problems he had to face even before the explorations were truly started:

> Reached Sioux City - Here informed the escort of 30 men under Lt. McMillan had been waiting for me 3 days. I immediately sent up to Lt. McM. to move down and cross the river /Big Sioux River/ but he had no teamsters and could not move, the harness was in inserviceable condition, and his men breaking thro' all discipline were constantly leaving camp without permission. Some days were necessary to prepare the trains and this took us into the fourth of July, and the following Sunday during which time most of the escort were drunk and insubordinate and 12 of them deserted: carrying off with them two of my horses. . . .[28]

Incensed at the debauchery, dereliction of duty, carelessness, and thievery of his men, Warren in his official report noted, "These losses occurring in a civilized community, where we supposed ourselves among friends, were quite annoying and gave rather unpleasant forebodings of what might occur to

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[27]Warren, Journal for 1857, entry for June 8, 1857.

[28]Ibid., Numerous entries in June and early July 1857.

us when we should come among our enemies, the Indians."[29]

The lieutenant finally set out with his party on July 6th for the mouth of the Loup Fork of the Platte River, where he was to join a second group which had fitted out in Omaha under the charge of Chief Topographer Snowden. It took the party eleven days to travel the one hundred ten miles to Loup Fork. The road was a sea of mud. Super-human efforts had to be expended to move the wagons through the mire. The explorers built a thirty foot bridge to cross over the swollen Middle Creek, and wasted another day constructing a twelve foot log raft to cross the Elk Horn River.[30] It was a wonder that in those backbreaking eleven days the remainder of Warren's escort did not desert. Meeting at the Loup Fork on July 19th, the united party moved westward up that stream. For three weeks the command inched its way over difficult terrain. On crossing the north fork of the Loup the first wagon got stuck in the quicksand bottom of the river so that it had to be unloaded to free it from the mud and Warren had to order the teams doubled to bring the remaining wagons across the water. Slowed countless times by creeks that emptied into the Platte, Warren's men were forced to become experts in bridge building.[31]

Additional difficulties lay ahead. Within fifty miles

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[29]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 17.

[30]Warren, Journal for 1857, entries for July 7, and July 11, 1857.

[31]J. Hudson Snowden, Journal for June 27 - November 15, 1857. Snowden was a member of Warren's Nebraska Expedition. His journal was found in the Warren Manuscript Collection, Albany, New York.

of its source the Loup Fork became shut up in a gorge that was impassable for wagons. The party was forced to travel over sand hills which greatly retarded its progress, and further delay was encountered when one of the teamsters, who had been ill with Billious Typhoid Fever for several days, grew worse. Dr. Moffett informed Warren that the man might die if he were not kept quiet until the crisis passed. Consequently, Warren had to order the expedition to remain in camp and a three days' period of inactivity ensued. The lieutenant utilized the time to investigate the nature of the country to the south of the camp, until on August 4th, the expedition, with the teamster well on the road to recovery, was able to advance once more.[32]

Not until early August was the first phase of Warren's mission completed. As he himself summed up the results,

> Travelled 7 1/4 miles and came to the head of the Loup Fork. . . We have now traced the river from end to end and found the impracticability for almost any purpose so marked that it seems like a great waste of time to have made the exertion we have. Our greatest wish is to get away from it as soon as possible and never return.[33]

Withdrawing from this region was not an easy undertaking. Provisions intended to last for a month had become nearly depleted and the expedition's water kegs were nearly dry. And there was in the Loup Fork region almost no potable water. The numerous lakes of the Sand Hills were saline and could

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[32]Ibid., entries for August 1, 2, and 4, 1857.

[33]Warren, Journal for 1857, entry for August 7, 1857.

not be used to slake the explorers' thirst.

In an attempt to relieve the hunger and thirst of his men, Warren, accompanied by a hunter, went into the hills in search of game and water. Finding neither, the lieutenant and his companion prepared to make a joyless return to camp when a storm broke, and while they were forced to spend an unpleasant night under the stars - wet and tormented by mosquitoes - the main expedition quickly channeled the falling rain into water barrels. Upon his return the following morning, Warren was greeted by several Indians who were uneasy about the presence of the white man in their country. Informing them of the peaceful nature of his expedition, he gave each of them a shirt and a knife.[34]

Once more supplied with fresh water, the expedition was able to continue its travels. Reaching longitude 102° 30', the party was fortunate in finding a large open plain with a clearly marked Indian trail which led directly north to the Niobrara River. From that point the lieutenant found little trouble in leading his men back to Fort Laramie.

Warren was disappointed at the meager accomplishments of his latest explorations. Two months of summer had been wasted with few results, and visions of another winter of inaction in Washington haunted his mind. Most likely, he feared that the negative aspects of his recent explorations

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[34]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, pp. 17-18; Warren, Journal for 1857, entry for August 11, 1857.

might persuade Congress to oppose further appropriations for future scientific explorations, and he was anxious to refit his party as soon as expedient. But Colonel Hoffman, commanding officer at Fort Laramie, invited Warren to dinner, at his quarters, where he promised him all possible aid in resupplying the material needs of the expedition. However, delays followed since almost all the supplies that might have been furnished to him had already been requisitioned for another expedition. While he fretted and waited for new supplies to arrive, he dispatched a party led by Dr. Hayden and Mr. Engel to make an excursion to Laramie Peak. After ascending the mountain these men brought back considerable information concerning the nature of the terrain between the fort and the peak. Engel's report indicated that the land in this region, in contrast to that encountered on the Loup Fork, had great potential for development. Warren's assistant further reported, "Timber is abundant and so the grass, game of every description fills the valleys & ravine, but the road becomes rather rough for the traveller."[35] The topographer also indicated that a large source of fresh spring water was readily accessible. Such reports brightened Warren's hopes for the future of the Platte region as an area for new white settlement.

In early September, Warren made a difficult decision.

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[35]P.M. Engel, Report of Reconnaissance to Laramie Peak, August 22 - August 27, 1857. This report is found in the Warren Manuscript Collection.

The lateness of the season dictated the necessity of dividing the expedition in two in order to carry out fully the expectations of the Secretary of War. Warren realized that he was taking a considerable risk, since each party would be too weak to fight off possible Indian attacks. But nevertheless, he turned in half his wagons to the quartermaster at Fort Laramie and, accompanied by his brother Edgar, three of his assistants, an interpreter, and seventeen men he left Fort Laramie on September 4th and headed north for the Black Hills. Remembering the delays of the previous months, he did not allow his party to be slowed by wagons, but ordered all necessary supplies to be packed on mules. Meanwhile, the remainder of the expedition, under the protection of Lieutenant McMillan, journeyed down the Niobrara River to await Warren at longitude 101°30' with Chief Topographer Snowden assigned to make a study of this still largely unexplored region.[36] Warren had high hopes for the success of his plan. As he wrote his father before setting out from Fort Laramie, "we anticipate much pleasure and some hardships. . . ."[37]

After crossing the south fork of the Cheyenne, the Warren party traveled rapidly and proceeded up river. In the distance, the explorers were soon able to observe their goal - the Black Hills. Encouraged by this sight, Warren urged his men forward, and the following day, the party entered the Black

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[36]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 18.

[37]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, September 3, 1857, Warren Papers, 1, 2; Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 18.

Hills, and headed for Inyan Kara, a basaltic peak whose height dominated the outcroppings around it.[38] At this point, the small force encountered a sizeable band of Dakotas, who strongly objected to the presence of the white men on their soil. Realizing that his expedition had as its purpose, scientific investigation and not military adventure, Warren prudently agreed not to advance further into the last sanctuary of the Sioux. His decision was partially humanitarian. As he stated:

> The grounds of their objections to our traversing this region were very sensible, and of sufficient weight, I think, to have justified them in their own minds in resisting; and as these are still in force for the prevention of the passage of any other party of whites not large enough to resist successfully, they are of sufficient importance to be repeated here. In the first place, they were encamped near large herds of buffalo, whose hair not being sufficiently grown to make robes, the Indians were, it may be said, actually herding the animals. No one was permitted to kill any in the large bands for fear of stampeding the others, and only such were killed as straggled away from the main herds. . . . For us to have continued on then would have been an act for which certain death would have been inflicted on a like number of their own tribe had they done it; for we might have deflected the whole range of the buffalo fifty or one hundred miles to the west, and prevented the Indians from laying in their winter stock of provisions and skins, on which their comfort if not even their lives depended. Their feelings toward us, under the circumstances, were not unlike what we should feel toward a person who should insist upon setting fire to our barns. The most violent of them were for immediate resistance when I told them of my intentions; and those who were most friendly, and in greatest fear of the power of the United States, begged that I would "take pity" on them and not proceed. I felt that, aside from it being an unnecessary risk to subject my party and the interests of the expedition to, it was almost cruelty

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[38]Warren, Journal for 1857, entries for September 8th, 9th, 1857; Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 18.

> to the Indians to drive them to commit any desperate act, which would call chastisement from the Government.[39]

Conceeding that their treaty with General Harney gave the white man the right to travel on the Platte and along the White River, between Forts Laramie and Pierre, and to utilize the Missouri River, the Indians pointed out that the agreement barred the whites from penetrating into the Black Hills which had been designated as the preserve of the Sioux. Moreover, the Indians informed Warren that they were well aware that the primary purpose of the expedition was to gain a knowledge of the character of the Black Hills in case war should once again break out between the United States and the Sioux nation. Warren confessed, "I was necessarily compelled to admit to myself the truth and force of these objections."[40] Not wishing to antagonize the Indians further, he decided against advancing deeper into their sanctuary.

For the next few days, Warren surveyed the outer fringe of the Black Hills. On September 16th, he, Carrington, and the interpreter, Morin, proceeded unnoticed to an Ogallalla camp of forty-five lodges. "They gave us some meat to eat," Warren recalled,

> and I told them that I had been sent by the Great Father to look at the country and tell him what was here. They made no objection to it further than to request I would not go along the stream they were camped on, as there were a few buffalo on it and they were afraid it would drive them away; and said

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[39]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 19.

[40]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

> I would take pity on them and not make them starve if I would pass down the next branch. . . to the east of us. I invited the head man with ten of his warriors to come over to my camp and I would give them something to eat, and that I was glad to find they were friends.[41]

In response to this cordial invitation forty Indians, representing this band and another of eighty lodges nearby, swarmed through the army encampment. Warren had violated a cardinal rule of the West. Because of defense considerations, mountainmen, pioneers, and settlers rarely allowed large numbers of Indians in their midst. However, he realized that his small party was, by its position, at any rate at the mercy of the Sioux, and it mattered little if the Indians were inside or outside of the camp. His daring stand impressed the Indians, who admired courage, and the expedition was not molested.

When the Indians had satisfied their curiosity about the white man and his camp, their leader, Black Shield, with the aid of an interpreter, began a long conversation with Warren. Stating that General Harney had promised them that no white man would be allowed to come into their lands, the chief asserted that Harney had given them permission to drive out interlopers, if the latter did not heed warnings to immediately depart from the Black Hills. Without hesitation, Warren replied that Harney had given them the right to drive out traders, not soldiers, and that he himself had been dispatched by the Great White Father, Harney's chief,

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[41]Warren, Journal for 1857, entry for Seprember 16, 1857.

to observe and not to build roads, forts, or in any other way interfere with the Indian way of life. Black Shield appeared impressed by Warren's demeanor, and promised that if the latter would remain in camp for three days, he would send for Bear's Rib, an important chief, to come and speak with him.[42] But the Indian leader did not make an appearance. After waiting in vain for three days Warren ordered his party to break camp and return to Inyan Kara peak. Striking out eastward through the southern portion of the Black Hills, he was courting disaster by his movement into a portion of the Indian's land that no white man had ever entered. Within two days, he was overtaken by Bear's Rib, who said he had arrived at the old camp the day after Warren had left, and that he had followed the expedition ever since.[43] As recorded in Warren's official report, the two men had a frank discussion about the presence of the white men in the Black Hills. Warren observed:

> He /Bear's Rib/ reiterated all that had been said by the other chiefs, and added that he could do nothing to prevent our being destroyed if we attempted to proceed further. I then told him that I believed he was our friend, but that if he could do nothing for us, he had better return to his people, and leave us to take care of ourselves, as I was determined to proceed as far as Bear Butte. After a whole day spent in deliberation, he concluded to accompany us part of the way, and he said he would then return to his people and use his influence to have us not molested. In return for this, he wished me to say to the President and to the white people that they

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 20.

> could not be allowed to come into that country; . . . All they asked of the white people was, to be left to themselves. . .[44]

As Bear's Rib made ready to leave, Warren gave him many presents as tokens of his esteem.[45]

Bear's Rib was as good as his word. For a week the expedition traveled extensively through the eastern portion of the Black Hills without encountering an Indian. The party was permitted to journey to Bear Butte where Warren and all his assistants climbed the height and quickly agreed that the peak would be an accurate starting point for future reconnaissances into the region. Only when satisfied that he had learned all that could be learned at that time did the expedition begin its long trek back to meet the Niobrara Party,[46]

Warren's return was welcome to his fellow officers. In his journal entry for October 15, 1857, J. Hudson Snowden, commander of the Niobrara expedition, related,

> About 10 o'clock this morning we were all surprised by hearing a shot & whoop on the hills, shortly after which one of the Black hill party accompanied by an Indian rode into the camp. He said Mr Warren & party were close behind and in a few moments they came defiling down the hill, their long string of pack mules and the motley groups of men presenting quite a fantastic appearance.[47]

After being separated for nearly six weeks the two halves of the expedition were united once more. The next few days were

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Warren, Journal for 1857, entry for September 25, 1857.

[46]Warren, Journal for 1857, entries for September 30 and October 2, 1857.

[47]Snowden, Journal for June 27 - November 15, 1857, entry for October 15, 1857.

spent reorganizing the party, discharging some of the men, and dividing provisions. Warren was cheered when he discovered that Snowden's explorations had been as successful as his own. Snowden had thoroughly examined, mapped and studied a large area of land bordering the Niobrara River, in spite of several Indian threats, which were firmly checked by Lieutenant McMillan's soldiers. To prevent further incidents, Chief Little Thunder assigned four of his warriors to accompany the expedition.[48]

Although Warren was pleased with the extent of his accomplishments, his problems had not ceased. On October 17th, as the explorers prepared to return to Sioux City, four inches of snow fell. The weather turned bitterly cold, the temperature dipping to 22° during the early morning hours of October 19th. As the ground froze, it became more and more difficult to move the wagons and animals across the hilly terrain. It was a tired, cold group of men who at the close of October reached the sanctuary of Fort Randall on the Missouri River.[49]

Despite all his success, Warren was still not satisfied. With winter closing in he delayed his return east to make topographical observations of the fort and its immediate environs. At last satisfied that he could accomplish nothing more at that time, on the 7th of November he ordered his small band to depart from Fort Randall for Sioux City,

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[48]Snowden, Journal for June 27 - November 15, 1857, entries for October 10th through 18th; Warren, Journal for 1857, entry for October 15, 1857.

[49]Snowden, Journal for June 27 - November 15, 1857, entry for October 17, 18, 19, 1857.

which it reached on the 16th. Finding that no steamboats were expected because ice was forming on the river, he was forced to lead his men overland to Fort Leavenworth - - a march which resulted in eleven men contracting influenza because of the extremely cold weather. Only upon reaching Leavenworth on December 4th, was he fortunate enough to find a steamboat about to sail to St. Louis from where he boarded a train for Washington.[50]

Believing that his stay in Washington was to be, as it had been the past two winters a temporary one, Warren was hopeful that his explorations would soon resume. He considered himself to be the best qualified officer in the United States Army to command further missions. However, delay was necessary. Over the course of two seasons, the lieutenant and his assistants had compiled a mass of information which would of necessity take a great deal of time to organize and classify. For more than a year he remained in Washington, critically examining all aspects of his recent expeditions in an attempt to enlighten the government and people about the exact nature of the lands still possessed by the Indians. Observing that the Niobrara River, though a "beautiful little stream of clear running water," was of limited usefulness for navigation because of the shallowness of its bed, the existence of rapids in its upper course, and the presence of numerous sand bars near its mouth, Warren was lavish in

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[50]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 22; Samuel H. Moffitt, Medical Report for 1857 Expedition, Warren Papers, V, 8.

his praise of the potentialities of the Missouri.[51] In a letter drafted during January 1858, he noted:

> In the year 1856 I made a careful survey of the Missouri from the northern boundary of Kansas to 80 miles above the Yellowstone and the Yellowstone itself for 125 miles. I am convinced that the navigability of the Missouri is not properly appreciated by the public generally. It is the second navigable stream in the United States, the Mississippi being the first. . . .[52]

Recalling his service on the Pacific Railroad Survey, he was able to touch on the question of the construction of a railroad to the Pacific. "Looking to a road to the Pacific in a national point of view," he observed, "I think there is no route north of the Arkansas by which the barren portions of our Territory between the Missouri and Rocky mountains can be passed that is so favorable as the valley of the Platte, and a cheap rail road combining both horse and steam power could be built. . . almost without grading."[53] In order to strengthen his feeling that there should be a railroad along the Platte he declared that within a reasonable period of time large numbers of Americans would settle there and that it would be necessary to provide easy communication between the region and the East.[54] He firmly believed that the United States Government should take an active role

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[51]Draft of Letter by G.K. Warren, January 29, 1858, concerning tributaries of the Niobrara River and about Nebraska Territory, Warren Papers, V, 8, pp. 4, 6. Hereafter referred to as Draft of Letter, . . . January 29, 1858. Warren was not enthusiastic about the future of the region adjacent to the Niobrara.

[52]Ibid., p. 11.

[53]Ibid., p. 13½.

[54]Warren, Preliminary Report of Exploratipns in Nebraska, p. 46.

in encouraging settlement along the Platte. "I think it exceedingly desirable," he wrote,

> that something should be done to encourage settlements in the neighborhood of Ft. Laramie. The wealth of that country is not properly valued, and the indian title not being extinguished there is no opportunity to settle it. Those who live there now, support themselves by trade with the indians and it is to their interest to keep others away.

In addition, he advised that the government extinguish the Indian title and extend the protection of the territorial government so as to be effective there. It was his belief that if this were done a settlement would spring up in this region that would rival that of the Great Salt Lake.[55]

Most of Warren's writings during this period were permeated with thoughts about the Indians who lived in the valley of the Platte. As the first explorer to penetrate deep into the Black Hills, he was impressed by the intelligence displayed by the Sioux chiefs, their sense of justice, and their desire to maintain their way of life free from the encroachments of the white man. As he reported to his superiors,

> I have always found the Dakotas exceedingly reasonable beings, with a proper appreciation of what are their own rights. What they yield to the whites they expect to be paid for, and I never have heard a prominent man of their nation express an opinion in regard to what was due them in which I do not concur.[56]

And he displayed pangs of conscience when he realized that the result of his exploration would mean the destruction of the Sioux as a nation. "I sympathise with them in this their

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[55]Warren, Draft of Letter, . . . January 29, 1858, pp. 12-13. Fort Laramie was in the southeast corner of the present state of Wyoming. It was an important post on the Oregon Trail.

[56]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, p. 54.

desperation," he confessed, "and almost feel guilty of crime in being a pioneer to the white man who will ere long drive the red man from his last nich [sic] of hunting ground."[57]

Small-pox, the scourge of the Indian, had struck the Dakotas in 1856 and 1857, when at least 3,000 of the tribesmen succumbed to the epidemic. A humane man, Warren was touched by their suffering and suggested, in his official report, that the government hire a competent medical man to visit the Indians annually in order to vaccinate them against this disease.[58]

Still, he was realistic, if not always consistent, in his opinions concerning the future of the Sioux. He knew that the large white migration into the region of the Platte, which was inevitable, would drive out the buffalo, the mainstay of Indian life, and with the destruction of the herds, the death knell for the Sioux would be sounded. Believing that a "vigorous course of action" by the government against the Indians might in the long run be more humane than allowing them to die slowly of starvation, Warren nevertheless cautioned that any war with the Sioux would be both lengthy and bloody. He correctly predicted, as early as 1858, that in the inevitable struggles with the Sioux that lay ahead, the Black Hills would be the key to breaking Indian

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[57]Warren, Draft of Letter, . . . January 29, 1858, p. 9.

[58]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, pp. 48, 51.

resistance.[59]

Many years later, Warren's thoughts still turned toward the plight of the Sioux, a people destined for cultural extinction. In a memorandum titled, "Thoughts about the Red man 1867," he observed,

> The Dakotas, now engaged in probably their last notable struggle for their rights and the purity of their race, present to us in the hopelessness of their attempt, a case for the commisseration of merciful men.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> When they perish many traits of mankind, worthy of preservation for our study and investigation into the origin of the human race will disappear forever to us: who are probably but the descendants of men in similar state of existence. How we regret to hear of the extinction actual or probable of some race of wild animals as a destruction of the links of natural history and should we not wish to preserve in unimpaired native vigor and honor a race like this which is truly filled with the most noble human attributes, and whose only crime had been a desire to preserve their birthright to themselves which desire in our neglect of right and guided only by the purist selfishness we have steadily deprived them of solely for our own advantage without thought of them. Thus resistance to this encroachment, which has proved their manhood, is the only foundation for a charge against them for deceit or cruelty. Noble warriors they have proved even to those who most misrepresented them.[60]

Warren labored nearly a year to complete his extensive reports. It was not until mid-December, 1858, that he was able to inform his father with great satisfaction:

> The great hurry which we have been in to get our reports ready for Congress is now over. . . . I will send you tomorrow a copy of the report of the Secretary of War in which you will see we are spoken of in very

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[59] Ibid., pp. 48-54 passim. At this time, according to Warren, the Sioux numbered 3,000 lodges, with 24,000 inhabitants, including 4,800 warriors.

[60] "Thoughts about the Red man 1867," Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 15.

> high esteem. . . . Our map of the Territory west of the Mississippi is now coming out and is very satisfactory. My map of Nebraska is most ready for publication. . .[61]

As part of his final report, he made extensive suggestions on the preparations necessary for a future expedition to the Yellowstone. He urged that the expedition be organized and equipped by May 1, 1859, and should remain in the field until December 1, 1860, a period of nineteen months. The intervening winter, according to his plan, would be passed at some point on either the Yellowstone or Big Horn River. Postulating that an escort would not be necessary because the region was occupied by the friendly Crow Indians, he observed that the cost of the expedition would reach $60,000, two-thirds of which would be to provide salaries for forty men and assistants.[62] He assumed that he would be the commander of the proposed expedition.

But personal tragedy intervened. During early February, Sylvanus Warren died, leaving the responsibility of caring for seven children upon the shoulders of his eldest son. The lieutenant had to postpone his plans. As he wrote,

> The death of my father, has entirely changed my plans. I shall not now wish to go to Nebraska again. I must stay awhile with my mother. His loss is a great one to us, besides my mother requiring me to be with her. I feel so sad about it, that all my ambitions

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[61]Warren to Sylvanus Warren, December 9, 1858, Warren Papers, I, 2.

[62]Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska, pp. 10-11. Salaries were 30 men at $30 per month and 8 assistants at $125 per month, $10,000 for animals and outfits, $7,000 for provisions, $4,000 for Indian goods, and $3,000 to serve as a contingency fund.

> have forsaken me. There was no person in the world whose death could make me so unhappy as my father's has.[63]

Consequently, when on September 1, 1859, he was ordered to West Point near his home to serve as an assistant professor of mathematics he could not have been disappointed. He was to remain at this post until the outbreak of the Civil War.[64]

His days of exploration and discovery were over, yet the expeditions he had led in 1856 and 1857 made discoveries that proved valuable for decades. Future explorers relied upon his maps and reports to further their own investigations.[65] History has recorded John Frémont as the Pathfinder; legend has glorified the heroic deeds among the Indians of Kit Carson and Davy Crockett. Still, in the years before the Civil War, Warren explored, surveyed and chartered a vast tract of land in the American West. An inquisitive soldier-explorer, he truly deserves the title, Explorer Of The Nebraska Territory.

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[63]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 44.

[64]War Department Order, Warren Papers, XIV, 65.

[65]War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), I, 48, I, 366-367. Hereafter referred to as O.R.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST FIRE

The storm clouds of secession and civil strife that had nearly disrupted the Union in 1850 grew more ominous during the following decade. Bitter invectives, threats, intimidation, violence, marked the relations between the sections in the period between the Compromise of 1850 and the election of Lincoln as President. The embers of mutual suspicion and mistrust were fanned by a number of sectional confrontations. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, "Bleeding Kansas," the northern reaction to the Dred Scott Decision, and the passionate response of the South to John Brown's Raid were indications of a people beset with an emotion that could not be calmed by an appeal to reason.

After the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, the irrational fears of southerners reached their peak. Robert Toombs, Edmund Ruffin, William Yancey and other "fire-eaters" caused the more moderate southerners to view the loss of control over the Presidency as a direct threat to the Southern way of life. These men, joined by slaveholders and non-slaveholders of their region, viewed Republican

opposition to the expansion of slavery in the territories as the first step in satisfying abolitionist demands for the complete extinction of slavery throughout the United States.

One question that remained after November 1860 was whether the "erring sisters" would be allowed to go in peace, as Horace Greeley strongly suggested in his New York Tribune editorials, or whether Lincoln would utilize force to maintain the Union. This was resolved on April 12, 1861, when General P.G.T. Beauregard ordered his men to fire upon Fort Sumter. On April 15th, President Lincoln called upon the states for 75,000 troops to serve for a term of ninety days against "combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings."[1] Northern governors responded affirmatively to the President's appeal for troops, and every northern state promptly oversubscribed its quota.

The creation of scores of volunteer regiments presented the problem of finding competent officers. At first, the War Department hoped to retain in their normal post the services of the three hundred regular officers who had not defected. But the mustering, in early July, of sixty-four

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[1]Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), IV, 331-332.

regiments in and around Washington necessitated diluting the regular officer corps to provide commissioned officers to drill, train and discipline this mass of recruits into a unified fighting force in the shortest time. Throughout the North, junior officers vied with each other to acquire high rank in the newly formed volunteer regiments by asking influential friends and acquaintances to intercede in their behalf with the War Department, and Warren was one of the first regular officers to see the possible advantage of serving with the volunteers.[2] "I entered the war," he recalled in a memorandum,

> with an ardent feeling to defend my country, no less strong than was my dislike to bloodshed, injustice and lying ambition. . . .
>
> I sought no place. I forsook the pleasure which an approaching leave of absence from my duties offered me and entered the volunteers with the first opportunity that offered.
>
> With a single object to do my duty I brought though young a knowledge and singleness of purpose to serve the public good, that won me friends and good opinions among all grades of men. My elevation was unsolicited. . . .[3]

But he was not entirely candid. As early as the middle of April, several of his prominent friends had been actively engaged in seeking a place for him in the volunteer service. On April 24th, as a result of these efforts, Warren received a telegram that informed him that he was chosen lieutenant-colonel of the Fifth New York, a regiment commanded by Colonel Abram Duryée, a prominent New York merchant who had been active in

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[2]Henry L. Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850 (West Point: 1883), p. 4.

[3]Memorandum, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

the state militia.

The young assistant professor of mathematics did not wait for the confirmation of his appointment. Immediately setting out for New York City, he met his regiment of three hundred forty men and conducted them to Fort Schuyler where he was able to gain considerable insight into the character of the men of his new command.

J.M. Read Jr., Adjutant-General of the State of New York, on April 18th, called upon the citizens of the state to volunteer for one of the seventeen regiments that were being organized in New York to fill Lincoln's request for 75,000 men. Immediately some of the best qualified men in New York City began to enlist in the Fifth New York. Although eighty percent of this regiment, when it was finally constituted, were native Americans, the unit also had under its banner campaigners who fought under Garibaldi in Sicily, veterans of the British army who had served in the Crimea, and former French and Prussian soldiers. Made up of men who were representative of every major trade practiced in New York, the regiment contained an entire company composed of members of the Volunteer Fire Department of the city. A small number of lawyers and white collar workers completed the roster.[4]

Warren, who had returned to duty at West Point on April 26th, promptly applied for a leave of absence from the

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[4]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, VII, I, entry for April 14, 1861; Alfred Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1879), pp. 22, 25.

Academy. His application was endorsed by Professor A.E. Church who observed, "The sections of the 4th Class now taught by Lieut. Warren are so small that they can be combined with the other sections of the class without serious inconvenience."[5] But the War Department turned down Warren's request for service with the Fifth New York, and he immediately called upon several influential friends to intercede in his behalf. Professor Henry E. Davies dispatched Warren to Washington with a note requesting that the Secretary of War place him on detached duty to serve with Duryée's regiment. Once more Warren's request was refused. Discouraged but still hopeful, Warren returned to New York.[6]

The pressure exerted on Simon Cameron by Warren's influential friends finally prevailed, and on May 8th, Warren was granted a leave of absence from the Military Academy for the remainder of the academic year. Immediately journeying down the Hudson River to New York City to be mustered in as lieutenant-colonel of the Fifth New York, he quickly made preparations to proceed, with his command, to the theater of war.[7]

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[5]Approval of Application for Leave of Absence, Prof. A.E. Church, April 26, 1861, Warren Papers, VII, 1.

[6]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entry for May 2, 1861.

[7]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entries for May 8 and May 11, 1861.

Henry L. Abbot, a close friend and confidant spoke well of his qualifications for the post of second in command of a volunteer regiment. "He brought to the strife," according to Abbot,

> an intellect fitted for high command, a courage which knew no fear and shrunk from no responsibility, a judgment ripened by responsible duties, an earnest patriotism free from fanatical bias, and an energy so indomitable that it carried his delicate frame through labors and exposures which broke down men of stronger physique.[8]

Duryée's Zouaves left Fort Schuyler on May 23, 1861 to join other Union troops already assembled at Fortress Monroe under General Benjamin Butler. The regiment, eight hundred forty-eight strong, was given a rousing send-off by the people of New York City. As one zouave described it,

> The boats landed at the foot of East Fifteenth Street about four P.M., and upon disembarking, the regiment proceeded to Fourteenth Street, and after forming in order, marched through that street to Broadway. The sidewalks and windows of the houses were thronged with people, and from every building floated the national flag. . . .
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> . . . . The regiment marched to City Hall Park, which it reached about half-past five o'clock, where they were received by Mayor Wood . . . After going through a parade drill, the Zouaves marched up Broadway through White and North Moore Streets to the Pier, receiving an ovation at every step. Finally, a little before sundown, they were all embarked on the good steamship Alabama, Captain Schenck, and bound for Fortress Monroe.[9]

The Fifth New York arrived safely in Virginia on May 25th and immediately bivouacked at Camp Hamilton.

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[8]Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850, p. 4.

[9]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 30-31. The Fifth New York was a zouave regiment. Its uniform modeled after that of the French colonial army, was gaudy. It featured red baggy trousers, short open jacket, and a turban of fez. Fortress Monroe was a Federal stronghold at the entrance to Hampton Roads in southeastern Virginia.

Upon arrival Colonel Duryée gave Warren the dual task of drilling the regiment and imposing tighter discipline upon these new soldiers only a month removed from civilian life. He was an exacting taskmaster. As he himself recorded, ". . . had long Battalion drill in morning - review and inspection at noon. Brigade drill at 5 P.M." Alfred Davenport, a soldier in his command, confessed, "The rapid increase in our numbers made strict government imperative, and the discipline was more severe and exacting after Lieut.-Col. Warren entered upon his duties."[10]

Under the easy going Duryée, the zouaves had been prone to take the easy way out whenever possible. This practice ceased under Warren, who was a stickler for discipline, and who exacted full measure from each of his men. Demanding that pickets and camp guards endure inclement weather at their post rather than seek shelter against the wind and rain, he stopped a practice that had previously been permitted. In addition, he kept his men constantly busy even when there was no immediate enemy to oppose. Soon after their arrival in Virginia, Warren set his men to work with picks and shovels to drain the parade ground. Within a short period of time the Fifth New York under his leadership became a crack regiment which earned the respect and admiration of its neighbors at

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[10]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entry for June 1, 1861; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteers, p. 26.

Camp Hamilton.[11]

During early June of 1861, military operations in the Virginia Theater were still at an incipient stage. There was little heavy fighting going on, so that Warren's first field service, while of little military importance, gave an indication of his competency to command troops in an independent military operation. On June 3rd, he conducted a raid on Hampton, Virginia, with four companies of the Fifth New York, for the purpose of investigating the reported capture of a foraging party by the Confederates. Quickly uncovering the story as an unfounded rumor, he decided to advance towards Yorktown to demonstrate to the Confederate forces stationed there that they could not conduct operations near Federal lines without provoking retaliatory raids on their outposts. As he put it, he believed his movement would also serve "to assure the citizens that all our authorized expeditions would respect peaceable persons and property."[12]

During the next twenty-four hours, Warren's small force spread consternation amongst the local populace. Southern women were terrorized by the appearance of Federal troops in a region they had considered safely protected by Confederate forces. The troops encountered no opposition. The only sizeable enemy force in the vicinity were

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[11]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteers, p. 26.

[12]Ibid., p. 44.

small groups of "rebels" on the Federal's flanks who placed trees across the road to impede the progress of the expedition. Advancing to within nine miles of the enemy's stronghold at Yorktown, Warren ordered his troops to halt and retire by a road a mile to the east of the one by which they had come. He regretted that the enemy chose to remain aloof, thus depriving him of his first military encounter.[13]

Caught in a heavy summer storm, the small force returned to camp wet, tired and hungry. Quick to criticize himself and his men for their shortcomings, Warren observed, "Owing to inexperience and eagerness to set out, my directions for supplying themselves with rations were imperfectly complied with, and they suffered severely for want of something to eat." Because General Butler was then attempting to pacify the region, Warren had not permitted his troops to forage for food along the road. He reported that nothing was taken from the people except a little corn bread and milk that was paid for by the men at double its true value.[14]

As a result of his brief expedition, the young lieutenant-colonel was able to make valuable suggestions to Colonel Duryée. "It is vain to attempt to pacify or render these people friendly," Warren

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[13] Ibid., pp. 44-46. Warren's report to Colonel Duryée on raid to investigate report of capture of 126 men of the 1st Regiment at Fox Hill.

[14] Ibid., p. 46.

reasoned,

> unless the greatest vigor is used, not merely toward those who are caught committing depredations, which is difficult to do, but toward every one found beyond some established line without authority. I would respectfully suggest that no more seizures of cattle or provisions shall be made, even when left behind by avowed secessionists. They will otherwise carry it off or destroy it. But if it remains unmolested by us, we will find abundance of means at hand to sustain us whenever we choose to advance in force. Small scouting parties in front of our lines keep up a needless alarm, and must fail in capturing detachments of the enemy, who, being well mounted and acquainted with the country, flee at our approach. Besides, these scouting parties tend to demoralize the regiment, and prevent that attention to drill and discipline so essential to the real operations or war. Let us remain quietly within our lines, preparing for the greater struggle; let our foes even think we fear them, if thereby their temerity may place them more within our grasp; and when we do move let it be like the bound of the lion from his covert.[15]

Despite limited battlefield experience, Warren was able to grasp the entire scope of army operations, and was able to present logical arguments for decisive momement. However, one of his major shortcomings as a subordinate officer readily became apparent. He was unduly concerned with matters beyond his realm of responsibility. As second in command of a regiment, he should have given his attention to the immediate tactical problems facing his command; yet, within a week after his arrival in Virginia he was mapping strategy and offering advice on matters that were not even the chief concerns of the regimental commander, but strictly the responsibility of the commanding general of the department. Throughout the duration of the Civil War, this was to prove to be one of Warren's major faults. As a brigade commander he would worry about the movements

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[15] Ibid., p. 47.

of his division, and later, as a corps commander, he attempted to shoulder the responsibility both for his corps and for the entire army. This trait would not make him popular with some superiors.

Less than a week after the conclusion of Warren's raid, he was involved in another engagement which did not have as fortuitous a conclusion as the first. General Butler had devised a plan for moving upon Confederate outposts at Little and Big Bethel to disrupt Confederate attempts to skirmish with Federal pickets at Newport News and Hampton. But from its inception the plan went awry. The commander of the expedition, General Ebenezer Pierce, was totally incompetent - as was later discovered, his commission was not valid since he had not been properly mustered into the service of the United States. And Butler's plan would have taxed the ability of Napoleon's most capable marshals. Using a map drawn in 1819, Pierce began his advance during the night of June 9th in two columns with the Fifth New York and Third New York advancing on the right by way of Hampton, while the Seventh New York and the First Vermont advanced on the left by way of Newport News. Before dawn the two forces met at a junction of roads near Little Bethel and the jittery green troops inadvertently fired into one another. Twenty-nine soldiers were killed and wounded before the mistake was discovered, while the small Confederate force at Little Bethel abandoned its post and fell back on

the main Confederate line at Big Bethel.[16]

When the battle started, Warren was at Camp Hamilton, resting. He recorded in his journal, "On duty as Officer of Day and Provost Marshall, day rainy - mind fatigued. Night expedition for regiment ordered by General Butler. Too tired to go."[17] On the next morning he rode to the front and arrived at the moment the Federal regiments were about to advance upon the Confederate line at Big Bethel. Held by eleven hundred troops under General D.H. Hill, Big Bethel was a forward post protecting the enemy's main camp under General Magruder at Yorktown. The Confederate line was well protected by a swampy creek and was further strengthened by the placement of well hidden artillery pieces in position to enfilade the Union troops as they advanced. A direct attack as contemplated by General Pierce might well have led to major defeat for the Federal forces.

Realizing this, Warren halted the advance of the Fifth New York, and went forward with a reconnoitering party to test the strength of the enemy's position. As he moved toward the Confederate line, the Southerners opened a heavy artillery fire upon his small party from their hidden batteries, a shelling which confirmed his belief that a frontal attack upon the prepared enemy position would lead to a needless

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[16]William Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1886), pp. 31-32.

[17]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entry for June 9, 1861.

slaughter of Federal troops. Consequently, he rode back to General Pierce to inform him that a frontal assault was impractical. The best hope for a Union success, he said, would be to order one regiment around each of the Confederate flanks to attack the enemy's flank and rear. A frontal attack could be ordered once the flank assaults began. Groping for any plan that sounded plausible and which gave some hope for success, Pierce ordered Warren to carry those instructions to the regimental commanders.

The plan, if competently carried out, probably would have proven to be sound. The regiment that was to make the movement around the enemy right, however, advanced across an open field instead of through a woods that would have masked its position, only to be stopped by heavy artillery fire. The regiment dispatched to circle the enemy's left was composed of raw troops who proved to be unsteady under a moderate fire. Observing that his plans had proven unsuccessful, General Pierce ordered an immediate withdrawal.[18] Making no effort to organize a rear guard to cover his retreat, Pierce's order resulted in a near rout. In a report highly critical of his commanding officer, Warren observed,

> So far though we had accomplished nothing. We had not suffered seriously from the enemy, some 50 or 60 only were killed and wounded. /Men exhausted/ Genl.

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[18]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 31-33. Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), III, 383. Hereafter referred to as J.C.C.W.

> Pierce then called a consultation of the colonels at rear and personally directed me to attend. It was proposed to make another combined effort, but this was not approved. Strong apprehensions were expressed that we were being outflanked, and that we were so exhausted and destitute of transportation and so far from our supplies that we were in the danger of being cut off. The order to retire was therefore given. This was executed in a very hurried manner. No regiment or company remained behind to prevent a charge of horsemen; nor was there any rear guard or systematic arrangement to bring off the dead and wounded. Though I urged it in the most strenuous manner and remained behind myself. . . .[19]

A small battery of two artillery pieces commanded by Lieutenant John T. Greble covered the withdrawal of the infantry - so successfully that it prevented the Federal repulse from turning into a rout. As the last of the infantry disappeared over the horizon, Greble ordered his men to retire, and at that moment a cannon ball struck down and killed him so that he became the first regular officer to lose his life in the service of the United States during the Civil War. Hearing of the death of a brother regular, Warren went back alone to where the body lay and carried the remains in his arms to an abandoned artillery limber which was then drawn off by hand to safety. Moreover, Warren, accompanied by a chaplain and a few men, remained behind for more than an hour collecting the wounded and placing them in wagons left behind by Pierce's fleeing troops.[20]

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[19]Account of Engagement at Big Bethel, Virginia, June 10, 1861, Warren Papers, VII, 1.

[20]Henry L. Abbot, Half Century of a West Point Class 1850 to 1854 (Boston: Thomas Todd, n.d.), pp. 24-25; Warren to N.Y. Times, June 16, 1861, Warren Papers, VII, 1.

Upon his return to camp, Warren sat down to prepare a report of the engagement. Bitter at the discovery that the responsibility for conducting the withdrawal had been completely abrogated by his superiors, he vented his passions, denouncing their incompetency, inefficency, and lack of courage:

> There was no occasion whatever for us to leave the ground as we did, and it is a burning shame that we left several men mortally wounded and others dead on the ground . . . The whole affair shows an unparallelled degree of military ignorance and inefficiency on the part of the generals and their command.
> . . . . The only regiment on the field capable of moving in any way except by the flank was Col. Duryée's, and the idea of making such a movement in face of a battery is awful to think of. Add to that the fact that we went into battle without any sleep for 30 hours with empty stomachs on a hot day after a march of 10 to 15 miles, and what could be expected.[21]

In a notation on this draft Warren observed, "The report sent in by me was milder than this but all this is true." Realizing that the strong language he had used to criticize his superiors was not politic, he recognized the fact that his report as first written would be shelved by Colonel Duryée, who would not care to jeopardize his own career by allowing his second in command to villify Butler and Pierce. In a journal entry for June 10th, Warren simply recorded that, as a member of General Pierce's expedition, he saw service at Big Bethel where after heavy fighting the Federals were decisively repulsed.[22]

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[21]Account of Engagement at Big Bethel, Virginia, Warren Papers, June 10, 1861, VII, 1.

[22]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entry for June 10, 1863. Actually Warren overstated the casualties taken by Pierce'e command. Out of a force of 3,500 men, the Federals lost an aggregate of 76 men, 19 of whom were in the Fifth New York.

During the following month Warren's activities were confined to those of a garrison officer. Since Colonel Duryée, as an acting brigadier general, was in command of the camp, effective control of the Fifth New York passed into the hands of Lieutenant-Colonel Warren, who held constant inspections and drills to mold his regiment into a crack fighting unit. Not only superiors but the men in the ranks commented favorably on Warren's handling of the outfit. For example, Alfred Davenport, a soldier in the Fifth New York, wrote freely about the admiration he held for his superior. "In the field maneuvers," he observed,

> the men are taught movements and tactics they never dreamed of before, and were never performed by the militia at home. He is very rigid with the officers, and requires them to know their duties thoroughly, and make no mistakes. The non-commissioned officers are also obliged to learn a lesson every day, and appear before Capt. Kilpatrick and recite it.[23]

General Butler fully utilized Warren's talents as an engineer. The department commander directed him to lay out battery profiles and to supervise the construction of breastworks to strengthen the defensive position of Camp Hamilton against any attempt by the Confederates to follow up their success at Big Bethel with an assault on the main Federal positions. In addition, he had to serve on court martial boards, a task he found tedious and unrewarding.[24]

On July 26th, General Winfield Scott requested troops

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[23]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 87-88.

[24]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entries for June 22, July 5, and July 11 through 19, 1861.

from Butler to garrison forts in and around the cities of Washington and Baltimore. The Fifth New York was one of four regiments selected for this task, and late in the evening of the 26th, the New Yorkers were marched to the government wharf at Fortress Monroe, where they embarked onto the steamship Adelaide bound for Baltimore.[25] Because of their southern sympathies, the inhabitants of the Maryland city were considered disloyal by the United States government. Early in the war, they had stoned Northern troops moving through the streets, and since that time they had torn up railroad tracks, destroyed bridges, and given other signs of disloyal behavior. Occupied by a small force under Butler in May, the city had been pacified, and the stationing of the Fifth New York on Federal Hill, which commanded the entire lower section of the city, was designed to prevent if possible, and quell if necessary, any further outbreaks of violence.[26]

Since Federal Hill was considered, next to Fort McHenry, the most important position commanding Baltimore harbor, the department commander, General John A. Dix, directed that it be fortified. Undoubtedly, he was well aware of Warren's talents as an engineer, for he gave his zouaves the assignment of turning the height into a fort that would effectively command the city.[27] As Warren began studying

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[25] O.R., I, 2, 963; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 90-91.

[26] O.R., I, 5, 556.

[27] O.R., I, 5, 566, 571.

plans for fortification, he received an announcement from the War Department that his leave would not be extended, and that he would have to go back to West Point. On August 30th, Warren traveled to Washington and visited the Secretary of War and General Scott. Listening attentively to his entreaties, at the close of the interview they informed him that he would be detached to serve with the volunteers for the duration of the war.[28]

For the next two months the soldiers of the Fifth New York were kept busy constructing the works that came to be known as Fort Federal Hill. Unaccustomed to hard manual labor, the men toiled under Warren's watchful eye from early morning to late night, digging trenches, constructing ramparts, forming sally ports and counterscarps. At its completion, the fort enclosed four acres on the highest point of the hill; its guns, mounted on walls from nine to eighteen feet high, commanded the harbor and the city.[29]

Warren's abilities were recognized and appreciated by his superiors. General Dix, in a report to General George McClellan, wrote, "The Fifth New York Volunteers is well drilled in the schools of the soldier, the company and the battalion."[30] As Warren was the drill-master of the Fifth, Dix's commendation greatly honored him. Warren's months

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[28]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entries for August 19 and August 30, 1861.

[29]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 105-113 passim.

[30]O.R., I, 5, 571.

of ceaseless toil were rewarded by a dual promotion. With Duryée's advancement to brigadier general, he was promoted to the rank of full colonel and commander of the Fifth New York. At least as gratifying was his advancement in the regular army to a captaincy in the Corps of Topographical Engineers. His volunteer rank was by brevet and thus temporary, while his regular army promotion was a permanent advancement.[31]

The newly promoted colonel, who had already gained the admiration and respect of his troops by his military bearing and drill ability, quickly attained great popularity with the men of his regiment by his deep concern for their problems. Alfred Davenport, historian of the Fifth New York, recounted an incident that endeared the colonel to the troops:

> A pass was never refused for such a purpose /a grudge fight/ but fighting about camp was strictly prohibited. On one occasion, however, Colonel Warren permitted a little brush. It happened in this way: One day as he was passing by the pump, he saw two of the men wrangling as to who was entitled to fill his pail first, and he stopped and told them, if they couldn't agree, to put down their pails and fight it out. They accordingly, without any further words, clinched. In the course of the fight, the larger one attempted to take an unfair advantage of his opponent, when the colonel, as umpire, interfered, and put him in the guard-house.[32]

Warren's regard for fair play won for him the approval of his men, who realized, that despite the strict discipline he

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[31]Memo on Promotion, October 11, 1861, Warren Papers, VII, 1; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 110.

[32]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 103-104.

maintained in his regiment, he was a just man, and a commander who would not fail them in their moments of trial.

In early November, General Dix decided to send an expedition to Accomac and Northampton counties on the eastern shore of Virginia. These counties, by their proximity to Maryland and Delaware, were extremely useful to the Confederacy. Illicit trade, recruits for the Southern army, and secret military information filtered south through the region from disloyal elements in the two border states. Deciding to dispatch a large Federal force to the eastern shore to combat a sizable force of Confederate militia occupying the two counties, Dix hoped that the appearance of the Federal troops would encourage loyal elements in the region to re-assert their allegiance to the United States.[33]

Gathering detachments from seven regiments, totaling 5,000 effectives, Dix placed them under the command of General Henry W. Lockwood. One of the units selected for the expedition was the Fifth New York. Having been instructed to take six companies of his regiment, some 500 men, with him, Warren left the balance of his troops to garrison Fort Federal Hill. His command left Baltimore on the steamer Pocahontas on November 12th to act in concert with other troops in the invasion of eastern Virginia, and during the next three weeks the Federal troops marched and counter-marched through Accomac and Northampton counties without

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[33] O.R., I, 5, 424, 430. Total population of the two counties, including slaves, was only about 20,000 inhabitants.

encountering any military opposition. The enemy militia disbanded when it saw the size of the force committed to the pacification of the region.[34]

Believing that General Lockwood was overly cautious in his pursuit of the enemy's militia, Warren offered to take his own regiment, supported by a battery of artillery, in a rapid advance through the area. This aggressive stance did not prove necessary. Aside from discovering a few old Confederate camps, the expedition's success was confined to the capture of ten artillery pieces, a thousand stands of arms and the seizure of a few Confederate flags.[35] Psychologically, the raid demoralized Southern sympathizers and restored Unionist feelings among many who had mixed emotions about the war.

Warren employed psychological warfare in his attempt to rewin, for the Union, the allegiance of some of the most influential members of Northampton and Accomac society. Toward the close of November, he invited a small group of known secessionists to his camp to witness a drill of the Fifth New York and then invited them to join him at supper. Impressed by the manner in which the regiment, under Warren's personal command, carried out its assigned movements, these gentlemen, after dinner, joined with Warren to listen to a songfest performed by a group of men from the regiment. The soldiers began singing patriotic songs. As they intoned "The

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[34]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 124.

[35]Ibid., p. 131.

Red, White and Blue," and "The Star Spangled Banner," the Southerners got excited, swung their hats wildly in the air, and joined the singing. They later explained that they still had a vested interest in the old flag, that one half of it properly belonged to the South, and that it was a crime to divide it. The evening ended with the Virginians giving three cheers for the flag, the members of the Fifth New York, and the Union.[36] Whether these men retained their newly won loyalty or if they reverted to secessionism is not known. However, Warren had done his duty. In the course of several weeks many Virginians expressed an interest in declaring allegiance to the Federal Government, and many meetings for this purpose were held by the citizens of Accomac and Northampton counties.[37]

One of the major problems Warren encountered in Virginia was the unauthorized foraging expeditions his men engaged in during encampment. A humorous account of one of these ventures has been recorded in the official narrative of the Fifth New York:

> One night after the regiment had gone into camp, one of the zouaves ventured on a private errand of provider. He went to a house near by, and, without ado, approached and knocked on the door. 'Come in,' cried a manly voice. He thought it an encouraging summons, and forthwith opened the door; but much to his astonishment, he saw Colonel Warren and Captain Partridge warming themselves over the fire. If he ever disobeyed an order of his commanding officer during his two years service, it was on this particular occasion. He not only refused to

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[36] Ibid., p. 129.

[37] O.R., I, 5, 434.

> obey, but rudely closed the door and beat a hasty and disorderly retreat around the corner of the house. Seeing a cellar-door open, his first impulse was to disappear down that way; but luckily for his second thought, he did better by tumbling head over heels into a pig-sty conveniently near, regardless of pigs or mire. Out rushed the officers, who saw the cellar-door open, and concluded that the rascal had gone below. The captain rushed back to get a light, while the colonel stood guard, saying that he would cut the scoundrel down if he attempted to dash by him.[38]

Fortunately for the forager, he was able to make his escape while Warren and the captain searched the cellar. While this incident had humorous overtones, it also illustrated Warren's violent temper. When provoked, he was quick to lash out and harangue, or threaten to inflict corporal punishment upon any subordinate who irritated him. In this case, he was waging a campaign to pacify the people of two counties in eastern Virginia. This necessitated his men to be on their best behavior. The "bummer", doing what came naturally, could have upset Warren's attempt to win the confidence of the people of this region, many of whom were favorably disposed to the Union.

The Fifth New York, early in December, after an absence of three weeks, returned to its camp at Fort Federal Hill. Not entirely happy with the performance of his regiment in the recent operation, Warren intensified his training program. For the remainder of the year the regiment drilled, drilled, and drilled some more. In the morning the troops drilled

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[38]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 128.

three hours in company formations. In the afternoon Warren required that his whole regiment turn out with full battle packs for battalion drill. At the close of every day the colonel personally led his command on a march through the streets of Baltimore. Either through fear or regained patriotism, the citizens of the city turned out in large numbers to welcome the daily parade.[39] Warren's march served two purposes. He was able to raise morale in his command by giving the men an audience and the display of military strength had a tendency to impress the citizens of Baltimore and discourage those with secessionist sentiment from actively opposing the authority of the United States.

The first year of the American Civil War had been an eventful one for Warren. At the beginning of 1861, as an instructor of mathematics at West Point, he had been a relatively obscure first lieutenant; by the close of the year, he had attained the rank of captaincy in the regular army, and a breveted colonelcy in the volunteers. On every occasion that arose during the year, he displayed a marked ability to comprehend the full scope of a complex military operation, and an instinct that enabled him to know what actions were necessary to resolve each tactical problem. Warren's skill as an engineer was utilized by his superiors on numerous occasions. As the war increased in ferocity, he was to be repeatedly endowed with both higher rank and added responsibility.

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[39] Ibid. p. 99

CHAPTER V

CAMPAIGNING WITH McCLELLAN

As a result of Federal setbacks in Virginia and the failure of the Union command to take the initiative in the war effort, Congress late in December 1861 authorized the formation of a Committee on the Conduct of the War to investigate the reasons for the past defeats of the Northern Army and the leadership abilities of its high command. In particular, the Committee was interested in discovering reasons for the failure of General McClellan to advance upon the enemy during the five months he commanded Federal forces around Washington. One of the first officers to be called before the Committee was Colonel Warren. Although he was too insignificant at that time to be drawn into the controversy between McClellan and the Congressional Radicals, he was quizzed by Representative George W. Julian concerning his participation in the Accomac expedition. Julian was particularly interested in the demeanor of General Lockwood, commander of the expedition. Extremely guarded in his answers, Warren related that the Federals had had little chance of capturing the Confederate militia and denied that Lockwood had ever freed known rebels or restored arms and ammunition to secessionists. Further, he observed that his superior had always been careful to follow orders of his superiors in the matter of returning contraband to its rightful owners.[1]

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[1] *J.C.C.W.*, III, 380-382.

While Warren was willing to defend Lockwood's actions before the Committee, he was not as kindly disposed towards Generals Butler and Pierce. Under questioning about Big Bethel by Senator Zacharia Chandler, Warren observed, "I think the plan of the fight, which was got up beforehand, from the very beginning involved a failure, so much so that I was ready to state that it was planned for a failure, and must have been one except by great good luck."[2] He went on to testify that the military bearing of General Pierce and the senior colonels had been deplorable. Considering their decision to withdraw after an initial repulse as poor judgment, he believed their hasty retreat, abandoning the Union wounded, had been shameful.[3]

It took considerable courage on Warren's part to criticize openly his superiors, particularly General Butler who was on the way to becoming the darling of the Republican Party's radical wing. However, it may be reasonably assumed that his display of military knowledge, his decisiveness, and his willingness to answer probing questions about Big Bethel with complete candor, left a favorable impression on the members of the Committee.

Immediately after completing his testimony, Warren returned to Fort Federal Hill. A month later the regiment was presented with a garrison flag, hand made by the loyal ladies of South Baltimore. Visibly moved by this tangible

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[2]Ibid., p. 384.

[3]Ibid.

symbol of loyalty for the Union, Colonel Warren delivered a short speech. "Allow me to return, through you," he declared,

> to our fair friends of the city of Baltimore, the heartfelt thanks of this regiment for the friendly interest they have shown in presenting it with a national flag, the work of their own hands.
>
> It is impossible for us not to feel our patriotism glow afresh at this proof ot their confidence. The unfortunate condition of our country brought us in your midst, and it is a source of unfailing gratification that in this gift that they show that our true position is understood. We come as supporters of the American flag, and the beloved Constitution of which it is the chosen emblem, and not as conquerors or oppressors. (Cheers)
>
> We believe that the necessity which occasioned our presence here has now passed away, and trust that this fort, which we have aided in constructing, will hereafter be a safeguard against the future outbreaking of lawless violence. We hope soon to be called again to the active scenes of the now receding rebellion, and trust, as a part of the great Union army, to see this flag, endeared by the associations of to-day, waving in some place where our misguided brethren yet flaunt their rebellious banner. When that time comes, may the knowledge that this flag of our country was made by the ladies of a sister Southern State help to dispel the feelings of animosity engendered by the strife. Again I beg that you will present to the ladies our sincere thanks. (Applause)[4]

A few days after this ceremony, the commander of the Fifth New York sponsored a ball at the officers' quarters, to which he invited nearly all the Unionist society in Baltimore. One of the belles invited was Emily Forbes Chase, a young and attractive Baltimore girl.[5] The second daughter of Algernon Sydney Chase, a prominent dry-goods merchant, she was born in New York and brought to Baltimore by her parents as a child.

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[4]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 136-143 passim.

[5]Memorandum, February 14, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 1.

At an early age she contracted consumption and was sent to Boston, where the cold, crisp air gradually cured her. By the time she was sixteen, Emily's beauty began blossoming and attracted many male admirers, among them a Southern gentleman, Ambrose P. Hill, who later was to win prominence as a Confederate general.[6] Her home at 187 Saint Paul Street was a hub of culture, education and congenial hospitality. Among her family's closest friends was Charlotte Cushman, the premier actress of the era. Emily's entire family was ardently Unionist, and when a pro-Southern mob attacked the Sixth Massachusetts during its passage through Baltimore, Algernon Chase, defying the pro-secessionist feeling in the city, draped the Stars and Stripes from his balcony.[7]

From the moment Warren was introduced to Emily Chase he became her suitor. In the days following the military ball, he began a romantic correspondence. On a calling card left at the Chase home, he implored his "Dear Miss Chase /to7 . . . name some time very soon when I can go somewhere with you a while. Let it be for a visit, a walk, a ride, a concert, the theatre, to church only say when and let me know."[8] On February 22nd, he wrote her a note of apology explaining why he had not marched his troops past her home. "I am so sorry" he wrote,

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[6]Memorandum of Emily Forbes Chase, n.d., Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 17.

[7]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, pp. 113-114.

[8]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, March 16, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 9.

> that I could not bring the battalion by Mrs. Wise's in McCullough St. We came up to the street but finding it to our right and the day being far advanced and some of my men having a three mile march to get home, I very reluctantly abandoned it. . . .[9]

Undoubtly flattered by the attention paid her, Emily nevertheless attempted to moderate the ardor of her suitor by declining to see him for short periods of time. But Warren refused to be put off. After what appeared to him an interminable separation he wrote,

> I send you a hyacinth today so that you may not forget me. I am glad sunday [sic] is so near, for then the embargo you laid, will be over, and I can come and see you again. How could you be so severe. If it had not been for the glimpse I had wednesday [sic] at the window, and the unexpected meeting on thursday, [sic] and the dear portrait to look at all the time since, I know I should have forced my way into your home before this time. . . .[10]

Under such persistent courting, Emily relented and permitted her suitor to visit her more frequently. Within six weeks from the time they first met, Warren and Emily reached an understanding which allowed the colonel to turn his attention to thoughts of war once again.

General George B. McClellan, Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac, late in 1861 revised all preparations to attack Richmond by the overland route via Manassas Junction as had been attempted by his predecessor, General Irwin McDowell. Instead, he planned to transfer the bulk of his forces before Washington by water to the peninsula between

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[9]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, February 22, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

[10]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, n.d., Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 9.

the York and James Rivers. Believing that the implementation of his plan would enable the Federals to sever communications between the Army of Northern Virginia and its base at Richmond, on March 17, 1862, he moved twelve divisions, the vanguard of a force of 150,000 men, by water from Alexandria on the Potomac to Fort Monroe.[11]

As part of the military buildup on the peninsula, the Fifth New York was relieved at Fort Federal Hill. On March 30th, the command marched for the last time through the streets of Baltimore to Long Dock, and the citizens turned out in large numbers for a farewell to the Federal soldiers who had been stationed amongst them for many months. After the regiment had boarded the steamer S.R. Spaulding, and as the ship was pulling out, the crowd on the dock and on Fort Federal Hill raised a tremendous cheer that greatly exhilarated the soldiers. As The Baltimore American observed the following day, "Success and glory to the zouaves wherever they go. They will not be forgotten in Baltimore, and we believe, will not forget the many friends they have left behind them here."[12]

Reaching Fortress Monroe the following day, the Fifth New York encamped some five miles from the fort

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[11]Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1895), I, 61. These multi-volume papers were published over a period of more than twenty years by several different publishing houses. Hereafter these papers will be referred to as M.H.S.M.; Clifford Dowdey, The Seven Days (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1964), p. 38.

[12]Baltimore American, n.d., All newspaper clippings found in Warren Papers unless otherwise noted.

near General Sykes' division of regulars. Warren was hardly established in his new camp when he began to search for an appropriate place to drill his command. Finding no field to his liking, he asked for and received General Sykes' permission to use the field reserved for the regulars. Soon afterwards, the Fifth New York marched out, executing with precision the most complicated regimental maneuvers in the manual. Impressed by this performance, Sykes acceded to Warren's request to move the New Yorkers nearer the regulars' camp. Moreover, Warren's men were permitted to draw their rations from Sykes' commissary. From this time the zouaves were to be brigaded with the regulars, a singular honor for a volunteer regiment and its commander.[13]

While most of McClellan's command advanced on Yorktown, the main Confederate defense line on the lower peninsula, Warren's regiment, awaiting wagons and other essential equipment, remained in camp near Fort Monroe. The colonel's talents as a topographer were being utilized in producing accurate maps of the main roads, charts which proved invaluable to McClellan in his advance towards Richmond.[14]

Given a respite at the very beginning of an arduous campaign, Warren was able to find a few moments to write to Emily:

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[13]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entry for March 31, 1862; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 156.

[14]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entries for April 2-10, 12, 13, 14, 1862.

> How I wish I could see your sweet face if only just for a minute but there is none other so photographed in my thoughts. what will you give me for the photograph? Is it worth a kiss? do you love me any more? Darling do write often to me. - I send you a rose from this place. It like my love for you blooms amid the strife that surrounds it.[15]

Warren's desire to see Emily would remain unfulfilled. During April of 1862, the Fifth New York was detached from Sykes' division and assigned as part of a siege train under General William Barry, the Chief of Artillery. The regiment was kept busy for many days in building siege-works, transporting and mounting mortars and heavy artillery, and several companies were drafted to work the siege guns. Impressed with the service of the volunteer regiment, McClellan directed Warren to assign a detail of two companies from his command to post guard over army headquarters.[16] Well pleased with the accomplishments of his men, Warren wrote his brother Will from Yorktown:

> Two hundred of my men were throwing up a battery all last night, and 200 more to day are continuing it. Sackett inspected the regiment very thoroughly a day or so ago, and seemed much pleased with it. We are called on for a good many things, and I expect will have to serve some of the siege batteries.[17]

The siege of Yorktown lasted nearly a month; General John Magruder, the Confederate commander during the investment, held in check 85,000 Federals with a scant force of 10,000

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[15]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, May 7, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

[16]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 159; Dispatch by correspondent of the Baltimore American, April 24, 1862, Warren Papers, VII, 1.

