Gaines Mill – 27th June 1862

This scenario has been supplied by Jim Nevling and Andy Nicoll. Some minor additional editing has been completed by Keith McNelly with background information drawn and edited from Wikipedia.

The Historic Battle

Gaines Mill was one of six major battles that comprised the Seven Days Battles between the 25th June until the 1st of July near Richmond, Virginia and formed part of the wider Peninsula Campaign. During the Seven Days Battles Confederate General Robert E. Lee drove the invading Union Army of the Potomac, commanded by Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, away from Richmond and into a retreat down the Virginia Peninsula.

By the morning of June 27, the Union forces were concentrated into a semicircle with Porter collapsing his line into an east-west salient north of the river and the four corps south of the river remaining in their original positions. McClellan ordered Porter to hold Gaines's Mill at all costs so that the army could change its base of supply to the James River.

On the 27th of June Lee launched the largest Confederate attack of the war, with some 57,000 men in six divisions. By early afternoon, A.P Hill ran into strong opposition by Porter, deployed along Boatswain's Creek and the swampy terrain was a major obstacle against the attack. As Longstreet arrived to the south of A.P. Hill, he saw the difficulty of attacking over such terrain and delayed until Stonewall Jackson could attack on Hill's left.

For the second time in the Seven Days, however, Jackson was late. D.H. Hill attacked the Federal right and was held off by the division of Brig. Gen. George Sykes. Hill backed off to await Jackson's arrival. Longstreet was ordered to conduct a diversionary attack to stabilize the lines until Jackson could arrive and attack from the north. In Longstreet's attack, Brig. Gen. George E. Pickett's brigade attempted a frontal assault and was beaten back under severe fire with heavy losses. Jackson finally reached D.H. Hill's position at 3 p.m. and began his assault at 4:30 p.m.

Union 5th Mass. Batt. artillery shown here held their fire as Union troops retreated from their position marked by the woods before engaging advancing Rebel infantry. (Collection of Keith McNelly)
Porter's line was saved by Brig. Gen. Henry W. Slocum's division moving into position to bolster his defence. Shortly after dark, the Confederates mounted another attack, poorly coordinated, but this time collapsing the Federal line. Brig. Gen. John Bell Hood's Texas Brigade opened a gap in the line, as did Pickett's Brigade on its second attempt of the day.

Gaines Mill was an intense battle, the largest of the Seven Days and the only clear-cut Confederate tactical victory of the Peninsula Campaign. Since the Confederate assault was conducted against only a small portion of the Union the army emerged from the battle in relatively good shape overall. Lee's victory, his first of the war, could have been more complete if it were not for the mishaps of Stonewall Jackson. Historian Stephen W. Sears speculates that it was not for Jackson's misdirected march and his poor staff work, the major assault that Lee unleashed at 7 p.m. could have occurred three or four hours earlier. This would have put Porter in grave jeopardy, without any last-minute reinforcements and the cover of darkness. He quotes Edward Porter Alexander, prominent Confederate artillery officer and postwar historian: "Had Jackson attacked when he first arrived, or during A.P. Hill's attack, we would have had an easy victory—comparatively, & would have captured most of Porter's command."

Although McClellan had already planned to shift his supply base to the James River, his defeat unnerved him and he precipitously decided to abandon his advance on Richmond and begin the retreat of his entire army to the James. Gaines's Mill and the Union retreat across the Chickahominy was a psychological victory for the Confederacy, signalling that Richmond was out of danger.
Gaming the Battle

The game starts at 14:00, ends with the 20:00 turn for a total of seven turns. The Confederates move first.

Terrain:

Only Turkey Hill itself is shown. In reality much of the ground to at least the west and northwest, and to a somewhat lesser extent the east, is much the same height. This is all left out since it is unlikely to be a factor (and making that much model hill is a pain!).

Boatswain Creek is impassable to artillery. For most of its length it has been rated as an ordinary stream for movement. However, since in reality it runs in a fairly deep gully between Turkey Hill and the other higher ground not shown here, it is impassable to artillery due to the steep sides.

Streams are marshy-banked where shown. The heavy woods are both wooded and marshy ground; they're impenetrable to artillery and disordering to everyone else except skirmishers. Streams in these areas are also marshy-banked. Other patches of wood have been omitted as being of no military significance.

