McPherson Ridge

July 1st, 1863

Background

As the sun rose on the morning of July 1st, Major General Henry Heth's Confederate division made its way towards the town of Gettysburg. Their objective was a reconnaissance-in-force of what Heth's superior, Lieutenant General Ambrose P. Hill, though was merely Pennsylvania militia and cavalry. In their way were two brigades of Brigadier General John Buford's Union cavalry division. Buford's cavalrymen managed to delay the Confederates by several hours until the arrival of the infantry of the Union First Army Corps. The cavalrymen withdrew as the First Division filed into position on McPherson Ridge, just moments ahead of Heth's approach. Brigadier General Lysander Cutler's Second Brigade barely made it into position north of the Chambersburg Turnpike before the assault began, and it would be a race for control of Herbst Woods to the south.

The first encounter at Gettysburg was particularly violent. North of the turnpike, Brigadier General Joseph R. Davis' Brigade forced half of Cutler's brigade to retreat to Sheads' Woods on Seminary Ridge to the east. The fighting then shifted south, where many of Davis' men became trapped in the unfinished railroad cut. Hundreds were captured in a desperate melee. To the south, Brigadier General James J. Archer's hard fighting Tennesseans and Alabamians ran headlong into the famed Iron Brigade in Herbst Woods (also known as McPherson Woods). Major General John F. Reynolds was killed there directing the men of his First Corps. The Iron Brigade managed to push the Confederates back, capturing many of them, including Archer himself.

With this short, brief fight the Union managed to consolidate a position on the high ground west of Gettysburg. After a short lull, and reinforcements from both sides, the fighting would resume in the afternoon.



Major General Henry Heth

Game Overview

This battle depicts the opening infantry fight at Gettysburg on the morning of July 1st. Its two brigades against two across woods, wheatfields, and undulating terrain. Can the Confederates knock the Union off balance before they can consolidate and counterattack?

The scenario map is 5'x 4'. The battle starts at 10:30 AM and ends on Turn [10/7/5], or when one side can no longer continue based upon the fatigue rules of the game being played.

Terrain

The terrain consists mainly of McPherson Ridge extending north-south across the map, with plenty of wheatfields, fences, and woods to break up the landscape. The ridge and hills on this side of town really are "gentle". For the most accuracy, hills should only be ½" per elevation, though in this scenario, there is only one level. Elevations of 1" are fine if that is all that is available. The hills should be beveled gradually; try to avoid cliffs at the edge of the hillsides.



The middle railroad cut looking northwest. The regiments of Davis' Brigade became trapped when the 84th and 95th New York and 6th Wisconsin charged to the edge of the cut on the left and poured fire into the Confederates from close range.

An unfinished railroad parallels the Chambersburg Turnpike to the north. There are no rails, but the right of way has been levelled. Units can travel along the bed at trail movement. Units in the railroad bed can use the banks as cover, and receive a cover benefit for any fire across the bed. This benefit does not apply if the fire is coming down the right of way in either direction.

Willoughby Run is not deep, but the banks can be steep. It confers a cover benefit to any unit in the stream deployed along the banks. There is a small quarry along the east bank of the stream west of the McPherson farm. This feature is about an inch wide on the game table. It is impassable terrain. Any unit, or portion of a unit if applicable, that takes fire across the quarry gets a cover benefit.

The woods on the map, particularly Herbst Woods but including all the woods shown, were very open with little underbrush. Visibility should be for light woods, and movement should only be hindered by about an inch per turn. The orchards act as light woods for visibility. Movement is also as light woods for infantry and cavalry regiments in line of battle, disorder, or field columns. They are open movement for units in column and skirmish formation. They have no effect on the movement of artillery batteries.

Units in wheatfields and cornfields receive an additional cover bonus if they are lying prone. Standing units, moving or firing, do not receive this bonus. In addition, enemy units firing from a higher elevation will negate this advantage.