[17]Warren to William Warren, April 18, 1862, Warren Papers, I, 3.

men. During the night of May 3rd, three days before McClellan planned to begin his assault on the Confederate lines, Magruder withdrew from Yorktown, leaving behind only thirty heavy artillery pieces as prize to the Federals.[18] The Confederates, after a rear guard action at Williamsburg on May 6th, withdrew up the peninsula towards Richmond. Federal pursuit was slowed by muddy roads and oppressive heat. Under these conditions even the best of regiments tended to become disorganized. Detecting a lack-luster attitude on the part of some of his men, Warren checked the spread of straggling among his troops. "One morning," one zouave recorded,

> just before the regiment started on its day's march Colonel Warren said he had a remark to make to the men, which was about as follows: He had noticed on the previous day a great deal of straggling, and it must not occur again. 'Now, to-day' said he, 'I intend to act as a doctor, and for such as are disposed to lag behind, I have some pills which are a sure cure,' and he tapped his revolver significantly as he said it. It is needless to say that there were very few sick men that day, and it was astonishing how well the regiment kept together.[19]

On May 24th, Warren was given command of a makeshift brigade consisting of the Fifth New York, First Connecticut Heavy Artillery (acting as infantry), Thirteenth New York, the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry /Rush's Lancers/ and Weeden's Rhode Island Battery. The provisional brigade was assigned to occupy the right and rear of McClellan's army to protect

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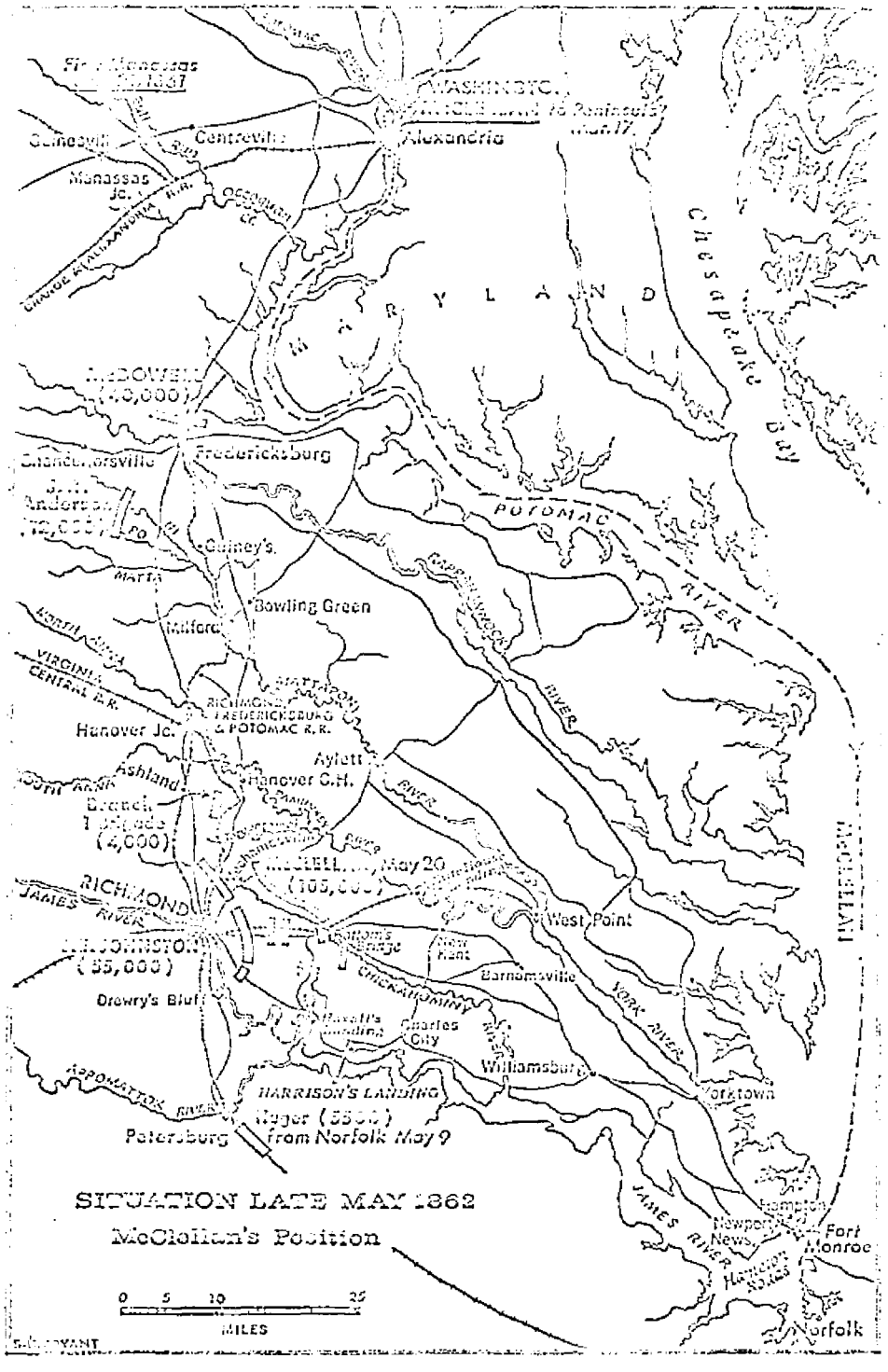
[18] M.H.S.M., I, 142; Dowdey, The Seven Days, p. 58.

[19] Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 176.


Centreville
Alexandria
Manassas Jct.
Occoquan Cr.
Chesapeake Bay
MARYLAND
Fredericksburg
POTOMAC
RIVER
Bowling Green
Hanover Jct.
Ashland
Aylett
Hanover C.H.
RICHMOND
JAMES RIVER
May 20
West Point
Barnhamsville
YORK RIVER
Drewry's Bluff
Charles City
Williamsburg
Yorktown
HARRISON'S LANDING
Reger (5500)
from Norfolk May 9
Petersburg
APPOMATTOX RIVER
Newport News
Fort Monroe
Norfolk
SITUATION LATE MAY 1862
McClellan's Position
0 5 10 25
MILES

the right flank of the Army of the Potomac against guerrilla incursion, and to prevent enemy detachments from cutting off wagons bringing supplies from the rear.[20]

Early on the morning of May 27th, Warren left Old Church with his command to join other units of General Fitz-John Porter's Fifth Corps in driving the Confederates out of the northwestern section of the upper peninsula. This operation was designed by McClellan to force the Southerners out of Hanover Court-House, a position that threatened the Federal line of communication with General McDowell's troops near Fredericksburg.

Although Old Church was only twelve miles from Hanover Court-House, Warren's march was delayed by muddy roads and the necessity of building a bridge over a swollen stream. By the time his brigade arrived at Hanover Court-House the main enemy force had been broken and routed. He led Rush's Lancers in pursuing the enemy to the Pamunkey River, and, destroying the wagon-road, captured a company of the Twenty-eighth North Carolina. A few minutes later a second fight broke out between another Confederate force and the Fifth New York supported by the First Connecticut. Once more the enemy broke and fled under the accurate fire of the two Federal regiments. The following day, Warren dispatched working parties to bury

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[20] O.R., I, 11, I, 33-34, 51, 632-633; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 178. At this time Warren was commanding the Third Brigade, Sykes' division, Fifth Army Corps.

the dead and bring in prisoners who were scattered over several miles. Advancing to Ashland on May 29th, Warren entered the town and captured a small force of the enemy that had remained behind.[21] Extremely proud of the accomplishments of his provisional brigade during the operation, Warren observed in his official report:

> These fatiguing marches were performed with cheerfulness by the command, though all suffered much from fatigue. Our operations were attended with no casualties except to the Thirteenth New York Volunteers, but were conducted constantly in the face of danger, and with a spirit which showed the willingness of the command to meet it wherever their duty calls them.
>
> Thrown together as my command was for the first time I have special reason to speak of the promptness and energy with which the different commanders obeyed my orders and seconded me in all my endeavors to carry out your /McClellan's/ instructions. I submit herewith a table called for by your circular, from which it will be seen that in my command none were killed or missing, 7 were wounded, and 173 prisoners captured by us.[22]

In the operation against Hanover Court-House, Warren had gained considerable experience in commanding a large brigade against an elusive enemy. At the same time, he earned the respect and life-long friendship of General Porter. Appreciating Warren's accomplishments in the Ashland raid, in his report to General McClellan, Porter noted,

> I have the honor further to report that the movements since Friday last /23rd/ of Colonel Warren's command from Old Church along the Pamunkey . . . has caused the rapid retreat to Richmond of General

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[21] O.R., I, 11, I, 34, 736-737; part III, p. 202; J.H. Stine, History of the Army of the Potomac (Washington: Gibson Bros., Printers and Bookbinders, 1893), pp. 58-59; Robert Underwood Johnson, ed., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: Thomas Yoseloff Inc., 1887), II, 175-176; Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1875), II, 55-56.

[22] O.R., I, 11, I, 737.

> Anderson's command. This releases for active operations the large force there under General McDowell, and I think must have relieved the Government of all apprehensions of an attack on Washington.[23]

The Federal army moved slowly forward towards Richmond, when on May 31st two army corps were roughly handled at Fair Oaks by an outnumbered enemy force under General Joseph E. Johnson. Always slow in working out his battle dispositions, McClellan grew still more cautious under mounting Confederate pressure. Split in two by the Chickahominy, the Army of the Potomac for nearly a month inched its way toward Richmond. Sweltering through four weeks of hot humid weather, amidst the unwholesome swampy terrain of the Chickahominy, the troops lost their determination and the momentum of their drive ground to a halt.[24]

On June 9th, Sykes' division was reviewed by General Prim, a foreign dignitary, accompanied by General McClellan and his staff. The Spanish general was surprised to see the Fifth New York uniformed exactly like the Second Regiment of French Zouaves. He complimented Warren on the appearance of his regiment, and when the zouaves went through their drill and bayonet exercises, the general was astonished by their precise movements and military bearing.[25] As commander of the Fifth New York, Warren must have felt highly complimented

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[23] Ibid., I, 11, I, 680.

[24] Dowdey, The Seven Days, pp. 84-127 passim; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 140.

[25] Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 195.

to have been chosen over the regulars to perform before this esteemed visitor.

During the night of June 12th, the Confederate cavalry commander, General J.E.B. Stuart, concentrated his squads north of the Chickahominy, and on the morning advanced his mounted division by a road west of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad toward Louisa Court-House. Stuart marching in a northerly direction convinced the Federal pickets that he was leaving the vicinity of Richmond to join Stonewall Jackson's force in the Shenandoah Valley.[26] In reality, he was beginning his famous ride around the Army of the Potomac in order to obtain information for the Confederate high command on the battle dispositions of McClellan's widely scattered forces.

Guarding the extreme right flank of the Federal Army, Warren's brigade was directed at 5 P.M., on the 13th, to be prepared to repel any attack made by the enemy in his quarter. Shortly thereafter, the brigade was ordered to join General Philip St. George Cooke's cavalry division in pursuit of the fast moving Stuart. This command called for immediate compliance and did not permit the infantry to provide itself with the normal supply of two days' provisions.[27] Thus, the infantry, accompanied by General Cooke's cavalry, followed in

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[26]James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1895), p. 117.

[27]O.R., I, 11, I, 1029. Warren's brigade at this time consisted of the Fifth and Tenth New York, the First Connecticut, Rush's Lancers, and four pieces of Weeden's Rhode Island Battery. It may also be noted that General Cooke was Stuart's father-in-law.

the wake of Stuart's raiders. After a long, tiring march Warren strongly urged Cooke to leave the infantry behind in order to block any attempt the Confederates might make to return to their lines over the same route by which they had advanced. But, fearing that Stuart might be accompanied by infantry, Cooke refused to consider Warren's suggestion. Hour after arduous hour the Federal infantry moved forward over rain-soaked roads and under a scorching sun. By early morning of June 15th the command, having marched nearly forty-five miles in thirty-eight hours, could not be kept in ranks. Some of the less hardy men began to straggle, while others fell down in the road exhausted or sun-struck. At 7 A.M. Cooke, learning that Stuart had a half days lead on his pursuers, gave up the chase and ordered Warren to return to camp.[28]

Furious, Warren, in his official report to General Sykes, criticized severely the military judgment exercised by General Cooke. "I deem it my duty" he informed Sykes,

> to say that I do not believe from the way in which General Cooke conducted the operations that the enemy would have been prevented from returning to Hanover-Court-House by taking the road along the Pamunkey River. It was impossible for the infantry to overtake him, and as the cavalry did not move without us it was impossible for them to overtake him.[29]

In a letter to his brother Will he was even more caustic declaring:

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[28]Charles W. Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion (New York: Charles H. Ludwig Publisher, 1882), p. 83; O.R., 1, 11, I, 1030-1031.

[29]O.R., I, 11, I, 1031.

> We just returned from a weary tramp (and an unsuccessful one foolishly managed) after a maurading regiment of cavalry which performed one of the most daring and successful manoeuvres ever known. We started out, not knowing that it was only a cavalry foray, report having put 7000 Infantry in the force, about 5 p. m.: intensively hot weather travelled till 12 at night; lay on our arms till 3½ a.m. and started keeping up the march till 12 at noon, when many of my men (the infantry was all of my brigade) were used up. At this time old St. George Cooke, who had the command, found out that the enemy had escaped, having travelled clear around our army. He had more cavalry than the enemy, and yet he was afraid to leave the infantry and follow up. The matter is undergoing investigation. . . .[30]

Warren was quite correct blaming Cooke for the failure to overtake the Southern cavalry. However, his open criticism of his superior was in questionable taste. At times, the excoriations in his reports boarded on insubordination.

On the surface, Stuart's Raid appeared to have accomplished little. Other than killing a few teamsters and cavalrymen, the Southern leader was able to burn fourteen army wagons and two schooners, cut the Union telegraph, and rip up some railroad track. To the Confederacy the true value of the raid was the exposure of the extreme weakness of the Federal right wing.[31]

In his snail-like advance upon Richmond, McClellan had placed four full corps on his left, on the southwest bank of the Chickahominy; on the northeast bank he had disposed only Porter's Fifth Corps, reinforced by George McCall's division from McDowell's corps. "Little Mac" intended that his attacking

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[30]Warren to William Warren, June 16, 1862, Warren Papers, I, 3.

[31]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 195-197.

force would be the 60,000 men advancing on Richmond from south of the Chickahominy. Porter's principal function was to protect Federal communications with his base at White House on the York River. To counter the new battle dispositions of the Army of the Potomac, General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, placed a containing force before Richmond to hold against McClellan's main force while massing the bulk of the Confederate Army to strike Porter's exposed corps.[32]

In his movement against McClellan's right, Lee made excellent use of Stonewall Jackson's detached force. On the 17th of June, Jackson set out from the Shenandoah Valley, and within a week reached Ashland on the Fredericksburg Railroad, a scant twelve miles from Richmond. This movement had been accomplished without either Banks or McDowell in the Shenandoah Valley, or McClellan, before Richmond, discovering Jackson's departure from the Valley. And on June 26th, over 60,000 Confederate soldiers led by James Longstreet, Jackson, A.P. Hill, and D.H. Hill fell upon the Federal right wing held by 27,000 Union soldiers. The Federal brigades of John Reynolds and Truman Seymour, assisted by George Morell's division and George G. Meade's brigade, were able decisively to check the first Confederate onslaught at Beaver Dam Creek, giving McClellan a respite of a day to readjust his troop dispositions. Recognizing that Confederate strength north of the Chickahominy

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[32]M.H.S.M., I, 224.

uncovered his line of communication with his supply base on the York River, in order to save his army McClellan resolved to withdraw all his troops from their positions north of the Chickahominy, while effecting a change of base to the James River. To allow time for the removal of heavy guns and wagons from Beaver Dam Creek to the south bank of the Chickahominy, McClellan required that the Fifth Corps hold a defensive position for one more day north of the river.[33]

The corps undertook its task with dispatch. Completing his dispositions by the morning of June 27th, Porter formed his troops in a semicircle with both flanks resting on the Chickahominy and the center of his line covered by the ravine of Gaines' Mill stream. In this manner, the Federals were expected to cover and defend all roads leading to the bridges over the Chickahominy.[34] Warren's brigade at the time of the Battle of Gaines' Mill consisted of the Fifth New York (450 men under Lieutenant-Colonel Hiram Duryea) and the Tenth New York (575 effectives under Colonel John E. Bendix). These two regiments had been held in reserve during the battle at Beaver Dam Creek, and during the night of June 27th, Warren withdrew his troops to the new defensive line at Gaines' Mill. After marching and countermarching his command some four miles, he reached high ground at Turkey Hill, and was assigned a

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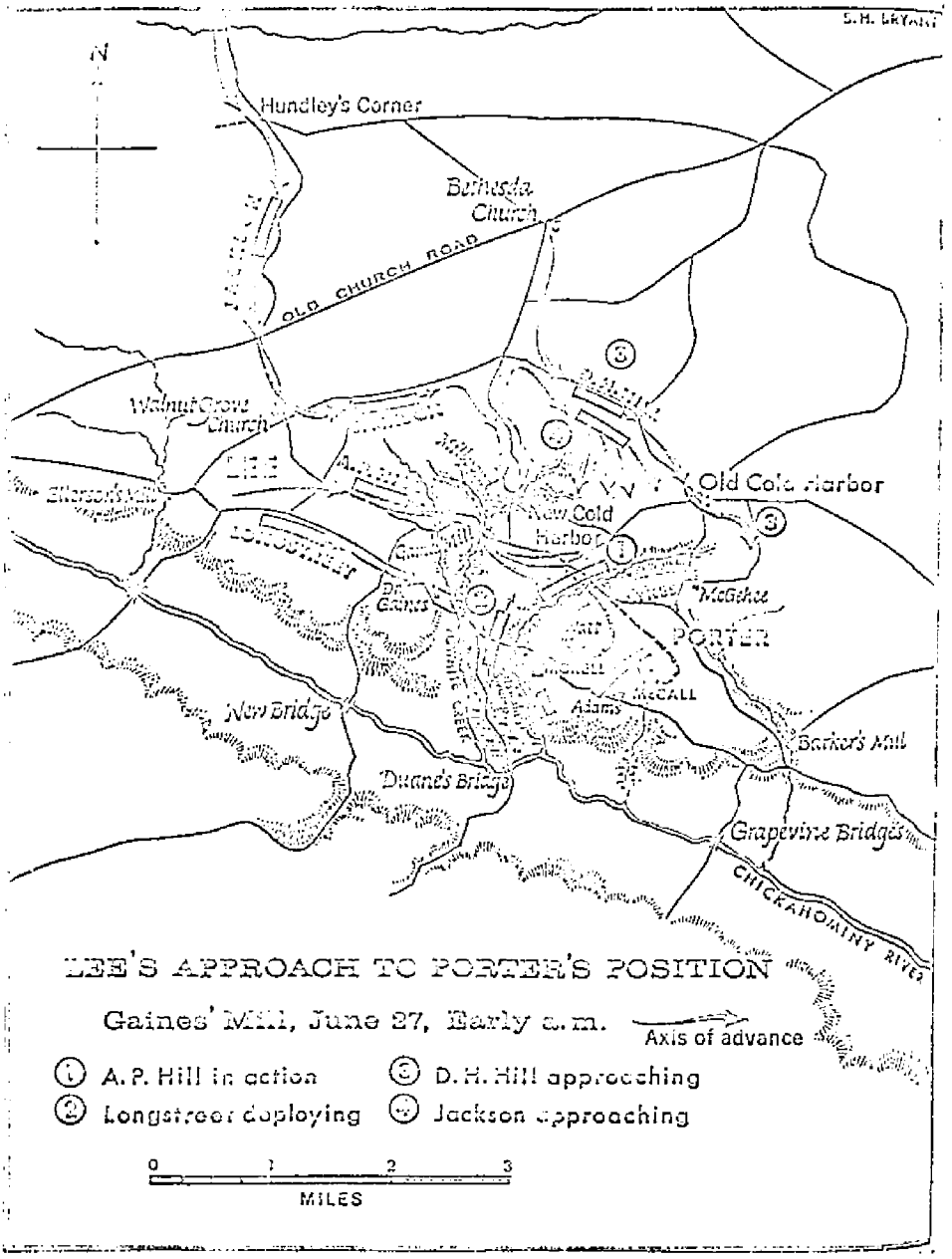
[33]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 204; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 145-149.

[34]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 149.


S. H. Bryant
N
Hundley's Corner
Bethesda Church
OLD CHURCH ROAD
Walnut Grove Church
LEE
A. P. Hill
Old Cold Harbor
New Cold Harbor
LONGSTREET
Gaines
McGehee
PORTER
McCALL
Adams
New Bridge
Dispatch Line
Duane's Bridge
Grapevine Bridges
CHICKAHOMINY RIVER
LEE'S APPROACH TO PORTER'S POSITION
Gaines' Mill, June 27, Early a.m.
Axis of advance
① A. P. Hill in action
② Longstreet deploying
③ D. H. Hill approaching
④ Jackson approaching
0
1
2
3
MILES

defensive position forming the left of Sykes' division.[35]

Posting his brigade with infinite care, Warren observed:

> The line assigned to my brigade, forming the left of the division, had its left resting upon a forest, which, I was informed, was held by Griffin's brigade, and our line of battle was in an open plowed field, along a gentle slope, in a measure hiding us from the observation of the enemy, though affording but little shelter from distant curved firing. In front of us, distant from 200 to 300 yards, was a belt of woods, growing in a ravine through openings of which a view could be had of an extensive open field beyond. These I guarded by a company of the Fifth New York Volunteers, deployed as skirmishers.[36]

The battle at Gaines' Mill has been described by one historian as being "like a leaf fire in a fickle breeze." Over a period of many hours, the Confederates mounted one attack after another upon several positions along the length of the Federal line. Being repulsed in their assaults upon one Federal brigade, the "rebels" would draw back to lick their wounds, bring up ammunition and reinforcements, and probe for another weak point in the Northern defensive line.[37] Near 1 P.M., it was Warren's turn to feel the impact of the Confederate onslaught. At this hour, a violent artillery duel had begun, with his brigade receiving nearly as much damage from Federal shrapnel falling short as from a heavy enemy battery fire at its front.[38] For a short period of time near 2 P.M., an eerie silence prevailed, when both sides stilled their artillery fire. The Federal infantry thought that the enemy had with-

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[35] O.R., I, 11, II, 377; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 205.

[36] O.R., I, 11, II, 378.

[37] L. Van Loan Naisawald, Grape and Canister (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 90.

[38] O.R., I, 11, II, 378.

drawn, when it was suddenly attacked by General Maxcy Gregg's brigade of five South Carolina regiments. Confederates debouching from a thicket advanced at the double-quick upon the Federal line. After Warren's two regiments had shattered the first Confederate line with an accurate musket barrage, the plucky colonel on horseback led a bayonet counter-charge that drove the enemy down the hill and into the woods beyond. Bringing his Fifth New Yorkers back to their initial position and reforming them as if they were on a dress parade, he exclaimed, 'Boys you did that so well we must try it again,' and then he led them on another charge that smashed up a second Confederate line. Renewed attacks made by fresh Southern troops were decisively repulsed by Warren's brigade, reinforced by the Sixth United States Infantry. During one on the numerous Federal counter-thrusts, Colonel Warren received a contusion on his knee from a spent minie ball, while another ball severely wounded the horse he was riding.[39]

For a time Warren's command was given a respite as the Confederates sought less resolute opponents. Then, shortly before dark, the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia made their final attempt to seize his position. On this occasion they tried a deception to gain the height they could not capture by assault. They began by charging at the double-quick from the woods in front. Observing the surprise enemy

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[39]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 208, 212-213, 225; Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York in the War of the Rebellion, p. 93; Journal of Commerce article for Battle of Gaines' Mill, June 1862, Warren Papers, VII, 1; O.R., I, 11, II, 382.

attack Warren shouted to his men, 'Fall in, men! Fall in!' When the Fifth New York opened a heavy fire by files upon the approaching line, enemy soldiers attempted a ruse by waving an American flag and calling out, 'Don't fire on your own men.' Confusion and indecision spread through the Union command until Warren, recognizing the Confederate subterfuge shouted to his men, 'Blaze away! blaze away, men! If they are our men they have no business there.' At that moment, the Confederates resumed their charge and fired a volley which caused heavy casualties in the Federal ranks. Recovering from their surprise the brigade forced back another desperate enemy assault.[40]

While Warren successfully repulsed the Confederate attacks, General George Morell's regulars were overcome by the sheer weight of "rebel" numbers, and at dusk were forced to withdraw, leaving Warren's left flank uncovered. This forced his command to file off by the flank to the rear toward the bridges over the Chickahominy.[41] His retreat was orderly, and several Confederate generals praised the resistance to their advance offered by his command. Stonewall Jackson observed, "Although swept from their defences by this rapid and almost matchless display of daring and valor, the well-disciplined Federals continued in retreat to fight with stubborn resistance." One of Jackson's brigadiers was equally impressed with

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[40]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 218.

[41]Ibid., p. 222; O.R., I, 11, II, 380.

the caliber of troops he encountered. "The enemy continued to fight in retreat with stubborn resistance," William Whiting reported, "and it soon appeared that we had to do with his best troops."[42]

During the early morning of June 28th, Warren's brigade passed over the Chickahominy and remained on its south bank until late afternoon supporting Federal batteries covering the retreat. At night, the command moved out to the left of McClellan's army and, marching all night, crossed the White Oak Swamp early the following morning.[43]

The stand made by Sykes' division had given McClellan the extra day he needed to save his siege batteries and supply trains. The price however was extremely high. The Fifth New York lost more than one-third of its force; of 450 men who entered the frey on June 27th, 56 had been killed, 110 severely wounded, and 3 men listed as missing. Warren's second regiment, the Tenth New York, sustained equally heavy casualties with 114 men killed, wounded and missing out of 575 effectives.[44] The regulars that made up the bulk of Sykes' command suffered proportionate losses, but yet the Confederates who faced Warren's determined little command suffered even more. Orr's Rifles, caught in one of Warren's counter-charges, lost 315 out of 537 men.[45] Porter lost 6900 men, including 3000 prisoners.

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[42]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 78.

[43]O.R., I, 11, II, 380.

[44]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 228.

[45]Dowdey, The Seven Days, p. 227.

However, the Confederate victory, north of the Chickahominy, had cost Lee the services of 8000 soldiers.[46]

Throughout the retreat of June 29th, Sykes' division held the rear of the Army of the Potomac. Early next morning General Philip Kearny relieved Sykes of this nerve-wracking task, and the latter took up the march for his next position on Malvern Hill, where General Porter had arrived several hours before on July 30th.[47] As each of his divisions came up upon the field, he placed it in position to cover one of the road approaches from Richmond. When Warren's small command arrived, Porter, observing its decimated ranks, placed it on the extreme left rear of his line to guard against the advance of the enemy on the River Road. The corps commander believed that the Confederates would not be so reckless as to advance on that road, since it was commanded by Federal gunboats in the James River. To bolster Warren's position, he placed under the New Yorker's command the Eleventh United States Infantry and Martin's Battery of five light twelve pounders.[48]

At about 4 P.M., elements of two enemy divisions under Generals Theophilus Holmes and Henry Wise were sighted advancing down the River Road in an attempt to envelop the left flank of the Union army. The Confederates opened heavy artillery fire upon Warren's brigade, to which Martin's Battery, and the gunboats in the James River replied. Rapidly firing Federal

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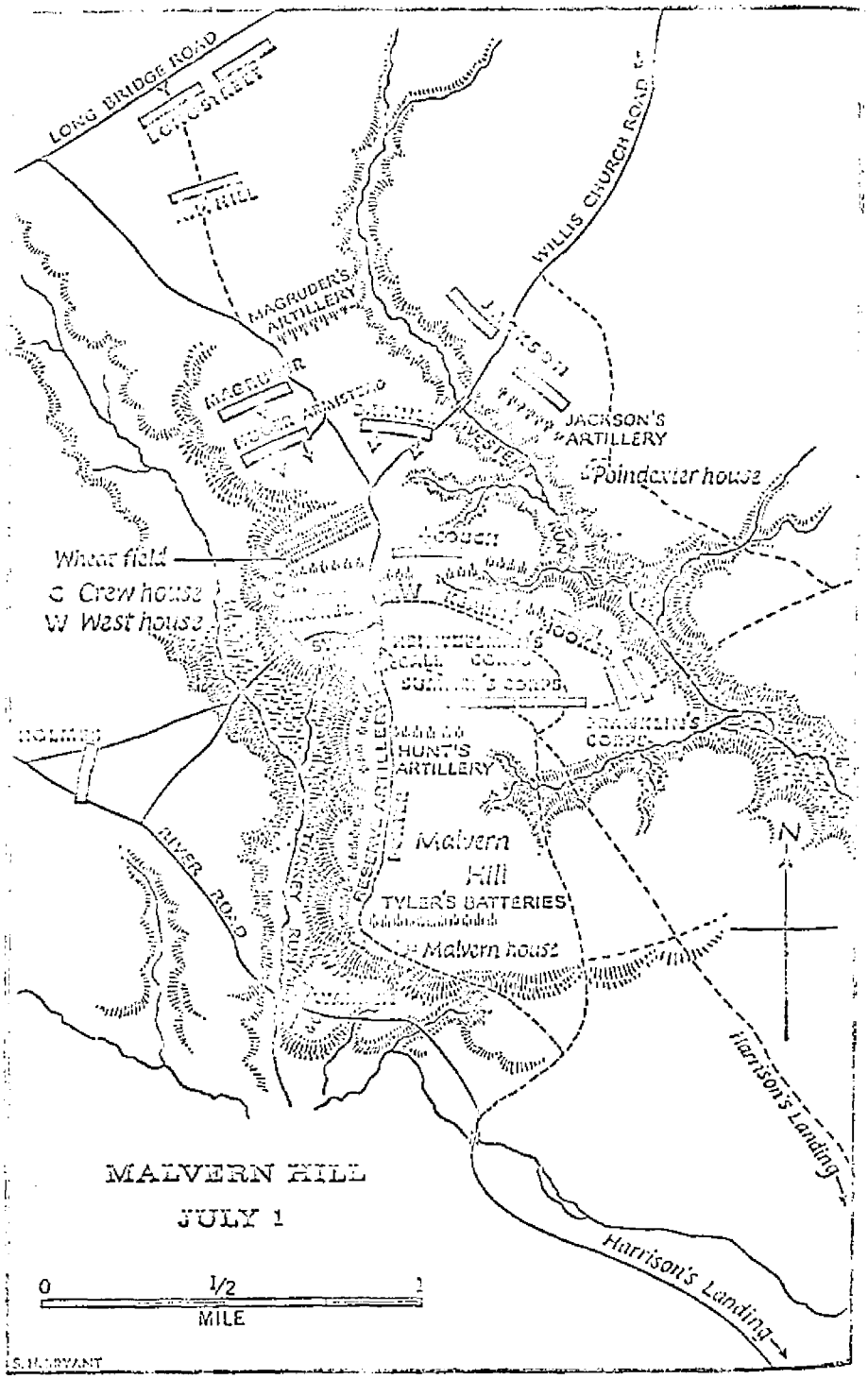
[46] Ibid., p. 242.

[47] O.R., I, 11, II, 350. Warren's part in the Battle of Malvern Hill was known as the Battle of Turkey Bridge.

[48] Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, II, 409.


LONG BRIDGE ROAD
WILLIS CHURCH ROAD
MAGRUDER'S ARTILLERY
JACKSON'S ARTILLERY
Poindexter house
Wheat field
C Crew house
W West house
HUNT'S ARTILLERY
Malvern Hill
TYLER'S BATTERIES
Malvern house
RIVER ROAD
Harrison's Landing
N
MALVERN HILL
JULY 1
0
1/2
1
MILE

artillery smashed one enemy battery, silenced another and, with the aid of Warren's men drove back in confusion the enemy's infantry.[49]

Early the following morning, Warren advanced his skirmishers and captured a few prisoners, two artillery pieces and six caissons abandoned by the enemy.[50] While Warren was successful in guarding the Union left, whole divisions of the Confederate main force were annihilated by concentrated Federal artillery fire at Malvern Hill. McClellan, however, made no attempt to follow up his success by renewing his advance toward Richmond. Apparently a prisoner of preconceived plans he ordered immediate withdrawal of his forces to Harrison's Landing, his new base on the James, where he could refit his forces under the protection of the James River Flotilla.

Nearly as demoralized and disorganized by their victory as the Confederates had been by their defeat, the Union Army retired in a disjointed mass. Lieutenant-Colonel Duryea, commander of the Fifth New York, refused to march his regiment up the road to Harrison's Landing. Believing that his regiment would become disorganized in this sea of humanity, Duryea appealed to Warren to delay their participation in the retreat, and the Colonel, as one observer recalled,

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[49]Ibid., II, 411; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 242.

[50]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, II, 411; O.R., I, 11, II, 380.

> took in the situation at a glance, and looking toward the retreating crowd, exclaimed, 'This is disgraceful!' He called the officers together, and after a brief consultation, turned and surveyed his men for a moment, when he called out, 'Unfurl your colors;' 'About face! Forward, march!' and the regiment moved down the Richmond road, toward the enemy, formed in line of battle on the hill, and there they stood alone awaiting orders.[51]

At this time, Warren dispatched an aide to bring up a battery to provide support for his command. Meanwhile, a detachment of the Fifth New York was ordered to collect and render useless all shells, ammunition, and other military supplies abandoned by the army in its flight. Before ordering the Fifth New York to retire from its advanced position, Warren directed a young lieutenant to call in all men on picket duty. As the regiment withdrew the colonel observed that one soldier had not been relieved from duty. As one zouave recorded, Warren became livid:

> He dashed up to the Lieutenant, and asked him if he had obeyed his orders in reference to the men on picket, to which the officer answered in the affirmative. 'Then,' said the colonel, 'what is that man doing out there; is that the way you forsake my men? is that the way you obey orders? Draw your sword and defend yourself.'[52]

Warren had half unsheathed his own sword from its scabbard before he was able to regain his composure. Cooler heads intervened and his subordinates were able to stem his anger.

The colonel's temper caused many of his junior officers to live in fear of his wrath. Generally the mildest of men,

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[51] Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 246.

[52] Ibid., p. 247.

Warren, when provoked by blatent incompetence would chastise in choice language his subordinates when they did not live up to his expectations. At the same time, however, he had great compassion for the suffering of the common soldier. On moving his command to Harrison's Landing, he learned that a high mortality rate prevailed in the brigade hospital because of the intense heat and stifling humidity. Taking immediate action, he removed the hospital tents to higher ground where the soldiers could convalesce more comfortably.[53]

For six weeks, the Federal army remained at its new base at Harrison's Landing. Early during this period of inactivity, Warren had the opportunity to write Emily a rather melodramatic story book account of what transpired at Gaines' Mill. In it he recalled:

> Oh I wish you could have seen the fight on the 27th of June when our regiment rushed against a South Carolina one that charged us. It was the opening of the bitter fighting. Nothing you ever saw in the pictures of battles excelled it. The artillery which had been firing stopped on both sides, and the whole armies were spectators. In less than five minutes 140 of my men were killed or wounded and the other regiment was completely destroyed.[54]

On July 6th, from Harrison's Landing, Warren wrote his brother William a more factual account of the battle:

> I have not had time to give you any detailed account of our operations and efforts for the past 10 or 12 days. I am very well, escaped with only a bruise from a spent ball, and the loss of my horse, shot twice in the neck. One of my captains was killed; six officers wounded. In the Brigade about 60 or 70 were killed, and over 150 wounded. No regiments fought harder or suffered so much

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[53]Ibid., p. 258.

[54]Warren to Emily Chase, July 8, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

praised
down.[55]ath and wounds. I think I have now secured a recommendation for promotion, for I never have been so praised as I have by all the officers from Gen. McClellan down.[55]

Inaction at Harrison's Landing had its lighter moments. While inspecting his camp Warren observed that the chief activity of his soldiers was playing poker, faro, and other card games for high stakes. Upon learning that gambling was widespread in his command, he forbade the soldiers to play for money. The men, obeying the letter of the edict, if not its spirit, substituted beans for the greenbacks. Their commander countered by forbidding all card playing, and in a spirit of playful retaliation, some of his soldiers kidnapped the colonel's Negro servant, tossing him in a blanket until he was almost half crazed with fear. Before letting him go, the soldiers completely doused him with flour.[56] The troops of the Tenth New York had made their point - an unspoken truce was reached; Warren no longer attempted to protect his men from the "vice" of gambling, and they, in turn, did not further molest the colonel's servant.

As the weeks of idleness passed, Warren had considerable time to reflect on the nature of the great civil strife that engulfed the people of the United States. In a

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[55]Warren to William Warren, July 6, 1862, Warren Papers, I, 3. Actually Warren's losses were even greater for the entire campaign. According to the O.R., Warren's brigade, between June 25 and July 2, 1862, lost a total of 286 men, twenty-seven percent of the brigade's effective strength.

[56]Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, pp. 118-119.

letter to Emily dated July 27, 1862, he mused,

> I strive to fight for our country, but what is it? Is it the country of the abolitionists or the secessionists? It seems to belong to one or the other but that is not my country. I care for neither. If as a soldier I strive for glory it must be for the Union, a union that leaves both north and south as they were, and dishonors neither.[57]

On the question of slavery, Warren probably held the view of the mass of the northern populace. To him the war was called to preserve the Union and not as a grand crusade to extinguish the institution of slavery from American soil. He bared his soul on this matter in a letter to William Warren:

> I think it would be a stronger course for him /Lincoln/ to discard the New England and Greeley abolitionists entirely; /he observed/ this would remove the cause for resistance from the minds of the masses South, and we could crush out the Secession Leaders. The Army has suffered enough now in hardships and perils to no longer act out any abolition programme. It is fighting for the Union which is unattainable without allowing the Southern people their constitutional rights, for it is otherwise degrading them. . . .[58]

Warren's letters home at this time were filled with disparaging remarks concerning the activities of abolitionists, Radical Republicans, and inefficient superiors. However, there were no references to the major military reverse suffered by McClellan on the peninsula. "Little Mac" and his supporters formed a conservative bloc within the Army of the Potomac, and to this faction Warren, because of his beliefs, was inevitably drawn. In his innermost thoughts he may have

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[57]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, July 27, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

[58]Warren to William Warren, July 20, 1862, Warren Papers, I, 3.

questioned the wisdom of McClellan's "change of base" after the Federal defeat at Gaines' Mill, or at his decision to withdraw after the Confederate reverse at Malvern Hill; but he refused to be publicly drawn into the cabals that were being formed to oust the general from command of the Army of the Potomac.

Warren's ability, military bearing, and intense loyalty to McClellan during the Peninsula Campaign were noted by his superiors. General Sykes, a McClellanite, in his official report favorably commented on Warren's capabilities during the Seven Days. He wrote:

> Colonel Warren, with the practical experience of an accomplished engineer, his untiring industry, unceasing energy, and unsurpassed gallantry upon the field won for himself promotion, which cannot be too soon or more worthily bestowed.[59]

Sykes recommendation was seconded by both Fitz-John Porter and McClellan, and in September 1862, Warren received his promotion to Brigadier-General of Volunteers, the commission to be dated from the time of his "distinguished conduct" on the battlefield of Gaines' Mill. This promotion was a most fitting tribute to his capable performance during the preceding campaign.

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[59] O.R., I, 11, II, 226.

CHAPTER VI

INCOMPETENT GENERAL OFFICERS AND WASTED OPPORTUNITIES

While McClellan's forces were engaged in the ill-fated Peninsula Campaign, General John Pope, fresh from his success in the West, on July 26, 1862 was ordered east by Lincoln to command the newly organized Army of Virginia. Scattered throughout northern Virginia, his command was composed of the demoralized remnants of the troops who had been beaten and routed during Stonewall Jackson's excursion in the Shenandoah Valley. Despite several prior victories, Pope had personality traits which thwarted his effectiveness as army commander. He possessed a quick temper, rude manner, vivid imagination, and an impatience for contradiction.[1] In addition, he had the uncanny knack of making statements that alienated his own troops and unduly antagonized those of the enemy. Two weeks after assuming command of the Army of Virginia, he had incurred the animosity of his men by issuing an "Address" that was insensitive to the feelings of the troops. In this pronouncement to the officers and soldiers of the Army of Virginia, Pope stated,

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[1] M.H.S.M., II, 35.

. . . . . .

> Let us understand each other. I have come to you from the West, where we have always seen the backs of our enemies; . . . I presume that I have been called here to pursue the same system and to lead you against the enemy. It is my purpose to do so, and that speedily. . . . Success and glory are in the advance, disaster and shame lurk in the rear. Let us act on this understanding, and it is safe to predict that your banners shall be inscribed with many a glorious deed and that your names will be dear to your countrymen forever.[2]

Influenced by Pope's bravado and under pressure from the members of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, President Lincoln and his general-in-chief, Henry Halleck decided to reinforce him by siphoning troops from McClellan's army encamped at Harrison's Landing. Early in August, S.P. Heintzelman's Third Corps was dispatched to cooperate with Pope, and by the middle of the month McClellan received orders to send Fitz-John Porter and the Fifth Corps to bolster other Union forces assembling in northern Virginia.[3] At dusk on August 14th Warren's brigade left Harrison's Landing and marched across the peninsula to Newport News via Williamsburg, Yorktown and Big Bethel. While at Newport News the ranks of the decimated brigade were bolstered by the addition of one hundred new recruits. Then, boarding the steamer Cahawa on the 20th of August, the two regiments were herded together for an unpleasant two day journey to Aquia Creek on the Potomac. From there the soldiers were

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[2]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, II, 530.

[3]Bruce Catton, Mr. Lincoln's Army (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 26, 30; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 169.

loaded hurriedly onto baggage and platform cars and transported to Falmouth Station on the Rappahannock, near Fredericksburg.[4]

For a week Warren's two under-strength regiments were participants in a long series of marches and countermarches. One account written by a zouave indicated the tedious nature of these seven days:

> On the 23d we marched two miles, and halted near Falmouth; Sunday, the 24th, we started at 4 A.M., to Deep Run, and bivouacked under arms after a march of ten miles; the 25th we reached Ellis Ford (four miles), and bivouacked under arms; the 26th, left at 6 A.M., and after a march of about ten miles, we joined the division about six miles from Bealton, and bivouacked under arms.
>
> On Wednesday, the 27th, we moved at 4.30 A.M., and marched to Catlett's Station, twelve miles, and bivouacked under arms. We resumed our march at 4 A.M. on Thursday, the 28th, eleven miles to Bristoe Station, and bivouacked under arms. As we approached this place, we saw numerous ambulances, and wounded men were lying near a house under the care of surgeons. Details were burying the dead slain in an encounter between Hooker's division and Ewell's forces that had taken place the day previous. Some Confederates were lying dead alongside of the railroad track in their gore; also a number of wounded were lying about in the sun; and Colonel Warren ordered some of the men to place boughs over them to shield them from its burning rays. . . . We fell in line and marched at 7 A.M., on Friday, the 29th, and after moving as expediously as possible halted at Manassas Junction. . . . After marching and counter marching all the afternoon up and down a narrow road, leading through woods, looking for a fight - the men in bad humor at what to them looked like useless exercise - the regiment drew up in line of battle in the afternoon on an elevated position, from which the country could be seen at intervals for a long distance.[5]

Hatred for Pope among the troops, and in particular the pro-McClellan general officers, was intensified by an

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[4]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2,1863, entries for August 14, 20, 21, 22, 1862; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 260-262.

[5]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer,Infantry, pp. 263-264.

incessant flow of directives ordering the dispersed divisions to march and counter march throughout much of northeastern Virginia in search of Stuart's marauding cavalry and Jackson's fast marching corps. For days at a time the Union commander did not know the exact location of his troops, and had even less knowledge concerning the position of Lee's army. Stuart's cavalry, 1500 strong, cut railroad communications at the rear of the Federal force while Jackson's command deflected Pope's troops to the right, at the same time sacking the huge Union supply depot at Manassas Junction. Reacting to the proddings of Stuart and Jackson upon his lines of communication to Washington, Pope lost his confidence and during the course of several eventful days he successively ordered the concentration of his forces at Warrenton, Gainesville and Manassas. Finally, in bewilderment, he sent couriers scurrying to order his scattered forces to converge at Centerville.[6] It was little wonder that the winded Federals, angered at what they considered useless marching, were more than half beaten before they were committed to battle on August 29th.

As bait to ensnare Pope's troops, Jackson established himself in a strong position in the highlands northwest of Groveton, near the old Bull Run battlefield. "Stonewall" placed the bulk of his forces behind an unfinished railroad embankment which was a ready-made obstacle against any

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[6]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 176-182 passim.

assault. Believing that he had only Jackson to deal with, Pope sent his divisions piecemeal to the assault. The divisions of Sigel, Hooker, Kearny, and Reynolds successively attacked the Confederates, and all were decisively defeated by Jackson's veteran troops.[7] Then, while the right wing of Pope's army was being punished by Jackson, the main force of Lee's army, under General James Longstreet, advanced almost undetected along the Warrenton turnpike, joining Jackson at noon of the 29th, and extending the Confederate right further to the south across the Manassas Gap Railroad.[8]

Early on the morning of August 30th, Warren's troops broke camp and, accompanied by other units of Porter's corps, marched to the right and rear of the Gainesville and Sudley Springs Roads, to the site of the previous day's battle near Manassas Plains at Groveton. The Fifth Corps, forming the Federal left, was adjacent to McDowell's corps and directly opposite Jackson's right.[9] That afternoon Pope drew in his left and buttressed his right and center forces in preparation for another assault. The Union commander had mistaken movement in the Confederate line for the beginning of an enemy retreat. Imagining a stunning victory and despite warnings from Porter informing him of Longstreet's presence, Pope ordered an immediate pursuit of the "fleeing" Southerners.[10]

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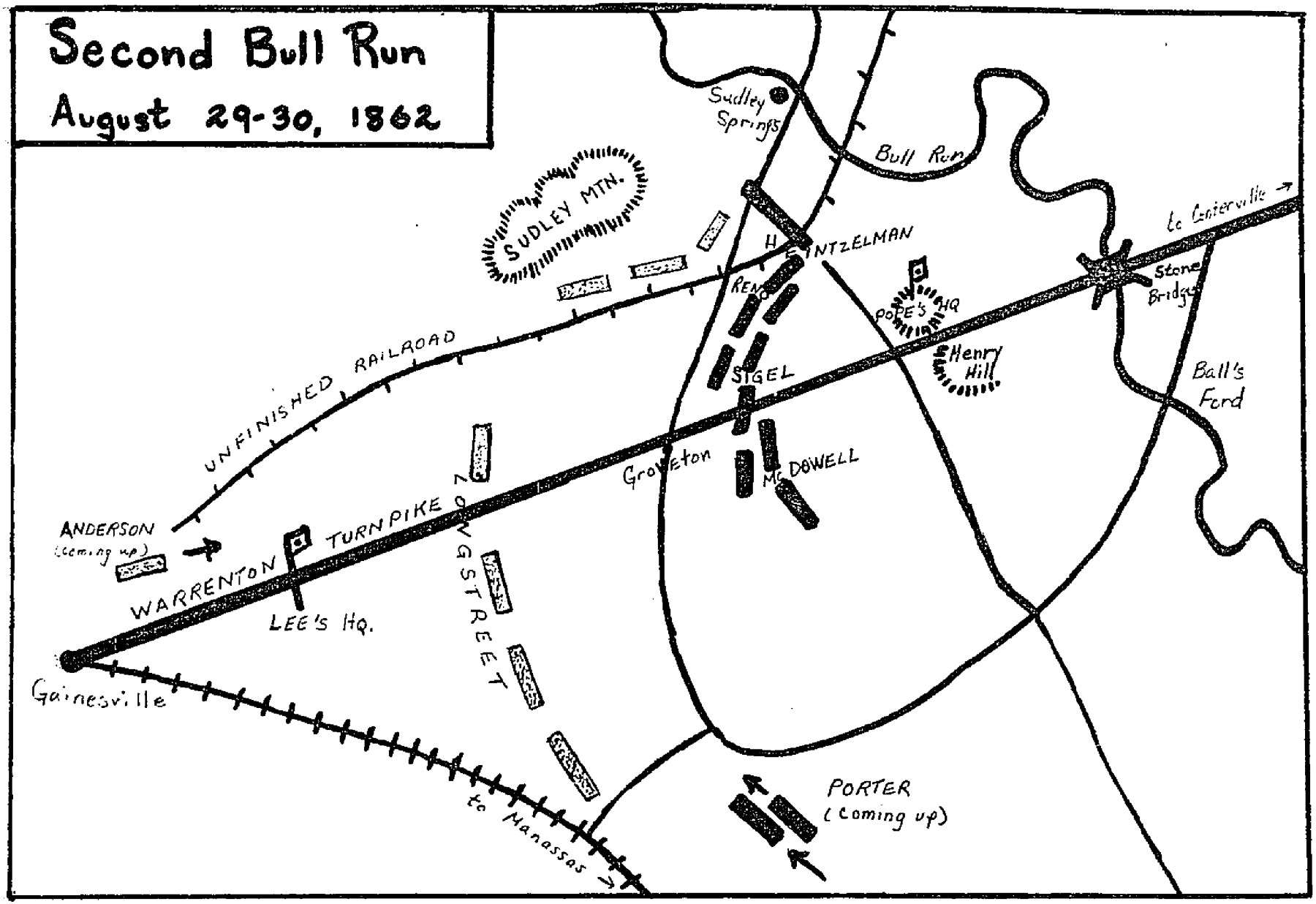
[7]Catton, Mr. Lincoln's Army, pp. 33-34.

[8]M.H.S.M, II, 309.

[9]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 269; M.H.S.M., II, 309; O.R., I, 12, II, 482.

[10]Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative (New York: Random House, 1958), I, 635; Catton, Mr. Lincoln's Army, p. 35.


Second Bull Run
August 29-30, 1862
Sudley Springs
Bull Run
SUDLEY MTN.
to Centerville
HENTZELMAN
RENO
POPE'S HQ
Stone Bridge
UNFINISHED RAILROAD
SIGEL
Henry Hill
Ball's Ford
Groveton
McDOWELL
ANDERSON
(coming up)
WARRENTON TURNPIKE
LEE'S Hq.
GROVETON STREET
Gainesville
to Manassas
PORTER
(coming up)

This "attack" force was put under the command of General McDowell, a capable but unlucky general who utilized two fresh divisions of Porter's corps, closely supported by his own and Heintzelman's corps, to lead the assault. Advancing through a tangle of hillocks and gullies, three Federal corps advanced toward the railroad embankment behind which the Confederates had defended themselves against earlier attacks. It was probably one of the shortest pursuits of the entire war. From the woods behind the railroad cut, poured the men of Jackson's command quickly manning their positions behind the embankment. A wall of fire, from their well served guns, mowed down Porter's first line and threw the reserve into confusion.[11]

Observing his forces being thrown back from the railroad embankment and wishing to prevent a rout, McDowell made a tactical error that could have enabled General Lee to destroy the Army of Virginia. Instead of calling up reinforcements from Siegel's corps, which had been held in reserve, he ordered Reynolds' division of Pennsylvania Reserves, posted on the south side of the Warrenton turnpike, to move north of the road to aid in the withdrawal of the Fifth Corps.[12] His brigade having been held in reserve during Porter's abortive advance, Warren observed Reynolds' departure and saw that Hazlett's Battery was now unsupported. This left Warrenton

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[11]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 189; Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative, I, 635-638.

[12]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 164.

turnpike open to a Confederate advance, a gap which would expose the Federal flank. Without prior authorization, Warren immediately moved his two regiments to a height on the south side of the road in a desperate attempt to cover the exposed flank.[13] He deployed six companies of the Tenth New York as skirmishers to defend the near edge of the woods on the left, with the remaining four companies held as a general regimental reserve. The Fifth New York was placed in line of battle on a knoll facing west to lend support to Hazlett's six gun battery.[14] At about 5 P.M., the Confederates opened a heavy fire upon the skirmishers of the Tenth New York assigned to picket duty at the woods. After a few minutes, rebel skirmishers, the vanguard of a force 30,000 strong which Longstreet had committed to overwhelm the Union left flank, rose and advanced upon the New Yorkers. Two brigades, under John B. Hood, closely supported by N.G. Evans' brigade, broke into the woods on the far left. Warren's pickets had only enough time to fire one volley before the determined Confederates were upon them. The order given to retire, the six companies fell back rapidly, firing through the woods as they withdrew. Attempts made by the four reserve companies to make a stand proved futile. Colonel John Bendix, commander of the Tenth New York, ordered his regiment to fall back and form on the flanks of the Fifth New

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[13]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 272-273; O.R., I, 12, II, 469, 482, 504.

[14]O.R., I, 12, II, 504; Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, p. 128.

York; however, most of the soldiers were so demoralized that they did not stop at the crest of the hill but continued hurriedly to the rear.[15]

The Fifth New York, whose battle line had not been broken by the flight of the Tenth, fired a volley at the oncoming Southern infantry. Rapidly firing zouaves cut gaping holes through the Confederate ranks. The action was a forlorn hope, however; Warren's five hundred never had a chance to stem the wave of enemy troops bearing down upon the lone regiment. Seeing that his command might be overwhelmed, he shouted to Hazlett to remove his battery to avoid its capture. Since the infantry was between the battery and the enemy, Hazlett could offer Warren no assistance in resisting the Southern onslaught. Immediately, he called up his limbers and moved his artillery pieces off the field.[16]

In the meantime, Longstreet, attacking the Fifth New York at its front and on both flanks, endeavored to surround and capture the zouaves. As the cream of his command was being shot down in a murderous crossfire, Warren ordered the men to save themselves. All who could heeded their commander and broke to the rear, carrying with them many of their wounded comrades and all of their battle flags.[17] Observing that his

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[15]Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, p. 129; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 274-276; Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, II, 278.

[16]Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, p. 130; Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 165; O.R., I, 12, II, 469.

[17]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 276-279.

men had escaped to the rear, Warren put spurs to his mount and eluded the enemy by racing his horse down the slope and jumping across a small stream at the foot of the hillock. Turning, he greeted his men as they sloshed their way through the creek and attempted to bring some semblance of order to his shattered command.[18]

The utter confusion that prevailed at this time was described by Alfred Davenport:

> The remnant of the regiment rallied on Buchanan's brigade, in rear of the plateau of Henry House Hill, where they found their regimental flag, the staff of which was planted in the ground by Chambers, who was standing on guard at its side, with Colonel Warren, who was dismounted, his horse having been disabled from wounds. The Colonel formed the men in line as they came up, but there were only about one sixth of them that got together. The remainder were mostly engaged in assisting the wounded to the rear. They were joined by lost members of other organizations, and Colonel Warren took command of them again, saying every few moments as the shell and bullets came over their heads, 'Don't dodge, men, don't dodge!'[19]

At nightfall, Warren's surviving troops joined with the regulars of Sykes' division and Reynolds' Pennsylvanians in an attempt to withstand Longstreet's assault on Henry House Hill. Darkness, clouds, and a gentle misty rainfall delayed a Confederate attack that might have entirely destroyed the Army of Virginia as it sought safety in flight. The small force on Henry House Hill held, and by standing fast it safeguarded the Union line of retreat across the Stone Bridge over

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[18]Ibid., p. 280.

[19]Ibid., p. 283.

Bull Run.[20]

From the time the first shot was fired at the skirmishers of the Tenth New York, to the moment the zouaves left the field, Warren's command had not faced the enemy for more than fifteen minutes. In the short space of seven minutes, the Fifth New York had been virtually annihilated; out of 490 effectives in the engagement, the zouaves had lost 297 men killed, wounded, and missing (sixty percent of its total strength). Few other Federal regiments during the course of the war suffered as severly in so short a period of time. Moreover, the Tenth New York also suffered heavy casualties during the brief period it was engaged. One hundred and fifteen of its men were killed, wounded, or missing in the woods in and around the Union left flank, so that at Centerville, on September 1, 1862, Warren was able to muster in his brigade only 28 commissioned officers and 495 enlisted men for an aggregate of 523 men.[21]

The sacrifice of Warren's brigade had not been in vain. During its stand the Fifth New York took a heavy toll of its adversaries; the Fifth Texas Regiment reported losing 239 men, including all field officers in its assault on the hill. In addition, his tenacity had enabled General Daniel Butterfield's division of Porter's corps safely to withdraw

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[20]James Longstreet, From Manassas To Appomattox (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1859), pp. 189-190; M.H.S.M., II, 93-94; O.R., I, 12, II, 532.

[21]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 286; O.R., I, 3, III, 796; O.R., I, 12 II, 260.

after it had been checked in its attack upon Jackson's right, and allowed Hazlett's six artillery pieces to gain the safety of Henry House Hill.[22] Lieutenant Hazlett was one of many officers who lavishly praised Warren and his brigade for their action at Second Bull Run. In his official report he observed, "I would give all praise and credit to Colonel Warren and his command for the noble manner in which they stood their ground, thereby preventing the capture of this battery."[23] I desire to call the attention of the major-general commanding," General George Sykes added,

> to the services of Colonels Warren, Buchanan and Chapman, U.S. Army, commanding brigades of my division. Their coolness, courage and example were conspicious. Their claim to promotion has been earned on fields of battle long prior to that of the 30th of August, 1862.[24]

At the first available moment after the battle Warren wrote his brother William informing him of the causes for the Federal debacle. "A more unfit man than Pope was never seen," Warren exclaimed:

> Every dispatch he sent to the Department was, as published, a gross lie. . . . McClellan is again in control but I fear, the opposition to him will nullify all his good as it has done since Stanton became Secretary of War. . . .[25]

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[22]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 279, 286.

[23]O.R., I, 12, II, 469.

[24]Ibid., p. 483.

[25]Warren to William Warren, September 5, 1862, Warren Papers, I, 3.

The New Yorker believed that the army's stamina and morale had been wasted by constant marching and countermarching. He also condemned Pope and his staff for fighting the enemy in detail. According to Warren, only one-quarter of the forces available to Pope were utilized at any one time in attacks upon the Army of Northern Virginia.[26] In closing, Warren informed his brother, "Genl. McClellan says he will put two more regiments in my Brigade, and have me promoted."[27] Hope for promotion greatly encouraged Warren. As he confided to Emily shortly after the close of the Second Battle of Bull Run:

> I saw Genl. McClellan last night and had a long confidential talk with him. He says he has recommended me first of all volunteer colonels for promotion and that it was promised him it should be made at once. That encourages me some by next summer's campaign I ill have the finest brigade in the field. Two regiments are recruiting for it in New York now.[28]

After the defeat of the Federal forces on August 30th, Lee decided to undertake an invasion of the North. As he saw it, there were three major reasons for this course of action. He did not wish to permit the "season for active operations to pass" without having an opportunity to inflict further damage upon the Union forces, he desired to give the South a respite by taking the war to the enemy, and he believed that Maryland could be a valuable source of supplies for his army.[29]

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Warren to Emily Chase, September 12, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

[29] M.H.S.M., III, 31.

Hope for the support of Maryland had been a major factor in Lee's decision. Failing in this endeavor, he divided his forces, dispatching Jackson to snap up the Federal garrison at Harpers Ferry, while Longstreet and his three divisions moved toward Hagerstown. McClellan, once more in command of the Union army, discovered a copy of Lee's plans and on September 17th confronted the Confederates at Antietam - a small creek near the Maryland town of Sharpsburg.

During the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest single day of the war, Porter's corps was held in reserve, posted directly opposite the center of the Confederate line. Warren's under strength brigade was detached from the Fifth Corps and assigned to hold a reserve position on the right rear of Burnside's Ninth Corps to cover the road approaches from Harpers Ferry.[30] While Burnside's corps made a tardy assault on the Confederate right late in the afternoon of the 17th, Warren utilized his brigade as provost marshal troops, deploying his command in an open field in rear of the Ninth Corps to prevent stragglers from drifting back to the rear. In performing this task, he organized malingerers irrespective of regiment and division into battle lines to cover the front of his brigade.[31]

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[30]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 315; O.R., I, 19, I, 62, 351. At this time the brigade consisted of the Fifth New York under the command of Captain Cleveland Winslow and the Tenth New York under Lieutenant-Colonel John W. Marshall.

[31]O.R., I, 19, I, 367.

The determined daylong Federal assaults upon Lee's forces forced their retirement from their fixed position at Antietam on September 19th, and, crossing the Potomac back into Virginia, Lee was pursued by a large force of Federals who crossed the river at Shepardstown the following day.[32] At this point Warren's command was ordered to proceed downstream and ford the river to cover the left flank of the main Union advance. Numbering less than 400 men, two-thirds of them recruits, the Fifth New York was drawn up in line at Blackford's Ford on the north bank of the Potomac. Attempting to encourage his men to move rapidly in the coming movement, Warren with a menacing look upon his face, drew his revolver and said, "Men, we are about to cross the river, if any man does not want to cross, let him step out."[33] Intimidated by his menacing gesture the Fifth New York followed Warren and waded across the river. The task before them was an arduous, fatiguing one. "We took off our body-belts," Alfred Davenport related,

> slung our cartridge-boxes over our shoulders, and waded into the stream. It was difficult and tiresome work to ford a stream 200 yards wide, up to the waist, with a strong current, the bottom being covered with slippery stones. . . . After reaching the opposite bank, the men climbed an almost perpendicular bluff, eighty feet high, covered with bushes and trees, and were obliged to employ both hands and feet to accomplish the task. Skirmishers were deployed a short distance when suddenly the enemy opened in heavy force from the wood beyond the open ground in front.[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 318.

[34] Ibid., pp. 318-319.

Rifle fire from a large, hidden enemy force grew so heavy that Warren was forced to order a withdrawal to the north bank of the Potomac. One company under the command of a Captain Whitney was left on the Virginia side to cover the retreat by maintaining a rapid fire against the enemy troops in order to convince them that the entire regiment confronted them. Warren hoped that the company would be able to prevent Confederate sharpshooters from gaining the edge of the bluff where they might pick off the troops as they struggled to recross the Potomac. Misunderstanding the order, Whitney withdrew with the regiment. Fortunately, Federal batteries on the Maryland bank of the river were able to keep up a rapid bombardment that prevented the Southerners from advancing. Discovering Whitney's blunder, Warren drew his revolver and threatened to shoot the careless subordinate.[35] This gesture indicated that he was probably as agitated by the failure of his offensive maneuver as he was by the gross negligence on the part of the company commander. Actually Warren had made the correct decision. After consultation with Porter, Sykes concurred with Warren's view to withdraw. These officers believed that the reconnaissance, if allowed to proceed against stiffening enemy resistance, might incur heavy casualties without compensatory results.

Relieved from command of his brigade on September 22nd, Warren was ordered to proceed to New York to recruit new regiments for his command. Enroute through Washington, on

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[35] Ibid.; O.R., I, 19, I, 351-352.

the 25th, he was informed that his name had been sent in for promotion to brigadier-general. This rank was bestowed on him the following day, and immediately afterwards, he proceeded to New York. For the next three weeks, he traveled extensively through the western counties of the state, busily engaged in enlisting men for two new regiments to be added to his command.[36]

While Warren was completing his recruiting efforts in the North, General McClellan did everything possible to aid him. On October 18, 1862, he wrote General-in-Chief, Henry Halleck:

> I earnestly request that the One hundred and forty-sixth Regiment New York Volunteers, Col. Kenner Garrard, may be ordered to report to me. I desire to assign it to Warren's brigade, Sykes' division, Porter's corps. . . . Please inform me whether I can have this regiment. I am anxious to complete the organization of Warren's brigade as soon as possible, and shall be much gratified if Colonel Garrard's regiment can be placed at my disposal for assignment to it.[37]

This request was acceded to, and within weeks an excellent regiment containing 850 officers and men from the central and western portions of New York was placed in Warren's brigade.[38] However, McClellan, Warren's patron, was no longer in a position to aid the New Yorker. "Little Mac's" failure to commit two corps held in reserve at

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[36]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entries for September 22, 25, 26, September 29 - October 18, 1862. After the engagement at Shepardstown the Tenth New York was transferred out of Warren's command. Warren's exertions in recruiting bore fruit in the creation of the 140th and 146th New York, which were promptly added to his command.

[37]O.R., I, 19, II, 444.

[38]Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 333.

