



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation

the *dispatch*

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George Patton at Monocacy

By Ken Plantz

World War II General George S. Patton III often cited his forefathers for their courageous examples of military service.

He was especially fond of the stories surrounding his grandfather Colonel George S. Patton and his service during the Civil War. Colonel Patton was in command of Echols Brigade on 9 July 1864 at the Battle of Monocacy.



Patton also fought in other Civil War engagements. In July of 1861 at Scary Creek, Patton was hit by a minie ball in the shoulder while trying to rally his troops.

As part of Breckenridge's Corps, Patton's his troops marched from Frederick down the Buckeystown Pike following Gordon's Division. After Gordon's Division's successful engagement of Union forces, Patton's soldiers crossed the river having not had to enter into the fight. His Brigade went on to be one of the first to attack Washington in Early's engagement at Fort Stephens.

When it was recommended that his arm be amputated, he pulled out his gun in a threatening response and prevented the amputation. After eight months at home, he eagerly returned to his command of the 22nd Virginia. In September of 1864 Colonel Patton was mortally wounded at the Battle of Third Winchester. He died four days later on September 23.

Commanders Corner

Commanders Corner is a continuing feature for the newsletter featuring information on the two commanders at the battle of Monocacy--Union Major General Lew Wallace and Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal Early.

Lew Wallace >>>

By Gail Stephens

In late July 1861, Col. Lew Wallace returned to Indiana with his now famous three-month 11th Indiana Regiment to reorganize it as a three-year regiment. By August 13, 1861, Wallace had added six hundred new recruits to those members of the original 11th who decided to re-enlist. On August 19, Wallace called all the men into camp to begin training. One member of the regiment later remarked that drill was “hobby” with Wallace, but added that it fused the regiment “into a compact machine” and taught the men that “in unity there is irresistible strength.” The reconstituted 11th was mustered in on August 31 and assigned to Paducah, Kentucky, strategically placed where the Tennessee River, a great water road into the center of the Confederacy, joined the Ohio River. There, Wallace and his men spent the winter of 1861-1862.

Wallace’s immediate commander was Brigadier General Charles F. Smith, one of the most admired officers in the antebellum army. Wallace was initially impressed with Smith. He commented upon arrival in Paducah that it was clear a “real soldier” was in command. During the winter, however, an initially good relationship would fall apart, in large measure because of Wallace’s impatience and pride, but also because of Smith’s adherence to a strict army code of behavior.

Wallace found out when he arrived in Paducah that he had been promoted to the rank of brigadier general. Lincoln needed generals to command the vastly expanded army and when he asked Indiana’s governor and congressional delegation for a list, Wallace was on it. He was quickly nominated and confirmed. Later in life, Wallace commented he had doubts and was anxious about his quick promotion from command of a regiment to command of a brigade of 1500 to 3000 men to be trained, fed and clothed, and ultimately managed in battle. Even for a man of Wallace’s self-confidence, it was a daunting challenge after only five months in military service.

Wallace put himself to the wheel and worked hard with his brigade. He was up at 6:30 every morning, filling his day until after 5 PM with paperwork and drill, but he was quickly bored with that routine and clashed with Smith, especially over Smith’s tolerance of displays of Confederate sentiment in Paducah. Newspapers got wind of the issue and criticized Smith. The matter came to the attention of the man in command of the Western Department, Major General Henry Halleck, and Wallace would be hurt by it. Halleck was a career soldier who admired Smith greatly and disliked volunteer officers. Halleck sized up Wallace after this affair and found him wanting. It affected his career from that

Jubal Early >>>

By Joseph McGraw

In June of 1837, Jubal Early completed his studies at West Point. He had earned an appointment as a second lieutenant in the US artillery and he shipped out promptly to Fortress Monroe in Virginia to train new army recruits, especially for the long smoldering conflict with the Seminole nation in Florida. The Seminole Wars raged, on and off, between 1816 and 1858 in three phases. The Second Seminole War (1835–1842) consisted of efforts by the US government to force the Seminoles to leave Florida altogether and move to the Indian Territory out West per the federal Indian Removal Act which the former Seminole fighter President Andrew Jackson had signed into law in 1830. In this second phase of the Wars, raids, skirmishes, and a small number of larger engagements raged across Florida. At the beginning of the Second War, the Seminoles effectively used guerrilla warfare against US forces requiring the Army to recruit and train new troops. That demanded the efforts of new West Point officers, like Early, at Fortress Monroe.

