

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architect, classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional names and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dam Number One Battlefield Site
other names/site number Lee's Mill Battlefield; Newport News Park;
VDHR File No. 121-60

2. Location

street & number 13560 Jefferson Avenue not for publication
city or town Newport News vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Newport News (independent city) code 700 zip code 23601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this national 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 national statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael A. H. Smith 08/26/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF SURVEY & REGISTRATION
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or other 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): _____

Signature of Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
district
[X] site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include counts for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DEFENSE Sub: Fortification Battle site

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A
roof N/A
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)

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

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

Period of Significance

1862

Significant Dates

1862

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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

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

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 142.8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	362000	4116620	2	18	362081 4116710
3	18	362300	4116782	4	18	362522 4116810

x See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Michael A. Balis, Historical Consultant
organization Newport News Parks Division date April 1995
street & number 1353 Emory Place telephone 804-853-5514
city or town Norfolk state VA zip code 23509

=====
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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title City of Newport News, Edgar E. Maroney, City Manager
street & number 2400 Washington Avenue telephone _____
city or town Newport News state VA zip code 23607

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Dam No. 1 Battlefield Site
City of Newport News, Virginia

Summary Description

The Dam Number One Battlefield Site is a 142.8 acre area located entirely in Newport News Park, Newport News, Virginia. The site's topography consists of wooded hills and a city reservoir. A line from the campground to the main park roadway (Constitution Way) is the site's western boundary. The eastern border is a line from a trail to Constitution Way. This road and a fire trail are the southern and northern boundaries, respectively. These boundaries embrace what was the Dam Number One Battlefield. Most recent man-made objects are noncontributing resources. Park resources allow very good visitor access to the battle site. The historical integrity of the site is excellent due to the pristine condition of existing Civil War earthen fortifications.

Description

The terrain of the Dam Number One Site consists of tree covered hills and a four hundred-acre reservoir. There is a mixture of fifty foot high pines and hardwoods with sparse undergrowth between them. These trees cover three quarters of the area. The remainder of the site is open ground. The gradually sloping hills surround the dam and vary from forty to fifty feet in height. The highest hills are south of the dam. A 720 foot wide city reservoir (Lee Hall) runs through the battlefield in an east to west direction. The depth of the reservoir at this location is approximately eight feet deep.

A number of improvements were made to the park in 1972. A 750-foot-long and five-foot-wide wooden footbridge was built over the remains of Dam Number One. A concrete water aqueduct was also built west of the dam. The aqueduct is approximately 720 feet long and five feet wide. Both the bridge and the aqueduct are in fine condition. In addition, the park constructed an interpretive center south of the dam. It is a one-story, forty-five by fifty foot modern building that is in good condition. It contains exhibits on the battle and recovered artifacts from the site such as belt plates, small arms ammunition, and field artillery projectiles.

In 1967, the city built a campground north and west of the dam. Its facilities are in good to excellent condition. There are electrical and water hook-ups, parking spaces, and restrooms for 188 recreational vehicles. Paved roads run throughout the campground.

The park gives the visitor a very good orientation to the battlefield site. Constitution Way, which is south of the dam, leads to the interpretive center's parking lot. Assistance for the handicapped who want to enter the building is available upon request. Historical brochures explain the battle and guide visitors along a 2.7 mile trail. This trail is wheelchair accessible, to union artillery positions south of the building. The trail turns north and passes by a nineteenth-century ten pounder Parrott rifled cannon barrel mounted on a replica cast iron carriage. The cannon barrel was manufactured in 1864 and was purchased from the Smithsonian Institution in 1973. Both the cannon barrel and carriage are in excellent

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condition. An eight by six painting encased in glass depicts the battle further along the trail. This painting was copied from an original sketch made by an unknown artist at the time of the battle. The painting and narrative are in good condition. A bronze plaque commemorating the Confederate participation in the battle is adjacent to this painting. The Bethel Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected it in 1967. It is in good condition.

Visitors may cross the reservoir on the wooden footbridge to the north side of the reservoir and confederate trenches. In 1992, the park installed a wooden sandblasted sign that marks the general location of the Fifteenth North Carolina Regiment. It is in good condition. The trail passes near the area of the heaviest fighting before returning to the footbridge.

The historical integrity of the Dam Number One Battlefield is excellent. Because Newport News Park has limited development of the site, recent land use is very much like it was in 1862. In 1992, Newport News Water Works contacted the park regarding the construction of a 48-inch raw water pipeline out fall on the site. The Acting Superintendent of Park Operations, Jerry Bochek, presented my narrative (section eight) to those representatives. The history convinced them of the significance of Dam Number One Battle Site and the pipeline outfall was relocated to another site. The trenches are 95 percent intact, revealing the Confederate defense plans, which will be discussed in section eight. Three lines of Confederate trenches north of the river run perpendicular to the dam. The earthen walls are six to eight feet high. Most have a ditch on their battle face. The average depth of the ditches is three feet. Several cannon embrasures with ramps leading to them remain. Small trees and thick grass bind together trench walls. Two park fire trails and a one hundred fifty foot-wide intrusion from the Virginia Power line easement have eliminated five percent of the earthworks.

During the battle, the Warwick River was approximately seventy feet wide and four feet deep. Today, the reservoir is 720 feet wide and eight feet deep. The battle painting located before the bridge depicts the original width and course of the river for visitors. The reservoir does not cover any of the earthen fortifications the Federals seized.

The reservoir has inundated the original Dam Number One, but a wooden footbridge built on top of it traces its exact course. A twenty by twelve foot section of it is visible on the north side of the reservoir bank. Because the rest of the dam is underwater, its condition is unknown. It is in the center of the battlefield's boundaries.

A concentration of surface scatter consisting of nine intact bricks and numerous broken bricks is all that remains of the Garrows House chimney. This concentration of bricks covers a nine by eleven foot area just above ground in front of where Union cannons set up during the battle. Official correspondence also mentioned this chimney.

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Standing at the park interpretive center, today's visitor has a similar view of the area as soldiers did during the battle.¹ Small clearings about ten feet in area are on the southern and northern ends of the footbridge (dam). These clearings were thirty feet larger during the battle. The fifteen hundred foot clearing further south of the dam that Union cannons fired across is covered by a thin line of trees. A visitor can also observe some of the targeted areas from this vantage point. As will be explained in section eight, this view of the battlefield shows not only why the battle was fought here, but also its strategic importance.

