Confederate Orders for July 19, 1864

In a circular order delivered to all three of his infantry commanders during the morning of Tuesday, July 19th, newly appointed Confederate Commander John Bell Hood made clear his objective to fight Sherman along the Peach Tree Creek line and to contest each attempted Federal crossing.

"Circular: Headquarters Stewart's Corps,
Army of Mississippi,

July 19, 1864.

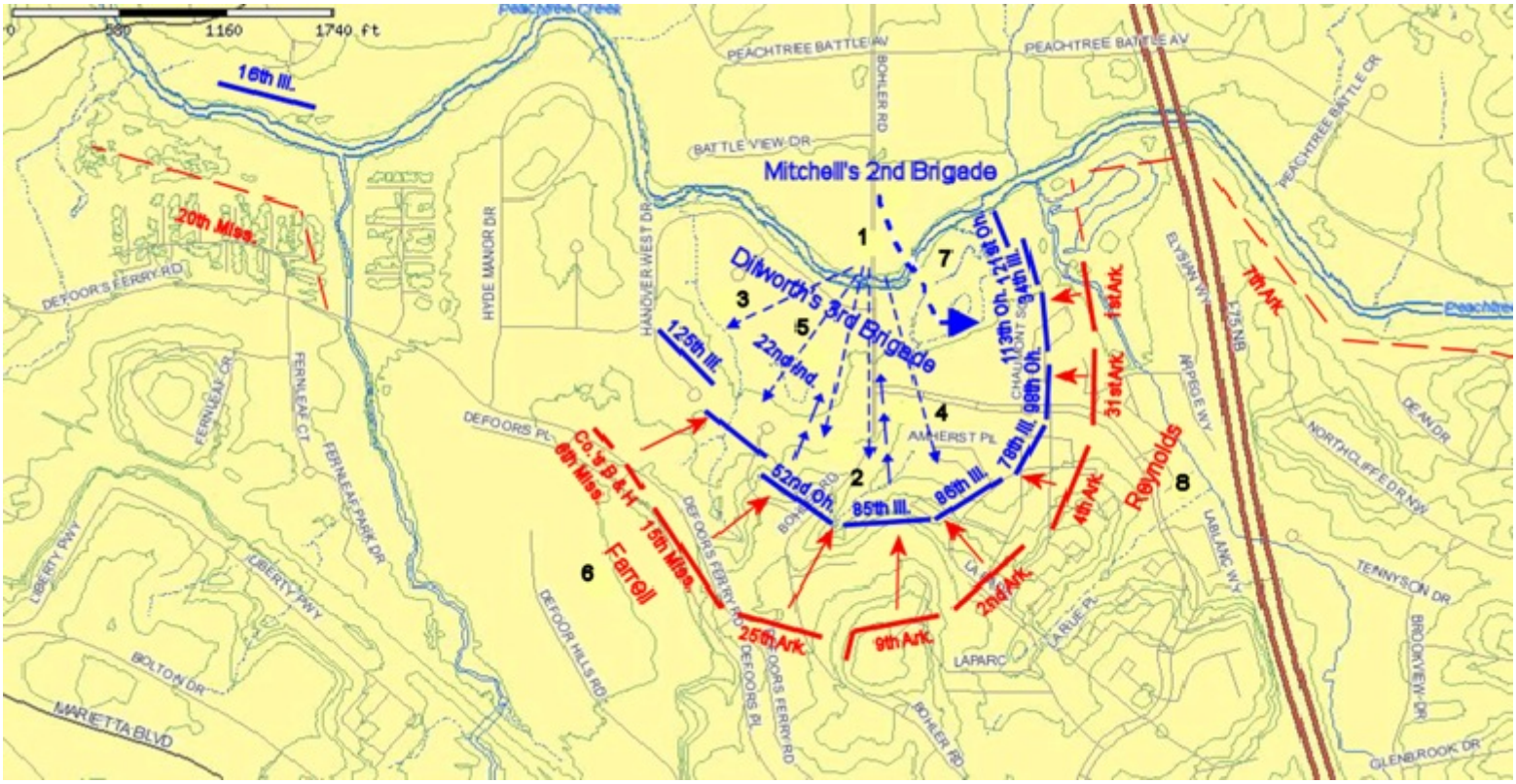
By direction of General Hood you will cause the banks of Peach Tree Creek to be thoroughly examined in front of your division; place a strong skirmish line there, and cause the best defenses that can be made to be placed there. The object is to enable a small force to resist the enemy's crossing for some time. General Hood considers this of great importance, and Lieutenant General Stewart wishes you to give it your prompt attention.

