

## Chapter 9

### 1863: Onward Toward Chancellorsville

**General Jackson ordered Colonel Munford “to guard his left flank and, if possible, seize and hold Ely's Ford Road, which we did, and when I left, Jackson said to me,**

**‘The Institute will be heard from today.’”**

**– *Stonewall Jackson to Munford during Jackson's flanking maneuver at Chancellorsville, May 2, 1863.***

1863 revealed Colonel Thomas Munford facing increasing responsibilities, often acting as a brigade commander. He rejoined General Jackson at Chancellorsville in May, riding at the head of Jackson's flanking column in support of Robert E. Lee's greatest victory of the war. Unfortunately for Munford, he would continue to be disappointed in receiving a coveted promotion to the brigadier rank.

General Ambrose Burnside initiated a new offensive in January 1863, hoping to redeem himself from his disastrous defeat at Fredericksburg. He set out along the Rappahannock, trying to flank Lee's strong positions north of Fredericksburg. His new campaign, however, quickly bogged down in the winter mud, with hundreds of horses dying trying to slog through the knee-deep mire. The abortive "Mud March" and other failures led to General Burnside's replacement by Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker on January 26. Hooker, age 48 and a West Point graduate of the class of 1837, was a distinguished veteran of the Mexican War, where he had demonstrated strong leadership and administrative skills. Hooker immediately began reorganizing and training his army in winter quarters outside of Fredericksburg. The new army commander adopted nearly all of the recommendations of Gen. Alfred Pleasonton concerning the cavalry service. On February 6, 1863, Hooker issued his General Order Number 6, consolidating all of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac into a single corps under the command of the army's senior cavalry officer, Maj. Gen. George Stoneman, who was universally liked by officers and enlisted troopers alike.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OR 25/2:51; Eric J. Wittenberg, *The Union Cavalry Comes of Age* (Washington, D.C., 2003), 9–13.

Meanwhile, on January 10, 1863, General Stuart held a cavalry review, attended by Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet. It was raining as the troopers of the 2nd Virginia rode 15 miles to the site of the review ground. After the review, the troopers slogged back to camp over muddy roads. One trooper recalled, "The weather was so bad that it destroyed all interest in the sight. . . . It rained so hard we could see only fifty yards ahead of us down the line." Commenting on the usefulness of such a review, the same soldier wrote, "The men and horses had been roused before daylight, marched 15 miles through the mud, and then thoroughly wet and worn had to march back. Could anything be more foolish, and all for the sake of a 'grand review,' by which a parade might be made before a few women? I have little patience for such vanity, and I think Fitz Lee and his command agree with me."<sup>2</sup>

The next day Fitz Lee communicated to Munford, "I desire to express to you officially my warmest thanks for the excellent marching and military bearing of your regiment upon review yesterday. The commander-in-chief, General R. E. Lee, was particularly complimentary on your large numbers, the discipline exhibited, and fine appearance of your regiment."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the 2nd Virginia went into winter quarters at Hanover Court House, broken by occasional tours of picket duty along the Rappahannock. On January 14, the brigade moved five miles in order to find an area where they could better forage for their horses. The brigade could muster only 618 troopers out of 1,900 on the rolls. Munford wrote his mother that "his transportation for the brigade had been reduced to 14 wagons, all of which were captured from the Yankees. There were 175 horses unfit for duty." In the same letter, Munford penned that his troopers were being kept "in a constant state of expectancy" by the Yankees.<sup>4</sup>

By the beginning of the third year of the war, the toll of the war began to wear on Munford's psyche. His soldiers and their horses were in a deplorable state. He counted three of every four horses dying daily [an exaggeration], including his own beloved "Ewell," who perished from lung fever. Rations for his men were so reduced that Munford "was mortified to see the poor fellows suffer." Even though the entire Confederate cavalry was experiencing extreme suffering, he complained as if his was the only regiment going through these ordeals, "I

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Minor Blackford to his wife, January 10, 1863, *Letters from Lee's Army*, 157–58.

