

General John Buford reached Turner's Gap where General Morris was stationed. General Buford ordered a small group of signal corpsmen to begin observation from a top the Washington Monument. From here they could see the whole valley and report any movements to General Buford.

On July 7th, a party of signal officers, under charge of Captain William J. L. Nicodemus, arrived from Washington, for the purpose of working in conjunction with the signal corps of this army. Captain Nicodemus opened a line of communication between Frederick and South Mountain Pass. General French ordered Captain Nicodemus to report to General Meade. Upon seeing General Meade, Captain Nicodemus was ordered to detach his men and begin operating from South Mountain and Maryland Heights to begin communicating with Frederick and South Mountain. The detachment was deployed as follows: Lieutenants Charles Herzog and Thomas P. Rushby to Maryland Heights, Lieutenant Fisher to Crampton's Pass while Captain Daniels, and Captain Denicke along with Lieutenants William J. Galbraith, Briggs, Denicke, Swain, and S. Cary Tuckerman were sent to the front to establish observation stations in Boonsboro Valley.

At 6:00 p. m. Captain Nicodemus left Frederick with Captain Denicke and Lieutenants Denicke, Galbraith, Briggs, and Swain, arriving at Turner's Gap at 3:00 in the morning. Upon entering Turner's Gap, their mission was to open communication by signals for the advance of the Army of the Potomac that was near Middletown. Captain Nicodemus ordered Lieutenant Galbraith to stay at Turner's Gap to open an intermediate station between Frederick and Washington Monument, at which point the detachment of signalmen were ordered to report to Captain Daniels. As the rain fell and darkness settled in there was no sign of Captain Daniels so the detachment laid down till daylight.

On July 8th, Captain Nahum Daniels arrived at the Mountain House at 8:00 in the morning, and as soon as the weather would permit they would begin to send signals. During the morning a detachment of signalmen were ordered to open up a signal station on a hill outside of Boonsboro. In the afternoon, general headquarters moved to Middletown. Turner's Gap and Boonsboro would also serve as communications for General John Buford and his cavalry division along with General Kilpatrick's Cavalry Division.

Captain Ernst A. Denicke and Lieutenant C.F.M. Denicke opened a station at Washington Monument early in the morning around 9:00. The first thing that needed to be done was to cut away the timber that obstructed the view near the monument. The Confederate forces marching toward Williamsport were observed from the Washington Monument by Captain Ernst A. Denicke and Lieutenant C.F.M. Denicke and this information was soon relayed to headquarters. At around 3:00 in the afternoon, Lieutenant C.F.M. Denicke was ordered to Frederick and assist Lieutenant Galbraith in opening communications with the stations upon South Mountain. Lieutenant Swain was ordered to open a station at Boonsboro while Lieutenant Briggs opened a station upon Elk Mountain. Captain Daniels opened a station near the Hagerstown Pike, about 1 mile beyond Boonsboro.

The Confederate cavalry under General JEB Stuart was ordered by General Lee to attack and stall General Meade's movements as they were holding the western approach of South Mountain Pass. Five Confederate cavalry brigades and artillery fought against the elements of the Union 1st and 3rd Cavalry Divisions and infantry at around 10:00 in the morning. General Stuart's role was to buy General Lee time and to keep General Meade from getting his army into position and surrounding General Lee's Army as they were concentrating their forces around Williamsport and Hagerstown.



The Washington Monument. First built in 1827 and was in ruins by the time of the Civil War.

At about 10:30 a.m. the Confederate artillery began to shell the signal stations that were popping up along South Mountain and in Boonsboro. As the engagement of Boonsboro was warming up, Signal Corpsman Captain Denicke reported by signal the movements of the Confederate cavalry that were reported to General John Buford. Every movement of Stuart's Cavalry was seen from the station at Washington Monument. Henry Brown of the Battery K, First U.S. Artillery was on one of the four guns deployed by his horse artillery. He took time to write home saying "It was the severest fight we have had." After the battle of Boonsboro, his detachment was getting fresh horses and also a new battery.

General Buford held the road while General Judson Kilpatrick's Cavalry Division rested east of Boonsboro. As the fight at Boonsboro became very intense, General Kilpatrick's Division came to assist General Buford. By nightfall, General Stuart withdrew his cavalry several miles to Funkstown. Generals Buford and Kilpatrick stayed near Boonsboro to rest their cavalry without food or supplies. Boonsboro was one of a series of cavalry battles fought around Funkstown, Hagerstown, and Williamsport. The Army of the Potomac was moving from Frederick toward South Mountain.

General Meade made his headquarters at Middletown. Lieutenant William A. Roebling wrote "The roads over the mountains from Frederick were frightful" on Catoclin Mountain. The next mountain being South Mountain must have been a dreadful site to the men dressed in blue.

A section of Battery F, 4th U.S. Artillery under the command of 2nd Lieutenant S. T. Rugg was posted at Crampton's Gap. Near to the north of Turner's Gap the 140th New York Volunteers under the command of Colonel Gilbert G. Prey encamped on the western side of South Mountain. They were ordered to throw up breastworks, which they did from stones that were noted to be in abundance. The 140th stayed in

position until July 10th when they were ordered to march on the National Pike toward Hagerstown.

Union General John Newton was protecting the eastern route to Turner's Gap. Fearing that a much larger Confederate force might attack, he wrote a dispatch to General S. Williams. General Newton, unsure of the strength of Turner's Gap, stated that he had about twenty-four pieces of artillery and 3,300 infantry. He was going to leave 1700 members of the Vermont Brigade behind since they were not issued rations and had been on the march for most of the day.

General Newton was unsure of the importance of Turner's Gap. As he continued to report to General Williams, if Turner's Gap required more troops to defend, then General Williams would have to send them. General Newton thought that if Turner's Gap was worthy of being held for the Union pursuit of General Lee's Army, and then more infantry was needed. He remembered the battle of Crampton's Gap from the year before when he engaged Confederate troops there that were small in number and how the Union forces pushed them out from the gap. General Williams replied to General Newton's dispatch. He told General Newton that the 11th Corps was ordered to Turner's Gap and that the 6th Corps would be on hand in support if it was needed.

During the day, General Meade issued the marching orders that were to be carried out 5:00 a.m. on July 9th, as follows: The 6th Corps would move out of Middletown through Turner's Gap to Boonsboro followed by the 11th Corps and the Artillery Reserve. The 1st Corps was to take possession of Turner's Gap. The 5th Corps followed by the 3rd Corps would cross over South Mountain at Fox's Gap. The 12th Corps was ordered to move to Rohrersville followed by the 2nd Corps. The Engineer Battalion was ordered to encamp with General Meade who was planning on having his headquarters at the Mountain House.