Antietam probably cost the Army of the Potomac a complete victory during that engagement; his failure promptly to follow and ensnare the retreating Southerners cost him his position as army commander. On November 7th, General Ambrose Burnside was given McClellan's command in order to engage the Confederates in one more battle before the weather worsened and forced the army into winter quarters.[39]

Because of the lateness of the season for military operations, Burnside chose to assault Richmond overland via Fredericksburg. It was the shortest route, adjacent to navigable waterways, and it permitted the Union army to cover Washington as it advanced upon the enemy's capital. The Federal commander proposed making a rapid descent with his army upon Fredericksburg, and then, after organizing his supply trains with sustenance for twelve days, to move on to Richmond, seizing that city by a coup-de main.[40]

Joining his command in early November, Warren did not hold much hope for the success of Burnside's plan. He wrote to Emily,

> It seems to all of us military men and I have talked with many of the highest here, that the plan of going to Richmond by land when we have the water route is little else than absoulute insanity. Burnside will have a hard time to save his reputation thousands of us will perhaps fall in vain and the country again be in tears and despair.[41]

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[39] M.H.S.M., III, p. 125.

[40] Ibid., 126

[41] Warren to Emily Chase, November 26, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

Warren's fears proved well founded. In order for Burnside's plan to have a chance of success, speed was of the essence. However, the Army of the Potomac waited for ten days at the Rappahannock for the arrival of a pontoon train from Washington. Army engineers who were on the scene could have bridged the river in less than two days.[42]

As the Federals moved slowly toward Fredericksburg, Warren had an opportunity to drill his two new regiments. One evening after drill, a squad from one of the new units raided a sutler's wagon located on the road near Warren's headquarters. Upon hearing the disturbance, he sprang out of his tent and gave the troublemakers a few sound whacks with the flat of his sword. Thus the recruits learned their lesson.[43]

By the time Burnside was ready to force the issue on December 13th, Lee had been able to concentrate his forces in the hilly terrain immediately behind Fredericksburg. After brushing aside Confederate sharpshooters in the town, Burnside threw Edwin Sumner's and Joseph E. Hooker's Grand Divisions against the main Southern positions on Marye's Heights. The piecemeal frontal assault upon the Confederate lines on the heights proved suicidal. Federal dead were piled high and deep in front of the stone wall which provided additional cover for

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[42] M.H.S.M., III, 129.

[43] Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entries for November 1, and December 10, 1862; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 331-332.

Confederate infantry.[44]

As the Northern army was sent piecemeal into the battle, Burnside called up fresh troops to renew his assaults on the Confederate positions. Warren's brigade, as part of Sykes' division was held in reserve on Stafford's Heights throughout the early fighting. At 2 P.M., his command was led down from its position on the heights north of the Rappahannock to the near bank of the river, and, shortly before sundown, the brigade was marched across a pontoon bridge, through Fredericksburg, toward the height in the rear of the town where the sounds of heavy fighting could still be heard. While Sykes' regulars marched toward Marye's Heights, Warren's command formed a second line at the outskirts of town.[45] Darkness mercifully interceded before the troops were forced to drive their assault to completion.

That night Warren's men moved closer to the Confederate lines to provide cover against enemy attempts to interfere with the pull back of Federal troops and the removal of wounded from in front of the stone wall. The brigade's position was an uncomfortable one. Because the night was cold and damp, the men got little sleep, and throughout the night the enemy kept up a sporadic shirmish fire at the Northern soldiers who were less than one hundred yards from their main position. Just before dawn Warren ordered his

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[44]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 248-253 passim.

[45]Porter Farley, "Reminiscences of the 140th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry," Rochester in the Civil War, XXII, 1944, p. 203; Mary G. Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), p. 25; Warren to Emily Chase, December 18, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

command to fall back as quietly as possible to Fredericksburg. This order was carried out without undue confusion, and the brigade was then posted on the outermost street on the western side of the town.[46]

Shaken by the debacle of the 13th, Burnside was determined to order further assaults the following day, with Sykes' division to be given the dubious honor of leading the attack. At a council of war held shortly after the close of the battle Hooker, Sykes, and Warren all asserted that further charges would only lead to additional loss of life without favorable result. After much debate, the generals were able to persuade the unnerved Burnside to give up any idea of resuming the offensive.[47] The Federal high command having decided against further assaults turned their attention to the measures necessary to safeguard their forces in Fredericksburg against expected counterthrusts from Lee's army. Warren's proven capabilities as military engineer were fully utilized in the construction of earthwork defenses on the south side of Fredericksburg. Under his immediate supervision the herculean task of building rifle pits and battery epaulements linking brick houses was accomplished with the greatest possible speed. By dawn on December 15th,

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[46]Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, p. 37; Civil War Times, December, 1965, pp. 42, 44.

[47]Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, pp. 37-38; The 155th Regimental Association, Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox: Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment (Pittsburg: The 155th Regimental Association, 1910), p. 107.

a complete line had been constructed which could have been further strengthened during the day without fear of enemy hinderance.[48] General Daniel Butterfield, commander of the Fifth Corps, alluding in his report to Warren's contribution to the defense of Fredericksburg, noted "General Warren is entitled to honorable mention and reward for his energetic and efficient services in the duties intrusted to him."[49]

In ordering Warren to take charge of plans for entrenching Fredericksburg, Burnside had originally intended to withdraw a portion of his army and to station the remainder in fixed positions in the town. However, the general changed his mind and decided to abandon his lodgment and to fall back across the Rappahannock to his former base at Falmouth.[50] Under cover of a violent rain storm, he began withdrawing his command. Warren's Fifth New York was given the assignment of maintaining the rear guard. About an hour and a half before daylight the New Yorker called in his regiment from its position in front of the town. A company at a time they were directed to crawl back to the cover of a large storehouse two hundred yards closer to Fredericksburg. There the regiment was silently assembled, and under scattered enemy fire, withdrew at 7 A.M. to the pontoon bridge that spanned the Rappahannock. By 7:30 A.M. Warren's command, the last

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[48] O.R., I, 21, pp. 56, 415, 429.

[49] Ibid., p. 402.

[50] Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861 to February 2, 1863, entry for December 15, 1862.

troops to leave the front, had without loss returned to the north bank of the river.[51]

Although his brigade had escaped relatively unscathed from the debacle at Fredericksburg, Warren appeared emotionally disturbed by the immensity of the Union defeat.[52] In a memo written immediately after the close of the campaign he noted,

> I see weeping widows, emaciated forms wasted by disease, or torn and crippled bodies dragging out a weary life in poverty and neglect. I see victims of recent battles stretched on couches of agony, gasping for breath while weeping heart broken friends droop around them. . . .
>
> I have heard they once had a general they all loved who aroused enthusiasm wherever he appeared, who wished to fill up the ranks of the tired regiments with the new levies. Where is he??[53]

In looking at reasons for the demoralization of the army, Warren saw hope for the Union only in the restoration to command of General McClellan and the downgrading of civil and military officials in Washington who were quick to offer advice, but who did not face the bullets of the enemy.

A melancholia was observable in all of Warren's correspondence during this period. Writing to his brother William on December 18th, he bitterly condemned the incompetency of many of the ranking generals of the Army of the Potomac. "The army has become disorganized in its staff appointments," he observed,

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[51] Ibid., entry for December 16, 1862; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 352-357.

[52] O.R., I, 21, p. 136. The total losses of the brigade was only six wounded and thirty men missing or captured.

[53] Warren Memo, undated but written after the Battle of Fredericksburg, Warren Papers, VII, 1.

> especially the Engineering, which is at the lowest ebb. Think of Williamson being Chief Topl. Engineer! Our troops are rushed about managed and manoeuvered little better than a mob, and discipline is sinking to the lowest ebb. We must have McClellan back with unlimited and unfettered powers. His name is a tower of strength to every one here; . . .
>
> But something must be done with a strong hand with this Army, or it will be useless. Our generals assault where they should besiege, and the frightful slaughter that follows is making cowards of the survivors. The enemy grows strong in heart safely hid behind his defenses, and we grow cowardly by being rashly led against them. My heart sickens when I think of the way our affairs seem to be going.[54]

At Fredericksburg, Warren gained a firm respect for defensive works. In a letter to Emily he noted, "We have had a most terrible battle in which our men were rushed against earth works blazing with the enemy's fire and were repulsed with a loss of 10,000 killed and wounded and nothing gained."[55] Early observing the futility of assaulting an enemy who was behind prepared entrenchments, Warren realized that in most cases works held by a determined foe would prove impregnable to any attack. From the battle of Fredericksburg on, Warren rebelled inwardly when directed by his superiors to assail an enemy securely lodged behind fixed defensive lines. For this reason, he often appeared lethargic in carrying out the sanguine orders of his superiors.

After Fredericksburg, both armies went into winter quarters. Aside from several abortive attempts by Burnside

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[54]Warren to William Warren, December 18, 1862, Warren Papers, I, 3.

[55]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, December 18, 1862, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

to resume the offensive, the troops settled down in their camps and attempted to make themselves as comfortable as possible while awaiting the resumption of fighting the following spring.[56] In looking back at the bitter fighting of the previous year, Warren had mixed emotions. Personally, his conduct had been above reproach. He had performed valorously on every occasion, and had given indications of being a gifted military engineer who could perform his tasks in short periods of time. However, Warren, while intently interested in his own advancement, was appalled by gross incompetency, missed opportunities and military blunders which he witnessed during the campaigns under Pope, McClellan, and Burnside. While never doubting that the Union would prevail in the end, he foresaw continuing defeat and suffering in the future unless the present generals were removed and replaced by more energetic ones who knew how to lead the army on to final victory.

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[56]Charles C. Coffin, The Boys of '61; or, Four Years of Fighting (Boston: Estes and Laureat, 1881), p. 174.

CHAPTER VII

CHIEF TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEER, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

After the defeat at Fredericksburg, in January 1863, while the Army of the Potomac was in its winter quarters at Falmouth, Warren was kept occupied carrying out reconnaissance missions, leading his men in reviews, sitting at military courts, and drawing maps useful for the future movements of the Union forces.[1] His pessimistic outlook had not been changed by the bloodless aspects of camp life. "The war I think does not look more favorable than when I wrote before," he confided to his brother William on January 10th.

> We cannot carry all the breastworks the rebels can build, by assault, and military science seems to be ignored in our plans. We throw away skill and rush in like savages. . . . Fortifications must be turned or besieged. But there seems to be an infatuation or a destiny, that rushes our men at breastworks as a moth does at a candle. Disguise it as we will, the bravery of our men is qualing before these things.[2]

Always high strung and of nervous disposition, Warren was overwrought by constant labor and appeared to be on the verge of a breakdown. In less than six months, he had seen his brigade severely mauled on two occasions, and saved

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[1]Warren, Journal from April 24, 1861, to February 2, 1863, entries for January, 1863.

[2]Warren to William Warren, January 10, 1863, Warren Papers, I, 3.

from annihilation on a third only by the onset of darkness. In addition, his patron and sponsor, McClellan, had been removed from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and replaced by Burnside, a man Warren considered likable but lacking the sagacity and ability to direct the complex operations of an army successfully. Tension, worry, the responsibility of leading a veteran brigade into battle, all played on his mind and probably contributed to a mild case of battle fatigue.

At the close of January, Warren wrote once more to William informing his brother of an impending reassignment which would enable him to join the personal staff of General Joseph Hooker, the newly appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac. He noted:

> Gen. Hooker offers me the place of Chief of Topl. Engineers on his staff, and I have the matter under consideration. Genl. Sykes and Genl. Humphreys, both of whom I wish to consult are away, and will be back, I expect to-morrow. I asked to be Chief Engineer of the whole and Genl. Hooker will give it to me if it can be arranged. . . .[3]

Hoping to gain the personal dedication of a small capable clique of young staff officers, Hooker had asked them if they would accept a post at his headquarters instead of being arbitrarily assigned to his command. This gave Warren time to discuss the implications of the proposed appointment with the pro-McClellan faction in the Army of the Potomac. In addition, the opportunity given Warren carefully to consider

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[3]Warren to William Warren, January 30, 1863, Warren Papers, I, 3.

the offer allowed him time to negotiate for a higher post and to determine at first hand the exact nature of the new assignment. The negotiations were concluded to Warren's satisfaction, and, on February 3rd, he reported to army headquarters for staff duty. The brigade that he had led so capably through four campaigns was placed under the authority of Colonel Kenner Garrard, commander of the 146th New York.[4]

From February to May 1863 Warren was Chief Topographical Engineer of the Army of the Potomac on the staff of General Hooker. Entailing a multitude of duties and responsibilities, his position brought him into a jurisdictional conflict with Captain Cyrus Comstock, Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac, a problem which was not resolved until May 12th, when General Warren superseded Comstock as Chief Engineer. The responsibilities of this position were then expanded to include both the topographical and construction engineers.[5]

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[4]Ibid., VII, 2; Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 368.

[5]There is much confusion on the exact date of Warren's appointment to the post of Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac. Henry L. Abbot, an intimate friend of Warren, noted the date as March 3, 1863 while Warren's biographer, Emerson Gifford Taylor prefers June 3rd. The date May 12 is based on a message Warren sent to Seth Williams, Adjutant General of the Army of the Potomac, on May 11th.

> "I respectfully beg leave to request to have my position defined by order, so that it cannot be misunderstood by my superiors, my comrades or my subordinates. . . . I feel honored with having been detailed to aid you, and trust I have maintained your confidence in me since you have been my commander. There is no one whose station here I would presume to fill. The position as "topographical engineer" has been, as you are aware, abolished by law since I came here. I do not know how

Staff work agreed with Warren. The morbidness he experienced during the preceding months passed as he was assigned numerous important tasks by Hooker. "Fighting Joe" gave every indication of having implicit faith in Warren's judgment, and as the weeks passed he began performing some duties usually reserved to the Chief of Staff. Every day a staff officer from each corps was directed to report to him at army headquarters to be given corps picket assignments.[6] From information presented daily by corps commanders, he had to determine the exact picket responsibility for each unit and the number of men required to meet the army's needs. In addition, to prevent duplication of labor and to insure efficient and reliable performance of duty, he required that all officers and enlisted men of the topographical bureau assigned to duty at corps, division, or brigade headquarters report personally to him all information

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to subscribe myself, and you cannot be satisfied how to address me. During the late movements, I have, on some occasions, been treated by general officers almost as if I were Chief of Staff, now so ably represented in Maj. Gen Butterfield. Others have addressed me as Chief Engineer, a place still held so ably by Capt. Comstock, and which, too, I believe, Gen. Benham, who successfully laid the bridge in our recent operations, regards as his." (Warren to Seth Williams, May 11, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 3)

A memorandum of Orders Corps of Engineers, June 10, 1863, announced that Warren became Chief Engineer, Army of the Potomac, on May 12, 1863. According to O.R., I, 25, II, 471, Warren being, ". . . senior officer of engineers on duty at these headquarters," was appointed chief engineer on May 12, 1863.

[6]O.R., I, 25, II, 62.

concerning reconnaissances carried out, routes traversed, and if possible, maps made of the regions surveyed.[7]

One of Warren's greatest contributions as a staff officer during the army's stay at Falmouth was his construction of a detailed map of northern Virginia. To obtain information for this map, Warren traveled extensively through the Union occupied region in the company of two capable army assistants, Washington A. Roebling and William H. Paine, a detail from General Benham's engineer brigade, and a few civilian surveyors. Traveling through a terrain cut by small rivers, swamps and bogs and honeycombed with groves of oak and pine scrub timber and tangled underbrush, the party was able to gain valuable insights needed for the formulation of the first truly accurate map of the region between the Rappahannock and the Rapidan. Using a scale of one inch to a mile, Warren charted an area 120 miles in length by 10 to 50 miles in width.[8] This map and the personal reconnaissances undertaken in its preparation were to prove invaluable to the Federal army during numerous future campaigns.

Nearly a year earlier, at the Battle of Fair Oaks, General Philip Kearny had directed the troops of his division to sew pieces of red flannel on to their caps so that he could recognize them during the battle. Believing that insignia

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[7] Ibid., p. 89.

[8] Warren, Journal from February 3 to August 12, 1863, entries from mid-April 1863; Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren pp. 106-107; O.R., I, 25, I, 194.

were valuable not only for identification of troop units but also for purpose of raising the espirit de corps of his soldiers, Hooker directed Warren to furnish designs for corps badges. After giving the matter much thought, he submitted many designs, and Hooker selected one for each corps of the army. He also accepted Warren's suggestion that the badges be stamped out of flannel cloth in different colors, red being designated for the first division of each corps, white for the second, and blue for the third.[9]

During early March, Warren was granted a ten-day leave and spent part of the time in Baltimore visiting Emily Chase. From there he traveled to Cold Spring to be present for the division of Sylvanus Warren's estate, a matter that had been pending for three years. Sylvanus had left his family in real estate and personal property a legacy valued at $17,700. Under the terms of the will, Phoebe Warren received $4,700 and each of his six children received $2,150.[10]

Returning to duty, Warren was given the task of reconnoitering the north bank of the Rappahannock in search of possible fording places to be used by the Army of the Potomac when it resumed the offensive. In response to seven questions posed by Hooker, Warren in late April drew up a memorandum

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[9]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 268n; Memo on Badges, early 1863, Warren Papers, III, 18. Several designs including the trefoil for the Second Corps and a Maltese Cross for the Fifth Corps were accepted.

[10]Warren, Journal February 3 to August 12, 1863, entry for February 28, 1863; Division of Sylvanus Warren Estate, March 4, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 18.

informing his superior that there were several points at which the Rappahannock could be easily and quickly bridged by pontoons.[11] Hooker's intense interest in pontoons was motivated by his plan to flank the Confederate left with the bulk of his army, while leaving a force at Falmouth to hold Lee's army at Fredericksburg.[12] While three Federal corps forded the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, twenty-seven miles above Fredericksburg, Warren was dispatched late in the afternoon of April 29th to United States Ford, some ten miles above the town, to reconnoiter the approaches to the Rappahannock in order to determine the feasibility of the passage of General Darius Couch's Second Corps to the south bank of the river.[13] He soon discovered that the road approaches were impracticable for the transportation of pontoons to the water's edge. Procuring the services of five hundred men from General Couch, Warren put them to work clearing the approaches of obstructions and preparing a roadway down to the north bank of the Rappahannock. By 3 P.M., April 30th, the bridge had been laid, and within a few hours the Second Corps had successfully crossed the stream to join forces with other Federal units which had bridged the river further to the north.[14]

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[11] O.R., I, 25, II, 266.

[12] Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 271-272; O.R., I, 25, I, 193. The Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps turned the Confederate left at Kelly's Ford.

[13] Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 273; O.R., I, 25, I, 197.

[14] J.C.C.W., I, 43-44; O.R., I, 25, I, 305; John Bigelow, Jr., The Campaign of Chancellorsville (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1910), p. 215.

To this point Hooker's turning movement had been an unqualified success. By nightfall, April 30th, the Federal commander had concentrated four Union corps on Lee's left flank at Chancellorsville while two additional Northern corps opposite Fredericksburg maintained constant pressure upon the Army of Northern Virginia to mask the true intent of the Union army. This was accomplished with minimum casualties.

Even before he had finished throwing a pontoon across United States Ford, Warren was given an additional assignment. At 9:30 A.M., he received a directive from Hooker ordering him to report, at the earliest opportunity, to the commanding officer at Chancellorsville "to assist him and give him the benefit of your advice in establishing a line of defense at that place or vicinity."[15] While establishing a defense line might have been prudent, the message showed that Hooker, even at this early stage of the campaign, was considering giving up the offensive and assuming a defensive position in order that "the enemy must either ingloriously fly, or come out from behind his defenses and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him."[16]

Chancellorsville was nothing more than a large brick house situated on a plateau hemmed in by a region covered by scrub oak and dwarfed pines intertwined by thickets of vines, creepers, and briars. The direct distance between Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg was but ten miles with two roads.

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[15]Hooker to Warren, April 30, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 2.

[16]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 275.

linking them. A rapid movement of the Federal army toward Fredericksburg from Chancellorsville had the added advantage of coming upon open fields where large numbers of troops could be deployed.[17] Securing the fields would enable Hooker to take advantage of his superiority in numbers in giving battle to Lee's army.

During the early morning of May 1st, Warren advanced three miles along the turnpike toward Fredericksburg to scout the road. As he rode out he observed:

> As far as I went, I found the road good and broad. The country along the road for the first mile is wooded on both sides, and was generally so to the left of it (except some cleared fields) nearly to the river. The inhabitants reported the roads and communications to be indirect and in bad condition between the road and river. To the right of the road it was rather more open, and in places the clearing extended across from the road to the Plank road.[18]

After riding nearly three miles, Warren encountered the Eighth Pennsylvania Cavalry picketing the turnpike within sight of an enemy breastwork which had been hastily thrown across the road. Returning to the Chancellor House at 10 A.M., he reported his findings to General Hooker.[19]

Hooker ordered an advance shortly before 11 A.M. Two divisions of the Fifth Corps under General Meade moved along the river road toward Banks' Ford on the Rappahannock; the Twelfth Corps, under the direction of General Henry

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[17]Warren Lee Goss, Recollections of a Private (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1890), p. 144; J.C.C.W., I, 44.

[18]O.R., I, 25, I, 198.

[19]Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 237.

Slocum, moved out on the Plank road further to the south while Sykes' division marched along the macadam turnpike. As Warren had just returned from a reconnaissance along this road, he joined General Sykes as an advisor.[20]

Meade's and Slocum's advance was slowed by natural obstacles as well as their lack of familiarity with the roads. In the center, Sykes' command, being smaller and more compact than the units on its left and right and benefiting from Warren's knowledge of the road, advanced at a rapid pace and soon outdistanced the other Federal troops. When Sykes' division gained open ground on a ridge about two miles from Chancellorsville, it encountered five brigades of Jackson's corps, under Lafayette McLaws, and a major encounter ensued. Although heavily outnumbered, Sykes recognized the importance of the high ground he held, and, though the Confederates had outflanked him, he refused to be pushed off the ridge.[21]

Realizing that Sykes' force had to be reinforced if the Federals were to maintain control of their advance position, Warren rode back to Chancellorsville and reported to Hooker the plight of Sykes' command. Hooker, believing that Lee had beaten him to the offensive, directed Warren to ride back to the two advance corps and order them to retreat without delay to positions they had held the previous night. By taking this action the Union commander forfeited the

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[20] J.C.C.W., I, 44; O.R., I, 25, I, 198.

[21] M.H.S.M., III, 158-159; XIII, 497; O.R., I, 25, I, 525.

initiative and all that had been previously gained by his brilliant flanking movement. Every attempt made by Warren to protest this course of action proved futile.[22] It was Hooker's firm conviction that this movement was necessary because he believed that he could not move his troops through the narrow forest way fast enough to prevent Lee's forces from beating his command in detail as it emerged from the dense underbrush.[23]

Turning his mount back toward Fredericksburg, Warren informed the senior generals of Hooker's decision to retire the army to the vicinity of Chancellorsville. Darius Couch, commander of the Second Corps; Winfield Scott Hancock, one of Couch's division commanders; and Sykes were appalled by "Fighting Joe's" order. Since Hancock's division had relieved Sykes, there was no imminent threat that the Union line might be overwhelmed by a Confederate thrust. Viewing the changed circumstances, Warren counselled disobedience to the army commander's order until he could inform Hooker of the favorable position held by Hancock's troops on open ground. This proved futile. By the time Warren persuaded the army commander to relent and rescind his order, Couch had abandoned the ridge and the enemy had promptly taken possession of it.[24]

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[22] Ibid., III, 197; Francis A. Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), pp. 221-222.

[23] M.H.S.M., XIII, 497.

[24] Glenn Tucker, Hancock the Superb (New York: The Bobb-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960), p. 119; Abner Doubleday, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, (New York: Charles Scribner's Son's 1882), p. 14.

The troops fell back and took up positions near Chancellorsville, with the Fifth Corps on the extreme left, the Twelfth Corps and one division of the Third Corps in the center, and the Eleventh Corps on the extreme right. To complete his disposition Hooker placed several divisions in the rear to form the army reserve.[25]

After the repulse of his advance on May 1st, General Hooker retired to his room at 10 P.M. and locked his door. Army morale had deteriorated during the evening, and the senior generals were incensed by his unpredictable behavior. Sometime after midnight, several of the highest ranking officers in the Army of the Potomac, including Meade and Daniel Sickles, commander of the Third Corps, awakened Warren and asked him, as a staff officer, in Hooker's name, to issue an order moving the troops to more favorable positions. Although undoubtedly flattered by the knowledge that ranking corps commanders were forced by circumstances to appeal to a brigadier for aid, Warren refused to entertain their overtures. But it was not loyalty to Hooker that stayed his hand. He was as disgusted at the general's actions as the members of the cabal; being a practical man, however, he refused to intervene on grounds that he might in case of disaster be found guilty of a treasonable offense.[26]

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[25] J.C.C.W., I, 45.

[26] Warren to D.N. Couch, November 17, 1876 and Warren to Daniel Sickles, February 15, 1875, Warren Papers, VII, 3. Warren in his official report and in testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War makes no mention of this incident. On the contrary, he indicated that it was the corps commanders who wished to retain the exposed positions rather than the army commander.

During the morning and early afternoon of May 2nd, Warren served as a courier and aide-de-camp, scurrying back and forth along the Federal line, observing troop positions and making recommendations to the corps commanders concerning the disposition of troops. Late that afternoon, he heard heavy firing coming from the extreme right of the Union line and headed there. Upon arriving, he found that the infantry of the Eleventh Corps had been completely routed by Stonewall Jackson's surprise flank attack. After dispatching an aide to warn Generals Sickles and Alfred Pleasonton of the stampede of Howard's corps, Warren took charge of some batteries of the Eleventh Corps and formed them across the Plank Road. Under his direction, the guns placed wheel to wheel fired several volleys which were sufficient temporarily to check the advance of the Southerners. From this forward position, Warren rode back to Fairview, a crest at the western end of a clearing near Chancellorsville, where he aided Captain Best, chief of Twelfth Corps artillery, in deploying his pieces and directed the artillerymen to fire solid shot over the heads of the retiring Federals into the advancing ranks of the Confederates.[27] The combined fire of thirty Federal artillery pieces, supported by ample infantry, effectively checked Jackson's assault at dusk.

After dark, Hooker learned that Lee's army was in

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[27] Doubleday, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, pp. 30, 35-36; O.R., I, 25, I, 200; J.C.C.W., I, 45; Warren to Abner Doubleday, June 6, 1881, Warren Papers, XIV, 64.

possession of the high ground in front of the Union right. Realizing that his position was untenable, he directed Warren to lay out a new defense line further to the rear. "Fighting Joe" emphasized that speed was of the essence, since the Confederate positions on the height commanded the Federal troops in the valley so that the latter would not be able to maintain their lines if the Southerners renewed their assault the following morning.[28] Ably aided by Captain Comstock, Warren spent the next two hours occupied in placing the Union troops in more secure positions.

Since the Federals had no intention of retreating during the night, it appeared likely that a major battle would be fought the following day. That evening, having learned from Confederate prisoners that Lee had withdrawn most of his troops from the heights above Fredericksburg to strengthen his attacks upon the Northern flanking column, Hooker sent instructions to the commander of the left wing, General John Sedgwick. Let him immediately fall upon the weakened Confederate line at Fredericksburg, and, after breaking through at Marye's Heights, attack Lee's rear. Warren, who knew much of the road that the Sixth Corps was to march over, asked Hooker that he be sent to Sedgwick to guide his troops from Fredericksburg to Chancellorsville. Warren's offer was accepted. He was undoubtedly instructed to keep Hooker

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[28]Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 314.

informed of the progress being made by Sedgwick's corps.[29]

Leaving Chancellorsville at 10:30 P.M. with a single aide, Warren traveled as rapidly as possible to Sedgwick's camp. Because a heavy fog hung over the river and adjacent countryside, his progress was slowed, and it was not until 3 A.M., May 3rd, that he finally found Sedgwick and rode with him toward Fredericksburg. Giving the corps commander a copy of Hooker's last battle order, Warren informed him "somewhat confidentially" of the precarious position of the Federal troops at Chancellorsville, hoping that this knowledge would motivate Sedgwick to move as rapidly as possible to the succor of the Federal right.[30]

It was not until mid-morning that the Union troops were able to get into position to assault the Confederate works above Fredericksburg. As the hours passed with little accomplished, Warren grew more and more impatient at the delay. He strongly urged an immediate attack, and finally Sedgwick made dispositions for an assault on the very heights that had frustrated Burnside's assault the previous December.[31] Desiring to scout the enemy's position, General Warren attached himself to a strong force of Federal infantry dispatched by Sedgwick to move up the Rappahannock to attack the left of the Confederate force in an attempt to turn the

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[29] Ibid., p. 335; O.R., I, 25, I, 201.

[30] Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 382.

[31] Doubleday, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, p. 57; Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, II, 95.

strong Southern position on Marye's Heights. A deep canal at the foot of a hill held by the enemy blocked the Union advance on the right. Discovering a damaged bridge over the canal, Warren, under heavy enemy enfilading fire, supervised its repairs. The activity of his flanking force created an effective diversion that drew enemy reserves from Sedgwick's front, and permitted the success of the latter's bayonet assault at 11 A.M. on the enemy position on Marye's Heights.[32]

Mindful of Hooker's instructions to keep him informed of the progress of the Sixth Corps toward Chancellorsville, Warren at 1 P.M. dispatched the following message to the commanding general:

> We have advanced with Newton's division on the plank road as far as Guest's house. The heights were carried splendidly at 11 A.M. by Newton. Howe immediately afterward carried the heights to the south of Hazel Run. We have been waiting to get his division behind us before advancing, to get up batteries and stragglers, and get the brigades straightened out, which were a little disorganized by a successful charge and pursuit. Our loss, though honorable proof of a severe contest is not very severe. The Sixth Corps is in splendid spirits. We captured several guns. General Howe reports a force yet in his front.[33]

By the time Hooker received this encouraging message, circumstances at Chancellorsville and on the march from Fredericksburg had drastically changed. All during the morning hours, Jackson's corps, now under the command of

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[32] O.R., I, 25, I, 201-202; Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, II, 94-95; Warren to Miss Emily Chase, May 24, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

[33] O.R., I, 25, II, 393.

J.E.B. Stuart, had pressed the Federals back on Chancellorsville. Shortly before 10 A.M., a chance artillery ball struck one of the pillars of the Chancellor House. The concussion stunned General Hooker and laid him prostrate for a short period of time. Without effective leadership, the Army of the Potomac fell back to a new line behind Chancellorsville.[34]

Lee pressed his advantage. Relying on Hooker to remain inactive after the rough handling his troops had suffered during the morning, the Confederate general dispatched reinforcements, under General McLaws, to General Jubal Early, whose troops were falling back after their defeat on Marye's Heights. By 4 P.M., Federal troops under Sedgwick engaged this Confederate force at Salem Church, near a crossroads midway between Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. After a severe fight Sedgwick's advance was effectively checked.[35]

Shortly after the repulse of the Sixth Corps at Salem Church, Warren returned to army headquarters by way of Banks' Ford and United States Ford. Arriving at 11 P.M., he immediately wakened Hooker, who was still feeling the effects of the injury suffered that morning and informed him of what had transpired with the left wing. Warren asked Hooker if he had any instructions to send to Sedgwick and the army commander

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[34]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 292-295.

[35]Ibid., pp. 298-299; O.R., I, 25, I, 203; M.H.S.M., III, 290-291.

responded, "None." Warren then withdrew, and rather than leaving Sedgwick in the dark regarding matters at Chancellorsville, he dispatched, on his own responsibility, a midnight telegraph message to the Sixth Corps commander.[36] "I find everything snug here," Warren observed,

> We contracted the line a little, and repulsed the last assault with ease. General Hooker wishes them to attack him to-morrow, if they will. He does not desire you to attack again in force unless he attacks him at the same time. He says you are too far away from him to direct. Look well to the safety of your corps, and keep up communication with General Benham, at Banks' Ford and Fredericksburg. You can go to either place, if you think best. To cross at Banks' Ford would bring you in supporting distance of the main body, and would be better than falling back to Fredericksburg.[37]

Admittedly this dispatch was written by Warren when he was exhausted by three days of incessant labor with little sleep. However, it was misleading. His reference to "we contracted the line a little" did not give Sedgwick a true picture of the military situation at Chancellorsville. The Federals had withdrawn a distance of from three-quarters to one and a half miles from Chancellorsville.[38] In addition, Warren did not inform Sedgwick that Hooker, suffering from shock, could not effectively exercise command of the army. However, this message from Warren was the only instructions Sedgwick received from army headquarters during the next twenty-four

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[36]Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 403; J.C.C.W., I, 48; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, III, 231-232.

[37]O.R., I, 25, I, 203.

[38]Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 403.

hours. Even though the politic Warren refused to criticize Hooker openly, Sedgwick was able to read between the lines of the message, and was quick to observe that since "Fighting Joe" had in reality abrogated effective command, he would be forced to determine his own actions without expecting any succor from the main Union force.[39]

On May 4th, the Confederates mounted several heavy attacks on Sedgwick's isolated force, and after resisting these onslaughts all day, the Union corps commander followed Warren's advice by retiring across the Rappahannock at Banks' Ford.[40] All that day, Hooker with over 70,000 men including two uncommitted corps, remained in his entrenchments, and although the troops could clearly hear the sound of battle in the distance, their commander made no effort to attack Lee's lightly held lines.[41]

Late on the evening of May 4th, Hooker consulted Warren and asked his advice concerning the course of action he should take for the coming day. Warren strongly urged the army commander to spend the night drawing up a plan of battle to engage the enemy in force the following morning.[42] Without reacting, one way or the other, to Warren's suggestion, Hooker

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[39]Such phrases as, "He says you are too far away from him to direct," and "Look well to the safety of your corps," indicated to Sedgwick that he could expect no aid from Hooker.

[40]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, III, 232.

[41]J.H. Stine, History of the Army of the Potomac (Washington, D.C.: Gibson Bros., 1893), pp. 377-378.

[42]O.R., I, 25, I, 512.

called a meeting of his corps commanders at midnight to seek their advice. Presenting the conditions of affairs, the army commander informed his senior generals that he was apprehensive of the steadiness of some of the troops, and presented for deliberation the question of advancing against the enemy or retreating across the Rappahannock. Afterwards Hooker, accompanied by the Chief of Staff, General Daniel Butterfield, left the meeting. Believing that the generals might want some information concerning the field of operations, Warren remained behind and listened to the discussion that ensued. Meade, John Reynolds, and O.O. Howard spoke emphatically in favor of advancing, while General Couch felt constrained from expressing an opinion, since - "he had not all the facts in his knowledge," and General Sickles, a political general, expressed disapproval of an attack, on the grounds that victory was doubtful and a defeat would expose Washington to enemy capture. The discussion grew more heated with Sickles stating that he was astonished at the manner in which the commanding general had presented the subject and was appalled that the responsibility for possible forthcoming action should be shifted from Hooker to the corps commanders. Thereupon Warren, believing that the close staff relationship he had with Hooker placed him in an embarrassing position, withdrew from the meeting.[43]

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[43] Ibid., Warren's Council of War memorandum; Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 419.

When Hooker returned, the generals informed him that by a vote of 3 to 2 they favored an attack upon Lee's army. After their decision was announced, however, Hooker informed his generals that he would take upon himself the responsibility of sanctioning a withdrawal across the Rappahannock. As the generals left the command tent, Reynolds, visibly disturbed, blurted out, "What was the use of calling us together at this time when he intended to retreat anyhow?"[44] General Meade ably expressed the feelings of the senior generals, including Warren, when he observed, "Hooker never lost his head, nor did he ever allow himself to be influenced by me or my advice. The objection I have to Hooker is that he did not listen to those around him."[45]

Once determined upon retreat, Hooker began devising plans for extricating his army from its precarious position. Ordering all corps commanders to construct roads, if necessary, from their positions to United States Ford, he directed Warren to prepare a new, contracted defense line further to the rear to protect the army in its withdrawal across the Rappahannock.[46] Consequently, Warren, with the aid of 1,000 soldiers, was busily engaged during the daylight hours of May 5th in laying out an immense line of fortifications. Difficult under the best of circumstances, this work was made

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[44]Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 420.

[45]Meade to Mrs. Meade, May 23, 1863, Meade Papers. (The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

[46]Bigelow, The Campaign of Chancellorsville, p. 420.

even more uncomfortable by heavy rains which made the ground soft and muddy. Since most of the troops assigned to this task were members of line regiments and not engineers, they had no experience with the use of pick and shovel. One soldier in a Pennsylvania regiment, impressed by Warren's demeanor at the time, left a vivid account of the general's activities:

> Warren in person went into the trenches among the men engaged in this work and was seen engaged with the privates shovelling up the clay and passing down on the embankments aiding and instructing the men in the various details. It was the first time the boys of the Army of the Potomac had ever been treated to the sight of an officer using a shovel and working like a private in the trenches. . . .[47]

Dressed in the work outfit of a private, Warren passed up and down the line throwing up several hundred spadefuls of earth. In so doing, he was able to advise the soldiers on the best and most efficient way to perform their task. Privates who witnessed this act were so impressed that in future assignments they were always anxious to serve under him.

The Army of the Potomac recrossed the Rappahannock without enemy interference during the early morning hours of May 6th. Its withdrawal was slowed by a heavy rainstorm and a rise in the river that threatened to wash away the pontoons. Remaining with the rear guard during the retreat, Warren was actively engaged in posting troops.[48]

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[47] Proceedings of a Public Meeting of Soldiers of the Late War in the City of Pittsburg Pennsylvania and Vicinity Held Saturday Evening August 12, 1882, to Take Suitable Action on Hearing the Sad News of the Death of Gouverneur Kemble Warren Late Major General U.S.A. This memorial volume bound in velvet is in the Library of Congress.

[48] M.H.S.M., III, 190; O.R., I, 25, I, 509.

Soldiers who had marched out from Falmouth a week earlier with implicit faith and confidence in their own capabilities and in the leadership of "Fighting Joe" Hooker returned to camp disillusioned, dispirited, and sullen.[49] Writing to his brother William on May 8th, Warren fully expressed the feelings of the Army of the Potomac about the recent defeat. "The army recrossed the river in the night between the 5th & 6th inst." he observed,

> It was unnecessary for us to retreat, and we have lost the fruits of our splendid fighting by it. There was a want of nerve somewhere in carrying out the movement. I urged and counselled activity and rode from one end of our long lines over and over again to push things. I spared myself neither from danger nor fatigue, nor took any time to sleep. . . . . . . Our great weakness, in my opinion, is in the imcompetency of many of our Corps Commanders. They don't know how to manage and fight troops.
>
> I am almost in despair that we shall ever get the right men in the right places.
>
> Our men fought splendidly, except the 11th and 12th corps. It is the old story - one or two corps fighting the whole army of the enemy.
>
> I hope we will advance and try our chances again. I am for pushing things to a termination one way or another.[50]

News of Warren's accomplishments cheered his relatives and friends in Cold Spring who avidly followed his career. He received a letter from his sister Eliza shortly after Chancellorsville, a note which greatly strengthened his belief that he had done everything in his power in the recent campaign to win victory for the Union. Enthusiastically she observed,

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[49] M.H.S.M., III, 190.

[50] Warren to William Warren, May 8, 1863, Warren Papers, I, 3.

> Thank heaven you have gone unharmed through the last great battle. We felt very anxious about you. . . . Everybody is praising you, and if the people of Cold Spring could say who should be commander in chief, that position would soon be yours. Mrs. Jones told me a few days ago that Mr. Gouverneur Kemble said that there were three officers who would come out plus far ahead of all the rest, and he named you the first.[51]

"Commander in Chief" of the Army of the Potomac was a rank that the ambitious Warren might have aspired to, but he had to be temporarily satisfied with his promotion to the position of Chief Engineer, a post bestowed upon him on May 12th, as a reward for the efficient service he had rendered during the fighting just completed. Once more as on previous occasions, he could be personally gratified by his own deportment in a campaign that was filled with errors in judgment and missed opportunities.

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[51]Eliza Warren to G.K. Warren, May 14, 1863, Warren Papers, XIV, 72.

CHAPTER VIII

LITTLE ROUND TOP

The lull in fighting that followed the completion of the Chancellorsville campaign permitted Warren time to turn his thoughts once more to Emily Chase. For more than a year he had written to her pledging his love. At every opportunity he sought leave to pay her a short visit at her home in Baltimore. These all too short moments together, while gratifying, did little to soothe his ardor. Writing to Emily on May 17th, Warren asserted, "If we were married we could be often together when now we cannot for in your position delicacy forbids you to meet me anywhere but at your home."[1] To further convince Emily that the time was appropriate for their marriage he observed,

> I hardly see now how this army can move far from Washington for some weeks to come, but it will not be so announced to the public. I am going to try and get some idea of what will be done but in truth I think the authorities do not know - they seem to be waiting on Providence. The war will not cease, perhaps for years, so we can hardly wait its termination for our union. Then dear one comes the question shall we be married soon? . . .
>
> If the army remains here I can always have a steamboat at my disposal.[2]

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[1]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, May 17, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

[2]Ibid.

Warren's solicitations did not go unheeded. Emily answered in the affirmative, and on June 11th, he noted in his journal, "Sent Robert to Baltimore to appoint wedding day."[3] "I had quite a . . . talk with Genl. Hooker last night," he informed Emily,

> and he finally agreed we could announce the day of our marriage and nothing but actual battle should keep me away. So I propose it should be next Wednesday the 17th or the 18th. That will give time enough to inform our friends.[4]

While Warren's wedding plans were reaching culmination, Lee began concentrating his army at Culpeper, in preparation for a renewed attempt to invade the North. By June 10th, Richard Ewell's corps had started for the Shenandoah Valley as the vanguard of a movement of the entire Army of Northern Virginia.[5]

The Federal forces were slow to react. After Hooker had been prodded into motion by stinging rebukes from President Lincoln and his General-in-Chief, Henry Halleck, on June 14th, the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac was moved from Falmouth to Dumfries. In the course of this retrograde movement Warren was assigned to command troops at Aquia Creek, where it was his mission to oversee the task of removing government property, in particular hospital tents,

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[3]Warren, Journal for February 3 to August 12, 1863, entry for June 11, 1863.

[4]Warren to Miss Emily Chase, June 11, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

[5]Robert W. Stribling, Gettysburg Campaign and Campaigns of 1864 and 1865 in Virginia (Petersburg: The Franklin Press Company, 1905), pp. 22-23.

military supplies, and rolling stock, from the exposed Federal depot. With the aid of 1500 troops Warren within two days, were able to report that he had successfully carried out the order.[6]

On July 16th, while superintending Union defenses at Aquia Creek, Warren received permission to leave his post and journey to Baltimore to be married. Accompanied by Lieutenant Roebling, the general reached Washington at day-break on the 17th, in time to catch the 6:30 train for Baltimore. Arriving there at 9 A.M., he immediately went to the Chase home on St. Paul Street, where the marriage ceremony was performed in the drawing-room at noon by the Reverend Henry Burroughs, the rector of Old North Church, Boston. After the ceremony, the bridegroom presented the minister with a generous check, which the clergyman, stating that he did not accept fees from kinsmen, hesitated to take. Recognizing that the minister had traveled a long distance from Boston to perform the ceremony, Warren insisted that Burroughs accept the offering. "Clergymen are no better off than those who serve their country, use it for your church," he said.[7]

At 5 P.M., while at his wedding reception, Warren

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[6]O.R., I, 27, I, 200; I, 27, III, 101, 104, 147, 200.

[7]Memo of Emily Warren, u.d., Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 17; Warren Journal for February 3, to August 12, 1863, entries for June 11, 14, 16, 17. The marriage ceremony performed on June 17, 1863 was the eighty-seventh anniversary of the death of Joseph Warren at Bunker Hill.

Gouverneur Kemble

Mrs. Warren

Two Views of General Warren

received an order from General Butterfield to post newly arrived troops from Aquia at Monocacy. He mulled over this order for a few minutes, but decided that since the troops would not be in position for several days, the matter was not pressing. He could go back to the business at hand.. The Warrens set out for Washington at 8 P.M., and although at Willard's he found another dispatch ordering him to go to Monocacy to post troops, he again judged the matter not pressing and decided to linger longer.[8]

On June 19th, Warren received peremptory orders at once to rejoin army headquarters at Fairfax Court House. Not able to delay the inevitable any longer, he sent his bride back to Baltimore under escort of his sisters and immediately returned to his post with the Army of the Potomac.[9]

Hooker was delighted to have his trusted advisor once more at his side. "Fighting Joe," not entirely sure of Lee's offensive intentions, directed Warren to review the strategic situation as a military exercise and to make suggestions as to the course of action that the Federal army should pursue to counter Lee's advance. Warren's agile mind was able to picture quickly the entire scope of military operations, and within two days he was able to respond with a full report that greatly clarified for Hooker the intentions of the Confederate commander. In his memorandum he wrote:

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[8]Warren, Journal for February 3 to August 12, 1863, entry for June 17, 1863.

[9]Ibid., entries for June 19, 20, 1863.

> The best information I have had access to places the rebel forces on the Potomac above Harper's Ferry, crossing into Maryland by the ford below Shepardstown; probably half the army being now over, and a considerable force advanced as far as Shepardstown.
>
> If he moves forward, his objective point will probably be Harrisburg. This place, I assume, will be so well defended that no cavalry raid, or force much less that one of his corps, can capture it, and that we shall not have to use any of our force for this purpose, and ought not to.[10]

Believing that if Lee attempted to move into Pennsylvania with his whole force he would be compelled to abandon his line of communication with Virginia, Warren further advised Hooker to adopt a Fabian policy. This would enable the Federal army to operate successfully at the Confederate rear and compel Lee to keep his army concentrated to prevent it from being destroyed in detail. Warren relied upon the hostility of the Northern populace to prevent the Southern army from obtaining necessary supplies. He recommended that the Federals should not fail to give battle to any detached corps or divisions wherever they could overwhelm it without exposing the rest of their troops to be attacked by a superior force of the enemy.[11]

In concluding his memorandum, Warren strongly urged the immediate movement of the entire Army of the Potomac to the vicinity of Harper's Ferry. By taking this action, he believed that Hooker could cover Baltimore and Washington while protecting his own lines of communication. Moreover, this

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[10]Warren to Joseph Hooker, June 24, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 3.

[11]Ibid.

maneuver would permit the Federal army to operate on Lee's line of communication, and would prevent him from detaching a single corps for an invasion of Pennsylvania, lest he expose the remainder of his army to an attack by the Federals in superior force. Again, Warren was advocating a policy of delay and attrition, "based upon the idea that we are not to try and go around his army and drive it out of Maryland, as we did last year, but to paralyze all its movements by threatening its flank and rear if it advances, and gain time to collect reinforcements sufficient to render us the stronger army of the two, if we are not so already."[12] So certain was Warren that General Lee was contemplating an invasion of Pennsylvania that he dispatched his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Roebling, to Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia to obtain all the best available county maps of Maryland and southern Pennsylvania.[13]

In writing to his wife on June 23rd, Warren gave indications of both the seriousness of the military situation and his insatiable appetite for official recognition and promotion. "The movements of the enemy are still much unknown to us," he observed,

> but indications favor his being in force along the Potomac above Harper's ferry on both sides of the river. If so we are probably to have an exciting campaign once more in Maryland or Pennsylvania. You can tell this to your Father but do not mention any-

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[12]Stine, History of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 439-440; O.R., I, 27, III, 292.

[13]Warren to Roebling, June 24, 1863, Roebling Papers, I, (Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey).

> thing I write to you to others. If Genl. Lee moves up into Penn. towards Harrisburg he will threaten both Baltimore and Philadelphia, and make a great panic I have no doubt, but I think it will ultimately ruin him. . . . A crisis will demand new men and measures and in the changes I must be advanced. I have served the country faithfully and disinterestedly while those who have brought so many misfortunes upon us have been working for themselves. They'll get their reward and I'll get mine. The longer the war lasts now the better it is for me until I have a more potent voice in its control, for I have become a thorough soldier and need a field to display my knowledge and experience which would all be lost in peace.[14]

Following Warren's sage advice Hooker made preparations to concentrate his army on the north bank of the Potomac, while sending his Chief of Staff to Washington to procure reinforcements for the Army of the Potomac. Hooker's representative, General Butterfield, met with a cool response from President Lincoln and General Halleck, who informed the Chief of Staff that all available troops were needed to defend the national capital against possible Confederate attacks.[15]

After the debacle at Chancellorsville, Lincoln had become disenchanted with Hooker. Chaffing at the inaction of the Federal forces during late May and early June, he dryly remarked to the army commander, "If the head of Lee's army is at Martinsburg and the tail of it on the plank-road between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, the animal must be very slim somewhere."[16] Hooker's call for reinforcements,

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[14]Warren to Emily Warren, June 23, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

[15]Stine, History of the Army of the Potomac, p. 440.

[16]Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, III, 488.

and in particular his demand that the Harper's Ferry garrison be placed under his control, was the last straw. During the early morning hours of June 28th, Colonel James A. Hardie of General Halleck's staff aroused General George Gordon Meade from his sleep and announced that Hooker was removed from command of the army and that he, Meade, was the new commander of the Union army.[17]

The change in command was forcefully brought home to Warren. Awakened by Meade, he was told, "I am in command of the Army of the Potomac and want you to be my chief of staff."[18] But he refused this position. Meade must retain Butterfield in this post, he said. The Chief of Staff had a great knowledge of Hooker's plans, orders, and instructions. As for himself, he added that with a major battle imminent he could best serve Meade as Chief Engineer of the Army - a post with which he was familiar.[19]

Rumors concerning impending changes in the staff circulated throughout the army. Charles S. Wainwright, chief of Fifth Corps artillery, wrote, "Butterfield remains with him

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[17]Meade to Mrs. Margaret Meade, June 29, 1963, Meade Papers, Letters to Mrs. Meade, 1863, (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

[18]Warren "recollection," u.d., Warren Papers, VII, 4. This incident related by Warren in an undated "recollection" could not be verified. No references are made to it in the Meade Papers.

[19]Ibid.; Edwin C. Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), pp. 218, 666n.

at present, but Warren I understand will be the new chief of staff."[20] Warren himself was not entirely sure about his future. Writing to his wife on the very day Hooker was superseded by Meade he related, "I do not know what effect this will have on me. I was spoken to about being Chief of Staff but I prefer not to take it. I may continue as Chief Engr., or I may get command of a Division."[21]

Upon assuming command, Meade's first task was to move his corps from the vicinity of Frederick, Maryland, towards Emmitsburg on the Pennsylvania border, so as to interpose the Federal army between the enemy and Baltimore. Headquarters for the Army of the Potomac was established at Taneytown, seven miles southeast of Emmitsburg.[22] On June 30th, Meade instructed his immediate staff to examine a position on Pipe Creek, near Taneytown, with the idea of selecting a site to fight a defensive battle. Warren and all his assistants were promptly dispatched to reconnoiter this line.[23]

Destiny worked against a battle at Pipe Creek. Early on the morning of July 1st, Henry Heth's Confederate infantry

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[20]Charles S. Wainwright, A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright 1861-1865, Allan Nevins ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), p. 227. Hereafter referred to as A Diary of Battle.

[21]Warren to Emily Warren, June 28, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

[22]M.H.S.M., III, 405.

[23]Ibid.; J.C.C.W., I, 376-377.

division accidently encountered John Buford's Federal cavalry at Gettysburg, a small town of about three thousand inhabitants, ten or twelve miles north of the Maryland line.[24] General John Reynolds' First Corps went to the support of Buford and by 11 A.M. a major fight ensued. Apprehensive because of this unexpected development, Meade ordered Warren to go to Gettysburg to examine the topography and see if it was suitable to fight a defensive battle.[25] The Chief Engineer's arrival at Gettysburg was inadvertently delayed by his taking the wrong road which brought him to the field via Emmitsburg. By the time he arrived Reynolds had been killed by an enemy sharpshooter, the Eleventh Corps routed by a successful Confederate flank attack, and the remnants of two defeated Union corps driven back to Cemetery Hill, a height just to the south of the town.[26]

General Winfield Scott Hancock, commander of the Second Corps, who reached the area before Warren, had discretionary orders to hold the line at Gettysburg, if he thought the position a good one or to fall back south to the Pipe Creek line. At 1:10 P.M., Butterfield wrote Hancock, "If you think the ground and position there a better one under existing circumstances, you will so advise the general, and he will order all the troops up.

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[24] M.H.S.M., V, 385.

[25] Warren to Theodore Lyman, June 18, 1877, Warren Papers, XIV, 66.

[26] J.C.C.W., I, 377.

You know the general's views, and General Warren, who is fully aware of them, has gone out to see General Reynolds."[27] Before responding to this message Hancock and Warren made a careful study of the terrain. Convinced that the ground was favorable for a defensive battle, they so informed Meade.[28] During the evening hours of July 1st, Warren assisted Hancock in establishing order among the troops of the defeated First and Eleventh Corps and laid out a strong line of battle along the crest of Cemetery Hill. He also gathered up Federal stragglers and placed them in line to resist any further Confederate advance.[29]

Meade now began to act upon the intelligence he had received. Accompanied by his chief of artillery reserve, Henry Hunt, he left Taneytown at 11 P.M. on July 1st and rode to Gettysburg, where he reached the Federal position by 1 A.M., July 2nd. He conferred with Generals Slocum, Howard, Sickles, and Warren, who informed him that the position held by the Union army was strong enough for the Federals to resist any renewed attack.[30]

The information was correct. By morning, the Federals had deployed their forces in the configuration of a fishhook

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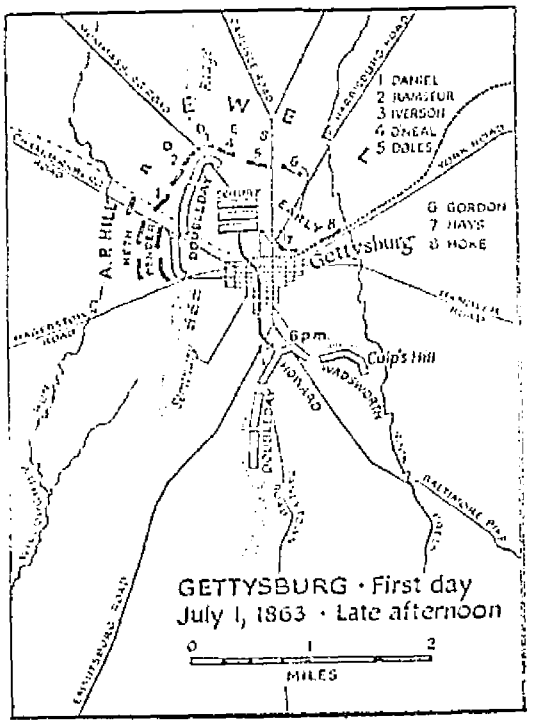
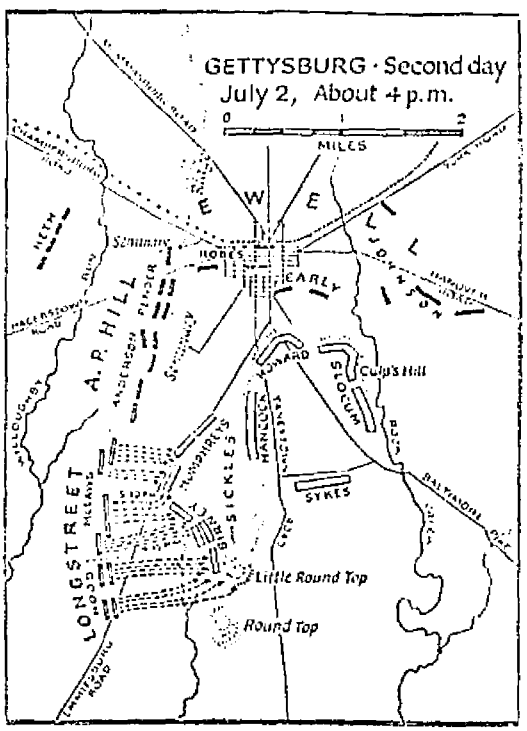
[27]William H. Powell, The Fifth Army Corps (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), pp. 510-511; O.R., I, 27, III, 461.

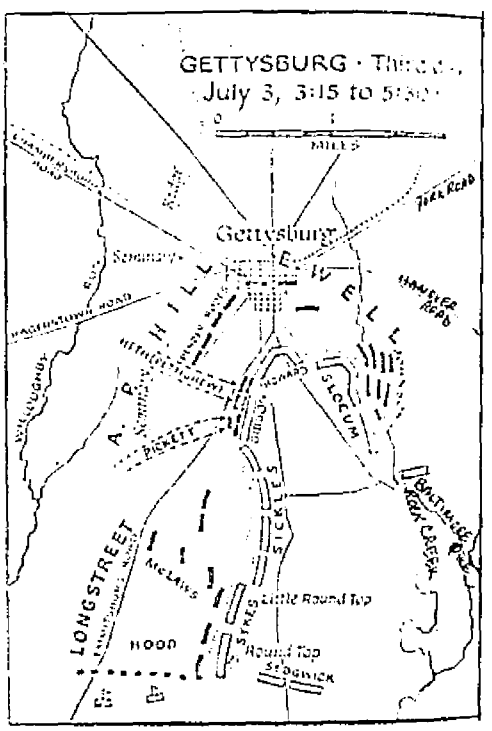
[28]Glenn Tucker, Hancock The Superb (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960), p. 138.

[29]Memorandum on Gettysburg Campaign, u.d., Meade Papers, u.p.

[30]Warren W. Hassler, Jr. Commanders of the Army of the Potomac (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), p. 176.


1 DANIEL
2 RAMSEUR
3 IVERSON
4 O'NEAL
5 DOLES
6 GORDON
7 HAYS
8 HOKE
A.P. HILL
Gettysburg
6 p.m.
Culp's Hill
GETTYSBURG · First day
July 1, 1863 · Late afternoon
0 1 2
MILES


GETTYSBURG · Second day
July 2, About 4 p.m.
0 1 2
MILES
A.P. HILL
LONGSTREET
Culp's Hill
Little Round Top
Round Top


GETTYSBURG · Third day
July 3, 3:15 to 5:30
0 1
MILES
Gettysburg
A.P. HILL
LONGSTREET
Little Round Top
Round Top

on the hills and ridges beyond Gettysburg. The Union right, the crook of the fishhook, was protected by occupying Culp's Hill, a wooded and rocky height. Further to the south, the shank was dominated by Cemetery Hill, a flat promontory which tapered off at its southern end into Cemetery Ridge. The extreme left of the Federal line was dominated by two prominent hills, Big Round Top, whose occupation by Union troops would guard the Taneytown Road, and Little Round Top, a small hill a quarter mile to the northeast that was the key to the entire Federal position. In Southern hands, it would make the Northern line on Cemetery Ridge indefensible.[31]

Meade spent most of the morning of July 2nd obsessed with the idea that Lee meant to assault the Federal right on Culp's Hill. Refusing to believe reports that the Confederates were massing their troops to attack the Union left in order to interpose themselves between the Army of the Potomac and Washington, he sent Warren to Culp's Hill to reconnoiter the region in the vicinity of General Slocum's Twelfth Corps to see if an attack from there was feasible. After a careful survey, Warren late in the morning reported that the ground was not favorable for an assault on the Confederate left.[32] As he observed in a dispatch sent to Meade, "the ground was

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[31]Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, pp. 330-331, map following page 332; Frank A. Haskell, The Battle of Gettysburg, (Madison, 1908), pp. 18-19.

[32]J.C.C.W., I, 377; Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 337; Hassler, Commanders of the Army of the Potomac, p. 176.

rough being the valley of a considerable stream with dams upon it; . . . therefore it was favorable to the defense and not to the attack, and . . . artillery could only be moved with difficulty through woods and marshy places."[33] Respecting Warren's sound judgment, Meade gave up any idea he might have entertained to strike the Confederate left with the Fifth and Twelfth Corps.

Seeing that his plans to attack the enemy's left had come to nought, Meade began to deploy his troops to the left with the prospect of assaulting Lee's right.[34] As late as 3 P.M., he had not determined whether to attack or to maintain a defensive posture. At this time he wired Halleck, "The Army is fatigued, - I have to-day up to this time waited the attacks of the enemy, - I having a strong position for defense. - I am not determined as yet on attacking him till his position is more developed."[35] "I feel fully the responsibility resting on me and will endeavor to act with caution," he added.[36] He was reacting in response to Lee's actions, and he had determined that if the Confederates attempted to interpose themselves between the Army of the Potomac and Washington, he would fall back to the southeast on his base of

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[33]Warren to Theodore Lyman, June 18, 1877, Warren Papers, XIV, 66. Because of the press of army business after the Chancellorsville Campaign, Warren could not find an opportunity to write an official report on the Gettysburg Campaign. However, much insight on his activities at Gettysburg can be found in his post-war correspondence with other Civil War notables.

[34]Doubleday, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, p. 157.

[35]Letterbook, June 28-July 19, 1863, Meade Papers, p. 42.

[36]Ibid., p. 43.

supplies at Westminster.[37]

Warren now performed a feat which was to make him famous. Accompanying Meade in inspection of the Union left, he readily observed the poor disposition of General Sickles' troops, who were fully one half mile out to the front of the Federal main line. Because of its position the Corps was entirely disconnected with Hancock's Second Corps on its right, and beyond effective supporting distance. Gesturing toward a ridge in the rear of the Third Corps' advanced line, he exclaimed to Meade, "here is where our line should be."[38] Meade promptly responded that it was too late to recall Sickles, since the enemy was already attacking the Third Corps' position. As the army commander rode toward Sickles' imperiled troops at the Peach Orchard salient, he remarked, "Warren! I hear a little peppering going on in the direction of that little hill off yonder. I wish you would ride over and if anything serious is going on, attend to it."[39] Accompanied by several aide-de-camps and some orderlies, Warren rode to Little Round Top. The Chief Engineer climbed to the summit of the 300 foot hill and readily observed that this position was the key to the entire Federal line. Because of carelessness on the part of high ranking officers, this strategic height had been left unoccupied save for a small signal unit, and thereby left

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Warren to Theodore Lyman, June 18, 1877, Warren Papers, XIV, 66.

[39] Washington A. Roebling, Wash Roebling's War (Newark, Delaware: The Spiral Press, 1961), p. 21.

at the mercy of Lee's troops.[40] In a letter written many years after the conclusion of the war, Warren recorded his feeling of dismay on finding the strategic position unguarded:

> On reaching Little Round Top, my worst apprehensions were confirmed. I sent word to a battery commander to fire a shell into the woods beyond, and, watching its flight, I saw the gleam of a line of muskets nearly a mile long, already arrayed to outflank our line, and there was not a man on the hill.[41]

Hastily sending a dispatch to Meade informing him of the perilous plight of the exposed position, he asked that at least a division be sent to him to guarantee the safety of the hill.[42] While waiting for the arrival of troops, the impatient Warren climbed down the hill and found General Sykes, whom he informed of what he had seen and asked him for a portion of his command to secure the position. After obtaining Sykes' promise that he would dispatch infantry, Warren returned to his post on the summit of Little Round Top.[43]

At this point elements of John Hood's Texas division, under General Evander Law, began ascending the rocky ravine

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[40]Oliver W. Norton, Strong Vincent and His Brigade at Gettysburg (Chicago: n.p., 1909), p. 10; Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox, p. 363.

[41]Warren to Theodore Lyman, June 18, 1877, Warren Papers, XIV, 66. Professor Edwin Coddington in his work, The Gettysburg Campaign, calls this account "romantic" and doubts its authenticity. Whether Warren's recall was faulty or not, it cannot be denied that it was Warren who discovered the threat to the Federal battle position at Little Round Top. (See Coddington p. 740)

[42]Warren to Porter Farley, July 13, 1872, Warren Papers, XIV, 66.