<sup>3</sup> *SHSP*, vol. 16:354-55; Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 68.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas T. Munford to Mrs. Elizabeth Tayloe Munford, January 27, 1863, Munford–Ellis Papers, DU; Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 69.

am becoming like a camel's back which was broken by a continued piling on of the agony." He wanted to relocate his regiment to an area where he and his men could get subsistence off the land or from the enemy, instead of his men having to buy food for themselves and their mounts. If refused, Munford aimed to demand it "as a right," and if that was not respected, he planned "to go to Richmond en route for home." He then proclaimed, "I have a splendid regiment, and one that I love; the men too are fond of me."<sup>5</sup>

Munford also wrote of his disdain for the management skills of "West Pointers," complaining, "I have made several formal complaints [on behalf of his troopers] but can get no redress. . . . I cannot and will not submit to such management. Stuart is a good general, but like many of these West Pointers with little experience, has but little sense—two weeks ago, I applied for permission to allow the dismounted men of my regiment to go home for twenty days to get fresh horses. Munford's request was denied by R. E. Lee—"no furloughs." As the morale of these dismounted men and others whose horses needed replacing declined, they became complaining and indifferent."<sup>6</sup>

On February 4, Adjutant Lomax Tayloe echoed Munford's concern about feeding the starving troopers and their mounts, writing from a new camp near the Pamunkey River, not far from Hanover Court House, "We have nothing to do here but cuss the Yankees and quarrel with the Qu. Masters and Commissaries for starving man and beast. Our horses are dying every day for want of food."<sup>7</sup>

On February 9, Fitzhugh Lee moved his brigade to near Culpeper Court House to relieve Hampton's brigade on picket duty along the Rappahannock from Griffinsburg to Richard's Ford. The next day, the troopers of the 2nd Virginia picketed along the river. Private Peter L.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Taylor Munford to Mrs. George Wythe Munford, January 27, 1863; Elizabeth Tayloe Munford to Mrs. George Wythe Munford, March 4, 1863, Munford Family Papers, DU; Akers, Thesis, 21, Virginia Tech.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 69. The problem's resolution for the entire army did not rest solely on the shoulders of Stuart or even the officers of the Commissary and Quartermaster's departments, but on the Confederate government and its inability to furnish supplies or the means of transporting them to the army.

Huddleston remembered, "Snowing in the morning, hailing and raining," weather that would continue for most of the month.<sup>8</sup>

On February 24, Fitzhugh Lee led troopers from his brigade from Culpepper across the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford on a scout, seeking to determine what movements, if any, the Union Army of the Potomac was undertaking around Fredericksburg. The mission's directive had come from Robert E. Lee, himself. Four hundred cavalymen, detachments from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Virginia Cavalry, splashed across the icy waters of the Rappahannock River in central Virginia, moving through deep snow northward into Union territory. Col. J. H. Drake led the 1st Virginia, Colonel Munford commanded the 2nd Virginia, and Lt. Col. William R. Carter led the 3rd Virginia. The Confederate cavaliers had to deal with the bitter cold and heavy snowfall. Lieutenant Colonel Carter recorded, "On account of the 18 inches of snow roads were miserable and almost impassable."<sup>9</sup>

Despite the snow and treacherous roads, Fitzhugh Lee and his men made good time. Reaching Morrisville on the Warrenton Post Road (today's Route 17), they spent the night, poised to strike east the next day and challenge any Federal cavalry they encountered. Early the next morning, Lee and his troopers set out for the Union lines. In the vicinity of Hartwood Church, four miles north of the Rappahannock and eight miles west of Falmouth, at the junction of the Telegraph Road and Ridge Road, Fitz Lee's horsemen struck the inexperienced picket line of the 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry. These Pennsylvanians were anchoring the far-right flank of the Army of the Potomac. Fitz Lee's horsemen captured a group of them, sending the rest stampeding for the rear. The 1st and 3rd Virginia regiments led the advance.<sup>10</sup>

As fate would have it, the 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment belonged to the division of Fitz Lee's former West Point classmate and friend, Brig. Gen. William W. Averell. Taking control of the area around the church, Lee then split his force. The 1st and 2nd Virginia continued the advance along Ridge Road, which ran parallel and just north of the Warrenton Post Road. Another detachment of the 2nd, along with the 3rd Virginia, moved along the Post Road itself. Next, Lee's troopers ran into the Union picket reserve, which consisted of the 3rd and 4th

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<sup>8</sup> Peter L. Huddleston Diary, typescript on file at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania NMP, 10; Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 69.