Deployment

Deploy the opposing forces on the board as shown. Cutler's brigade has just taken position along the ridge, and Davis is closing fast. Archer and Meredith are on a collision course in Herbst Woods. The 6th Wisconsin enters the board on Turn [1/1/1] at the southeast corner of the board at **1**. General Reynolds begins the game next to the 2nd Wisconsin. All brigade



Major General John F. Reynolds

generals may begin anywhere within an inch of a regiment in their brigade. There is no record of either division commanders being close to the combat. However, General Wadsworth was most likely on Seminary Ridge to the east. He may enter the board anywhere on the eastern edge of the board south of the Chambersburg Turnpike any time after Turn [5/4/3].

The Confederates had artillery stationed on Herr Ridge to the west. They fired at McPherson Ridge throughout the day, and did cause casualties. To simulate this, the Confederate player controls Pegram's Battalion as off-board artillery. They may fire from any point at the shaded area marked **2**. Simply calculate the distance from the edge of the board to the target, and add an additional foot. Line of sight begins at the edge of the board as well, blocking most targets behind McPherson Ridge and Herbst Woods.

While there would technically be cavalry and a horse battery leaving the area of the McPherson farm, they had positive orders to leave and have not been represented in the scenario. This is an infantry fight.

Victory Conditions

There are no terrain based Victory Conditions. The fighting continues until one side or the other can no longer continue based upon the morale and fatigue rules of the game being played. After the battle has finished, add up the Victory Points based upon unit casualties. The side with the most Victory Points wins.

Order of Battle

Union

Army of the Potomac

First Army Corps

MG John F. Reynolds [+2]

1st Division

BG James S. Wadsworth [+2]

1st Brigade	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
BG Solomon Meredith [+1]	1,894	94	63	48	39	19		
19th Indiana	328	16	11	8	7	3	4	R
24th Michigan	476	24	16	12	10	5	2	R
2nd Wisconsin	282	14	9	7	6	3	4	R
6th Wisconsin	424*	21	14	11	8	4	4	R
7th Wisconsin	384	19	13	10	8	4	4	R

*Includes 100 man Brigade Guard that fought with the regiment.

2nd Brigade	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
BG Lysander Cutler [+1]	1,566	79	53	39	32	16		
76th New York	375	19	13	9	8	4	3	R
84th New York*	318	16	11	8	6	3	4	R
95th New York	241	12	8	6	5	2	4	R
147th New York	380	19	13	10	8	4	2	R
56th Pennsylvania	252	13	8	6	5	3	3	R

*Also known as the 14th Brooklyn.

Artillery Brigade	ES	Status	Armament
Battery B, 2nd Maine	117	2	**6x** 3" R

Confederate

Army of Northern Virginia

Third Army Corps

Heth's Division



Looking east from Seminary Ridge across the Chambersburg Turnpike toward Herbst Woods. The McPherson barn is to the right.

Archer's Brigade	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
BG James J. Archer [+1]	1,193	59	39	30	24	11		
13th Alabama	308	15	10	8	6	3	3	R
5th Alabama Battalion	135	7	5	3	3	1	4	R
1st Tennessee Provisional Army	281	14	9	7	6	3	4	R
7th Tennessee	249	12	8	6	5	2	3	R
14th Tennessee	220	11	7	6	4	2	4	R

Davis' Brigade	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
BG Joseph R. Davis [+1]	1,707	116	76	57	47	23		
2nd Mississippi	492	25	16	12	10	5	3	R
42nd Mississippi	575	29	19	14	12	6	2	R
55th North Carolina	640	32	21	16	13	6	2	R

Pegram's Artillery Battalion	ES	Status	Armament
	366		
Crenshaw's Virginia Battery	76	3	**2x** 12 lb. N, **2x** 12 lb. H
Fredericksburg Virginia Battery	71	3	**2x** 12 lb. N, **2x** 3" R
Letcher Virginia Battery	65	3	**2x** 12 lb. N, **2x** 10 lb. P
Pee Dee South Carolina Battery	65	3	**3x** 3" R
Purcell Virginia Battery	89	3	**4x** 12 lb. N



Matthew Brady photograph of the northeast corner of Herbst Woods taken on July 15th, 1863.

Optional Rules

There are no Optional Rules for this scenario. It's a pretty straightforward fight.

Author's Notes

This is a nice, small fight. I've always been fascinated by this opening round of the battle, and the famed Iron Brigade is one of my favorite units to study. It's also a great introductory scenario for testing a new set of rules.