[43]Norton, Strong Vincent and His Brigade at Gettysburg, pp. 10-11.

which separated Little Round Top from Big Round Top. Observing this movement, Warren directed the members of the signal party occupying Little Round Top to continue waving their flags, maintaining a show of Union strength on the elevation, while he once more scampered down the far slope of the prominence in search of infantry supports.[44]

He succeeded in his quest. Encountering a portion of General Weed's brigade of the Fifth Corps, he found reinforcements. As luck would have it, this command contained both the 140th and 146th New York, two regiments Warren had commanded during the Fredericksburg Campaign. Approaching the head of the 140th New York, he shouted that he wanted the regiment to climb up Little Round Top to attack an enemy force advancing unopposed up the opposite slope. Colonel Patrick O'Rorke, commander of the regiment and a former student of Warren's at West Point, answered, "General Weed is ahead and expects me to follow him." Without hesitation, Warren responded, "Never mind that, bring your regiment up here and I will take responsibility."[45] Immediately turning his command to the left O'Rorke followed Lieutenant Roebling up the north side of the hill.

Before the general could detach more of the brigade, Warren's brother Edgar, a staff officer under General Weed,

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[44]Warren to Porter Farley, July 13, 1872, Warren Papers, XIV, 66.

[45]Farley, Reminiscences of the 140th New York Volunteer Infantry, p. 219; Norton, Strong Vincent and His Brigade at Gettysburg, p. 15.

rode up and informed him that Weed had orders to support Sickles' troops who were withdrawing in some confusion from their forward position at the Peach Orchard. Warren informed his brother that he would keep O'Rorke's regiment while the remainder of the brigade should join Weed.[46] A few minutes later Sykes sent an aide to inform Weed to disregard former directives to support Sickles and directed the brigade commander to countermarch his command to Little Round Top.[47]

When Warren returned to the crest of the hill, other troops had already joined O'Rorke's 140th New York in the task of preventing the position from falling into Confederate hands. General Strong Vincent's brigade of the Fifth Corps, dispatched by Meade when he received Warren's first urgent message reached Little Round Top and, independently of Warren, helped beat back the first Southern onslaught.[48] Moreover, Charles E. Hazlett's Fifth United States Battery of rifled cannon had managed to arrive at Little Round Top, and, with Warren's assistance, two artillery pieces were dragged up the hill and positioned on the summit.[49] While conferring with Hazlett, Warren was wounded for the second time during the war. A Confederate bullet grazed his throat, and, although the wound was not serious, blood flowed profusely and gave the general

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[46]Statement of Edgar W. Warren, November 15, 1877, Warren Papers, XIV, 66.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Norton, Strong Vincent and His Brigade at Gettysburg, pp. 10-11.

[49]Roebling to Oliver W. Norton, July 13, 1915, Roebling Papers, File 1.

a rather ghastly appearance.[50] However, the wound did not disable him, and he could be seen riding about on Little Round Top, blood trickling from his throat, shouting to the Union infantry, "Come! hurry up! hurry up!"[51]

Bitter fighting raged for hours on and around the hill. Casualties were frightening; O'Rorke, Strong Vincent, Hazlett and Weed were all killed during the engagement. Finally, Warren, assured of the safety of the strategic height, left it and rejoined General Meade at another endangered position further to the right of Little Round Top.[52]

Warren's contribution to the victory at Gettysburg should not be underestimated. For his keen perception and decisive action at Little Round Top, the Chief Engineer received the acclaim of the army, press, and public in the North. Henry L. Abbot, a prominent civil engineer and contemporary of Warren noted,

> It was one of the many turning points of this, the supreme battle of the war, and but for Warren's military coup d'oeil and prompt acceptance of responsibility, Gettysburg might have been known as the grave of the Union.[53]

At dusk on July 2nd, Meade dispatched staff officers to summon all his senior generals to army headquarters at the

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[50]Warren to Comte De Paris, October 10, 1877, Warren Papers, XIV, 66.

[51]Theodore Lyman on Gettysburg, July 22, 1877, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 13.

[52]Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958), p. 264; Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 396.

[53]Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850, p. 8.

Leister House. By 9 P.M. twelve generals, including Warren, assembled for a war council in a small front room not more than ten or twelve feet square. The surroundings were truly Spartan. Furniture consisted of only a large wide bed in one corner, a pine table in the center of the room upon which a single lighted candle cast a dim light, and five or six straight back chairs. Since there were not enough chairs available, some generals were forced to lounge on the bed, while others sat on the floor or slouched against the walls. Exhausted by the exertions of the day and further weakened by the loss of blood and the shock effects of his neck wound, Warren did not participate in the discussion. Lying down in a corner of the room, he slept through the meeting which lasted for more than three hours. While he did not take an active part in the decisions reached at this council or war, it is a safe assumption that he was in complete agreement with the decisions reached at the Leister House to remain at Gettysburg and continue to act on the defensive, awaiting further enemy attacks.[54]

Several opponents of General Meade later referred to this meeting as proof of the commanding general's desire to withdraw from Gettysburg after the second day of hard fighting. Warren refused to be drawn into this conspiracy to detract from Meade's reputation. He unhesitently stated, "I know he

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[54]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, III, 313; Haskell, The Battle of Gettysburg, pp. 62-63; Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 449.

/Meade/ never wavered . . . and that to his strong heart and clear head we owe that victory."[55]

As dawn broke on July 3rd, Warren was found once more at his favorite post on the summit of Little Round Top. During a momentary lull in the battle he found an opportunity to write his wife a short note, informing her of the immensity of the conflict and his narrow escape from death. Concluding his message he emphasized with pride, "I am not off duty though."[56]

Shortly after 1 P.M. the Confederate artillery opened a heavy cannonade from more than 150 guns at Union positions on Cemetery Ridge. General Henry Hunt, in charge of the Federal artillery reserve, responded with a concentrated fire from 118 guns.[57] From his vantage point atop Little Round Top, Warren, scrutinizing the effect of this artillery battle, quickly concluded that the enemy hoped to demoralize the Northern forces by the shock effect of heavy artillery fire, and at the proper time advance a heavy column of infantry to overwhelm the center of the Federal line. Reporting at once his observations to General Meade, he advised, "It would be better if all our guns ceased firing. The enemy do no damage, and are trying to get up a smoke to cover their infantry. When

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[55]Letter from Warren to Samuel Crawford, April 24, 1882, Meade Papers.

[56]Warren to Emily Warren, July 3, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

[57]Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, pp. 493, 497.

they advance I will open on them from this bat/tery7."[58] Before this message was delivered, General Hunt, anticipating the same outcome, had given the order for the Federal guns to cease firing.[59]

At 3 P.M., nearly 15,000 Confederate infantry under General George E. Pickett began their charge across a half mile wide field directly at the center of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge. As the Southerners got within range, Warren ordered Benjamin Rittenhouse's six Parrotts on Little Round Top to open an enfilading fire upon the long lines of enemy infantry advancing one mile to the north of the hill. Using its elevated position to advantage, this battery took a heavy toll of Confederate infantry, sometimes ten enemy soldiers killed or wounded by the explosion of a single shell.[60] Union artillery supported by Hancock's Second Corps stopped Pickett's Charge, and Warren was one of a number of Federal generals who believed that Meade should have counterattacked after the repulse of the Confederates.[61] Meade, however, proved cautious. He overestimated the strength of the Army of Northern Virginia by 10,000 to 15,000 men, and as Warren later stated, "there was a tone amongst most of the prominent officers that we had quite saved the country for the time, and that we had done

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[58]Warren to General Meade from Round Top Signal Station, 2 P.M., July 3, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 4.

[59]Fiske, Dedication Services . . . at Little Round Top, p. 26.

[60]Foote, The Civil War, II, 546-547; Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, pp. 505-506.

[61]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 255. Of all the senior Federal generals only Warren, Abner Doubleday, and James Wadsworth were in favor of an immediate counterattack after the repulse of Pickett's Charge.

enough; that we might jeopard all that we had won by trying to do too much."[62] Warren was not in agreement with his fellow officers who felt that Lee should be permitted to withdraw intact without molestation by the Federal Army.

Seeing that the expected Union counterattack at Gettysburg did not materialize, Lee, fearing that his line of communication to the Potomac might be cut, decided to retire from the battlefield during the night of July 4th. He directed his troops to retreat westward along the Chambersburg and Fairfield roads so as to gain the comparative security of the South Mountain passes and the Cumberland Valley in Maryland. Ever cautious, Meade ordered his cavalry to harass the lines of communication of the Confederate army.[63]

Before planning any advance of his infantry, Meade decided to have Warren take a division to probe the enemy's lines to determine if the Confederates were truly in retreat. By the tenor of Meade's directives of July 4th and 5th, it was apparent that he was interested in finding the position of the enemy and not in precipitating another battle. With the aid of General Sedgwick's Sixth Corps he conclusively ascertained on July 5th that Lee was in complete retreat.[64]

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[62] M.H.S.M., XIII, 541; J.C.C.W., I, 379.

[63] Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 364-365; Andrew A. Humphreys, From Gettysburg To The Rapidan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), p. 2; Regis De Trobriand, Four Years With The Army of the Potomac, trans. by G.K. Dauchy, (Boston: Ticknor & Co., 1889), p. 516.

[64] O.R., I, 27, III, 530-531; Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, pp. 544-545; S. Williams to General John Sedgwick, July 4, 1863, Meade Papers, Letterbook June 28-July 19, 1863.

Although Meade was certain that the Southern general was retiring toward the Potomac, he refused to hasten his troops in pursuit. Another day was wasted in reconnaissance, discovering the routes used by the Confederates in their retreat, the distance they had withdrawn and the practicability of carrying the enemy's rear positions.[65]

Learning that Lee was attempting to recross the Potomac, Meade on July 7th ordered his command to move by flank routes through the Catoctin Mountains by the Hamburg and High Knob passes and by way of Frederick, Maryland.[66] General William French, holding Frederick with 7,000 men, sent infantry to reoccupy Harper's Ferry and ordered a strong cavalry force to destroy a Confederate pontoon-bridge on the Potomac at Williamsport, Maryland. Both these actions were successful, and when Lee reached the river, it was swollen by heavy rainfall and unfordable.[67]

On July 8th, a new Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac was appointed by Meade. It had been assumed by many, and the rumors were persistent, that Warren would be the one so elevated. Even the usually reliable New York Times was mistaken when it announced on July 9th that Warren had succeeded Butterfield as Chief of Staff. The honor, however, went to a personal friend of Meade's, and a fellow Pennsylvanian,

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[65]Meade to Sedgwick, 2 A.M., July 6, 1863, Meade Papers, Letterbook June 28-July 19, 1863.

[66]Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 9.

[67]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 367.

General Andrew A. Humphreys.[68]

It was not until July 12th that advance units of the Federal army, coming from Frederick, reached the Potomac. With a raging river at his back, Lee, because of Meade's hesitation, had six days to entrench his troops against an expected Northern assault. Accompanied by his Chief of Staff and Chief Engineer, Meade carefully examined the enemy's positions at Williamsport and discovered that there were no vulnerable points in the Confederate entrenchments. On further observation Warren reported that Lee's flanks were secure and could not be assailed.[69] Unable to decide whether to attempt to force the Confederate positions by a frontal assault, Meade called a council of war during the evening of July 12th. The meeting proved the maxim, "councils of war never fight." The senior corps commanders, Sedgwick, Slocum, Sykes, French and Hays advised against any assault. On the other hand, Pleasanton, the Chief of Cavalry; Howard, commander of the Eleventh Corps; James Wadsworth, representing the First Corps; and Warren, advocated an immediate advance upon Lee's lines. Warren eloquent in his call for an attack upon the Confederate army, demonstrated that if the Confederates repulsed Meade's assault they would not have the manpower and supplies to follow up

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[68]Davis S. Sparks ed., Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), p. 270; New York Times, July 9, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 4; Freeman Gleaves, Meade of Gettysburg (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 177.

[69]Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 6.

their advance, while a victorious Northern attack would cause a total annihilation of Lee's army.[70] By a 5-4 vote the senior Union commanders decided not to attack Lee's fortified camp at Williamsport.

But Meade had to do something. Barbed by rising criticism in the Northern press, on July 14th, he heeded Warren's advice and made dispositions to engage Lee in a decisive battle which might have completely destroyed the Army of Northern Virginia. Unfortunately for the Union the Potomac had receded and Lee was able, with great skill and little loss, to regain the safety of Virginia.[71] Consequently, at 3 P.M., July 14th, Warren sent the following message to the War Department: "The Maryland Campaign is ended. Have sent to me at Harper's Ferry, as soon as practicable, all the maps you can spare of the Shenandoah Valley and the routes east of the mountains to Gordonsville."[72] In this one short sentence Warren recognized the frustrating reality of the failure of the Federal army to consummate the great victory it had achieved at Gettysburg. Once more General Lee, despite the heroism of Warren and thousands of other dedicated Northern soldiers, was able to elude the grasp of the Army of the Potomac.

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[70] DeTrobriand, Four Years with the Army of the Potomac, pp. 521-522.

[71] Ibid.; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 367; Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, III, 729.

[72] O.R., I, 27, III, 691.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAMPAIGN OF MANEUVERS

After recrossing the Potomac, Lee's army fell back to the Shehandoah Valley, forming, on the line of the Opequan Creek, the same position it had held after the Antietam Campaign.[1] President Lincoln, in a letter to Meade that was never dispatched, vented his displeasure at the Union commander's failure to attack and destroy Lee's army. "Again, my dear general," he remonstrated,

> I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday /at the Potomac/ how can you possibly do so South of the river, when you can take with you very few more than two thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it.[2]

In this message, Lincoln was in complete agreement with the vote of the minority at the Williamsport War Council. He saw that in the immediate future the army would be engaged in a campaign of maneuvers with much marching and countermarching but little opportunity to engage Lee in a decisive battle.

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[1]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 373.

[2]Abraham Lincoln, The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, ed. Ray P. Basler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), VI, 328.

Perceiving through the dispatches sent to him by General Henry Halleck that Lincoln was displeased, Meade offered to resign as commander of the army.[3] His request was rejected, not because Lincoln had confidence in his ability, but rather because the Commander-in-Chief could not find a qualified officer to assume command at that moment.

In order to pursue Lee into the Shenandoah Valley, pontoons which had been scuttled at the beginning of the campaign had to be repaired to transport wagons and artillery to the Virginia bank of the Potomac. It was General Warren's suggestion that the shattered pontoons be repaired by the use of slates from cracker-boxes obtained from the Subsistence Department. For three days Warren's primary task was the construction of a bridge of seventy-four pontoons, moored in a perfectly straight line connecting the Maryland shore with Virginia. When completed, the flooring of this bridge was so level, and the roadway was so perfectly formed, that the work received the admiration of the army corps of engineers. The task of bridging completed, the Federal army crossed the Potomac on July 17th and 18th at Harpers Ferry and at Berlin, Maryland. From there it continued to march on the flank of the Confederate army in an attempt to engage it in a decisive battle.[4]

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[3] O.R., I, 27, I, 93.

[4] Report of Porter Farley on Crossing the Potomac, July 17, 1863, Warren Papers, III, 18; Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren-Class of 1850, p. 8; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 8.

The only opportunity the Union Army had to destroy Lee after he crossed the Potomac arose at Manassas Gap. As staff officer, Warren witnessed the engagement and later observed that General French "made a very feeble attack, with one brigade only, and wasted the whole day." It was his belief that General Meade "was more disappointed in that result than in anything that had happened."[5]

Warren, too, was dissatisfied. Depressed by the failure of the Army of the Potomac to engage the Confederate army in a decisive battle and disturbed by the failure of the Northern authorities to recognize his worth, he wrote Emily a letter on July 22nd that bitterly castigated the government in Washington. "If those who stay all the time in Wash. deny this /a promotion/ to me," he observed,

> I shall consider it very unjust and further if that spirit is to rule I shall cease to hope for good commanders to our corps or speedy success to our cause.
>
> When I think how weary I am of this constant campaigning now in its third year, deprived of all enjoyments and oppressed with labor and care and dangers and contrast the peaceful happy life I would have with you; I feel the necessity for some military reward to sustain me, some mark of appreciation at least. . .[6]

Warren's ambition was to be gratified. As the Federal army advanced deeper into northern Virginia, Meade sought a temporary replacement for General Hancock, who had been

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[5] J.C.C.W., second series, I, 381-382; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 374.

[6] Warren to Emily Warren, July 22, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2.

gravely wounded on the third day at Gettysburg.[7] On July 21st, in the midst of the furor over allowing Lee to escape, Meade wired General Halleck:

> I am very anxious to have a competent commander for the 2nd Corps made vacant by the wounding of General Hancock. The very valuable services and most efficient assistance rendered me by Brigadier General G.K. Warren induce me to nominate him for the commission of Major General, to be assigned to the 2nd Corps. I consider the efficiency and spirit of the army will be greatly promoted by making this appointment, and have therefore to earnestly urge it.[8]

Halleck responded to Meade's solicitations by informing him that, until some "useless" major generals were discharged, there was no vacancy available on the active list to promote Warren, but renewed pressure was brought on the War Department and on August 3rd, Warren was ordered to Washington on detached duty.[9] On August 8th, he had an interview with President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and at that time received his appointment as Major General of Volunteers. His commission was dated retroactive to May 3, 1863, when he aided Sedgwick in the storming of Marye's Heights, during the Chancellorsville Campaign.[10]

Warren's new position required his undivided attention. After a brief two day reunion with his bride in Baltimore, on August 12th, he was formally made the temporary commander of

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[7]Francis, A. Walker, History of the Second Army Corps (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), p. 299. Glenn Tucker, biographer of General Hancock noted that Hancock recommended Warren to Stanton as his successor.

[8]O.R., I, 27, I, 96-97.

[9]Ibid., p. 101; Warren, Journal for February 3, 1863 to August 12, 1863, entry for August 3rd.

[10]Warren, Journal for February 3, 1863 to August 12, 1863, entries for August 8, 10, 1863; Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850, p. 8.

the Second Army Corps.[11] This unit, along with other Federal Corps, held positions north of the Rappahannock River opposite the Confederates who were based on Culpeper Court House. Administrative details, re-equipping troops and inspections occupied most of his time for the remainder of the month.[12] He found the execution of deserters the most onerous of duties. Although the Second Corps was a veteran unit, one soldier was executed on August 21st, and two others on the 28th.[13]

During this month of reorganization, the Army of the Potomac was stripped of most of its offensive strength by the transfer of 11,000 troops needed to maintain order in New York City after the July draft riots. One division of the Twelfth Corps was also dispatched to assist in coastal siege operations in South Carolina, and 2,000 more men were lost by discharges. Lee, however, sustained proportionally heavier losses when the bulk of Longstreet's corps was transferred for duty in the West.[14]

Meade's intelligence service discovered this weakness, and, on August 31st, the divisions of the Federal army broke camp and took positions covering the fords of the Rappahannock. On September 12th, the Second Corps reached Rappahannock Station, and the next day, with the aid of a cavalry screen, it crossed the river and drove Confederate pickets away from the

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[11]Warren, Journal for February 3, 1863 to August 12, 1863, entry for August 12, 1863; O.R., I, 51, I, 1084.

[12]Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 318.

[13]Ibid., p. 317.

[14]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 447; Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 191.

fords.[15] Within a week the Second Corps, in conjunction with a general advance by other Federal units, had forced the Confederates to withdraw south of the Rapidan River. A stalemate then prevailed until the second week of October.[16]

During this lull in the campaign, Warren was honored by the presentation of a ceremonial sword and sash by the citizens of Cold Spring, New York. Theodore Lyman, an officer on Meade's staff, presented a humorous yet valuable description of Warren's behavior during this ceremony:

> General Warren was lodged in Spartan simplicity in a third-rate farmhouse. His dress was even more Spartan than his lodgment. Did I ever describe him to you? Fancy a small, slender man, with a sun-burnt face, two piercing black eyes, and withal bearing a most ludicrous resemblance to cousin Mary Pratt! He was dressed in a double-breasted blouse, buttoned awry, a pair of soldier's pantaloons, rather too short, and a very old straw hat. . . . Such is the personnel of one of the very best generals in the Army of the Potomac! He is a most kind man, and always taking care of hysterical old Secesh ladies and giving them coffee and sugar. As to secesh males, in the army, he is a standing terror to them. This valiant warrior, who don't care a button for missiles, was extremely nervous at the idea of the sword presentation, and went trotting around the house consulting with Dr. Young. There soon arrived sundry other generals, each with a longer or shorter tail. . . . Then the band arrived; and, by that time, there was a house filled with shoulder-straps of all sorts. . . . Thereupon we formed a semi-circle round the porch, where was deposited, on an old pine table, the elegant rosewood case /containing the sword/. General Warren stood up, looking much as if about to be married, and Dr. Young, standing opposite with a paper in his hand, so resembled a clergyman, that I fully expected him to say, Warren, will you have this sword to be your lawful wedded wife? But instead, he only read how the citizens of Cold Spring, desirous of showing their appreciation of the patriotism, etc., had

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[15]Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 318.

[16]Ibid.

> procured this sword, etc., in token of, etc., etc., to which the General, looking, if possible, still more as if in the agonies of the altar, replied from a scrap of notepaper, the writing whereof he could not easily read. The whole took about five minutes at the end of which he drew a breath of great relief, and remarked, 'The execution is over; now won't you come in and eat something.'[17]

Because of Rosecrans' debacle at Chickamauga, the War Department informed Meade at the end of September that the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were to be relieved from service with the Army of the Potomac and sent to Grant in Tennessee.[18] The removal of the two veteran corps forced Meade to suspend all offensive plans and to rely upon defensive tactics until the return of troops sent to New York. Learning of the depletion in the Union ranks, Lee immediately assumed the offensive and Meade was forced to withdraw from his positions on the Rapidan.[19]

Major General Martin T. McMahon, a participant in this retreat, noted that as early as October 7th, the deciphering of enemy signals yielded intelligence that the Confederate army was preparing to turn the Federal right. As late as October 10th, the Union Chief of Staff, General Humphreys, nevertheless continued to believe that Lee's movement was designed as an advance on Culpeper, the Union headquarters,

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[17]Theodore Lyman, Meade's Headquarters 1863-65, ed. George H. Agassiz (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1922), pp. 25-27; Description of Sword, Warren Papers, XIV, 72.

[18]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 447; Lyman, Meade's Headquarters 1863-65, p. 25.

[19]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 376; Kenneth P. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), II, 767.

rather than an attempt to fall on the Federal lines of communication. Confusion as to Lee's exact movements led to the marching and countermarching of the army on the 11th and 12th.[20] Then Meade, convinced of the danger of Lee's flank movement, broke up his depot at Culpeper and ordered his train of 2,500 wagons under the escort of General Buford's cavalry to fall back beyond Rappahannock Station, a position that had been seized only a month before.[21] But Meade was greatly disturbed. Writing to his wife on October 12th he confessed,

> I am at present very much worried & occupied. On Saturday I found Lee was turning my right flank & assuming an offensive position. As to have remained where I was was to have endangered my communications, I yesterday fell back to the Rappahannock. This I fear will not be acceptable to the people in Washington. . . .[22]

Convinced that Lee had turned the right of the Army of the Potomac and was apparently headed for Warrenton at his rear, Meade ordered his troops to fall back along the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to the height beyond Centerville.[23]

The honor of forming the rearguard in the retreat was assumed by Warren's Second Corps at Fayetteville on October 13th, when he relieved General French.[24] But his

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[20]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 83; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, pp. 15-18.

[21]O.R., I, 29, II, 285; Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, pp. 33-34.

[22]General Meade to Mrs. Meade, October 12, 1863, Meade Papers, Letters to Mrs. Meade, 1863.

[23]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 447.

[24]DeTrobriand, Four Years with the Army of the Potomac, p. 541.

command was severely delayed in his withdrawal by the slow-paced movement of the troops, particularly French's Third Corps, before it.[25]

The following morning, cannon fire from the general direction of Auburn, an all but deserted hamlet near Cedar Run, signaled to the retreating Federal army that Warren's corps was engaged with advanced elements of Lee's army.[26] Sounds of battle only encouraged the soldiers to speed their withdrawal to the concentration point at Centerville, twenty-four miles west of Alexandria, near the site of the two battles of Bull Run. Little thought was given to the plight of their comrades in the rearguard.

The engagement at Auburn was largely brought about by the inability of the Second Corps to cross Cedar Run during the night of the 13th. All fords over that stream were jammed by the soldiers and wagons of French's corps.[27] As Warren rested his men south of the Run, he could not help worrying about his precarious position. With an unfordable stream at his back, his command was isolated from the rest of the army and strung out for three miles along a road on the enemy's side of Cedar Run.[28] Finally, before dawn on the 14th, the fords were cleared by the last of French's

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[25]O.R., I, 29, I, 237.

[26]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, pp. 33-34.

[27]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, pp. 447-448; O.R., I, 29, I, 236-237.

[28]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 448; O.R., I, 29, I, 236-237.

command, and the Second Corps began crossing the stream. A pea-soup fog cut visibility to one hundred feet. First across the water barrier, General John Caldwell's division was ordered by Warren to secure control of a hill covering the road approaches from Warrenton. Captain Bruce Rickett's Battery F, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery, positioned itself to sweep the road with its six three-inch rifled cannon. Alexander S. Webb's and Alexander Hays' divisions began filing past on the road to Catlett's Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.[29]

During the night of the 13th, several Confederate cavalry brigades under the immediate supervision of General Stuart inadvertently found themselves entangled among the divisions of the Second Corps. Shortly after dawn, seven guns of the Confederate horse artillery began lobbing shells into Caldwell's division from a position 800 yards to the east of the Federal line of retreat. While taken by surprise by the fire from an unexpected quarter, this veteran unit quickly took steps to engage the enemy. Rickett ordered "Action Rear" and engaged in counter-battery fire, while Warren ordered Hays' division to throw out a skirmish line to test the size and strength of the Southern force. Because of the prompt pressure placed on his cavalry, Stuart was forced to retire before the Federal skirmish line outflanked

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[29]Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 448.

his position.[30]

As Stuart gave way before superior force, Robert Rodes' division, the van of Richard Ewell's Confederate corps, advanced on the Cedar Run fords. Federal battery commanders once more ordered "Action Rear! Limbers and caissons pass your pieces!" Warren's skillful deployment of artillery and Caldwell's infantry effectively held the enemy in check, while the remainder of the corps, with its large wagon-train, struck out westward toward Catlett's Station and then to the north following the tracks of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad toward Bristoe Station, a small burned out village about three miles from Manassas Junction.[31] Later, at Catlett, Warren paused to regroup his corps, and then followed in the path of the Army of the Potomac toward Centerville. Webb's division led the withdrawal and marched on the west side of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, while Hays' command followed slightly behind and to the east. Once more Caldwell's division acted as rear guard.[32] Warren had taken effective precautions to engage a Confederate attack from any quarter.

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[30] O.R., I, 29, I, 238-239; Naisawald, Grape and Canister, pp. 448-449; Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850, p. 9; Jubal A. Early, War Memoirs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 304.

[31] Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 381-383; Naisawald, Grape and Canister, pp. 451-452; O.R., I, 29, I, 239-240; Comte De Paris, History of the Civil War in America, III, 771.

[32] Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, map p. 323; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 23; Naisawald Grape and Canister, pp. 453-454; O.R., I, 29, I, 240.

As the Second Corps marched to Bristoe Station, Warren received an important message from Meade: "General Sykes is directed to keep up communication with you, and to keep in supporting distance. . . . French is directed to keep up communication with Sykes, and within supporting distance. Sykes will remain here /Bristoe/ until you are up."[33] According to Meade's arrangements, Warren had reason to expect support from both Sykes and French in his withdrawal from Bristoe.[34] Because of time lost in deploying troops at Auburn, however, the Second Corps had become isolated and a large gap existed between Warren and the remainder of the Army of the Potomac.

A message from Sykes to Warren, received at 2 P.M. on the 14th, indicated that the Fifth Corps commander was anxious to leave his exposed position and withdraw to the comparative safety of Centerville. In this communique Sykes noted, "French is on Manassas Heights; and I am at Bristoe, waiting to see the head of your column. I shall move on the moment I see it. There is a long interval between French and I, which I ought to close up as soon as possible. Are you delayed by anything? Let me hear from you."[35] In fact, French was nowhere near Manassas Heights and Sykes was at Milford, covering Bristoe. It would appear that Sykes was suffering from a case of war-jitters brought on by a week of constant

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[33]Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 340.

[34]Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 24.

[35]Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 343.

tension and marching.

On the basis of a report, from aide-de-camp Lieutenant Synders, that the van of the Second Corps was in sight, Sykes ordered his command to abandon its position around Bristoe. Actually it was not the head of the Second Corps that Synders had observed, but a squadron from the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry attempting to bridge the gap between the Fifth and Second Corps.[36] The failure to confirm his aide's report proved nearly disasterous to the rear guard. Commenting on the plight of the Second Corps, William Swinton wrote, "Warren's position was again a critical one, for, instead of finding Bristoe Station held by the Fifth Corps, as had been indicated to him in General Meade's orders, he discovered he was there alone, in the immediate vicinity of the whole army of Lee, and found himself suddenly assailed while marching by the flank."[37]

At about 2 P.M., as the head of Webb's division emerged from the cover of a strip of woods a mile southwest of Bristoe, a Union officer observed a rebel battery wheeling into position on the left flank of the advancing Federals. Intent upon chopping up the rear of Sykes' column, the Confederates had not noticed the arrival of the Second Corps. General A.P. Hill, commander of the Confederate troops, believed that the Fifth Corps, in advance of the Second, was the last Northern unit on the road and that the van of Warren's corps was but a

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 383-384.

detached rear guard. His desire and determination to capture the Federal wagon trains intact caused him incautiously to advance his command without regard to protecting his flanks.[38]

From the heavy rifle fire being poured into Sykes' retreating corps by the two Confederate brigades occupying the Greenwich road and from the lack of fire directed at his command, Warren gathered that the overconfident Southern troops were not aware of the danger on their right flank.[39] Reacting quickly with the instincts of an expert engineer, he observed that a nearby railroad embankment and cut would serve as ready-made entrenchments. The army that held this strategic position would possess an impregnable stronghold, the key to the impending battle, and ordering it to hold the embankment, he shouted at the Irish Brigade in Hays' division to "run for the cutting." The Irishmen, reacting promptly, seized the depression just in time to repulse an advancing Confederate battle line. Warren's troops decimated several Southern brigades by heavy musket fire centered in the cut, and raked them with artillery from two supporting batteries stationed behind the Federal lines.[40]

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[38]Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, p. 223; Naisawald, Grape and Canister, pp. 454-455; Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 198.

[39]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 292; Naisawald, Grape and Canister, p. 456.

[40]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 292; O.R., I, 29, I, 242; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, pp. 25-26; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 384-385.

During the ensuing battle many Confederate soldiers surrendered to Federal troops in the cut, while others were captured by a thin Union line which the Second Corps commander had ordered to advance against the defeated enemy. In this pursuit an entire Confederate battery fell into Northern hands. At the close of the battle General Caldwell's division, which had formed the Federal rear guard, came up on the run and deployed on Hays' left extending the corps' battle line preventing the Confederates from attempting to lap around the Union left flank.[41] Realizing that he had effectively stopped only a small number of Lee's available force, Warren now called upon Sykes for assistance. "I have whipped Heth's division, captured a battery and some hundreds of prisoners," he wrote, "I cannot retire under the fire. Support my right; they still threaten me heavily."[42]

Upon receipt of Warren's communication, Sykes halted his column and relayed to Meade the information that the Second Corps was heavily engaged with the enemy. Indicating that he doubted his ability to aid Warren, he called upon Meade for instructions. "Warren is engaged with the enemy," he reported:

> His right is at Bristoe. He says they [the Confederates] are along his front. I shall move to Bristoe at once. There is no communication between French and myself. Sharp musketry firing is being heard. If their army is there, two corps are little better than one, but I am

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[41]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 384-385.

[42]O.R., I, 29, II, 919.

> afraid when darkness comes they may get between Warren and Manassas, if I do not move toward him, and even then they may get between French and myself.[43]

True to his word, Sykes was able to connect with Warren at nightfall on the 14th. At 7:30 P.M., a message from Army Headquarters directed Warren to withdraw if at all possible that night to Centerville.[44] Upon receipt of this communication, he gathered his wounded, prisoners, and spoils, and in total silence, the corps abandoned the site of its latest victory. Until the troops crossed Broad Run no command above that of a whisper was uttered and each soldier was instructed to hold on to his cup and canteen to prevent them from rattling. In effecting this withdrawal, Warren took a calculated risk and exposed his flank to the enemy whose pickets were barely 300 yards from the Federal line of retreat. Traversing Broad Run at 9 P.M., he marched his troops all night, and crossed Bull Run at Blackburn's Ford at 4 A.M., on the morning of the 15th.[45]

At Centerville, an hour before daylight, Warren reported to Meade's Headquarters and announced his victory to Theodore Lyman. "We whipped the Rebs right out," he excitedly remarked, "I ran my men, on the double quick, into the railroad cut and then just swept them away with musketry."[46] Lyman

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[43] Ibid., p. 313.

[44] O.R., I, 29, II, 314.

[45] Ibid.; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p.30; Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 361; Warren note, October 15, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 5.

[46] Warren to Emily Warren, October 15, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 2, Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 32.

offered him brandy, and then, physically and mentally drained from combat, Warren lay down. He was asleep in less than a minute.[47]

Victory for the Second Corps prompted Meade on October 15th to issue a special commendation to the officers and men of the rear guard:

> The Major-General commanding announces to the army that the rear guard, consisting of the Second Corps, was attacked yesterday while marching by the flank. The enemy after a spirited contest, was repulsed, losing 2 flags, a battery of 5 guns, and 450 prisoners. The skill and promptitude of Major-General Warren and the gallantry and bearing of the officers and soldiers of the Second Corps, are entitled to high commendation.[48]

The success appeared even more remarkable as the total of Confederate prisoners, numbering 450, was nearly as great as the number of Federals killed, wounded, or missing.[49] It was also significant that the engagement at Bristoe saved the Federal wagon train from capture. Had it fallen to the enemy, the resulting confusion might have led to the destruction of the army.[50]

The success of the Second Corps at Bristoe led to a major debate. Should Meade have taken advantage of Warren's victory? General Regis DeTrobriand, believing that Meade had been overly cautious in not countermarching to the aid of

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[47]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 33.

[48]Warren to William Warren, October 15, 1863, Warren Papers, I, 3; O.R., I, 29, I, 250; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 84.

[49]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 84. Union Losses: 50 killed, 353, wounded, 161 missing. 546 Total Confederates: 136 killed, 797 wounded, 445 missing. 1378 Total

[50]Ibid., IV, 84.

the Second Corps, noted that the Federal position at Bristoe was not disadvantageous, and that this site would have permitted Meade to have engaged the enemy while still covering Washington.[51] On the other hand, Theodore Lyman, an apologist for Meade, observed that Confederate intentions were not fully known, and many of Lee's movements were concealed by the wooded topography of northern Virginia. An effective cavalry screen tended to mask the movements of the Confederate army. According to Lyman, Meade, lacking sufficient information, acted correctly in refusing combat.[52]

We also have Confederate testimony. A.P. Hill, the Southern corps commander whose troops had engaged Warren at Bristoe, admitted he had attacked too hastily. Nevertheless, he noted that if he had wasted another half hour, Warren would have made off without a fight.[53] In the final estimation of the engagement, however, Warren had the last word. Shortly after the battle he sent a note through the lines to General Hill, observing, "Hill, I have not only whipped you, but married your old sweetheart."[54]

Several days after the battle at Bristoe, Warren wrote his Emmie a jubilant letter. "We have every confidence," he wrote, "in our ability to whip Genl. Lee and the enthusiasm

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[51]DeTrobriand, Four Years with the Army of the Potomac, p. 543.

[52]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 31.

[53]Hassler, Commanders of the Army of the Potomac, p. 179.

[54]Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, p. 114.

of my command is boundless."[55] Fresh from his victory at Bristoe, he sought to dispel the myth that Lee and his graycoats were all but invincible. As early as 7 P.M. on October 15th, encouraging Meade to assume the offensive, he argued,

> I think Lee's game is blocked, and that he will retreat when pressed. It may be, though, that he still contemplates an advance around our right. I believe we can whip him in any fair fight, even by attacking. If you wish, I can push forward again and see what is going on in my front, if you are still in doubt about the enemy's movements. I am very tired, or I would come down to see you.[56]

Ever cautious, however, Meade did not respond favorably to the suggestion.

The general's hesitation irked his superiors in Washington. His request for information concerning Lee's movements exasperated General Halleck. "Lee is plainly bullying you," he replied, "If you can't find him, I can't. If you go and fight him, you will probably find him!"[57] As the campaigning season was late, Meade would have preferred going into winter quarters, but he believed that "the condition of the public mind would hardly brook delay."[58] Such a lack of enthusiasm by the commanding general did not bode well for the successful outcome of the next campaign.

Although Meade readily admitted that in the recent

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[55]Warren to Emily Warren, October 17, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1.

[56]O.R., I, 29, II, 328-329.

[57]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 35.

[58]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 390.

maneuvers Lee "had got the advantage," the Southerner had been unsuccessful in his primary mission of cutting the Northern lines of communication. Perceiving that his flanking movement was a failure, Lee, proceeded to tear up the track of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad from Bull Run to the Rappahannock, and on October 18th, covered by a cavalry screen, he began a withdrawal to the south of the Rappahannock River.[59]

Meade responded with deliberation. During a violent rainstorm on October 19th, he commenced his slow pursuit. After the army had advanced on Warrenton, he called a halt for several weeks to await the completion of repairs on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.[60]

Warren was irritated. In the encampment, he had an opportunity to write his brother William a long letter expounding his views on the inefficiency and incompetency of his fellow corps commanders. "Gen. Sykes," he noted:

> is being pitched into heavily by the papers, but he did as well as he ever did or ever will do. He don't really know what is best to do in a trying time, and all our present Corps Commanders are bad ones - poor ones - not wicked ones. Genl. S. has written to me in relation to some of the strictures upon him, and I expect he cannot be pleased with my answer. I think he was much to blame for Genl. Porter not attacking at the last Bull Run fight, and for one or two other serious failures. I have no better opinion of the others - all honest and well-meaning, but not fit to be generals.[61]

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[59]General Meade to Mrs. Meade, October 17, 1863, Meade Papers; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 385.

[60]Warren to Emily Warren, October 19, 1863, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 1; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 385-386.

[61]Warren to William Warren, October 30, 1863, Warren Papers, I, 3.

But while Warren was extremely critical of his brother officers, he was egotistical concerning his own command abilities. Conceding that he might not be made commander of the Army of the Potomac in the impending military shakeup, he believed that his views would be respected in the "new order of things." At the same time, he sent his wife a clipping from the Philadelphia Enquirer which compared his feats at Auburn and Bristoe with those performed a half century earlier by Marshal Ney at Elchingen.[62]

It was not until November 7th that Meade once again began to advance.[63] As the Union army retraced its steps to the Rappahannock, a staff officer pictured Warren as spoiling for a fight. The little general, seated on a large white horse as his command marched past, was observant of every detail from the movements of the entire army to the dress and military bearing of the common soldier. Obviously pleased at the fighting trim of his troops, Warren was heard to remark, "As soon as I get there, [in contact with the Confederate army] I shall bring on a general action, right off."[64] Finally on November 7th, Union troops of the Sixth Corps stormed across the Rappahannock at Rappahannock Station, and seven miles downstream at Kelly's Ford the Third Corps also made a successful assault.[65] While most senior officers were pleased

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[62]Ibid.; Warren to Emily Warren, October 23, 1863, Warren Papers, V, 5.

[63]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 386.

[64]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 42.

[65]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 87-88.

with the results of the Federal advance, General Warren was clearly disappointed with the failure of the Confederates to stand and fight a decisive battle. Glancing around the empty countryside, he was heard to exclaim, "There's nobody here - nobody!"[66]

The army remained inactive until the 26th of November, when Meade's intelligence service reported a wide separation between two Confederate corps, those of Ewell and A.P. Hill. After a close scrutiny of a map of northern Virginia, Meade determined that the Federals could cross the Rapidan at the lower fords, advance to Orange Court House by the plank and turnpike roads, and drive a wedge between the two wings of Lee's army. It was his hope that if the Army of the Potomac moved rapidly, it could destroy Lee.[67]

Prior to the implementation of this plan, Warren, having a premonition of his death during the coming campaign, wrote a letter to his father-in-law. "Tomorrow our army is to make another grand movement," he noted,

> It is pregnant with great results for or against our cause, and will if our expectations are realized bring on one more of those desperate battles which this army has several times before made. I am full of hope and we have the lead. I shall fight most earnestly and it may be my last. I certainly shall not in dying dishonor the reputation I have borne heretofore. But as such an event is among the probabilities, and as Emily is now the one most concerned I thought it was my duty to be very free with you for her sake.[68]

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[66]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 391.

[67]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 391.

[68]Warren to A.S. Chase, November 23, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 6.

He also wrote that his brother William held $1,000 for him and that this money would go to Emily in event of his death, Finally, he requested that his father-in-law should see to his burial at West Point if circumstances permitted.[69]

Algernon Chase sought to dispel his son-in-law'a apprehensions. Writing to the general on the 25th, he observed,

> I hope you will not unnecessarily expose yourself, for I think the cause would be more likely to lose than gain by that /your death/. . . Emily is not likely to suffer from want during my lifetime especially if I have my health & faculties, for although I was not in a position to give her a dowry at her marriage I have a business so well established that it pretty well assures me of an independent and comfortable support for my family so long as they may have occasion for it.[70]

Warren did not have to worry about Emily's future.

In accordance with Meade's plan to drive a wedge between the two halves of Lee's Army, the Second Corps, at 6:30 A.M., on the 26th, left its camp on Mountain Run and marched to Germanna Ford with the hope of effecting a speedy crossing of the Rapidan. By 11 A.M., the corps was poised to attack. But Meade temporarily suspended the movement until 1:30 P.M., while he tried to locate General French whose corps had gone astray.[71] Federal cavalry, driving off the Confederate mounted pickets, finally crossed the Rapidan at 1:30 P.M. There was a delay of more than an hour when a pontoon bridge

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[69] Ibid.

[70] A.S. Chase to General Warren, November 25, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 6.

[71] O.R., I, 21, I, 694; Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 368.

fashioned by the engineers proved too short to span the stream.[72] Delay followed delay and the Federal infantry, which should have been well on its way to Orange Court House, was barely across the Rapidan by nightfall, a state of affairs affording Lee an opportunity to begin the concentration of his widely scattered forces.

Warren again proved his skill. During the morning and early afternoon of the 27th, the Second Corps was the only unit fulfilling Meade's expectations for rapidity of movement. General French's Third Corps, decamping on the wrong road, delayed the advance, and his inefficiency caused consternation at Meade's headquarters. In addition, unseasonably cold weather and unfamiliar terrain slowed the forward movement of the Federal army.[73] Before noon, Warren's command, advancing more rapidly than the units on its left and right, necessarily exposed its flanks to possible enemy assaults. Had Lee attacked the flanks instead of the front of the Second Corps, a major victory might have been his. But Warren meeting considerable Southern opposition to his advance, ordered his command to deploy into line of battle and, after a brief but sharp fight amongst the scrub timber, drove in the Confederate force in his front. Prisoners questioned told of two divisions of Ewell's corps directly opposite and a third division nearby in support.[74] Nightfall deferred further attack by either the Second Corps or by the Confederate army.

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[72] O.R., I, 29, I, 695; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 392-394.

[73] Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, p. 372; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, pp. 57-58; Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, II, 772-773.

[74] O.R., I, 29, I, 695.

At dawn of the 28th, the First, Second and Sixth Corps, advanced in line, only to find that the Confederates had withdrawn during the night. Lee had fallen back two miles to Mine Run, a small stream that runs northward into the Rapidan. Here the Confederates were partially entrenched in a formidable position that would be difficult to assault. The terrain of the area strongly resembled the battlefield at Fredericksburg. In order for the Federals to press a frontal attack, they would have had to cross the stream and advance over more than a thousand yards of open ground which gradually sloped upward to an elevation of over a hundred feet, and attack a large, well entrenched and strongly fortified Confederate force.[75] A frontal assault upon the Southern position at Mine Run might well have repeated Burnside's mistake at Fredericksburg, and there is evidence to indicate that Meade did contemplate an attack upon the center of Lee's line in conjunction with assaults on the Confederate left and right.[76]

A heavy rainstorm and a thick fog prevented army scouts from closely inspecting the enemy's lines. Determined not to be deterred by bad weather, Warren made a personal reconnaissance of the Confederate works hoping to discover some chance of success. The reconnaissance cost him twenty men killed and wounded and he was not able to detect a single unguarded point

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[75]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 88; O.R., I, 29, I, 696; Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 63.

[76]William H. Powell, The Fifth Army Corps (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), p. 585.

in Lee's lines.[77] During this costly survey, an amusing incident occurred which caused considerable merriment in Warren's command. A Union skirmisher discovered a "Secesh Turkey" and was about to carry it off when heavy Confederate musket fire caused him to drop the fowl and beat a hasty retreat. Riding along the line, Warren, seeing that the soldier had dropped the turkey, calmly dismounted and threw the bird over his saddle and rode off slowly amidst enemy bullets which struck close to him. It was observed by one witness that this was the first time he had ever known a major-general to indulge in foraging.[78]

Reporting to army headquarters during the evening of the 28th, Warren suggested that a flank movement of the Federal left could reach the Confederate right flank.[79] At a war council General Sedgwick, commanding the Sixth Corps holding the Federal right, reported that Lee's left was lightly held.[80] Meade immediately initiated plans for a double envelopment. Warren's Second Corps, reinforced by one division of the Sixth and two divisions of the Third Corps, was to strike the Confederate right, the Fifth Corps and two divisions of the Sixth Corps, the Confederate left. General French, commanding three divisions in the middle of the Union line /one division,

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[77] New York Tribune, December 19, 1863.

[78] Ibid.

[79] O.R., I, 29, I, 696.

[80] Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 89-90.

Third Corps, and two divisions of the First Corps[7] was to feint an attack to prevent Lee from reinforcing his flanks by troops taken from his center. Meade ordered a preliminary bombardment to commence at 7 A.M. on the 30th, with a general assault on the Southern flanks to begin one hour later.[81]

All troop movements to the left on the 29th were made in absolute silence. Top security had to be maintained, because the two Federal wings were five miles apart with less than one-fourth of the infantry holding the center of the Union line.[82] Had Lee suspected the extent of the denudement of the Federal center, he would have attacked, driving a wedge between the strengthened Union left and right.[83]

That night it was exceptionally cold; the ground was frozen except near the camp fires where the soldiers huddled together on the wet ground for warmth. During the night several Union pickets froze to death, even though sentinels were changed every half hour.[84] Colonel Thomas L. Livermore, sitting with Warren's staff around a bright fire, heard the Second Corps commander remark, "If I succeed to-day I shall be the greatest man in the army. If I don't, all my sins will

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[81]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 395-396; O.R., I, 29, I, 696; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 89-90.

[82]Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 66.

[83]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 56; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 84.

[84]Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 210; Goss, Recollections of a Private, p. 249.

be remembered."[85] To assure success, Warren before dawn conducted a personal reconnaissance of the Confederate positions. By moonlight the corps commander, accompanied by his aide, Roebling, crawled on his knees close up to the enemy's works. The two officers soon discovered that Lee's lines were fully manned, high and strong, and they realized that their planned assault would be thrown back with heavy losses.[86] When Warren returned to his own lines, the soldiers scanned his face for a sign. He appeared so careworn and anxious that many soldiers began printing their names on little slips of paper and pinned them to their uniform. The troops of the assaulting column believed few men would return from the attack.[87]

Warren now made one of the most crucial decisions of his life. At 7 A.M., on the morning of the 30th, the batteries along the Union center opened a heavy cannonade on the Confederate entrenchments. A skirmish line from the First and Third Corps forded Mine Run and drove back the Confederate pickets. All was ready for the main assaults.[88] Hearing no sounds from Warren's front, General French inquired tauntingly of Meade, "Where are your young Napoleon's guns; why doesn't

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[85] M.H.S.M., XIV, 51.

[86] Roebling to James F. Rusling, February 18, 1916; Roebling Papers, I; Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, pp. 210-211.

[87] Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 211; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 396-397; Goss, Recollections of a Private, p. 249.

[88] Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 585.

he open?"[89] Theodore Lyman, who was with Meade on the morning of November 30th, has presented the best account of what transpired at that time:

> In all the woods the troops were massed for the attack, waiting orders. We rode back to Headquarters, and, a moment after, Captain Roebling from General Warren's Staff, galloped up. He is the most immovable of men, but had, at that moment, rather a troubled air. He handed a scrap of paper. General Meade opened it and his face changed. 'My God' he said, 'General Warren has half my army at his disposition!' Roebling shrugged his shoulders. The note was to the effect that General Warren had made a careful examination of the enemy's works, had altered his opinion of last evening, and considered an assault hopeless!!! Orders were at once issued to cease firing. We tried to take it all philosophically, but it was hard, very hard. Most of all to General Meade and General Humphreys, who really took it admirably, for both of them have excellent tempers of their own, which, on occasions, burst forth, like twelve pounder spherical cases. In a little while the General again rode away; this time to see General Warren, some four miles off. Two aides, besides myself, went with him . . . General Warren had a sad face, as well he might. He drew aside, with the two other generals, and there they stood, in long consultation, over a fire which had been made for them, for the air was sharp. Then we started back again, stopping half-way at General French's whom we found in a fuming passion, partly because two of his divisions had been, in some way put under guidance of General Warren, and partly because he was all ready for the assault and pushed the skirmish line to within 300 yards of the Rebel works, while the storming parties were in a great rage at not being led on. Alas! it was of no use; General Humphreys, with a heavy sigh, pronounced the opportunity (if it had ever existed) now past; and, when <u>he</u> cries no fight, you may be sure there is not much chance. At a meeting that evening, the other generals concurred. It was physically impossible to flank any more on either side, and the only thing that remained was:
>
> The King of France with forty thousand men,
> Marched up a hill; and then marched down again.[90]

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[89]Walker, <u>History of the Second Army Corps</u>, p. 385; Cleaves, <u>Meade of Gettysburg</u>, p. 211.

[90]Lyman, <u>Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65</u>, pp. 56-57; Warren's message to Meade is in <u>O.R.</u>, I, 29, II, 517:

> It is now 7:45 and I have heard no firing from you, from which I fear the enemy has left your front. His position and strength seem so formidable in my present front that I advise against making the attack here. The full light of the sun shows me that I cannot succeed.

There were no supplies for a sustained campaign and the weather of Virginia in December was unpredictable. Meade had but one choice, to retreat. On December 1st, the army withdrew behind the Rapidan to reoccupy camps that had been abandoned a week earlier.[91]

Warren, the hero of Gettysburg and the victor over Lee at Bristoe Station, was under a dark cloud because of his unauthorized suspension of Meade's assault plan. Several senior corps commanders took personal delight in the failure of the Mine Run campaign. They had resented their loss of status and position as a result of the previous exploits of Warren, the "beardless boy."[92] However, the rank and file of the Federal army respected Warren for his decision.[93] If he had been successful in driving the Confederates from their position, even at the price of a pyrrhic victory, he would have been the darling of the press and public of the North; if he had been driven back from the Confederate entrenchments, bad luck would have been blamed for his mauling and he would have been praised for his courage and audacity in carrying out Meadé's orders. In Warren's position, it did not take courage to give the signal to attack, but it did take courage not to fight, risking harm to both military reputation and career. Realizing full well the storm of criticism he would

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[91]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 397; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 90-91.

[92]Walker, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 385.

[93]Stine, History of the Army of the Potomac, p. 592; O.R., I, 29, II, 525; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 90-91.

face, it took a valiant, dedicated self-sacrificing officer to suspend the attack.

Meade himself sustained Warren's decision not to attack. "I would rather be ignominiously dismissed," he observed in a letter to his wife,

> and suffer anything, than knowingly and willfully have thousands of brave men slaughtered for nothing. It was my deliberate judgment and I am willing to stand or fall by it at all hazards. . . . As it is my conscience is clear. I did the best I could. If I had thought there was any reasonable degree of probability of success, I would have attacked. I did not think so. On the contrary I believed it would result in a useless & criminal slaughter of brave men, and might result in serious disaster to the army. I determined not to attack.[94]

However, the mutual respect and admiration Warren and Meade felt for one another was destroyed by the Mine Run incident. Bitter over what he considered the public rebuke to which Meade subjected him before the rank and file of the Army of the Potomac, Warren, in a short note to Chief of Staff Humphreys, noted, "his /Meade's/ manner towards me should have saved me from that seeming public censure which every one is spared till sentenced by a Genl. Court Martial."[95] Writing to William Warren shortly after the conclusion of the Mine Run campaign, he warned his brother that he faced criticism for his conduct at Mine Run:

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[94]General Meade letters to Mrs. Meade - 1863, George Gordon Meade to Mrs. Meade, December 2, 1863, Meade Papers.

[95]Warren to Humphreys, December 11, 1863, Humphreys Papers, War Papers, Vol. February 1863 - February 1864, (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). In later letters to his wife, Meade revealed that he overly relied upon the judgment of "one corps commander" who felt he without a doubt could carry the enemy's works.

> Do not concern yourself about the late movement. I did all I could and if Genl. Meade had done as I have wished him ever since the battle of Gettysburg, change some of his Corps commanders, especially Genl. French, we should have succeeded. My efforts to have these men removed made them all enemies of me, and they are trying to shift the blame in the newspapers to my shoulders. . . .
> . . . . I do not feel very kindly toward Gen. Meade under all the circumstances, because that he has retained these men to balk our plans, and then lay the blame on us. I thought they would do so, and I should have done for them long ago, if I had been in his place.[96]

Several senior officers including General Regis DeTrobriand, realized that the Mine Run campaign had been doomed almost from its inception. Recognizing that Meade's plans called for rapid movement in order to maneuver between the halves of Lee's army before they could be concentrated, the Frenchman blamed the inadequate leadership of French for the loss of the momentum of the Federal advance.[97] Warren's proposed flank attack was a last attempt to win victory from an already unsuccessful campaign. The failure in this week long movement lay not in his suspension of the Mine Run assault, but in a severe case of "slowitis" on the part of General French. One must find fault with Warren, however, for his presumption in assuming that Meade was bound to follow his advice in the day-to-day direction of the army. Even after falling out of favor with Meade in the weeks immediately

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[96]Warren to William Warren, December 8, 1863, Warren Papers, I, 3. In addition to French, Warren had his doubts about Generals Sykes and Newton.

[97]DeTrobriand, Four Years With the Army of the Potomac, p. 554.

following Mine Run, Warren remained adamant in his stand that the Pennsylvanian remove certain "inefficient" corps and division commanders from their posts. Moreover, Warren felt obliged to suggest that in order to add mobility to the army, half the corps artillery and all the reserve artillery should be sent to the rear.[98] While many generals found commanding a corps too much for them, Warren languished because he found directing the operations of a corps not sufficient to satisfy his abilities and his ambition. This was his great shortcoming.

As usual, the Second Corps held the rear in the retreat of December 1st. Meade would have liked to advance on Fredericksburg had restrictions from Washington not prevented him from doing so. This would have had the dual advantage of appearing to be an offensive movement - - an important consideration in improving the low morale in the ranks, -- and of insuring that the first battle with Lee in the spring of 1864 would not have been fought in the Wilderness but in a more open area, where the army could maneuver more effectively.[99]

The Mine Run stalemate ended the active campaigning in Virginia for the year. A cold, piercing wind rose to greet the army as it retreated along frozen roads to its

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[98]Correspondence with Warren for December 3, 12, 1863, Humphreys Papers, War Papers, Volume February 1863 - February 1864; Warren to Humphreys, December 3, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 6.

[99]Humphreys, From Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 68; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 398.

cantonments.[100] Morale had reached a low point, for despite all their sacrifices, marching, maneuvering and battles, the Army of the Potomac was no nearer Richmond than it had been two years earlier.

Despite these setbacks, Warren's reputation did not suffer great harm. While he was considered ineffectual by some because of his performance at Mine Run, and while many influential Americans condemned Meade for allowing Lee to escape after Gettysburg, these two officers were among the most popular generals in the army and were well thought of by the press and populace of the North. A poem printed in the National Intelligencer in December 1863, best expressed this adulation.

Warren and Meade

Let cowards who'd faint at a scar,
By their firesides so safe and so warm,
Prate what wonders they'd do in the war,
And how little we soldiers perform.
Those railers may spare their vile breath,
And cease our brave chiefs to upbraid,
For we'll follow to conquest or death,
Our leaders, brave Warren and Meade.

They have prudence and bravery too,
And fear to their hearts is unknown;
Whatever men can do they'll do,
But they know that men's flesh is not stone.
They drove the brave Lee to the hills,
Of the brave Union forces afraid,
When his soldiers fell down with the chills,
While we marched on with Warren and Meade.

Meade met Lee upon Gettysburg field,
And gave him such lashings of fight
That he forced his scared legions to yield
And abandon the North in their flight
To Bristoe brave Warren quick flew
And made Hill very sick of his raid,
Then rail on, ye stay at home crew
We soldiers love Warren and Meade.

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[100]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters 1863-65, p. 58.

Politicians are crowding around Abe,
And would Warren and brave Meade remove;
But the rail-spliter is not a babe,
And will give us the leaders we love.
To your homer, you vile prattlers, then cling,
But, when winter's bleak storms shall fade,
We'll march on to Richmond next spring,
And be led there by Warren and Meade.[101]

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[101] National Intelligencer, December, 1863, Warren Papers, VII, 5.

CHAPTER X

"IT HAS BEEN ONE FUNERAL PROCESSION . . ."

During the winter the army engaged in no major battles but "burrowed in the earth and built little shelters, and the officers and men devoted themselves to unlimited festivity, balls, horseraces, cock-fights, greased pigs and poles, and other games as only soldiers can devise."[1] On December 16th, Warren left camp on a fifteen day leave later extended for five more days. While on leave the general was able to devote time to both his wife in Baltimore, and his family in Cold Spring.[2]

Returning to the army on January 9th, Warren found his position in the Army of the Potomac far from secure. Hancock, commander of the Second Corps on leave since Gettysburg, had recovered and was expected to resume his command shortly. Writing his father in early January, Captain Roebling expressed the feeling of uncertainty which prevailed among the small entourage of staff officers that surrounded Warren:

> After some delay in Washington we came down to the army and are back at the old corps for the present; Gen.

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[1]Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, II, 773.

[2]Warren, Journal, August 8, 1863 to January 17, 1864, entries for December 16, 17, 30, 1863 and January 1, 1864.

> Hancock was ordered to Washington and Gen. Warren will remain in command until he returns which he expects to do shortly; when that takes place we will be adrift again unless by that time the contemplated reorganization of the Army has been effected; the intention is to consolidate 5 corps into three; this action will double the present size of the divisions and will make them a respectable Maj. Gen's command; whether Gen. Warren will get one of the Corps is doubtful; if he don't he may go to Texas.[3]

For the remainder of the month Warren was engaged in carrying out countless administrative details. One directive from Secretary of War Stanton instructed him to provide accommodations and sustenance for a Mrs. Haight and her son who were visiting the Union army for the purpose of circulating religious tracts among the soldiers; another message from the War Department asked the general to look after Edwin Stanton, son of the Secretary of War, who had journeyed down to Virginia to see the actual operation of the different staff departments of the army.[4] During this time Warren found the opportunity to write a lengthy letter to Seth Williams, Adjutant General of the Army of the Potomac, calling for the reduction in the number of ambulances assigned to each corps. It was his belief that ambulances as well as an excess of artillery trains and ammunition wagons tended to impede the progress of the army during an advance, weaken the strength of a corps during the march, and impede the army during a withdrawal.[5] Moreover, in a

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[3]Roebling to John Roebling, January 9, 1864, Roebling Papers, I.

[4]Edwin Stanton to Warren, January 13, 1864, and War Department Dispatch, January 31, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7.

[5]O.R., I, 33, 379-383 passim.

letter to General George Cullum, Halleck's Chief of Staff, Warren suggested that one of the army's greatest needs was for a light pontoon train suitable for crossing streams of less than 300 feet in width. Believing that the debacle at Fredericksburg was caused at least in part by the lack of this equipment, he recommended the construction of a lighter bridging structure for the forthcoming campaign.[6] Such were the activities of a major-general in winter quarters.

Two months of military inaction in Virginia were broken on February 6th, when the Second Corps was ordered to demonstrate at Morton's Ford on the Rapidan in support of General Benjamin Butler, who had planned a surprise attack on Richmond to liberate prisoners at Libby and Belle Isle.[7] At the beginning of the diversion Warren was ill, and so the Second Corps was temporarily under the direction of General John C. Caldwell, commander of the First Division. Under the latter's instructions a brigade from Hays' Third Division waded across the waist-deep icy Rapidan and captured the Confederate picket force guarding the ford. Pushing inland for nearly a mile this unit encountered the main enemy force posted behind entrenchments. Since the enemy made a show of force the remaining two brigades of Hays' division were sent across the river.[8]

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[6]Warren to General George Cullum, January 10, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7.

[7]M.H.S.M., IV, 4.

[8]O.R., I, 33, 119-120.

Recovering from his illness of the morning, Warren in the early afternoon proceeded to Morton's Ford with discretionary orders from the army commander directing him to withdraw his troops if they were in danger of being overwhelmed or to advance them further if the attack gave indications of success.[9] Reaching the ford at 3 P.M., Warren, under fire from enemy sharpshooters, immediately began to reconnoiter the Confederate position.[10] He quickly discovered that Morton's Ford was at the middle of a bend in the Rapidan, the convexity of which was turned inward toward the Union lines. Moreover, the enemy who controlled the high ground effectively commanded the point of land occupied by Hays' division. Realizing that his troops were in a cul-de-sac, the corps commander determined not to advance further but to await nightfall to withdraw.[11] As the enemy's fire grew heavier, he was obliged to order Webb's division across the stream to relieve Hays' troops. By midnight, with the loss of 255 men, all soldiers of the Second Corps had been withdrawn to the near bank of the Rapidan. The demonstration had been in vain, for Butler had been unsuccessful in his attack.[12]

For the Army of the Potomac, the most important and intriguing question that winter was who would replace Meade as

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[9]Ibid., pp. 115, 524.

[10]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 70.

[11]O.R., I, 33, 115.

[12]Ibid., pp. 115, 118; Hans L. Trefousse, Ben Butler: The South Called Him Beast! (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1957), p. 146.

commanding general. Everyone knew that Lincoln was displeased with Meade's direction of the army. Yet, while many considered the Pennsylvanian an inadequate commander, there was no one available to take his place. Grant was to be reserved for a higher position, Sedgwick would refuse, Hancock was still not functioning effectively because of his Gettysburg wound, Sickles was too much of a "Bowery boy," while Newton, Sykes and French were not even considered. At the mention of Warren's name there was some hesitation, caused by his youth and questionable performance at Mine Run. Although he was considered, he was passed over. Finally Meade was retained by default.[13]

The question raised by Roebling a few weeks earlier, whether Warren would be retained as a corps commander or relegated to a non-vital post, worried the ambitious major-general. He had always been associated with the McClellan faction in the army, and since McClellan was emerging as a possible Democratic candidate for President, Warren was stigmatized by some as being favorable to a compromise settlement of the war. Fearful that this unfounded rumor would hurt his chances for confirmation as a permanent corps commander, Warren wrote to Senator Edwin D. Morgan of New York to ask his assistance. Attempting to clarify the issue, he observed,

> I was told to-day by a friend, that vice-President Hamlin while here said to him, that I had been represented as belonging to the copperheads.

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[13]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-65, p. 66.