Roads are shown mainly for decoration, but where they cross streams or the Chickahominy there are bridges. If a Confederate unit moves adjacent to any bridge over the Chickahominy that bridge is automatically destroyed. Confederate units may not cross the Chickahominy under any circumstances.
Victory:

Confederate objective is to destroy Porter's isolated corps before it can be reinforced, or retire south of the Chickahominy River.
# Union Order of Battle & Deployment

**Union Army of the Potomac (Elements), CinC Genl McLellan (AC)**

**V Corps, Genl Fitz-John Porter (CC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps assets</th>
<th>no exhaustion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emory's Cavalry Bde</strong></td>
<td>5 [ ] linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reserve Artillery, Genl Hunt (DC)</strong></td>
<td>Ex=3 OOO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Reserve Arty</td>
<td>6 [ ] R-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Reserve Arty</td>
<td>5 [ ] R-SG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Reserve Arty</td>
<td>6 [ ] SB-H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1st Division, Genl Morell**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ex=10 OOOOOOOOOOO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martindale's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfield's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffin's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st USSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd USSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/V Arty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2nd Division, Genl Sykes (DC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ex=9 OOOOOOOOOO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buchanan's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovell's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/V Arty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Reserve Arty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3rd Division, Genl McCall (DC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ex=10 OOOOOOOOOOOO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynold's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meade's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/V Arty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forces Drawn from other Corps:**

**1st Division VI Corps, Genl Slocum (DC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ex=9 OOOOOOOOOO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton's Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/VI Arty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Downloaded from “The Volley & Bayonet Page” at:
http://volleyandbayonet.wordpress.com
1st Division II Corps, Genl Richardson (DC)  

Ex=4  

OOOO  

- French's Brigade  5  
- Meagher's (Irish) Brigade  6  

sko == skirmish only  

rr == repeating rifle  

Union Deployment:  

The following are deployed on table:  

- V Corps as shown on map;  
- Morrell left-to-right: Butterfield, Martindale, 1/V Arty, Griffin, USSS (stands one behind the other);  
- Sykes left-to-right: Lovell, Warren, 2/V Arty, Buchanan, 3rd Reserve Arty;  
- McCall: any order you like;  
- Artillery Reserve (less 2nd) in front of McCall's left. Hunt and Porter here;  
- Emory's cavalry behind McCall;  
- 2nd Reserve Arty on the hill south of Duane's bridge;  
- Hasty works along the frontage of all of Morrell except the USSS (who are in the re-entrant), plus Lovell's Bde of Sykes. Union units are not considered to be lining the streams at any point;  
- All guns start unlimbered. Everything is stationary;  
- Note that 2nd Reserve Artillery starts and stays out of command. In reality it is with other union troops south of the river. It may fire normally but never move.  

The following arrive at 16:00  

- 1/VI deployed at G in column of brigades, having crossed Woodbury's Bridge;  
- Start the units from G moving normally from that point. None of them are initially considered to be in the disordering terrain.  

The following arrive at 18:00:  

- 1/II deployed at H in column of Brigades, having crossed Grapevine Bridge. McLellan enters with this division.
Confederate Order of Battle & Deployment

Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, CinC Genl R E Lee (AC)

Longstreet’s Wing, Genl Longstreet (CC)

- Wing Artillery (no DC)  Ex=2  OO
- 1st Reserve Arty  5  [ ][ ]  R-F
- Washington Arty  6  [ ][ ]  SB-H

Longstreet’s Div, (command by the CC)  Ex=11  OOOOOOOOOOO

- Kemper's Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- R Anderson's Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Pickett's Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Wilcox' Brigade  4  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Pryor's Brigade  4  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Featherston's Brigade  4  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Longstreet's Arty  5  [ ][ ][ ]  SB-F

A P Hill’s Div, Genl A P. Hill (DC)  Ex=11  OOOOOOOOOOO

- Greg's Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Pender's Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Field's Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Archer's Brigade  4  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Branch's Brigade  4  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- J Anderson's Brigade  4  [ ][ ][ ][ ]
- A P Hill's Arty  5  [ ][ ][ ]  SB-F

Whiting’s Div, Genl Whiting (DC)  Ex=7  OOOOOOO

- Hood's (Texas) Brigade  6  [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Laws' Brigade  5  [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
- Whiting's Arty  5  [ ][ ][ ]  SB-F
**Jackson's Wing, Genl Jackson (CC)**

