

Shepherdstown Battlefield Special Resource Study

West Virginia and Maryland

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



February 2012



The men of the 118th Pennsylvania escape under fire of Federal batteries.
From Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Oct. 25, 1862

Dear Interested Party,

The National Park Service is beginning a special resource study of the Shepherdstown Battlefield, located near the town of Shepherdstown, West Virginia. In 2009, Congress passed legislation directing the National Park Service (NPS) to evaluate the national significance of the battlefield. The legislation also directs the NPS to study the suitability and feasibility of adding the battlefield to the national park system as an addition to either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield. Additionally, the study may evaluate alternative strategies to National Park Service ownership and management. These alternatives may encourage partnerships and other efforts to protect important resources in ways that do not necessarily require direct NPS management.

Please join us for one of two public meetings to be held on February 23rd and 25th. At these meetings, Civil War historian Thomas McGrath, author of *Shepherdstown: Last Clash of the Antietam Campaign, September 19-20, 1862*, will present his research on the events that occurred during the two-day battle at Shepherdstown and the impact of the battle on U.S. history. The National Park Service study team will also explain the study process, answer your questions, and gather your ideas for the study.

This special resources study will take place over the next two years in coordination with Antietam National Battlefield, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. During this time, the study will assess public interest and support by providing opportunities for your comment. Based on the Special Resource Study, the NPS will recommend to the Secretary of the Interior whether the battlefield meets the criteria for inclusion into the park system. The Secretary will forward the recommendation to Congress.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about and comment on this study effort. You may provide your thoughts at one of the public meetings or online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SHBA>. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Steve Whitesell, Regional Director
National Capital Region, National Park Service