<sup>9</sup> OR 25/1:25; William R. Carter, *Sabres, Saddles and Spurs*, Walbrook D. Swank, ed. (Shippensburg, PA, 1998), 46.

<sup>10</sup> OR 25/1:25.

Pennsylvania, another contingent of the 16th Pennsylvania, the 1st Massachusetts, the 4th New York, and the 1st Rhode Island. Fighting immediately broke out. Charge met countercharge as troopers in blue and butternut, shot and slashed at each other through the woods and thickets between and along the Ridge and Warrenton Post roads. It was not long before the sounds of battle reached the lines of Federal infantry. Moving out from their position at Berea Church, four companies of the 124th New York Infantry under Lt. Col. F. M. Cummins, part of Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles's III Corps, came to the support of the Union cavalry. The appearance of foot soldiers on the scene was enough to convince Fitzhugh Lee it was time to withdraw from the fight.<sup>11</sup>

Hooker's Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Daniel Butterfield, telegraphed Maj. Gen. Alpheus S. Williams, commander of the 1st Division of the XII Corps, to relay the message to all cavalry commanders in the area (Pleasanton and Averell) to vigorously pursue the retreating Confederate horsemen and capture Fitz Lee's whole command, thinking it should not be difficult, stating that the invaders had "Marched from 12 miles the other side of the Rappahannock last night, made a long circuit today, and horses very tired. We ought to capture every one of them." The prickly Butterfield added, "Say to Pleasanton, a major-general's commission is staring some cavalry officer in the face in this business."<sup>12</sup>

Surmising the Federals would pursue, rather than return by the route which he had come, Lee moved off to the north and encamped that night near the old battlefield of Second Manassas. Lee crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, without being captured, and reported to his uncle Robert E. Lee that the Army of the Potomac remained across the Rappahannock, and no major operation was underway.<sup>13</sup>

General Fitzhugh Lee reported:

On the 25th, I drove in the enemy's [16th Pennsylvania Cavalry] pickets near Hartwood Church, and attacked his reserve and main body. Routed them, and pursued them within 5 miles of Falmouth, to their infantry lines. Killed and wounded many of them. Captured 150 prisoners, including 5 commissioned officers, with all their horses, arms, and equipments. I then withdrew my command slowly, retiring by detachments. Encamped at Morrisville that night,

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<sup>11</sup> *OR* 25/1:21, 25, part 2:103–04.

<sup>12</sup> *OR* 25/2:101, 103–04.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; McClellan, *Campaigns of Stuart's Cavalry*, 204.

and on the 26th recrossed the river, and returned to camp with my prisoners. The successive charges were splendidly executed. My loss in killed, wounded, and missing was 14.<sup>14</sup>

Averell reported losses in the skirmish of 36 killed, wounded, and missing.<sup>15</sup>

Munford's adjutant, Lomax Tayloe, reported Munford's action:

Col. Munford saw another regiment coming up on our flank as if trying to cut us off, so he cut off all of the Reg't except the 1st Squadron, and went at them, who no sooner saw him coming than they put to flight. I was with the squadron that was charging the first Reg't that we saw; we pitched ahead thinking the whole Reg't was coming, but lo and behold, this squadron of about 60 men was chasing a Yankee Reg't of about 400 men.<sup>16</sup>

The reconnaissance determined the Federal infantry was still concentrated opposite Fredericksburg.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, there were troubles at the Munford home front. Typhoid fever raged at Glen Alpine. Etta Munford and four of the servants fell sick to the disease. The children were also ill with terrible colds and croup. Etta cried out in desperation in a letter to her mother-in-law, "If this terrible war would only end! I miss Mr. Munford each day of my life and more." Etta Munford, also thinking of the situation regarding her husband's deserved promotion, further lamented, "I am beginning to despair of Mr. M's promotion—though my heart is quite set upon it, and I can but think it strange that his claim should be overlooked."<sup>18</sup>

