

and turn right on Rt.603, Travel 1.5 miles to a stop sign. Turn right and continue on Rt.603 (Indiantown Rd.) for 2.3 miles and stop at the junction of the Woodville Road.

Stop 1 – Start at Jacobs’ Ford, (Woodville). The Third and Sixth Union corps crossed the Rapidan River at Jacobs’ Ford, approximately one mile to your right, and marched up the Woodville Road toward your present location. Today the road ends at a private residence several hundred yards from the ford.

Follow the Union advance by continuing on Rt. 603 for 0.5 miles to its intersection with Rt. 715 (Lewistown Road). Brigadier General Henry Prince’s division, the leading element of French’s Third Corps, reached this point before halting on the night of November 26th. Prince spent the night at “the apex of the angle of the forks.” Bear left and drive 0.6 miles farther, stopping at the intersection of Russel Road (Rt. 685).

Stop 2 – Widow Morris Farm (Route 603). Generals French and Prince wasted several hours at this road junction debating which road to take. During the fighting at Payne’s farm, French used the Widow Morris house as his headquarters. A modern structure now stands on the site of the Morris house, at the southeast corner of the junction.

Continue to follow the Third Corps advance by driving on Rt. 603 1.2 miles farther to Rt. 611 (Raccoon Ford Road). Turn left and continue 0.2 miles to Zoar Baptist Church.

Stop 3 – Payne’s Farm (Zoar Rd.). Marching down the Raccoon Ford Road (Rt. 611), Edward Johnson’s Confederate division collided with French’s corps in the woods and fields in this vicinity. To orient yourself to the direction of Johnson’s attack, stand with your back to the church and face the road. the Stonewall Brigade, on Johnson’s left, marched past the site of the modern church, crossed the road, and passed through the woods on the opposite side into the open fields of the Payne farm. About a hundred yards to our right is a dirt road that leads to the Payne house. Stafford’s and Jones’ brigades, on Johnson’s right, crossed the Raccoon Ford road, wheeled to the left, and formed along this dirt road, facing northwest across the field. Return to your car and continue south on Rt. 611 a distance of 1.2 miles to the junction of Rt. 602. Johnson’s division used this road when it pulled back across Mine Run on the 27th. Proceed on Rt. 611 1.1 miles farther to Rt. 20. Just before you reach the intersection, turn left into the gas station on the left.

Stop 4 – Robertson’s Tavern (Route 20). Meade originally intended to concentrate his army at

this intersection then continue west to flank Lee’s army, but poor weather, muddy roads, and a quick Confederate reaction foiled his plan. Skirmishing occurred here on the 27th between Major General Jubal A. Early’s Confederate division and Brigadier General Alexander Hays Union division. Robertson’s Tavern stood at this site until recent years, when it was moved 200 yards farther off the road. The yellow building with its steeply pitched roof now stands in the field behind this gas station.

Turn right (west) on Rt. 20 and drive 1.2 miles to the junction of Rt. 729.

Stop 5 – Federal Position (Route 20). On November 28th, the Federal army entrenched along this ridge facing west, the direction you are now travelling. General Meade made his headquarters near here, in a field north of the road. 0.8 miles ahead is Mine Run, the creek that gave the battle its name. In order to attack the Confederate line, Meade’s men would have to cross the creek and charge 1,000 yards up a cleared slope under a murderous artillery fire. Meade ultimately determined the attempt would be too hazardous and withdrew his army back across the Rapidan River.

Continue west on Rt. 20 for approximately 1.9 miles and pull off to the right at near the power station.

Stop 6 – Confederate Position (Route 20). The Confederate line intersected the road in this vicinity. General Meade reported that the west bank of Mine Run was “crowned with infantry parapets, abatis, and epaulments for batteries.”

Drive one-quarter mile and turn left on Rt. 692. As you drive south on this road, you will be traveling behind and roughly parallel to the Confederate line. Continue 1.8 miles and turn left on Rt. 621, the Orange Plank Road, now known as the Mine Run Road. 0.6 miles down the road you will once again cross Mine Run. When you reach the run, Union General Gouverneur K. Warren’s position on the night of the 29th will be on your right. Continue 2.8 miles past Mine Run and Stop at New Hope Church.

Stop 7 – New Hope Church (Mine Run Rd.). This modern structure stands on the same site as a church that was here during the war. After an initial cavalry clash in this vicinity on the 27th, Brigadier General Henry Heth’s Confederate division arrived and occupied the important hill just west of the church. Major General George Sykes’ Union Fifth Corps then took the high ground from Heth and cautiously sought the advantage while the army consolidated. During the battle, Federal cavalry commander David Gregg used the church as his headquarters.

To go to Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, or I-95, continue east on Rt. 621 8.3 miles and turn right on Rt. 3.

The Mine Run Campaign



Text reviewed and graphics provided by Chief Historian

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Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park

ORANGE COUNTY
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Mine Run Campaign

November 26 – December 2, 1863

Of all hard looking places...Mine Run was the hardest I ever beheld.

Surgeon Daniel Holt, 121st New York

The landscape was once bucolic, but for Union soldiers gaining across the frozen farms bordering Mine Run, the likely battlefield offered a frightening panorama: more than a mile of open space, cut by Mine Run itself, and then a gentle upslope to powerful Confederate earthworks on the far side. When the orders to attack the distant Confederates were cancelled on November 30, 1863, 80,000 Union soldiers heaved a collective sigh of relief.

But the Mine Run Campaign in November 1863 was far more than a battle that wasn't. It was in scale a movement as large as Chancellorsville or the Wilderness—an attempt by Union General George Meade to follow up the victory at Gettysburg with a decisive triumph before winter set in.

