



## **Camp Allegheny**

**Also known as Camp Baldwin or Camp Johnson, Camp Allegheny is a Civil War era Confederate fortification located astride the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike in Pocahontas County, West Virginia. Camp Allegheny was built in the summer of 1861 by Confederate forces in an attempt to control the turnpike (present County Route 3). They hoped to bar Federal advances toward Staunton, Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. At an elevation of approximately 4,400 feet above sea level, the fortification is the highest in the eastern theater of the Civil War.**

**Camp Allegheny consists of an enclosed pit and parapet fortification to the west of the turnpike, with associated cabins and earthworks on a hill to the east. The fort was constructed on the farm of John Yeager and a large sugar maple grove supposedly was cut down for building cabins. Following the October 3, 1861 Battle of Greenbrier River at Camp Bartow (nine miles northwest), Confederate General Henry R. Jackson moved his forces to this position. Here the Confederate Army established winter quarters.**

## **Camp Allegheny Battle**

**Brigadier General Robert H. Milroy, newly promoted commander of Federal forces in the Cheat Mountain Division, determined to destroy the Confederate outpost here. On the morning of December 12, 1861, he assembled a force of about 1,900 men at Cheat Summit Fort and advanced on Camp Allegheny. Opposing Milroy was Colonel Edward Johnson's 1,200-man Confederate force consisting of Georgia and Virginia regiments, two batteries of artillery (totaling eight guns) and a detachment of cavalry.**

**The Federal troops seized abandoned Camp Bartow (site of the October 3 Battle of Greenbrier River). There General Milroy divided his force, hoping to strike both the right and left (east and west flanks) of Camp Allegheny at daybreak of the 13th. Milroy personally directed the main column which advanced along the Staunton-Parkersburg steep mountainside approximately one mile from Camp Allegheny. The column's intended position was to reach the right and rear of the Confederates.**

**Meanwhile, the second Federal column under Colonel Moody was to march up the Green Bank road and attack the left. Colonel Moody's attack was to be the signal for Milroy's simultaneous assault. However, Milroy's force encountered a strong Confederate picket**

and began the fight prematurely. The Confederates advanced from their earthworks toward Milroy, but were driven back by the superior long range rifles of the Federals. The Confederates quickly rallied, however, and returned from the trenches and log cabins in force. The fighting was at such close quarters that the Confederate cannons could not be used efficiently. Milroy had not brought any artillery with his troops, hoping to capture the Confederate guns. Finally breaking off the engagement, Milroy gathered his dead and wounded from the open field and led the exhausted Federals back to the turnpike. At that time, Colonel Moody made his hopelessly late attack on the left flank of Camp Allegheny. Colonel Johnson was now able to commit his entire force against Moody. Worn out by the long march, (and rumored to have visited a local cider mill the previous night) Moody's troops fought stubbornly but were soon driven back. They retreated down the mountainside and rejoined Milroy's command.

The Confederates remained in control of the fort and Milroy's Federals retreated to Cheat Mountain. Casualties were almost even with both sides reporting roughly 20 killed and a little over 120 wounded and missing. As a result of this action, Colonel Johnson was promoted to Brigadier General, and his command received a commendation from the Confederate Congress.

## **The Winter of 1861-1862**

The engagement at Camp Allegheny effectively ended campaigning for the winter. Both armies settled into the routine of winter camp life under harsh conditions. The Confederates suffered in their exposed position during the miserable winter of 1861. Measles, pneumonia, and other illnesses swept through the camp. Numerous cemeteries and unmarked graves in the area bear witness to their results.

George P. Morgan of the 31st Virginia regiment noted in his diary for August 20, 1861:

*"Between the measles and the worst climate ever seen, I am still dragging out a kind of miserable existence unable to do military duty or anything else. Here on top of the Allegheny Mountain it rains in torrents nearly every day, and when not raining, we are in the midst of clouds through which one can't see fifty yards."*

Colonel Johnson's troops abandoned the works at Camp Allegheny in April 1862. Soon after, local guerillas apparently set fire to much of the camp. Camp Allegheny saw sporadic use during various raids later in the war.

## **Present Condition**

Camp Allegheny is extremely well preserved. The locale today looks much as it did in 1861, consisting primarily of open sheep pasture. The Forest Service administers and protects that portion of the camp north of the Staunton-Parkersburg pike. This area includes three rows of stone piles and surface depressions representing the remains of at least 35 cabins. The hillside above this point contains a shallow trench. This hillside and

**the ridge flat above are the locations of General Milroy's attack during the December 13, 1861 battle.**

**South of the turnpike, on private property, lie extensive earth and stone breastworks on the summit of Buffalo Ridge enclosing well defined battery emplacements, stone piles representing more cabin locations and a prominent oval earthen enclosure on the ridge crest often referred to as a "command post." Visitors to the site should not enter the private portion without permission from the landowners.**

**Recognizing the historical significance of this location, the Forest Service nominated Camp Allegheny to the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. This nomination was accepted, and the site is now listed on the National Register.**

### **Tips for Visitors**

**Please assist us in preserving this important site. Remember that all artifacts, earthworks, structures, and archaeological resources at Camp Allegheny are protected by Federal law (Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, etc.). If you observe artifacts, please leave them in place and report them to USDA Forest Service personnel. If you observe anyone using a metal detector or collecting, please contact the Forest Supervisor at (304) 636-1800, the District Ranger in Bartow (304) 456-3335, or 1-800-333-SAVE.**

**Please make your visit to Camp Allegheny a safe one. Remember to stay alert on the narrow dirt road (Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike) accessing the area and be aware of hazards such as uneven ground when walking through the site. Unexploded ordinance at Civil War battlefields can constitute a health hazard. Should you observe any ordinance do not touch it. Please contact the Forest Supervisor or District Ranger immediately. As you visit and enjoy Camp Allegheny, please be certain to leave it as you find it.**