Echoing his wife's concern, Thomas Munford had cause to wonder when and if he would receive his promotion to brigadier general. Up to this point, he had commanded a brigade much of the time and had previously been recommended for promotion by General Stuart and Governor Letcher. Munford felt that because he was not a "West Point" officer, Stuart and others were biased against him. He believed he was being passed over by others, some less qualified than him.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> McClellan, *Campaigns of Stuart's Cavalry*, 204; *OR* 25/1:25–26.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Taylor Munford to Mrs. George Wythe Munford, March 4, 1863, Munford–Ellis Papers, DU.

<sup>19</sup> Stuart had previously recommended Munford for promotion in the Fall of 1862.

Before the end of March, Munford was hit by overwhelming sadness due to the loss of his second son, seven-year old Beverly Carlton. He wrote, "My precious little boy was so gentle and affectionate, and clung to me that I feel his loss sadly indeed. What a mighty gap it leaves in my dear little circle—and how hard it will be to forget his gentle ways. . . . Surrounded as I am by men, hardened by the circumstances of war—my own heart and feelings, blinded and changed until I can scarcely realize it."<sup>20</sup>

Just before the impending battle at Kelly's Ford on March 17, 1863, Robert E. Lee, responded to Secretary of War James A. Seddon's desire to have Fitzhugh Lee replace General William "Grumble" Jones as commander of the Valley District cavalry. Robert E. Lee offered, as an alternative, to assign Jones to an infantry brigade, and promote either Munford or Wickham, giving one of them the command. Nothing, however, came of Lee's suggestion because at this point, he really didn't want to relieve Jones. Lee's suggestion that Munford was worthy of promotion goes against Munford's view that because he was not a "West Pointer," he was deemed not worthy by Stuart, Lee, and others in Richmond.<sup>21</sup>

### **Battle of Kelly's Ford**

On March 17, the battle of Kelly's Ford was fought in Culpeper County, one of the early larger scale cavalry fights in Virginia, setting the stage for Brandy Station and cavalry actions of the Gettysburg campaign.

In early March, Union Commander Joseph Hooker ordered Brig. Gen. William Averell to depart from the main body of the Army of the Potomac, then opposite Fredericksburg, and lead his cavalry west up the Rappahannock River, cross it at Kelly's Ford, and defeat a Confederate force near Culpeper, 10 miles west of the ford. Averell was anxious to impress his new commander. He was further inspired by the opportunity to defeat his good friend and former West Point classmate, Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, in command of the Confederate cavalry in that sector of Virginia.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Taylor Munford to Mrs. George Wythe Munford, March 25, 1863, Munford Family Papers, DU. The cause of death may have been the typhoid fever mentioned in the March 4th letter from Elizabeth Tayloe Munford to Mrs. George Wythe Munford.

<sup>21</sup> *OR* 25/2:654; Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 71.

<sup>22</sup> NPS, "Battle of Kelly's Ford."

During the winter, Fitz Lee had sent his friend Averell several messages taunting him about the inferiority of Federal cavalry. Lee had left an especially challenging message before withdrawing from a raid in late February, "I wish you would put up your sword, leave my state, and go home. You ride a good horse, I ride better. If you won't go home, return my visit, and bring me a sack of coffee."<sup>23</sup>

With his 3,000 horsemen and a battery of six cannon, Averell set out on March 16 to accept Lee's challenge. Fearing that a significant enemy force to the northwest might threaten his right flank, Averell expeditiously detached 900 of his troopers to Catlett Station, 15 miles north of Kelly's Ford.<sup>24</sup>

Fitz Lee quickly learned of Averell's movement, but was unsure whether he would attempt to cross the river at Kelly's Ford or at Rappahannock Ford, four miles farther upstream and north of Kelly's. Lee reinforced the 20 Confederate pickets guarding Kelly's Ford. Lee's available sharpshooters were poised to move to either ford. Lee posted the bulk of his command, 800 horsemen and Capt. James Breathed's four-cannon battery, in Culpeper. The Kelly's Ford defenders, about 85 members of the 2nd and 4th Virginia cavalry regiments, found shelter in a dry millrace and blocked the approaches to the ford along both river banks with abatis<sup>25</sup>