The campaign began on November 29, 1863, when Meade ordered his army to cross the Rapidan River, trying to pass Lee's right flank. Lee quickly learned of the movement and moved his army from Orange Court House and the upstream Rapidan crossings to confront Meade.

Skirmishes flared across eastern Orange County on November 27: infantry near Robertson's Tavern (along modern Route 20 at Locust Grove), cavalry along the Orange Plank Road (modern Route 610) near New Hope Church. Most importantly, the entire Union Third Corps, commanded by William B. French, collided with Confederates at the Payne farm, on the road from the Rapidan to Robertson's Tavern. Confederate general Edward Johnson launched an impetuous attack with his division against the much larger Union force. Fighting raged across the Payne farm—the most intense fighting of the campaign. The Confederates slowed the Union advance, giving Lee time to man a powerful line

of earthworks west of Mine run. The next day, the two armies would come face to face, separated by the stream that would give the campaign its name.

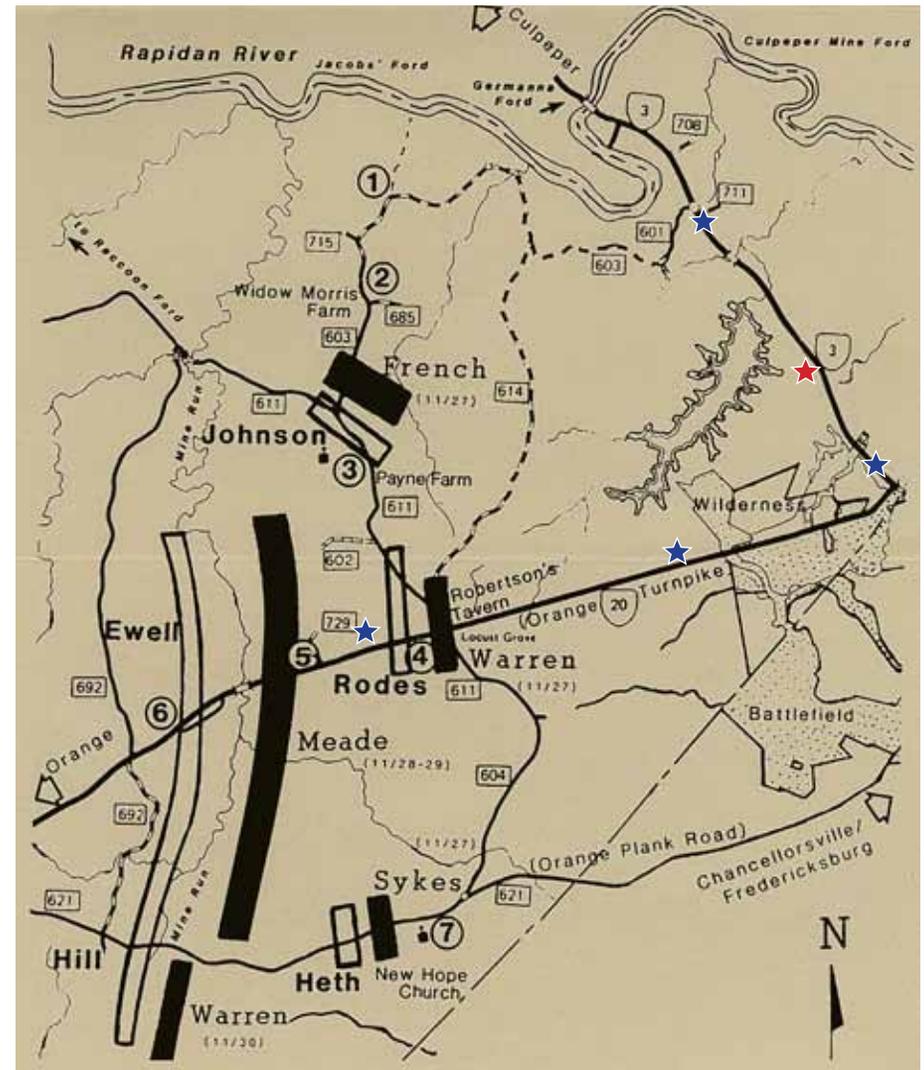
Both sides suffered through days of bitter cold. Still, Meade determined to attack Lee on November 29—moving troops on a wide arching marching to the Orange Plank Road (Route 621), where he hoped to roll up the Confederate flank. But Confederate general A. P. Hill got wind of the movement and blocked it. After watching his troops huddle in below zero overnight temperatures, Meade called off the attack. The armies would glower at each other on November 30, but the next day Meade opted to withdraw—sparing his army what most believed, would have been a disastrous defeat.

The Battlefield Today

While much of the battlefield remains in private ownership, in 2003 the Civil War Preservation Trust acquired almost the entire site of the Battle of Payne's Farm—680 acres. Payne's farm is, by acclamation, perhaps the best-preserved battlefield site in Virginia.

Other sites associated with the campaign can be viewed from public roads. No Union earthworks remain (the Confederates leveled them after the campaign), but significant lines of Confederate works survive on private property. Please respect the rights of property owners—do not trespass.

The Mine Run Campaign Map



★Traveler and dining services available.

★Route 3, aka *Germanna Plank Road* by the Confederate Army and *Stevensburg Plank Road* by the Union Army.

Directions to the Battlefield

To reach the Mine Run battlefield, drive west on Rt. 3 from Fredericksburg and proceed 3.5 miles beyond the traffic light at Wilderness Junction (Rt. 20). Just after passing Rt. 711 on your right, make a U-turn and travel back towards Fredericksburg in the eastbound lane. Go 0.1 miles