United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Rich Mountain Battlefield
other name/site number: Camp Garnett, Hart Homestead

2. Location

street & number: 6 mi. west of Beverly on Rich Mountain Road, Co. Rt. 37/8 not for publication: N/A
city/town: Beverly vicinity: X
county: Randolph code: 083 zip code: 26253

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property 
meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant 
nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet.)

Signature of Certifying Official: ____________________________ Date: 6/1/92

State or Federal agency and bureau: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

In my opinion, the property 
meets 
does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

State or Federal agency and bureau: ____________________________
4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- [ ] entered in the National Register
  See continuation sheet.

- [ ] determined eligible for the National Register
  See continuation sheet.

- [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register

- [ ] removed from the National Register

- [ ] other (explain): ____________________________

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Category of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply) (Check only one box)

- [X] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

building(s)

- [X] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITH PROPERTY
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER. N/A

6. Function or Use

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS
(Enter categories from instructions)

Defense -- Battle site, fortification

CURRENT FUNCTIONS
(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape -- Forest. Work in progress - park
Rich Mountain Battlefield

Name of Property

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: (Enter categories from instructions)
N/A

MATERIALS
(Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation
Walls
Roof
Other

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

X B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.
8. Statement of Significance (Cont'd)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE
(Enter categories from instructions)
Military

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE
June and July, 1861

SIGNIFICANT DATES
July 11, 1861

SIGNIFICANT PERSON
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
McClellan, Gen. George B.

CULTURAL AFFILIATION
N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER
N/A

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
Rich Mountain Battlefield
Name of Property

Randolph County, WV
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

BIBLIOGRAPHY
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # __________
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # __________

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository: ________________________________

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property: 2 1/2 APPROX.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheets.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheets.)

Name/Title: See Continuation Sheet

Organization: ________________________________ Date: ____________________

Street & Number: ________________________________ Telephone: (____) ________

City or Town: ________________________________ State: __ ZIP: ___
Rich Mountain Battlefield  
Beverly vicinity, Randolph County, W.V.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 215 approximately

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Rich Mountain Battlefield
Name of Property

Randolph County, WV
County and State

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Submit the following items with the completed form:

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

PHOTOGRAPHS
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

PROPERTY OWNER
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: See Below

Street & Number: ______________________ Telephone: (____)_____

City or Town: _________________________ State:____ ZIP: __________

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Property Owners

Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites,
P.O. Box 1862, Fredericksburg, VA 22402.

Mr. Ralph Beckwith, Beckwith Lumber Company,
Slaty Fork, WV 26291.

Mr. Willard B. Posson, 13918 Hunters Hawk,
San Antonio, TX 78230.

Mr. Richard Cox Bishop, 1605 N.E. 7th Terrace,
Gainsville, FL 32609.
The Rich Mountain Battlefield includes the site of the battle at the crest of Rich Mountain, the Confederate Camp Garnett at the western base of that mountain, and the historic roadway which connects the two, over which the battle was fought. It is located about 6 miles west of the town of Beverly, West Virginia, which in 1861 was the county seat of Randolph County, then Virginia. The buildings which existed at the time of the battle are gone, and the site has been surrounded by nearby strip mines, oil and gas drilling, a limestone quarry, and intermittent logging. In spite of this adjacent activity both the battle site and Camp Garnett are in surprisingly intact condition.

At the time of the battle Rich Mountain Battlefield was mostly wooded with clearings cut out for subsistence homesteads. The Joseph Hart homestead at the battle site on the crest of the mountain consisted of a log house, small log stable, corn crib, spring house and garden. These are depicted within the Jed Hotchkiss battlefield map (Map 6). Another homestead with a house belonging to Alexander Hart was located on the south side of the road in front of the Camp Garnett fortifications at the western base of the mountain. The fortifications mostly were earthen parapets with ditches in front of them, buttressed by piled brush (Map 5). The woods in front of these fortifications were largely cleared in the building of the camp. The Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike crossed over the mountain, passing through both Camp Garnett and the battle site and connecting them (Map 4). There was also a more direct road which was the Old State Road before the Turnpike was built which led from Camp Garnett directly up the mountain (included but not labeled on Map 5).

The current vegetation of the Rich Mountain Battlefield is a mixed hardwood forest dominated by oak. The area is more forested now than in 1861, although small clearings still exist at both sites.

The Federal attack at the Battlefield site occurred through the Hart Homestead area (feature A on map 2). The Joseph Hart house, and the barn which had replaced the original stable, both burned down in 1940. Some unevaluated foundation remains of the house and spring house are still evident (feature B on sketch map 2). The garden area remains open. A metal state historical marker, and a modern monument commemorating the Hart house both stand near the house site (Non-contributing objects 1 on map 2).