The number of resources on this battlefield fell into either contributing or noncontributing categories. There are many contributing resources within the boundaries: one battlefield site; a trench system and Dam Number One that are structures; eight bricks from the Garrows house chimney that are objects making a total of four contributing resources. The noncontributing resources are: one interpretive center building, a footbridge, pipe line aqueduct and campground restroom as structures, cannon, Fifteenth North Carolina narrative sign, battle painting, and a United Daughters of the Confederacy plaque as four objects for a total of eight noncontributing resources.

There are two serious threats to the site. Relic hunters illegally remove Civil War period artifacts, including Garrows house chimney bricks. A potentially greater problem is the lack of a city ordinance protecting the battlefield from future development.

The Dam Number One site is in excellent condition and is a valuable historical site. Many landmarks mentioned in official records remain to guide visitors. A veteran of the battle would probably recognize the setting, feeling, and location of this hallowed ground.

¹G.H. Houghton Photographs of Dam Number One, photographs, as reproduced in William C. Davis, Ed., The Image of War 1861-1865 Volume IV End of An Era (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1984), Volume 6, 140-41.

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Dam No. 1 Battlefield Site
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Statement of Significance

The Battle of Dam Number One is historically significant under Criterion A because it is the site of the only Union infantry attack against Confederate defenses during the month-long siege of Yorktown and the Warwick defense line.

While Major General George McClellan commenced siege operations against a numerically inferior Confederate garrison at Yorktown commanded by Major General John B. Magruder, he gave conflicting and cautious orders for a division a few miles west of that town to seize a reported weak spot in the defense line near Dam Number One. After a bombardment, four companies crossed the Warwick River, but were left without further orders for forty minutes. Poor communications between the corps, division, and brigade commanders left these officers unable to control the battle. A Confederate counterattack drove back these troops and a Union division commander sent another weak force against the reinforced Southern line that easily repulsed this last attack. Had Federal officers exploited their brief success, they could have broken through behind Yorktown and destroyed or captured most of the garrison.

Historical Background

The Battle of Dam Number One occurred on 16 April 1862 near Yorktown, Virginia.¹ Civil War between the North and South had erupted in the United States in April 1861 and gradually spread across the nation. In Virginia that year, neither side was able to inflict a decisive defeat on the other nor destroy their opponent's will to win. After a long period of inactivity, Union General George B. McClellan, who commanded the Army of the Potomac, attempted to break this stalemate with an attack up the York-James Peninsula toward the Confederate capitol of Richmond. After moving northward from Fort Monroe in march and April 1862, elements of McClellan's army faced Confederates of the Army of the Peninsula under Major General John Bankhead Magruder, C.S.A., across the Warwick River in Virginia. During the Battle of Dam Number One in April 1862, a Confederate brigade had the challenge of halting a Federal division from crossing that river. If the Confederates failed, Federal forces would pierce their line, envelop the rest of Magruder's army, and seize the road to Richmond.

In March 1862, Magruder had only 10,000 men in his army to execute his defense plans. His mission was to delay any attacking Union force moving toward Richmond long enough to allow the Confederates to shift troops to defend the city. By building coastal batteries on his flanks at Mulberry Island on the James River and Yorktown as well as Gloucester Point

¹U.S. War Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies During the War of the Rebellion*, series [hereafter ser.] 1, volume [hereafter vol.] 11, part [hereafter pt.] 1, 128 vol. 1881-1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office), 278-79. The Confederate name for the battlefield was "Dam Number One." Because the Federals probably considered the town of Lee's Mill as the closest recognizable landmark, they named the battle "Lee's Mill."

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on the York River, Magruder wanted to prevent Union troop transports from sailing up either river and placing soldiers closer to Richmond. He also had engineers direct the construction of three earthwork defense lines between Hampton and Williamsburg. His men used these defenses to delay Federal advances, so reinforcements would reach Magruder in time to prevent a Union breakthrough. The forward line went from Young's Mill to Harrod's Mill. The second one stretched along the north bank of the Warwick River from Mulberry Island and went through the Dam Number One area as well as Yorktown. A third set of fortifications went across the peninsula just below Williamsburg. If the Federals pierced the first row of positions, Magruder's troops would occupy the second and prevent Yorktown from being encircled. Magruder built dams on the Warwick River to inundate a larger area, making it more difficult for the Union army's advance. Since the Federals could use the dams as bridges, the Confederates dug more elaborate earthworks to defend the dams. They built a road north of and parallel to the Warwick defenses to move reserves to any threatened area.² They also constructed a main supply road approximately one-half mile north of and parallel to the entire defense line. This roadway, sometimes referred to as Magruder's military highway, had numerous smaller roads leading from it to the defense line for easy access of men and materials.

McClellan landed his men at Fort Monroe in late March 1862 and planned his move north through the Virginia Peninsula, and capture Richmond. He devised an aggressive scheme for his corps commanders to execute. His 150,000 men were divided into four corps under Brigadier General [hereafter Brig. Gen.] Edwin Sumner, Brig. Gen. Samuel P. Heintzelman, Brig. Gen. Erasmus Keyes, and Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell. McClellan ordered Keyes's Corps to cut off Yorktown while Heintzelman's Corps launched frontal attacks on the city. Sumner's Corps would remain in reserve to support either assault. McClellan planned to send Irvin McDowell's Corps up the York River to help capture Yorktown or seize West Point. Finally, the Army of the Potomac would capture Richmond and demoralize the Confederacy. Since McClellan never adequately explained his defensive plans to Washington or Abraham Lincoln, and because growing Confederate activity in the Shenandoah Valley alarmed Lincoln, the President took McDowell's 50,000 men away from McClellan to defend the nation's capital. McClellan's plan was sound, but he began the campaign predisposed with a

²Magruder to Cooper, 1 February 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 9, 38-42; Magruder to Randolph, 24 March 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 393; Magruder's General Order 168, 28 March 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 410-11; Magruder to Rhett, 24 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 462-63; Brigadier General H.T. Douglas, C.S.A., (ret.), "Reminiscences of the Peninsula," Confederate Veteran (December 1903), 554; Leonard Reidel, "John Bankhead Magruder and the Defense of the Virginia Peninsula, 1861-62" (Thesis, Old Dominion University, 1991), 12, 97-98.