> How such a false report could have originated is a mystery to me as I have always been an ardent supporter of our government, and gave to Mr. Lincoln and his ticket in New York the only vote I ever gave.
> If this charge should be brought against me when my case comes up for confirmation in the Senate may I beg you will deny it for me.[14]

In early March, Warren had an opportunity to meet some important politicians in person, as he received a summons to appear before the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War to answer queries on the activities of the Federal army during the Chancellorsville and Gettysburg Campaigns. Concerning Chancellorsville, he testified that Sedgwick did not push his men forward at a rapid enough pace after the Federals had stormed Marye's Heights.[15] And he charged that Hooker neither took his staff officers into his confidence, when devising plans before Chancellorsville, nor retained it during the battle. Under questioning by Senator Benjamin F. Wade, the New Yorker, brimming with personal confidence at his own military deportment, declared, "I do not think he /Hooker/ fought that battle as well as he might have done; if I may say so, he did not fight it as I would have fought it." In response to another question posed by Senator Chandler, he answered, "I never should have stopped at Chancellorsville; I should have kept advancing, and fought the enemy, instead of waiting for him to attack me. The character of the country was the great reason for advancing, because as we advanced we

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[14]Warren to Edwin D. Morgan, February 26, 1864, Edwin D. Morgan Papers, XXIV, 1, (State Education Building, Albany, New York).

[15]J.C.C.W., I, 48.

kept getting out into more open country."[16] When quizzed about the stampede of the Eleventh Corps, Warren volunteered a theory which attributed the defeat of Howard's command to the fact that the corps' ambulances, pack-mule train, reserve ammunition wagons, and even beef-cattle had been permitted to come up to the corps' line of battle, and as the battle began these animals and conveyances broke to the rear, spreading destruction and confusion among any troops they encountered.[17]

Turning his attention to Gettysburg and its aftermath, Warren impressed the Congressional Committee by his complete candor concerning the generalship of Meade and the demeanor of his principal officers. Asserting that the rank and file of the Federal army were elated by the great success that they had gained in the bloody conflict at Gettysburg, he declared that the army was prevented from completing the annihilation of the enemy by the hesitancy and indecision of the senior generals.[18] When questioned by Senator Chandler about the result one might have expected of a general assault upon the Confederate positions at Williamsport, Warren resolutely responded, "I think we should have cut them all to pieces; that was my opinion." In response to further questions he noted, "we must take the risk of a smash up of the army before we settle this matter [the war]."[19]

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[16] Ibid., I, 50.

[17] Ibid., I, 45.

[18] Ibid., I, 378-379.

[19] Ibid., I, 381, 383.

Senator Wade, visibly impressed by the witness' frankness in regard to the operations of the Army of the Potomac, questioned Warren on what actions should be taken by the authorities in Washington to make the Federal forces more efficient for the coming campaign.

> Question. Now I want you, as an officer of experience and one who has acted with this army of the Potomac for a long time, to tell me if you believe this army, just as it is now organized, is as efficient as it ought to be?
>
> Answer. No, sir; I think for offensive warfare it could be made immeasurably superior to what it is by properly organizing it.
>
> Question. What do you mean by properly organizing it? What would you do?
>
> Answer. For instance, I would consolidate this army into three corps. Then I would get whoever should be the best man to command the army, and then I would allow him to have the choice of his own corps commanders. Then I would allow these corps commanders to choose their subordinate commanders.
>
> Question. And then hold them all to strict accountability for what they did?
>
> Answer. Yes sir; and let them understand that their position depended upon their doing well; not merely excusing themselves, but accomplishing something.[20]

Whatever may have been the committee's reactions to his attacks on its favorite, Hooker, the radical members must have relished his aggressiveness.

On March 9th, the same day that Warren testified before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, General Ulysses S. Grant, summoned from the West, received his commission as Lieutenant-General, to command all Union field armies.[21] One of the first tasks confronting Grant before he committed his forces to battle was the

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[20] Ibid., I, 384.

[21] J.F.C. Fuller, The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant (London: John Murray, 1929), p. 209.

reorganization of the Army of the Potomac. With his approval, the First and Third Corps were broken up and their troops transferred to the Second, Fifth and Sixth Corps. First Corps troops were consolidated into two divisions and these were added to the Fifth Corps whose depleted ranks were also merged into two divisions.[22] To lead this four division corps of more than 25,000 men, President Lincoln, on March 23, 1864, by General Order 115, assigned General Warren as its permanent commander.[23]

Warren could only have been pleased by the results of the reorganization. His recommendations to the Joint Committee had been fulfilled; French, Sykes, Newton, and other inefficient subordinate generals had been relieved from active duty with the Army of the Potomac, which had been consolidated into three large corps, equal in size with Lee's corps; and his appointment as commander of the Fifth Corps indicated to him the approbation of the Administration, Congress, and Grant.[24]

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[22] O.R., I, 33, 784-785. After reorganization the four divisions were commanded respectively by Brigadier Generals Charles Griffin, John C. Robinson, Samuel W. Crawford, and James S. Wadsworth.

[23] Ibid., I, 33, 725; Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850, p. 11.

[24] Meade for one was pleased neither with the removal of the three corps commanders nor with the growing influence Grant was exerting over the authorities in Washington. Writing to his wife on March 29th, Meade commented,

> I join with you in the regret expressed at the relief of Sykes. I tried very hard to retain Sykes, Newton and even French as division commanders, but without avail. I had very hard work to retain Sedgwick. As to Pleasonton his being relieved was entirely the work of Grant and Stanton. (Meade to Mrs. Meade, March 29, 1864, Meade Papers)

Overjoyed at his appointment, in a letter to Emily he declared that he wanted a corps flag made, and suggested that their friends in New York might wish to join her in presenting him with this ensign. "I would like to have it said it was presented to me," he admitted.[25]

The month of April, 1864 was utilized by Grant and his three corps commanders to become acquainted with their new units. Warren worked long hours bringing his divisions to a peak of efficiency. On March 29th, he issued his first edict in an attempt to discourage some of the troops from their slothful habits. He observed,

> The General commanding the Corps regrets to find that a false notion prevails with many soldiers, that labor is not their proper duty. Nevertheless, the removal of filth and garbage, the making of sinks and drains, are all necessary to prevent sickness, and increases the number to stand by our sides in the day of battle. In making good roads we make good the timely arrival of provisions and equipage at all times and in movements against the enemy secures rapidity to the advance and reliability in the calculated arrival of supports, and reserves. No officer should camp in a wet filthy place, and leave it so, or allow it to accumulate, nor be content to get his command over a difficult place, if he does not expect to see his men failing from bad health, and disease and be left alone, when he meets the enemy. . . . Troops that work cheerful and march well, always fight well and to the best advantage. . . .[26]

In an attempt to discourage malingering and prolonged absences from service, Warren interpreted "extreme cases" in the issuance of leaves very strictly. From the beginning of his

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[25]Warren to Emily Warren, n.d., Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 9. The silk corps flag measured five feet by three feet and combined the badge of the First Corps, a disk, with the Maltese Cross of the Fifth Corps.

[26]Fifth Corps Circular, March 29, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7. Warren, on March 28th, had 40 teams and 700 men cleaning the streets and gutters in Culpeper, site of corps headquarters.

tenure as commander of the Fifth Corps he informed his men that he would not sanction leaves of absence to allow soldiers to attend the funerals of close relatives. It was his belief "that if soldiers could die without having their wives at their side, the rule should also work the other way."[27] Observing the man-killing labor expended by his superior, Roebling felt obliged to write the general's sister, Emily, informing her of the strain experienced by her brother in the performance of his duty. "Your brother is working quite hard; I feel sure he can't stand it long without stimulants, he gets along now by going to sleep at 6 o'clock on three chairs drawn up to the fire, whether he falls off during the night I don't know - So far from calling that a rest I should call it a mortification of the flesh worthy of a follower of La Trappe. . . .[28]

Young Roebling had more than a casual interest in the Warren family. Several days after he dispatched this note to Emily Warren, she asked her brother for permission to marry him.[29] Warren gladly consented.

With the coming of spring, offensive operations began. A communique received by Warren from Humphreys on April 24th, informed Warren that General Burnside's Ninth Corps would, the following day, begin to relieve the Fifth Corps from

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[27]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 341.

[28]Roebling to Emily Warren, April 1, 1864, Roebling Papers, File I.

[29]Miss Emily Warren to Warren, April 7, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 12. Roebling had first met Emily at a Second Corps ball.

Bull Run to Rappahannock Station and directed Warren to concentrate his divisions between Brandy and Rappahannock Stations, preparatory to a move upon Lee's lines.[30] Grant's strategy called for continuous action against the Southern army, hammering away at its lines, and ultimately destroying the Army of Northern Virginia despite the heavy cost to the Federal forces. A war of attrition to wear down the Confederate forces was the policy to be followed for the final suppression of the rebellion.[31]

The great obstacle to Federal success during the forthcoming Wilderness Campaign was the unwieldly size of Grant's corps. Warren had been mistaken in his belief that the consolidation of corps would end all the fractious disputes which plagued the army in the months after Gettysburg. Moreover, twenty-eight thousand men was to prove too large a force for a commander to successfully maneuver in the brush and broken country of northern and central Virginia. During the heat of battle troop movements became disorganized and a corps commander found it necessary to delegate authority to his more experienced generals. Hancock, Sedgwick, and Warren were to act as army commanders, coordinating the activities of their subordinates.[32] Many observers believed that in an area as wooded as Virginia, Grant would have gained greater mobility by organizing his

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[30] M.H.S.M., IV, 11; O.R., I, 33, 962, 1035.

[31] C.F. Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865 (London: Hugh Rees Ltd., 1908), p. 21.

[32] Ibid., 59-60.

troops into five units of 15,000 men instead of the ungainly three corps structure which he utilized.[33]

Another major problem which led to confusion and delays within the Army of the Potomac was the complicated command system. Since Grant had decided to place his headquarters with this army, he was the senior officer present. On the other hand, Meade remained the nominal commander of the Army of the Potomac, and orders from Grant to the army had to pass through his headquarters before being disseminated to the corps and division commanders. For all practical purposes Meade served as a chief-of-staff with unusually wide powers to handle tactical situations as they arose.[34] However, having two generals, each with his own headquarters and staff, issuing directives, (sometimes contradictory) often caused consternation for corps commanders.

The Federal army gathered by Grant at the beginning of the spring campaign consisted of 125,000 effectives, including Burnside's independent corps, 4,300 wagons, 835 ambulances, and 56,500 animals.[35] On May 2nd, final orders were issued directing that the movement south of the Rapidan commence on May 4th. Warren's Fifth Corps, in the vanguard, was directed to force a crossing of the river at Germanna Ford, and to march as rapidly as possible to the vicinity of Old

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[33]Andrew A. Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), p. 3.

[34]Atkinson, Grant's Campaign of 1864 and 1865, pp. 60-61.

[35]M.H.S.M., IV, 207.

Wilderness Tavern on the Orange Court-House turnpike.[36]

Warren had been given the post of honor in the Federal advance in what was to be the long, final campaign in Virginia. Respecting his past reputation and capabilities, Grant observed,

> At that time [beginning of Wilderness Campaign] my judgment was that Warren was the man I would suggest to succeed Meade should anything happen to that gallant soldier to take him from the field. As I have before said, Warren was a gallant soldier, an able man; and he was beside thoroughly imbued with the solemnity and importance of the duty he had to perform.[37]

From all indications, Grant did not wish to bring on a general engagement in the Wilderness. General Humphreys believed that Grant was hoping to march rapidly through the dense underbrush to reach an open area further south where the Union army might be able to take advantage of its superior numbers and firepower to fight a battle in a site of its choosing.[38] With this in mind, General James Wilson's cavalry division before dawn on May 4th drove in the Confederate pickets, secured Germanna Ford, and by 6 A.M., had successfully thrown two pontoon bridges across the Rapidan. At this hour the head of Warren's corps, which had taken up the march from Culpeper at midnight, drew near the ford and shortly thereafter, General Romeyn B. Ayres' brigade of regulars from Griffin's division, crossed the stream and followed Wilson's cavalry up

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[36] O.R., I, 36, II, 331-332.

[37] U.S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1886), II, 216.

[38] Humphreys, The Virginia Campaigns of '64 and '65, p. 56; Fuller, The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant, p. 231; M.H.S.M., IV, 10-11.

the narrow road toward Old Wilderness Tavern.[39]

The terrain on which the Federal infantry advanced during the forenoon of May 4th was called the Wilderness. A forest land some fifteen miles square between Orange Court House and Fredericksburg, it was covered by thickets of scraggy oak, hazel, sassafras, and pine trees, interlaced by vines. It was a domain of sandy soil, worn-out farms, and desolation, broken only by the hoots of an occasional owl or the piercing cries of a whip-poor-will.[40]

It took nearly six hours for the Fifth Corps, with all its accouterments, to cross the pontoons and enter the wasteland. As soon as all his troops had cleared Germanna Ford, Warren, nattily attired in a full dress uniform with yellow sash, mounted on a large iron-gray horse, started up the Germanna Ford road for the clearing around Old Wilderness Tavern, some seven miles distant.[41] During this ride he observed that the road was strewn with overcoats which the men had thrown away. The troops, marching since midnight,

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[39]Morris Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), pp. 81-82; Horace Porter, Campaigning With Grant (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 41.

[40]Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox, pp. 555-556; History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, 118th Pennsylvania Volunteers from their First Engagement at Antietam to Appomattox (Philadelphia: J.L. Smith Publisher, 1888), p. 397. Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox: Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment (Pittsburg: The 155th Regimental Association, 1910), p. 241; Lyman, Meade's Headquarters 1863-1865, p. 89.

[41]Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 51; Farley, Reminiscences of the 140th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry, pp. 236-237; Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, p. 93.

were tired and considered the heavy greatcoats a needless burden, for the day was excessively warm and the dense underbrush did not permit a fresh breath of air.[42]

By mid-afternoon Warren had his corps concentrated at Old Wilderness Tavern with one division advanced a mile and a half up the pike toward Robertson's Tavern. This was the first day's objective of the Fifth Corps. Many contemporaries of Grant have found fault with him for not pushing his troops clear through the Wilderness while over four hours of daylight still remained for maneuvering.[43] Although militarily this would have been advantageous, logistically it was impossible. An early halt was necessary to allow the army's second line transport, carrying fifteen days supplies, to cross the Rapidan. In addition, delay was necessary to allow the troops who had been marching almost continuously for sixteen hours to get some rest and to permit General Burnside's Ninth Corps, which was guarding the supply trains and Rapidan fords, to march through the night to form the reserve of the army.[44] At any rate, Grant was satisfied with the movement of his army around Lee's right flank. During the evening he was heard to remark, "It is very gratifying to know that Hancock and Warren have made a march to-day of over twenty miles, with scarcely any stragglers from their commands."[45]

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[42]Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, p. 94.

[43]Washington A. Roebling, Wash Roebling's War (Newark, Delaware: The Spiral Press, 1961), p. 23.

[44]Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, p. 110; Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 101.

[45]Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 46.

By nightfall, Warren had disposed his troops to meet any possible advance of Lee's army upon Old Wilderness Tavern. From his headquarters at the Lacy House, on the pike near Old Wilderness Tavern, he dispatched messengers ordering Robinson's division to take position along the Germanna Road toward Flat Run; Griffin's division to hold the road towards Locust Grove, one and a half miles west of Old Wilderness Tavern; Crawford's division to hold a line at Griffin's left rear; and Wadsworth's division at the tavern and eastward along the turnpike.[46] At supper he appeared in fine spirits, hopeful for success, and according to one staff officer, "cheerier at heart" than at any time afterwards. As the headquarters officers ate, they could faintly hear hymn singing from the camp of a brigade posted a short distance away. The Federals bedded down for the night without knowing that General Richard Ewell's Confederate corps was within three miles of their position.[47]

After rising before 5 A. M. on May 5th, Warren made preparations to advance his forces through the Wilderness. At the time he informed General Humphreys that on account of the negligence of a pioneer officer, the Fifth Corps had failed to detail its full compliment of troops to escort the army's supply trains. Being a strict disciplinarian, he promised to punish severely the offending officer and offered to dispatch immediately 400 men from his main force to carry out the duty. As

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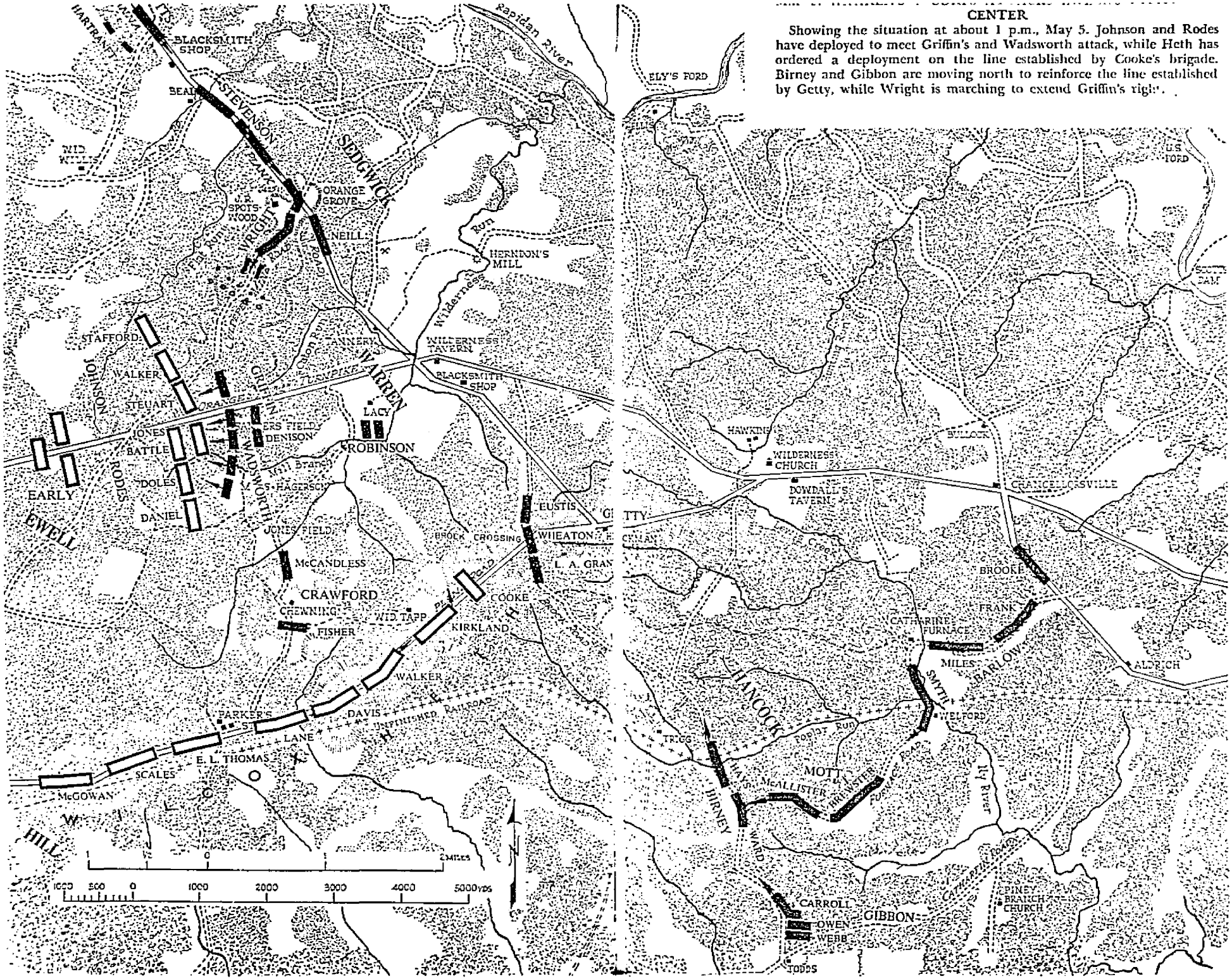
[46]Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 115. Roebling Report, entry for May 4, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7A.

[47]Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, pp. 98-99, 114.



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Showing the situation at about 1 p.m., May 5. Johnson and Rodes have deployed to meet Griffin's and Wadsworth attack, while Heth has ordered a deployment on the line established by Cooke's brigade. Birney and Gibbon are moving north to reinforce the line established by Getty, while Wright is marching to extend Griffin's right.

one historian aptly observed, this minor incident graphically illustrated "the over-wide range of his thoughts and preoccupations." Another indication of this obsession to take upon himself the burdens and functions of the commanding general was his impromptu decision to keep Griffin's division out on the turnpike to serve as flank guard, not for his command, but for the entire Army of the Potomac.[48]

Prior to 6:30 A.M., Warren had directed Griffin and Crawford cautiously to feel forward to see if the enemy had any force at their respective fronts. Shortly thereafter, he reported to army headquarters that a considerable enemy force had been encountered on the Orange Court House turnpike, southwest of Old Wilderness Tavern. Grant and Meade refused to admit the validity of this communique because they had strong convictions that Lee, in order to protect his communications with Richmond, would withdraw southward. A little after 7 A.M., Meade arrived at Warren's headquarters and after a short conference with the corps commander stated, "They /the enemy/ have left a division to fool us here, while they concentrate and prepare a position towards the North Anna; and what I want is to prevent those fellows getting back to Mine Run." Under the misapprehension that the Fifth Corps was confronted only by the enemy's rear guard, Meade directed Warren to attack

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[48] O.R., I, 36, II, 413; Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, pp. 129-130.

without delay the Confederate force on the turnpike.[49]

Immediately, Warren suspended Crawford's forward movement and directed General Wadsworth to move his division into line on the left of Griffin.[50] All of these maneuvers took time, and as the hours passed Grant's temper was aroused by what he considered the unwillingness of Warren to close with the enemy. Meade was also more irascible than usual, and the two senior generals severely reproached the New Yorker. Goaded by his superiors, Warren in turn upbraided his subordinates. When a messenger from Griffin reported that the division commander was against making an attack unless he was properly supported, Warren directed the aide to inform Griffin to follow orders.[51]

Preparations completed, Griffin at noon attacked and routed General John M. Jones' brigade of Edward Johnson's division. Under the impact of the Federal assault, the entire Confederate brigade fell back in great confusion for more than a mile; its commander, General Jones, was killed and

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[49]Fuller, The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant, p. 234; William Swinton, The Twelve Decisive Battles of the War (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, Publishers, 1867), p. 368.

[50]O.R., I, 36, II, 417; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 420-421.

[51]Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 140; According to Roebling, Grant threatened to cashier Warren on the spot in front of the entire army if he did not immediately order an attack. For a full account see, Roebling to James F. Rusling, January 14, 1910, Roebling Papers, File 2.

the morale of the unit shattered.[52] The Fifth Corps' advance was checked by the arrival of the remainder of Ewell's corps. Attacking in turn, the Confederates overwhelmed the 140th and 146th New York, capturing two pieces of artillery, and forced Griffin's entire battle line back to its initial starting point.[53] For the next few hours Union and Confederate units ran into one another more by accident than by design. Confusion, intensified by the difficulty of traversing the dense underbrush, prevailed on both sides, and little was accomplished except for swelling the already heavy casualty lists.

C.F. Atkinson, an English observer in the Federal army, called May 5th a day of "lost opportunities" for the Union cause. Through the entire day Grant had committed only seven of his divisions against the enemy's five. Another mistake noted by Atkinson was that the Federal attacks were piecemeal and not concentrated to overwhelm Lee. All of Burnside's corps, and six divisions from Hancock's and Sedgwick's commands, were not utilized but kept in reserve.[54] At the same time Lee had the dual liability of fighting with one third of his infantry (Longstreet's corps) absent, and his cavalry still

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[52]H.J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, James Longstreet: Lee's War Horse (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 305; Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, pp. 187-188; Adam Badeau, Military History of Ulysses S. Grant (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1868), II, 106.

[53]O.R., I, 36, I, 189; Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, pp. 189-192.

[54]Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 164.

on its way from Fredericksburg. If Grant on May 5th had ordered a coordinated, general assault along the line, the Confederates most probably would have been decisively defeated the same day.

The army's difficulties created severe personal rifts. After the close of action on that day, Griffin rode to Meade's headquarters. Furious about the reprimands he had received he railed against Warren and Meade, whom he accused of having left his division in the lurch during the heavy fighting.[55] Cooler heads intervened and escorted him back to his command. This episode, though minor, was the first indication that military adversity was to prove a strong devisive force within the Army of the Potomac in the forthcoming year.

During the early evening Warren held a conference at the Lacy House with Frederick T. Locke, the Adjutant-General, and Chief Surgeon Milhau. Still wearing his yellow sash and with his long black hair streaming down from his pronounced forehead, the general was seated on one side of a small table in the main room of the house. Milhau informed him of the heavy losses sustained by the Fifth Corps in the action of the day. Astounded at the figure announced by the surgeon, Warren looked up and gloomily observed, "It will never do, Locke, to make a showing of such heavy losses."[56] Shortly afterwards,

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[55]Steere, The Wilderness Campaign, p. 182; Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 145.

[56]Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, pp. 209-211. The Fifth Corps lost nearly 3,000 men on this single day.

accompanied by his aide, Roebling, he went off to a conference called by Meade to devise plans for the renewal of fighting in the morning.[57]

By 10 P.M. the Fifth Corps commander received his instructions for May 6th:

> You will be re-inforced during the night by the four battalions of heavy artillery serving with the Artillery Reserve, and a battalion of engineer troops. You are authorized also to withdraw General Robinson with his brigades as soon as General Burnside's troops are in position or nearly so.. With this force you will to-morrow, at 4.30 a.m., renew the attack on the Orange Court-House pike, where you attacked to-day.[58]

At 5 A.M., two divisions of Warren's corps, under Robinson and Wadsworth, in conjunction with Hancock's Second Corps, advanced upon the flank of A.P. Hill's forces. The combined assault quickly overwhelmed the Confederates, driving them back through the thickets for more than a mile and a half. This momentary success was checked when the Federals encountered advanced units of Longstreet's command. Gradually the Federal lines were pushed back. James Wadsworth, the commander of the Fourth Division, was killed during the heavy fighting while attempting to rally his men.[59] Efforts made by Warren's two remaining divisions, under Griffin and Crawford, to break Ewell's lines failed when the commander of the First Division discovered that the Confederates had profitably spent the night constructing strong earthworks.[60] Under the circumstances,

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[57] Ibid.

[58] O.R., I, 36, II, 415.

[59] Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 430-434 passim.

[60] Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 179.

Warren had no choice but to call off the attack in this quarter. For the remainder of the day the Fifth Corps was used as a pool for reinforcements for other corps. Warren noted that on this day he received eighteen separate and distinct orders to dispatch troops to the aid of other embattled units.[61]

Under the pressure of heavy combat Warren's disposition grew more irritable. In response to a request to cooperate with General Sedgwick in one movement, he responded,

> General Meade, I'll be Godd/amne/d if I'll cooperate with Sedgwick or anybody else. You are the commander of this army and you can give your orders and I'll obey them; or you can put Sedgwick in command and he can give the orders and I will obey them; or you can put me in command and I will give the orders and Sedgwick shall obey them; but I'll be Godd/amne/d if I'll cooperate with General Sedgwick or anybody else.[62]

Growing more introverted during these trying days, at times he would remain alone in his tent for hours, while reading from a small volume of limericks. He appeared hurt when his staff did not respond favorably when he repeated the verses at almost every meal. One staff officer noted that Warren's already grave expression deepened as he rose in fame and responsibility.[63]

Just before midnight, May 6th, Confederate General John Gordon discovered that the Federal right flank was ex-

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[61] M.H.S.M., IV, 211.

[62] James H. Wilson, Under The Old Flag (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912), I, 396.

[63] Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, p. 30

posed and his brigade, supported by a portion of Robert Johnson's command, attacked. The entire position held by the Sixth Corps became endangered. Alexander Shaler's and Truman Seymour's brigades were broken and all but annihilated with both commanding generals captured. Confusion and rumors were rampant - - it was said that both Sedgwick and his second in command, General Horatio Wright, were captured. Meade was at Grant's headquarters and therefore he was not able to promptly send troops to support Sedgwick. Taking decisive action without orders from superiors, Warren dispatched reinforcements to patch the hole in the Union line and thereby prevented a complete breakthrough.[64]

Grant's first battle in the East had not been nearly as successful as his previous operations. By nightfall of May 7th, the Army of the Potomac had lost 17,666 men during the three day battle in the Wilderness. Fifth Corps casualties in this encounter amounted to 253 officers and 4,879 men, a total of 5,132 out of an effective force of almost 28,000 men.[65] But blame for the defeat of the Union offensive in the Wilderness could not be placed on any one individual. Federal infantry, cavalry, artillery, and supply trains were scattered for many miles along both banks of the Rapidan, and Union commanders by force of circumstances were compelled to attack before their dispositions were completed.[66] The

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[64]Andrew A. Humphreys, Reply to General Porter's Articles Which Have Appeared in the Century Magazine (Port Niobrara: 1897), p. 8.

[65]Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 629; O.R., I, 36, I, 125.

[66]Steere, The Wilderness Campaign, p. 194.

chief obstacles encountered by the Northern forces were not Lee's veterans, but the underbrush and scrub timber which concealed the enemy's presence and hindered a coordinated attack by the numerically superior Army of the Potomac.[67] The Wilderness was an unfortunate tactical defeat for Grant because he was not able to achieve his goal of selecting the ground of battle, and forcing the Confederates to attack the Union army in a position of its choosing. However, strategically, Grant could well afford to lose 17,000 men while Lee could not readily replace his manpower from the already depleted ranks of the Confederate reserves.

After dark on May 7th, Grant ordered a movement of Union forces to the southeast toward Spotsylvania Court House. Previously, after a defeat, the commander of the Army of the Potomac had always withdrawn northward to reorganize and rest the army. Grant, however, had other plans, and his movement upon Spotsylvania had a two fold objective, first, to prevent Lee from moving back to Richmond to crush General Butler's forces along the James River, and second, to attempt to maneuver the Federal army between the Confederates and Richmond.[68]

For the second time in four days the Fifth Corps led the way. Warren remained behind to draw his corps, division by division, out of its lines which were in close proximity

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[67]Sylvanus Cadwallader, Three Years With Grant (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 177.

[68]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 211.

to the Confederate entrenchments. At 12:30 A.M., Warren, riding at a gallop down the Brock Road to rejoin the head of his column, readily observed that the troops marched poorly. The night was hot and humid and there was much straggling. When the corps' passage was delayed by the Provost Marshal's mounted troops and the personal escorts of Grant and Meade, the exhausted troops took the opportunity to lie down by the side of the road and many immediately fell asleep.[69] The Fifth Corps was further retarded in its attempt to seize Spotsylvania by the blocking of the Brock Road by several mounted squadrons of Sheridan's cavalry under General Wesley Merritt. Encountering Fitz Lee's troopers, Merritt had to dislodge the stubborn Confederates from behind every tree and thicket. Impatient at the long delay his corps encountered, Warren made a long vocal complaint to Meade that Sheridan's cavalry had obstructed his command.[70]

Terrain at and around Spotsylvania Court House was more open than in the Wilderness, but formidable obstacles were found in the form of several swift-flowing streams which caused much of the land to be swampy.[71] Overcoming natural

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[69]Warren to Humphreys, May 8, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7B; Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, pp. 227-229; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 441.

[70]Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 229; Joseph Hergeshimer, Sheridan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931), pp. 177-178. A little before noon May 8th, General Meade sent for Sheridan and proceeded to give the cavalry commander a tongue lashing for allowing his mounted forces to impede the advance of the Fifth Corps. The peppery little Irishman in turn denounced both Meade and Warren. It has been suggested that Sheridan's dislike for Warren can be dated from this time. See. M.H.S.M., IV, 218-219.

[71]Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 88.

obstacles, and thrusting aside felled trees cut by Fitz Lee's cavalry to block its passage, by daylight the Fifth Corps had reached the outskirts of Spotsylvania. Robinson's division had the advance and his men were "blown", many of them having fallen out of the ranks from fatigue and heat exhaustion. Robinson asked his corps commander for time to concentrate and rest his brigades.before attacking, but Warren, impatient, would brook no delay. Believing that the only force occupying his objective was an exhausted enemy cavalry division, Warren ordered an immediate charge upon the enemy's rudimentary breastworks. As the division commander turned to comply, Warren said, "Never mind cannon, never mind bullets, press on and clear this road."[72]

Forming his three brigades in column of regiments four lines deep and supported on the right by Griffin's division, Robinson's command charged forward at the Confederate works. Instead of encountering only cavalry, the Federal assault troops charged across a wide, open field directly at entrenchments manned by the graycoats of Robert H. Anderson's corps. Northerners went down in ranks under the accurate fire from Confederate muskets; the First Michigan mauled in the Wilderness, entered the fray one hundred strong and within fifteen minutes came out with but twenty-five.[73]

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[72]Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, p. 91; M.H.S.M., IV, 214-215; Walker, A History of the Second Army Corps, p. 443.

[73]E.P. Alexander, Military Memoirs of a Confederate, T. Harry Williams ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 511; New York Times, May 13, 1864, Account of Battle of Spotsylvania, May 8, 1864.

Watching the advance of his men on the Confederate position, Warren came under the fire of a Southern sharpshooter. Several shots passed uncomfortably close to the general's head, and only after the prompting of his staff did he begin to move away from the line of fire. At this precise moment, another shot rang out and down went both Warren and his mount. Although his horse had been severely wounded, Warren escaped unscathed. Fate had been with him; his horse had raised his head and received the ball between the eyes, a shot that had been meant for his rider. The following day, at the same spot, General John Sedgwick, commander of the Sixth Corps, was killed by an enemy sharpshooter.[74]

Mounting another horse, and observing that Robinson's division had broken in disorder, Warren was compelled to go among the troops to steady their will to fight. Grasping the division flag firmly in his own hands, he stopped the stampede of Robinson's division.[75] Successive assaults on Anderson's corps by Griffin, Crawford, and Cutler (formerly Wadsworth) were repulsed with heavy losses, and by midday Warren's command had been fought to a standstill.[76] Left with no choice but to have his forces entrench their forward positions in front of the Confederate works, Warren awaited the arrival of Sedgwick's and Hancock's commands.

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[74]Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, pp. 229-230.

[75]New York Times, May 14, 1864, Account of Battle of Spotsylvania.

[76]Warren to Humphreys, May 8, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7B.

Undaunted, Warren was not dejected by the repulse of his command in its morning assaults. Writing to Meade at 2 P.M., he noted:

> I see no changes in the enemy's force. No firing to speak of except with artillery and of that but little. I am picking up a little ammunition and dividing out that of those that have not fired much away, with the others. Prisoners say Longstreet is wounded. I will do my best to smash Longstreet up when Genl. Sedgwick comes.[77]

Throughout the day, he was optimistic in his belief that the Army of the Potomac would finally crush its adversary. In one of his dispatches he wrote, "I feel the less apprehension of an attack than I did after considering the matter from my own point of view. The rebels are as tired out as we are."[78] On the same day, in a letter to General Meade, Warren remarked that under the circumstances the Army of the Potomac had but one choice, "to fight it out."[79]

Both armies used May 9th to perfect their entrenchments, bring up troops, and bury their dead. At 10 A.M., May 10th, Warren received orders to coordinate a joint attack with Hancock's corps against the enemy's works. After a personal reconnaissance, Warren reported to Meade that he found the opportunity for attack to be so favorable that he counselled an immediate assault. General Humphreys has recorded a graphic description of this desperate attempt to break through Lee's lines at Spotsylvania:

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[77]Warren to Meade, May 8, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7B.

[78]O.R., I, 36, II, 541.

[79]Ibid., p. 542.

> General Warren, wearing his full uniform, proceeded to assault the enemy's position at once with Crawford's and Cutler's divisions, and Webb's and Carroll's brigades of Gibbon's division /Hancock's corps/ under Gibbon's orders. Opposite the right of this attacking force the wood in front of the enemy's intrenchments was dense, and filled with a low growth of dead cedar trees, whose hard sharp-pointed branches, interlaced and pointed in all directions, made it very difficult for the troops to advance under the heavy artillery and musketry fire they met at the outset. They emerged into the open ground near the intrenchments with disordered ranks and under a heavy artillery and musketry fire, part direct, part flanking, that swept the whole ground; but went forward some to the abatis, others to the crest of the parapet, but were all driven back. . . .[80]

During the assault, Warren displayed marked personal bravery. In an attempt to rally Crawford's troops who were disorganized by their repulse, the corps commander came under heavy enemy fire; Confederate sharpshooters, observing the plucky little general resplendent in full uniform and mounted on a large white horse, concentrated their fire upon him. Although a chance ball split in half the staff of the corps flag he was holding, Warren miraculously escaped unscathed.[81]

On May 11th, General Warren led an attack on the Confederate lines north of Spotsylvania. The attack was not well planned and was easily repulsed.[82] Even though the Fifth Corps thrust was a failure, it demonstrated that Warren was not afraid to storm entrenchments, if he believed they could be carried by assault.

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[80]Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65, pp. 81-82.

[81]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 364.

[82]Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 263.

The following day, fighting at the "Bloody Angle" and along the Brock Road was as heavy as any encountered by the Army of the Potomac during the course of the war. A stout oak tree twenty-two inches in diameter was cut down near the base by minie balls.[83] In order to further exploit the gains made by Hancock's corps at the "Bloody Angle," Warren was directed to order an attack before 8 A.M., to act as a feint to discourage any Confederate counterattack on the salient.[84] Grant did not expect Warren to carry the enemy works in his front, but he hoped that pressure exerted upon Lee's lines would prevent the Confederates from expelling the Second Corps from its advanced positions. As early as 6:30 A.M., Warren, in a corps circular, advised his division commanders to prepare for imminent action.[85]

Shortly after 8 A.M., Warren received orders to attack immediately with his entire force. But he hesitated; it was his belief that his assault would fail. Writing to Meade before 9 A.M., he observed, "Your order to attack immediately with my whole force leaves me no time to attack the key positions first. One of them is in front of Crawford; another is in front of the Sixth Corps, which enfilades and takes my whole left in reverse. Your orders have been issued and

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[83]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 173N.

[84]Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 107.

[85]O.R., I, 36, II, 667. "We may expect an order to advance our line at any moment. Have your troops in readiness to move out in line of battle, preceded by a strong skirmish line to draw the enemy's fire. Let the main line make the charge after the first volley of the enemy. . . ."

reiterated."[86]

Grant and Meade were both disturbed by the New Yorker's repeated requests for delaying his assault. They sent messengers scurrying to Fifth Corps headquarters in an attempt to stir Warren to action. One communique from Humphreys stated, "The order of the Maj Genl Comdg. is peremptory that you attack at once at all hazards with your whole force, if necessary."[87] Shortly thereafter, in an attempt to relieve Warren's care-worn mind from the agonies of ordering an attack that might meet with a bloody repulse, the Chief of Staff wrote, "Don't hesitate to attack with the bayonet. Meade has assumed the responsibility and will take the consequences."[88] In response to these directives Warren answered, "My lines nearest the salient of the enemy are reported constantly advancing up to the enemy's works. My orders are to attack with the bayonet without regard to consequences that may result unfavorably."[89]

Meade thought he detected a defeatist tone in Warren's dispatches, and at 10:05 A.M., General Humphreys informed the Fifth Corps commander, "The major-general commanding infers from the tenor of your dispatches that, in your judgment, your attack will not be successful. Should it fail, make your dispositions to draw in your troops and send them as fast as

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[86] O.R., I, 36, II, 662.

[87] Humphreys to Warren, May 12, 1864, 9:15 A.M., Warren Papers, VII, 7B.

[88] O.R., I, 36, II, 663.

[89] Ibid., p. 664.

possible to the support of General Wright and General Hancock."[90] Visibly agitated because of the inertia of the Fifth Corps, Grant wrote Meade, "If Warren fails to attack promptly, send Humphreys to command his corps, and relieve him. . . ."[91] Whether Warren was actually temporarily removed from his command is doubtful. Adam Badeau, a close confidant of Grant, believed that Warren acted under "verbal orders" from Humphreys and the New Yorker did not function independently in directing him command during the latter part of the battle of Spotsylvania.[92] However, General Humphreys in writing about the part played by the Fifth Corps on May 12th, made no mention of his commanding the operations of that unit.[93]

In at least one assault on that day, Warren was observed leading his troops in person. During the first two weeks of May, there was little doubt that he was a courageous officer who set the example for his men by performing acts of bravery. One shortcoming was noted by General Grant; Warren had a mind of his own and refused to be hurried when orders from headquarters were contrary to his own concept of how a particular battle should be fought. In Warren's defense, it can be stated that one reason for his apparent unwillingness to order further assaults was that the Fifth Corps had been

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Grant to Meade, May 12, 1864, 10:40 A.M., Grant Papers, Series 5, Vol. 45. This message appears surprising especially in comparison to a message Grant sent to Burnside only twenty minutes earlier, "Warren and Wright have been attacking vigorously all day."

[92] Badeau, Military History of Ulysses S. Grant, II, 181.

[93] Humphreys, The Virginia Campaigns of '64 and '65, pp. 101-102.

fighting without relief at Spotsylvania for four days and its numbers had been greatly thinned by the continuous action. The unit was used up.[94]

Commenting on his proposed removal of Warren, Grant stated,

> I feel sorry to be obligated to send such an order in regard to Warren. He is an officer for whom I had conceived a very high regard. His quickness of perception, personal gallantry, and soldierly bearing pleased me, and a few days ago I should have been inclined to place him in command of the Army of the Potomac in case Meade had been killed; but I began to feel, after his want of vigor in assaulting on the 8th, that he was not as efficient as I had believed, and his delay in attacking and the feeble character of his assaults to-day confirm me in my apprehensions.[95]

In Grant's estimation, Warren did not live up to expectations; the commander of the Fifth Corps lacked the flamboyant aggressiveness that he had previously taken for granted in his senior officers. Grant saw qualities in Warren he despised - caution, delay, and worse, a questioning of orders.

Several eminent, contemporary observers believed that Grant had been unnecessarily severe with Warren. Francis Walker, historian of the Second Corps, felt that if it took a corps commander's personal presence in the forward rifle pits to prod along his men, the troops were demoralized and should not be driven to additional attacks. Further, he believed that the Battle of the Wilderness had left the Union

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[94]Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 167; Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 87. During the Spotsylvania Campaign, May 8-21, the Fifth Corps lost 4,480 soldiers. See O.R., I, 36, I, 147.

[95]Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 108.

veterans in a state of shock, which prevented them from successfully assaulting the enemy's prepared works.[96] Warren, on the morning of the 12th, had at first reported favorably for a frontal assault but, after several probing actions by Crawford's and Cutler's divisions, the general had decided that the Confederate entrenchments could not be carried by storm.[97] Officers and private soldiers, historians and biographers, have disagreed about the responsibility for the failure of the Union army to crush Lee at Spotsylvania, but one fact is uncontestable, Grant lost a great deal of respect for Warren's capabilities as a commanding general during the intense fighting of that campaign.

Frustrated in his attempt to defeat Lee at Spotsylvania, Grant resumed his turning movement to the southeast. This advance kept the Confederates on the defensive, parrying Federal thrusts at their lines of communication. At worst, the strategem would force Lee to abandon his heavily fortified line; at best, Grant would be able to flank Lee and defeat the Confederate divisions in detail, as they hurried up to the threatened position. Anticipating Grant's movements, the Southern general was able to utilize his interior lines of communication to dispatch troops so as to entrench and defend Hanover Junction. This Confederate movement once more blocked the Union advance.

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[96]Walker, History of the Second Army Corps, pp. 130-131.

[97]Ibid., p. 457.

During this latter offensive maneuver Warren felt the necessity to write his wife to correct an erroneous newspaper account that reported his death. The dead officer was a Colonel Warren and not the commander of the Fifth Corps.[98] Warren was physically and mentally drained by the battles and long tedious marches of the past fortnight. Writing to General Humphreys, on May 14th, he observed,

> The head of my column came here a little while ago, but in the night most of the men fell out of the ranks from weariness and the command became disjointed, and part lost their way. I have nothing to go forward, for those who have come up are excessively weary. I have not more with me than would make a good skirmish line for the corps. I am pushing them out. I have spared no effort, but my men could not be gotten up. I must await their coming. The enemy is here in some force.[99]

At this time, in an attempt to tighten discipline among his troops Warren took several measures to bring shirkers back to the ranks and rid the service of a number of inefficient officers. The corps commander directed that henceforth, musicians, bandsmen, and other support forces would not be permitted to go to the rear during an engagement but should remain near or with the infantry. In addition, Warren preferred charges of cowardice, "misbehavior in the presence of the enemy" and "shamefully abandoning their company and regiment when about to meet the enemy" against eleven officers.[100] These actions had the salutary effect of raising morale and

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[98]Warren to Emily Warren, May 16, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[99]O.R., I, 36, II, 755.

[100]Special Corps Orders for May 18, and May 19, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 7C.

efficiency in the corps for the forthcoming campaign.

On May 20th, at the close of a week of marching, skirmishing, and brief engagements, Warren wrote his wife of the problems encountered by his troops:

> Yesterday was a trying and anxious day for me. Our whole army moved around to my left and I had to hold the right flank and my whole front. As soon as the enemy discovered the movement the whole of Ewell's corps moved out to get around and turn our right and a very heavy engagement came off towards evening in which we were completely successful, part of my troops and Genl. /Robert/ Tyler's division driving them back and capturing many prisoners.[101]

Once again Warren's corps led an advance to flank the Confederate positions. On May 23rd, his command reached Jericho Ford on the North Anna, a swiftly flowing, deep stream which formed a steep ravine 125 feet wide.[102] Finding the opposite bank of the stream unguarded, he directed Bartlett's brigade to wade across the river and form a line of battle, covering the construction of a pontoon bridge to insure the safe passage of the corps to the south bank. By 4:30 P.M., the entire corps had crossed over the North Anna without loss.[103] Cutler's and Griffin's divisions were pushed out several hundred yards and there encountered Cadmus Wilcox's division of A.P. Hill's corps. In a short but sharp contest a determined Confederate attack was repulsed and the enemy

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[101]Warren to Emily Warren, May 20, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[102]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865, p. 126.

[103]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 473; Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 246; Fuller, The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant, p. 265.

driven back into their entrenchments, with the loss of 500 prisoners.[104] One of these prisoners, a young officer undergoing interrogation, arrogantly remarked that "he had heard on their side that Warren was a good general, but no gentleman." Warren, nearby, heard this remark and murmurred, "If they only think me a good general I don't care to be considered a gentleman."[105] For his part in repulsing the Confederate attacks made on his command by Hill's corps at the North Anna, he received a congratulatory telegram from General Meade.[106]

During the next two days the Fifth Corps was engaged in ripping up track belonging to the Virginia Central Railroad, conducting reconnaissances, and attempting to link up with Hancock's corps several miles downstream.[107] In this last endeavor it was unsuccessful. Recovering from an illness which had curtailed his effectiveness for several days, Lee thrust the center of his line between the two wings of the Federal army, and prevented Grant from reinforcing either wing without making a difficult double passage of the North Anna.[108]

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[104]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 246; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 474.

[105]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 387.

[106]O.R., I, 36, III, 129. In this message Meade noted, "I congratulate you and your gallant corps for the handsome manner in which you repulsed the enemy's attacks."

[107]Warren to General Crawford, May 24, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 8; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 477.

[108]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865, p. 128; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 477.

The Lieutenant-General's line of attack was effectively checked. Major Roebling expressed the opinion of Warren and his staff concerning the state of affairs at the North Anna:

> Our matters here are at a dead lock; unless the rebs commit some great error they will hold us in check until kingdom come; neither of our commanding Generals seems to be smart enough to do anything beyond mediocrity. We are all getting thoroughly tired and disgusted; these two armies remind me very much of two schoolboys trying to stare each other out of countenance.[109]

Adversity created a polarization among the senior officers of the army. Easterners, mainly engineer officers familiar with the McClellan tradition, tended to grow more cautious as the campaign developed; Westerners, accompanying Grant to Virginia after a long succession of victories in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi, looked with distain upon the "defeatism" and the respect held for "Bobby Lee" by the veterans of the Army of the Potomac.[110] It was inevitable that the flamboyant Sheridan should come into conflict with Warren who, in the mind of the cavalryman, represented the "Eastern Establishment" and the last vestiges of "McClellanism" within the Army of the Potomac. As Grant ordered the Union army once more to skirt the Confederate right flank and advance to the southeast toward Cold Harbor, this smoldering hostility between Warren and Sheridan burst into flame. On May 24th, with the Fifth Corps on the extreme left of the Federal line, Meade assigned the cavalry to protect the left flank of the Union army. Believing that the cavalry was not properly performing

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[109]Roebling to Miss Emily Warren, May 24, 1864, Roebling Papers.

[110]Frederick B. Wiener, "Decline of a Leader: The Case of General Meade," Infantry Journal (Nov.-Dec., 1938, volume 45), p. 541.

its duty, Warren sent a protest to cavalry headquarters which induced Sheridan to reply, "I have had troops on the left of General Warren's corps all day and connected with him."[111] The commander of the cavalry must have been mistaken, because Lee flanked the Fifth Corps and drove in its outposts. Had Sheridan been in the position ordered by the high command, it would have been impossible for the Confederates to strike the left of the Federal infantry line. In this encounter antipathy between infantry and cavalry grew more personal and led to ill-will between the commanders of these forces.

A few days later, Warren sent a dispatch to General Andrew A. Humphreys, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac:

> I am just informed by Lieutenant Houghton of Colonel McIntosh's cavalry that their nearest picket is 2 miles from my right flank. I am not capable of maintaining any position whatever, if this is all the co-operation I am to have. Officers being informed that two divisions of cavalry are on my right flank, it but gives me false assurances of being timely warned of the enemy's flank movements.[112]

Warren was compelled to forward this complaint to headquarters because of what he considered the disinterest displayed by the cavalry with the plight of the infantry. He had been angered by a message from General Wilson who informed him that, because of the vast territory his command had to patrol, the infantry should not expect much support from his cavalry. Wilson suggested that Warren open communication with General

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[111] Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 249.

[112] O.R., I, 36, III, 609.

Alfred Torbert to see if he could help to protect the Fifth Corps' flank.[113]

Warren was bewildered about the function of the Union cavalry. In the past, the mounted troops had always provided effective cover for infantry movements, but, since Sheridan had assumed supreme command of the cavalry, the mounted squadrons had stopped supporting the foot soldiers. In his estimation, despite the preponderance in numbers, equipment, and firepower, the Federal cavalry had proven incapable of providing effective cover for the movements of the Army of the Potomac against the greatly weakened Confederate cavalry.[114]

Continuing its southern advance, the Federal army on June 3rd fought its third major battle in less than a month at Cold Harbor. A debacle resulted in which Grant lost almost 10,000 men in twenty minutes. During the battle, the Fifth Corps held a quiet sector at the right of the Federal line and was not drawn into the bloodbath. While the troops of the Second, Sixth, and other corps taking part in the battle were slaughtered as they assaulted the Confederate works, Warren's command held a long line near Bethesda Church, and the total casualties of his corps only amounted to 400 men. The Fifth Corps was spread so thin that it could not mount an attack; in fact, it had difficulty holding its ground against several

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[113] Ibid., p. 610.

[114] Warren was completely disenchanted with Sheridan's cavalry. In a correspondence with Crawford at 3 P.M., May 30, 1864 he observed, "Be careful not to run your left against any strong force. The cavalry do not co-operate with us in any reliable way, as far as I can learn. If you find any of ours, post them on your flank." See O.R., I, 36, III, 351.

Confederate assaults.[115]

Commenting on Warren's ability at Cold Harbor, Grant was to record in his Memoirs, "the enemy charged Warren three separate times with vigor, but were repulsed each time with loss. There was no officer more capable, nor one more prompt in acting, than Warren when the enemy forced him to it."[116] But Grant paid Warren only a half-hearted compliment. While it was evident that the commander of the Fifth Corps was more efficient during moments of extreme crisis when the Army of the Potomac was fighting a defensive battle, it was not true that Warren was afraid to attack. Sensitive to the intimations of his commanding officer, Warren wrote to Meade criticizing Grant's notion that he was against all offensive movements. Noting that Grant's question on a particular assault stated, "Is it possible by a bold and decisive attack to break through the enemy's center, say on Warren's front?" he believed that it was not possible.[117] He was not against all assaults but felt that this particular attack, as outlined by Grant, was not feasible and should be canceled to avoid further needless bloodshed. He had no liking for senseless slaughter and unnecessary frontal assaults. Commenting on Cold Harbor, he gloomily stated,

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[115]John Miller, Photographic History of the Civil War in Ten Volumes (New York: The Review of Reviews Co., 1911), III, 87; Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 176.

[116]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 266.

[117]O.R., I, 40, I, 81-83; Warren to Meade, July 5, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 12.

> For thirty days now, it has been one funeral procession, past me; and it is too much! To-day, I saw a man burying a comrade, and, within, half an hour, he himself was brought in and buried beside him. The men need some rest. . . [118]

Warren's personality was an enigma to the officers who served with him. "Warren looks care-worn," Theodore Lyman observed,

> Some people say he is a selfish man, but he is certainly the most tender-hearted of our commanders. Almost all officers grow soon callous in the service; not unfeeling, only accustomed, and unaffected by the suffering they see. But Warren feels it a great deal, and that and the responsibility, and many things of course not going to suit him, all tend to make him haggard.[119]

Perhaps Warren cared too much. Charles S. Wainwright, Chief of Fifth Corps Artillery, dipicted him as a vile, profane man. Writing in his diary on the evening of June 3rd, he related,

> I was talking with some of the corps staff, when the general returned, /from Burnside's Headquarters/ and seeing no preparations for the night, he ripped out at his staff generally and poor little Marvin in particular. I used to think the Charleston hackmen the most profane in the world. . . . I have heard Meade in one of his towering passions. But I never heard anything which could begin to equal the awful oaths poured out tonight; they fairly made my hair stand on end with their profaneness, while I was filled with wonder at the ingenuity of invention and desperate blackguardism they displayed.[120]

While a part of Wainwright's devastating indictment might be excused because of a personal pique he felt for Warren at this time, it must be admitted that the losses sustained by the army played upon Warren's mind and caused him to lash out

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[118] Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865, p. 147.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, pp. 404-405.

unmercifully at his staff.

In the final analysis, the private soldiers decided for themselves that further assaults would be suicidal. Demurring, they refused to advance when ordered to do so by their commanding officer.[121] Recognizing that the costly assaults at Cold Harbor were a tactical error, Grant observed, "I have always regretted that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made."[122] In forty-three days, the Fifth Corps sustained a loss of 12,027 men out of 28,000 with over 1,500 soldiers killed in action. Nearly half of the infantry who entered the Wilderness with Grant on May 4th, were dead, wounded or in prison camps of the South.[123] It was safe to assume that 60,000 Union soldiers were casualties of war in this brief period of six weeks; and yet, Grant was no nearer Richmond than McClellan had been in 1862.[124]

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[121]William Meade Dame, From the Rapidan to Richmond (Baltimore: Green-Lucas Co., 1898), p. 206.

[122]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 276.

[123]Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 695; Humphreys, The Virginia Campaigns of '64 and '65, pp. 306-307.

[124]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 491.

CHAPTER XI

THE PETERSBURG TRENCHES

For more than a week after the debacle of June 3rd, the Federal army awaiting Grant's orders for renewal of the campaign remained in its trenches. Retreating into a lethargic sulk, Warren slept a great deal and refused to speak to anyone. One officer, commenting on the general's unpredictable behavior, observed, "I think at times that these fits of his must be the result of a sort of insanity; indeed, that is perhaps the most charitable way of accounting for them."[1] Although the general might be despised by some subordinate officers he was extremely conscientious. During the course of the week he kept himself occupied advising Meade on ways to improve the mobility and fighting trim of the army. He strongly urged the Pennsylvanian to avoid, whenever possible, night maneuvers since in his view "an army on one of these dark nights marches a little better than the crowd that walks the streets, as far as organization is concerned."[2] Always conscious of the problem of maintaining discipline in a military formation he noted that at night an officer's rank could not be distinguished and an insubordinate soldier could disobey

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[1]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 409; See Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac, p. 381 for another account of the negative feeling of some officers for Warren.

[2]O.R., I, 36, III, 649.

authority with impunity.[3]

Cognizant of the dispute between Eastern and Western generals concerning the relative merits of engineer officers against line officers, Warren naturally took the side of the engineers. He strongly advocated that Meade utilize engineer officers whenever possible to command infantry regiments. In a message dispatched to Meade on June 9th, he observed, "I would let every engineer officer we have take a regiment in the army, if he can get the commission."[4]

As early as June 5th, Grant decided to move once more by the left flank to transfer the Army of the Potomac to the south bank of the James River. This determination was reached for two practical reasons: The Northern public would not stand for a renewal of assaults with their staggering losses upon the Confederate lines at Cold Harbor, and the Lieutenant-General considered his supply lines northeast of Richmond vulnerable to Southern attacks.[5] In addition, Grant realized that by moving south of the James he would threaten Petersburg, "the citadel of the Confederacy" and this action would also serve to relieve General Butler's forces "bottled-up" at Bermuda Hundred after an unsuccessful advance upon Richmond. Aware that he could not destroy the Army of Northern Virginia by force of arms, Grant decided to grasp "the arteries of the

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., pp. 713-714.

[5]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 417.

Confederacy at the throat" by seizing the railroads in and around Petersburg and thereby strangle Lee into submission.[6]

By a gradual refusal of his right flank and a development of his left Grant was able to place his army within an easy march of the lower crossings of the Chickahominy. During the early evening hours of June 12th, Warren's corps, being but ten miles from Long Bridge on the Chickahominy, led the march to the James. Within a matter of hours his forces seized the crossings of the river and made dispositions to screen the movement of the army by holding positions on the Long Bridge Road toward the crossing of the White Oak Swamp.[7]

In this endeavor Warren was entirely successful. By feinting a direct advance on Richmond via the White Oak Swamp he was able to paralyze Lee's countermovements. Staying in the vicinity of the latter place for a day, Warren effectively covered every possible route by which the Confederates might come down from Richmond to interfere with the movements of the Army of the Potomac to the James.[8] At daybreak on the 14th, Warren moved his corps toward Petersburg by way of Charles Court House. For the next two days he pressed his men forward and at 1 P.M., on the 16th, the last of the Fifth Corps had crossed the Chickahominy and was rapidly approaching its

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[6]Fuller, The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant, p. 286; Trefousse, Ben Butler: The South Called Him Beast!, pp. 147, 151.

[7]Army Orders for June 11, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 11; Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 498.

[8]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 498.

objective - Petersburg.[9]

Arriving before Petersburg during the early morning of the 17th, Warren's troops were deployed on the left of the Union battle line and spent most of the morning in reconnoitering the positions in their front. Late in the day, Crawford's division made an attack, capturing some 60 men and a flag belonging to an Alabama regiment. In this assault there was some confusion between units of the Fifth and Ninth Corps and no sector of the enemy's line was permanently held.[10] At 8:30 P.M., Warren received a message from Meade's headquarters curtailing further activity for the day.[11]

The next morning, Warren's corps joined the Second and Ninth Corps in a combined attack on the Confederate works, but the Southerners, anticipating the assault, had evacuated their forward lines and withdrawn closer to the city.[12] At 5:50 A.M., Warren sent Meade a message telling him that prisoners captured by Cutler's division had confirmed that the Confederates had retired to their main line of works within one mile of Petersburg.[13]

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[9]Roebling Report on Grant's Campaign from Culpeper to Petersburg, entry for June 14, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7A.

[10]Ibid., entry for June 17, 1864.

[11]O.R., I, 40, II, 127. "The commanding general directs me to say that unless the advance now being made promises decisive results, you had better hold on to what you have, and postpone further attack until to-morrow morning, as the men were up all last night. . . ."

[12]Roebling Report on Grant's Campaign from Culpeper to Petersburg, entry for June 18, 1864, Warren Papers, VII, 7A.

[13]Warren to Meade, 5:50 A.M., June 18, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 11.

Warren soon incurred his superior's ill-will again. Finding his initial plans foiled by the enemy's surprise withdrawal, Meade ordered a simultaneous attack by all corps at noon. Because Lee was able to send reinforcements to his beleaguered Petersburg garrison, the Federals met mounting opposition, and they were not ready to attack. Willing to make another assault, although not sure of success, Warren wrote Meade at 2 P.M., "I have had my whole line close enough to the enemy to assault since 1:15. I thought the attack at 12 noon was to be a rush. My left had not then got up close enough. . . . I think it would be safe for us all to make a rush at, say, 3 p.m. That will give time to notify all to make another effort. I am willing to try alone. The enemy does not seem strong in infantry force."[14] Upon receipt of this dispatch, Meade's temper got the better of him. Writing to Warren and Burnside he observed, "I am greatly astonished at your dispatch of 2 p.m. What additional orders to attack you require I cannot imagine. My orders have been explicit and are now repeated, that you each immediately assault the enemy with all your force, and if there is any further delay the responsibility and consequences will rest with you."[15]

At 3 P.M., Warren's entire command advanced in line of battle at the double quick toward the main Confederate entrenchments. Although the attack was well made, some of Griffin's men getting within twenty feet of the enemy's line, it came

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[14] O.R., I, 40, II, 179.

[15] Ibid.

under heavy enemy fire and was repulsed.[16] Several subsequent assaults yielded no better results. "Another attack made by my right failed to take the enemy's line," Warren observed in a dispatch received by Meade at 7 P.M., "but we advanced quite close to the works, and hold all we got. We want to make another effort just at dark."[17] Meade, discouraged by the delays encountered by his forces and their lack of success in earlier assaults, answered, "It is useless to make another attack, because I doubt your or my ability to follow it up. Secure your lines and look to your left flank."[18]

Meade's decision to abandon his frontal assaults and to initiate a formal siege of Petersburg was motivated by a message he received from Grant late in the afternoon of the 18th. "I am perfectly satisfied," Grant stated, "that all has been done that could be done, and that the assaults to-day were called for by all the appearances and information that could be obtained. Now we will rest the men and use the spade for their protection until a new vein can be struck."[19]

During the early days of the siege Warren's fertile mind conceived of a plan to force Lee out of his lines around Petersburg and compel him to give battle on a field not disadvantageous to the Union army. After much deliberation he decided to present his ideas on this subject to General Meade.

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[16]Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65, p. 223. Warren's loss in this assault reached 1,000 men.

[17]O.R., I, 40, II, 179.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 702; O.R., I, 40, II, 156.

In a communique received by Meade on June 23rd, Warren observed,

> I venture to suggest the following plan of operations to complete the destruction of the roads approaching Petersburg, which is simply to abandon all the positions we now occupy, take with us, say, six days' provisions and all the ammunition we need on our men or on pack mules: First, reconnoiter and construct roads to facilitate our setting out, and send all our wagons of every description, except ambulances to General Butler. Then let us set out with our whole army for the Weldon road. General Lee can only stop us by a battle in the open field, which is what we want if we are all together. We can return to our base if we can't bring up supplies. If this succeeds we will then know how to reach the next road. I venture to suggest this, as it seems to me better to abandon all our lines than to hold any of them with part of our force.[20]

Long familiar with Warren's idiosyncrasy that necessitated his unwarranted meddling in the strategic maneuvering of the army, Meade promptly answered his corps commander, pointing out to him the shortcomings of the proposed plan. The Pennsylvanian suggested that Lee would avoid fighting the Federal army on open ground and would attempt to interpose his forces between the Army of the Potomac and its lines of communication. In this position they would force the Northerners, who carried only limited supplies, to attack them in order to clear their lines of communication.[21] Undaunted, Warren attempted to overcome these objections by stating, "we must make some decisive movement, in which, throwing all our weight in the battle, we are willing to run the risk of losing all by a failure - fight the Wilderness battle over again. I more fear Lee attacking our weakened line that anything else."[22] Meade,

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[20] O.R., I, 40, II, 333.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 346.

realizing that Grant had decided to besiege Petersburg rather than to risk further serious losses, declined to pacify Warren by a continuation of this line of discussion.