Respectfully,
A. P. Stewart, General Commanding Corps."

Along the quiet banks of the creek which lazily passed a mill near the mouth of Nancy Creek, these orders would soon be followed by the Mississippi and Arkansas troops which had been posted there. Soon, Federals by the hundreds and then thousands would swarm to the southern shore of the creek, the last natural obstacle between General Sherman and his goal, the city of Atlanta.

What happened next would be called the Battle of Moore's Mill.

Battle of Moore's Mill
July 19, 1864 (4:00 P.M.-8:30 P.M.)



Confederate Situation: A little after 1:00 P.M., Reynolds' Arkansas Brigade was relieved by Gist's Brigade from his position guarding the creek crossings around Howell Mill Road (then called the Pace's Ferry Road by many.) He was ordered to move west to cover Peach Tree Creek from east of today's I-75 to the Defoor's Ferry Road. His force numbering only about 520 men was too small for the task, and Adams' Miss. Brigade, some 1,500 strong, which he had just relieved had retired to a point near the Defoor's Ferry Road. Reynolds deployed the 25th Arkansas in a skirmish line to cover the field below today's Bohler Road crossing. By 4:00 P.M., the balance of his brigade was resting while Reynolds checked on the right of his line east of today's I-75.

Federal Situation: Meanwhile, Col. Dilworth's 3rd Brigade was ordered to force a crossing of Peach Tree Creek by General Jefferson C. Davis, his 1st Brigade under General Morgan having been unable to effect a crossing at Moore's Mill just to the west due to the mill pond, Nancy Creek, and Sear's Mississippi Brigade which was entrenched on the heights on the southern bank of Peach Tree Creek opposing any attempts to cross. Col. Mitchell's 2nd Brigade was ordered to support Dilworth's crossing.

Key to Map:

1. Lt. Col. Charles W. Clancy led the 52nd Ohio across a log which had been felled over Peach Tree Creek about 4:00 P.M.
2. The 85th Illinois followed immediately thereafter, and the two regiments proceeded about a quarter of a mile south to the heights opposite the field below today's Bohler Road and the confluence of Green Bone Creek with Peach Tree Creek. The move by these regiments overwhelms the Arkansans of the 25th Ark. who quickly flee south to near today's La Parc.

3.,4.& 5. The remainder of Dilworth's Brigade also cross Peach Tree Creek and begin to deploy in the field near the creek.

6. Col. Mike Farrell and the 15th Mississippi along with 2 companies of the 6th Mississippi from Adams' Brigade who are resting along today's Defoor's Ferry Road just to the southwest are called upon to help Reynolds respond to the Yankee parry. Farrell quickly forms his men, and with unloaded weapons (they did not have time to load), charge, fight in a brief clubbed-musket hand-to-hand encounter, and rout the 52nd Ohio, sending them back to the creek. Also, Farrell briefly captures the 85th Illinois, his regiment being now in rear of the surprised Illinois troops. But they soon realize how few men are with Farrell, and they escape. The Mississippians are finally stopped, however, by the arrival of the 22nd Indiana and the 125th Illinois who have by now formed to their left front, causing Farrell's Mississippians to withdraw but not before they took some 52 Yankees prisoner.

7. After Dilworth's Brigade has crossed, and after two of his regiments are routed, it is apparent that he needs support to hold the bridgehead. Col. Mitchell quickly crosses his Brigade over logs and rafts where they form to the east to protect Dilworth's exposed left flank. The 34th Illinois leads Mitchell's Brigade over the creek.

8. Soon thereafter, Reynolds launches a counter-attack from the east which bottles up another 40 prisoners, mostly from the spooked 85th Illinois, and some from the 86th Illinois nearby, but they capture many more guns (102) from those that they couldn't catch. Reynolds' progress is stopped by the timely arrival of Mitchell's Brigade. For the next two hours, firing continues along the lines until dark.