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slow and careful siege operation, which left him in a less flexible frame of mind to exploit Confederate weaknesses.³

When the Union troops landed on the peninsula, Magruder pulled his Confederate troops back behind the Warwick line and organized his units for the upcoming Federal attack. Magruder received only 13,000 reinforcements from Richmond that gave him a total force of 23,000. Because of the tremendous Union numerical advantage, he chose to begin the battle behind the inundated Warwick River. Confederate Brig. Gen. Gabriel Rains commanded the Yorktown area with his First Division. Brig. Gen. Lafayette McLaws controlled the rest of the Warwick line (including Dam Number One) with his Second Division. Magruder planned to shift his men around the line to bluff McClellan into overestimating Confederate manpower and make him cautious. Magruder ordered his men to combat Federal patrols in order to keep Confederate weakness a secret. He told his commanders to know their routes of retreat well in advance, so they could quickly adapt to changing situations.⁴

When McClellan marched from Fort Monroe and struck the Warwick line the first week in April, he decided that it was too strong to assault immediately, so he commenced lengthy siege operations. His map incorrectly showed the Warwick River as having a north to south axis. Not only did the river have an east to west orientation, but Confederate entrenchments lined its north bank. This took McClellan by surprise and made him cautious. Magruder shifted his men around, had officers shout commands to non-existent units, and paraded carts to simulate a unit's wagon train to appear very strong, thereby reinforcing McClellan's fears. The defenders used skirmishers to repulse Union reconnaissance patrols that could have uncovered these Confederate deceptions. Magruder received 13,000 men during the first week in April, which probably increased McClellan's discomfort. Since Rear Admiral Louis Goldsborough, U.S.N., commanding the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, had to monitor the powerful ironclad C.S.S. Virginia and prevent it from threatening the Union blockade, he did not provide McClellan added naval artillery bombardment for the attack on Yorktown. Despite the fact that McClellan then had 85,000 combat troops and outnumbered his adversary at least three to one, he believed that he faced 100,000 Confederates. McClellan thought that he needed to wait until his heavy artillery came up to break through the line. Lincoln did not believe Yorktown should be besieged and he politely but firmly urged McClellan to assault the defenders before they were reinforced. Because McClellan

³McClellan to Stanton, 19 March 1863, Stephen Sears, ed. The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan: Selected Correspondence 1860-1865 (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1989), 215; McClellan to Totten, 28 March 1863, Civil War Papers, 218; *Ibid.*, 204; McClellan to Wife, 3 April 1862, Civil War Papers, 225; McClellan to Goldsborough, 3 April 1862, Civil War Papers, 226; McClellan Report, 4 August 1863, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 8-10; James McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 423-30; Reidel, "Magruder," 12.

⁴Magruder to Rhett, 24 March 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 462-463; General Order 171, 2 April 1862, Orders Received by the 15th Virginia Volunteers, Record Group [hereafter RG] 109, National Archives [hereafter NA]; OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 463; Reidel, "Magruder," 77, 111-13; McPherson, Battle Cry, 426-27.

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mistakenly thought the President did not understand military affairs, he smugly ignored Lincoln's sound advice.⁵

By 16 April 1862, the following Confederate regiments were at Dam Number One under Brig. Gen. Howell Cobb: the Second Louisiana, Fifteenth North Carolina, Sixteenth Georgia. A section of three cannons supported them. By 5 April, these artillerymen shot at likely positions the Federals would occupy and recorded range and elevation coordinates to those areas for more accurate fire. Cobb commanded roughly 2,875 troops. The following regiments in reserve were within four miles of the area: Seventh Georgia, Thomas R. R. Cobb's Georgia Legion, Eighth Georgia, Eleventh Georgia, Tenth Louisiana, Fifteenth Virginia, and the Seventeenth Mississippi. A military road behind the fortifications enabled these columns of reserves to reach the area relatively fast. West of this dam was another at Lee's Mill that inundated a 330-foot wide area of the Dam Number One region to a depth of two to four feet. Because it was easily fordable, Dam Number One needed heavier fortifications on the north shore to stop Union attacks across this part of the river. The confederates dug lines of earthworks along the northern shore perpendicular to the dam. They constructed three lines of works directly behind the dam. These trenches had five-foot deep ditches to slow the Union soldiers while the defenders shot at them from eight foot high parapets. Two lines of earthworks with smaller walls flanked these main defenses to keep an attacker from turning them and attacking the defender's rear. Trees covered the flanking earthworks but the works near the dam had no trees to block their fields of fire. Reinforcements could safely deploy from moving to attack formations to counterattack or reinforce the trenches behind the parapets and woods. Troops dragged logs called abatis, an early form of barbed wire, into the river at likely crossing points to entangle attackers. The Confederates built an earthwork, they planned to occupy, in a 1,800-yard field on the south bank just in front of the dam to prevent the Union from using the large field and higher ground as an artillery position. Positions on the north bank supported it with fire across its flanks. However, for unknown reasons the Confederates did not occupy it in strength.⁶

⁵McClellan to Goldsborough, 5 April 1862, Sears, Civil War Papers, 229; Magruder to Lee, 6 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 425; McClellan to Scott, 11 April 1862, Sears, Civil War Papers, 236; Bryan to Winston, 11 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 437; McPherson, Battle Cry, 426-27; Sears, Civil War Papers, 204-5 and 234; REidel, "Magruder," 106-23.

⁶Hancock to Currie, 7 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 308-310; OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 436; Lord to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 378; French to unknown addressee, 18 April 1862, Albert C. Eisenberg, "The Third Vermont Has Won a Name: Corporal George Q. French's Account of the Battle of Lee's Mills, Virginia," Vermont History (Fall, 1981), 227; McClellan to Thomas, 19 April 1863, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 363; Cobb to McLaws, 22 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 416-17; McLaws to Dickenson, 30 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 415; Magruder to Cooper, 3 May 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 406-7; Lieutenant Henry Abbot, "Official Plan of the Siege of Yorktown, Virginia," U.S. War Department, Official Military Atlas of the Civil War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891-1895), plate 19; B. M. Zettler, "Magruder's Peninsula Campaign," Confederate Veteran, May 1900, 197; Dennis Hart Mahan, A Complete Treatise on Field Fortification: With General Outlines of the Principles Regulating the Arrangement, the Attack, and the Defense of Permanent Works (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), plate 9; G. H. Houghton, photograph of Union artillery crossing Dam Number One, Photograph, as reproduced in William C. Davis, ed., The End of an Era (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1984), vol. 6, The Image of War 1861-1865, 140-41; Author's examination of Dam Number One earthworks, 22 February and 22 March 1992. Because the earthwork south of the dam had a moat on the south side of the earthen wall and shielded the

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Neighboring Confederate forces occupied two powerful fortifications that protected the flanks of the Dam Number One position. A fort was located 1,500 feet west of the dam. The Confederates occupied another trench in front of it on the south bank that would make it difficult for the northerners to man firing positions in front of the fort. The Wynn's Mill works which housed two regiments, one battalion, and two artillery batteries, protected the eastern flank. This was an impressive maze of communications and fighting trenches that ran parallel to the river along bluffs, over fifty feet above Union positions.⁷