The stable yard area is now overgrown and forested (feature C on map 2). An unevaluated partial foundation remains of the later barn. The area contains boulders which were used by the soldiers as makeshift breastworks during the battle. Inscriptions of the names of some of the soldiers can still be seen carved into some of these rocks, presumably carved by veterans returning to the scene after the war.

Modern intrusions on the site consist of a power line crossing the site (non-contributing structure 2 on map 2), and side roads (non-contributing structures 3 on map 2) leading off from the main road.
The connecting area between the battlefield and Camp Garnett is all wooded. The county road today follows the same route as the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike (contributing structure C on map 2), although it has been widened slightly to accommodate automobiles and has been graveled. Several small turnoffs have been added over the years, but overall the road has much of the character evident in 1861. Several modern access roads lead off from the main road (non-contributing structure 3 on map 2). One of the access roads appears to follow the path of the Old State Road (contributing structure D on map 2) which pre-dates the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike. A skirmish occurred during the battle between Federal forces and a Confederate reinforcing party at an undiscovered location along one of these roads.

One end of an abandoned strip mine intrudes into these woods, but it is long overgrown and not very noticeable from the road (non-contributing structure 4 on map 2). In addition, a number of other abandoned strip mine areas come near to the site, but are not included in the historic district boundaries.

The Camp Garnett site still shows a complex of earthen and stone fortifications (contributing structure D on map 2). These include a series of relatively unaltered parapet/ditch combinations, some as high as 8 feet. They closely match the original Poe-Hotchkiss map (map 5) of the fort, and argue that the area is relatively pristine. Most of these are constructed of earth, but at least one section contains built up stone walls. There are at least two round cannon emplacements (feature E on map 2), again corresponding with the historic map. The camp also contains a series of curious stone piles and depressions (feature F on map 2). The stone piles resemble collapsed chimneys found at other sites, but it is not clear whether they are in fact associated with the Civil War use of the camp or with later use of the locale. The depressions concentrate on benches above the main parapet and are generally roughly 14 feet in length by 5 feet in width. Some are as deep as 2 feet. These may be a series of rifle pits meant to support the main fortification.

There is a small clearing in the vicinity of the unverified Alexander Hart house site (feature g on map 2), although the building itself burned in the 1940's. On the north side of the road there is a more extensive and better maintained cleared area with an apple orchard, fences, small shed, and a foot bridge over the stream. These are all associated with a 20th century house (non-contributing structure 6 on map 2) which was occupied until 1989. It burned in 1990, and the ruins have recently been removed except for the foundation.

Several old logging roads cut through the parapets in different places. One access road follows a stream bed starting on the approximate site of a historic camp road. Another new access road leads just below the angle at the southern end of Camp Garnett, but has not impacted on it
(non-contributing structures 3 on map 2). An oil well (non-contributing structure 5 on map 2) is located along the main road at the northern end of the fortifications.

Despite several modern intrusions the district retains the qualities of integrity to a degree rarely found on Civil War battlefields. The location and association of the sites are well documented. The setting has been altered relatively little. Most modern intrusions are hidden from view by the dense forests, giving the district an exceptional feeling of a remnant 1860's landscape.
SUMMARY

In one of the earliest engagements of the Civil War, Union troops under the command of Major General George B. McClellan routed Confederates holding the pass over Rich Mountain near Beverly, (West) Virginia. This victory gave the Union control of much of northwestern Virginia.

Rich Mountain Battlefield is nationally significant under Criteria A because this engagement was the deciding battle of McClellan's 1861 western Virginia campaign. This battle led to the withdrawal of Confederate forces from the northwestern counties of Virginia, thus securing these counties, and the B&O Railroad which ran through them, for the Union. It allowed this area to join in forming the government of Loyal Virginia, and to become the nucleus, two years later, of the new State of West Virginia.

Rich Mountain Battlefield is nationally significant under Criteria B because of the importance of this battle in the career of Major General George B. McClellan. As Union Commander at this battle, Gen. McClellan claimed it as a great personal victory, thus establishing his reputation as a winning general just before the disastrous battle of 1st Manassas. As a direct result, President Lincoln appointed him commander of the Army of the Potomac. Gen. McClellan thus had the task of building and training the North's primary army, and leading its campaigns for most of the first two years of the war.