*Wing Artillery (no DC)  Ex=2  OO*

- 2nd Reserve Arty  5  [ ] [ ]  R-F

*Jackson's Div, (command by the CC) Ex=10  OOOOOOOOOOO*

- Falkerson's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Cunningham's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Lawton's Brigade  4  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Winder's (Stonewall) Brigade  6  [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Jackson's Arty  5  [ ] [ ] [ ]  SB-F

*Ewell’s Div, Genl Ewell (DC)  Ex=8  OOOOOOOO*

- Seymour's Brigade  6  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Elzey's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Trimble's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Ewell's Arty  5  [ ] [ ]  R-F

*D H Hill’s Div, Genl D H Hill (DC)  Ex=12  OOOOOOOOOOOOO*

- Ripley's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Colquitt's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Rodes' Brigade  6  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- G Anderson's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- Garland's Brigade  5  [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
- D H Hill's Arty  5  [ ] [ ]  SB-F

**Confederate Deployment:**

The following are deployed on table:

- A P Hill as shown on map first line north-to-south: Gregg, Branch, J Anderson, Archer;
- Second line north-to-south: A P Hill's Artillery, Pender, Field;
- The first line is within 8" of the Union position - able to charge immediately;
- The second line is not within 8”;
- R E Lee - Gaines Mill.

The following arrive at 14:00 :

- Whiting's Division, deployed at B;
- Longstreet's Wing artillery at C, field formation, units one behind the other;
- Ewell's Division deployed at D
The following arrive at 15:00

- Longstreet's Division at A, field formation units one behind the other.

The following arrive at 17:00

- Jackson's Division, Jackson's Wing Arty deployed at E;
- D H Hill's Division deployed at F.
Scenario Variants

Strengths are presented effectively as reported in the OR. There is a reasonable case to be made that the US and CS used different methods of counting noses (US "present for duty" vs CS "effective"). If true, this could overstate US infantry numbers by anything up to 15% compared to CS. If you choose to believe this, remove 1SP from each brigade in Morrell, McCall, and Slocum, and reduce the exhaustion limit of each division except Richardson by one.

Equipment of US artillery batteries is hard to determine. Making US divisional artillery units SB-H is right for 1863 onwards but it may well be the case that earlier in the war the US went more heavily for rifles. Replace any or all of 1/V, 2/V, 3/V divisional artillery SB-H stands with R-F stands (do not change the number of strength points).

Both of these variants disadvantage the Union a little. Neither has been playtested.

Infantry long arms are all muzzle-loading rifles except the USSS. To further simplify weapon types, delete the "rr" rating for the USSS units - count them as ordinary rifles - but instead mark them as sharpshooter stand(s).

Scenario Notes

This was originally designed as convention game by Jim Nevling who designed the orbats. The map and scenario was developed further by Andy Nicoll. A lot of this scenario is eminently debatable so these notes are far more extensive than usual to give our (or at least my!) rationale for the current presentation. Jim and myself both find it to gives a very good game with a believable range of outcomes. It you want to tinker with it then by all means do so. Let us know how you get on!

The convention origin means that the scenario is simpler and more standardised in places than one might make it with experienced players. It also long predates the RTG edition of the rules and has not been updated (very largely because I don't want to risk breaking anything!).

March columns are banned. This is a complexity not worth bothering with on a 4' square table with only 7 turns. Everything arrives deployed, which sometimes means placing Union units on the north side of the marshy terrain - yes they've been marching up in column and forming up for the turn or two before they are parachuted on to the table, but they're no factor to anyone so I have just simplified this away entirely, which helps enormously with inexperienced players.

Artillery is all shown as gun units. Whilst it may have been administratively assigned to infantry brigades in places it was in fact largely massed separately by both sides. Some argument can be made for distributing V Corps divisional artillery as dedicated guns, but it just doesn't work for the Confederates in this battle and I can't see a case for modelling the two sides differently. In any case the Civil War Trust maps show at least Morell's artillery as largely massed. What I definitely didn't want to do was make this a player decision - remember the goal of simplicity.
Today the length of Boatswain Creek is mainly forested and you cannot see the high ground on one side from the other. Period maps show that at least some of it might have been forested at the time. This is not shown on the scenario map as it appears to have been no significant factor. Both sides' artillery seems to have happily fired across the creek and the Rebs charged across it without pause from their start line. Make it wooded in rules terms and these actions are not possible: in particular restricting the Reb ability to charge breaks the game timeline entirely, and preventing their artillery from firing makes it too hard to inflict losses on the US. Rather than having special terrain or movement rules, or adjust exhaustion limits, I just removed the trees.