Between 4 and 15 April 1862, while McClellan built roads and earthworks and ordered heavy guns to be brought up to pulverize Yorktown, Keyes's Fourth Corps moved northward near the south bank of the Warwick River from Mulberry Island to Dam Number One and tried to find a weak point in the Confederate lines on the opposite side. Confederate skirmishers attempted to prevent Union scouts from getting close enough to count troops and study the fortifications. Before the Federals overpowered the skirmishers, the Southern guards retreated across the river on small bridges. Magruder attempted to keep his weaknesses a secret by ordering everyone in his command except skirmishers to hold their fire. These security measures fooled Keyes into believing that "No part of his [Magruder's] line as far as discovered can be taken by assault without an enormous waste of life."⁸

One of Keyes's division commanders, Brig. Gen. William F. Smith, discovered a weak area in the Confederate line at Dam Number One. On 5 April 1862, Brig Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock, one of Smith's brigade commanders, sent elements of the Sixth Maine and Fifth Wisconsin to gather information on the Dam Number One garrison. The Sixth Maine commander believed the Dam Number One area was so weak that he wanted to assault it with only his regiment. He sent a messenger party of Major Harris and two men to get Hancock's permission to cross the river. They collided with a seven-man Confederate scouting patrol. Harris shouted commands to his non-existent unit while his two men shot one of the Confederates. The Southerners feared they were outnumbered and ran away, so the Federals escaped. Harris was unable to find Hancock and the Federals did not attack. Since Hancock lacked artillery to suppress Confederate fire or shovels to dig in on the northern river bank, he wrote that he would not have made the crossing. In other words,

dam, the Confederates must have built it. The earthworks are in excellent condition. Dam is submerged.

⁷Magruder to Lee, 5 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 404; Author's Battlefield Survey, 12 April 1992.

⁸General Order 185, Headquarters, Army of the Peninsula, 15 April 1862, RG 109, Orders Received by the Fifteenth Virginia Volunteers, NA; Smith to Keyes, 6 April 1862, RG 393, Fourth Army Corps Letters Received, NA; Hancock to Currie, 7 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 308-10; Keyes to Marcy, 8 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 78; Keyes to Marcy, 9 April 1862, RG 393, pt. 2, Fourth Army Corps Letters Sent, NA; Keyes to Williams, 16 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 358-60; Keyes Report, 26 March 1863, Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War in Three parts part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), 597-601; George T. Stevens, Three Years in the Sixth Corps (Albany: S. R. Grey, 1866), 40.

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Hancock implied that if he had entrenching tools and artillery, he believed he could have crossed the river.⁹

From 7 through 14 April 1862, the main body of Smith's division moved up to the Warwick River but despite Hancock's report, remained on the defensive. Smith's three brigades occupied eight miles of the river's southern bank, which included the Dam Number One region. Despite the bad roads and weather, Smith had at least part of his artillery with his forward units. He placed Brig. Gen. William T. H. Brooks and his 3,692-man brigade opposite Dam Number One. Smith read Hancock's report and saw an opportunity to overwhelm the Confederate position. Smith constantly asked Keyes's permission to allow him to cross the river. Keyes lacked orders from McClellan to attack and he believed the Confederate position was too strong to assault with just a division; so, Keyes ordered Smith not to make the crossing.¹⁰

On 15 April 1862, McClellan sent an order to Smith to shell Dam Number One's fortifications the next day and stop the occupants from improving their trenches. According to Magruder, McClellan chose the weakest part of the Confederate line to attack. McClellan compared the reconnaissance reports all along the line, which probably included Hancock's and came to the same conclusion. McClellan wanted to silence confederate fire and weaken this point in the line, so that when he was ready for his general assault, Smith would have an easier time piercing the Dam Number One works. McClellan also wanted to prevent the Confederates from counterattacking across the dam. McClellan claimed it was too late to send the order through Smith's commander, Keyes. McClellan told Smith that Brig. Gen. Willis A. Gorman's brigade would protect his right flank.

McClellan still believed that he faced 100,000 Confederates and this probably made him write a cautious and contradictory order. First, McClellan told Smith to cross the river carefully in order to stop the enemy fortification work. Then McClellan stated that he wanted Smith to simply shell the Confederates and delay the crossing until McClellan's general attack along the Warwick Line was ready to begin. In a postscript, McClellan stated that Smith should limit his operation to halting Confederate work on the defenses. Such an

⁹Hancock to Currie, 7 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 308-10; Smith to Keyes, 12 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 300-301; Keyes to Williams, 16 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 358-60. The bricks from the Garrows Chimneys still remain in the earth.

¹⁰Hancock to Currie, 7 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 308-10; Smith to Keyes, 12 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 300-01; OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 97; Keyes to Williams, 16 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 358-60; Keyes Report, Joint Committee, 597-60.

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order demonstrated that McClellan did not thoroughly understand the extent of the Confederate weakness or he would have ordered a full-scale assault.¹¹

Despite the confusing order, Smith understood his commander's intent and organized his division to harass Confederate troops at Dam Number One with cannon and skirmisher fire. Smith's sector was one of the few areas in Keye's sector that had open ground so close to the rebels that artillery could easily occupy and fire from. He ordered Captain Romeyn Ayres, who commanded the divisional artillery, to move one of his batteries into position to shell the Confederates. To prevent an enemy assault on the cannons, Smith ordered Brig. Gen. William T. H. Brooks to use his Vermont Brigade to protect the artillery's flanks and deploy skirmishers to fire on Confederate working parties. Smith also ordered Brig. Gen. Davidson to insure his men had three days of rations in their haversacks and to march to Four Corners, which was three miles east of Dam Number One.¹²

On the morning of 16 April 1862, an unequal exchange of fire raged. Smith sent a battery commanded by Captain Thaddeus Mott forward within 3,300 feet of the Confederates to begin shelling Confederate positions while Smith kept the rest of the divisional artillery at Four Corners. Mott reached his position and began firing at 7:45 in the morning. His twelve-pounder Napoleons and ten-pounder Parrott Rifled guns fired 167 rounds of ammunition designed to explode above the rebels and spray lead balls or shell fragments on them. According to B.M. Zettler of the Eighth Georgia, the cannonade was so powerful that the Federals thought it would even kill rats. A Confederate regimental commander ordered his men to loosen their formation to avoid unnecessary casualties. Brooks deployed his skirmishers from the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Vermont regiments and they fired at the earthworks across the river. The outgunned southerners poorly placed two of their three guns and therefore could not use them effectively. The remaining Confederate six-pound howitzer under Lieutenant Pop's command was well placed and it killed three Union soldiers, wounded six troops, and killed one horse before it was suppressed. It made such an impression on the attackers that they referred to it as the "one gun battery."¹³

¹¹Hancock to Currie, 7 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 308-10; McClellan to Smith, 15 April 1862, George B. McClellan, McClellan's Own Story (New York: Charles, L. Webster and Co. 1887), 284-85; McClellan to Stanton, 16 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 103; McClellan to Thomas, 19 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 363; McClellan to Thomas, 4 August 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 18.

