

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Evolution of the Union Cavalry 1861-1865

By Laurence D. Schiller

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	Title. City: Publisher, Year.
Nosworthy, Brent	<i>The Bloody Crucible of Courage: Fighting Methods and Combat Experience of the Civil War.</i> New York: Carroll & Graf, 2003, chapters 2, 3, 5, 8, 16, 17, 18, 25, 34.

Books and Articles

Author	Title. City: Publisher, Year.
Carter III, Samuel	<i>The Last Cavaliers: Confederate and Union Cavalry in the Civil War.</i> New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.
Dornblaser, T. F.	<i>Sabre Strokes of the Pennsylvania Dragoons.</i> Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Publication Society, 1884.
Evans, David	<i>Sherman's Horsemen: Union Cavalry Operations in the Atlanta Campaign.</i> Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
Gallagher, Gary W.	<i>Chancellorsville: The Battle and Its Aftermath.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
Hard, Abner	<i>History of the Eighth Cavalry Regiment Illinois Volunteers, During the Great Rebellion.</i> Aurora, IL: 1868.

Hartley, Chris J.	<i>Stoneman's Raid, 1865</i> . Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair Publishing, 2010.
Longacre, Edward	<i>Mounted Raids of the Civil War</i> . London: A. S. Barnes, 1975.
_____.	<i>The Cavalry at Gettysburg: A Tactical Study of Mounted Operations during the Civil War's Pivotal Campaign, 9 June-14 July 1863</i> . Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986.
_____.	<i>General John Buford: A Military Biography</i> . Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, 1995.
Nosworthy, Brent	<i>With Musket, Sword and Cannon: Battle Tactics of Napoleon and His Enemies</i> . New York: Sarpendon Publishers, 1996.
O'Neill, Jr., Robert F.	<i>The Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville: Small but Important Riots, June 10-27, 1863</i> . Lynchburg, VA: privately printed, 1993.
Schiller, Laurence D.	<i>Of Sabres and Carbines</i> . Danville, VA: Blue Gray Education Society, 2001.
Shue, Richard	<i>Morning at Willoughby Run: The Opening Battles at Gettysburg</i> . Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1995.
Starr, Steven Z.	<i>The Union Cavalry in The Civil War</i> , 3 vols. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
Wert, Jeffery D.	<i>From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864</i> . Carlisle, PA: South Mountain Press, 1987.
Wittenberg, Eric J., J. David Petruzzi, and Michael F. Nugent	<i>One Continuous Fight. The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, July 4-14, 1863</i> . El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2008.
Wittenberg, Eric J.	<i>Gettysburg's Forgotten Cavalry Actions</i> . Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1995.
_____.	<i>Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station</i> . Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2001.
_____.	<i>Protecting the Flanks: The Battles for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field, Battle of Gettysburg, July 2-3, 1863</i> . Cincinnati, OH: Ironclad Publishing, 2002.

_____.	<i>The Union Cavalry Comes of Age: Hartwood Church to Brandy Station, 1863.</i> Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2003.
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Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
United States Cavalry Association	The United States Cavalry Association is dedicated to preserve the history, traditions, uniforms, and equipment of the United States cavalry units, including mounted support units. The Association publishes a journal and has a research library which makes its collections available to researchers of all types. Their website is: http://www.uscavalry.org/

Web Resources

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
The Cavalry Journal	The Journal of the United States Cavalry Association. The Hathi Trust has digitized a significant portion of the published editions of The Cavalry Journal, though not all. Their collection is available on line at: https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008891896

Scholars

Name	Email
Laurence D. Schiller	lds307@northwestern.edu
Eric J. Wittenburg	eric@wittenberglawgroup.com

Topic Précis

The story of the Federal cavalry during the Civil War is not only the story of the development of raw recruits and officers from difficult beginnings to a finely honed and feared machine, but also the story of the evolution of an arm of the U.S. military that had been neglected before 1861. Those who became the commanders of Union cavalry had to figure out not only how to train their troopers and officers, but to determine exactly what their role and missions would be, what tactics would be needed to carry those tasks out, how cavalry would relate to the other two arms both in support and combat, and what their role would be in the overall strategic scheme for winning the war. Initially cavalry tasks were defined traditionally as: reconnaissance - locating and maintaining contact with the enemy, screening - covering and concealing the movements of your own army from the enemy's reconnaissance attempts, covering the flanks and rear of your army in battle and threatening those of your enemy, shock charges against the enemy to break them, to produce a rout, or, when your own army is withdrawing, to delay the pursuit, picketing, orderly, and provost duty and long distance raids designed to attack the supply lines of the enemy. At the time of Fort Sumter, the United States had 5 cavalry regiments; by December 1861 50 cavalry regiments were being raised. Throughout 1862 Union cavalry was used in traditional roles, in regimental or smaller sized units, often commanded by infantry generals, but during this time the cavalry became a competent veteran force, well equipped and tactically skilled. 1863 was the year in which Federal cavalry began to demonstrate the ability as an integral striking force of the army and cavalry began to be used in brigades and divisions, commanded by cavalry generals. At Brandy Station, Gettysburg and Chickamauga they showed they could delay and pursue infantry and act as a strike force. Large mounted raids began disrupting Confederate communications and supply. Joseph Hooker was the general who created the first Federal cavalry corps of three divisions and a reserve brigade. John Buford demonstrated the Federal cavalry's new power on July 1 where, fighting dismounted with their repeating carbines they held up the Confederate advance of Henry Heth on Gettysburg. A similar pattern of creating larger cavalry units and expanding their traditional role into that of a strike force fighting either mounted or dismounted occurred in the western theater. In 1863 the Federal cavalry became in effect dragoons, able to fight mounted or dismounted, in defense or assault, an integral part of the striking force of the whole army. Armed with breach loading carbines, six shot revolvers and sabres and supported by horse artillery, cavalry armies operated in close coordination with infantry or in independent commands. 1864 saw several large cavalry raids in Virginia and Atlanta and the continued growth the federal cavalry into a formidable force and by 1865 the Federal cavalry was probably the most formidable dragoon force in the world. By the time the United States was involved in another major war, the era of cavalry had passed and the horse replaced by motorized and airborne vehicles. There would never again be a need for masses of cavalry thrown against the territory of the enemy.