At dawn on March 17, General Averell led 2,100 troopers, along with several artillery batteries, and splashed across the swollen Rappahannock River at Kelly's Ford to attack the Confederate cavalry. It had rained overnight, followed by snow to a depth of five inches. Fitzhugh Lee counterattacked with his brigade of about 800 men. Confederate Maj. John Pelham, known as the "Gallant" Pelham and perhaps the best artillerist of the war up to that point, was mortally wounded after returning from some time off duty. The loss of Pelham was a crushing blow to the Confederacy, as the young cannoneer everyone loved had not even had enough time to rejoin his "battalion" before mortally wounded. After achieving success, Union forces withdrew in mid-afternoon. The inconclusive battle, which proved the Federal cavalry would be a force to be reckoned with in the future, resulted in an estimated 200 total casualties. Munford was presiding at the seemingly never-ending court martial of Col. Henry C. Pate, commander of

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<sup>23</sup> George Gordon Meade, ed., *Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade* (New York, 1913), vol. 1:361.

<sup>24</sup> NPS, "Battle of Kelly's Ford."

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*



the 5th Virginia Cavalry, at Culpepper Court House. He did not know of the action in time to join his command until the fight was nearly over.<sup>26</sup>

After Kelly's Ford, the Confederate cavalry was stretched thin; their pickets extended from the Blue Ridge Mountains east to the Chesapeake Bay. The majority of this picket duty along the Rappahannock fell on the shoulders of Rooney Lee and Fitz Lee. The work was hazardous for troopers on both sides of the river. Munford recalled that when his pickets manned their posts, they often excelled in a deadly game. In a postwar letter, the 2nd Virginia commander remembered, "I had a great many Mountaineers that could kill a running deer with their rifles or cut off a wild turkey's head, and if well posted, it was not safe for any man to come within range of their rifles. It was a cruel kind of fun, but it was war, and they could enjoy the practice."<sup>27</sup>

As the hard times of supplying the Confederate army continued, on March 31, Secretary of War James A. Seddon wrote Robert E. Lee urging that Colonel Munford's cavalry, "whose horses are now suffering greatly from want of adequate supplies of forage, should be allowed to go into or on toward Loudoun to protect them [the citizens] . . . he and his men are especially familiar and influential in that county, and could in every way render them most essential aid, while recruiting and refreshing themselves and their animals." The lack of adequate cavalry to replace the 2nd Virginia prevented Lee from acting on this suggestion and therefore, the men of the 2nd continued to suffer, along with many others.<sup>28</sup>

Echoing the problems with supplies, Capt. Thomas B. Holland of Company D reported:

The company would be more efficient and report a larger number of men for duty if the horses could be properly fed, but they have suffered a great deal with hunger and are thus some rendered unfit for service. The men whose horses are thus disabled for the want of forage are detailed to go home and furnish themselves with fresh one which diminishes our numbers and imposes a very heavy expense on the men.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *OR* 25/1:60, 62; Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 71, 76. The horse artillery had not yet been officially formed into a battalion.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas T. Munford to E. A. Carmen, December 10, 1894, Carmen Papers, New York Public Library; Jeffrey D. Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause*, 213.

<sup>28</sup> *OR* 25/2:693–94

<sup>29</sup> Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 77; *OR* 25/2:693–94.

