

The Battle of Corrick's Ford, July 13, 1861

Following the Union victory at the Battle of Rich Mountain in Randolph County, CSA General Robert Garnett realized that retreat was the only prudent action for his 3,000 to 5,000 troops. He turned east toward the Cheat River. Union Brigadier General T.A. Morris of the Indiana militia pursued Garnett's troops with a force of roughly 1,800 soldiers under orders from General George B. McClelland.

On the morning of July 13, 1861, the Union troops closed in on the Confederates, observing signs of their retreat beginning at New Interest (now called "Kerens".) They followed the trail over Pheasant Mountain and along Pheasant Run (also called "Pleasant Run".) At about noon, the Union troops reached Kalar's Ford, located near the confluence of Pheasant Run and Shavers Fork. The Confederate troops had camped on the east side of the ford during the heavy rains the night before, but had fled in the face of the Union advance leaving behind stragglers, deserters, and supplies.

The Union force continued to pursue the Confederates as they followed a county road up the Shavers Fork valley. By the time the Confederate wagon train was crossing the river, presumably at Moore's Ford, the skirmish was underway. The troops continued to wind their way north, crossing the river as many as six times. The Confederates attempted to cover their retreat and ambush the advancing Union soldiers with limited success.

As a last stand to allow the bulk of the Confederate force to escape, General Garnett ordered the 23rd Virginia to establish a position on high ground and in the laurel thicket on the east side of Shavers Fork at Corrick's Ford. A wagon train was left standing in the river as bait for an ambush from the concealed force. The Union force fell for the trap then set up a line of artillery on a low bank. As the Union troops began a direct assault on the Confederates, the rebels retreated again leaving their cannon and their dead and wounded

behind them. The Union troops did not continue their pursuit after this action.

While the bulk of his troops were already north of Job's Ford (north of Parsons on the Cheat River), General Garnett had returned to aid his "last stand" troops at Corrick's Ford. He was mortally wounded by a member of the 7th Indiana. Garnett was the first general—Union or Confederate—killed during the Civil War.

It is estimated that 13 Union soldiers were killed and 40 wounded in the events of July 13, 1861. On the Confederate side, 20 soldiers were killed, 10 wounded, and 50 prisoners captured. In addition, approximately 40 Confederate wagons were captured by the Union army.

Corrick's Ford Battlefield - Significance

Corrick's Ford Battlefield was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register in 1995. She described the significance of the battle in this way:

"The War Department identified Rich Mountain and Corrick's Ford as two of the most important events of the Campaign in West Virginia. The campaign ensured Union control of western Virginia and largely eliminated the Confederate threat to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. It also played a critical role in elevating George B. McClelland to the command of what would become under his leadership the Army of the Potomac. Although the death of General Robert S. Garnett cut short his involvement in the Civil War, his role as overall commander of the Confederate forces at the battles of Rich Mountain and Corrick's Ford is significant."