

THIS WAS THE CIVIL WAR

Stuart's Great 'Ride Around'

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On June 10, 1862, Gen. Robert E. Lee called to his headquarters north of Richmond, Va., the Army's dashing 29-year-old cavalry leader—Brig. Gen. James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart.

It was imperative for Lee to know how strongly Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's Federal troops held the territory north of the Chickahominy river. McClellan's 100,000-man Army of the Potomac was laying siege to the Confederate capital. Lee was new on the job. Only 10 days before he had taken command of the Confederate army because of the wounding of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston in the battle of Seven Pines.

To break McClellan's gradually tightening hold on the city, Lee had to strike before the Federals. Even discounting McClellan's well known caution, time was running out. But before Lee could attack, he had to have information. That was where Stuart came in. Lee ordered him to make a cavalry reconnaissance on the right flank of the Federal army.

The young cavalry commander caught fire as Lee outlined his plan for the maneuver—three times he called it an "expedition," a word which Stuart would stretch to its limit.

Much Imagination

Stuart was a leader with much imagination. Later he wrote that he had suggested to Lee that he "pass around" the Federal army. His mind probably raced ahead of Lee's. Perhaps he could "ride around" the enemy, even destroy its supply base and force a retreat. That would be one for the history books.

Lee's reaction is not recorded but he never was one to discourage enterprise.

The next day Stuart received his orders and picked his troops.

The 1st Virginia Cavalry, commanded by Col. Fitzhugh Lee, the general's nephew, would lead. Four companies of the 4th Virginia were added. Lee's second son, "Rooney" (W.H.E.) would lead part of the 9th Virginia and the rest of the 4th. The best of the Jeff Davis Legion and the South Carolina Boykin Rangers were included.

Lt. Jim Breathed, a protégé of Stuart, would command the two-gun artillery force. All told, 1,200 men with scouts and staff.

The expedition started on June 12, riding 22 miles north of Richmond to Winston Farm, near Taylorsville, Va. The next day, when the column turned east toward Hanover Courthouse, the troopers had their first brush with the Federals.

Cavalry Sighted

Scouts sighted the Federal cavalry just outside of town. Fitz Lee led his regiment around the village. Stuart waited until Lee got into position and then ordered a charge. The column swept into the village and the Federals, about 150, fled south.

One of Stuart's staff officers was Lt. John Esten Cooke, a cousin by marriage and a part-time novelist. Cooke described his commander that day:

He was a gallant figure to look at. The gray coat buttoned to the chin; the light

French sabre balanced by his pistol in its black holster; the cavalry boots above the knee, and the brown hat with its black plume floating above the bearded features, the brilliant eyes and the huge moustache, which curled with laughter at the slightest provocation—these made Stuart the perfect picture of a gay cavalier.

Later in the day the gray troopers clashed with part of the 5th U. S. Cavalry near Haw's Shop, seven miles southeast of Hanover C. H. All the Federals escaped except a few guards and dismounted men.

About 3 p.m. Stuart ran into more serious trouble. At Old Church, about four miles southwest of Haw's Shop, his troopers attacked Federal cavalry, estimated to be about a regiment, charging straight along the road from the north.

The fight lasted only a few minutes but it was a hot one.

Expected More Trouble

Old Church was the crossroads for Federal wagon trains supplying the far right wing of the Army of the Potomac and Stuart had expected more trouble. Col. Fitz Lee pursued and burned the Federal camp. Among the loot was a keg of hospital whiskey destined to serve as more than a beverage.

Then Stuart broke the news to his officers that he proposed to "ride around" McClellan's army. He quietly called them off the road and explained that the expedition had obtained information that the right flank of the Union army was lightly held along the Pamunkey river and that this was the intelligence General Lee desperately needed.

They now had two choices, he explained. One was to return the way they came with chances good that the aroused Federals would cut them off. The other was to continue across the Chickahominy river and then west along the James river back to Richmond.

That route would completely encircle the Federal army, and, he reasoned, Union cavalry would not be looking for the expedition to go that way.

Might Deal Blow

Furthermore, at Tunstall's Station, nine miles ahead, they would hit the York river railroad, one of McClellan's chief arteries of supply. To tear up a section of the line and halt supplies, even for a short time, might deal a severe blow to the enemy.

The officers were skeptical but all said they would follow. The expedition hit Tunstall's Station shortly before dark, scattering a few Federal guards.

By 8:30 p.m. the expedition arrived at Talleyville, a four-house hamlet five miles south of Tunstall's Station.

Here the Federals had a big hospital but the Confederates rode by without molesting it. A sutler's store did not fare so well. It was cleaned out by the famished troopers who had not eaten much in two days.

Now the expedition rode in the bright moonlight toward the Chickahominy, seven miles away. There, if anywhere, would come the test.

Federal cavalry now was aroused. It was commanded by Gen. Philip St. George

Cooke, father-in-law of Stuart and uncle of Lieutenant Cooke. Unless Stuart's timing was precise, relative might be fighting relative on the Chickahominy.

Stuart's forces arrived at the river at dawn on June 14. A scout had said that a ford at Sycamore Springs was a short cut the Federals would overlook—but the river there

was too high for crossing. Only a few daring ones made it.

Stuart seemed worried for the first time and dispatched a courier to General Lee, asking that a demonstration be made to divert pursuit.

Then he ordered his force a mile downstream to the ruins of Forge Bridge. There they tore down an old warehouse and laid a shaky bridge across the river on the piers of an earlier span.

The job took three hours of feverish work by all the troopers, laboring under the lash of expected Federal pursuit. Appearance of a considerable Union force would have meant failure.

As the last Confederates

crossed the makeshift bridge and set it afire, Federal cavalry caught up and opened fire—too late.

The expedition was safe. His work done, Stuart turned the command over to Fitz Lee and started for Richmond, 35 miles away.

Information Obtained

He rode alone the rest of the day and all night, stopping three times for coffee. He reported to General Lee on June 15 that he and his troopers had ridden all the way around McClellan's army and had obtained the information Lee wanted—all this in three days and about 100 miles, with one casualty.

For Stuart, the "ride around" put him in the mili-

tary textbooks until gasoline engines replaced horseflesh.

For Lee, the expedition gave him the information he needed to trigger the Seven Days' battle and save Richmond.

For the troopers, one "liberated" keg of hospital whiskey, a prize for lifting one of the expedition's guns out of a mudhole, and the plaudits of the Confederacy.

71-STROKE HOLE

Cocorro, N. M. — Fred Silva won the El Fuego Baca golf shoot Sunday with a 71 for one hole — and don't scoff. The tee is on a 7,000-foot mountain and the green is in a valley, three miles away.

Police Search for Masked Gunman

Seattle — Police are searching for a masked gunman that robbed a supermarket here Saturday of about \$18,000.

Randall West, 31, manager of the Food Giant store said the man forced him at gunpoint to remove the money from the store's safe.

West told police the man apparently had hidden in the store until it closed, and then made his bid for the money.

A security guard and another store employee were forced into a large refrigerator by the bandit.

Second Escapee Is Arrested Saturday

Tacoma — The second of three escapees from the Yakima county jail was arrested here Saturday.

Don L. Southern, 28, was picked up by police acting on a tip Southern was trying to pass a stolen money order.

Police said Southern was carrying a .38 caliber revolver when he was arrested. It was not determined if the weapon was the same one stolen by the trio when they escaped last week.

Southern admitted stealing a car in Salem, police said.

Another of the trio, Earl Taylor, 22, was arrested last Monday while hitchhiking north of Yakima.

The third escapee, James Leroy Cooper, 32, has not yet been apprehended.

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