Dejected, Warren wrote his wife informing her of his disappointment at the failure of the Northern army to crush the rebellion:

> Our losses in this campaign /under Grant/ are not less than 70,000 and at least that many Northern homes are bereaved or suffering in anxiety, and war to utter submission seems the only plan our rulers can devise & I cannot but think that with ability virtue and magnaminity an easier solution of the difficulty might be brought. But in the rivalry of political faction neither party can adopt moderate views without being at once stigmatized as sympathisers and traitors. . . .[23]

In this correspondence, Warren was critical of the generalship of both Meade and Grant. He believed that the former by his acrid tongue had offended every corps commander and his public censures had tended to demoralize his subordinates. The latter he held to be a man who had won the fancy of the Northern populace by his determination but who sacrificed the lives of thousands of his soldiers by his senseless charges and his failure to consult with his senior generals before making his battle dispositions.[24] In a fit of melancholia, he remarked, "Emmie I believe we could win by good management but I fear we shall never see the Union restored and I mention this seriously for Mr. Chase to consider in his business so that such a termination may not carry ruin to his business and leave you in poverty for most likely the same end would ruin me."[25]

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[23]Warren to Emily Warren, June 25, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

All of the first half of July was utilized by the Army of the Potomac further to strengthen its entrenchments before Petersburg. In this endeavor Warren, always an engineer first and an infantry officer second, was in his true element. Becoming his own "officer of the trenches," he personally supervised the fatigue details of his corps in the placing of abatis, the extension of entrenchments, and the erection on his extreme left of two large redoubts, Fort Davis, intended to hold 1,500 soldiers and eight pieces of artillery, and Fort Prescott, to be garrisoned by 500 men. With the aid of sixteen hundred freedmen, Warren, in little more than two weeks was able to complete the construction of works of sufficient strength to adequately safeguard the entire left flank of the Federal army.[26]

While Warren's mood grew more cheerful as he participated in siege activities, his personal difficulties with Meade grew worse in the aftermath of recriminations growing out of the failure of the army to seize Petersburg on June 17th and 18th. The first inkling of this growing animosity between

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[26]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 436; Captain Mandall to General Warren, July 14, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 13; O.R., I, 40, II, 569.

An indication of the deep concern which Warren had for this engineering project can be found in a letter from Warren to Colonel Peter Lyle, commander of the First Brigade, Third Division: "When I was at your redoubt to-day I found that in the northwest angle they were not raising the parapet and place for the guns to stand upon, as I directed you. Neither were they cutting off the front of the angle on the southwest corner as I directed. This work on the angle is the most important for its defense of anything that is to be done, and should not be neglected." See O.R., I, 40, III, 321-322.

the two officers appeared in a letter written by Warren to his wife in the week following these abortive attacks. "I wrote you," Warren related,

> full of indignation which I felt at Genl. Meade's querulousness and after I had taken the determined step to submit to it no more. Somehow my self reliance had increased since. I am glad that no fears of opposition in desire of place can make me sacrifice my self respect or submit to unjust censure from a responsible source. But it is a time when we should encourage not abuse each other and our petulance should be kept at rest under the consciousness that we are prominent actors in a great drama. . . .[27]

Rumors of a split were rampant. Assistant Secretary of War, Charles A. Dana, reporting to Stanton shortly after the miscarriage of the Petersburg assaults, observed that Meade had notified Warren that he must immediately request to be relieved from command of the Fifth Corps, or he, Meade, would prefer charges against him.[28] Made uneasy by this camp gossip and by an article in the Pittsburg Commercial of July 14th, which publicly exposed the alleged ill-will between the two generals, Warren wrote Meade on July 22nd requesting that he furnish him with a statement denying these rumors.[29]

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[27]Warren to Emily Warren, June 25, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[28]Stribling, Gettysburg Campaign and Campaigns of 1864 and 1865 in Virginia, p. 226.

[29]O.R., I, 40, III, 393; Warren to Meade (not sent), July, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 11. In this letter Warren observed, "As to my being relieved, I have always maintained that in your place you should have the choice of your Corps Commanders, nor will I allow my efforts, or any friend of mine to force me upon you. Appointed by the President I do not question his authority to remove me summarily with or without cause, but the responsibility of doing so must come from those above me. I would not resign under any circumstances nor apply to be relieved, while in the presence of the enemy. To relieve you from initiating such action, I told you on the 19th /June/ that if I did not suit you, it was best you should have some one put in my place. . . ."

Meade promptly responded by giving Warren a written denial of the statement made by the Pittsburg Commercial for publication. In a private note, the Pennsylvanian rebuked Warren for the ill-temper that he had manifested toward superiors. Admitting that he had considered applying to Grant for his removal as a corps commander in the Army of the Potomac, Meade upon reflection informed him that he had stayed his hand in this matter in the hope that cordial relations might be reestablished between them.[30]

Although Meade might have considered the affair closed, Warren, never prone to forget a grievance, wrote his wife of the bitter feelings he harbored toward his commanding general. He remarked:

> I believe Genl Meade is an unjust and unfeeling man and I dislike his personal character so much now that it is improbable we shall ever have again any friendly social relations. I have also lost all confidence in his ability as a general. He has quick perceptions but does not know how to act with patience and judgment. He would expect to hatch a chicken from the egg in the same time you could boil it.[31]

By the close of July, the friction between Meade and Warren had subsided, at least on the surface. At this time Warren once more wrote Emily, "I no longer give myself any concern about my relations with Genl. Meade or even Genl. Grant. I trust they will never injure me. I mind my own affairs too well, to get in their way or make them wish another in my

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[30]O.R., I, 40, III, 393-394; Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 252.

[31]Warren to Emily Warren, July 24, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

place. . . ."[32] But there was no real reconciliation.

Another problem facing Warren during July was the need to reorganize his corps. Owing to the recent heavy fighting, the Fifth Corps had been reduced in mumbers to 16,000 men with General Lysander Cutler's Fourth Division counting less than 2,000 effectives.[33] Warren proposed disbanding the unit with a subsequent distribution of its brigades among the remaining three divisions. Opposition to this transfer plan was engendered from the old First Corps troops in the Fourth Division, who long had resented the destruction of that corps in an earlier army reorganization. The acrimonious dispute which followed was resolved only when General Cutler was transferred out of the Fifth Corps, and the troops of the Fourth Division were added to General Ayres' division, the bulk of whom were former First Corps soldiers.[34] In directing the Fifth Corps, Warren always had to take into account the feelings of a large number of tradition-bound commands. Besides the two distinct corps consolidated in the original reorganization, he had to be wary of the sensitivity of the men of the Pennsylvania Reserves, the Regular Brigade, and the Maryland Brigade, all of whom refused to be consolidated with other units or to have their regiments separated from one another.[35] Warren deserved

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[32]Warren to Emily Warren, July 31, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[33]Fifth Corps Returns, July 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 14. Griffin's division - 4,979; Ayres' division - 4,758; Crawford's division - 4,336; Cutler's division - 1,959.

[34]O.R., I, 40, II, 58; I, 40, III, 349, 444, 469-472, 520-521.

[35]Ibid., I, 40, III, 469.

high commendation for his handling of the many intra-corps disputes.

After Grant's attempts to capture Petersburg by direct assault proved fruitless, a plan was devised to break the stalemate by tunneling under the enemy's line at Burnside's front. This project was conceived and executed by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Pleasants, commanding officer of the 48th Pennsylvania, who was a mining engineer. By July 23rd, a mine shaft 511 feet in length, with two lateral galleries with a total length of 75 feet, were dug some 20 feet under the Confederate line. The mine was charged with 320 kegs of black powder, totaling 8,000 pounds of explosives.[36] Although Pleasants had selected a good position for the construction of a mine, the engineer officers of the army believed that its location did not favor the tactical exploitation of a successful explosion, and Meade and all his senior generals, including Warren, lacked enthusiasm for the project.[37]

Shortly before dawn on July 30th, the mine was detonated and the explosion created a crater within the Confederate lines 150 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 30 feet deep. Northern troops waiting to assault were nearly as confused and disorganized by the spectacle of the explosion as the Confederates by its impact. Mismanagement on the part of both Meade and Burnside and the cowardice of two division commanders, James Ledlie

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[36]Henry Pleasants Jr. and George H. Straley, Inferno At Petersburg (Philadelphia: Chilton Company, 1961), p. 77.

[37]Charles S. Wainwright, "So Ends the Great Rebel Army. . .," (American Heritage, vol. 13, no. 6. October 1962), p. 35.

and Edward Ferraro, who cowered in a bomb shelter during the advance of their troops, spelled doom for the attempt to break through the Confederate lines.[38]

Warren's corps was posted to the left of Burnside's command and the Fifth Corps commander was directed to support the Ninth Corps' assault and follow that unit through the gap in the enemy's line after the last of Burnside's troops had cleared the passageway. By force of circumstances the New Yorker was not able to assume the offensive after the explosion of the mine. Enemies of the general within the army immediately attempted to place a portion of the blame for the fiasco upon his shoulders. Warren's response to these individuals conclusively demonstrated that it was impossible for him to succor Burnside on the morning of July 30th. In an undated memorandum he revealed,

> I did exactly as /ordered/ posted my troops on the right next to Burnside and went to his /headquarters/ to receive his requisitions for support. He did not call on me at all for he had more of his own troops than he was able to push forward and deploy. About 15 minutes before the enemy regained his lines Burnside's (sic) sent a dispatch that it was now time for /me/ to go in. There was no time to do it and Burnside's troops were in my way between me and the enemy.

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[38]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 523; Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1953), p. 246; Hans L. Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade: Radical Republican From Ohio (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1963), pp. 241-242, 252. Meade may have borne too great a share of the blame for the Crater fiasco. Radical Republicans led by Senator Benjamin F. Wade in their reports sought to defend the reputation of their friends while criticizing opponents. Wade considered George G. Meade a hopeless conservative in racial and political matters who had to be removed if the army was to go on to ultimate victory.

> Had the plan been for me to concentrate all my troops along my front and assault at the same time with Burnside's troops as soon as the explosion took place, it would have been easy for me to obey it. I however did obey orders carefully and it is contemptable to attempt to blame me for the consequences. My inaction was forced.[39]

Warren's logic was indisputable. It had been six weeks since his corps had been hurled back from the lightly held Confederate works. In those forty-two days Lee had brought up reinforcements, strengthened his entrenchments, and placed a battery of guns to enfilade Warren's command if it attempted to advance. A successful attack by Warren's corps on July 30th was an impossibility.

At 9:45 P.M., July 30th, Warren received an order from Meade rescinding all prior directives to attack. This new order directed him to reoccupy his former positions with his entire command.[40] From his post overlooking the entire battle line Warren was able to see the carnage wrought by the engagement. His humanitarian spirit was stirred by the sight and he promptly dispatched a note to Humphreys:

> Our helpless wounded are still lying close to the enemy's line and they give them no help. There is no firing going on. Our men and the enemy are standing up on the parapets. They could help them if they would. The wounded seem to be mostly colored men who are writhing with their wounds in this almost insufferable sun, and I think the neglect of them must be intentional. I think we should open fire upon the enemy if he refuses to let us go and take care of these men.[41]

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[39]Warren Memorandum of Petersburg Mine, n.d., Warren Papers, XIV, 68.

[40]O.R., I, 40, III, 654.

[41]Ibid., p. 699.

His apprehension that the Confederates would willfully permit the colored Federal troops to die from their wounds proved valid. Meade was not able to reach an understanding for a temporary cessation of hostilities with Lee until 6 A.M., August 1st.[42] In the interim nearly all the wounded had died.

Appearing before an Army of the Potomac court of inquiry during August, Warren was extremely critical of the planning and execution of the Mine Assault. Under questioning he testified, "I never had confidence in its success. The position was taken in reverse by batteries, and we must, as a matter of course, have expected a heavy fire of artillery when we gained the crest, though we did not get near enough to develop what that would be. I never should have planned it, I think."[43] In response to a leading question by the Court, Warren volunteered a statement which was to have adverse personal ramifications for him. "I think" he observed, "some one should have been present to have directed my command as well as General Burnside's and General Ord's, some one person; but whether that would have affected the result or not I am not prepared to say." Pressed for details he added, "I think that the controlling power should have been there /at the mine/ and nowhere else. . ."[44] Present at this meeting was Meade, who became indignant at Warren's disparaging remarks, which cast him in an unfavorable

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[42]S. Williams to Warren, August 1, 1864, 6 A.M., Warren Papers, VIII, 15.

[43]O.R., I, 40, I, 78.

[44]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

light. Several of Warren's supporters dated Meade's renewed coolness toward the general from the time of this testimony.[45] Charles S. Wainwright, no admirer of Warren, wrote, "Many are inclined to throw the blame of the failure on Meade: I do not myself think that he is free; but cannot see what fault can be laid at this door which is not equally close to Grant's"[46] General Regis DeTrobriand, expressing the sentiment of many within the army, remarked, "I am convinced that if Hancock or Warren had charge of the affairs we would have carried everything in a few hours."[47]

Several days after the hearing, on August 13th, Hancock was directed to march his own corps with the Tenth Corps under General David B. Birney and a division of cavalry under General Gregg to the north bank of the James, and then to move this force in the general direction of Richmond. Grant was desirous of making this movement for three reasons. First, Hancock might have been able to catch the Confederates unawares and thus capture Richmond without a fight; second, the Lieutenant-General wished to prevent Lee from dispatching reinforcements from his army to General Jubal Early's command operating in the Shenandoah Valley; and finally, Grant wanted Warren to strike out to the left to seize and tear up track belonging to the Weldon Railroad. This latter movement by Warren was designed to extend the Federal lines further to the west and to cut Confederate communication from the Carolinas into

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[45]Warren Memo, March 10, 1879, Warren Papers, I, 20.

[46]Wainwright, "So Ends the Great Rebel Army. . .," p. 39.

[47]DeTrobriand, Four Years With the Army of the Potomac, p. 613.

Petersburg. To carry out this plan, the Fifth Corps, during the night of August 14th, left its trenches and camped a short distance to the rear.[48]

On August 17th, Warren received a dispatch from Grant, through General Meade, which confirmed the proposed reconnaissance in force. This directive was important to the corps commander for two reasons. First, Warren believed he was once more in favor with the Lieutenant-General; and second, he was given his first independent command since Mine Run. Delighted at the prospect of being able to demonstrate his capabilities without the confining instructions from superiors, Warren wrote Humphreys before dawn on August 18th, "I was exceedingly pleased with my instructions for the movement I am just starting on. I have shown them to some of my division commanders and all alike are pleased. We'll do the best we can, you may rest assured, and will never ask anyone under them to stand the responsibility of a possible failure. I propose to send a message once an hour; oftener if interesting."[49]

By his instructions Warren was directed to move his corps south for a considerable distance to mask his intended movement and then to proceed due west to make a lodgment upon

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[48]Stine, History of the Army of the Potomac, p. 689; Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, p. 236; Humphreys to Warren, August 14, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 15.

[49]O.R., I, 42, II, 251. Warren's orders allowed him great flexibility in determining what actions he should undertake during the ensuing engagement. At 10:30 P.M., August 17th, Humphreys wrote Warren, "The Comdg. Genl. directs that you strike the Weldon railroad as near the enemy's entrenchments as practicable, extend your reconnaissance as far to the left as you can, and if a good opportunity occurs carry out the instructions sent you last night." Humphreys to Warren, August 17, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 16.

the Weldon Railroad. At 4 A.M., the Fifth Corps with Griffin's division in the van broke camp and marched south down the Jerusalem Plank Road for two miles before turning to the west. During this march a heavy rainstorm broke, turning the roads into a quagmire. The rain did not cool the air and the oppressive heat, made more intolerable by a rising humidity, caused many soldiers to drop from the ranks.[50]

By 9 A.M., Warren was able to report to Humphreys, "Our advance encountered nothing but cavalry and captured some of them from the 7th Confederate /James Dearing's brigade/. My troops have reached the Railroad and cut the telegraph wire."[51] The Fifth Corps easily drove in the small Confederate force protecting the railroad and Griffin's division, along the railroad toward the south and west from Globe Tavern, proceeded to tear up and burn the rails.[52] An attempt by Henry Heth's division to attack and flank the Federal right was driven back in a spirited contest by the combined weight of Crawford's and Ayres' divisions.[53]

During the course of the heavy fighting along the Weldon Railroad Warren was nearly shot by an enemy marksman. In the evening, as the troops bedded down for the night, Warren wrote Emily of his brush with death. "To-day I was riding a bay

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[50]Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, p. 237.

[51]Warren to Humphreys, August 18, 1864, 9 A.M., Warren Papers, VIII, 16.

[52]M.H.S.M., V, 249.

[53]Ibid., p. 250.

horse and a sharpshooter shot square between his eyes and brought us both down. I was not hurt and the ball glanced down to the throat instead of the brain and the horse may yet get well. I had to ride old whitey again."[54]

That evening Federal entrenchments were extended by the Ninth Corps from the Jerusalem Plank Road in an effort to connect with the Fifth Corps on the railroad.[55] Realizing that the permanent loss of the Weldon Railroad would hinder the Confederacy from drawing supplies from North Carolina, Lee weakened his main line and dispatched thousands of reinforcements under General William Mahone to his extreme right in a desperate attempt to expel the Federals from their positions along the railroad.

The morning of August 19th was rainy and the Union troops remained inactive in camp. While Warren made attempts to connect his position on the Weldon Railroad with the Ninth Corps to his right, the Confederates probed for a weak spot in the Northern line. Discovering that the right flank of the Fifth Corps was in the air, Mahone promptly made dispositions to flank the Federals out of their partially constructed entrenchments. Soldiers of the Fifth Corps did not expect an assault in the inclement weather, and, attempting to keep dry, they stacked arms and sought shelter.[56] Then, at 3 P.M.,

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[54]Warren to Emily Warren, August 18, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[55]Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth New York State Volunteers, p. 242.

[56]M.H.S.M., V, 254-255.

Heth attacked General Ayres' division frontally, while Mahone's command struck Crawford's division in flank. Confusion reigned as the soldiers of the Third Division believed the advancing Southerners to be the vanguard of John Parke's Ninth Corps. Federal troops fired into one another, and before Warren could rush reinforcements into the breach to stabilize a deteriorating battle line, nearly two brigades of Crawford's command were captured by the onrushing Confederate infantry.[57]

Undaunted, Warren rode among his demoralized men, and with the aid of fresh troops he mounted a counterattack which recovered the ground lost earlier in the day. In this attack the Fifth Corps captured many prisoners and drove the enemy back into their entrenchments.[58] Shortly before 7 P.M., Warren wrote Meade informing him of the desperate nature of the day's fighting. Faithfully he reported:

> The enemy broke through the line I had just established between my position and that on the plank road and moving rapidly on my right flank compelled the whole of Crawford's and Ayres' divisions to fall back. A heavy fight took place and the whole line has been regained taking a good many prisoners. They are from Mahone's, Heth's and Hoke's Divisions. Our loss is heavy being considerable in prisoners. I will report more definitely when I get returns.[59]

Appreciative of the valiant service performed by the Fifth Corps, Meade was prompt to dispatch a congratulatory message. "I am delighted to hear the good news you send, and most

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[57] Ibid., pp. 256-257; O.R., I, 42, I, 429-430.

[58] O.R., I, 42, I, 430.

[59] Warren to Humphreys, August 19, 1864, 6:50 P.M., Warren Papers, VIII, 16.

heartily congratulate you /and7 your brave officers and men on your success. It will serve greatly to inspire the whole army, and proves that we only want a fair chance to show our capacity to defeat the enemy. . . ."[60]

Grant's reactions were less unequivocal. Surprised by the tenacity displayed by a corps commander he considered over-cautious, he wrote Meade a note which was half complimentary and half contemptuous: "I am pleased to see the promptness with which Genl Warren attacked the enemy when he came out. I hope he will not hesitate in such cases to advance his line and take every man to fight every battle and trust to regaining them afterwards or to getting beaten. The enemy must have left their line guarded by a single Division."[61] Grant's prejudices were not easily dispelled.

Despite the loss of over 2,700 soldiers Warren was in high spirits, and, in a communique dispatched to Meade, informed him that the morale of his command was good and that he personally considered his tactical position on Lee's supply line as excellent. "If we are not strong enough to beat the enemy we cannot be taken," he added, "I have given orders to advance at daylight in every direction and will govern my movement according to the developments under your sanction where it is practicable."[62]

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[60] O.R., I, 42, II, 309.

[61] Grant to Meade, August 19, 1864, 9:30 P.M., Warren Papers, VIII, 16.

[62] O.R., I, 42, I, 430; I, 42, II, 310.

On July 20th, Warren contracted his lines and constructed defensive works so as to make any enemy assault impractical. To further improve the fighting trim of his command he gave his division commanders strict orders to control the firing of their men to make sure that the troops reserved their volleys for the main enemy battle line and not waste powder on enemy skirmishers. He also directed that his division commanders retained the authority to order an advance without waiting for directives from the corps commander.[63]

Early on the morning of July 21st the Confederates renewed their attempts to oust Warren from his position on the Weldon Railroad. Using the same attack plan that he had utilized in his initial attack on the 19th, Heth at 10 A.M. once more assaulted the front of the Federal infantry line, while Mahone attacked Ayres' command in flank. This time the Union troops were fully prepared. Heth's attack was met with massed artillery and his division was driven back greatly demoralized and with heavy losses. Mahone's division, in its advance, found its way barred by a strongly entrenched line well supplied with artillery. Repulsing Mahone's brigades with ease, Warren ordered a counterattack to complete his victory.[64]

By 11 A.M., Warren was able to announce his triumph to the army. In a communique sent to Humphreys he stated: "The enemy attacked us both on the north and west with Hill's

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[63] M.H.S.M., V, 261-262; O.R., I, 42, II, 343-344.

[64] M.H.S.M., V, 262-264.

and Beauregard's troops. We repulsed them, too, easily. They did not come on far enough to get the effect of our fire. I have a general order to push out, but the woods favor the escape of the troops. We have three battle-flags and probably 400 prisoners that I know of. I hope they will try again. . . ."[65] Then, in a corps order issued during the early evening hours Warren directed his division commanders to strengthen their defensive positions and to make dispositions to cautiously push out their pickets the following morning to seek contact with the enemy.[66]

But Warren could not overcome his penchant for grand strategy. As a result of early morning reconnaissances he was able to report that the enemy, having sustained heavy losses, had retired towards Petersburg.[67] A little later, he reported that his pickets had reached the Vaughan Road on the west and found no Confederate troops. "If," he advised,

> we are going to establish a line to hold I believe the ground we are on is as good as any we can take up between us and Petersburg. I /want/ to get a battle at once out of the enemy. I think we should advance to the Danville railroad which will undoubtedly bring the enemy out of his intrenchments and we can have an open fight.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I think our plan should be to establish a good line across the plank road with a good sized fort at this point where we can leave our artillery and a supply of ammunition and then take every available man and go to the Danville road. If we advance against Petersburg I venture to say that we shall fare no better than

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[65] O.R., I, 42, II, 356.

[66] Ibid., p. 370.

[67] Warren to Humphreys, August 22, 1864, 7:20 A.M., Warren Papers, VIII, 17.

> heretofore in such attempts east of the Jerusalem Plank road.[68]

Once more Warren pitted his judgment against that of his superiors.

Warren's success was complete. Under his expert supervision, within a period of two days, the corps straightened its line, put in flanking batteries, constructed abatis, and cleared a line of fire by slashing the woods to its front. His position was impregnable. Although the Confederates, during the next few days mounted several minor attacks, Lee was forced to the realization that the rail link was lost for good. From that time forward, the Army of Northern Virginia was compelled to employ wagons for a distance of about thirty miles to circumvent the serious break in its supply lines.[69]

Shortly after the close of hostilities on the Weldon Railroad, Warren came to the conclusion that the greatest threat to his retention as a corps commander came not from Meade, as he had long assumed, but from Grant. In a letter to his wife he related:

> The enemy attacked me again yesterday with very heavy fire but I had everything well arranged and whipped them easily. And yet the only word I have recd. in acknowledgment of my having maintained myself here against 3 days attacks and one of preparation on the most important Railroad leading into Richmond and from which all our other forces that came on it had been driven was a note from Genl Grant to Genl Meade saying it seemed to him I ought to have done more. . . . I have no confidence in

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[68]Warren to Humphreys, August 22, 1864, 10:30 A.M., Warren Papers, VIII, 17.

[69]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 325; Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 281; O.R., I, 42, II, 431.

> Genl Grant's abilities to use an army and it is a sad thing to think that if he fails, at what a fearful crushing heart broken sense our people will realize it.[70]

For the next month the Fifth Corps expended much energy in reconnaissances, skirmishing, and constructing fieldworks, but the unit fought no major engagement. Camped in a war-ravaged sector, Warren was moved by the destitution he observed among the populace. Dutifully, he informed Meade that, although the women and children were unwilling to take the loyalty oath as they feared that it might be used against them by the Confederate authorities, he was reluctant to see these non-combatants starve and he did not have sufficient supplies to offer them adequate aid.[71] Meade's headquarters placated the corps commander by referring him to General Marsena Patrick, the Provost Marshal General, for a resolution of the problem.[72] Through Warren's prompt action hundreds of people received emergency aid, and they were able to survive the hardships of war.

Never interested in politics during the pre-war era, Warren took a lively interest in the impending Presidential election of 1864. In a lengthy letter addressed to Lincoln, but never dispatched, Warren conceded that he had held a high opinion of Jefferson Davis prior to the war but that he had always been a firm foe of secession. Realizing that the

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[70]Warren to Emily Warren, August 22, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[71]Warren to S. Williams, u.d. but probably September 9, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 18.

[72]S. Williams to Warren, September 9, 1864, Warren Papers, VIII, 18.

President faced a difficult contest against General McClellan, the Democratic candidate, Warren attested that although his father, Sylvanus Warren, and all his influential friends had always been Democrats, he had voted for Lincoln in 1860 and declared, "I write to assure you that I wish to sustain you and shall give you my influence in the coming election, and in your next term in any position I may be in. The right of the majority of the American people in choosing their president, and the manliness of the north, can only be truly vindicated by putting down these southern usurpers by the same hand they first rebelled against."[73] Although he decided not to mail the letter, its content revealed that while he had been McClellan's loyal subordinate, he was by no means blind to the general's shortcomings.

Military affairs soon took up Warren's time again. On September 30th, he was promoted to major in the Corps of Engineers and on the same day he was directed to attempt to extend his line further to the left to the vicinity of Peeble's Farm.[74] This movement was designed by Grant to serve as a demonstration in favor of troops on Butler's front north of the James to prevent Lee from sending reinforcements to his left.[75] By mid-afternoon Warren's Corps, with Griffin's

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[73]Warren to Abraham Lincoln, September, 1864 (not sent), Warren Papers, XV, 72. It is likely that Warren did not send this letter to the President because he believed that a general officer should not meddle in the political management of the nation.

[74]Engineer Corps Announcement for September 30, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 19.

[75]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 539.

division in the vanguard, carried the enemy's entrenched camp at Peeble's Farm and drove the Confederates back in some confusion into their main works. At 2:20 P.M., Warren reported to army headquarters, "The charge by Griffin is one of the boldest I ever saw. His line passed full 600 yards over a clear field defended by infantry against a parapet flanked by an enclosed redoubt. One gun was captured."[76] Further attacks made by the Fifth Corps supported by the Ninth Corps upon a Confederate line on the Squirrel Level Road proved futile, so that Warren was constrained to halt his advance and to take measures to lay out the works necessary to extend the Federal line to encompass the ground gained.[77]

Warren was still convinced that he ought to offer counsel to his superiors. After his offensive stalled on October 1st, he wrote Meade advising him that he opposed additional attempts to extend the Federal line further to the left. "From what I know of our and Genl. Lee's relative strength," he asserted,

> I do not think we can extend our lines further around Petersburg without great risk. If we design by such continued extension ultimately to make him abandon Petersburg, and if the complete envelopment of it from river-bank to river-bank is practicable, I think it altogether to be expected that when we reach our fullest development he will by a concerted effort break our lines and compel us to fall back to the James, with much loss of material. If Petersburg is worth the

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[76]Warren to Humphreys, September 30, 1864, 2:20 P.M., Warren Papers, IX, 19.

[77]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 335; At 7:45 P.M., Humphreys wrote Warren, "The major-general commanding directs that you occupy the intrenchments taken from the enemy to-day, your left holding the redoubt in Peeble's field and your right connecting with your works on the Weldon railroad. . . . You will intrench.

> effort we are making it is worth that effort from Genl. Lee and he will make it before evacuation of the place.
>
> Now I would propose the establishment of a very strong position on the Weldon Railroad with a supply of stores and competent garrison, and then assembling all our force place ourselves on the South side R.R. and destroy it. This would undoubtedly bring on a general battle. . . .[78]

Once more as in June, he was proposing the abandonment of the formal siege of Petersburg. He believed that the Federal forces would have a better opportunity to draw Lee out of his entrenchments by taking to the field. If it assumed offensive operations, the enemy would be drawn out of his trenches to engage the Northern forces on a field not unfavorable to the latter. Warren's presumptions were not appreciated.

Receiving no response to his suggestion, Warren applied for a leave. This request was at first denied because Hancock had been earlier promised a leave and it was impossible to allow two corps commanders to be away from the army at the same time. Hancock, however, declined his leave, and Warren, accompanied by Roebling, left the army on October 8th for fifteen days.[79] General Crawford commanded the Fifth Corps in Warren's absence. The unit acted on the defensive and confined its offensive movements to minor reconnaissances. Throughout October and November, rumors continued to rise that Grant had grown disenchanted with both Meade and Warren, and that plans were being considered to shelve both these officers.[80] Despite these rumors, both generals retained their

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[78]Warren to Meade, October 1, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 19.

[79]Meade to Warren, October 4, 1864 and October 6, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 19.

[80]John Chipman Gray and John Codman Ropes, War Letters 1862-1865 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), pp. 399, 407, 410.

positions.

In November Lincoln was reelected to the Presidency. Warren, writing to Algernon Chase, was enthusiastic about the outcome of the election. "I think Lincoln got about 60 percent of the votes cast /in the Fifth Corps/. . . ." he observed,

> now that the election is over I have no doubt Mr. Lincoln will call for 200,000 more men. . . . I firmly believe the war must go on till the rebel armies are dispersed no matter what it costs in men or money. . . . I think it is everybody's duty to invest a portion of their means in the government funds and thus give them all the support they can. . . .[81]

It was not until December 6th that Warren received new orders directing him once more to strike the Weldon Railroad, with the purpose of further disrupting enemy communications as far as Hicksford, thirty miles south of Petersburg, in order to deprive the Confederates in Petersburg and Richmond of potential supplies available in unoccupied areas further to the south. For this purpose, Warren was assigned his own corps, Greshom Mott's division from the Second Corps and two brigades of cavalry under General Gregg.[82]

Relieved in the line during the night by troops of the Sixth Corps, the Fifth Corps, with Crawford's division in the vanguard preceded by Gregg's cavalry, started on its raid at 6 A.M., the morning of the 7th. The troops forced marched all

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[81]Warren to Mr. Algernon Chase, November 11, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21.

[82]S. Williams to Warren, December 5, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21; O.R., I, 42, III, 828-829.

day through a heavy rainstorm, and by nightfall the head of the column had crossed the Nottoway and marched five miles to Sussex Court House.[83] When Warren reached the Nottoway he took up his pontoons in order to trap stragglers, laggards, and shirkers on the north bank of the stream. Sending back 100 cavalrymen to sweep the road, the general was able to gather in 865 malingerers. He made an example of these slackers, by ordering his Provost Marshal to march the men for three miles and then place them out on picket duty in the frosty December night.[84] By such methods he was able to keep his command well closed up during his extended march.

On the following day, as Gregg's cavalry scouted to the front near the Halifax Road, the Federal advance was constantly harassed by small bodies of Confederate troops. Federal cavalrymen fought several sharp engagements with the Southerners, driving them back and clearing the way for the Union infantry. By nightfall the Fifth Corps formed line of battle along the railroad near Jarritt's Station and under Warren's immediate supervision the track was completely turned over, the rails ripped from their supports and consumed within large fires kindled by the Union infantry. In the course of a single night eighteen miles of the Weldon Railroad had been totally destroyed.[85]

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[83] O.R., I, 42, III, 855.

[84] Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865, pp. 291-292.

[85] Report of correspondent for The New York Chronicle on December 12, 1864 for Weldon Railroad Raid, Warren Papers, IX, 21; O.R., I, 42, III, 882; Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, p. 251.

By dawn, December 9th, Warren's troops reached the north bank of the Meherrin River at Hicksford. At this point the railroad bridge had been destroyed, and Warren discovered that the Confederates had posted themselves in strong positions along the south bank of the stream in an effort to contest any attempt to cross to the far bank. The Fifth Corps commander, ascertaining that it would take him at least two days to dislodge his opponents and realizing that his men were worn out by the rapid march, decided not to attempt to force a crossing of the Meherrin.[86] In his order to withdraw, Warren informed his division commanders that any attempt by the Confederates to offer battle during the return march was to be accepted.[87]

At the onset of the expedition, Warren had issued strict orders forbidding his men to forage along the road or to commit any depredation against civilians. On the return journey, however, the corps commander discovered that non-combatants had engaged in bushwhacking Union stragglers, and he immediately rescinded his directives against foraging.[88] On the second day of the return march the body of a Union soldier was found pinned to the ground with a stake driven through his mouth. Several more bodies, stripped by plunderers,

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[86]Brainard, Campaigns of the One Hundred and Forty-Sixth Regiment New York State Volunteers, p. 252.

[87]Fifth Corps Circular, No. 163, December 9, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21.

[88]Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox: Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, p. 238.

were discovered on the road leading through Sussex Court House. Appalled by these atrocities, some of the men put the village to the torch and destroyed a good portion of it before General Warren was able to arrive and stop the progress of this destruction.[89]

While still on the march, Warren dispatched a messenger to inform Meade of his success. "I have completely destroyed the railroad track from the Nottoway to Hicksford, he observed,

> and my command is all at the crossing of the Nottoway. Time did not allow me to go in between the Nottoway and Stoney creek (sic) but that can be done at any time. I have met but trifling opposition or annoyance but the marching and working night and day has been very fatiguing and the weather very uncomfortable. The men have however stood it all in good spirit and we have made the best marching I have ever seen. The roads are now in a very bad condition. I propose to return tomorrow.[90]

Returning to his own lines on December 12th, Warren was justly proud of the accomplishments of his men. Within six days his command had marched more than 100 miles, destroyed many miles of railroad track and twenty miles of telegraph wire,

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[89]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 490; Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox: Campaigns of the 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, p. 329. Several reports were circulated that Warren ordered the destruction of Sussex Court House. These accounts were denied by W.D. McGregor in an account published in The Washington Chronicle. McGregor observed,"The reports circulated to the effect that General Warren ordered the houses on the line of his late march to be destroyed, in retaliation for the shooting of some of our stragglers by guerillas, are untrue. He, as well as his staff, and other commanders, did all in their power to prevent these outrages, particularly where women and children were living; and although these efforts did not prevent a terrible scene of devastation and conflagration, yet more than one habitation was saved to its unfortunate occupants."

[90]Warren to Meade from Sussex Court House, December 11, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21.

ruined thousands of barrels of corn, and brought in all the cattle and horses they encountered along the line of march.[91] In a mood of exhileration, he congratulated all the troops under his command for the service they had performed during the past week. "The Major-General commanding," he observed,

> considers it his duty to express to his division commanders - Brevet Major General Gregg, commanding Second Cavalry Division, Brevet Major Generals Griffin, Ayres, and Crawford, of the Fifth corps, and Brevet Major General Mott, commanding Third division, Second corps - his high appreciation and commendation of their performance of the instructions issued to them by him. He desires that they will convey this approval to their commands, with such especial praise as they may deem due to individuals in their divisions.[92]

In his message to the troops, he expressed his appreciation to all the soldiers under his command, Second Corps as well as Fifth Corps, cavalry as well as infantry. In his moment of glory, Warren remembered that it had been a team effort which had brought success to the mission. Less than four months later another general, under similar circumstances, was to react in an entirely different manner.

Although Warren was elated by the success of his raid upon the Weldon Railroad, his first unequivocal accomplishment in many months, he realized that war was a debilitating experience. Writing to his wife on December 12th, he revealed, "I know the life I had is telling on my nerves. I could

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[91]Report of Correspondent for The New York Chronicle, for the Weldon Railroad Raid, December 12, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21.

[92]Warren's Congratulatory Address, General Order No. 65, December 13, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21.

scarce eat my dinner afterwards, and though my eyes feel heavy I cannot sleep. . . ."[93]

On December 31st, Warren applied for, and received, a fifteen day leave starting January 2, 1865. Extensions were to prolong his absence from the army until January 26th. During this interval of nearly one month, Warren had the honor of giving his sister Emily away in marriage to his aide, Major Roebling.[94] It was a tired and disillusioned general who journeyed to Baltimore for a welcomed reunion with his wife. From the height of his success at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and Bristoe Station a year earlier, he had in the interval under Grant's leadership lost confidence in both the Lieutenant-General and in General Meade. What was worse, the commanding generals in turn had lost confidence in his abilities!

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[93]Warren to Emily Warren, December 12, 1864, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[94]Warren to S. Williams, December 31, 1864, Warren Papers, IX, 21. Before going on leave, Warren testified once more on December 20th, before the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, which was investigating the events surrounding the Petersburg Mine disaster. In his testimony, Warren did not attempt to place blame for the debacle on any one individual.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIVE FORKS CONTROVERSY

By the beginning of 1865, it had become obvious that the war was entering upon its final stage. Lee's army was becoming weaker; the ring about Richmond and Petersburg was tightening, and the Confederacy was running out of resources. For Warren, too, the new year was to be decisive.

In late January, the general returned to the Army of the Potomac. On February 4th, he was directed by Meade to push his corps out to the west across Hatcher's Run on the road to Dinwiddie Court House. This movement was designed to support Gregg's Cavalry, whose main task was to capture Confederate wagon trains bringing supplies into Petersburg by the Boydton Plank Road.[1] Reaching Rowanty Creek at 10 A.M. on the 5th, after a three hour march, Warren found his path blocked by a force of 100 Confederates. Attempts made by a squadron of cavalry to keep down enemy fire proved futile, and Warren directed General James Gwyn's brigade to wade the stream in order to dislodge the Southern skirmishers. In short order, Gwyn accomplished his task, capturing about thirty of the enemy and clearing the way for the passage of the remainder of the corps. As the troops crossed the stream by means of

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[1]A.S. Webb to Warren, February 4, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 22; O.R., I, 46, II, 377-378.

improvised bridges, the soldiers moved out to the Vaughan Road and marched toward Dinwiddie Court House.[2]

Attempts made by Warren to move within supporting distance of General Gregg proved unnecessary, when the latter, at mid-afternoon, reported that he was returning to his own lines after having captured 18 wagons and some 60 prisoners.[3] The Fifth Corps was then directed to move up the Vaughan Road to support General Humphreys' Second Corps, then heavily engaged with a strong enemy force, which had left its entrenchments to attack the isolated Federals.[4] Although the night was very cold and the road frozen hard, Warren, marching as rapidly as possible to Humphreys' position, allowed his men no sleep and little rest. But, despite his vigorous exertions, the enemy retired into entrenchments prior to the arrival of the Fifth Corps.[5]

Frustrated in his effort to catch the Confederates outside of their works, Warren under instructions from Meade, ordered Crawford's division to Dabney's Mill. He was hoping to drive back the enemy from there and to ascertain the position of Confederate entrenchments.[6] By mid-afternoon Crawford's command carried the enemy's entrenched picket-line

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[2]Warren to Webb, February 5, 1865, 11:30 A.M., Warren Papers, IX, 22; O.R., I, 46, I, 253.

[3]Warren to Webb, February 5, 1865, 4:30 P.M., Warren Papers, IX, 22.

[4]O.R., I, 46, I, 254; I, 46, II, 403.

[5]O.R., I, 46, I, 254.

[6]Fifth Corps Circular, February 6, 1865, 1:15 P.M., Warren Papers, IX, 22.

near Dabney's Mill. At the same time one of General Gregg's cavalry brigades, supported by General Frederick Winthrop's infantry, was attacked by the Confederates in force. Heavy fighting ensued on both fronts with Lee committing four divisions to the fray. Since the enemy was able to get up reinforcements faster than Warren, the Federal line on the Vaughan Road gave way, and before the troops could be halted they had been driven back with some confusion for a considerable distance.[7]

Working steadily through the night, Warren was able to reform his brigades, and by 10 A.M., the enemy having made no further attempts to advance, he directed Crawford's division once again to advance on Dabney's Mill. During the course of the day the Third Division advanced,driving the enemy from several entrenched positions. A severe storm which inundated the area prevented the Federals from taking full advantage of their success.[8] By 12:30 P.M., Warren received a message from General Alexander S. Webb, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac, instructing him to suspend the offensive. "In view of the weather and instructions from the lieutenant-general commanding," Webb stated, "it is not advisable to make any attack to-day, unless you are satisfied that thereby great advantage will be gained. It is intended to withdraw you to-night or to-morrow this side of Hatcher's Run, and to

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[7]O.R., I, 46, I, 254-255; I, 46, II, 432.

[8]O.R., I, 46, I, 256; Warren to Webb, February 7, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 22.

permanently occupy the line to Armstrong's Mill."[9] Warren complied with this directive. Suspending offensive operations, he withdrew his command to the near side of Hatcher's Run. At the same time he began to extend his lines from there to The Vaughan Road crossing.[10]

As a result of this further extension of the Federal line to the left, the Fifth Corps, for the third time during that bitterly cold winter, was obliged to move its camp. Obviously pleased by the success of his command, Warren enthusiastically wrote to Webb: "I have received your dispatch requiring us to occupy a new position and forsake our old quarters," he observed. "We will do it cheerfully, and for my part, I am glad that, when any extension of our line is to be made, we have the privilege of doing it. . . ."[11]

During the course of the next several weeks, Warren kept his troops occupied in strengthening his newly constructed works and preparing new entrenchments to safeguard the Federal left flank. On February 13th, he once more wrote Webb:

> Yesterday, I worked two brigades on our new lines, and completed the bridge-head across the run and the large battery south of the Vaughan road, destroyed our old breast-work, and had a good deal of timber slashed. To-day I have 1,000 men at work on the battery north of the Vaughan road in extending our breast-works down the run and making abatis and more slashing. I have also a party working the road from the Wyatt house to the

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[9] O.R., I, 46, II, 455.

[10] O.R., I, 46, I, 256.

[11] O.R., I, 46, II, 457.

> Vaughan road. I have my troops encamped in line of battle, reaching on a line nearly east and west, from Hatcher's Run to the Wyatt house, and all camped in the woods. . . .[12]

By mid-March the Fifth Corps, by dint of arduous labor, had perfected its lines to a point where they were truly impregnable.

But all was not work for the Corps. On March 16th, it was selected to present a grand review in honor of the French Minister who was at that time visiting the Army of the Potomac. Selecting a large field near his camp, Warren drew up his divisions with Ayres on the right, Griffin in the center, and Crawford on the left. After the troops had taken their positions, a special train arrived from Washington, carrying the French Minister, Secretary of War Stanton, and a multitude of staff officers. As the corps passed in review the soldierly appearance and military bearing of the men brought forth the unqualified encomiums of all who witnessed the spectacle.[13] Although Grant and Meade might have had personal reservations about Warren's willingness to engage the Confederate army in a battle, they realized that his ability as a disciplinarian and drill master made his command the best trained unit within the Army of the Potomac. It was usual that when army headquarters desired to impress some foreign dignitary the Fifth Corps was selected to demonstrate

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[12] Ibid., p. 550.

[13] Account of Grand Review, March 16, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 23.

its prowess in performing the manual of arms.

On March 25th, under instructions from Jefferson Davis, Lee decided to make one more effort to break the Union lines at Petersburg before the Federal stranglehold forced the Confederates to abandon both that city and Richmond. For this purpose, he determined to attack Fort Stedman. At dawn, General John Gordon led two divisions to the assault. The Federal garrison was taken completely by surprise and within minutes the Confederates seized the fort and turned its guns upon the adjacent Union works.[14] The situation was critical. If Lee effectively employed the 20,000 troops he had massed to support Gordon's divisions, an irreparable breakthrough might have forced Grant to abandon the siege. Without awaiting orders from headquarters, Warren left a single brigade to hold his lines at Hatcher's Run and directed each of his division commanders to place himself at the head of his command and to march to the sound of the guns.[15] Fortunately, the aid of the Fifth Corps was not needed to repair the breach in the Ninth Corps' line. Before 9 A.M., General John Parke, who commanded Fort Stedman, ordered a counterattack and succeeded in expelling the Confederates from the environs of his command.[16]

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[14]Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, pp. 575-576.

[15]Fifth Corps General Order Number 20, March 25, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 23.

[16]George Ruggles to Warren, March 25, 1865, 8:47 A.M., Warren Papers, IX, 23.

Although the Union line was restored without any assistance from the Fifth Corps, General Meade recognized Warren's alert decision to march his command to the endangered point. Army General Orders Number 13 issued on March 26, 1865 noted, "In connection with this subject /Fort Stedman/ the promptitude of Major General Warren, . . . in the early part of the operations, during the accidental absence of the Major General Commanding, deserve commendation and thanks."[17]

After the Fort Stedman engagement, Lee could count on scarcely 50,000 men to guard his extended lines before Petersburg. On the other hand, Grant led an array consisting of the Army of the Potomac, the Army of the James and Sheridan's independent cavalry command, totaling 125,000 effectives.[18] By the last week of March, the Union army from right to left consisted of the Ninth Corps, commanded by General Parke, with its right resting on the banks of the Appomattox River, at City Point; Sixth Corps under General Wright southeast of Petersburg; a division of the Army of the James under General Ord; Second Corps commanded by General Humphreys near the Weldon Railroad; and Warren's Fifth Corps on the extreme left of the Federal infantry line, near the junction of the White Oak Road with the Boydton Plank Road. To the west of the Fifth Corps, detached from all support, was Sheridan's

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[17]Army General Order Number 13, March 26, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 23.

[18]Estimate of Confederate Strength on March 29, 1865, "Thomas G. Jones Pamphlet," pp. 3-4, Joshua L. Chamberlain Papers, (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.).

Cavalry Corps. Headquarters for the Army of the Potomac was near the eastern extremity of Gravelly Run.[19]

The forthcoming operation, which came to be known as the Five Forks Campaign, took place in a heavily wooded area southwest of Petersburg. The terrain in this region was cut by several important roads, including the Boydton Plank Road, which wound for fifteen miles in a southwesterly direction from Petersburg to the tiny county seat of Dinwiddie Court House. Intersecting the Boydton Plank Road ten miles from Petersburg lay the White Oak Road which at its western extremity intersected four other country roads at the small crossing of Five Forks. The Crump Road connected Dinwiddie Court House with the White Oak Road near Five Forks. Almost the entire Five Forks Campaign was fought in a small triangle with the White Oak Road serving as the base line of the inverted triangle and the Boydton Plank Road and the Crump Road acting as arms of the triangle and converging at Dinwiddie Court House.[20]

Rolling countryside, cut by innumerable streams and dotted with pine woods and dense underbrush, made it difficult for General Meade to keep in contact with his isolated corps. Communications were made more difficult in the rainy season by spring storms which turned the soil into sticky mire or quicksand. Punsters within the Army of the Potomac, when asked

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[19]Proceedings of Court of Inquiry, The Case of Lieutenant-Colonel G.K. Warren (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), II, 1238. Hereafter referred to as Warren Court.

[20]Burke Davis, To Appomattox (New York: Rhinehart & Co., 1959), p. 27 and maps in prologue; Warren Court, III, maps.

if they had been "through Virginia," sarcastically responded, "Yes, in a number of places!"[21] Because of these problems of terrain and weather each corps commander had to determine for himself where to place his troops, so as to take advantage of the topography and yet present a solid front against the heavily entrenched Confederate forces defending Petersburg. General Warren's problems were doubly difficult. Situated on the left flank of the Union line, he had the responsibility of maintaining contact with the Second Corps to the east, while at the same time he was expected to defend the Federal left flank against any Southern attack from the west on the White Oak Road.

Desiring to break the stalemate before Petersburg, General Grant on the 24th of March ordered three cavalry divisions, totaling 9,000 sabers, under Sheridan's command, to move against the Confederate right flank and rear, with the hope of destroying the Danville-Southside Railroad which provided for the Confederacy a vital supply line between the western part of Virginia and the Southern army at Petersburg. He hoped that Sheridan's raid would cause Lee to weaken his center in order to strengthen his right which would permit a successful Federal assault against the center of the Southern

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[21]Atkinson, Grant's Campaigns of 1864 and 1865, p. 88; Joshua L. Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), p. 40; Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 439.

forces.[22]

By March 28th, General Lee came to realize the dangerous situation which would confront his command if the railroad linking Petersburg with the west were permanently broken. Ammunition, food, and forage for the cavalry mounts stored in the western part of Virginia would be lost to Petersburg where it was most needed. Lee's defensive position would become untenable as available supplies became depleted. In order to parry the Union threat to his lines of communication, Lee was forced to dispatch General George Pickett with a mixed force of infantry and cavalry, the last available offensive units of the Army of Northern Virginia, to the vicinity of Five Forks on the White Oak Road to encounter and attempt to

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[22]Sheridan's Report of Five Forks, Sheridan Papers, Volume 75, p. 132 (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.); Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 440; Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 767.

On March 28th, Grant sent Sheridan the following dispatch which allowed him a great deal of leeway in the forthcoming campaign:

> The 5th Army Corps will move by the Vaughan road at 3 a.m. tomorrow morning. The 2nd moves at about 9 a.m. having but about three miles to march to reach the point designated for it to take on the right of the 5th Corps after the latter reaching Dinwiddie C.H. Move your cavalry at as early an hour as you can and without being confined to any particular road or roads. You may go out by the nearest roads in rear of the 5th Corps, pass by its left and passing near to or through Dinwiddie, reach the right and rear of the enemy as soon as you can. It is not the intention to attack the enemy in his entrenched position but to force him out if possible. Should he come out and attack us, or get himself where he can be attacked move in with your entire force, in your own way, and with the full reliance that the army will engage or follow the enemy as circumstances will dictate.

For the full text of this important directive, see Grant to Sheridan, March 28, 1865, Grant Papers, Series 5, Volume 45, Page 267.

defeat Sheridan's marauders.[23]

From March 29th to the morning of the 31st, General Warren's command was far from inactive. The Fifth Corps began its movement towards the enemy's right flank at daylight on the 29th. Its movement was masked by a detour to the rear by way of Arthur's Swamp and down the Vaughan Road.[24] Since no opposition was encountered during the early hours of the movement, the troops were able to press rapidly forward. By early morning General Joshua Chamberlain's brigade, forming the head of Warren's column, had reached Rowanty Creek and, finding no Confederates to oppose its passage, the infantry passed over the stream by means of a bridge which the enemy during its withdrawal had only partially destroyed. While the Federal infantry was effecting its passage, Warren directed his engineers to construct a new bridge to enable artillery to be brought to the far bank.[25]

Marching on, the Fifth Corps arrived by noon at the crossing of the Quaker Road and Gravelly Run. Since this stream was not fordable, considerable time was lost in laying

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[23]Davis, To Appomattox, p. 22; Swinton, The Twelve Decisive Battles of the War, p. 485.

[24]Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, p. 42. Warren's corps at the beginning of this campaign consisted of little more than 15,000 men. Griffin's division, the largest in the corps, had 6,180 effectives; while Crawford's division contained 5,250 men; and Ayres' command only 3,980.

[25]Warren to Webb, March 29, 1865, 5:30 A.M., Warren Papers, IX, 25. Rowanty Creek was the name given to the stream below the junction of Gravelly Run and Hatcher's Run.

a pontoon bridge and constructing approaches for the artillery. Within a few hundred yards of the crossing, Chamberlain's brigade encountered Henry Wise's and William Wallace's brigades of General Bushrod Johnson's division. Without waiting for orders, General Chamberlain ordered an attack, and in a sharp engagement lasting two hours his command, supported by two other Federal brigades, succeeded in driving the Confederates back upon the junction of the Quaker Road and the Boydton Plank Road.[26]

During the encounter the Federals lost 400 men, 360 of whom were in Chamberlain's brigade. Besides inflicting heavy casualties in killed and wounded upon the enemy, Chamberlain captured more than 100 Confederates.[27] Warren was well pleased by his subordinate's remarkable success. Riding to the site of the engagement, he approached the slightly wounded Chamberlain and remarked, "General, you have done splendid work. I am telegraphing the President. You will hear from it."[28] True to his word, Chamberlain upon Warren's recommendation was promoted to brevet major-general for conspicious gallantry in the Quaker Road engagement.

Not waiting for the remainder of his corps to come up, Warren directed Griffin to push his division forward to the

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[26]Gouverneur K. Warren, An Account of the Operations of the Fifth Corps at the Battle of Five Forks (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1866), p. 8. Hereafter referred to as Five Forks; White Oak Road Pamphlet, pp. 8-9, Chamberlain Papers; M.H.S.M., VI, 215-216.

[27]M.H.S.M., VI, 216.

[28]Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, p. 56.

Boydton Plank Road. By 9 P.M., this unit reached the road and went into bivouac. After nine months of failure the Federal army had successfully placed itself on one of the most important nerve-centers of the Confederate defenses around Petersburg.[29] When informed that the Fifth Corps had been able to gain a lodgment on the Boydton Plank Road, Meade wrote Warren congratulating him for his success in driving the Confederates from the principal road leading out westward from Petersburg.[30]

Although Warren had more than carried out the expectations of his superiors during March 29th, he appeared to be in bad humor during the entire evening. One staff officer recalled:

> Corps headquarters waggon was not up for some unknown reason, and when Warren came back from Meade's headquarters there was a scene. I was just near enough to catch a word now and then: they fell on Locke and everyone around, and were fearful, worse if anything than that night at Bethesda Church. The devil within him seemed to be stirring all day, and I presume something had been said at Army Headquarters which he did not like.[31]

Attempts to placate him by offers of food and lodgings were rebuffed. Agitated, he observed, "If I can't sleep in my own

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[29]Newspaper Clipping from The Grand Army Journal, August 20, 1870, Chamberlain Papers; M.H.S.M., VI, 216.

[30]Webb to Warren, March 29, 1865, 7 P.M., Warren Papers, IX, 25.

[31]Wainwright, A Diary of Battle, p. 508. There is no evidence to indicate the reasons for Warren's rage. However, it is likely that when Warren went to Meade's headquarters, he expected to receive compliments and congratulations. Instead, he was informed that Grant expected even greater exertions from his command in the days ahead.

tent, I'll be damned if I /'11/ sleep in anyone's else's."[32] After saying this, he proceeded to sit under a tree and mumbled oaths at his staff.[33]

At 11 P.M., Warren received a message from Meade calling upon him to extend his line further to the left to determine the position of the Confederate works. In response to this directive, he immediately informed his senior generals that, "Division commanders will hold their commands in readiness at 6 a.m. to-morrow either to advance upon the enemy or to repel any attempt upon his part. The order is to advance."[34]

While Warren on the 29th occupied the Quaker Road and a small segment of the Boydton Plank Road, Sheridan's cavalry seized and occupied its objective, Dinwiddie Court House. The Court House was so delapidated in appearance that many cavalrymen believed it had not been worth the hard riding to capture it. In this they were mistaken. Although Dinwiddie was only a crossroads village with a pre-war population of 200 inhabitants, its possession by the Federal army was important as a point of approach against Lee's right flank and rear, and as a base for an attack on the Southside-Danville Railroad.[35] But although both Warren and Sheridan were

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[32] Ibid., p. 509.

[33] Ibid.

[34] O.R., I, 46, I, 803.

[35] H. Edwin Tremain, The Closing Days About Richmond: or, The Last Days of Sheridan's Cavalry (New York: Waldron & Payne, n.d.), p. 9; Philip H. Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, (New York: Charles L. Webster & Comapny, 1888), II, 139; O'Conner, Sheridan The Inevitable, p. 244.

campaigning on the far left of the Federal line, the movements of the Fifth Corps were not directly concerned with the dispositions of Sheridan's cavalry, which was operating independently of the movements of the Army of the Potomac.[36]

Because of incessant rain which quickly turned the ground into a quagmire, the Fifth Corps saw limited service on March 30th. Commissary wagons and artillery pieces sank hub deep into the thick mud. Weary troops moved slowly, every step causing them to sink up to their ankles in the all but impassable road beds.[37] At 5:50 A.M., Warren, obviously uneasy because of the vulnerable position of his command, now isolated from the remainder of the Army of the Potomac, wrote General Webb:

> I have my command all in readiness, but my advance is so far ahead of General Humphreys and in sight of the enemy across the open ground that I do not think it advisable to attempt anything more northward until General Humphreys gets into position on my right. My left, on the plank road, cannot be extended with propriety till I can get some idea of General Sheridan's movement, and now rests on Gravelly Run, and, if I move, it will be in the air. I believe I am now in the best position I can be, unless an assault is intended on the enemy's lines near the Quaker road. I cannot move forward, and it does not appear a favorable place in front of Griffin.[38]

In response to this pessimistic report, Warren received a directive from Meade through Webb, ordering him to develop

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[36]Five Forks, p. 7.

[37]Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 427. General Sheridan in his official report observed that the movements of troops on the 30th proved almost impossible because of the heavy rains. See Sheridan Papers, Vol. 75, p. 133).

[38]O.R., I, 46, I, 803.

his corps to the left. "General Meade," the Chief of Staff observed,

> does not think you hold as much of the front line as the strength of your command would warrant. He desires to have you make use of both Crawford's and Ayres' to develop to the left. He cannot give you any more definite information of General Sheridan's movements than to state that he is ordered to attack or turn the enemy's right. You must act independently of Sheridan, and, protecting your flanks, extend to the left as far as possible. If the enemy comes out and turns your left you must attack him. You will be supported with all the available force to be procured.[39]

With many misgivings, Warren sought to carry out Meade's wishes. That day Humphreys' corps connected with the Fifth Corps which allowed Warren slowly to renew his advance. Griffin's division, despite heavy Confederate skirmishing and inclement weather, was able to move up the Boydton Plank Road. A reconnaissance by Ayres' division was made as far west as the enemy entrenchments on the White Oak Road.[40] By probing the latter position, Warren threatened the main Confederate artery by which Lee could dispatch reinforcements to hold Five Forks against Sheridan's cavalry.[41]

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[39]Ibid., p. 804. This message was motivated by a communique Grant sent to Meade during the morning of March 30th:

> As Warren and Humphreys advance thus shortening their lines, I think the former had better move by the left flank, as far as he can stretch out with safety and cover the White Oak road if he can. This will enable Sheridan to reach the South-side road by Ford's road and it may double the enemy up so as to drive him out of his works south of Hatcher's run. (Grant to Meade, March 30, 1865, Grant Papers, Series 5, Vol. 46. p. 272.

[40]White Oak Road Pamphlet, p. 10, Chamberlain Papers; Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, p. 61; O.R., I, 46, I, 804-805; Five Forks, p. 9.

[41]Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65, p. 329.

The rain which had been heavy all night and during the early morning hours of March 30th, intensified during the afternoon. Theodore Lyman reported that the Chief Quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac had informed him that it was the worst day for moving supplies he had ever experienced. It took 1,000 engineer troops 56 hours to move 600 wagons 5 miles. Riding to the front, Warren was greeted by one man who shouted out, "Say General, why don't you bring up the pontoons and the gun-boats?"[42] Even Grant had to concede that it was almost impossible to advance. Writing to Sheridan he admitted, "The heavy rain of to-day will make it impossible for us to do much until it dries up a little or we get roads around our rear repaired. . . ."[43] It was a wonder that Warren made any progress at all that day.

In reporting the result of General Ayres' reconnaissances, Warren requested that a division of the Second Corps should relieve Griffin's division on the Boydton Plank Road. He suggested that this would enable the Fifth Corps to concentrate for the purpose of occupying the entire length of the White Oak Road, thereby cutting communications between Pickett's command at Five Forks and Lee's main body further to the east.[44] Undecided upon the course of action to pursue, Grant determined

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[42]Lyman, Meade's Headquarters 1863-1865, p. 330; Goss, Recollections of a Private, p. 341.

[43]Warren Court, II, 1308.

[44]Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65, p. 329.

to allow the Second Corps to relieve Griffin, but he hesitated in ordering Warren to renew his offensive the following day. In a message to Meade during the evening of March 30th, Grant commented, "Your orders to Warren are right. I do not expect to advance him in the morning. I supposed, however, that he was now up to White Oak road. If he is not, I do not want him to move up without further orders."[45] Cognizant of the precarious position of the Fifth Corps, Grant decided to limit Warren's role in the immediate future to the defensive, while cautioning Sheridan to prepare to come to the infantry's assistance if necessary.[46]

In the meantime, Warren was preparing for all eventualities. Although he had been ordered to suspend his advance, at 11 P.M. he sent anticipatory orders to his division commanders directing them to prepare to renew their forward movement the following morning. Ayres was ordered to reinforce his advance at dawn with his entire division; Crawford, to hold his command ready to follow Ayres' division; and General Griffin, to march his division to the position vacated by General Ayres, as soon as his command was relieved by the Second Corps.[47]

Lee was quick to attempt a countermove. Realizing that

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[45]Grant to Meade, March 30, 1865, Grant Papers, 5, 46, 279; Meade to Grant, March 30, 1865, 7:30 P.M., Warren Court, II, 1240.

[46]Grant to Meade, March 30, 1865, 9:50 P.M., Warren Court, II, 1243; Grant to Sheridan, March 30, 1865, Grant Papers, 5, 46, 275.

[47]Warren Court, II, 1269.

the movements of Sheridan and Warren would eventually force him to relinquish control over Petersburg, he further stripped his already understrength line and dispatched reinforcements to his extreme right on the White Oak Road. By the morning of March 31st, the Confederate commander had successfully massed 15,000 men, comprising the whole of Pickett's and Bushrod Johnson's divisions and two brigades under Generals Wilcox and Wise, to check the advance of the Union flanking columns.[48]

But Warren did not remain idle. He understood that as long as the enemy held the western extremity of the White Oak Road the Fifth Corps' flank was exposed. Despite orders to suspend action, at 9:40 A.M., March 31st, he informed Meade, "I have just received a report from Gen. Ayres that the enemy have their pickets still this side of the White Oak Road, so that their communication is continuing along it. I have sent out word to him to try and drive them off, or develop with what force the road is held by them."[49] He added that he was taking this action because he "deemed /it7 essentially necessary to the security of our position."[50] Belatedly, Meade gave his sanction to the movement.

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[48]Swinton, The Twelve Decisive Battles of the War, p. 485. The exact number of Confederate soldiers at Five Forks and along the White Oak Road has never been conclusively authenticated; however, Thomas Livermore indicated that Confederate strength at this time consisted of 17,600 men. Several thousand Southern soldiers were employed in maintaining communications with Lee's main force and were not engaged in the battle. See Thomas Livermore, Numbers and Losses In The Civil War, p. 137.

[49]Five Forks, p. 11.

[50]Ibid.

He suggested that if reconnaissance indicated that the Corps could get possession of the White Oak Road, it should endeavor to do so, notwithstanding earlier directives to the contrary.[51]

At 10 P.M., General Ayres' division, the smallest in the Fifth Corps with fewer than 2,500 effectives, led the advance westward along the White Oak Road. Crawford's command was placed in echelon with Ayres, some six hundred yards to his right rear, and Griffin's division was positioned thirteen hundred yards further to the rear out of sight of both Ayres and Crawford.[52] Within half an hour after the beginning of the advance, four Confederate brigades fell upon Ayres' command and completely routed it. Crawford's troops were within supporting distance, but his brigades had not deployed, and before the division could be formed into line of battle, the enemy closed in and drove both Crawford and Ayres back toward Griffin's division.[53]

Intending to be with Ayres during the advance, Warren had been delayed at corps headquarters by the need to answer a telegraphic communication from General Meade.[54] Leaving his headquarters shortly before 10:30 A.M., he arrived at a branch of Gravelly Run and heard heavy firing in the direction of Ayres' division. Astonished to find the stream swollen sixty feet wide and four or five feet deep by the recent rains,

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, p. 65.