¹²Currie to Brooks, 15 April 1862, RG 393, Fourth Army Corps Letters Received, NA; Currie to Hancock, 15 April 1862, RG 393, Fourth Army Corps Letters Received, NA; Currie to Davidson, 15 April 1862, RG 393, Fourth Army Corps Letters Received, NA.; Currie to Ayres, 15 April 1862, RG 393, Fourth Army Corps letters Received, NA; Hancock to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 370-71. The Union artillery earthworks still stand except for a fifty foot section that was cleared for power lines.

¹³Smith to Suydam, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 364-65; Mott to Ayres 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 369-70; Smith to Marcy 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 365; Brooks to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 372; Ayres to Currie 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 36872; Zettler, "Magruder's Peninsula Campaign," 197; Jay Luvaas and Harold Nelson, The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Gettysburg (Carlisle: South Mountain Press Inc., 1986), 206. Pope's gun was

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That afternoon, the Federal plan of operation changed. Lieutenant E. M. Noyes of Brooks's staff nearly crossed the Warwick River and reached a point within seventy-five feet of the Confederate line. Another observer saw Confederate wagons removing supplies which may have indicated a retreat. Meanwhile, McClellan and Keyes arrived to observe the action in Smith's sector. According to Keyes, the three generals viewed the Union shelling as a defensive operation to prevent a Confederate river crossing. Keyes left before Noyes's return to inspect the rest of his corps positions. The fact that Noyes was able to get so close to the enemy probably convinced McClellan to allow Smith to attempt a crossing with four skirmish companies to verify Noyes's report. McClellan told Smith that if the defenders abandoned their positions, Smith would create a lodgement on the north bank. McClellan warned Smith that if Confederate resistance was serious, he was to withdraw his troops from the other bank. It is not clear exactly how long McClellan remained with Smith.¹⁴

Smith and his officers placed the Union division in an attack posture. Because the woods concealed Confederate positions, he ordered Brooks's Vermont Brigade to send four companies across to determine enemy strength before the division crossed the river. Brooks told Colonel Breed Hyde, commander of the Third Vermont, to send four of his companies across and signal when they entered the enemy positions. Hyde would send a messenger to Brooks to request that Brooks reinforce the skirmishers. Hyde chose companies D, E, F, and K under the command of Captain Fernando C. Harrington. Woods would conceal the approach march of the attackers to the river and give them some protection on the north bank. The designated crossing point was the narrowest portion of the river in Smith's sector which would expose the men to less fire while they waded across such an open area. The division commander ordered Ayres move the division artillery up to support the crossing Vermonters. Smith ordered Hancock's Brigade forward to act as the reserve for the Vermont Brigade. Davidson's Brigade remained at Four Corners to protect the division's flank and where it was close enough to move quickly to support the attack.¹⁵

Ayres brought up twenty cannons of the divisional artillery to within 2,700 feet of the Confederates to suppress rebel fire for the crossing Union companies. By 2:00 P.M., the

probably placed next to and north of the dam where it has the best field of fire.

¹⁴Smith to Suydam, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 364-65; Smith to Marcy, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 365; Brooks to Currie 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 372-73; Keyes Report, 26 March 1863, Report of the Joint Committee, 597-601.

¹⁵A. W. Stillwell, "Diary," 16 April 1862, Historical Society of Wisconsin; Kennedy to Ayres, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 368-69; Hyde to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 375; Smith to Suydam, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 364-65; Mott to Ayres, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 369-70; Ayres to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 368; Hancock to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 370-71; Smith to Marcy, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 365-66; Harrington to Corey, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, pt. 1, 376; Brooks to Curry, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 372-73; McClellan to Thomas, 19 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 363; Brooks to Assistant Adjutant General, Fourth Corps, 20 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 373-74; War Department, Official Military Atlas, plate 18.

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crews had their guns behind the Confederate earthwork near the chimneys of the Garrows House. They cut openings for the cannon barrels which protected the Federals from fire and allowed the troops to aim their artillery at the Southern positions. The shape of the former Confederate earthwork allowed the Union gunners an effective converging fire on Southern units at and near the dam. The Federal cannons were also at the same elevation as their targets which increased their chances of firing into the positions and not just hitting the earthen walls. The rate of fire of the other batteries is unknown but Mott's Battery fired 580 rounds across the river. By 3:00 P.M., this bombardment suppressed Confederate fire.¹⁶

For all McLaws knew, this increased Federal cannonade was the beginning of a major Union offensive to pierce Confederate defenses and envelop the Army of the Peninsula; so, when Union artillery fire increased at Dam Number One, he correctly assumed that Smith would cross the river there. McLaws reorganized part of his division to counterattack the intruders. He ordered his divisional reserves consisting of the Tenth Louisiana, Fifteenth Virginia, and four companies from the Seventeenth Mississippi to move to the Dam Number One area. If these troops failed to shore up the defense, the closest troops were five miles away.¹⁷

While the Federal artillery shelled the Dam Number One area, a Confederate regimental commander committed a serious error. Despite the Federal cannonade, Colonel Robert McKinney decided to keep his Fifteenth North Carolina Regiment six-hundred feet to the rear to dig earthworks in order to protect the regimental camp. He probably believed his skirmishers would warn him of a Union advance, delay it, and give him time to move the regiment into its positions. When Union fire began at 8:00 A.M., McKinney formed his men into battle formation of two lines with officers behind them to direct the attack to be ready for the expected Federal attack. At 10:00 A.M. when the attack did not occur, he ordered his men to stack arms and continue their digging. The presence of the strong Union force that had not attempted to cross the river in strength for eleven days may have made McKinney complacent. If the Union attacked, his men would have to waste precious time reforming before they could occupy their front line positions or counterattack.¹⁸

Harrington led his 192 troops into battle formation across the river and into the Confederate rifle pits directly before the almost empty Fifteenth North Carolina trenches. Companies D and F deployed into a skirmish formation that left men farther apart than the standard attack arrangement to be less vulnerable to Confederate fire. Companies E and K entered the water and added their fire to the spearhead's. Ayres cannons helped suppress

¹⁶ Ayres to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 368; Mott to Ayres, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 369-70; Author's Battlefield Survey, 24 April 1992.