BACKGROUND

In May of 1861 the state of Virginia voted to secede from the Union. Many of the people of Western Virginia had long felt that the state government in Richmond was biased to unfairly benefit the slaveholding aristocracy of the eastern counties. After soundly defeating the ordinance of Secession, the citizens of northwestern Virginia gladly seized the chance to separate themselves from Richmond's grasp. A convention was called at Wheeling to plan a government for "Loyal Virginia".

In the meantime, Richmond authorities sent Col. George A. Porterfield to Grafton to recruit volunteers to protect the B & O Railroad and defend northwestern Virginia for the Confederacy. Finding Grafton to be anti-secession in sentiment, Porterfield retired some twenty miles south to Philippi, a more hospitable base for Confederate volunteers. There he assembled about 600 infantry and 175 cavalry, mostly from local volunteer regiments and militia. These troops were ill equipped and untrained, but enthusiastic.
Major General George B. McClellan, commanding the Federal Department of the Ohio, was charged by the War Department in Washington with securing the loyal counties of western Virginia and protecting the vital B & O Railroad for the Union. Destruction of bridges and other railroad property by Confederate partisans gave him an excuse to send in Federal troops. On June 3, 1861, a combined force of Ohio, Indiana and Loyal Virginia troops surprised the Confederates gathering at Philippi and caused their precipitous retreat. This action, the first land battle of the Civil War, was referred to as the "Philippi Races".

Controlling the Turnpikes

The Confederates fell back another 40 miles southward to Huttonsville, where they received reinforcements and a new commander, General Robert S. Garnett. Garnett proceeded to distribute his troops to fortify two critical passes across the mountains (See map 3). The first of these was at Laurel Hill outside of Belington. It controlled the north-south road from Grafton to Lewisburg. Federal troops advancing from Philippi dug in astride this road, facing the Confederate works.

The other Southern stronghold was Camp Garnett, 23 miles away by road, at the western base of Rich Mountain. This was a half dozen miles west of the small town of Beverly, then county seat of Randolph County. Camp Garnett controlled the crucial east-west Staunton-Parkersburg turnpike, one of the few overland routes connecting Ohio with the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The position here was fortified by earth, stone, and log entrenchments on both sides of, and overlooking, the vital turnpike (See map 5).

Little information exists concerning the construction of Camp Garnett or life in the camp. A period map was prepared by Jed Hotchkiss and was copied over by Federal cartographers (map 5).

William H. Woodley described the camp as follows:

"After our stampede at Philippi we returned to Huttonsville, and in the course of a week or ten days we were reinforced by troops from Virginia, Infantry and Cavalry, and under the command of Colonel Heck, we came back to the western foot of Rich Mountain and went into camp near Alexander Hart's, were we began to fortify and commenced a systematic course of drilling, in the meantime completing a line of breastworks from the top of one ridge down across the pike and small ravine to the top of a parallel ridge to the north. There were very few tents in the command of 2,500 men. We the Upshur Grays, Co. B. 25th Va. Infantry, known at that time as Reger's Battalion, forming the 25th Va. Infantry, made our tents of brush under which we managed to sleep the best we could, with water dripping on our faces (quoted in Bosworth 1916:138)."
For the Confederacy the situation represented an attempt to buy time and rebuild their influence in the area following the disaster at Philippi. The bases established would be used to launch a campaign to drive the Federals out of western Virginia and cut the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Accordingly, Camp Garnett became the location of perhaps the most critical battle fought in western Virginia.

General Garnett divided his command between these two fortifications and several other important places, such as Beverly. The bulk of his forces were stationed at Laurel Hill as it was there he expected the Federal Forces to strike next. By positioning his forces in static bases, Garnett surrendered the initiative to the United States forces. It would cost him dearly.

For the United States forces the situation involved removing Confederate troops from two strong positions, one at Camp Garnett (on Rich Mountain) and one at Laurel Hill. In outlining his plans of operation, General McClellan likened the situation to that faced by the American army facing Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo (Sears 1988:86). McClellan split his forces and sent approximately 500-4,000 men under General Thomas Morris to attract the attention of the 4,000 Confederate troops commanded in person by Garnett at Laurel Hill. McClellan with more than 5,000 Federal troops determined to move against Colonel Pegram's 1,300 men on Rich Mountain.

THE BATTLE OF RICH MOUNTAIN

General McClellan had now taken the field to assume personal command of the Federal forces. He brought his three brigades (about 5000 infantry, two batteries of artillery, and two companies of cavalry) to Roaring Creek Flats, roughly two miles west across the valley from the well entrenched position at Camp Garnett (see Map 4).