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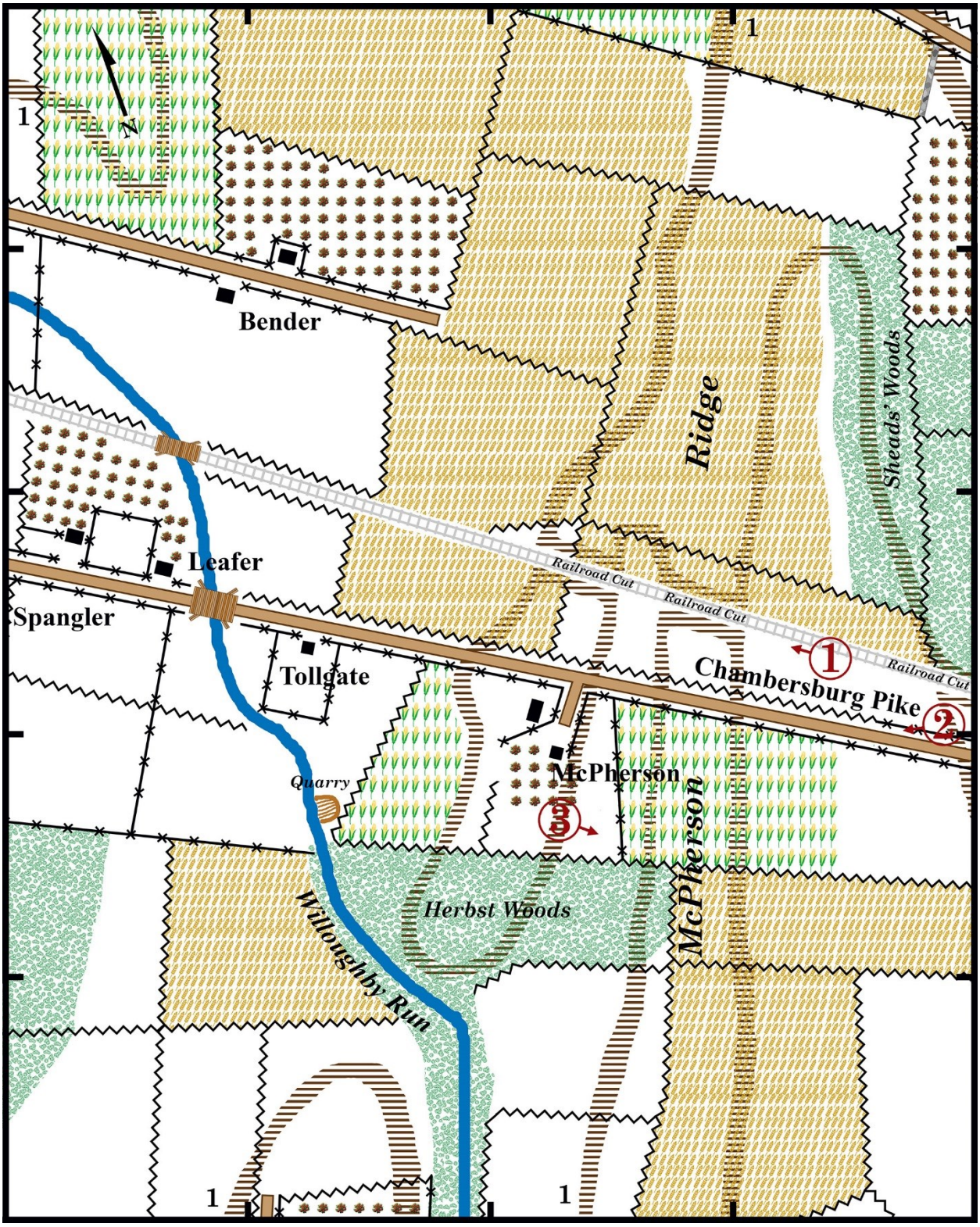
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1
Bender
Ridge
Sheads' Woods
Leafer
Railroad Cut
Railroad Cut
Railroad Cut
Spangler
Tollgate
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Chambersburg Pike