¹⁷ McLaws to Dickenson, 30 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 415.

¹⁸ Ihrie to Cobb, 19 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 421-22.

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Confederate fire and allowed the Vermonters to cross the river. According to Corporal George Q. French, "On we pushed over logs, roots & every kind of impediment which floated in the water or rested in the ground." Because the skirmishers were in such a hurry to charge the defenders and seize cover in Confederate rifle pits, many of the Vermonters tripped on the obstacles so that even if they carried their cartridge belts above their heads, they got their ammunition wet and therefore useless. The rapidity and firepower of the Federal assault overwhelmed the skirmish company from the Fifteenth North Carolina and the other from the Sixteenth Georgia, and compelled them to retreat. French referred to "the gleam of our steadily advancing bayonets" terrifying the Confederates. Six Federals yelled so loudly that they flushed some of the Confederates away from the main defense works. Then these bold soldiers entered the enemy trench. The Vermonters gained their beachhead on the north shore.¹⁹

While the Vermonters clung to their vulnerable positions for forty minutes, Union leadership suffered from an inexcusable breakdown in communication. Harrington's men, who were the only Union soldiers locked in close combat with the Confederates in Smith's sector, signaled Hyde on the opposite bank to reinforce them before the Confederates counterattacked. Hyde sent this message to Brooks, presumably to get brigade reinforcements for this operation. Brooks never received the message nor saw the agreed upon signal from the skirmishers. As a result, he did not reinforce or withdraw his men from their lodgement. Smith did not establish communication with Harrington's men. Despite the fact that Keyes heard an increase in the firing from Smith's area while he inspected the rest of his corps, he strangely assumed that the defensive operation was still in progress and thus remained uniformed. Because four senior officers only had a fraction of their forces in contact with the rebels with the rest safely behind a river, it should have been relatively easy for them to stay informed of the situation. As a result, three generals who could have quickly reinforced or withdrawn the skirmishers did not know what was going on. This left the Vermonters isolated and therefore vulnerable to a Confederate counterattack.²⁰

In contrast to the Union generals, Confederate leaders knew what was happening and they were actively involved in the battle. Howell Cobb, the Confederate brigade

¹⁹Hyde to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 375; Levy to Baum, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 420-21; Brooks Report, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 372; French to unknown addressee, 18 April 1862, Eisenberg, "Third Vermont," 226-27; Harrington to Corey, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 376; McLaws to Dickenson, 30 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 415-16; Magruder to Cooper, 3 May 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 406,7; Ranger Jerry Bocek, Archological Study Interview, 22 March 1992; Paddy Griffith, "Packs Down-Charge," Military History Quarterly (Autumn 1989), 110. Bocek found a rifle pit the Vermonters occupied filled with fifty "pulled" .58 caliber bullets which support the theory they got wet during the river crossing. These positions are now underwater. According to Paddy Griffith, yelling was an effective way to embolden troops, drown out enemy yells, or cause the enemy to overestimate strength.

²⁰Hyde to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 375; Brooks Report, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 372; Keyes Report, 26 March 1863, Report of the Joint Committee, 597-601.

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commander, launched a brigade counterattack against the four Union companies. From his left to right, he placed the Second Louisiana, Fifteenth North Carolina, Sixteenth Georgia, Eleventh Georgia, and Thomas R. R. Cobb's Legion into a line of battle. McKinney died leading his Fifteenth North Carolina in a charge, so they became temporarily disordered. Cobb rode along his line on horseback, reorganized the Carolinians and helped push the attack forward. Brig. Gen R. H. Anderson sent the Seventh and Eighth Georgia from his Second brigade to reinforce the attack. The Vermonters, with their backs to the river for an hour, were in a desperate situation.²¹

Because Hyde received no reply from Brooks and his skirmishers' situation was getting more desperate by the minute, Hyde ordered his troops to withdraw. Harrington's men were running out of dry ammunition, taking severe casualties, and losing their power to resist the steady Confederate attack. Corporal French stated:

It makes my heart sick to think of it. Let it suffice to say we held them there at bay for a long hour, waiting, Oh how anxiously for reinforcements. The ground was dotted with our comrades dead & the creek was crimson with the blood of our wounded.

Since some of his men refused to retreat or did not get his order, Harrington had a hard time disengaging his troops. During the retreat, the Confederates inflicted more casualties on the Vermonters.²²

After their initial success, the Confederates were certainly ready for another Union attack. Cobb now had the Tenth Louisiana, Fifteenth Virginia, four companies of the Seventeenth Mississippi that McLaws had ordered to reinforce him in addition to the Second Louisiana, Fifteenth North Carolina, T. R. R. Cobb's Legion, Seventh and Eighth Georgia which were already there. Magruder deemed the area so important that he arrived to provide added leadership.²³

²¹Ihrle to Cobb, 19 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 421-22; Cobb to McLaws, 22 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 416-17; McLaws to Dickenson, 30 April 1862, 415; Magruder to Cooper, 3 May 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 406-7; B.M. Zettler, "Magruder's Peninsula Campaign," 197. In a line of battle, a unit's troops stood in two ranks. Officers directed their movements and firing from behind the formation.

²²Harrington to Corey, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 376; Hyde to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 375; French letter to unknown addressee, 18 April 1862, "Third Vermont," 226-27.

²³McClellan to Smith, 15 April 1862, McClellan's Own Story, 284-85; Cobb Report to McLaws, 22 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 416-17; McLaws to Dickenson, 30 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 415; Magruder to Cooper, 3 May 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 406-7.

