

A Sharp Cavalry action at Waynesboro

At dawn on the 15th June, union and confederate cavalry brigades clashed at Waynesboro.

Col. Weynkoop's Union cavalry had occupied the town 2 days before and had set-up camp and patrols around the town to monitor for rebel activity in the south of the Shenandoah valley. In this aim Weynkoop was ably mentored by his divisional Commander, the Hungarian hero, general Julius Stahel.

Arrayed against the Federal forces were general 'Bobby' Ransom's cavalry brigade, who had moved up to Waynesboro under cover of night on the evening of the 14th June. After much planning the rebels launched an attack at first light, having been able to advance to within one mile of the town via a little known tracks through local woods, which kept them under cover most of the way.



See attached map for initial dispositions.

It should be noted at this juncture that Col. Weynkoop had become aware of increased enemy activity in the area and had planned a strategic withdrawal from the town in the morning, the rebel attack, however, caught him a little off guard.

Ransom's force announced themselves with a bold sweep by the 14th, 16th & 17th VA to their right skirting the woods south east of Waynesboro and attacking the camp of the 22nd PA, this was all accompanied by a salvo of artillery crashing into the Federal encampments.

The Federal troops were, however, already awake, preparing to break camp and were therefore not totally caught 'knapping', however, their initial response to the onslaught was confused, with the 20th & 22nd PA regiments struggling to form firing lines before a second series of artillery rounds crashed in, causing quite some casualties.

As the Federal troops formed their firing lines the Confederate cavalry rode on, picking up speed as they went. Their yells and hurrahs! breaking the stillness of the morning. Finally as the rebels spurred on their mounts for the last hundred yards the union troopers opened up with an intense salvo of fire from their Sharps breach loaders, cutting down many a brave cavalryman. The rebels visibly shuddered and their horses stalled before they rallied back and pressed forward through a barrage of lead.

In this time the 15th NY had managed to mount and rode in support of it's Pennsylvanian cousins, this time the two brigades made contact and in the swirling mass of men, horses and smoke the higher numbers of rebels pressed their northern

counterparts back forcibly. The melee then pushed one way then another before both sides broke off to regroup.

Strahel and Weynkoop, took this opportunity to order a general with drawl to Staunton, the 20th PA & 15th NY regiments forming firing lines to cover the retreat and guard the withdrawal of their baggage.

On regrouping the rebels took stock of their casualties, and on seeing the Yankees move to with draw elected not to press the matter any further, for risk of taking unnecessary further losses.

It is estimated that the Federal troops will reach Staunton by lunchtime, Ransom would need to decide on an immediate pursuit or to wait for re-enforcements.

Outcome

Tactical: Draw
Strategic: Rebel Win

Losses

Union:	Killed 0	Wounded: 1	Missing: 2
Confederate:	Killed 1	Wounded: 1	Missing: 2

One Supply Point used by both sides.