Confederate Lt. Col. John Pegram was in command of Camp Garnett with about 1,300 men and four cannons. He feared that the Federals might flank his position by taking the only other known road over the mountain. This little-used trail passed over Rich Mountain to the north and east of his position. To forestall any surprises, Col. Pegram sent two companies to form a picket outpost station at the Hart homestead. The Hart farm was located on the turnpike where it crossed the very summit of Rich Mountain, about one and one-half miles east and far above Camp Garnett (see Map 4).

Thus the troops at Hart's guarded the rear of the main Confederate works. On the morning of July 11, Pegram detected signs that the enemy was moving. He sent reinforcements and one cannon to the pass, making a force there of 310 men under the command of Captain Julius A. deLagnel.
Roaring Creek

Meanwhile in the Union camp, McClellan was hesitant to make a frontal attack on the Confederate position, even with his superior number of troops. Perhaps his recollections of French and English casualties assaulting Russian field fortifications in the Crimean War were vivid enough to make him hesitate.

Twenty-two year old David Hart, son of the loyal Unionist Virginia family who lived at the pass on Rich Mountain, volunteered to lead Federal forces behind Camp Garnett along little known trails and footpaths to the south of the Confederate positions. Accordingly, about 5 a.m. on the morning of July 11, Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans with four regiments of infantry and one company of cavalry, totaling 1,917 men, set out with young Hart up the mountain. Before Rosecrans left, McClellan assured him he would pitch into the enemy once he heard the flanking column's gunfire. Through a mistake, reveille was sounded during the night in the Union camp, thus alerting the Confederates that something was afoot.

The main body of troops, numbering roughly 3,000 men, under the direct command of General McClellan prepared in the early morning to assault the main works at Camp Garnett. The smaller command of Rosecrans would strike the camp at one end diverting attention from McClellan's planned coupe de main. McClellan prepared his troops for heavy fighting and serious casualties during the frontal attack.

The 3rd Ohio infantry regiment was to be the spearhead of the main assault force. The pre-battle speech by Colonel Marrow of that regiment reveals much as to what McClellan had informed his officers to expect.

"Soldiers of the Third: The assault on the enemy's works will be made in the early morning. The Third will lead the column. The secessionists have ten thousand men and forty rifled cannon. They are strongly fortified. They have more men and more cannon than we have. They will cut us to pieces. Marching to attack such an enemy so armed, is marching to a butcher shop rather than to a battle. There is bloody work ahead. Many of you boys, will go out who will never come back again (Colonel Marrow - Third Ohio Infantry as quoted by Beatty 1946:26)."

Some time after Rosecrans and the flanking column left, McClellan decided to call off the attack. The above quote attributed to Marrow perhaps indicates that McClellan overestimated the size of the force he faced, a pattern which would continue throughout his military career. He dispatched a messenger recalling Rosecrans.
The Confederates were aware the Federals were up to some thing but it was not clear what. Confederate officers continued to believe that any flanking attack must come around from the north. This belief was reinforced when the messenger from McClellan to Rosecrans took the wrong path and was captured. The Confederates captured this messenger on their right flank, and so continued to believe the flanking movement was to the north. McClellan's command stood at arms awaiting the return of Rosecrans and the flanking force. Then at about 2:30 p.m. the sounds of musketry, followed shortly thereafter by artillery, reached their ears from the direction from the Confederate rear. For the Federal troops in the main force, the moment had come to pitch in and carry the day. For McClellan it apparently was a moment of great consternation as Rosecrans' tiny command surely would be whipped by the imagined larger Confederate army.

An eyewitness described the scene thus:

"We expected every moment to receive an order to advance. After a time, however, we ascertained that Rosecrans, with a brigade, was seeking the enemy's rear by a mountain path, and we conjectured that, so soon as he had reached it, we would be ordered to make the assault in front. It was a dark, gloomy day, and the hours passed slowly.

"Between two and three o'clock we heard shots in the rear of the fortifications; then volleys of musketry, and the roar of artillery. Every man sprang to his feet, assured that the moment for making the attack had arrived. General McClellan and staff came galloping up, and a thousand faces turned to hear the order to advance; but no order was given. The general halted a few paces from our line and sat on his horse listening to the guns, apparently in doubt as to what to do; and as he sat there with indecision stamped on every line of his countenance, the battle grew fiercer at the enemy's rear. Every volley could be heard distinctly. There would be an occasional lull for a moment, and then the uproar would break out again with increased violence. If the enemy is too strong for us to attack, what must be the fate of Rosecrans' four regiments, cut off from us and struggling against such odds? Hours passed; as the last straggling shots and final silence told us the battle had ended, gloom settled down on every soldier's heart, and the belief grew strong that Rosecrans had been defeated and his brigade cut to pieces or captured. The belief grew to certain conviction soon after we heard shout after shout go up from the fortifications in our front (Beatty 1946: 27-28)."
On Rich Mountain

Rosecrans' Brigade, never receiving the order to halt, struggled as quietly as possible through the thickly wooded, mountainous terrain. They had set out upon a longer route than planned originally due to the unfortunate alarm as they prepared to leave Roaring Creek. (See map 4. This shows the appropriate direction of this march, but the actual route was considerable longer). The command was further delayed by missed directions and drenched by rain. At roughly 2:30 p.m., the Federal column, now on the top of the mountain, encountered Confederate skirmishers.