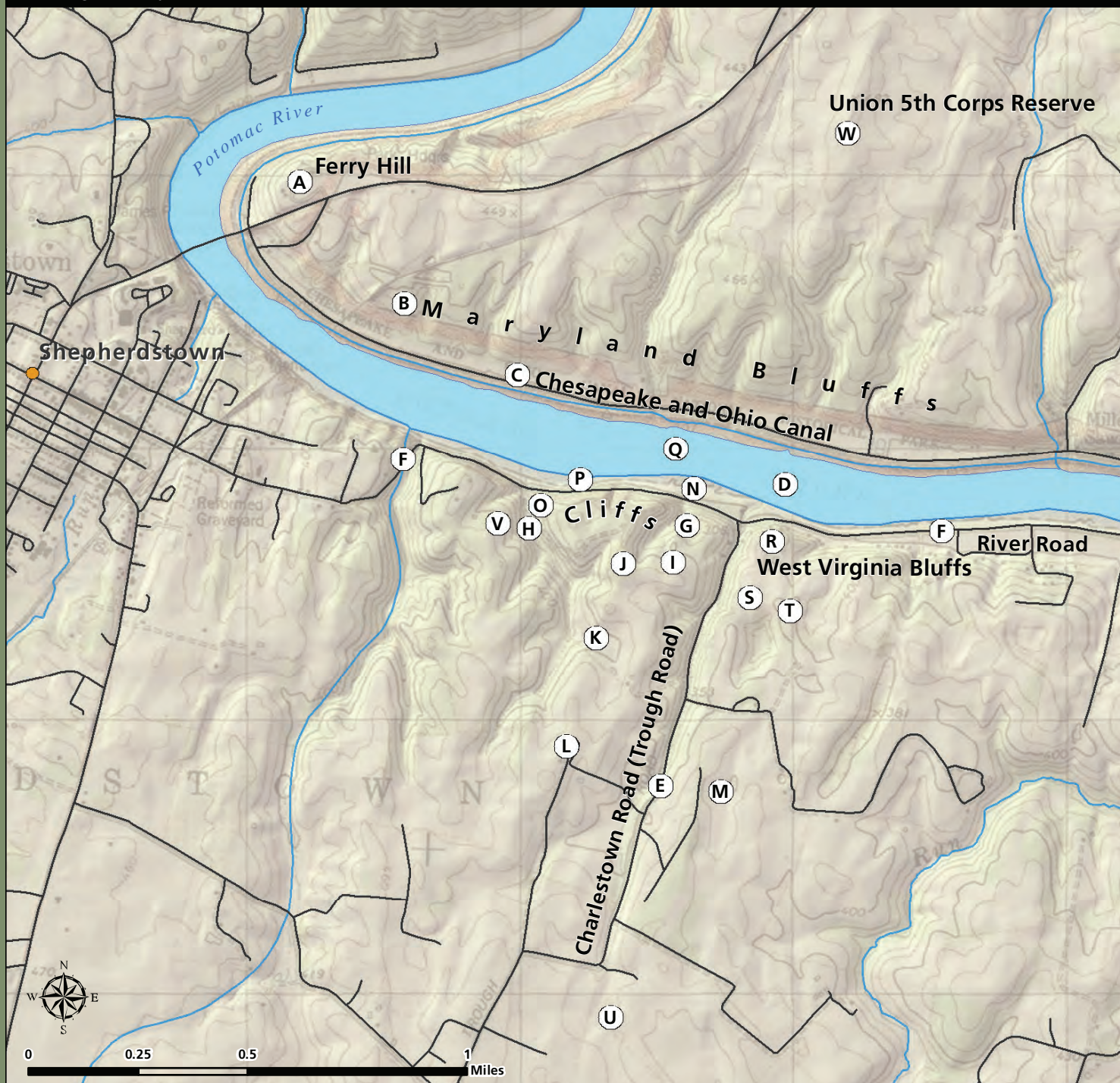


Shepherdstown Battlefield Special Resource Study

Battlefield Landscape

West Virginia/Maryland

National Park Service
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Features*

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (A) Ferry Hill | (G) Hollow | (M) Fields East of Trough Rd | (S) Knoll #3 |
| (B) Maryland Bluffs | (H) Ravine | (N) Boteler's Cement Mill | (T) South Carolina Hollow |
| (C) C & O Canal | (I) Knoll #1 | (O) Cliffs | (U) Confederate Staging Area |
| (D) Boteler's Ford | (J) Knoll #2 | (P) Kilns | (V) Rim of Ravine |
| (E) Charlestown Road (Trough Road) | (K) Pender's Bowl | (Q) Dam | (W) Union 5th Corps Reserve |
| (F) River Road | (L) Osborn Farm | (R) West Virginia Bluffs | |

*These features will be discussed in more detail during public meetings

INTRODUCTION

Shepherdstown Battlefield has been a focus of public interest for several years. In 2010, the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service, in their *Update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields, State of West Virginia*, identified Shepherdstown Battlefield as a site needing additional protection. Also, nonprofit organizations (independent of the National Park Service) have been

working to preserve the lands associated with the battle for the last decade. In 2009, legislation championed by the late Senator Robert Byrd (Public Law 111-11, Title VII, Subtitle C, Section 7205) was passed by the U.S. Congress directing the Department of Interior to undertake this special resources study. This study will evaluate the importance of the battle to U.S. history in addition to the suitability and feasibility of adding the site to the national park system.



The kilns used to produce lime at Boteler's Cement Mill. (Courtesy of the McGrath Collection)



Historic image of the Boteler's Cement Mill building at the base of the cliffs on the south bank of the Potomac River. (Courtesy of the McGrath Collection)

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF SHEPHERDSTOWN

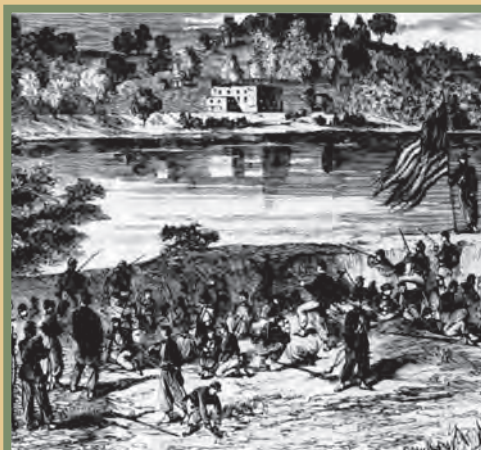
When shots rang out at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, sectional tensions boiled over, drawing America into civil war. As the battle lines were drawn between North and South, the border states witnessed some of the worst fighting of the war and saw significant loss of American lives. Confederate General Robert E. Lee's 1862 Maryland Campaign became a critical moment of the American Civil War and the history of the nation. Considered the bloodiest one-day battle of the Civil War, Antietam proved to be a tactical draw for both sides, yet a strategic victory for the Union. Following Antietam, Confederate forces began their withdrawal across the Potomac River back into Virginia. This withdrawal on September 18, 1862, would also set in motion the final conflict of the Maryland Campaign, the Battle of Shepherdstown.