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McPherson
Willoughby Run
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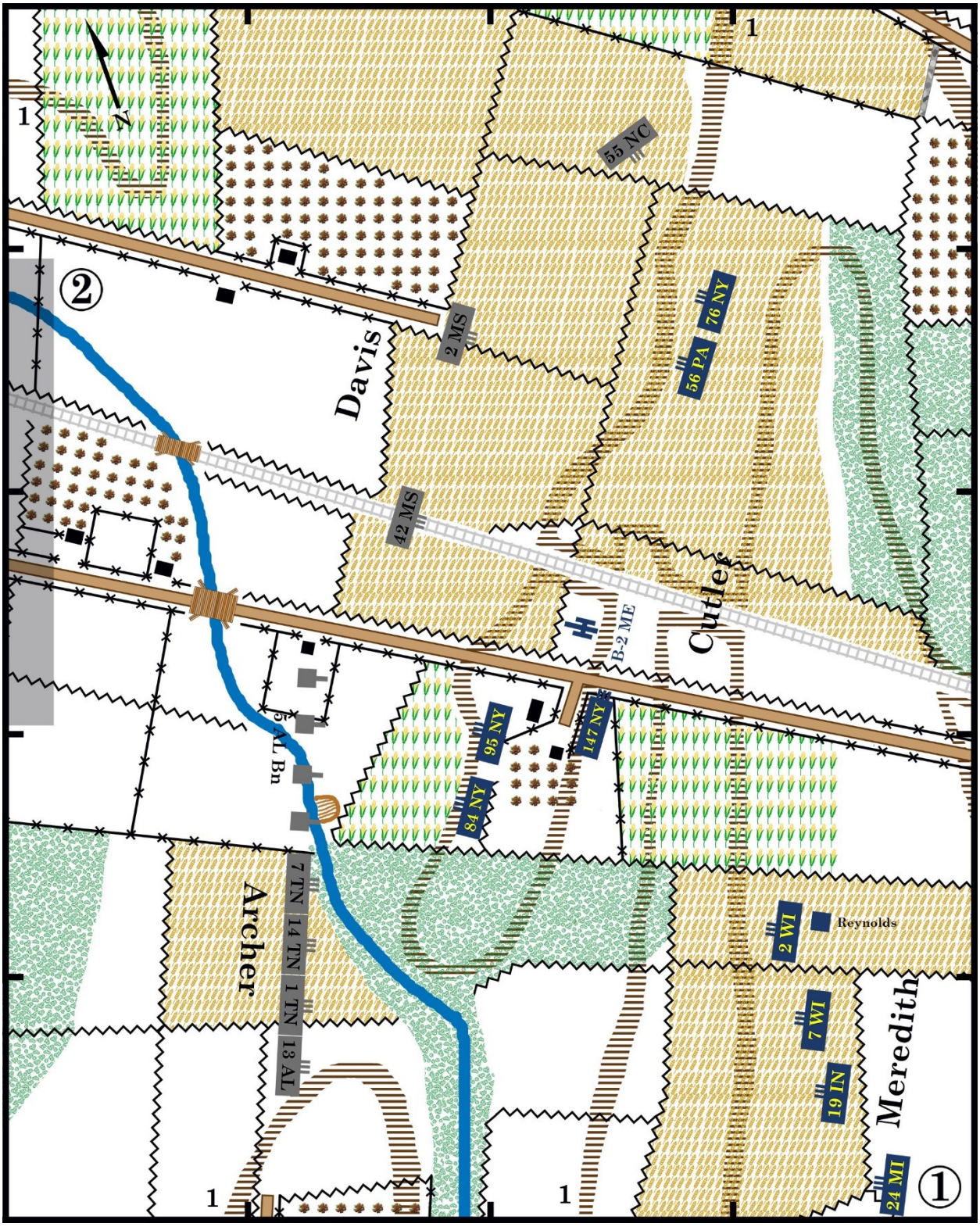

N
1
1
55 NC
2
2 MS
Davis
76 NY
56 PA
42 MS
Cutler
B-2 ME
5 AL Bn
95 NY
147 NY
84 NY
Archer
7 TN
14 TN
1 TN
13 AL
2 WI
Reynolds
7 WI
19 IN
Meredith
24 MI
1
1
1