Indeed, the map as a whole is deliberately minimalist: the farmhouses and trails to them that dotted Turkey hill have been omitted as being of no military significance. I could have been fussier - and probably more accurate - adding ordinary woods on the SW slope of Turkey Hill from Morrell's left down to the really bad ground. It turns out not to matter much since the Rebs don't really have time to manoeuvre round there - but if you put the trees on it then means that the US artillery south of the river have effectively no line of sight and so can't fire - yet fire they did - and we'd need another scenario rule to cover that. Simplicity won again.

I count the initial US positions as uphill in morale terms; Jim doesn't. Take your pick. The Confederates didn't start significantly lower down (see terrain notes) but the gully Boatswain Creek is in is a steep one, so I happen to think that giving the US an extra +1 morale here is reasonable: it makes the position somewhat tougher to break without making it impregnable, e.g. by making the gully disorder the Confederates for any reason. It also means we're following standard terrain rules given the slightly odd way I have drawn the map.

Sykes' right flank may have rested on another marsh (Elder Swamp). The period maps in the Official Military Atlas of the Civil War don't show this very clearly, and the Civil War Trust maps tend to show Sykes' flank as somewhat in the air with Elder Swamp being at least 1/2 mile or so east. I have chosen to make the eastern edge of the map the Elder Swap boundary. If you want to make life even harder for the Rebs then arguably all of the area east of the easternmost stream could be marked as swamp.

How much of the US front to entrench is debatable. It could well be all of it. Works are shown where physical evidence exists today and is accessible to the public (where Sykes fought is largely private property today). Topographically-speaking, where works are shown they are just below the crest of a slope with a good field of fire. By contrast most of Sykes' position is on gently undulating ground with no such advantage so it's much less obvious there would have been rifle pits there. Also the Union infantry are clearly deployed (and indeed in rifle pits) in two lines from Butterfield to Lovell, but only one line further to the right: the right wing ought to be the weakest part of the position. Militarily-speaking, Porter's position is a double entrenched line of infantry facing NW (towards the expected axis of Confederate advance) with a refused right flank. But if you want to add works on the right feel free!

Morale ratings are basically: brigades which have not fought a major action before are M4, brigades which have are M5. Artillery is M5 as standard. A handful of brigades and artillery units that had already gained a reputation as elite are M6.

The Confederates formally didn't have corps, but Longstreet and Jackson have been made CCs as well as commanding their own divisions to help with traffic control and rallying any
routers. We would definitely count them as CCs by the time of 2nd Manassas, but here it would be entirely reasonable to count only Jackson as such (he is commanding the Valley Army: there is no doubt about who is the boss). I do not count Lee as a monarch since he hasn't made his name yet.

The US did have a formal corps structure but there are parts of several here whose CCs are absent. Either subordinate everything to Porter or bring McLellan (really representing some staff officer effort) on with Richardson's division. I do the latter, since again it helps with traffic control - here of broken units defiling back over Grapevine bridge. Historically the whole force managed to do this.

Morell is given two USSS stands because the regiments in his division were all fairly well up to strength at this point. If you think this is too strong, eliminate one of them or else combine them as a single 2SP linear stand.

Artillery strength points are factored into exhaustion totals and artillery losses count against exhaustion. If distributing artillery as dedicated guns, you need to add the same number of strength points to infantry brigades to keep the arithmetic constant. Exhaustion is generally around 50% throughout, but with Porter's corps a little less to help represent the fact they marched to this position at night and then entrenched, so they are somewhat fatigued. Whiting's division is noticeably higher because of Hood's brigade.

The entry times and locations for Jackson's wing represent when they started having an effect on the field in reality. According to Lee's plan they were meant to arrive earlier at D on the map (Lee believed the Union forces would defend Powhite Creek, and that D would be behind their flank), but they got lost. When they did reach the field, DH Hill's division stood effectively at F doing nothing for at least an hour because staff work broke down. An interesting what-if might be to move up some or all of Jackson's arrivals by a turn. Note that this will make life very hard indeed for the Union!