[53] Warren Court, I, 650; M.H.S.M., VI, 233.

[54] M.H.S.M., VI, 233N; Warren Court, I, 717.

Warren was about to make the difficult crossing, when he observed large numbers of men without apparent organization attempting to recross. In an effort to bring order out of chaos, Warren did not advance but remained on the east bank of the stream, where he placed the returning soldiers in line of battle and called up artillery to maintain a solid front against any Confederate attempt to ford the run.[55] Confronted by Warren's preparations, the enemy did not make any attempt to force a passage across the stream.

Unperturbed, Warren informed Webb at 1 P.M. that he was determined to drive back the Confederate force which had so roughly handled his corps during the morning attack. After consultation with Griffin whose command had not been engaged in the earlier debacle, Warren devised a plan calling for a wheeling movement from the right toward the left, westward on the White Oak Road. This assignment was carried out by Crawford's and Ayres' divisions, reinforced by Chamberlain's brigade.[56]

While Warren made dispositions to renew his offensive, Grant, distressed by the earlier defeat suffered by the Fifth Corps, telegraphed a message to Meade which was highly critical of Warren's handling of the entire operation. "If the enemy has been checked on Warren's front," the Lieutenant-General observed,

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[55] Warren Court, I, 717.

[56] Ibid., I, 717-718.

> What is to prevent him from pushing on with his whole corps attacking before giving him time to entrench or retire in good order in his old line of entrenchments. I do not understand why Warren permitted his corps to be fought in detail when Ayres was pushed forward. He should have sent other troops to /his/ support.[57]

At 1:30 P.M., as the Fifth Corps with the support of Miles' division from the Second Corps was about to attack the Confederates on the White Oak Road, Warren rode up to the head of the troops and, his voice choaking with emotion, exhorted, "General Chamberlain, will you save the honor of the Fifth Corps? That's all there is about it."[58] Shortly afterwards, the Fifth Corps, spearheaded by Chamberlain's brigade, mounted a strong attack westward on the White Oak Road. The Confederates, demoralized by heavy losses suffered in their morning attack, were rapidly driven back on their main trenches, three miles to the east near the important road junction of Five Forks.[59]

The entire Federal counterattack lasted less than two hours. Constant fighting on March 29th, 30th and 31st, had cost the Fifth Corps 1,800 men, or nearly 12 percent of its depleted strength.[60] Such units as Warren's first command, the Fifth New York, took particularly heavy losses. The expenditure of Union blood was more than matched by heavy

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[57]Dispatch in Alexander S. Webb's File, Grant to Meade, March 31, 1865, Warren Papers, II, 7.

[58]White Oak Road Pamphlet, p. 18, Chamberlain Papers.

[59]Warren Court, I, 719.

[60]Five Forks, p. 13.

Confederate losses, which greatly exceeded the casualties suffered by the Federals. Moreover, the Fifth Corps could boast of the capture of the flag of the 56th Virginia regiment.[61] No longer was there any possibility that Lee could further succor Pickett by sending additional troops from the Petersburg trenches via the White Oak Road to Five Forks, where elements of the Confederate army were already fighting Sheridan's cavalry. With the road in the possession of Northern forces, the plight of the Confederates at Petersburg became more desperate.

But Warren was not satisfied with his early afternoon accomplishment. As soon as his infantry got possession of the White Oak Road, the general went out with his picket line to make a personal reconnaissance preparatory to another assault to carry the Confederate main works. "I got up as close as 200 yards," Warren noted, "and drew the fire of the artillery quite markedly upon us, and I expected to do it, because I wanted to know how their artillery was posted, and how the ground was covered by it. I found it was as well constructed a breastwork as I had ever seen. The artillery was protected by embrasures and in small salients, so that we would get a flank fire from the works. . . ."[62] From the White Oak Road, at 3:40 P.M., he wrote Webb a message stating, "We have driven the enemy, I think, into his breastworks. The prisoners report

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[61] Warren Court, II, 1153.

[62] Ibid., I, 722-723.

Gen Lee here to-day, and also that their breastworks are filled with troops. We have prisoners from a portion of Pickett's and Johnson's divisions."[63] Although he was wrong in stating that Lee was present on the White Oak Road during the day, his estimate of strong Confederate strength in his front proved correct.

There was still more to be done. Allowed one hour for rest, the Fifth Corps was given a new assignment. At 4:30 P.M., Webb directed Warren to hold a defensive position on the White Oak Road, while sending a small force down the road to open communications with Sheridan.[64] Less than an hour later, Meade directed Warren to send a brigade down the White Oak Road to support the cavalry leader. He assumed that Sheridan had defeated the Confederates, thus clearing the White Oak Road for Warren's infantry. In reality, the sounds of battle emanating from the vicinity of Five Forks were receding rather than drawing nearer. At the time of Meade's 5:15 P.M, dispatch elements of Crook's and Devin's cavalry divisions had been forced south from Five Forks on Dinwiddie Court House, away from the Union infantry.[65]

Although Warren had reported as early as 5:50 P.M.

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[63] Five Forks, p. 13.

[64] Warren Court, I, 720; O.R., I, 46, I, 817.

[65] Webb to Warren, March 31, 1865, 5:15 P.M., Warren Papers, IX, 25; M.H.S.M., VI, 238; Five Forks, p. 14.

that the cavalry had been driven back from its advanced positions at Five Forks, it was nightfall before Grant and Meade were officially informed by a courier from Sheridan that the cavalry had been defeated and was forced to give ground on the Crump Road back toward Dinwiddie.[66] At 6:30 P.M., Warren received a message from Webb: "A staff officer of General Merritt has made a report that the enemy had penetrated between Sheridan's main command and your position - this is a portion of Pickett's division. Let the force ordered to move out on the White Oak Road move down the Boydton Plank Road as promptly as possible."[67] Warren was astonished. Bartlett's brigade, which he had dispatched to Sheridan via the White Oak Road, had been gone for an hour; to countermarch this command would have wasted two hours more. Consequently, Warren ordered General Alfred L. Pearson's brigade, his most available force, already occupying a portion of the Boydton Plank Road to substitute for Bartlett and march to Sheridan.[68] And, realizing that a long arduous night awaited him, he gave orders to secure the gains made by his infantry during the day. Then he proceeded to the Boydton Plank Road to keep in telegraphic communication with General Meade, whose headquarters was some four and a half miles distant near the intersection of the Vaughan Road with Hatcher's Run.[69]

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[66]Five Forks, p. 14.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Warren Court, II, 1278.

[69]Five Forks, p. 15.

Sheridan's troubles now affected all of Warren's movements. At 8 P.M., he received a dispatch from General Meade which officially informed him of Sheridan's repulse. "Dispatch from Genl. Sheridan says he was forced back to Dinwiddie C.H. by strong force of cavalry supported by infantry. This leaves your rear and that of the 2d Corps on the Boydton plank-road open, and will require great vigilance on your part. If you have sent the Brigade down the Boydton Plank it should not go further than Gravelly Run, as I don't think it will render any service but to secure your rear."[70]

Shortly after receiving this message Warren suggested to Meade the possibility of a rear attack on the Confederates who had defeated Sheridan. Because of the lack of a direct wire from Fifth Corps to Grant's headquarters, more than two hours passed between the time Warren suggested the offensive and the reception of Grant's orders regarding the rear attack.[71] Ordered to relieve Sheridan, Warren at the same time was directed to attack the Confederates by a march on their rear

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[70] Warren Court, II, 1279.

[71] Ibid., I, 368-369; II, 1361. At 8:40 P.M., Warren wired Webb the following message.

> The line along the plank-road is very strong. One division, with my artillery, I think can hold it. If we are not threatened south of Gravelly Run, east of the plank road, Gen'l Humphreys and my batteries, I think, could hold this securely and let me move down and attack the enemy at Dinwiddie on one side and Sheridan on the other. . .
>
> Unless Sheridan has been too badly handled I think we have a chance for an open field fight that should be made use of. (Warren Court, II, 1280).

on the White Oak Road. To accomplish both these missions he would have had to split his corps in two without knowing the strength of the enemy forces posted on the White Oak Road, Boydton Plank Road, and those confronting Sheridan in front of Dinwiddie Court House.

The situation was not cleared up by subsequent directives. At 9 P.M., Webb ordered Warren to send Griffin's division to Sheridan. "You will, by direction of the Major-General commanding, draw back at once to your position within the Boydton Plank-road, & send a division down to Dinwiddie C.H., to report to Gen Sheridan. This division will go down the Boydton Plank-road. Send Griffin's division. . . ."[72] But to move to Sheridan, Griffin would have had to concentrate his brigades and then march his division east on the White Oak Road and then south on the Boydton Plank Road. Along both these roads were units of Ayres' and Crawford's divisions. These two commands would have had to move from the narrow roads into the pine barrens so that Griffin's troops might pass. In order to avoid needless confusion Warren sent Ayres' division, the force nearest Sheridan's cavalry, to Dinwiddie.[73]

A short time after he had carried out the 9 P.M., order, Warren received from Meade an urgent message which emphasized

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[72] Five Forks, p. 17.

[73] Warren Court, I, 231; White Oak Road Pamphlet, pp. 32-33, Chamberlain Papers. At 11 P.M., Warren wrote Ayres - "Instead of halting your command as directed in your last order, you will proceed down the plank-road to Dinwiddie C.H., and report to Gen. Sheridan."

that speed in the movement of the infantry was of the utmost importance. "Don't encumber yourself with anything that will impede your progress. . . ." was the general's admonition."[74]

This order for the rapid advance of the Fifth Corps on Dinwiddie Court House had been motivated by an alarming dispatch from Sheridan. Never prone to exaggerate his difficulties, the cavalry leader had informed Meade: "We have of the enemy a number of prisoners. This force is too strong for us. I will hold out to Dinwiddie C.H. until I am compelled to leave."[75] In response, Sheridan was promptly notified that infantry reinforcements would be sent to aid him against Pickett. In this dispatch, sent at 10:05 P.M., on March 31st, Grant informed his cavalry commander that Warren's corps would be able to reach his position by midnight.[76]

Warren was hardly in a position to fulfill these expectations. Receiving his orders to relieve Sheridan at 10:50 P.M., he had little more than an hour to carry out his mission.[77] Precious time had to be expended in silently

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[74] O.R., I, 46, I, 821.

[75] Five Forks, p. 53.

[76] Grant to Sheridan, March 31, 1865, 10:05 P.M., Warren Papers, II, 14. Grant wrote:

> The Fifth Corps has been ordered to your support. Two divisions will go by J. Boiseau's and one down the Boydton Road. In addition to this, I have sent McKenzie's Cavalry which will reach you by the Vaughan Road. All these forces except the cavalry should reach you by 12 to-night.
>
> You will assume command of the whole force sent to ooperate with you, and use it to the best of your ability, tto destroy the force which your command has fought so ggallantly to-day.

[77] O.R., I, 46, I, 821; Warren Court, I, 729, 248.

drawing in pickets, regrouping regiments and brigades, and drawing rations and ammunition for the men. The task was impossible to accomplish under existing circumstances!

For all practical purposes the movement of Ayres' division toward Dinwiddie Court House marked the beginning of a concentrated effort on Warren's part to move as many troops as possible to the firing line in the shortest time. Obstacles were encountered every step of the way. Shortly before midnight, scouts on the Boydton Plank Road reported that the bridge over Gravelly Run had been destroyed. Upon receipt of this information, Warren dispatched two staff officers to Gravelly Run to see about building a bridge across the stream. After a thorough examination, Major W.H. Benyaurd and Captain Wadsworth determined that Gravelly Run was unfordable and immediately reported this fact to the general. Warren at once directed that an old building located near his headquarters be torn down to provide plank for bridging and that his personal escort be utilized to construct the necessary span.[78]

Warren realized that his advance might be delayed by the necessity of bridging the swollen Gravelly Run, and he promptly informed Meade. Because of the breakdown in the direct telegraph wire between his and army headquarters, however, he did not receive Meade's answer until 1 A.M., April 1st:

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[78]Warren Court, I, 155-156.

> A dispatch partially transmitted, is received, indicating the bridge over Gravelly Run is destroyed, and time will be required to rebuild it. If this is the case, would not time be gained by sending the troops by the Quaker road? Time is of the utmost importance. Sheridan cannot maintain himself at Dinwiddie without reenforcements, and yours are the only ones that can be sent. Use every exertion to get troops to him as soon as possible. If necessary, send troops by both roads and give up the rear attack. . . .[79]

This message emphasized only one idea, the urgency of relieving Sheridan. The cavalry was in sore straits; it could not maintain its position much longer. Everything, including the rear attack, must be sacrificed to prevent the annihilation of Sheridan's command. Warren had to give up all plans for an offensive movement - he must fight his way through to Sheridan and foil an expected Confederate attack in the morning. The initiative for a Federal offensive, as proposed by Warren as a pincers movement against the Confederates, was lost.

Warren's troops, advancing down the narrow, winding Boydton Plank Road met every conceivable obstacle to their advance. As they marched by a quarter moon, which did little to illuminate their path, men weary from three days of constant marching and fighting were forced to drag their exhausted bodies, encumbered with all the instruments of war, through thick, sticky mud.[80] While the soldiers moved agonizingly forward, Warren remained behind at corps headquarters, attempting to coordiante the movement of his three divisions.[81] His

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[79] O.R., I, 46, I, 823; Warren Court, I, 733.

[80] Warren Court, I, 155, 231.

[81] Ibid., I, 337. Fifth Corps headquarters was at the Wilson House, situated 250 yards back of the Boydton Plank Road and about one half mile northeast of Gravelly Run.

task throughout the night was made more difficult by the multitude of orders, directives, and instructions he received. Many of them were contradictory, many countermanded earlier directives, and several were delayed by the breakdown of the army telegraph so that they were obsolete by the time they arrived. Out of desperation and in order to give some of his troops rest, the general decided to halt Griffin's and Crawford's divisions until he heard that Ayres had reinforced Sheridan.[82]

Delay followed delay. Engineer troops, supplemented by Warren's personal escort, frantically worked to complete the bridge over Gravelly Run in order that Ayres' command might pass to the south bank. At 1:20 A.M., April 1st, Warren informed Meade that he was doing everything possible to push his troops forward as quickly as conditions permitted. In this message he observed, "I think we will have an infantry bridge over Gravelly Run sooner than I could send troops around by the Quaker road . . . I am sending to General Sheridan my most available force."[83] By 2:05 A.M., he was able to report that Ayres' division was crossing Gravelly Run by means of a make-shift bridge. He also observed that he had urged Ayres to report to Sheridan at Dinwiddie Court House as soon as possible.[84]

Warren's real problems were only starting. At 4:30 A.M.,

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[82] O.R., I, 46, I, 824.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Five Forks, p. 26.

he received information that his advance division had opened communication with Sheridan. Without hesitating for a moment he mounted his horse and prepared to join Griffin and Crawford for a cross-country march to link the Fifth Corps with the cavalry.[85] At this time he still believed that his immediate function was to prevent Sheridan from being overwhelmed by superior forces. However, the cavalry commander was uninformed about the changed instructions regarding the advance of the infantry. Never questioning Grant's dispatch which assured him that the Fifth Corps would reach his lines by midnight, Sheridan in his early morning dispatches, spoke not of reinforcements to maintain his position, but of a joint attack to capture Pickett's force intact. At 4:50 A.M., Warren received a direct communication from Sheridan, a message written at 3 A.M.:

> I am holding in front of Dinwiddie Court-House, on the road leading to Five Forks, for three-quarters of a mile, with General Custer's division. The enemy are in his immediate front, lying so as to cover the road just this side of Adams house, which leads across Chamberlain's run or bed. I understand you have a division /in reality only Bartlett's brigade three-quarters of a mile north of Gravelly Run/at J. Boisseau's; if so, you are in rear of the enemy's line and almost on his flank. I will hold on here. Possibly they may attack Custer at daylight; if so, have this division attack instantly and in full force. Attack at daylight anyway, and I will make an effort to get the road this side of Adams' house, and if I do you can capture the whole of them. Any force moving down the road I am holding, or on the White Oak road, will be in the enemy's rear, and in all probability get any force that may escape you by a flank attack. Do not fear my leaving here. If the enemy remain I shall fight at daylight.[86]

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[85] O.R., I, 46, I, 824.

[86] O.R., I, 46, I, 824; Warren Court, I, 738-739.

The message arrived too late to change the advance of the infantry on the Boydton Plank Road. Basically, Sheridan was expecting Warren to cooperate with him in a pincers movement to trap Pickett between the Federal infantry and cavalry. This was the same plan sponsored by Warren the preceding night, but ultimately vetoed by Grant and Meade in their anxiety to unite the two Union forces at Dinwiddie Court House. It was not until the linking of Ayres' and Griffin's divisions with the cavalry pickets, at about 5 A.M., that Warren learned that Sheridan, despite his earlier calls for aid, had expected a joint attack and not succor. Upon receipt of Sheridan's message Warren rode immediately up to the White Oak Road and told Griffin to move at once across country toward Dinwiddie. Then he went to Crawford and directed him to retire from in front of the enemy's works on the White Oak Road and move out after Griffin toward the cavalry's position.[87]

At 6 A.M., Meade informed Warren, who did not receive the directive until 9 A.M., that during the immediate operations before Five Forks he would be under the command of General Sheridan.[88] Prior to this message, the Fifth Corps had been a part of the Army of the Potomac, under the immediate command of General Meade. On April 1st, Warren was to operate under the orders of the cavalry commander who was already greatly

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[87] Warren Court, I, 739.

[88] Five Forks, p. 29; O.R., I, 46, I, 818; Webb to Warren, April 1, 1865, 6 A.M., "Letterbook February 4 - May 1, 1865," Meade Papers. "General Meade directs that in the movements following your junction with General Sheridan, you will be under his orders and will report to him. Please send a report of progress."

displeased with the progress the infantry had made during the early morning hours.

The first indication of Sheridan's pique with Warren came soon after the joining of the commands near Dinwiddie Court House. General Chamberlain, senior officer in the vanguard of the Federal column, rode to Sheridan and said, "I report to you, General, with the head of Griffin's Division." The cavalry commander in a stern tone responded, "Why did you not come before? Where is Warren?" Chamberlain answered, "He is at the rear of the column, sir." "That is where I expected to find him. What is he doing there?" Sheridan sarcastically responded.[89] General Chamberlain quickly replied that his commander was with General Crawford attempting to draw off the Third Division from the White Oak Road without allowing the enemy knowledge of the movement.[90] Nerves were raw and tempers quick on that spring day in Virginia.

What Sherdian did not realize was how greatly he had been dependent on Warren's actions. General Fitzhugh Lee, commanding Confederate cavalry and second in command to General Pickett at Five Forks, later stated that the Confederates had not fallen back on the Crump Road during the night to Five Forks because of cavalry pressure. One of Pickett's brigadiers, General Montgomery Corse, later recalled that at about 1 A.M., April 1st, he was summoned to Pickett's headquarters and told that, because Federal infantry was reinforcing Sheridan's

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[89]White Oak Road Pamphlet, pp. 40-41, Chamberlain Papers.

[90]Ibid., p. 41.

cavalry, the Confederate army would retire before dawn from its position in front of Dinwiddie Court House.[91] Obviously, Pickett had received information about the advance of the Fifth Corps toward Dinwiddie, and this was why the Confederate commander ordered his troops to fall back rapidly to the northwest to form a defensive line at the junction of the Crump and White Oak Roads. The advance of the infantry during the early morning hours of April 1st ended the Southern threat to the cavalry at Dinwiddie Court House and permitted Sheridan to pursue the Confederates north toward Five Forks.

But the antagonism between cavalry and infantry commanders was growing worse. When Griffin reached the junction of the Crump and Adams' Roads at 7 A.M., he was met by a messenger from Sheridan who directed him to halt his troops, mass them, and await further orders. Crawford's division reached J. Boisseau's an hour later, and following the same instructions, the men went into bivouac to cook their breakfast and rest. Between 8 A.M. and 2 P.M., the Federal infantry commanders consolidated their divisions north of Dinwiddie Court House, established camps, and rested their men after their long, arduous march. At 9:30 A.M., Warren wrote Webb, "I reached the crossing of the Gravelly Run early this morning and met General Sheridan there. We are massed at that point by his direction. I did not meet General Sheridan personally; General Griffin, leading the column saw him."[92]

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[91] Warren Court, I, 420, 477; Tremain, The Closing Days About Richmond: or, The Last Days of Sheridan's Cavalry, p. 30.

[92] Warren Court, I, 297-298; O.R., I, 46, III, 418.

Warren's failure immediately to seek out and find Sheridan caused a further deterioration in relations between the two generals.[93]

For a moment, at least, the controversy seemed to subside. When Warren mounted his horse and rode to Sheridan's headquarters, he was cordially received, and the two generals sat down and discussed plans for the forthcoming battle.[94] At no time did Sheridan give any indication that he was displeased with the progress of the Fifth Corps. After a short talk, he mounted his horse, and without giving Warren any definite orders for the deployment of his infantry, rode off to the front.

But the lull was deceiving. As noon approached on April 1st, General Sheridan received a verbal message from Grant through his aide-de-camp, Colonel Orville E. Babcock: "Tell General Sheridan that if, in his judgment, the Fifth Corps would do better under one of the division commanders, he is authorized to relieve General Warren and order him to report /to General Grant/ at headquarters."[95] Sheridan now held the upper hand; he had full authority to vent his spleen against the infantry commander.

Many years later, in his Memoirs, attempting to justify this curious directive, Grant observed,

> I was so much dissatisfied with Warren's dilatory movements in the battle of White Oak Road and in his failure to reach Sheridan in time, that I was very much

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[93] M.H.S.M., VI, 248.

[94] Five Forks, p. 31.

[95] Warren Court, II, 901; Porter, Campaigning With Grant, p. 435.

> afraid that at the last moment he would fail Sheridan. He was a man of fine intelligence, great earnestness, quick perception, and could make his dispositions as quickly as any officer, under difficulties where he was forced to act. But I had before discovered a defect which was beyond his control, that was very prejudicial to his usefulness in emergencies like the one just before us. He could see every danger at a glance before he had encountered it. He would not only make preparations to meet the danger which might occur, but he would inform his commanding officer what others should do while he was executing his move.
>
> I had sent a staff officer to General Sheridan to call his attention to these defects, and to say that as much as I liked General Warren, now was not a time when we could let our personal feelings for any one stand in the way of success; and if his removal was necessary to success, not to hesitate. . . .[96]

In the meantime Warren had been making dispositions for the impending battle. At 1 P.M., he directed Colonel Henry C. Bankhead, Inspector General of the Fifth Corps, to bring up the corps as quickly as possible to Gravelly Run Church, near the White Oak Road. Then he gave orders to meet any exigency that might arise in the coming battle. Ammunition was ordered up, ambulances positioned, unnecessary vehicles sent to the rear, and two batteries of artillery ordered to the front.[97]

After making preparations to move his corps as expediously as possible to confront the Confederates near the White Oak Road, Warren, in advance of his troops, went up the road leading to Five Forks to find out what plans Sheridan had devised to assault Pickett. When the two generals met at 2 P.M. in an open field south of the White Oak Road, Sheridan in the presence of Generals Griffin and Chamberlain outlined his

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[96]Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, II, 445.

[97]Warren Court, I, 343-345, 743-744.

plan of battle by sketching with his scabbard a map on the ground to indicate where the rebel positions would be found.[98] According to the sketch the crucial point was the Confederate left flank or return, positioned near the junction of Crump and White Oak Road. In Sheridan's plan the Fifth Corps would be massed, and each division would move simultaneously. Ayres' division, the weakest in the corps, would assault the extreme left of the Confederate front on the White Oak Road, while Crawford's command on Ayres' right would wheel to take the Southern entrenchments in flank. Griffin's division, the strongest in the corps, was to be placed behind Crawford's command to support it in rolling up the Confederate flank from left to right along the White Oak Road.[99]

After the infantry had spent nearly three hours in marching two miles from its concentration point, J. Boisseau's house east of the Crump Road, north to Gravelly Run Church opposite the Confederate trenches on the White Oak Road, the starting point for the Federal attack, Sheridan again became dissatisfied with Warren.[100] He believed that his subordinate's dilatory movement would cost him a victory. But during these three hours Warren had been actively engaged in expediting the movement of his troops. He had taken careful pains in

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[98] Ibid., I, 301, 305; Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox, Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regimant, p. 347; Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, II, 158-159. According to Sheridan the enemy's position began with a short return about three-quarters of a mile east of Five Forks and ran along the south side of the White Oak Road to a point about one mile west of Five Forks.

[99] Abbot, Gouverneur Kemble Warren - Class of 1850, p. 12; Warren Court, I, 744-745.

[100] Warren Court, I, 55.

drawing up written instructions and preparing a sketch to inform fully his subordinates of Sheridan's plan and the manner in which he expected it to be carried out.[101] On numerous occasions Colonel Bankhead and other aides were dispatched to the rear to hurry the troops forward.[102] At this time Warren had been deep in concentration. One general officer described his appearance as that of a caged eagle, "all his moral energies compressed into the nerve centers somewhere behind his eyes and masked pale cheek and compressed lip."[103]

While the Federal infantry was deploying for an attack, three Union cavalry divisions, totaling 9,000 men, kept up a skirmish fire along the White Oak Road.[104] As the minutes passed and became hours, Sheridan grew more and more fearful that either his cavalry would run out of ammunition or the sun would set before the infantry got into position to assail Pickett's works.[105] Finally, near 4:30 P.M., all was in readiness for the assault. Just before he ordered the advance, Warren rode out in front of his line and declared, "Boys, you know the reputation Sheridan's cavalry has, now show them how you can fight."[106]

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[101] M.H.S.M., VI, 250.

[102] Warren Court, I, 338-340, 572, 746; Harrison Adreon to Warren, May 30, 1866, Warren Papers, IV, 46.

[103] Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, p. 121.

[104] Warren Court, I, 19.

[105] Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, II, 160-161.

[106] Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox, Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, p. 613,

Not expecting a late afternoon attack upon their lines, the Confederates were caught unprepared. Both General Pickett and General Fitzhugh Lee had tarried too long at a shad bake behind Hatcher's Run, and in addition their forces were seriously outnumbered. Although Pickett had at least 12,000 men under his immediate command, his troops were dispersed and it was not possible for the Confederates to muster more than 8,000 effectives to guard a front of 1,000 yards along the White Oak Road.[107]

Advancing at 4:30 P.M., the Federal infantry divisions kept the sun at their left until they reached the White Oak Road, where it was planned to order a change of front, with the Union force moving to a position perpendicular to the road to attack the Confederate return.[108] Warren gave the order for this movement, acting upon information supplied by Sheridan concerning the positions held by the Southern troops. The Fifth Corps moved without artillery support, because General C.S. Wainwright informed Warren that the fieldpieces were still a mile behind the lines and would not be up for another half an hour. Because the day was growing late, Warren decided he could not wait. Any further delay would have meant that the Union attack would have had to be postponed for another day.[109]

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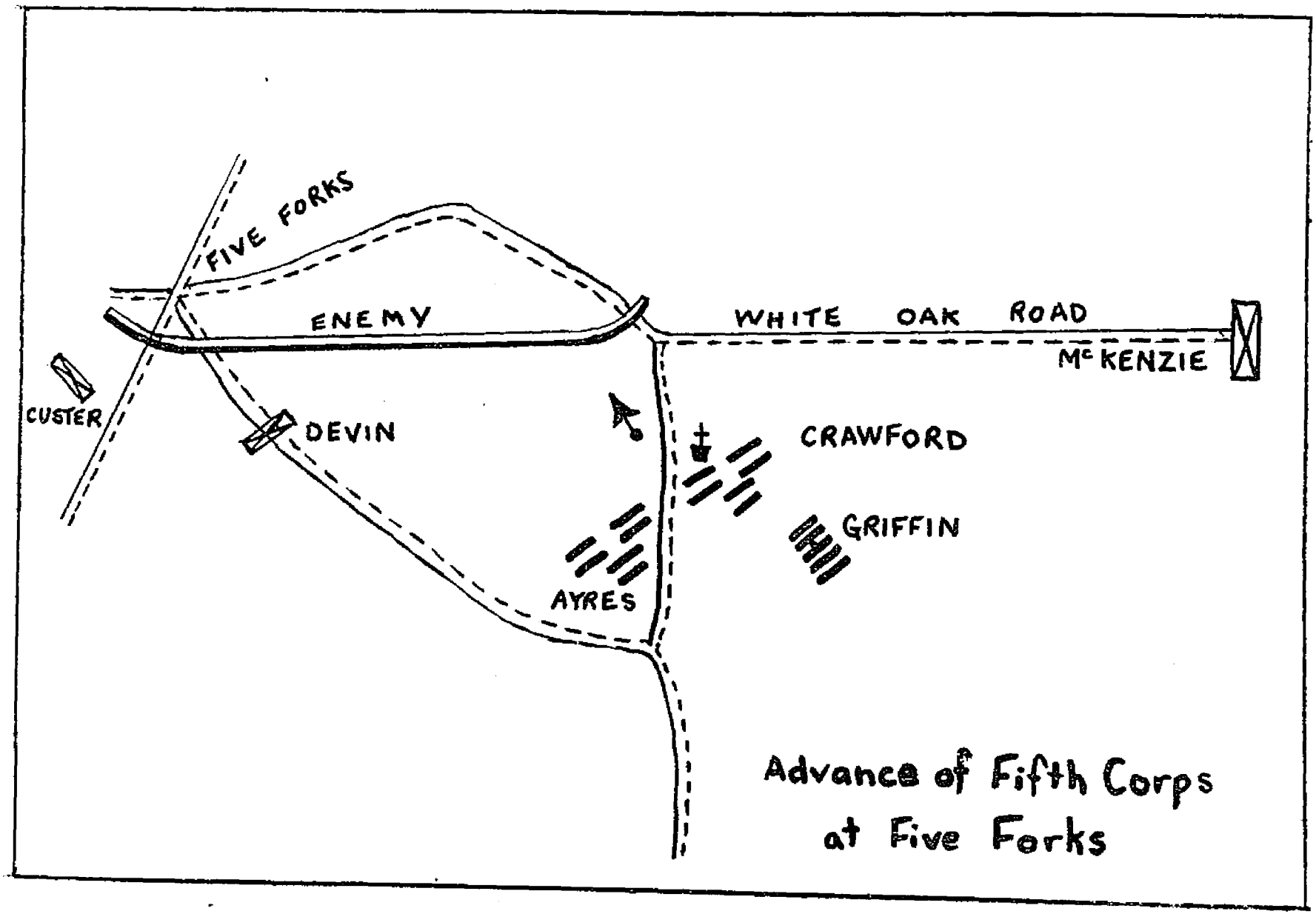
[107]Boston Sunday Globe, June 22, 1902, Aurestus Perham Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65, p. 328.

[108]Warren Court, I, 349.

[109]Ibid., I, 563.


FIVE FORKS
ENEMY
WHITE OAK ROAD
McKENZIE
CUSTER
DEVIN
CRAWFORD
GRIFFIN
AYRES
Advance of Fifth Corps
at Five Forks

As the troops advanced, Ayres' division, because of a miscalculation made by Sheridan in pinpointing the exact position of the Confederate return, was met by a severe enfilade fire from the enemy's works on the White Oak Road. Several of Sheridan's staff officers reported that Union infantry regiments broke to the rear and that the Federal attack was temporarily checked until Sheridan, by advancing with Ayres' division, was able to revive confidence in several unsteady units. Following the cavalry commander, Ayres' command fought its way into the Confederate line at the return.[110]

As the Fifth Corps advanced, a gap appeared in the Union line between Ayres' division on the left and Crawford's command on the right of the Federal battle line. When the former changed front to the left to meet the Confederate flank fire, the latter continued to advance in a northerly direction, as specified in Sheridan's directives.[111] Observing the ever widening gap between the two units, Warren turned to Major Benyaurd and said, "Go over and see if you cannot get Crawford in."[112] Within the next few minutes he dispatched nearly all his aides in an attempt to keep Crawford closed on Ayres. Impatient with the lack of success of his staff in this endeavor, he turned to Ayres and exclaimed, "You are all right, Ayres, I am going after Crawford."[113]

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[110] Ibid., I, 254-255. The Confederate line did not extend as far eastward as General Sheridan had been led to believe by his scouts. The Confederate left was covered by General Thomas Munford's dismounted cavalry in deploy.

[111] Warren Court, I, 246.

[112] Ibid., I, 161.

[113] Ibid., I, 364, 380.

Traveling across country, Warren encountered Crawford and he hurriedly observed, "Crawford, you are too far to the right; I want you to face to the left directly and charge at once." Crawford replied, "Which way?" Gesturing with his left hand toward the direction of the sound of the firing, Warren commanded, "Directly at that point where the firing is; charge right there."[114]

Sheridan also observed that Crawford's brigades were splitting away from the Federal left. He directed Colonel James W. Forsyth, Chief of Staff of the Middle Cavalry Division, to direct Crawford's command to guide on Ayres' division, and to wheel the infantrymen to the west on the White Oak Road.[115] Like Warren, Sheridan sent several additional staff officers to bring the errant division in on the Confederate left flank. One of these aides directed Crawford's left brigade to wheel prematurely to its left, and this caused a break in connection with the two brigades to the right, the remainder of Crawford's command.[116]

Meanwhile, Warren was successful in getting the two right brigades and Griffin's division to oblique to the left so as to come on the flank and rear of the Confederates. Following Crawford's errant left brigade north toward the Ford Road, Warren reached the head of the column, and, observing a strong enemy entrenchment on the far side of a large open

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[114] Ibid., I, 604.

[115] Ibid., I, 203.

[116] Ibid., I, 315.

field, he promptly formed all the troops at hand into a line of battle. Seizing the corps colors out of the hand of a color sergeant he rode in front of his regiments, and, addressing the weary soldiers exclaimed, "Now, boys follow me, this will be the last fight of the War."[117] Inspired by these words, the troops, with Warren five rods in the lead, charged across the Gillium Field toward the enemy's position. Long before he reached the center of the field, Warren became the target of many enemy sharpshooters. His corps flag was riddled by Confederate bullets, an orderly was killed at his side, and, as he approached the Southern line, his horse was shot from under him. A prominent target, he would most assuredly have been killed, had not Colonel Hollon Richardson, commander of the 7th Wisconsin, ridden between the enemy and his commander. Richardson was severely wounded, but Warren remained unscathed and successfully led his men into the enemy entrenchments.[118]

The thin Southern line could not withstand the pounding of the Fifth Corps, and, a few minutes after Warren's "grand charge" it was completely overwhelmed. Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick T. Locke, Warren's Adjutant General, was dispatched to Sheridan, who was within the Confederate entrenchments at the return, to inform him that Warren had gained the enemy's rear and captured more than 1,500 prisoners. Locke also

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[117]Jno. Palmer to Aurestus Perham, n.d., Perham Papers, Box 1.

[118]Hollon Richardson to Warren, July 20, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 21; Richardson to Warren, May 27, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 26.

reported that Warren was hotly pursuing the Confederates with a division.[119] Visibly excited by victory, Sheridan rose in his saddle and gesturing wildly with his hand said, "Tell General Warren that, by God! I say he was not at the front. That is all I have got to say to him."[120] Shocked by Sheridan's remark Locke asked, "Must I tell General Warren that, sir?"; Sheridan thundered back, "Tell him that, sir!"[121] General Joseph Bartlett, soon to command a division in the Fifth Corps, overheard Sheridan's conversation with Locke. According to Bartlett, Sheridan's final rejoinder to the staff officer was, "Tell General Warren that I do not consider him in command of the Fifth Army Corps. I do not see him where the fighting is."[122] On this latter point, Sheridan was clearly in error. In response to a letter sent to him by Warren after the Civil War, General George A. Custer noted:

> As you undoubtedly, are aware, I saw you but once on that memorable day; that was at the close of the engagement, or more properly speaking at that period of the engagement when our combined forces were driving the enemy from the field. . . . I remember distinctly that as my cavalry, which was moving at a gallop, passed your troops I saw you with your advance. You recognized me and we had but time to exchange ordinary salutations before we became separated. I was able nevertheless to observe that you were leading your advance and with sword in hand was encouraging and cheering your men forward.123

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[119] Warren Court, I, 366.

[120] Ibid., I, 366; II, 1102; New York Herald article for May 25, 1880, Warren Papers, XI, 64.

[121] Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, p. 142.

[122] Warren Court, II, 1172

[123] George A. Custer to Warren, May 3, 1866, Warren Papers, IX, 26.

This statement by General Custer, one of Sheridan's division commanders, was sufficient evidence to disclaim Sheridan's charge that Warren was not at the front.

At 7 P.M., when all heavy fighting had ceased, and the remnants of Pickett's shattered command were in complete flight, General James Forsyth was sent by Sheridan to Warren officially to relieve him of command of the Fifth Corps. Finding Warren in the rear of the Confederate entrenchments, Forsyth told him, "you are relieved from the command of the Fifth Corps and will report for orders to General Grant." Then, the staff officer handed Warren a written order confirming his removal.[124]

Warren, stunned by this command and believing that "a soldier's reputation is his life," immediately sought out Sheridan.[125] Crushed by what he considered his unjust removal, he exclaimed, "I trust you will reconsider your determination." Sheridan's answer to Warren's request was, "Reconsider? Hell I [never] reconsider my determination!"[126] Sheridan quickly added, I do this on my own responsibility." Warren replied, "I will not rest under it." Impatient with Warren's prolongation of the interview the cavalryman responded, "Go on General."[127]

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[124]Warren Court, I, 195; Lt. Col. H.C. Bankhead to Warren, March 5, 1866, Warren Papers, I, 21; O.R., I, 46, I, 828.

[125]Notes made by Warren on removal, April 1881, Warren Papers, X, 35.

[126]Warren Court, II, 1058.

[127]E.B. Cope to Warren, March 1880, Warren Papers, X, 30.

Many admirers of Grant and Sheridan have given the cavalry almost exclusive credit for the storming of the Confederate line on the White Oak Road. However, General Ayres believed that the Federal infantry, rather than the cavalry, was chiefly instrumental in this success. In a letter written to Warren many years after the war, Ayres recalled:

> In reference to the cavalry carrying the works and turning captured guns upon the enemy I have to say that as I rode along, behind the works at the head of my troops (in advance of them) prisoners were swarming in to go to the rear. The cavalry beginning with their right came forward (as we advanced) to the front of the works, and some in their excitement, levelled their carbines to shoot into the prisoners, who were all around me. I had great difficulty in preventing it. Had to state that I was a General Officer & to command them not to fire - then to shame them for seeking to fire upon men - unarmed - who were surrendering. . . .[128]

Although both Grant and Meade had heard the heavy firing emanating from the vicinity of Five Forks, neither knew of the scope of the Federal victory until several hours after dark. It was not until 9 P.M. that a courier, reporting that Pickett's line had been completely broken and that "Sheridan is still pushing the enemy," arrived at Grant's headquarters.[129] Immediately, Grant telegraphed the news of "Sheridan's Victory" to Meade. Pleased to hear about the extent of the Union success, Meade replied, "What part did Warren take? I take it for granted he was engaged."[130] His question was not to be

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[128]Ayres to Warren, June 18, 1880, Warren Papers, X, 31.

[129]War Papers, March 26, 1865 - November 4, 1867, Meade to Humphreys, April 1, 1865, 9 P.M., Humphreys Papers; Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 314.

[130]Meade to Grant, April 1, 1865, Letterbook, February 4 - May 1, 1865, Meade Papers.

answered for several hours.

Following Sheridan's directive, Warren reported at 11 P.M. to General Grant, informing him that he had been relieved by General Sheridan. Grant told Warren that he was not surprised and informed him that he had given Sheridan discretionary orders for his removal. Speaking frankly, Grant stated that he had a high regard for Warren's personal courage and ability as a general, but that he had several serious defects which detracted from his capacity as a subordinate commander.[131] Although Grant rejected all of Warren's solicitations to be restored to command of the Fifth Corps, he stated that he would not send him to the rear but would be willing to reassign him to another command where there would be no superiors over him.[132]

Disconsolate and dissatisfied with Grant's refusal to reappoint him to the Fifth Corps, Warren, accompanied by a single staff officer, left Dabney's Mill at midnight and went to army headquarters. After dining with Colonel Lyman, Warren saw Meade who was cordial but frank. Reproaching Warren, he stated that his fault was his tendency to substitute his own judgment for that of his superiors and his slowness in carrying out orders unless he was in complete agreement with their intent.[133]

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[131] Warren Court, II, 1034.

[132] Ibid., II, 1034, 1233.

[133] Lyman, Meade's Headquarters 1863-1865, pp. 333-334; Cleaves, Meade of Gettysburg, p. 314.

That Warren had been shocked at his removal after the close of the Battle of Five Forks is not surprising. In the twenty-four hours preceding he had fought a major battle with the Confederates on the White Oak Road, directed a successful night march to succor Sheridan, and led a charge against a Confederate line at Five Forks, an action which captured several thousand prisoners and routed the remnant of Pickett's force. Casualties in Crawford's Third Division, which Warren led in person on April 1st, were nearly as great as the combined losses of Griffin's and Ayres' divisions.[134] This fact showed that Warren had been at the center of the infantry fighting on April 1st. As a reward for four years of devoted service, hard labor, and at times brilliant innovations and decisive leadership, he was removed from his command during the last days of the war without any specific charges.

Sheridan sought to explain his actions in his Memoirs. He wrote:

> My troops, though victorious, were isolated from the Army of the Potomac, for on the 31st of March the extreme left of that army had been thrown back nearly to the Boydton plank-road, and hence there was nothing to prevent the enemy's issuing from his trenches at the intersection of the White Oak and Claiborne roads and marching directly on my rear. I surmised that he might do this that night or early next morning. It was therefore necessary to protect myself in this critical situation, and General Warren having sorely disappointed me, both in the moving of his corps and in its management during the battle, I felt that he was not the man to rely upon under such circumstances, and deeming that it was to the best interest of the service as well as but just to myself, I relieved him, ordering him to report to General Grant.[135]

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[134]Warren Court, I, 756.

[135]Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, II, 165.

Although Sheridan's reasoning appeared logical, many prominent officers of the Army of the Potomac were not convinced that he was justified in ordering Warren to the rear. From the very first day many questions remained unanswered. Why did Grant find it necessary to send orders to Sheridan authorizing him to remove Warren? Was Warren really expected, by Grant, to reach Sheridan's lines by midnight, March 31st? Why did Sheridan permit the Fifth Corps to remain inactive for nearly six hours before utilizing it on April 1st? Lastly, why did Sheridan wait until dusk, when victory was assured, before removing Warren? These questions would not subside, and for more than fifteen years a controversy raged between those who supported Warren and those who sided with General Sheridan. That Warren would never rest until he had cleared himself was obvious.

CHAPTER XIII

THE YEARS OF DISHONOR

The destruction of Pickett's command had the immediate effect of breaking the stalemate which for nine months had existed before Petersburg. Realizing that his right flank was turned and that the Southside Railroad, the last supply route into Petersburg, was irretrievably lost, Lee had decided immediately to abandon Petersburg and Richmond before the Federals mounted a frontal assault which would certainly break his main line and lead to the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia.[1]

But Warren was not present to savor the fruit of his victory. Early on the morning of April 2nd, he received orders from Grant placing him in command of the Defenses of City Point and Bermuda Hundred.[2] Although the title of his new position appeared impressive, he soon discovered that his command consisted solely of three companies of infantry doing picket duty and two batteries of light and one battery of heavy artillery.[3] Disgruntled at the inaction imposed on him at City Point, he wrote a long letter to his wife which gave vent

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[1] M.H.S.M., VI, 255; Swinton, The Twelve Decisive Battles of the War, p. 495.

[2] O.R., I, 46, III, 462.

[3] Returns for City Point and Bermuda Hundred, April 2, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

to his bitterness. "I am not altogether unprepared for this [removal from command of the Fifth Corps], " he stated:

> Ever since General Grant came here every chance and favor has been shown to the western generals and they have shown a spirit that is extremely sectional. Coldness in their ordinary intercourse and remarks behind our backs have made this only too apparent. It made me see sometime ago that I should never gain any advancement from the point on which I stood and it has been a great source of unhappiness, and made me often anxious and wakeful. . . . Adversity proves men, and their friends. I could easily bear all my chagrin if it was not for my darling. As everything I gained was valued for my Emmie's sake so I feel sad about the loss of position for her dear self alone. . . .[4]

In an attempt to soothe her husband's wounded pride, Emily immediately replied, "The loss of your military position I think not of only the shock and trial to your sensitive feelings. . . I love you and am happy in your self alone."[5] Other members of Warren's family rallied to his defense. Writing his brother on April 10th, William Warren remarked, "I have not seen the first person yet who does not believe the most outrageous injustice has been done you. With many it had aroused such feelings of indignation as almost to take away the great joy of the victory. . ." Algernon S. Chase, in a letter to his son-in-law, agreed: "I am happy to tell you that so far as I have been able to learn there is but one sentiment in regard to your case, and that is of condemnation of the treatment you

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[4]Warren to Emily Warren, April 2, 1865, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 4. Sheridan's action was bitter medicine to swallow for an officer who had fought in 17 major engagements, 23 lesser battles, and who was twice wounded in the service of his country.

[5]Emily Warren to Warren, April 6, 1865, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 4.

have received. . . ."[6]

Upon reflection, Meade had second thoughts concerning Sheridan's removal of his senior corps commander. On April 18th he wrote Grant stating, "Your attention is called to the necessity of a permanent commander being assigned to the 5th Corps. My views upon this point have been made known to you. Should you be disposed to re-assign Major General Warren, I shall make no objection thereto."[7] Grant was not willing to offend Sheridan nor to admit that his favorite might have made a mistake. In a response to Meade's earnest entreaty, he instructed him to retain General Griffin as the temporary commander of the Fifth Corps. Grant further observed that new orders would be dispatched to Warren within a few days.[8]

When Warren, shortly after his arrival at Bermuda Hundred, reported that Major General George Hartsuff, his senior in rank, was in command at that place, Grant assigned Warren to command City Point-Petersburg and the troops along the Southside Railroad.[9] On the following day, Warren established headquarters in Petersburg at the Bolingbroke House located at the corner of Washington and Adams Streets.[10]

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[6]William Warren to Warren, April 10, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 11; A.S. Chase to Warren, April 13, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 11.

[7]Meade to Grant, April 18, 1865, Letterbook February 4 - May 1, 1865, Meade Papers.

[8]O.R., I, 46, III, 823.

[9]Ibid., I, 46, III, 501; T. L. Bowers to Warren, April 3, 1865, Grant Papers, Series 5, Vol. 46, pp. 311-312.

[10]Warren Memo, April 4, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

Warren's position was that of a military governor. Despite his personal feeling of despair at being relegated to rear echelon service, he took decisive measures to normalize living conditions as far as possible for the civilian population. He ordered aides to offer protection to sutlers seeking to enter the city to sell their wares, especially food and other necessities, to citizens and soldiers. Another directive from his headquarters permitted all flour mills to resume operation, and he promptly posted guards to insure their safety.[11]

During his tenure as military governor of Petersburg, Warren was appalled at the medical treatment offered wounded Confederate soldiers left behind by Lee. Since Warren was not able to get aid for these unfortunates from the Federal medical service, he personally loaned twenty-five dollars /Incidentially, never repaid/ to Miles K. Steuke, a surgeon in the Confederate army, to purchase necessary supplies from sutlers so that he could properly care for his patients.[12]

Even though the heavy fighting had shifted further west, Warren cautioned his small command to stay on guard within the city's defenses because of guerilla activity in the vicinity of Petersburg. Moreover, on his own volition, he sent scouting parties to the Weldon Railroad and along the Boydton Plank Road

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[11]Warren to Colonel Ely, April 4, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

[12]Promissory note signed by Miles K. Steuke, April 5, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

to make sure that the region was effectively cleared of enemy troops.[13]

Warren had scarcely begun his task of returning Petersburg to a state of normalcy when on April 5th he received an order from General John A. Rawlins, Grant's Chief of Staff, which left him once more without a command.[14] Within two days, he complained to Meade:

> Gen. Hartsuff has relieved me of the command along the line you assigned me as far west as Sutherland Station. Genl. Wilcox begins at that point and has acted under Genl. Parke. I have virtually no command except a cavalry picket under Col. Sanders. No order states what troops are under my command.
>
> What do you wish done with the troops under Genl. Benham, and of the dismounted cavalry. Night before last Genl. Rawlins told me to await instructions from Genl. Grant which I have since been doing.[15]

Two days passed before he received a curt reply from Meade's headquarters. "All the troops are ordered from City Point. You must apply for orders to Lt. Genl. Grant."[16]

Realizing that he could expect little active support from Meade, Warren, on April 9th, the very day Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, wrote to Rawlins:

> The order of Maj. Genl. Sheridan taking from me the command of my corps on the evening of the 1st of April after the victory was won, assigns no cause and leaves me open to the inferences now finding expression in the public prints and which are in every way to my prejudice.
>
> I am unconscious of having done anything improper or unbecoming to my position or the character of a soldier or neglected any order or duty. I therefore respect-

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[13]Warren to General H.L. Abbot, April 4, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

[14]O.R., I, 46, III, 585.

[15]Warren to A.S. Webb, April 7, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

[16]A.S. Webb to Warren, April 9, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

> fully request a full investigation of the matter as soon as the exigencies of the service will admit. I make this application now while awaiting orders which I deem the most appropriate time, but I do not intend by it nor desire, to press the matter upon the consideration of the Lieutenant General until he can give it his attention without interfering with more important duties. The consideration already shown me in immediately assigning me another command on the 2d gives me the assurance he will not deem it an intrusion to solicit an opportunity to vindicate the honor and reputation of a faithful soldier of the Union who waits in silence under an unmerited injury till such time as his superior shall be ready to give him a hearing.[17]

When Warren received no response to this request, he sought the aid of influential friends to bring pressure to bear upon General Grant. On April 28th, Senator Edwin Morgan of New York visited Grant on Warren's behalf. Despite the Senator's entreaties, Grant refused to authorize an investigation because of the expense of holding a court of inquiry and the unavailability of witnesses. Expressing no opinion in the controversy, Grant explained that he had not been present at the battle. He would not admit to Morgan that Warren was a competent corps commander, although he conceded that the New Yorker had always been industrious and had the ability and judgment to qualify as a department commander.[18]

As the days passed, Warren grew more despondent. Sensing a growing melancholia in her husband, Emily Warren journeyed from Baltimore to Petersburg to be with him during those difficult days. She readily observed that although he appeared

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[17]Warren to Rawlins, April 9, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 27.

[18]Warren Memo, April 28, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 21.

very quiet and calm about "his affair," he was greatly agitated by what he considered the harsh treatment he had received at the hands of Sheridan.[19]

Throughout the latter part of April, Warren received assurances from high ranking Federal officers that he would be restored to his old command. Although following a policy of keeping "purposely quiet, expecting justice would set me back to my old place without any effort of mine," he was to be disappointed. Neither Grant nor Sheridan were willing to admit that Warren's removal had been a mistake.[20] On May 1st, Emily Warren wrote her father a letter which indicated the feeling of pessimism felt by both her husband and herself. "I do not like to leave the Gen. alone," she observed,

> He is almost crazy sometimes over this affair of his. If they put off doing anything for him so long, I think he might just as well come home and clear himself to the public. I know he intends taking a very strong stand and I think the sooner he commences the better as he will have less idle time to think and become desperate over it. . . . I doubt if they /will/ do anything in the way of advancement for the general anyway but as soon as he gets through this trial he can apply for six months leave of absence. He has pretty much determined to leave the army. He will always be in public life though I feel sure. He is young yet, and some of these men who ride over him will be far below him before long. . . .[21]

Although Warren stood convicted in the eyes of his superiors, his troops had unlimited faith in the justice of

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[19]Emily Warren to A.S. Chase, April 18, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 27.

[20]Warren to William Warren, April 22, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 3.

[21]Emily Warren to A.S. Chase, May 1, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 27.

his cause. As the Fifth Corps returned from Appomattox on its homeward march, General Griffin, Warren's successor as corps commander, allowed the troops to move outside of their assigned route in order that the men, before disbanding, could pay their respects to their former commander. General Warren and his wife reviewed the troops from the steps of the Bolingbroke House. Ten thousand veterans, all that remained of the twenty-eight thousand soldiers who had entered the Wilderness a year earlier, passed by their former commander in parade order. Cheer followed cheer as the impeccably attired and well-drilled regiments led by Crawford, Ayres and Chamberlain marched past him. The climax of the review occurred when Warren's old brigade arrived in front of the Bolingbroke House. Choaked with emotion, the soldiers broke ranks and ran to grasp Warren by the hand. It was with extreme difficulty that the officers were able to force the troops back into ranks to resume the march.[22]

On May 3rd, Warren received orders assigning him to command the Department of the Mississippi.[23] Prior to leaving for Vicksburg, he journeyed to Washington to see Secretary of War Stanton and General Grant. Stating that he had never taken control of army matters in the field, Stanton declined to intercede in Warren's dispute with Sheridan. He

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[22]Under the Maltese Cross from Antietam to Appomattox: Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, pp. 378-379; History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, 118th Pennsylvania Volunteers, p. 601.

[23]O.R., I, 48, I, 8; Vicksburg Daily Herald, letter dated May 11, 1865, Warren Papers, III, 18.

did say, however, that it was his belief that Grant, by giving Warren another important post, had removed from the New Yorker any stigma that his sudden removal from command of the Fifth Corps might have implied.[24]

After leaving the War Department, Warren went to see Grant to receive instructions for conducting operations in Mississippi. Since Grant had no definite guidelines to offer, Warren brought up the question of his application for an official investigation. Responding that a court of inquiry was unnecessary since his appointment to a new post was in itself sufficient to reestablish Warren in public esteem, Grant observed that he had made the appointment entirely on his own, without pressure by any of Warren's friends.[25]

Far from convinced by the logic of Grant's arguments, Warren, in a memo written immediately after the conclusion of his interview, observed:

> I told him I hardly could agree with him, in regard to the effect of my appointment. The implications involved in my being relieved at the close of a battle were of such delicate nature that some positive justification of my conduct there would only be sufficient. . . . In fine I told him that I would sooner have the worst offense they could name set down as the cause /for my removal/ and have it established or not so as to acquit me of all other offenses, than to leave it as unsettled as it was. It was unjust to me to leave it so and would imbitter all my future life and it was also unjust to the public interest to entrust me with an important command while thus tainted in reputation. . . .[26]

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[24]Memorandum of conversation with Secretary Stanton and with General Grant set down right after, May 6, 1865, Warren Papers, X, 35.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

Although Grant remained unmoved by Warren's entreaties, he ultimately yielded to his subordinate's request that he be allowed to publish his application for an investigation, and he also suggested that Sheridan in his official report might indicate that he had erred.[27]

After his meeting with Grant, Warren changed his tact in requesting that his superiors grant him a court of inquiry. Writing to A.S. Chase from Memphis, Tennessee, on May 11th, he noted, "I should be glad now to have all my friends. . . speak out in relation to the matter in any way they please or write anything concerning it they may feel inclined to do or favor me with."[28] He also forwarded a lengthy letter defending his position regarding Five Forks, a document which he instructed his father-in-law to send to the New York Times, New York Herald, Baltimore American, and to as many other newspapers as possible.[29] Clearly, the days of silent waiting were over, and Warren, from this moment on, spent the remaining seventeen years of his life in an attempt to force Sheridan and Grant to concede that they had done him a grave injustice.

After a three days journey from Cairo, Illinois, on the

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[27]Ibid.; O.R., I, 46, III, 1103. Grant in a short note sent to Warren shortly after this interview observed,

> Your note requesting authority to publish your application for an investigation of the grounds upon which you were relieved from the command of the Fifth Army Corps, or to have the investigation, is received. It is impossible at this time to give the court and witnesses necessary for the investigation, but I see nothing in your application which I see objectionable to have published.

[28]Warren to A.S. Chase, May 11, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 27.

[29]Dispatch to Editor of New York Times, May 25, 1865, Warren Papers, III, 18.

packet W.R. Carter on May 14th, Warren arrived at Vicksburg.[30] But he was not a vengeful military governor. Two days later, in a letter to his wife, he outlined his views on reconstruction:

> If the President allows these states to return to the Union under their present Governors and laws he can make I believe any terms with them he wishes, abolition of slavery and all, but if he attempts to upset them and set up anything like the Pierpont Government in Virginia I believe he and all the U.S. officers and all the people of the states will have a perfect pandemonium for some years. If the first is adopted such positions as mine will be unnecessary, and if the second, I shall ask to be relieved on account of my not being equal to the labor. . . .[31]

A firm Republican since the election of Lincoln in 1860, he nevertheless sided with the conservatives regarding the reconstruction of the Southern states. From the first, he was a supporter of leniency and soon after advocated Andrew Johnson's mild plan for restoring the Union.

Warren's chief responsibility as a department commander was to prevent any remaining Confederate soldiers from crossing the Mississippi into Texas. During his brief tenure at Vicksburg, he paroled enemy soldiers willing to surrender, inspected military posts, and made a preliminary survey for the War Department to determine the number of troops necessary to provide for the safety of the department. In this latter endeavor Warren observed that 1,500 troops at Vicksburg and

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[30] O.R., I, 48, I, 8; Warren to William Warren, May 11, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 3.

[31] Warren to Emily Warren, May 16, 1865, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 4. While Warren favored granting lenient terms to the defeated South, other ranking generals including General Sheridan believed that the "rebels" should be made to feel the full weight of a Federal occupation. See James E. Sefton, The United States Army and Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967).

another 1,500 men stationed at Natchez would be sufficient. However, he dryly stated that if the intention of the United States Government was to extend military occupation throughout Mississippi, it would take a large force of cavalry to suppress outlaws and many detachments of infantry to protect interior posts.[32]

In the meantime, the war had virtually ended, and on May 19th, tendering his resignation as a major-general of volunteers, Warren officially requested a leave of absence of thirty days to allow him to attend to his own private affairs. Officially, he stated that he was taking this action because the hot, debilitating climate did not permit him in his present state of exhaustion to carry out adequately his responsibilities as a department commander.[33] Privately, he admitted that his resignation was motivated by his personal dislike for what he feared would be the harsh treatment of former leaders of the Confederacy.[34] Warren wrote to his brother:

> After a full reflection I have sent in my resignation as Major General Volunteers, and I shall perhaps follow it up with my commission in the Engineer Corps.
> I believe I can do this act now with good grace, and without reproach, and it is necessary for my future health, which may now be considered by me, since the dangers of battle are past.[35]

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[32]Warren Court, I, 14; O.R., I, 48, II, 490-491; Warren to Lieutenant Colonel C.T. Christensen, May 18, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24.

[33]Warren to War Department, May 19, 1865, Warren Papers, IX, 24; Warren Court, I, 14.

[34]O.R., I, 48, II, 520. Warren by his disposition could not but be repulsed by a directive he received on May 20th from General Edward Canby which instructed him to suppress self government in his department.

[35]Warren to William Warren, May 19, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 3.

And eight days later, he added, "To-day we receive information that Kirby Smith has surrendered, so the great Sheridan will have nothing to do. I have been expecting him to make some explanation to me for his conduct, but I fear he is too mean to do it. If he does not I shall be even with him some day yet."[36]

The last Confederate troops laid down their arms on June 2nd, when E. Kirby Smith formally surrendered the Department of the Trans-Mississippi to General Edward Canby. Three days later Warren, informed of the acceptance of his resignation as a major-general of volunteers, turned over command of his department to Major General Peter Osterhaus and prepared to take leave.[37] Before leaving Mississippi, he thanked both the officers and men of the Federal army who had served under him, and the citizens of the state for their forbearance during their time of troubles. "I beg leave," he stated,

> to make my acknowledgments to all the officers of this Department, for their cordial assistance during my brief control of it; and, also, to thank the Officers of the Navy and Agents of the Treasury Department, for their polite offers of co-operation.
>
> My best wishes in the future will be for them, and for the civilians of this State, who have shown by their good behavior, during a period when all civil authority was annulled and military authority but imperfectly substituted, a respect for order and right which does them honor.[38]

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[36]Warren to William Warren, May 27, 1865, Warren Papers, I, 3.

[37]Edward Canby to Warren, n.d., Warren Papers, XI, 24; Department of Mississippi, General Order No. 61, June 5, 1865, Warren Papers, XI, 24.

[38]Department of Mississippi, General Order No. 61, June 5, 1865, Warren Papers, XI, 24.

Warren's case was not progressing satisfactorily. While on leave, he received the first inkling of Grant's and Sheridan's charges against him in Grant's report filed with the Secretary of War on July 22, 1865. The Lieutenant-General alleged:

> On the morning of the 31st, [of March] General Warren reported favorably to getting possession of the White Oak road, and was directed to do so. To accomplish this, he moved with one division instead of his whole corps, which was attacked by the enemy in superior force and driven back on the second division before it had time to form, and it in turn forced back upon the third division; when the enemy was checked. A division of the Second Corps was immediately sent to his support, the enemy driven back with heavy loss, and possession of the White Oak road gained . . .

Sheridan's three imputations against Warren appeared in his official report of May 15, 1865, which was published on June 17, 1865 in the Army and Navy Official Gazette. Condemning Warren, Sheridan observed:

> . . . had General Warren moved according to the expectations of the Lieutenant-General, there would appear to have been little chance for the escape of the enemy's infantry in front of Dinwiddie Court House. . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed. . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . During the attack, I again became dissatisfied with General Warren. During the engagement portions of his line gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply from want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire. . . .[39]

At last Warren was confronted with specific charges which he could attempt to refute.

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[39]Warren Court, II, 1545, 1550, 1559-1560; Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, 723-724.

On June 26th, Warren was assigned to duty in New York at the Army Engineer Office, and during the course of an entire year he labored on the preparation of the campaign reports of the Fifth Army Corps while it was under his command.[40] His task was immense; at the close of October he requested the assistance of a clerk and draftsman to aid him. A few days later General Richard Delafield, Chief of Engineers, informed Warren that his request for assistance had been turned down by the Secretary of War. And he instructed the overworked officer to take as much time as necessary to prepare his own notes, maps and illustrations.[41] Warren must have been discouraged by the lack of interest in his problems demonstrated by the War Department, and several friends thought they detected from Warren's remarks a willingness to leave the army if an attractive offer were forthcoming. Consequently, on December 31st, George P. Shrie, an army acquaintance, proposed that the general and himself open a civil engineering firm in New York City. Although Warren must have been tempted by the offer he ultimately decided against it. "[I] didn't see my way clear enough," he stated.[42]

It may be assumed that Warren declined every invitation to return to civilian life because he believed that this action would be a public admission that he had committed some mal-

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[40]Engineer Order No. 6, June 26, 1865, Warren Papers, XI, 27.

[41]Warren to General Richard Delafield, October 30, 1865, Warren Papers, XI, 27; Delafield to Warren, November 4, 1865, Warren Papers, XI, 27.

[42]George P. Shrie to Warren, December 31, 1865, Warren Papers, XV, 76.

feasance during the war and had resigned his regular commission under fire. Moreover, as long as he remained in the army, Warren had ready access to the official reports, dispatches, and maps which he needed to disprove the charges leveled against him.