Roughly a mile and a half downstream of Shepherdstown, Boteler's Ford served as the primary crossing point on

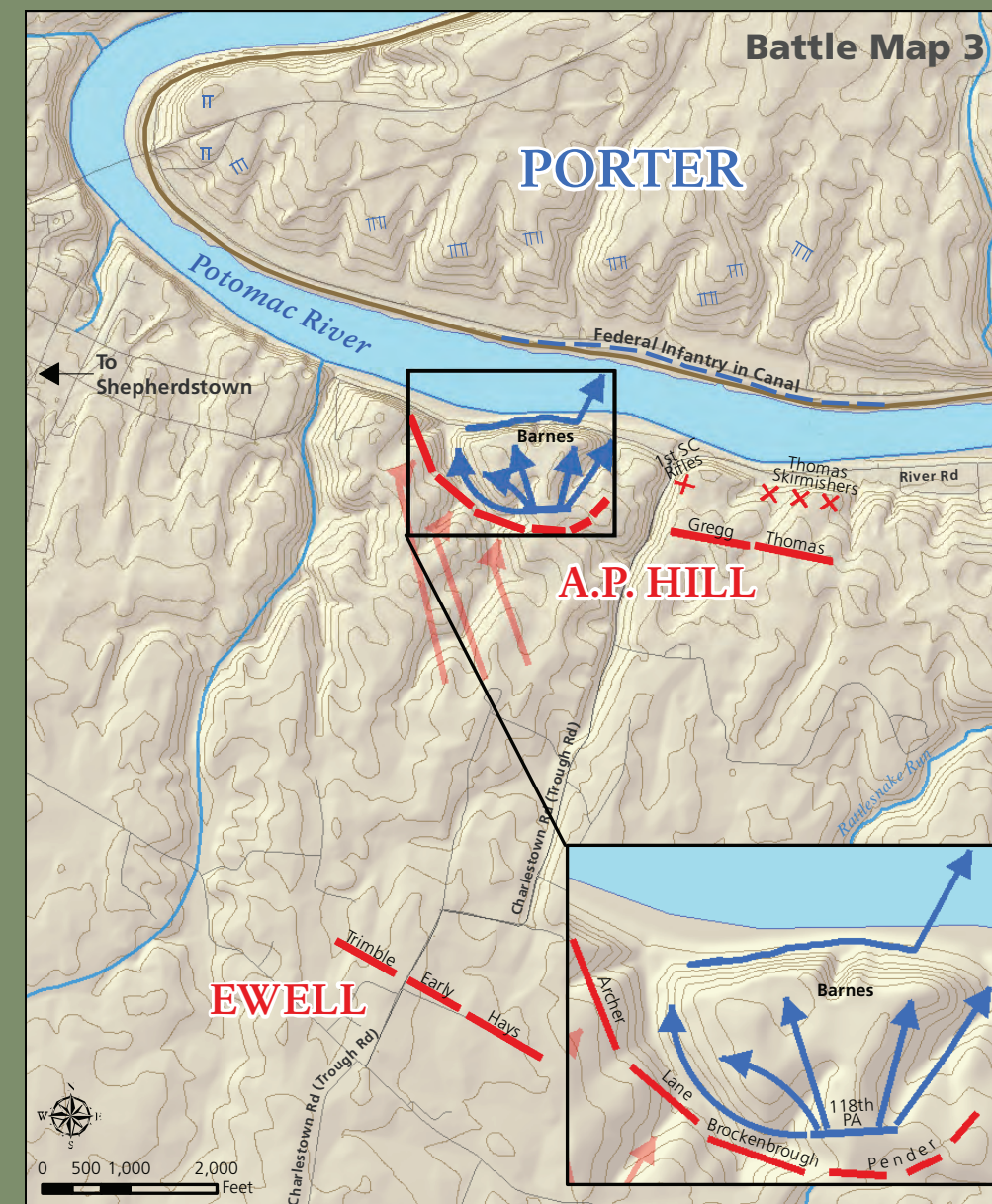
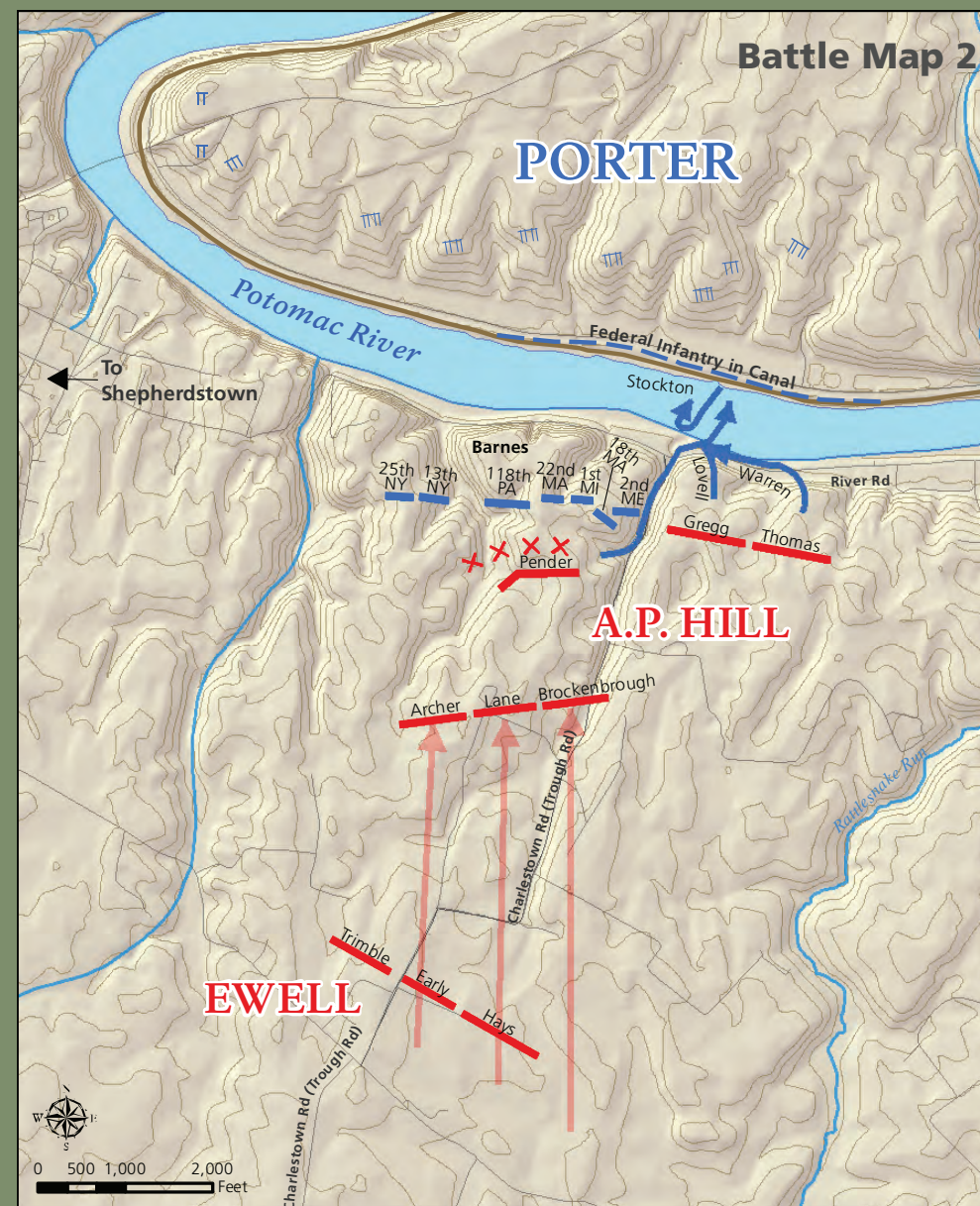
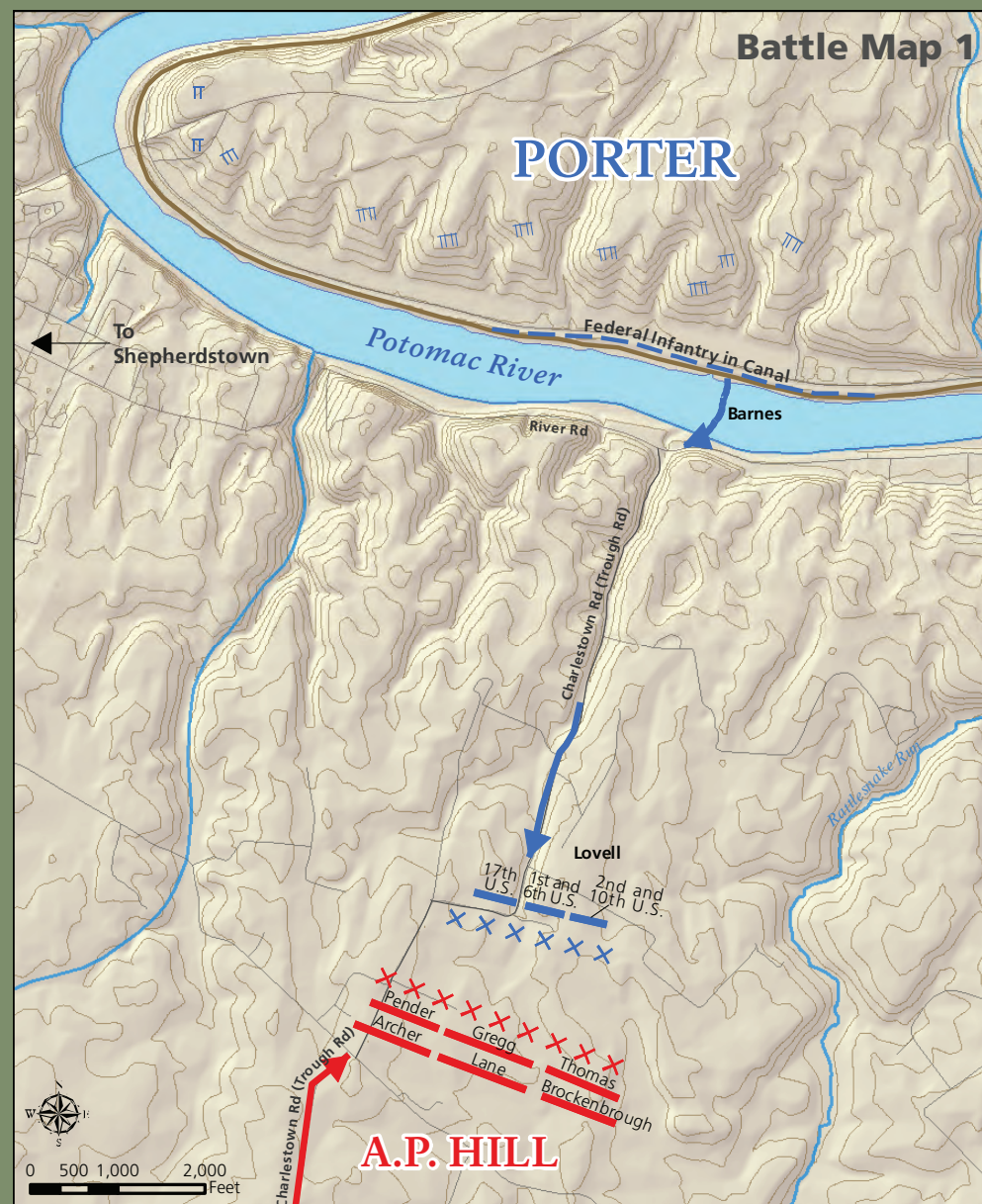
the Potomac River for the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. As Lee's forces moved back into Virginia, he appointed Brigadier General William Nelson Pendleton to protect this vital river crossing with 44 cannons placed in artillery positions on the bluffs above the southern side of the river. Federal forces set up significantly more artillery positions on the northern banks of the river on the Maryland bluffs and took advantage of the then drained C & O Canal to fortify their positions with sharpshooters. Both sides exchanged artillery volleys, but it was not until the movement of Federal soldiers into Virginia on September 19 and the capture of Confederate artillery that the skirmish erupted into a bloody battle.