In mid-April, the men returned from horse detail, and with paroled prisoners and new recruits, raised the strength of the brigade to 1,500 troopers. The 2nd Virginia numbered about 400 present for duty.<sup>30</sup>

On April 11, Munford and his 2nd Virginia went on a scout, arriving at Amissville the next day, camping near Cobbler's Mountain. They returned on the 14th, encountering Federal cavalry, but drove them from the hamlet. Captain Edgar Whitehead of Company E recalled, "weather bad, raining torrents, and no forage." He reported the regiment rode to Sperryville on April 17, returning to Culpeper Court House on April 20.<sup>31</sup>

### **Battle of Chancellorsville**

The battle of Chancellorsville was fought from April 30 to May 6, 1863, in Spotsylvania County near the village of Chancellorsville. Two related battles occurred nearby on May 3 at Fredericksburg and Salem Church. The main fight at Chancellorsville pitted Joseph Hooker's Army of the Potomac against an army less than half its size, Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Chancellorsville became known as Lee's greatest victory because of his risky decision to divide his army in the presence of a much larger enemy, a judgment resulting in a momentous Confederate victory. This triumph, a product of Lee's audacity and Hooker's tentativeness, was tempered by heavy casualties and the mortal wounding of Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson as a result of friendly fire, a loss that Lee reportedly likened to "losing my right arm."<sup>32</sup>

The Chancellorsville campaign began with the crossing of the Rappahannock River by the Union army under Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum on the morning of April 27. Simultaneously, Union cavalry under Maj. Gen. George Stoneman began a long-distance raid against Lee's supply lines. This combined offensive was ineffectual. Three days later, Federal infantry crossed the Rapidan River via Germanna and Ely's Fords, concentrating near Chancellorsville. Combined

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 77.

<sup>32</sup> NPS, "Battle of Chancellorsville."

with the Union force facing Fredericksburg, Hooker planned a double envelopment, attacking Lee from both his front and rear.<sup>33</sup>

On April 28, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker began crossing the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford. Stuart notified Robert E. Lee and then concentrated his cavalry near Brandy Station. The next day, Fitz Lee's brigade skirmished with William Averell's Federal cavalry at Stevensburg. Stuart detached Fitz Lee's brigade, ordering them to Raccoon Ford, where they camped for the night.<sup>34</sup>

General Hooker's army was in possession of Chancellorsville. Stuart marched his command toward Todd's Tavern, where he planned to camp for the night. As Stuart's troopers rode along at night, they encountered the 6th New York Cavalry, returning from a scout to Spotsylvania Court House. Stuart ordered his 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Virginia regiments to charge the New Yorkers, but the Federal horsemen escaped to Chancellorsville, leaving pickets at a fork in the road. Stuart ordered the 2nd Virginia to charge the pickets, resulting in capture of the pickets, freeing some of their own troopers, who had been taken prisoner earlier by the New Yorkers.<sup>35</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel James W. Watts remembered the charge, "Very soon we encountered the picket or advance guard, when the charge was ordered, and gallantly made, scattering the command in our front which we learned was the 6th New York, commanded by Lt. Col. [Duncan] McVicar who acted very gallantly. . . . After the fight we were ordered to Spotsylvania Court House with the [captured] prisoners." The highly respected McVicar was mortally wounded in the fight. Stuart's Adjutant, Maj. Heros Von Borcke, had his horse shot and killed under him at the head of Stuart's column during this fight.<sup>36</sup>

On May 1, General Hooker advanced from Chancellorsville toward Robert E. Lee, but Lee split his army in the face of superior numbers, leaving a small force at Fredericksburg to discourage Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick from advancing, while he attacked Hooker's advance with

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<sup>33</sup> Stephen W. Sears, *Chancellorsville* (Boston, 1996), 120–24, 137–38.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 78; Eric J. Wittenberg, *The Union Cavalry Comes of Age*, 156. McVicar was so respected by all that the historian of the 6th New York recorded that the Confederates "paid every respect to his remains." His body was conveyed to the nearby Alsop farm and "tenderly cared for." General Fitzhugh Lee sent Rev. Dabney Ball, Chaplain of the 1st Virginia Cavalry, who prayed over the remains of the gallant McVicar. It has been told that "even General J.E.B Stuart patted the forehead of the Colonel and said, 'Brave man, brave man.'" Reference: William B. Besley and Gilbert Guion Wood, *History of the Sixth New York Cavalry: Second Brigade – First Division – Cavalry Corps* (Boston, Ma, 2010), 107.