They advanced to within 350 yards of the Confederate outpost at the Hart farm where Seessionist troops quickly scrambled to meet this completely unexpected attack from the south (see map 6). Abandoning now useless prepared positions, Confederates took cover on the opposite side of the rocks, trees, and log breastworks in the stable yard on the north side of the road. The Federals attacked and regrouped several times, but the Confederates, with the help of their one cannon, held their position in spite of being severely outnumbered. At one point, the Union troops pulled back. The Rebels gave out a cheer, and sent a messenger to Camp Garnett claiming they had won the day.

Rosecrans' troops reformed and attacked again. Their superior numbers pressed the Confederates hard. The horses with the ammunition caisson panicked and bolted down the mountain. The Federals concentrated their fire on the canoneers with telling effect, until Captain delAgnel was left operating the gun by himself. Soon he too fell wounded.

Overwhelmed by superior numbers, the Confederates gave way and withdrew in disorder into the woods behind them. It was nearly 6 p.m. and Rosecrans ordered his exhausted troops to camp for the night, remaining ready for immediate action.

Camp Garnett

Hearing the firing and responding to a request from delAgnel, Pegram sent reinforcements and another cannon toward the pass. The group was attacked somewhere en route and took cover. At this point there is some confusion as to whether the runaway caisson collided with the relief force's gun or whether Indiana troops shot some of the horses hauling the artillery piece. In any case the cannon overturned and, after a brief skirmish, was captured by Indiana troops (Zinn 1971:17).
Near Beverly

A second Confederate reinforcement column, under the command of Colonel William C. Scott, of some 570 Confederates (44th Virginia Infantry and some attached cavalry) was by this time approaching the battlefield from the direction of Beverly. This command closed to within a mile of the battle when the firing died out and cheering could be heard. They were too late.

Colonel Scott and a small party scouted the area and discovered a large body of Federal troops. The Union soldiers managed to shoot one of the scouts. Colonel Scott previously had received information that Rosecrans' force numbered roughly 4,000 - 5,000 men and they appeared to have driven off any organized Confederate resistance. Accordingly his troops returned to Beverly.

Roaring Creek

General McClellan, meanwhile, had made no movement even though the plan had called for him to make a simultaneous attack on Camp Garnett. The last message to reach him from Rosecrans was sent at 11:00 a.m. and there had been no direct news since. McClellan had heard the cheering from the Confederate camp and feared Rosecrans was defeated. During the day McClellan began work on an artillery position and prepared a road for the artillery to move upon. He then retired for the evening content to wait for further developments.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Camp Garnett

After personally viewing the final collapse of organized resistance by his rear guard Pegram returned to Camp Garnett. A council of war determined to spike the remaining two cannon and join General Garnett at Laurel Hill. Jed Hotchkiss (who would later win fame as Stonewall Jackson's cartographer and aide), guided the command in its attempted escape.

At dawn on the following day, July 12th, Rosecrans marched down the turnpike, entered Camp Garnett from the rear, and found it abandoned except for some 69 sick, wounded, and medical personnel. He then sent word to McClellan that Pegram's force had been routed and the camp was secured.

The Union troops lost 12 killed and 62 wounded in the assaults at the Hart farm. Reported Confederate losses ranged from 20 to 135 killed. Official records confirm at least 33 killed and 39 wounded (Haselberger 1987:139,176).
Escape and Capture

With their position outflanked, the Confederate forces fled from the battlefield and from Camp Garnett. Hotchkiss with about 50 men, as well as two other groups of retreating Confederates, were able to retreat through Beverly and south before the Federals occupied it. Col. Pegram, without supplies or food for his demoralized men, and believing his column to be cut off, decided to surrender. One of his officers, Captain J.B. Moorman, offered to lead the troops east by the Seneca Road and escape, but Pegram put no faith in this. Moorman took his 40 men of the Franklin Guards and escaped during the night, while Pegram surrendered his 525 men and 30 officers of the 25th and 20th Virginia Infantry regiments.