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As reinforcements entered the Confederate positions, Smith decided to plan another attack on Dam Number One. Because McClellan had warned him to withdraw his men from serious enemy resistance, this new attack violated McClellan's orders. Despite the Vermonters' repulse, Smith seemed to remain unaware of the Confederate brigade at the dam. He planned another weak attack. He ordered the Sixth Vermont with artillery support to probe and capture Confederate defenses below the dam. The Fourth Vermont's mission was to divert enemy attention by moving towards the dam.²⁴

The Vermonters were even less successful on their second attack which began at 5:00 P.M. The Fourth Vermont's ruse failed and the defenders poured their fire into the Sixth Vermont. Then Ayres's cannons fired over the heads of the Vermonters but did not suppress Confederate fire significantly. Colonel Nathan Lord led his Sixth Vermont forward in a Confederate crossfire until they were ninety feet from the enemy positions. He decided that his men had taken too many casualties to hold any ground they might win, so he ordered a retreat. According to Corporal A. W. Davis of the Sixth Vermont, the withdrawal was harrowing. "As we waded back, the water fairly boiled around us for bullets." He described wounded men struggling to get back to Union lines while others cried as they sank into the old stream bed and drowned. Some troops carried their stricken comrades in the muddy water and both were shot. Davis "saw two others assisting a wounded man, when a bullet passed through the latter's head and he pitched forward and was gone."²⁵

Both sides paid a high price for fighting the battle. The Federals suffered 35 dead and 121 wounded. The Third Vermont had 23 killed and 51 wounded. The Confederates had 60 to 75 casualties. The conflict left a grim reminder behind in the form of Union corpses floating in the river and lying on the shore in front of the confederate trenches. On 19 April, the new Confederate brigade commander, Brig. Gen. Paul Semmes, sent Colonel Levy across the river under a flag of truce and asked Captain L. D. H. Currie, Assistant Adjutant General of Smith's Division, for a two-hour truce to allow the Confederates to bury the Union dead. Currie sent Levy back with a request for the Confederates to deliver the dead to his men in the middle of the dam or stream. Semmes granted Currie's request and the Confederates delivered the corpses to Smith's soldiers.²⁶

²⁴Smith to Suydam, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 364-65; Lord to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 378; Smalley to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 377-78; Brooks to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 372.

²⁵Smalley to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 377-78; Lord to Read, 17 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 378; Ayres to Currie, 18 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 368; George Grenville Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War: A History of the Part Taken by the Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the War to Free the Union 1861-1865 vol. 1, (Burlington: The Free Press Assoc., 1886-1888), 212.

²⁶Semmes to Currie, 19 April 1862, 10 AM, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 117-18; Currie to Semmes, 19 April 1862, 230 PM, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 117-18; Semmes to Currie, 19 April 1862, 4 PM, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 3, 117-18; Smith to Marcy, 24 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 367; Terry L. Jones Lee's Tigers: The Louisiana Infantry in the Army of Northern Virginia (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 58-59.

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Because both sides prepared to defend against attacks that never came, the aftermath of the battle was relatively uneventful. Keyes and Smith feared a Confederate attack from the Lee's Mill area and sent reconnaissance patrols west of the Garrows chimneys to collect information. Meanwhile, the Dam Number One garrison remained on alert for another Union attack. Southern patrols went across the river and clashed with their Federal counterparts. When McClellan finally had the artillery he believed would crush the Army of the Peninsula, the Dam Number One garrison left with the rest of the Confederate forces on the night of 3 May 1862.²⁷

Magruder's men, under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston and then General Robert E. Lee fought the Army of the Potomac near Richmond from June through July 1862. While Lee prepared to counterattack McClellan's right flank and drive him from Richmond, Magruder's men held Richmond. During the Seven Days Battles in June and July 1862, Magruder's men helped Lee push McClellan back to the James River. McClellan's army left the peninsula for Washington, D.C., in late July 1862.²⁸

The Battle of Dam Number One was an important part of McClellan's Peninsula Campaign and is historically significant. McClellan's cautious orders to Smith are an important example of the hesitation McClellan showed throughout the siege of Yorktown, and indeed typified his approach to warfare generally. The Union attack at Dam Number One took the Confederates by surprise but they exploited Federal confusion, reinforced their positions, and defeated the two attacks. Poor communications between Hyde, Brooks, Smith, and Keyes not only left the brave Union companies in hostile territory for forty minutes, but also kept them from reinforcing the beachhead and breaking through the rebel line. Despite the earlier repulse, when Smith launched a second weak attack on the reinforced Confederate line shortly afterward, he showed how uninformed he was about the situation. The Confederate victory allowed Magruder to protect his army and the road from Lee's Mill north to Richmond. By the time McClellan was ready to pulverize the defenders with his batteries in early May, the Confederates had withdrawn toward Richmond.

Luckily for the civilians, no further combat occurred in the area of Dam Number One. Union troops occupied the Yorktown and Warwick River area while the center of fighting swirled around Northern and Central Virginia for the rest of the war.

²⁷General Order Four, Headquarters Right Wing of the Army of the Peninsula, 20 April 1862, RG 109, Orders Received by the Fifteenth Virginia Volunteers, NA; Keyes to Taylor 27 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 387-88; Davis to Johnston, 29 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, 84-86; Naglee to Smith, 29 April 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 396-97; Johnston to Cooper, 19 May 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 275-76.

²⁸McPherson, Battle Cry, 461-89.

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In 1866, James T. Garrows (who owned the land Union troops occupied during the battle) and other family members moved back to the farm and rebuilt the house. The family remained at this Warwick County location until 1897. This house is no longer standing.

From 1889 to 1926, the Newport News Light and Water Company and the Old Dominion Land Company purchased three thousand acres of the Warwick River watershed in order to provide water for the city of Newport News. They built an earthen dam on the Warwick River which created the Lee Hall Reservoir. The addition of 4,000 more acres of watershed property in the early part of this century would eventually encompass all the Garrows Farm and site of the Battle of Dam Number One. The construction of the reservoir and subsequent heightening of the dam in later years would raise the water level over Dam Number One.

From 1926 until 1959, two waterworks commissions owned the battlefield. In 1926, the Newport News Waterworks commission was formed and replaced the Newport News Light and Water Company. It managed the Dam Number One site and surrounding area as a watershed for the reservoir for thirty two years. On 1 July 1958, the Department of Public Utilities for Newport News replaced this company.

In 1959, the City Council of Newport News discussed the possibility of developing a part of the Lee Hall watershed, which included the Battle of Dam Number One site, into a public park. In 1966, the 8,065 acres Newport News Park was dedicated and became one of the largest municipal parks in the United States.

Despite several different owners in the past 132 years, the Dam Number One Battlefield is in excellent condition. Park roads, trails, and brochures guide visitors through this hallowed ground. Ninety-five percent of the trenches are intact. Trees and open areas generally follow wartime patterns; so, today's visitor can experience this battlefield.