three-quarters of his army. Despite strong objections from subordinates, Hooker, wanting reinforcements, withdrew his army to defensive lines around Chancellorsville, allowing Lee to determine the next step. Hooker wanted to entice Lee to attack while he was in a strong defensive position.<sup>37</sup>

On May 2, Lee divided his army again, retaining 15,000 soldiers; he sent Stonewall Jackson's entire 30,000-man corps on a flanking march around the right flank of the Union XI Corps under Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard. On the morning of May 2, Jackson began to move his corps to accomplish the flanking mission. Munford, just detailed to Jackson that morning, rode at the head of the advance infantry column with Jackson and his chief of artillery, Col. Stapleton Crutchfield, while Maj. Cary Breckinridge led the 2nd Virginia. Munford wrote, "My regiment was all the cavalry that Jackson required."<sup>38</sup>

About 1:00 p.m., Munford's troopers reached the Orange Plank Road, where it angled northwest towards the Turnpike and the position of Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's line on the extreme end on the right flank of the Union army. This was the path Jackson expected to use. Munford led his regiment up that road, stopping at Hickman's farm, just a mile and a quarter from the Turnpike. Munford sent a squadron further up the road, striking a picket of the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry, driving it in. Munford's troopers got a good look at Howard's line, noticing it was unanchored. They reported back to Munford, just as Fitz Lee was riding up. Fitz Lee quickly rode to tell Jackson, marching up the Brock Road. Lee accompanied Jackson to see the situation for himself.<sup>39</sup>

Earlier that morning, Munford had been at Jackson's headquarters with Brigadier Generals Robert E. Rodes and Raleigh E. Colston, and Major Stapleton Crutchfield to get his orders just before Jackson's attack of Hooker's army. Jackson knew these VMI grads and former professors and trusted their abilities. Munford had been Jackson's cadet adjutant, while Raleigh Colston had been a senior at the Institute when Munford was there. Stapleton Crutchfield had roomed with Munford. Colston, Rodes, and Crutchfield, like Jackson, also had been VMI professors. There were 20 or more officers in the 2nd Virginia who had attended VMI. Jackson

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<sup>37</sup> NPS, "Battle of Chancellorsville."

<sup>38</sup> Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 79; Whitehead, "Campaigns of Munford's 2nd Virginia Cavalry," 59.

<sup>39</sup> Ernest B. Ferguson, *Chancellorsville 1863: The Souls of the Brave* (New York, Vintage Books, 1993), 164.

knew all these soldiers personally, and these men had served him in the 1862 Valley Campaign, the Seven Days' campaign, and at Second Manassas. Jackson ordered Munford "to guard his left flank and, if possible, seize and hold Ely's Ford Road, which we did, and when I left, Jackson said to me, 'The Va. Military Institute will be heard from today.'"<sup>40</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel James Watts, quoted Munford on the flanking march, "After the 2d Va. Cavalry had cleared the Brock Road the enemy [17th Pennsylvania Cavalry] in a sharp skirmish, Gen. Fitz Lee came up to Jackson, who told him, 'This road must be held until my troops pass.'" Jackson left the Stonewall Brigade to support the cavalry. "The column moved forward," continued Watts, "the 2d Va. Cavalry leading, across the pike, two miles north. Here the column turned east and the 2d Va. Cavalry again encountered and drove in the [17th Pennsylvania] cavalry picket, supported by artillery."<sup>41</sup>

Munford added, "When we struck the Plank Road, we found a picket of the 17th Penn. Cavalry, and Breckridge's and Whitehead's squadron of my regiment charged and drove them back on their infantry support." At this point, Jackson's line of battle was formed, with General Rodes first, supported by General Colston, and then by Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill's division in column, ready to go where most needed.<sup>42</sup>

Munford recalled:

We moved with [Brigadier General Alfred] Iverson's brigade and on its left, but my regiment was ordered to bear to the left and to guard the left flank. We, of course, could not make headway until we got to the road, but we captured the Commissary Department of [Major General Oliver O.] Howard's Corps with some six or eight slaughtered beeves and as many stragglers as we could well guard, and held Ely's Ford road before night, driving the enemy's cavalry picket to the ford.<sup>43</sup>

Jackson's flanking maneuver surprised the Federal XI Corps under the ineffectual General Howard; Jackson rolled them up, routing them. Union III Corps commander Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Sickles reported, "The fugitives of the Eleventh Corps swarmed from the woods and

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<sup>40</sup> Whitehead, "The Campaigns of Munford's 2nd Virginia Cavalry," 59–60; *OR* 25/1:885–87; Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 80. Many historians and the VMI Archives report Jackson's quote as, "The Institute will be heard from today."