The position at Laurel Hill was now also endangered, and General Garnett led his men in a disastrous retreat through the mountains to the north and east, losing most of his supplies, a number of men, and his own life in the process. Garnett became the first general officer killed in the Civil War while directing his rear guard at Corricks Ford.

CONSEQUENCE

The Battle of Rich Mountain, though small by later Civil War standards, had profound effects on the subsequent history of western Virginia and the nation.

Statehood

The Federal Government retained control of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and northwestern Virginia. There would be future small campaigns in western Virginia, including one which would tarnish the career of no less a general than Robert E. Lee. However, except for scattered raids, the area and its vital railway was lost to the Confederacy. Western Virginia would provide troops to both sides, but the economic value of the area as well as the majority of the population were available for use by the United States Government. Within two years, the State of West Virginia would be admitted to the Union.

The Rise of George B. McClellan

General McClellan promptly sent a telegram to Washington claiming a great victory:

"Col. E.D. Townsend

Beverly Va. [July 12] 1861

I have the honor to inform you that the army under my command has gained a decisive victory, which seems to have accomplished the objects of my march...."
The next day he continued in more detail:

"Success of today is all that I could desire. We captured six four brass cannon, one of which was rifled, all their camp equipage & transportation even to his tents. The number of tents will probably reach two hundred and more than sixty wagons. Their killed and wounded will amount to full hundred and fifty. At least one hundred prisoners and more coming in constantly. I know already of ten officers killed & prisoners. Their retreat complete. Occupied Beverly by a rapid march. Garnett abandoned his camp this morning, leaving much of his equipage. He came within a few miles of Beverly but our rapid march turned him back in great confusion and he is now retreating on the road to St. George. I have ordered General Morris to follow him up closely. I have telegraphed for the two Penna Regts at Cumberland to join Gen. Hill at Rowlesburg. The Gen. is concentrating all his troops at Rowlesburg [to] cut off Garnett's retreat near West Union or if possible St. George. I may say that we have driven out some ten thousand5 troops strongly entrenched with the loss of eleven killed and thirty-five wounded. Provision returns found here show Garnett's force to have been ten thousand men. They were eastern Virginians, Georgians, Tennesseans and I think Carolinians.6 Tomorrow I can give full details as to prisoners. Will move on Huttonsville tomorrow and endeavor to seize the Cheat Mountain pass where there are now but a few troops. I hope that Gen. Cox has by this time drive Wise out of the Kanawha Valley. In that case I shall have accomplished the object of liberating Western Virginia. I hope the General will approve my operations (OR Vol. 2, Chap. IX: 203-204)."

These communications were followed by a series of equally dramatic proclamations of victory consummating with the death of General Garnett. Gen. McClellan's address to his troops demonstrates these claims:

"ARMY OF OCCUPATION, WESTERN VIRGINIA,
Beverly, Va., July 16, 1861

Soldiers of the Army of the West!
I am more than satisfied with you.
You have annihilated two armies, commanded by educated and experienced soldiers, entrenched in mountain fastnesses fortified at their leisure. You have taken five guns, twelve colors, fifteen hundred stand of arms, one thousand prisoners, including more than forty officers--one of the two
commanders of the rebels is a prisoner, the other lost his life on the field of battle. You have killed more than two hundred and fifty of the enemy, who has lost all his baggage and camp equipage. All this has been accomplished with the loss of twenty brave men killed and sixty wounded on your part. . .

Geo. B. McClellan,
Major-General, U.S. Army, Commanding.

(OR Vol. 2 Chap IX:236)"

Though his troops had inflicted few Confederate casualties, the timing was right and this string of small victories secured McClellan's reputation as a winning general. His own bombastic rhetoric also contributed in no small way to an initially positive public image among Northerners looking for war heroes. These reports contrasted sharply with the disastrous defeat at Manassas, July 21, 1861. McClellan was promptly called to Washington and on July 22, 1861 was appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac.

General Rosecrans' independent role in the action was not admitted by McClellan.7 The Union needed a winner to champion its efforts and to President Lincoln General George McClellan appeared to be that man. Had Lincoln been present at the battle he would have noted all the flaws in McClellan's generalship which would later characterize his two tenures as head of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan showed himself to be overly cautious and to have a knack for swelling the size of the obstacles faced by his commands. At Rich Mountain he inflated Confederate strength roughly ten times.

McClellan demonstrated himself to be an able organizer, administrator, and planner. However, when facing the enemy the "fog of war" appeared to settle thicker around him than others present. This small action in the hills of western Virginia had far-reaching consequences for the future course of the war.