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Dam No. 1 Battlefield Site
City of Newport News, Virginia

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A.	18	362000	4116620
B.	18	362081	4116710
C.	18	362300	4116782
D.	18	362522	4116810
E.	18	363425	4117040
F.	18	363825	4116698
G.	18	364120	4116440
H.	18	364360	4115925
I.	18	364320	4115785
J.	18	364170	4115590
K.	18	364120	4115470
L.	18	363260	4115370
M.	18	363185	4115540
N.	18	362939	4115863

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is embraced by the polygon drawn on a USGS map with points A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, and N. Start at point A which is the bank of the reservoir, go northeast to B, follow same direction on unimproved road to C which is a hard surface road, then travel northeast to D at the junction of that road and another unimproved road, continue northeast along unimproved road to E, turn southeast and follow ridge to F, cross water obstacle to gully at G, travel southeast then southwest in gully to H, continue southwest to ridge at I, follow this in same direction to J, travel southwest to hard surface road at K, continue west along this road to L, go northwest to ridge at M, continue northwest along ridge to bank of reservoir at N, and finally go northwest across reservoir and along its shore to A.

Boundary Justification

All historically significant features associated with the Battle of Dam Number One are located within these boundaries. These features are the Union and Confederate earthworks, Dam Number One, and areas Confederate reserves moved through during the battle.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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**Dam No. 1 Battlefield Site
City of Newport News, Virginia**

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

Dam Number One Battlefield
City of Newport News, Virginia
VDHR File No. 121-60

All photographs were taken by Jerry Bocek in 1993. Negatives are filed with the department collection at the Library of Virginia, Negative No. **12409**.

VIEW OF: typical trench; camera facing northwest
PHOTO 1 of 12

VIEW OF: Dam Number One; camera facing south
PHOTO 2 of 12

VIEW OF: bricks from Garrows' chimney ruins; camera facing north
PHOTO 3 of 12

VIEW OF: Interpretive Center exterior; camera facing south
PHOTO 4 of 12

VIEW OF: interior of Interpretive Center; camera facing north
PHOTO 5 of 12

VIEW OF: Cannon and Caisson; camera facing northeast
PHOTO 6 of 12

VIEW OF: Dam Number One painting; camera facing east
PHOTO 7 of 12

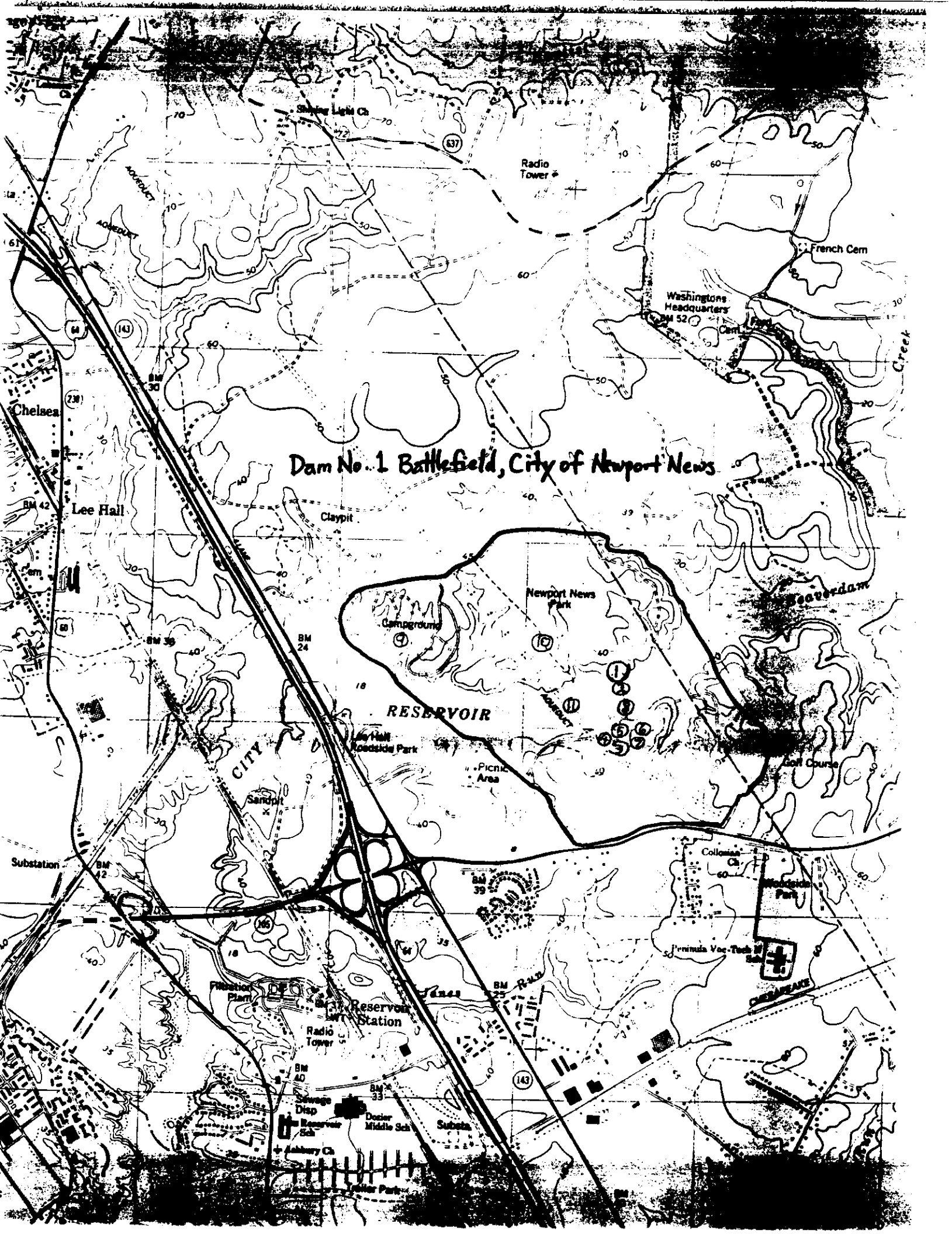
VIEW OF: UDC Plaque; camera facing north
PHOTO 8 of 12

VIEW OF: footbridge; camera facing north
PHOTO 9 of 12

VIEW OF: campground; camera facing east
PHOTO 10 of 12

VIEW OF: 15th N.C. sign; camera facing south
PHOTO 11 of 12

VIEW OF: aqueduct; camera facing west
PHOTO 12 of 12



Dam No. 1 Battlefield, City of Newport News

RESERVOIR

Chelsea
Lee Hall

Substation

Reservoir Station
Radio Tower
Sewage Disp Reservoir
Dozier Middle Sch
Abney Ch
Tanner Park

Washington Headquarters
Cent

French Cem

Newport News Park

Reverdam

Golf Course

Collman Ch

Woodside Park

Primula Vee Tech Sch

CHESTER