<sup>41</sup> Driver, *2nd Virginia Cavalry*, 79.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

swept frantically over the cleared fields, in which my artillery was parked. The exulting enemy at their heels mingled yells with their volleys, and in the confusion which followed it seemed as if cannon and caissons, dragoons, cannoneers, and infantry . . . Ascertaining the enterprise of cutting us off from the army to be hopeless, the enemy sullenly withdrew to the line of rifle pits and breastworks formerly held by the Eleventh Corps." As Jackson sought to continue to roll up the right flank, he ran up against a stubborn I Corps under Maj. Gen. John F. Reynolds. The guns of the XII Corps brought Rodes's division to a standstill. Jackson's attack stalled. The positioning of Daniel E. Sickles's III Corps and Pleasonton's cavalry on the right flank of Jackson's cavalry cut off direct communication with General Lee's right.<sup>44</sup>

Jackson wanted to continue the fight after darkness had closed in. While performing a personal reconnaissance in advance of his line, Jackson was mortally wounded by fire from his own men. Major General J.E.B. Stuart temporarily replaced him as corps commander. The battle continued the next day, under the temporary command of Stuart, who turned in an excellent performance as an infantry commander.<sup>45</sup>

On May 3, Lee launched multiple attacks against the Union position at Chancellorsville, resulting in heavy losses on both sides. The same day, General Sedgwick forded the Rappahannock River, defeated the small Confederate force at Marye's Heights in the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, and then moved to west towards Salem Church. There, Confederates fought a successful delaying action, and by May 4 had driven Sedgwick's men back to Banks's Ford, surrounding them on three sides. Early on May 5, Sedgwick withdrew across the ford. Hooker subsequently withdrew the remainder of his army across U.S. Ford the night of May 5-6. The campaign ended on May 7, when George Stoneman's cavalry reached Union lines east of Richmond.<sup>46</sup>

J.E.B. Stuart reported, lauding Fitz Lee, "The cavalry was well managed by Brigadier General Fitz Lee, who seized Ely's ford, and held the road to within two miles of Chancellorsville, driving the enemy's cavalry from the former place. His men, without rations or

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<sup>44</sup> *OR* 25/1:200-201; 384–85.

<sup>45</sup> Major General Robert Rodes actually replaced Jackson at first, but three hours later Stuart claimed the mantle of Jackson. Munford thought it was "a great piece of injustice." Ref: Darrell Collins, *Major General Robert E. Rodes of the Army of Northern Virginia: A Biography* (New York, 2008), 220.

<sup>46</sup> NPS, "Battle of Fredericksburg."

forage, displayed a heroism rarely met with under any circumstances, and guarding the two flanks, accomplished an indispensable part of the great success." Munford claimed his and Wickham's reports were delivered to Rosser in the presence of Jedediah Hotchkiss, but were never received by the war department. Neither Fitz Lee nor Rosser wrote a report.<sup>47</sup>

Some troopers were growing extremely tired of the war. Robert W. Parker wrote his wife about the unlikelihood of being able to purchase a substitute to take his place in the 2nd Virginia Cavalry, even though he was willing to spend "twenty-five hundred and even more if I could get out of this war, even if it didn't last six months longer."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *OR* 25/1:889; Thomas T. Munford to Charles Blackford, May 23, 1901, Munford–Ellis Papers, DU.

<sup>48</sup> Robert W. Parker to his wife, May 17, 1863, Robert W. Parker Papers, 1858-1889, SHC, UNC, Chapel Hill, NC; Wright, ed., *Lee's Last Casualty*, 102.