According to biographer Charles C. Osborne, Early’s recruit training duties were “arduous” during the summer of 1837. In the oppressive heat, Early exerted every effort to whip his 800 recruits into shape for Indian warfare. Fortress Monroe afforded Early his first opportunity to closely observe the caliber of men available to the US Army. Most of the recruits came from northern urban recruiting centers and Early was not impressed by the men under his command. According to Osborne, these unfavorable impressions of Northern fighting men would stay with Early throughout the rest of his life.

In October 1837, Lieutenant Early arrived at Fort Taylor on Tampa Bay and reported to Company E of the Third US Artillery. With the company commander too ill to discharge his duties and the company’s other two first lieutenants away from the fort on field duty, Early immediately assumed command of the unit. In early January of 1838, Early marched his men out of the fort as part of a larger unit of approximately 1,000 regulars (horse-mounted infantry known as dragoons and artillerymen) and 500 Tennessee and Alabama volunteers under the command of the major general in charge of all US forces in Florida. The march was difficult. Roads had to be cut through dense hardwood wilderness in order to provide passage for artillery and wagons. Cypress swamps had to be bypassed or waded through with waist deep water and large pine flat areas, with flesh-cutting thickets of saw palmetto, had to be crossed.

Wallace cont'd

The winter of discontent ended in late January when Halleck ordered Brigadier General U.S. Grant to take the troops from Paducah and Cairo, Illinois, and move up the Tennessee River, in concert with the U.S. gunboat fleet in the West, to take and hold Fort Henry. The earthen fort was located on the river just below the Kentucky border, equipped with powerful artillery, manned by Confederate troops and in a clear position to stop any Union movements south on the river. On February 4 and 5, the troops left Paducah on steamboats. Wallace wrote a note to his wife, Susan, expressing the hope that "I may do my duty tomorrow..."

On the morning of February 6, Grant had 15,000 men in the vicinity of Fort Henry. The Union fleet consisting of four ironclad and three timberclad gunboats was ready to engage. Grant's plan was to move the division from Cairo along the east side of the river to attack Fort Henry. Smith's division, including Wallace and his men, was to move up the west side of the river and seize Fort Heiman, an incomplete work which nonetheless had artillery, on a high hill across from Henry.

Torrential rain had fallen on February 5, so the men marching overland toward the two forts had to deal with mud and high water. Meanwhile the Union gunboats moved upstream and found themselves at eye level with Henry because of the high flood level of the river. The gunboats and the big guns in the fort began an artillery duel. Wallace, who had never experienced a protracted artillery exchange, later commented to a friend on the "roaring fiery passage of the shells" and the noise of their "crash against the iron sides of the boats." Smith's men reached their target and with a rush seized Fort Heiman, only to find that Fort Henry had surrendered to the U.S. Navy.

Wallace was excited and happy about the victory, commenting to his wife that it was "altogether the best thing of the war." Wallace's duty was not done. A much harder target, Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, lay only a few miles away. A bigger battle was in the offing, one in which Wallace would distinguish himself.

Gail Stephens is an historian and author of [Shadow of Shiloh: Major General Lew Wallace in the Civil War](#) and numerous other articles and monographs.

Early cont'd

Finally in late January, Early engaged the Seminoles in a series of rather undramatic skirmishes. As he later reported, he had "heard some bullets whistling among the trees," but "none came near me and I did not see an Indian." Florida military service hardly proved to be a significant training experience to prepare the future Confederate general for combat in the Civil War. By the fall of 1838, Early had resigned his Army commission and returned to Virginia to commence the study of law and lay the foundations for a life in politics.

Joseph McGraw is Vice President of MNBF and retired professor of history from Stevenson University

What's New at MNBF?



MNBF Welcomes Jennifer Liles

In January, Jennifer Liles joined the Board of Directors of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation for a 3-year term. Jen is a public historian and professional genealogist with a degree in public history from Stevenson University (formerly Villa Julie College). She originally graduated from Villa Julie College in 1998 with a degree in computer science and spent 10 years working in the investment banking and nonprofit fields before becoming a full-time mom to her three children. In 2015, she returned to Stevenson to pursue professional training in history. Since graduating in 2018, she has consulted with several Maryland organizations focused on local history, including researching the life of an 1885 Baltimore County lynching victim, Howard Cooper, for the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project. She was later featured in a documentary on Cooper. Jennifer has also performed genealogical research for a number of private and public clients, including work on burials at Antietam National Cemetery and at Tolson's Chapel in Sharpsburg, Maryland.