McClellan would rebuild the Army of the Potomac. However, it was only through dogged insistence by President Lincoln that the army was brought out of its camps to face the Confederate army. McClellan's Peninsula campaign could easily have resulted in the capture of Richmond in 1862. However, McClellan was characteristically dilatory in his move on Richmond (earning the nickname "Virginia Creeper") and when finally near the prize overestimated Confederate strength and called for a retreat. Even in instances where the Army of the Potomac significantly damaged opposing forces, such as Mechanicsville, McClellan allowed himself to be jockeyed from one position to another by inferior forces.
Could the selection of McClellan as leader of the Army of the Potomac have extended the war? This is highly speculative. However, we do know that without the victories attributed to him at Rich Mountain and the pursuit to Corrick's Ford it is doubtful that General McClellan would have had the opportunity to gain that post and affect the course of the war as much as he did.

Whatever effects McClellan had on the course of the war relate in no small part to the springboard which propelled him to national attention, a fog-encased hill in western Virginia called Rich Mountain.

Thus the significance of this small battle extended far beyond the locale it was fought over. It contributed significantly to the division of Virginia, and the formation of the new state of West Virginia two years later. And it affected the larger course of the Civil War, by bringing to prominence the man who would lead the Union army through the opening years of the conflict, General George B. McClellan.

Order of Battle
Battle of Rich Mountain

Confederate States of America

Garrison for Camp Garnett -- Colonel John Pegram, Commander
(Approximately 1300 men and 4 cannons)
20th Virginia Infantry Regiment

25th Virginia Infantry Regiment
14th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, Company I
Lee Artillery Battery

Engaged at Hart Farm -- Captain Julius deLagnel, Commanding (310 men and 1 cannon from the above garrison)
Cos A & E, 25th Virginia
Co B, D, & E, 20th Virginia
Statham's cannon from Lee Battery

Relief Force from Beverly (unengaged) 8 -- Colonel William Scott, Commanding (800) men
44th Virginia Infantry Regiment
United States of America

Major General George B. McClellan, Commander
Main Force at Roaring Creek (unengaged) -- Gen. McClellan, commanding (over 3000 men)
3rd Ohio Infantry Regiment
4th Ohio Infantry Regiment
9th Ohio Infantry Regiment
2 Batteries of Artillery [Loomis' battery]

Flanking Force Engaged at Hart Farm -- Brig. General William S. Rosecrans, commanding (1,917 men)
8th Indiana Infantry Regiment
10th Indiana Infantry Regiment
13th Indiana Infantry Regiment
19th Ohio Infantry Regiment
1st Ohio Cavalry Regiment, Troop

Footnotes

1. It is ironic that the counties of northwestern Virginia expressed their protest to the Ordinance of Secession by seceding from their State government.

2. A figure which some later inflated to 10,000.

3. General McClellan had a poor opinion of General Rosecrans' abilities. In a July 3rd letter to his wife, Ellen, he indicates, "I have not a Brig Gen. worth his salt -- Morris is a timid old woman -- Rosecrans (sic.) a silly fussy goose. . .(Sears 1988:86)."

4. The forces under Pegram had but four cannon at Camp Garnett.

5. Pegram had approximately 1,300 men. Garnett probably had roughly 4,000 men plus scattered detachments.

6. This statement is misleading as it implies regiments from these states were involved. Individuals from those states may have been involved but all the regiments were under Virginia jurisdiction.
7. Some of McClellan's correspondence does acknowledge Rosecrans' contribution but even the best, as exemplified below, fails to do him justice. "Have just gained the enemy's position & occupy the road to Beverly. Rosecrans turned the works by a march of some 7 miles through the mountains. Defeated a large part at Hart's House, taking guns. We now have their entrenchments, all their guns, baggage & some prisoners. Have not lost over 10 men in whole operation. Will send details by another messenger. I move to Beverly at once. Do not attack until further orders. I learn that fugitives have retreated towards Laurel Hill (George McClellan letter to Thomas A. Morris 7/12/1861 quoted in Sears 1989:51)."

8. Apparently a scout from this command was killed after the main fighting was completed.
Beatty, John 1946

Bosworth, A.S. 1916
History of Randolph County. Parsons, McClain Printing Company (1975 reprint)

Haselberger, Fritz 1987

Sears, Stephen W. 1988
George B. McClellan the Young Napoleon. New York, Ticknor and Fields.

Sears, Stephen W. 1989
The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan, Selected Correspondence, 1860-1865. New York, Ticknor and Fields.