On the afternoon of September 19, a portion of Major General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac crossed the river at Boteler's Ford,

capturing four artillery pieces before returning to the northern banks of the Potomac at dusk. A panicked Pendleton fled the battlefield not having fully assessed



5th New York Infantry, Duryee's Zouaves, on picket in the canal bed. From *Harpers Weekly*, Oct. 11, 1862



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF SHEPHERDSTOWN (CONTINUED)

the situation. Pendleton reported to Lee that his positions, along with all the Confederate artillery, had been taken and that Federal soldiers were flooding over the river crossing in pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Following this report, Lee quickly changed his plans and prepared for battle, sending Major General A.P. Hill's division, which included the brigades of Pender, Gregg, Thomas, Archer, Lane, and Brockenbrough, to counter the Federal movement into Virginia at Boteler's Ford, while withdrawing the remainder of his Confederate forces farther south into the Shenandoah Valley (see Battle Map # 1).

The early morning of September 20 saw Federal Army exploratory forces under the command of Major Charles Lovell taken by surprise to see a large contingency of Confederate troops taking positions on both sides of the Charlestown Road (Trough Road) and preparing to march north toward Boteler's Ford.

As Federal forces pulled back toward the river and Confederate troops advanced, skirmishes broke out as soldiers on both sides moved into positions readying for battle. As fighting erupted, Federal artillery on the northern side of the Potomac opened fire. The forces of Colonel James Barnes, which had spread out

along River Road and the knolls along the south side of the river, retreated back across Boteler's Ford (see Battle Map # 2).

The remaining Federal forces, realizing they were severely outnumbered, withdrew to Maryland—all but the ill-prepared 118th Pennsylvania regiment (also known as the Corn Exchange Regiment).

Due to miscommunication of orders, the 118th fought in vain and suffered horrific casualties before finally retreating down the ravine and back across the river (see Battle Map # 3).

As the fighting wore on into the afternoon, all remaining Federal troops made it back into Maryland as the Confederates left the field of battle under heavy cannon fire.

With over 675 casualties, the Battle of Shepherdstown was the last major confrontation between Federal and Confederate forces during the Maryland Campaign.

Legend	
Troop Movements	
	Federal
	Confederate
	Previous Movement
Troop Positions	
	Confederate
	Federal
	Confederate Skirmishers
	Federal Skirmishers
Federal Artillery	
	Artillery
Landscape Features	
	Road
	Drainage
	C & O Canal

WHAT IS A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY?

The National Park Service was created to conserve unimpaired outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The treasures in this system have been set aside by the American people to protect, preserve, and share our nation's greatest stories. Usually a new unit of the national park system is established by an act of Congress. Before passing such legislation, Congress requires reliable information about the quality of resources in the

area under consideration and the potential for visitor enjoyment and efficient management. The National Park Service collects this information and provides a recommendation to the Department of the Interior who then provides a report of its findings to Congress through special resource studies. This process ensures that only those candidate sites that are most deserving of national designation are included within the national park system.

THIS SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY IS ALSO A BOUNDARY STUDY

When Congress directed the Department of the Interior to undertake this study effort, the Department of the Interior asked the National Park Service to determine if the Shepherdstown Battlefield would be appropriate as an addition to existing park units, specifically Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield. Because the addition of Shepherdstown Battlefield to

either unit would have boundary adjustment implications, the study will also include a boundary adjustment study. To be clear, boundary adjustments can mean the inclusion of a distinct land area, not physically attached to an existing park, for management jurisdiction by that park. As listed below, there is some overlap between the criteria for special resource studies and boundary studies.

