

17th Annual Reenactment 2006 Neshaminy State Park Bensalem, PA.

“Action on the Upper Potomac 1861”

Battle Scenarios

Saturday, April 29, 2006

Battle of “Ball’s Bluff” (October 21, 1861)

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Battle of Ball’s Bluff, Leesburg, VA. October 21, 1861

U.S. Forces

Col. Edward Baker’s Brigade:

71st Penna. (1st Calf.)

15th Mass

42nd N.Y.

19th Mass

N.Y. Batt.

Bunting's

3rd N.Y. Battery

Cavalry: guards, pickets, orderlies

C.S.A. Forces:

Gen. Nathan 'Shanks' Evans, Brigade

13th Miss

17th Miss

18th Miss

8th Va.

Richmond Battery

4th Va. cavalry

1:00PM: Troops assemble in respective camps

1:15PM: form Battalions; prepare to march out

1:30PM: Federals march to deployment area at head of the Ridge above the wilderness area, avoiding contact with the Confederates.

Confederates march out through wilderness area to the Cross roads area
Union forces are advancing in skirmish order, when both skirmish lines encounter one another.

A fire fight breaks out. Skirmishers feel each others lines, attempt flanking maneuvers. etc. Confederate cavalry charges Union line.

2:00PM: Federals advance back through wilderness via different routes to vicinity of the ‘Cross Roads’ area; forces collide and fighting opens
Hot general action ensues in rough terrain. Charges and countercharges are mounted by the respective commanders.
Flanking actions are attempted and repulsed.

Guns are brought up in support.

Troops deployed back and forth sometimes at double quick over the fields.

2:30PM: Initial skirmishing increases as more supports are brought up on both sides; the Federals begin to give way and retire slowly toward the Open field, where battalion maneuvering takes place.

2:45PM: Federals fall back under pressure to 'Landing' area, forming a line in advance of Hill and on Hill; forming semi-circle fronting the Confederate line (Confederates' backs to the crowd, facing the Federals); open attacks.

3:00PM Confederate assaults, Federal counter-assaults continue; a CSA officer rides to front of Union line and orders an unsupported charge, which is bloodily repulsed unhinging Federal line; Col. Baker walks the line encouraging men, firing cannon; a Rebel comes forward and shoots Baker with pistol, claming his body; other Rebels seize Baker; the men of Baker's command rush forward to reclaim the body; Confederates charge forward and attempt to seize the flag of Baker's command; the flag is rescued. Col. Cogswell is informed of Baker's loss, takes command.

3:15PM: Federals under great pressure begin to fall back over the Hill; hand-to-hand combat erupts; many prisoners taken; others fling down arms and flee over Hill into the river. Action ends. Authorized "taps" call, ending fighting. Prisoners are exchanged and return to commands.

Both forces reform and salute one another. They march in review back to camps.

Federal troops are positioned behind works on Hill with skirmishers extended out into field.

Confederates advance from different quarters.

At one point a Confederate officer in blue rides (runs?) up to a portion of troops in line and orders them forward to charge a large body of Confederate. Their desperate charge is easily repulsed and almost unhinges the Union line.

Toward the end of the action, Col. Baker is killed riding across the front of his troops, his body is fought over by both sides, but eventually he is recovered and brought into Union lines.

Baker's death unsteadies the Federals, some of whom begin to fall back toward the river. The Confederate commander seizes the opportunity and orders a general advance all along the line. Union resistance collapses into a rout and panic. Men flee, throwing down their arms and equipment. A color dropped by a fleeing Union color bearer is picked up by the jubilant Confederate who capture many men begging for quarter, and keep up a murderous fire as Confederates run to back of the Hill to fire down at retreating Federals.

Honor ceremony (taps)

Both forces reform and march back to respective camps. March by crowd.

Sunday, April 30, 2006
Battle of "Bolivar Heights" (October 16, 1861)

Sunday April 30, 2006 portraying:
Battle of Bolivar Heights, Va. Oct. 16, 1861

USA: Col. John W. Geary, comd'g
28th Penna. 1st R.I. battery
13th Mass 9th N.Y. battery
3rd Wisc. Cavalry - guards, orderlies, pickets

CSA: Col. Turner Ashby, comd'g
13th Miss Richmond battery
18th Miss 7th Va. Cavalry
8th Va.

1:30PM

US action opens down hill bramble hill. CS action opens with troops advancing from Landing area.

Union troops advance down bramble toward cross roads area in skirmish order. Confederate forces advance from Landing area into rough terrain in three columns, cavalry massed as one column.

1:45PM

Opposing forces encounter one another. Union in skirmish order, Confederates attack in 3 columns with cavalry charging the Union line.

Union forces fall back under heavy pressure on reserves.

2:00PM – 2:30PM

General action develops: charges and countercharges mounted against opposing lines, guns are brought up in support.

Charges are repulsed with some loss on both sides but most shots go wild and high. Officers have difficulty executing movements, keeping men in line, commands are misunderstood, orders are botched and evolutions are poorly performed

2:30PM – 2:45PM

Slowly the Confederate forces are driven back by reinforced Union troops.

A Union force is pushed forward onto the Confederate left flank, turns the flank and the Confederate troops are withdrawn back into Landing area.

They make their initial stand behind the works.

2:45PM – 3:15PM

Union troops assault Confederate lines. Columns are formed to assault front and flanks. Having taken Confederate Works, a line is held at the works extending up onto the hill on left.

PUBLIC BATTLE DEMONSTRATION

Several charges are repulsed by the rapid firing Confederate infantry. After several attempts to drive the Confederates away fail, a grand charge several lines deep is mounted: The 1st line is annihilated, the 2nd line falters and goes to ground short of the works, the 3rd line sweeps forward to and over the works, capturing men and a color and driving the remaining Confederates in retreat. Union forces will pull back preparatory to a return to Union territory and a defense on the Heights to left. Final assaults force the Union Line back onto Heights where the Confederates are repulsed, ending the actions.

A flag of truce is arranged so the dead may be buried, wounded tended to and prisoners exchanged.

1:00PM: Troops assemble in respective camps

1:15PM: form battalions

1:30PM: Federals depart camps and march to area of deployment at the top of the hill skirmishers extending down to 'Cross Roads' area

Confederates depart camps and march to 'Landing' area, advancing into the Wilderness area, and extending skirmishers up to the 'Cross Roads'.

1:45PM: forces encounter one another and commence skirmishing; supports are brought up. Federals drive the Confederates slowly back in a fighting withdrawal.

2:00PM: forces reach the open field; battalion maneuvering

2:15PM: Confederates continue to fall back under Federal pressure via woods and river road

2:30PM: Confederates form lines in 'Landing' area; Federals mount renewed and repeated assaults, preceded by skirmishers; cavalry on flanks, skirmishing.

2:45PM: Confederates continue to fall back slowly to breast works, where fighting continues; Federals assault the works, and drive the Confederates away. They continue to fall back toward river and their own camp.

3:00PM: Confederates assault the Federal lines at works and on Hill to the right with brief pursuit of Federals

3:15PM: Battle ends with appropriate calls; both forces reform facing each other; shake hands; and march in review back to camps.

End of Sunday's action

Battle Reenactment Ends. Plan on coming next year!

Cars allowed into camps at 4PM.

Please police your camps: trash in bags at head of streets; straw gathered into piles; clean up the area to leave Park as when you found it!

Thank you!

Neshaminy Committee.