Various 1880 (Cited as OR)

Zinn, Jack 1971

Additional Documentation

Maps

1. USGS Topographical Map "Beverly West Quadrangle, Randolph County, West Virginia" 1968 7.5 min. series.

2. Sketch map with boundaries and features marked.


Figures


7. Photo of Rich Mountain battlefield, photo by Lars Byrne, 1991. This photo was taken standing on the north side of the road looking south at the Hart house site, with the historical marker, monument, and power line visible.

8. Photo of Rich Mountain battlefield, photo by Lars Byrne, 1991. This photo was taken standing on the south side of the road looking north at the stable site.


10. Photo of parapet of Camp Garnett, photo by Lars Byrne, 1991. This photo was taken near the point of the left-hand entrenchments of Camp Garnett, looking south along the upper fortifications.

11. Photo of cannon emplacement of Camp Garnett, photo by Lars Byrne, 1991. This photo was taken at the upper cannon emplacement on the south side of the turnpike, looking west into the semi-circular depression of this fortification.
Verbal Boundary Description

The Boundary of the Rich Mountain Battlefield is shown on map 1 -- USGS topographic map titled "Beverly West", and on sketch map 2.

Boundary Justification

The western portion of the Historic District Boundary encompasses the fortifications of Camp Garnett, both as they appear on the period maps and in relation to the remains visible today. The eastern portion of the Boundary encompasses all of the primary battlefield area at the Hart homestead location as described on the period map. The boundaries connecting these two sites are drawn to include the portion of the Staunton-Parkersburg turnpike which connected the two sites, and the Old State Road route, both of which were traveled extensively by both forces between the two areas. All of the land included within the boundaries retains a high degree of historical integrity. The boundaries were drawn to exclude most of the adjoining areas which have been disturbed by strip mine activity.
Terry DelBene, Archaeologist
Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation
P.O. Box 352
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82902
(307) 382-3304

W. Hunter Lesser, Archaeologist
Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation
Rt 1 Box 180A
Elkins, West Virginia 26241
(304) 636-1405

Lars Byrne, Photographer
Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation
139 S. Walnut St.
Philippi, West Virginia 26416
(304) 457-4385

Phyllis J. Baxter, Historian
Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation
Rt 2 Box 114
Bowden, West Virginia 26254
(304) 636-2467
When the enemy were driven from their breastworks on the summit they attempted to run off one of their cannon. Captain Sayles and Lieutenant Atkinson, with about forty men of Company G of the Thirteenth Indiana, started in pursuit. The Indians, on turning the road, found the enemy drawn up across in front, firing from a log cabin and from bushes on the side of the way. They fired, stormed the house, and charged bayonets down the road, driving the enemy from their position, taking several prisoners and capturing the cannon without losing a man.
General McClellan's plan for attacking the Confederates under General Garnett in Western Virginia and driving them beyond the Alleghany involved the surprise of a large body strongly intrenched at Rich Mountain, in a position commanding the turnpike over Laurel Hill. He detailed General Rosecrans to surprise them. This in turn involved a circuitous march through the dense forests of Laurel Hill, over a wild and broken country. General Rosecrans's column of 1,600 men was guided by a woodsman named David L. Hart, who described the march as follows: "We started at daylight, and I led, accompanied by Colonel Lander, through a pathless wood, obstructed by bushes, laurels, fallen timber and rocks, followed by the whole division in perfect silence. Our circuit was about five miles; rain fell, the bushes wet us through, and it was very cold. At noon we came upon the Confederate pickets, and after drawing the demoralized charges from our guns immediately opened action." The result of the battle is well known. It ended in the utter rout and final capture of the Confederates under Colonel Pegram, with a loss of 150 killed and 300 wounded.
RICH MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD

Contributing Features
A. Battle Site
a. Route of Federal Attack
b. Joseph Hart house site
c. Confederate positions, stable site, boulders
B. Camp Garnett
d. Fortifications
e. Cannon emplacements
f. Rifle pits
g. Alexander Hart house site
C. Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike
D. Old State Road

Property Tracts
AA. Assoc. for the Preservation of Civil War Sites
BB. Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation
CC. Willard B. Posson
DD. Richard Bishop
EE. Beckwith Lumber Company
FF. National Register Historic District

Non-contributing Features
1. Historical marker & monument
2. Power line
3. Modern access roads
4. Strip mine
5. Oil well
6. Modern house site

Map 2
The Battle of Rich Mountain was fought here, 7-11-1861. In a surprise attack, General W.S. Rosecrans defeated the Confederates under Captain J.A. de Nagel. The victory was decisive in McClellan's Northwest Virginia campaign.