CRITERIA

Special Resource Study Criteria (NPS *Management Policies* 2006, Section 1.3)

For the Secretary of the Interior to recommend new parklands, an area must

- Contain nationally significant natural and/or cultural resources.
- Be a suitable new unit of the national park system that represents a natural or cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land-managing entity.
- Be a feasible new unit of the National Park System as determined by size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. It must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Important feasibility factors include landownership, acquisition costs, life cycle maintenance costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements.
- Require direct NPS management that cannot or will not be accomplished by another government entity or by the private sector.

Boundary Study Criteria (NPS *Management Policies* 2006, Section 3.5)

For the Secretary of the Interior to recommend Shepherdstown Battlefield and related sites as an addition to an existing park unit, an area must meet one of the following criteria:

- Protect significant resources and values or enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes.
- Address operational and management issues, such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads.
- Or otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

The addition would also have to meet both of the following criteria:

- Be a feasible addition to the National Park System—the criteria is the same as the feasibility criteria for special resource studies listed above.
- Require direct NPS management that cannot or will not be accomplished by another government entity or by the private sector.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

The National Park Service places a high value on public participation and strives to encourage participation in all aspects of decision-making. As the study unfolds we will provide opportunities for you to learn more and send in comments. *

- **Project Website** – The project website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SHBA>) will contain updates and other information about the special resource study. It will be open to receive public comments during the 30-day review period for this current public scoping period—February 13 to March 13, 2012.
- **Public Scoping Meetings** – Meetings to discuss this project are currently scheduled to take place in Harpers Ferry, WV on February 23rd and Shepherdstown, WV on February 25th. Presentations by Thomas McGrath and National Park Service staff will start promptly, followed by an open-house format where you can speak individually with NPS staff to learn more and

provide comments. This will enable a large number of people to comment within a fairly short time frame. Large maps will be on display for discussion. See public meeting information on the back page.

- **Letters to the National Park Service** – If you would like to mail postal letters to the National Park Service, please address them to the Regional Director, National Capital Region, attn: David Hayes, National Park Service, 1100 Ohio Drive, SW, Washington, DC 20242.
- **Public Review of Draft Study** – Once the draft study is ready, it will be made available on the project website. Please take some time to review the draft and provide comments directly on the project website. See schedule below.

**Note: To help us be able to contact members of the public about this project, please provide us your e-mail address as part of your comment on our project website during this public scoping comment period.*

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS, IDEAS, AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

1. Do you have any ideas or concerns about preserving and interpreting the battlefield? What are they?
2. What lands should or should not be included in the study area? Why?
3. What are your thoughts about possible management options for Shepherdstown Battlefield and related sites?
4. Do you have any other ideas or comments you would like to share with us?

Time Frame	Study Process	Key Steps and Outcomes
Winter 2012	Information Gathering and Public Scoping WE ARE HERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Civil War historians to provide research on the battle at Shepherdstown. • National Historic Landmarks Program review of national significance. • Public scoping to gather public input.
Spring 2012 – Winter 2013	Prepare Draft Study	<p>The <i>Draft Shepherdstown Battlefield Special Resource Study</i> will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource description and historical background; • evaluation of suitability and feasibility for inclusion in the national park system; • a range of management alternatives; and • an environmental assessment that will evaluate the impacts of each potential management alternative.
Spring 2013	Public Review of Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirty day public review period to solicit feedback on the draft study.
Summer 2013	Finalize study and transmit to Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise draft document following public review. • Prepare a final determination about whether the study area meets criteria. • Recommend action to Congress.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

Thursday, February 23, 2012

4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Presentation will start at 4:00 p.m. Repeated at 6:00 p.m.

Stephen T. Mather Training Center

51 Mather Place

Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

304-535-6215

Located on Camp Hill on the former Storer College Campus in Harpers Ferry, WV. Harpers Ferry is located along Rt. 340. Directions can be found at:
<http://www.nps.gov/training/stma/location.htm>

Saturday, February 25, 2012

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Presentation will start at 10:00 a.m. Repeated at 12:00 p.m.

Clarion Hotel & Conference Center

233 Lowe Drive

Shepherdstown, WV 25443

304-876-7000

Located off of Kearneysville Pike/Rt. 480 in Shepherdstown, WV. For directions, please call the number above or visit www.clarionhotel.com.

Thank you for your interest in Shepherdstown Battlefield Special Resource Study!