He did not allow his case to rest. While in New York, despite his heavy labors at the Army Engineer Office, he completed a lengthy pamphlet defending his conduct at the Battle of Five Forks. Utilizing his own meager savings, he arranged for a private printing of 260 copies to be distributed to friends, military officers, governmental officials and influential newspapers.[43] William Warren, residing in Washington and serving as a government clerk, received twenty copies. Under instructions from his brother, he distributed them to sympathetic officeholders in the capital.[44]

Warren's work was well received. A former aide-de-camp in the Fifth Corps, E.B. Cope observed in a letter to Warren

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[43] Five Forks, note on title page of original copy. The annotation on the cover of the draft copy of this pamphlet stated,

> The circumstances under which I was so unfairly placed by the order of Genl Grant, through Genl. Sheridan, at the close of the battle on April 1st 1865, caused me to write this pamphlet. I strove by representing my own conduct in the most modest manner, and by avoiding all criticism on the conduct of others, to obtain a generous consideration for my reputation and feelings on the part of those who had injured me. Thus it happens that the whole account is tame, compared with what truth would allow for and justice demand. . . .

[44] William Warren to Warren, March 8, 1866, Warren Papers, IX, 26.

that even some cavalry officers who had seen the pamphlet believed Sheridan's action was "hasty and uncalled for." Professor D.H. Mahan, an instructor of Military and Civil Engineering at the United States Military Academy presented a hypothesis of innate prejudice. "Sheridan's action both in your case, and in that of /Horatio/ Wright in the Valley, arose from something of that notion among line officers that engineers are not fitted, by their occupations, for command in the field," he wrote.[45] After reading the report, Theodore Lyman observed, "Why Sheridan so treated you I could never understand. I suppose it was a compound of a good many prejudices and dislikes. He is a hot ambitious man; and it is a great pity he could not make up his mind to say, like Perry, 'There is glory enough for us all.'"[46]

Newspapers also commented favorably. Although it was the chief Democratic sheet in New York, the New York World was widely read. On March 8, 1866, it wrote:

> We have received from General Geo. K Warren his report of the battle of Five Forks, with a justification of his conduct on that affair. It will be remembered that on that occasion General Warren was removed from command, and, though he has frequently demanded an inquiry, up to this time the public have no knowledge of the reasons for his removal. He claims he was treated unjustly, and in the pamphlet before us he certainly makes out a very strong case, which his acknowledged bravery and former success as commander of the Fifth corps will go far to strengthen. For the sake of history it might be well if other officers of the army

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[45]E.B. Cope to Warren, April 27, 1866; Professor D.H. Mahan to Warren, April 5, 1866, Warren Papers, IX, 26.

[46]Theodore Lyman to Warren, March 13, 1866, Warren Papers, IX, 26.

> would write as ably and temperately as General Warren has done upon disputed points. Much injustice might be avoided and many new and interesting facts in the record of the great struggle brought to light. The letters which have recently passed between Generals Sheridan /and/ Early are very apt illustrations of just how such works should not be done.[47]

Cheered by the favorable response from many quarters, Warren attempted once more to present to the War Department his application for a court of inquiry. Journeying to Washington, on May 1st he had a private interview with Stanton, who listened patiently to Warren's solicitation and at once said that he should have his investigation. However, Warren's satisfaction was short-lived. The following day the Secretary of War sent for him and told him that there were great difficulties in the way and he had to counsel delay.[48] It would appear that Stanton's resolution had been weakened by Grant, who several weeks earlier had informed Senator Morgan that, "he could not give /Warren/ a hearing without offending Sheridan."[49]

The opposition of Grant and Sheridan to the further advancement of Warren manifested itself in many ways. When brevet ranks in the regular army were to be bestowed upon deserving Civil War officers, John Pope, Irwin McDowell, Joseph A.

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[47] New York World, March 8, /1866/, Warren Papers, IX, 26.

[48] Warren Court, I, 15-16.

[49] Memo on Interview Between Grant and Senator Morgan, u.d., Warren Papers, X, 35.

Mower, Charles R. Woods and sixteen others were recommended to be breveted as major-generals, while Warren and fifty-five others received recommendations for the brevet rank of brigadier-general. Since Sheridan was an influential member of the selection board, it must be assumed that he was partially responsible for the slight of Warren. President Johnson thought fit, however, to revise the list, and Warren was breveted a major-general, United States Army, "for gallant and meritorious service in the field during the rebellion."[50]

The beginning of peace meant a return to normal activities. Although he had not completed his reports, on July 31, 1866, Warren received orders assigning him the task of supervising the official surveys of the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers. He was to determine what improvements were necessary to render the upper reaches of these water-courses safe for navigation, particularly in the region between the Rock Island and Des Moines Rapids. It was hoped that these surveys would be preparatory to the construction of bridges across the Mississippi to facilitate railroad transportation linking the East with the West.[51]

During the last five months of 1866, Warren was kept busily employed collecting information relative to bridging the Mississippi River between St. Paul, Minnesota, and St. Louis, Missouri. Throughout his tenure as chief of engineers on the

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[50]Washington Chronicle, April 25, 1866; House Resolution 6943, December 16, 1882, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[51]Orders for July 31, 1866, Warren Papers, XIV, 65; General Delafield to Warren, August 2, 1866, Warren Papers, XIV, 65; Article in Saint Paul Press, u.d., Warren Papers, XII, 46.

Upper Mississippi, he asserted that the needs of navigation, rather than inexpensive rail transportation was his prime consideration.[52] From personal surveys conducted in 1866 and 1867, he concluded that it was impractical to accomplish the permanent improvement of the Wisconsin River by a system of canals or by rectifying its low and high water channels. He further asserted that the construction of a canal along the banks of the river was the only feasible method of permanent improvement.[53] And during his first year on the Mississippi, Emily Warren had her first child, a boy who all agreed looked like his father. The general and his wife called their son Sydney /Siddy/ in honor of Emily's father, Algernon Sydney Chase.[54]

Warren continued his investigations. Between June and December 1867, he was allocated and spent $40,000 for surveying the Upper Mississippi River System. He noted, "Judging from the lakes yet existing we should infer that these alluvial sands in the bed of the Mississippi must now equal a depth of forty to fifty feet at least. The borings made at Burlington and Quincy showed that the sand extended down about seventy feet, and there rested on a tenacious bluey clay. . ."[55] Under

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[52]Circular on Western Bridges, December 21, 1868, Warren Papers, IV, 3.

[53]Gouverneur K. Warren, Report on the Transportation Route Along the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers in the State of Wisconsin, between the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), pp. 3-4.

[54]Robert Warren to Warren, November 30, 1866, Warren Papers, XII, 46; William Warren to Warren, September 27, 1867, Warren Papers, IX, 28.

[55]Warren to Humphreys, December 11, 1867, Warren Papers, II, 1.

his immediate supervision, dozens of observations were made of the volume of water passing fixed points along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers.[56] Information obtained from these observations and dozens of other tests were necessary for dredging and improving the flow of the Mississippi, an improvement required to make the upper reaches of the river navigable.

Although Warren was kept occupied from sun-up to sundown, he always found time late each evening to write Emily who was living with relatives in New York. "I am still worried about you letting. . . that little boy wear you down so," he noted in one letter. "I am sure a little judicious use of some quieting medicine would make him quiet at night and more wakeful & perhaps troublesome in the day time, but then not injure you so much. . . ."[57]

Even though Warren by the exigencies of the service was far removed from the intrigues of Washington, he was kept informed of developments by his brother. But William judiciously warned:

> Unfortunately at this time everything connected with Sheridan takes a political tone and I suppose any attempt to condemn him would be combatted by the whole Radical party. The Johnson party could make a splendid case against him, by taking up his injustice towards you, and the blind backing up that Grant gave him, . .; and show that he (S.) has continued the same unjust course in New Orleans, and received the same backing up from his superior. But I don't know that the Johnson party taking your part could do you any good.[58]

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[56]General Description of the Mississippi River above the Rock Island Rapids, January 21, 1867, Warren Papers, II, 1.

[57]Warren to Emily Warren, June 9, 1867, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 5.

[58]William Warren to Warren, September 16, 1867, Warren Papers, IX, 28.

The analysis was correct. During the Reconstruction era, Warren's appeals for justice were unfulfilled. Supporting Grant for President in 1868, the Radicals would not listen to pleas for an unbiased hearing; while Johnsonians, ever weaker and facing the impeachment of the President, could do little to help.

In the midst of his surveys during the autumn of 1868, Warren was appointed to a commission created by President Johnson to inspect the Union Pacific Railroad, which at that time had been completed as far as the Green River in Utah, 850 miles from Omaha. Although this new mission suspended other activity, it did not relieve Warren from his duty in connection with the improvement of the Upper Mississippi and its tributaries.[59] The purpose of the Pacific Railroad Commission was to discover if construction of the railroad had been made unnecessarily circuitous in order to gain increased funds from government mileage subsidies.[60]

Warren felt honored by his selection. However, it wrought a personal hardship upon him. During the winters of 1866 and 1867 he had been able to journey from the Mississippi to New York to spend several months with his wife and baby. Accepting the presidential mandate meant that he would not be able to pass the winter of 1868 with his family.

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[59]Warren to Emily Warren, October 6, 1868, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 5.

[60]Article from The Recorder /Cold Spring/; October 6, 1868, Warren Papers, XII, 47.

Leaving Omaha on November 23rd, Warren traveled westward overland towards the Pacific. By February 1869 he was in California, conducting numerous surveys along the western end of the railroad.[61] Until late June, he traveled extensively from California to Utah verifying that the railway was properly constructed. Upon the completion of this assignment he returned to St. Paul in August, only to be immediately dispatched to Rock Island in order to take charge of the planning and construction of a new bridge across the Mississippi.[62] Although he was instrumental in the building of numerous bridges spanning the "Father of Waters," the construction of the Rock Island Bridge was his greatest achievement. "The bridge we are to build here," Warren observed in a letter to A.S. Chase,

> is to replace the present railroad bridge which is greatly in the way of navigation of the river, is in the way of the government arsenal works, and is besides nearly worn out. The arsenal at Rock Island needs a good wagon road bridge across the river for the government's purpose. So there has been a law passed by Congress directing the Sec'y of war to build the new bridge across the main channel of the river both for a railroad and wagon road and appropriating $1000000.00 to do it with. The piers and abutments the government pays the whole of, but the railroad is to pay the government, half what the superstructure or bridge proper costs and take down their present bridge. . . .[63]

The Mississippi was 1,650 feet wide between the Iowa shore and the Federal arsenal on Rock Island. To span this

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[61]Warren to Emily Warren, November 24, 1868, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 5.

[62]Warren to Adjutant General, United States Army, August 9, 1869, Warren Papers, XII, 47.

[63]Warren to A.S. Chase, September 6, 1869, Warren Papers, XII, 47.

distance Warren drew up plans for the erection of a wrought iron superstructure lying on piers of masonry, which rested on piles driven into the limestone bed of the river. His instructions called for a draw-bridge with two openings, allowing a clearance of 160 feet. Other than this requirement, he was directed to make the best bridge he could for the price of one million dollars. Because of this requirement, he was forced to utilize wooden floorings for both the wagon-way and railroad bed instead of a more durable material.[64] Although he took great pride in the construction of the Rock Island Bridge, ill health was to intervene before this crossing was finally completed.

Warren's accomplishments on the Mississippi were remarkable. When he was assigned in 1866 to survey possible sites for the bridging of the river, there was not a single authorized bridge between St. Paul and St. Louis. Largely through his efforts, by 1878 there were eleven crossings linking the eastern and western banks.[65] By 1870 he was without dispute the foremost expert in America on bridging the Mississippi. "Cheap transportation, the great want of the Mississippi Basin," he advised in his official report, "can only be secured by the barge system, requiring wide openings between the piers, which

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[64] Ibid.; Gouverneur K. Warren, Report of Bridging the Mississippi River Between Saint Paul, Minnesota, and St. Louis, Missouri (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1878), pp. 997, 1001-1002.

[65] Ibid., pp. 961-1028 passim. Warren's name was associated with the surveys and plans for the Quincy Railway Draw-Bridge, Prairie Du Chien Pontoon Railway Bridge, and the La Crosse Railway Bridge.

low draw-bridges, such as now constructed, cannot give. . . ." Moreover, he noted, ". . . that high bridges with wide spans are the only kind that will with certainty accommodate the railroads, and at the same time preserve the navigation."[66]

Throughout his tenure on the Mississippi, Warren often had monetary difficulties. Totally dependent upon his salary, he had to borrow from relatives and renew loans to meet mortgage payments on the family property at Cold Spring. His financial problems were further accentuated by Congressional propositions to reduce army officers' annual pay by a reduction of $1,000. As he readily conceded, "Of course I cannot stand that long, and I want to have my affairs /in order/ in view of quitting the service and trying something else."[67] Fortunately Congress finally decided against the reduction.

Bitter weather, over-work, and brooding over the injustice done to him by Sheridan, all had a debilitating effect on his frail constitution. Writing Emily from St. Paul on February 22, 1870, he admitted:

> I am about the same as yesterday, comfortable but very weak & no appetite. I hardly have strength to dress myself, and have not done it to-day. I lie half dressed on a lounge writing a few letters.
> Genl. Humphreys /Chief of Engineers/ writes me as if he thought a change to the Lakes would have been very agreeable to me. He was surprised to hear me say I preferred a quiet little work in New York, where I could live at home on my pay and take some rest. He fears I have been overworked. If I am who put the work on me. Why was last summer's work and the R.I. bridge

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[66] Ibid., pp. 908-909.

[67] Warren to A.S. Chase, December 18, 1869, Warren Papers, XII, 47; Warren to Chase, January 19, 1870, Warren Papers, XII, 48.

added. It was a load itself so I won't say it was the feather that broke the camel's back.[68]

All during the early months of 1870, Warren suffered from indigestion; in addition, acute pains in his chest could be eased only by administering morphine periodically. A two month sojurn in Washington to confer with General Humphreys about the Rock Island Bridge did not alleviate his discomfort.[69] Shocked by Warren's drawn appearance, the Chief of Engineers decided to relieve his subordinate of his responsibilities on the Mississippi. Consequently, on May 3rd, Warren was ordered to proceed to Newport, Rhode Island, to assume command of government works along the coast of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.[70]

A change of station did not bring relief from work. Shortly after Warren assumed command of the district, Congress appropriated large sums of money for surveys and harbor improvements for coastal New England.[71] With the aid of several capable assistants, Warren made a thorough reconnaissance of the Connecticut River between Hartford and Holyoke with a view to improving navigation. After a thorough study, he determined that the channel of the river could be deepened.

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[68]Warren to Emily Warren, February 22, 1870, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 6.

[69]Warren to Emily Warren, January 27, 1870 and February 2, 1870, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 6; Warren to Adjutant General, United States Army, April 30, 1870, Warren Papers, XII, 48.

[70]Army Orders, May 3, 1870, Warren Papers, IV, 1; Humphreys to Warren, December 14, 1871, Warren Papers, XI, 40.

[71]Abbot, Memoir of Gouverneur Kemble Warren, n.p.

The removal of obstacles would permit navigation of the Connecticut River as far north as Springfield. This would enable vessels navigating Long Island Sound to proceed directly to Springfield, thereby avoiding the transshipment of goods by land from Hartford.[72] In addition, while on duty in New England, Warren supervised the repairs of the fortifications of New Bedford, Massachusetts, Narragansett Bay, and Newport.. And his efforts brought about construction of the Block Island Breakwater.[73]

But there was more work to be done. The War Department assigned the general to duties above and beyond those required to administer his department. In 1870 he sat on boards concerned with bridging the Ohio River and the construction of a bridge over the Niagara at Buffalo, New York. The following year, Warren participated in the completion of plans for the alteration of the Cincinnati and Newport Bridges over the Ohio, and the improvement of the harbors of Saint Louis and Alton, Illinois. And in 1874 he served as president of a special commission on the reclamation of the alluvial basin of the lower Mississippi. In 1876, he was appointed to a board concerned with bridges over the Upper Mississippi and in 1878, to a panel formed to study the improvement of the Mississippi River from the Falls of Saint Anthony to the Rock Island Rapids.

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[72]Gouverneur K. Warren, Report of the Surveys and Examinations of the Connecticut River between Hartford, Connecticut, and Holyoke, Massachusetts, Made Since 1867 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), pp. 17, 42.

[73]House Resolution 6943, December 16, 1882, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

During this decade Warren also made surveys of the battlefields of Gettysburg and Manassas, and prepared campaign maps illustrating the campaign leading to the Second Battle of Bull Run to be used at the Fitz-John Porter court of inquiry.[74]

Despite these many official responsibilities, Warren found time to refute an article in the North American Review for July 1875, which alleged that because of relative inaction on the part of officers of the United States Army, America had failed to keep pace with the remainder of the world in the matter of topographical surveys. Contending that army officers were pioneer explorers in unexplored regions, Warren observed that they had participated in land surveys to lay out land for sale to the public; that through the efforts of the Engineer Corps, international boundary surveys had been conducted, harbor and river improvements undertaken, and extensive surveys made for the construction of roads, canals, and the railroads. He further contended with some personal pride that, "Lieutenant Warren, Topographical Engineers, examined, in 1855 - 56 - 57, several routes leading from the Missouri River westward, and called attention to the present route of the Northern Pacific railroad."[75]

The decade of the 1870's was an era of both personal happiness and deep sorrow for General Warren. A second child, a girl, was born during this period and named Emily after her

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[74]Abbot, Memoir of Gouverneur Kemble Warren, n.p.; House Resolution 6943, December 16, 1882, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 3.

[75]Gouverneur K. Warren, Geographical Surveys in the United States, (Washington: Judd & Detweiler, 1877), pp. 3, 7-9, 24.

mother. Little Emily was Warren's pride and joy, and often the general would steal moments from his work to walk around the family home in Newport with his infant daughter on his shoulder.[76] However, his son, always mischievous, often involved his father as a result of youthful escapades. On one occasion Siddy came home with a bloody nose, the result of his fight with an older boy. Immediately, Warren wrote the offending youth's father a note:

> Ill feeling from some cause having been excited in your son about 13 years old against my boy two years younger, my boy was waylaid by yours this morning near Spring St. [Newport] and struck across the face so as to make his nose bleed, and caused him to turn back from school to have the blood washed from him at home.
>
> Without taking any harsh course, I wish to endeavor to prevent such occurances by the exercise of parental discipline and instruction. I will punish my boy if informed that he does anything wrong to another boy smaller than himself, or offends larger boys who are not intruding upon him. Boys should be taught that they have no right to take such matters in their own hands, any more than men have and I hope you will caution him against so doing again.[77]

Responding in a friendly note, the offending boy's father observed that young Warren had thrown water on the older boy and had taunted him by calling him "red head". He gave assurances that his son would not strike Warren's boy again under any provocation, and the general reprimanded his son for inciting the incident.[78]

But throughout the 1870's Warren knew many moments of

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[76]Emily Warren to Aurestus Perham, November 14, 1922, Perham Papers, Box 1.

[77]Warren to Ben Palmer, December 3, 1877, Warren Papers, XIII, 54.

[78]Ibid.

deep personal sorrow. His mother fell ill, and after lingering on the point of death for several weeks, she finally died at the close of December, 1870.[79] During the decade both Gouverneur Kemble and Algernon S. Chase died.[80] While Warren grieved at the loss of these relatives and friends, the blow he felt most deeply was the death of his thirty year old brother, Lieutenant Robert Warren, at Camp Douglass, Salt Lake City, on January 23, 1876.[81] Although Robert had succumbed to apoplexy, Warren felt pangs of guilt since it had been he who in 1861 had introduced his then fifteen year old brother to army life, and who in the post-Civil War period, against his better judgment, had requested and received a commission for him in the United States Army.

Aside from personal tragedies, Warren still brooded about his unresolved quarrel with the army. As a matter of course, in the years following the Civil War, he declined membership in most military societies and associations. Invariably, he refused to attend Grand Army of the Republic reunions on the excuse that the press of official duties prevented him from attending such functions.[82] It was well known by intimates, however, that he considered that such meetings were for soldiers with untarnished records, and that

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[79]Warren to A.S. Chase, December 14, 1870, Warren Papers, XII, 48; Humphreys to Warren, December 28, 1870, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 13.

[80]Warren to Gouverneur Pauling, September 19, 1875, Warren Papers, XII, 50; William Warren to Warren, June 13, 1878, Warren Papers, XIII, 62.

[81]Obituary Notice, u.d., Warren Papers, II, 4.

[82]Memo on Societies, Warren Papers, XV, 76.

he was still under the stigma of removal from the command of the Fifth Corps while on the field at Five Forks. On several occasions, however, Warren discovered that he could not escape the attentions of the men who had served under him. In 1866, the veterans of the Fifth New York Volunteer Association elected him president of their fraternal organization.[83] A decade later he received a singular honor from the veterans of the Thirty-Ninth Massachusetts Regiment. On October 7, 1875, The Boston Advertiser reported:

> The annual reunion of the Thirty-ninth Regiment Association and reception of Major-General G.R. Warren /sic/ formerly commander of the fifth corps, to which the regiment was attached, took place yesterday in Woburn. . . .
>
> About 200 of the members, accompanied by General Warren, left this city /Boston/ in the morning for Woburn. . . . The procession then marched to the armory on Common street. During the passage of the procession the bells were rung, salutes fired, while the streets were thronged with people in holiday attire. A number of the public buildings and private residences of the town were finely decorated with flags

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[83]Report of the Fifth New York Volunteer Association 1866, Warren Papers, XIII, 63; Warren to Chamberlain, June 11, 1881, Warren Papers, XV, 78. In a letter to Chamberlain sent on June 11, 1881, Warren noted:

> I was much pleased to receive your letter of invitation to the proposed reunion in Maine next August. I will certainly come if I am physically able. I have almost altogether refrained from attending reunions, because Genl Grant at the close of the war most unjustly left me under a cloud, which I have felt it my duty to dispel if possible, before the regular courts provided by our laws for such purposes.
>
> Reunions should be composed of men of unquestioned worth in the war, - of which you are the type -, not of scheming managers of political investments, nor of controversialists like myself, forced by others to be so. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> This trial - so hard upon me in my case -, I have sought, waited for, endured. Out of it, I come a full man again before my country men, and while I have life hereafter, as an opportunity, I shall not fail to respond to any invitation to meet my fellow citizens. . . .

and bunting.

> A business meeting of the association was held at the Mechanic Phalanx armory, . . . At the conclusion of the meeting General Warren entered the armory and was received with great applause by the comrades, who presented him with a gold corps badge, which is in the form of a Maltese cross and of beautiful workmanship. The presentation was made by Lieutenant Charles Porter, and received by General Warren in a few remarks, in which he spoke in very complimentary terms of the record of the regiment while under his command.[84]

At another reunion held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Warren was able to achieve a particle of personal satisfaction at Sheridan's expense. Addressing a meeting of Ninth Army Corps veterans, Sheridan bitterly spoke out against allowing members of Longstreet's Confederate Corps from participating with Federal veterans in future reunions. Sheridan's speech was not well received. As he concluded, Warren arrived in the hall and his entrance brought forth a tumultuous applause. And when Warren attempted to take a seat in the hall, a number of soldiers carried him bodily to the platform where the general officers were seated. In this manner the men in the ranks demonstrated their high regard for an officer who had, on countless occasions, exhibited both personal valor in battle and a high regard for the safety and well-being of his troops.[85] At least one sergeant named his son after the general.[86]

Warren was not the only officer whose unresolved case caused controversy after the war. All during the 1870's

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[84]Boston Advertiser, October 7, 1875.

[85]New York Times, May 17, 1879, Warren Papers, I, 20.

[86]Joseph M. Cargo to Warren, June 10, 1879, Warren Papers, IX, 28.

Warren had corresponded with Fitz-John Porter, who had been court-martialed and cashiered from the service after Second Bull Run, for "disobedience, disloyalty, and misconduct in the face of the enemy." Believing Porter innocent of any wrongdoing, Warren pledged him support to substantiate his contention that he was unjustly convicted.[87] Summoned to West Point to testify in Porter's behalf on July 8, 1878, Warren observed that the general was justified in not carrying out Pope's order to advance, because to do so would have led to the annihilation of his command. According to Warren, prudence dictated caution; if Porter would have followed Pope's directives at Manassas, Confederate troops masked by a thicket would have fallen on the Fifth Corps flank and killed or captured the entire Federal force.[88] His evidence contributed materially to the decision of the court to reverse Porter's conviction, although some tried to impune the purity of his testimony. As one former soldier remarked, "A fellow feeling makes us wonderous kind."[89]

But despite the jibes of detractors, Warren's spirits were buoyed by Porter's vindication. Knowing that Porter after fifteen years had been given an opportunity to substantiate his long asserted innocence he, Warren, reassessed his own chances for vindication. To him, too, justice could not be permanently denied.

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[87]Article cut from a Norfolk, Virginia newspaper, June 1878, Warren Papers, XIII, 59. In June, 1878, Warren traveled to Manassas to conduct a survey necessary for the presentation of an accurate map needed for the reopening of the Porter Case.

[88]New York Herald, July 8, 1878.

[89]New York Times, July 24, 1878.

CHAPTER XIV

COURT OF INQUIRY

Warren's prospects of vindication were indeed becoming brighter. Grant had left the White House; his successor had no reason to deny a hearing. When on November 21, 1879, Warren saw President Rutherford B. Hayes, the President promised that he would turn his attention to the general's request for a court of inquiry.[1] On December 9th, the Adjutant General's Office issued an order:

> On the application of Lieutenant Colonel Gouverneur K. Warren, Corps of Engineers, (late Major General of Volunteers), a Court of Inquiry is hereby appointed to assemble at Governor's Island, New York Harbor, on the 11th day of December, 1879, or as soon thereafter as practicable, for the purpose of inquiring into Lieutenant Colonel Warren's conduct as Major General, commanding the 5th Army Corps at the battle of Five Forks, Virginia, on April 1, 1865, and into the operations of his command on that day and the day previous, as far as they relate to his, Lieutenant Colonel Warren's conduct, or to imputations or accusations against him.
>
> The Court will consist of the following three members:
>
> Major General W.S. Hancock, U.S. Army
> Brigadier General C.C. Augur, U.S. Army
> Colonel L.B. Tower, Corps of Engineers[2]

Upon receipt of this long awaited directive, Warren sought and received permission to travel to the battlefield of Five

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[1]Warren to Emily Warren, November 21, 1879, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, I, 8.

[2]Adjutant General's Office, Special Orders No. 277, December 9, 1879, Warren Papers, IV, 1. The first meeting of the court of inquiry was held on December 11, 1879, from which day it adjourned until January 5, 1880. When the court met on the latter date, General John Newton had replaced Colonel Tower on the Court.

Forks to obtain topographical information, to verify the accuracy of existing maps and to substantiate the exact position of troops and movement of units engaged in the battle.[3] He spent the latter part of December riding back and forth across the battlefield, gathering data which he thought would prove of value in clearing his name and reputation. Returning to New York City during the first week of January, he took residence at the Stevens House on Broadway. This hotel was to be his home for the many weeks that the court heard testimony in the ensuing months.

After several days were spent in discussing precedural matters, the court of inquiry met for its first working session on January 8, 1880, in the large trial room in the barracks on Governor's Island. General Hancock, president of the court, dressed in full uniform with a yellow sash across his breast, sat in the middle seat at the Judge's table, flanked by General Newton on his right and General Augur on his left. At a table a few feet away Warren had his attention closely drawn to a pile of manuscripts and maps relating to his case.[4]

Much time was taken by the stenographer in reading the official copy of General Sheridan's Report of the Battle of Five Forks. Looking up from his documents after the reading was completed, Warren addressed Hancock requesting that Sheridan be summoned as a witness before he, Warren, attempted to respond

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[3]Warren to Adjutant General, December 15, 1879, Warren Papers, X, 33.

[4]New York Times, January 8, 1880.

to the charges. Hancock replied that Sheridan was absent on three months' sick leave which could not be curtailed. When Warren insisted that Sheridan be brought before the court Hancock, after a consultation with his associates, announced that he was adjourning the inquiry until Sheridan's presence could be assured.[5] In great annoyance, Warren wrote to his wife:

> To-day begins my 51st year. The 15 years are nearly up that I said I had left to work in, in my letter to you after the Battle of Five Forks in April 1865, and still I am fighting the same battle over again. . . . As long as there is an unwarranted imputation against me I never will cease to strive while I live, so that no reproach can be made when I am gone, that I tamely acquiesced or submitted.[6]

In the interim before the reconvening of the court of inquiry Warren returned to Newport to attend to his official engineering duties. During these months he retained a lawyer, Albert Stickney of New York, to advise him in the preparation of his case. In his frequent correspondence with Stickney, he observed that he was working assiduously everyday to prepare material for the court by duplicating maps, gathering official reports, and reproducing in his own mind and on paper the movements of the various units engaged in the Battle of Five Forks.[7]

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[5] Ibid.; Warren Court, I, 9.

[6] Warren to Emily Warren, January 8, 1880, Warren Papers, X, 30.

[7] Warren to Alexander Ramsey, June 18, 1880, Warren Papers, X, 33; Warren to Albert Stickney, January 27, 1880, Warren Papers, I, 4. Although Stickney volunteered his services without fee, Warren realized that his case would take up much of the lawyer's time and he therefore insisted upon paying him. His gesture, though magnanimous, further depleted his already limited resources.

When the court of inquiry resumed daily sessions in early May, Sheridan appeared as its first witness. At first, he seemed reluctant to offer evidence. "It is a pretty painful thing to antagonize old soldiers," he observed. "This is the most painful thing I ever had in my life, going through this inquiry. I am not only antagonizing myself, but will antagonize /many other/ officers before we get through. . . ."[8] However, Sheridan, never known to be silent on controversial questions, early in his testimony made statements which created ill-will among the veterans of the Fifth Corps. By observing that the cavalry, with the aid of Ayres' division, had won the Battle of Five Forks while "the others /Crawford's and Griffin's divisions/ didn't get in in time," he did little to win for him the approbation of the infantrymen who had followed Warren across the Gillium Field.[9] Relying upon memory because his original papers had been destroyed in a fire, the witness could not recall many important details of the engagement and was contradictory in his answers. On at least one occasion he made a statement that was so blatently false that it appeared ludicrous to those who heard it. Upon being questioned by Stickney whether Warren should have completed his march down the Boydton Plank Road according to Grant's expectations, Sheridan replied that in 1858 or 1859 in Oregon, he had marched infantry at a rate of five miles per hour for more than twelve

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[8] Warren Court, I, 118.

[9] Ibid.

hours. Under further questioning he conceded that his troops had sustained that pace for only a short period of time.[10] Then, when queried about Warren's slowness in carrying out orders, Sheridan observed:

> My dissatisfaction with the non-arrival of General Warren's command with promptness was in proportion to the urgency of the occasion as I regarded it. So it was with the slowness of the formation of his corps before the battle of Five Forks, and so it was with General Warren's part in the battle itself.
> I do not pretend that I judged of these things by an ordinary standard. I felt that a great opportunity had arisen, and besides I had to realize as well as I could the expectations of the Lieut. General. I judged by this standard of conditions as well as duty and without prejudice. General Warren in my opinion fell far short of the occasion and what it required.[11]

For the first time after fifteen years, the truth was out. Sheridan by his own evidence admitted that the paramount purpose he had to fulfill during the Five Forks Campaign was "the expectations of the Lieut. General." It would appear that these "expectations" included the removal of the commander of the Fifth Corps.[12]

One of the major conflicts which grew out of the inquiry was concerned with Warren's request that ex-Confederate officers be called to testify to prove the strength of enemy forces along the Southern battle line at Five Forks. Major Asa Bird Gardner, counsel for Sheridan, told the court that

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[10] Ibid., I, 57, 60-62, 67, 72, 85; New York Sun, May 6, 1880.

[11] Sheridan Statement to Warren's Court of Inquiry, Sheridan Papers, Volume 94.

[12] Warren Court, I, 139. When Sheridan was questioned whether he would have relieved Warren if authority had not been sent to him by General Grant, he responded, "I would have no right to do it. It required authority."

"he hoped that no ex-Rebel officers would be summoned to testify in the little family trouble of Federal officers."[13] A firm supporter of Radical Reconstruction, General Sheridan was infuriated when informed that "Rebs" might be permitted to present evidence.[14] On the other hand, Warren, looking forward toward a reconciliation of the sections, favored a healing of the old wounds. Writing to General Montgomery D. Corse, he observed,

> There are great changes coming over the public mind, and I am sure now that every reasonable northern man will not only acknowledge the equal rights of his conquered southern brother in the recent conflict, but be proud of him as a fellow countryman, so that there will be no humiliation in each other's parade day boastings. No reasonable man ever would disparage the foe he fought. We have sharpened our swords each with the other. Now let some third party try us.[15]

General Hancock ruled that Confederate officers could testify. Invariably, the Southerners gave evidence which greatly favored Warren. Writing to Fitzhugh Lee, a few days after he had testified before the Warren Court, General Thomas L. Rosser observed,

> Your version of the Five Forks affair agrees with my recollection of it, almost entirely. The rapid advance of the enemy's Infantry and his sharp and vigorous attack, I shall never forget.
>
> From the beginning to the close of the engagement, I confronted nothing but Infantry, and if there was a cavalryman in my front at all, he was well concealed behind the Infantry. ... .
>
> I have always believed that Genl. Warren contributed more largely to the Federal victory at Five Forks than

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[13] New York Tribune, May 22, 1880.

[14] Sheridan to Colonel Michael Sheridan, May 28, 1880, Sheridan Papers, Volume 26.

[15] Warren to General Corse, July 4, 1880, Warren Papers, XII, 37.

> any other soldier engaged in it, and there is no doubt in my mind that Sheridan's attack on him was the result of jealousy.[16]

Testimony offered thus far in the investigation materially favored Warren. H.L. Richardson, the regimental commander whose prompt action at Five Forks had saved Warren's life, was greatly encouraged and in a letter written to the general observed, "I congratulate you on your successful investigation thus far, the old fifth Corps is still to the front, and sheridan with hat in hand! must go to the rear. /W/ould to God, you had been nominated for the Presidency instead of Hancock, for the old Maltese cross, with the combination 1st Corps lives with you always. . . ."[17]

On June 29th, Hancock, the nominee of the Democratic Party for the Presidency of the United States, was relieved from duty on the court of inquiry. Shortly thereafter, General C.C. Augur adjourned the court for three months to permit the recorder to finish transcribing his notes.[18] When the court reconvened on October 1st at the Army Building in New York City, Asa Bird Gardner, counsel for Sheridan, prepared to call a number of officers to testify in behalf of his client. One of the first summoned was General Grant whom Warren considered after Sheridan his most bitter enemy. Writing to a personal

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[16]General Rosser to General Fitzhugh Lee, August 1, 1880, Warren Papers, XI, 37. Undoubtedly, there were bitter feelings among Southern veterans against Sheridan because of his harsh treatment of the prostrate South during the Reconstruction era. However, there is no evidence to indicate that any Confederate officer lied in presenting evidence before the Warren Court of Inquiry.

[17]H.L. Richardson to Warren, June 30, 1880, Warren Papers, X, 31.

[18]Warren Court, I, 682.

friend, Dr. R.H. Kealhofer, during that summer, the general had observed:

> It was very kind of you to write your note rejoicing with me over the end of Grantism. I trust it is the end of it in our day. I think I always believed Grant would be played out some day, but often had to say 'How long oh Lord; how long!'
> I hate the man, for his slaughter of my friends - fellow soldier patriots - in the war. I hate him for his outrageous treatment of myself and other individuals. I hate him for the blush of shame which as President he brought to the cheeks of every honest American who knew his corrupt deeds and associations.[19]

Taking the stand on October 23rd, Grant testified that he had expected to make the Battle of Five Forks the last major engagement of the war, and believed that Warren, at the critical moment would probably fail Sheridan. He further noted that "the authority /to remove Warren/ was not sent to General Sheridan in consequence of any report that was brought to me - It was simply that I knew General Warren's defects."[20] During the latter part of his testimony, Grant readily admitted Warren's bravery and spoke kindly about the New Yorker's qualities as a soldier. When pressed on this point by Stickney, however, he insisted that Warren did not obey instructions with sufficient promptness, and that he stopped to mull over orders too long before carrying them out.[21] Grant's evidence before the court of inquiry was not enlightening and did little to clarify the issues in dispute.

To refute Grant's contentions that Warren did not act

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[19]Warren to Dr. R. H. Kealhofer, June 15, 1880, Warren Papers, X, 31.

[20]Warren Court, II, 1030.

[21]New York Times, October 24, 1880.

with all deliberate speed to reinforce Sheridan, Stickney called further witnesses to verify his contention that the former Fifth Corps commander had done all in his power to reach Sheridan at the earliest possible moment during the morning of April 1, 1865. Many Fifth Corps officers affirmed that not a minute had been wasted by Warren in pushing the infantry toward Dinwiddie Court House. Moreover, they observed that his orders to subordinates had been most emphatic about the necessity of reaching the cavalry at the earliest possible moment.[22] It was further established that when the Fifth Corps commander had first encountered Sheridan at the latter's headquarters near Dinwiddie, the cavalry commander had displayed no sign of impatience for the "late arrival" of the Fifth Corps.[23] In fact, many lower grade officers noted that the cavalry divisions had barely been holding their positions, and the horse soldiers had been very happy to see the arrival of the tired infantrymen.[24]

Supporters of Sheridan in their testimony blamed Warren for the confusion in the ranks of the infantry after Crawford's and Griffin's commands had missed the Confederate return during their attack late on the afternoon of April 1st. Under examination, Warren conceded that he had sketched a faulty map of the Confederate line and had supplied a copy to each of

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[22]Warren Court, I, 260, 268.

[23]Ibid., I, 741-742.

[24]Ibid., II, 813-814.

his division commanders; he contended, however, that the map had been inaccurate because of erroneous information supplied to him by Sheridan. Moreover, he insisted that the cavalry commander had approved the map before he had issued it to his subordinates.[25] Clearly, the blame for the miscalculation in determining the position of the Confederate left flank rested with Sheridan, who had not bothered to reconnoiter the enemy's lines. Attempting to refute this dangerous testimony which cast a shadow upon Sheridan's competence at Five Forks, Gardner called several witnesses who avowed that during the afternoon of April 1st, Warren had not appeared concerned with attacking the enemy's positions. General Francis T. Sherman, Inspector General of the Middle Cavalry Division, observed:

> General Sheridan, about 3 and 4 p.m. of April 1, directed me to proceed to General Warren with a message, the purport of which was that he should put his corps in position and attack at once. I found General Warren dismounted and sitting at the foot of a tree, with a memorandum or field book in his hand. I rode up, dismounted, saluted General Warren and delivered the message. General Warren took no notice of my salute nor the message which I gave him. Thinking he might possibly not have heard, I repeated it. General Warren then failed to recognize me as a staff officer, or the message I bore him.[26]

Testifying that he reported this encounter to Sheridan who went to see Warren and found him in the same position as before, Sherman asserted that it was Sheridan not Warren who finally put the Fifth Corps into motion.[27]

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[25] Ibid., II, 1377.

[26] Ibid., II, 856.

[27] Ibid., II, 856-857.

Warren was greatly agitated by Gardner's attempt to impugn his personal courage. Writing to Stickney during one of the many adjournments, he noted:

> Gardner disavowed questioning my courage, but he is making all the insinuations in that way that he can, it seems to me. I am sensitive about it. A soldier's reputation for courage must be like Caesar's wife for virtue. It is the unpardonable offense, and it is base to even insinuate a charge of it, without sufficient cause.[28]

Attempting to refute testimony presented by Sherman and other cavalry officers, Stickney called several of Warren's subordinates as witnesses. General Chamberlain described his former corps commander as an earnest man who gave the appearance of being lethargic, but whose entire being was "intense" during moments of stress.[29] Moreover, W.H. Benyaurd informed the court that Sherman must have mistaken the identity of the officer under the tree. He noted that, except for five or ten minutes, he had not left the side of General Warren during the afternoon of April 1st, and at no time had he seen Warren sitting under a tree.[30]

Sheridan's most damaging imputation was his charge that Warren had hoped "that the sun would go down" before he had to fight Pickett. This innuendo of cowardice was refuted by a great number of line and staff officers who affirmed that Warren had spent the hours immediately before the Battle of Five Forks preparing his troops for combat and moving them up,

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[28]Warren to Stickney, September 18, 1880, Warren Papers, I, 4.

[29]Warren Court, II, 1084.

[30]Ibid., II, 1126-1127.

as quickly as possible, to a position near the Confederate entrenchments.[31] Apparently Sheridan had not been overly concerned with the "slowness" of the Fifth Corps commander until after Warren had won the Battle of Five Forks.

After hearing evidence for eighty-six days, the court adjourned on November 22, 1880 for the purpose of perfecting the record and having it printed before counsels for plaintiff and respondent made their final summations.[32] The months of waiting and inaction which followed passed slowly for Warren. His constitution, never strong, was further weakened by the strain of preparing notes for the summation, and nervous tensions which had manifested themselves during the months that the court was in recess grew worse because of financial worries brought about by the need to borrow money to defray the expenses of the investigation.[33] Although Stickney had not desired to mention money to Warren, at least until after the case was completed, he found his expenses high, and on occasions he requested that the general pay a portion of what he owed. On December 1, 1880, he had asked for $500. Warren only managed to meet this request by sending a check for $200,

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[31] Ibid., I, 338-339, 572.

[32] Ibid., II, 1235.

[33] Warren to Stickney, October 21, 1880, Warren Papers, XI, 38; Warren to Major Eugene M. Baker, November 23, 1880, Warren Papers, X, 32. In his letter to Baker, Warren observed, "The fifteen dollars ($15) I temporarily loaned you on October 8th ultimo, you promised to return to me in a few days. I hope you will not let it pass out of your memory. I need it, for I have no means but my pay, and my expenses are very heavy upon me."

a part of his November pay, and by borrowing $300 from his sister, Emily Roebling.[34]

Warren's mental anguish was compounded during the months of adjournment by the constant derogatory articles published in the pro-Sheridan press. In an article titled, "A Useless Inquiry," the army and navy edition of The Sunday Herald on July 24, 1881 noted:

> It will be remembered that when the Warren Court of Inquiry was first convened we pointed out the useless, and, indeed, the pernicious character of such investigations, especially after so long a period has been suffered to elapse since the events in controversy. We are therefore glad to see that Major Gardner has given prominence to this view, for about the only good that can possibly flow from this costly inquiry will be to show what sensible men knew first - that it never ought to have been entered upon.[35]

On the next day, Albert Stickney began his argument in summing up the case for the plantiff. He was eloquent in his plea. "In judging General Warren's acts," he stated,

> certain general considerations, we submit, should be borne in mind.
>
> General Warren should, undoubtedly, be held to a very high standard, to the highest standards of his profession, both as to capacity and acquirements. That is his own wish. He does not come here to make excuses.
>
> At the same time, it is to be borne in mind, that a corps commander is something more than a mere conduit pipe to his subordinates for the order of his superiors. . . . He must oftentime use a wide discretion. The operations of the corps commander are often carried out beyond the immediate personal observation of the commander of the army. . . . Situations, too, change from hour to hour, or it may be in a minute, so that it becomes impossible to make reports and to receive fresh commands in season to meet pressing emergencies.

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[34]Stickney to Warren, November 30, 1880, Warren Papers, XI, 38. Stickney, as early as March 1880, estimated that his fee for an extended case would be $2,000 or $2,500.

[35]The Sunday Herald, July 24, 1881, Sheridan Papers, Volume 94.

> In such cases the corps commander is required to use his own judgment; unless he does so, he fails in his duty to his superiors. . . .[36]

Upon completion of this introductory statement, Stickney presented an elaborate brief in which he considered the charges and imputations against General Warren, elaborated on the facts pertinent to the engagements of March 31st and April 1st, 1865, and examined Warren's personal conduct during the two days covered by the investigation of the court of inquiry.[37] In conclusion, he observed:

> Now, sixteen years have passed since the imputations were made against General Warren's military reputation. For an assassin who takes human life the whole civilized world has the deepest condemnation. For a man who kills reputations, they have the most thorough contempt; and the Constitution of the United States and the Articles of War give to a soldier whose reputation is assailed a proper and sufficient protection. It would be a sad day for the United States Army, if it should ever come, when a soldier's reputation could not have this full and sufficient safeguard; and if the day should ever come, when a soldier could not appeal to a military court for full and complete protection, on that day the United States Army had better pass out of existence, for its days of usefulness will have been numbered.[38]

After Stickney concluded his argument, Gardner began his plea in behalf of the respondent. Filling more than 125 pages of the official record, his lengthy presentation was an elaborate attack upon Warren's handling of the Fifth Corps during the engagement of the White Oak Road, in the night march to reinforce Sheridan, and in the movement to assault Pickett's lines at Five Forks. He accused Warren of committing

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[36] Warren Court, II, 1340.

[37] New York Tribune, July 26, 1881.

[38] Warren Court, II, 1409.

his troops piecemeal into battle on March 31st, blundering in making dispositions to march his command to Dinwiddie Court House during the evening after this engagement, and permitting his command to waste the better part of April 1st by his dilatory behavior.[39] After Gardner had completed his brief, the court adjourned to deliberate on the evidence presented, make up its reports on the facts and opinions given, and ultimately, to present its own opinions on the inquiry to the War Department and the President of the United States.

Although moderate elements within the army had hoped that an airing of grievances in the Warren case would facilitate a reconciliation between the supporters of Warren and Sheridan, the breach was widened by public and private statements made by the principals in the dispute and their avid supporters. In a letter to G.M. Barnard, Secretary of the Somerset Club, Warren bitterly asserted, "Gardner's so called argument is a violent unreasonable attack upon me generally; much of it about matters not before the Court. . . . If thought worth while, Gardner's slanders will receive attention at some future time."[40] Writing to Sheridan, Senator John A. Logan was equally acrid in his denunciation of Warren and the latter's demand for a court of inquiry. "Black Jack" acidly observed, "I want to examine this case very carefully so that I may be able to aid in some slight degree in stopping

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[39]Ibid., II, 1410-1539 passim.

[40]Warren to G.M. Barnard, October 25, 1881, Warren Papers, X, 32.

this outrageous practice of organizing unauthorized and illegal pretended 'Courts' for the purpose of plastering up the reputation of some who could not gain an enviable reputation by their own course of conduct, during the war."[41] Grant, however, in the months after the close of the hearing, apparently attempted to effect a reconciliation with his former corps commander. Fitz-John Porter at any rate informed Warren that he had had an interview with General Grant, and that Grant had spoken of him in the highest terms - as always brave, efficient, and in retrospect one of his very best commanders. Moreover, the ex-President told Porter that he was sincerely sorry to hear about Warren's broken health.[42] Warren immediately responded to Porter's letter, and it was apparent that nearly seventeen years of self imposed mental anguish had so embittered him that any attempt to effect a reconciliation would prove futile:

> I have rec/eived/ yours of yesterday. Gen. Grant always talks as he did to you whenever he talks privately to a friend of mine. When he speaks through a John Russell Young or an Adam Badeau, it is quite different, and then it goes to the world. He forgets too. He swore before my Court that I said if I couldn't have the 5th Corps I did not want anything. I never said so. I was actually put in command of the Bermuda Hundred lines the morning after Five Forks. After that, of Petersburg, after that, of the Department of Mississippi, where I staid till reconstruction began. . . .[43]

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[41]Senator John A. Logan to Sheridan, October 24, 1881, Sheridan Papers, Volume 94.

[42]Fitz-John Porter to Warren, December 14, 1881, Warren Papers, X, 32.

[43]Warren to Fitz-John Porter, December 15, 1881, Warren Papers, X, 32.

In the months after the close of his court, Warren resumed his engineering responsibilities within the coastal region of the Department of New England. Despite short journeys to Hyannis, Massachusetts, and Stonington, Connecticut, on duties connected with works under his charge, he found that he no longer had the energy to begin new projects. Writing to Stickney from Newport, Warren conceded, "I feel I would like to drop the past and start out anew, a free lance. But it is perhaps that I am getting old and feeble, and have only the longings of the old man in the 'Curiosity Shop' to roam the green fields again; such feelings as the old dog and old mule have, when they stray away and die unknown."[44] Warren's physical deterioration was greatly accentuated by a mental depression heightened by the failure of the court of inquiry to announce and publish its findings in his case. His dejection was increased by statements made by friends and relatives which indicated that it would be unrealistic for him to expect complete exoneration since strong forces inside and outside of the army were at work to prevent vindication.[45]

Growing anxious at the long delay in rendering a decision, the general as early as May 1882 had proposed to Stickney that he might appeal to important political friends such as Edwin Morgan and General William T. Sherman to persuade President Chester A. Arthur to take action in the case. After consultation with

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[44]Warren to Stickney, November 15, 1881, Warren Papers, I, 6.

[45]William Warren to Warren, July 29, 1882, Warren Papers, I, 11.

Morgan, however, Warren was convinced that any attempt to place pressure upon Arthur would work to his detriment.[46]

Warren was not to be permitted to learn of his exoneration. On July 31, 1882, he went over to Fort Adams [Newport] to supervise some government work. The following day he remained home, and after dinner sat on the piazza of his residence and smoked a cigar. Falling asleep, he was thoroughly chilled by the damp night air. He spent a restless night, and the following morning Dr. Squire, the family physician was called in. After a thorough examination, the doctor informed Emily that her husband was gravely ill. He had discovered that his patient, who had been diabetic for a number of years, was suffering from acute liver failure. Shortly thereafter the general lapsed into a period of unconsciousness. On several occasions he rallied, but the debilitated nature of his body would not permit a permanent recovery. In his last hours, Warren found a peace which his life had not known for many years.[47] His last words spoken to his devoted wife

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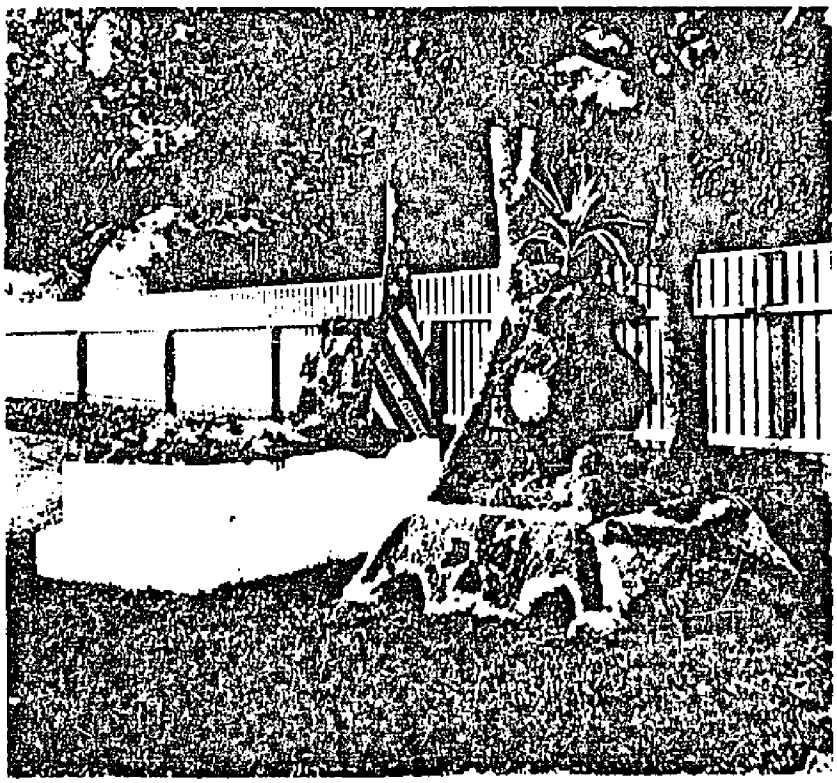
[46]Warren to Stickney, May 19, 1882, Warren Papers, I, 6; Warren to Stickney, July 10, 1882, Warren Papers, I, 7. As early as June 14, 1882, Warren had prepared a draft letter to the Adjutant General, General R. L. Drum, requesting the publications of the findings of the court of inquiry. This letter was not sent.

[47]New York Herald, August 10, 1882; Humphreys to William Warren, August 8, 1882, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 4. General Humphreys, in a letter written to William Warren on August 8, 1882, observed:

> . . . for I take it that his illness is due to the long protracted torture inflicted upon a sensitive person, by official, unfounded imputations upon his character as a soldier, and the denying him the opportunity of vindicating his character. I have supposed that his ill health for several years past was primarily due to this!

Although Humphreys ascribed Warren's illness in part to a mental depression to say that the general died of a broken heart is not factual.



Warrem's Grave, Newport, Rhode Island

were, "When I am dead, see that I am not buried in uniform; have no military emblems or trappings near me. Allow no military escort. Convey me quietly to my grave without pageant or show, I die a disgraced soldier."[48] At 6 P.M., August 8, 1882, Warren succumbed to his malady.

Warren's funeral was solemnized on August 12th at All Saints Chapel in Newport, Rhode Island. Among the many dignitaries present were Governor Edwin Morgan of New York and Generals Crawford, Parke and Hancock. At the request of Emily Warren, the latter two officers were added to the list of pall-bearers which included R.S. Franklin, Mayor of Newport, General J.H. Van Alen of New York, and General G.W. Cullum, a retired engineer officer. Although the band at Fort Adams played a dirge and many Civil War veterans, resplendent in military dress, followed the body to the cemetery, the general's family respected his final wish by not permitting any military display.[49] The simple statement engraved on his tombstone exemplified his thirty years of public service - "He Has Written His Own Epitaph With Sword And Pen."[50]

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[48]Under the Maltese Cross from Antitam to Appomattox: Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, p. 667.

[49]Clipping on Warren Funeral Ceremony, n.d., Warren Papers, addendum 1962, III, Book of Clippings.

[50]Inscription on Warren Tombstone, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 20.

EPILOGUE

Warren's death did not end his quest for justice. On August 16th, 1882 Albert Stickney wrote President Chester A. Arthur calling attention to the long delay in promulgating the decision of the Warren Court. The counselor observed,

> I make this communication for the reason that, although my professional relation as General Warren's counsel is now ended by his death, there seems to me no other person who can with so much propriety make this request, in behalf of his family, and of the people of the United States.
>
> On their behalf I most respectfully ask, that final action on the Report be taken, and that the Report of the Court may be published, at as early a date as your other official duties will allow.[1]

The exoneration substantially came three months later. On November 21, 1882, the findings of the Court of Inquiry were finally revealed by the War Department. The military tribunal had concluded:

> First Opinion:
>
> There seems to be no evidence that General Warren, on the morning of March 31, or any other time, reported favorably to getting possession of the White Oak Road . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The court is further of the opinion that considering the Fifth Corps constituted the extreme left wing of the armies operating against Richmond, and that the corps was in a delicate position and liable to be attacked at any moment, of which liability General Warren had been repeatedly warned, he should have been with his advanced divisions, guiding and directing

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[1]Stickney to President Chester Arthur, August 16, 1882, Warren Papers, I, 16.

them, and that he should have started earlier to the front than he did . . .

Second Opinion:
. . . the court is of the opinion, considering the condition of the roads and surrounding country over part of which the troops had to march, the darkness of the night, the distance to be traveled, and the hour at which the order for the march reached General Warren, 10.50 p.m., that it was not practicable for the Fifth Corps to have reached General Sheridan at 12 o'clock on the night of March 31.

Notwithstanding . . . the court is of the opinion that he should have moved the two divisions by the Crump road in obedience to the orders and expectations of his commander, upon whom alone rested the responsibility of the consequences.

Third Opinion:
The court is of the opinion that there was no unnecessary delay in this march /to Five Forks during the afternoon of April 1st/ of the Fifth Corps, and that General Warren took the usual methods of a corps commander to prevent delay.

The question regarding General Warren's manner appears to be too intangible and the evidence on it too contradictory for the court to decide, separate from the context, that he appeared to wish 'the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack would be completed'; but his actions, as shown by the evidence, do not appear to have corresponded with such wish, if ever he entertained it.

Fourth Opinion:
General Warren's attention appears to have been drawn, almost immediately after Ayres received the flank fire from the 'return' and his consequent change of front, to the probability of Crawford with Griffin diverging too much from and being separated from Ayres, and by continuous exertions of himself and staff substantially remedied matters, and the court thinks that this was for him the essential point to be attended to, which also exacted his whole efforts to accomplish.[2]

Although the First and Second Opinions conceded that Warren should have been with his advanced divisions on the White Oak Road during the morning of March 31, 1865 and that

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[2]Warren Court, II, 1549-1550, 1558-1560.

he should have moved two of his divisions by the Crump Road during the evening of the 31st, this verdict completely exonerated Warren of the more serious charges against him in Sheridan's Third and Fourth Imputations.

This verdict in effect vindicated Warren. But it did not tell the whole story. Grant and Sheridan, the two most prominent Federal generals in the Eastern theater of operations, had obviously removed Warren from command of the Fifth Army Corps for motives other than his conduct at Five Forks. After the death of Sedgwick at Spotsylvania Court House, Warren and Hancock were the best corps commanders remaining in the Army of the Potomac. Warren's acceptance of responsibility at Gettysburg, his brilliant action at Bristoe Station, his leadership in the Wilderness, at Spotsylvania, the Weldon Railroad, and elsewhere were outstanding. But no matter how successful he had been in battle, so long as he remained in the Army of the Potomac old prejudices remained.

The Army of the Potomac and its commanding officers were simply not accustomed to the tactics utilized by the Western generals. Conditions prevalent in the West were different from those in Virginia. Years of experience had educated the Eastern generals to the fact that Lee was a wily leader capable of decisively defeating a numerically superior Union army, and adversity had undoubtedly given the officers and men of the Army of the Potomac a defeatist attitude concerning their Southern counterpart. Not used to combatting adversaries such as Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart, Richard

Ewell, and A.P. Hill, Grant had resented the circumspect attitude of his subordinates. When he saw caution in one of his corps commanders, he suspected cowardice; when the subordinate advised delay or retreat, he thought of replacing him. In Grant's opinion, the discontent and ill-feeling in the Federal army centered around General Warren. As senior corps commander of the Army of the Potomac, he was the focal point for opposition to the Western generals.

From the Wilderness to Petersburg, Grant's primary purpose was to inflict heavy casualties upon his adversaries, even though this meant the decimation of his own forces. Warren, observing the mounting casualty lists, rebelled against what he considered the needless expenditure of human life. The New Yorker's answer to demands for greater sacrifices on the part of his command was a half-hearted attempt to carry out attack orders. If he believed that an assault might succeed, Warren could be seen at the head of his troops; if he felt that the attack would be ineffectual, he refused to press the onslaught. After several abortive assaults half-heartedly carried out by Warren, Grant obviously concluded that the general's attitude would interfere with his future value. Consequently, it became necessary for the Lieutenant-General to seek the removal of an imprudent subordinate.

Grant's opportunity came during the last campaign of the war. Aware of Sheridan's dislike of Warren and of the intense rivalry between infantry and cavalry, Grant was able to utilize this animosity to remove the commander of the

Fifth Corps. Playing upon the inherent tensions within the Federal army, he used Sheridan as a pawn in his plan to remove the unwanted general from the Army of the Potomac. Sheridan, a cavalry commander, personally disliked Warren as an engineer, as a regular, and as a man who lived by the book of regulations. In addition to his general dislike of Warren, Sheridan held a grudge against him because he resented criticism of mounted troopers and seems to have considered attacks upon the cavalry as a personal slight. Warren's constant conflict with Wilson, Merritt, and other cavalry division commanders on numerous occasions, had brought him into direct conflict with the tempermental young cavalry leader. All available evidence indicates that Sheridan's ill-feeling for Warren dated from the Battle of Spotsylvania, nearly a year before the Five Forks Campaign.

It is therefore not surprising that Grant and Sheridan agreed that Warren was expendable. A new force had been replacing the old order in the Army of the Potomac, and the Fifth Corps commander did not fit into the new scheme of things. He represented a concept of fighting that the high command considered archaic. Consciously or unconsciously, Grant saw failure in every action performed by Warren during the summer and autumn of 1864. He minimized Warren's victories and exaggerated his reversals. Warren became a convenient scapegoat for the frequent Federal setbacks in Virginia. Indecision in the Wilderness, failure to assault vigorously at Spotsylvania, and inactivity at Cold Harbor, were all shortcomings attributed to

him. It was easy for Grant to imagine that Warren, who differed from him both in temperment and military bearing, was responsible for the failure to annihilate Lee.

It cannot be denied that Lieutenant-General Grant had every legal right to replace a subordinate; but it was regrettable that Warren was informed of his disgrace at the moment of a great success. Evidence presented before the court of inquiry in later years indicated that Warren, the hero of Gettysburg, Bristoe Station, and a dozen other major engagements, was not "sacked" because of his deportment at Five Forks. The reasons obviously lay deeper. The battle had been anticlimatic. Because Warren lacked Grant's support, his position in the Army of the Potomac had become untenable shortly after the Federal forces entered the Wilderness. It was inevitable that sooner or later he would be removed.

Yet the soldiers who had served under Warren never forgot his great contributions to the ultimate success of the Union cause. The groundwork for greatest tribute was initiated in March 1885 when a committee was created, with General Alexander S. Webb serving as chairman, to raise a fund for the erection of a monument to honor the memory of the New Yorker. In September 1886, the funds received were transferred to a committee of the Fifth New York Volunteers Veteran Association. Originally, the intention of this committee was to erect the proposed monument over the grave of General Warren at Newport. Since a suitable monument had already been placed on this site by private contributions, the committee finally

decided to erect a large bronze statue of its old commander at Gettysburg. Additional contributions were solicited and received from soldiers living in all sections of the country.[3]

On August 8, 1888, the sixth anniversary of Warren's death, a bronze likeness, eight feet in height, was placed on a large boulder at the crest of Little Round Top. After a prayer was offered by Reverend I.W. Foster of New Haven, the statue was unveiled by Sydney and Emily Warren. A bronze tablet set into the boulder upon which the statue rested had engraved on it, in bold capital letters, the inscription:

> Led To This Spot By His Military Sagacity On July 2nd 1863, General Gouverneur Kemble Warren, Then Chief Engineer Of The Army Of The Potomac, Detected General Hood's Flanking Movement.
> And By His Promptly Assuming The Responsibility Of Ordering Troops To This Place, Saved The Key Of The Union Position. Promoted For Gallant Services From The Command Of A Regiment In 1861, Through Successive Grades, To The Command Of The Second Army Corps In 1863, And Permanently Assigned To The Fifth Army Corps In 1864, Major General Warren Needs No Eulogy. His Name Is Enshrined In The Hearts Of His Countrymen.
> This Statue Is Erected Under The Auspices Of The Veteran Organization Of His Old Regiment, The Fifth New York Volunteers, Duryée Zouaves, In Memory Of Their Beloved Commander.[4]

After the statue was officially transferred to the Gettysburg Memorial Association by James B. Fiske, president of the Fifth New York Volunteer Veteran Association, several speakers made long orations praising the accomplishments of

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[3]James B. Fiske et al., Dedication Services at the Unveiling of the Bronze Statue of Maj.-Gen. G.K. Warren, at Gettysburg, Pa., August 8, 1888, (Brooklyn: Press of Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Printing Department, 1888), pp. 5-6.

[4]Inscription on Warren Statue at Gettysburg, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 4.

the dead general. But perhaps the most notable was a short speech made by General Félix Agnus, who observed:

> Boys of '61 - Like this lady /turning to Mrs. Emily Warren/ we entrusted our lives to the gallant Warren. Wherever he might lead, we promised to follow. We never halted, because we knew our commander. We knew him as a model of manhood, as the bravest of the brave, as the truest of the true. He fought his fight and our fight nobly and victoriously in his battles here and now that he stands on the ramparts of the other world, I know he will say, when we meet him there, 'Your duty has been well done, boys, pass on.'[5]

From far and wide representatives of a grateful nation had come together on this rocky craig at Gettysburg, twenty-five years after Warren's heroic deed. Merely by their presence they underlined the sentiment: 'Your duty has been well done, pass on.'

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[5]Unidentified Newspaper Clipping, Warren Papers, addendum 1962, II, 4.

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