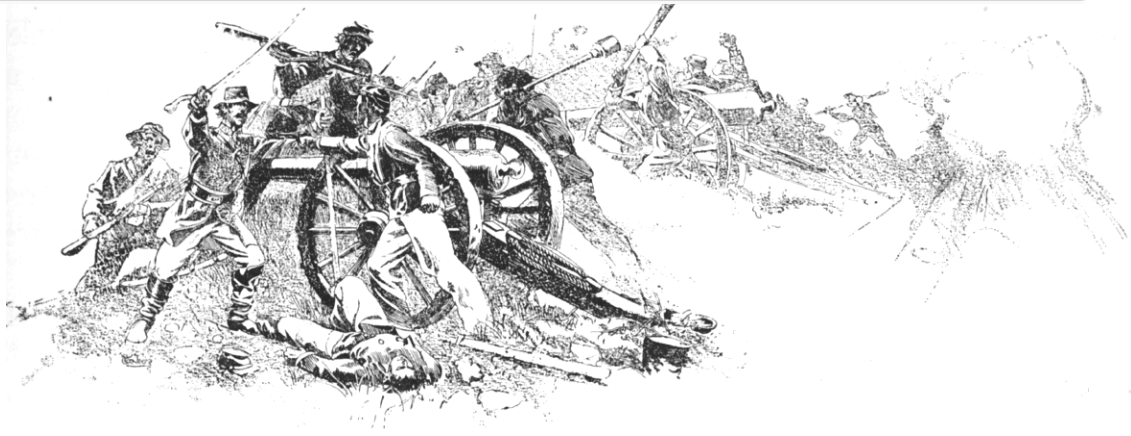


# *Unwilling Witness to the Rage of Gettysburg*

## The Experience of Battle, July 2

D. Scott Hartwig



The battle of Gettysburg is the most exhaustively studied battle in American history. The volume of literature produced about it boggles the mind. Richard A. Sauer's bibliography on the Gettysburg campaign published in 1982 listed 2,757 books and articles published since the battle, a seeming staggering quantity. But twenty-two years later, in 2004, he published a second edition. It contained 6,193 entries. Interest in the battle seems insatiable. Through this flood-tide of books and articles we have learned a great deal about generals and generalship, battlefield controversies – which continue to fuel the debates in print, on the field, and in chat rooms – and the courage and sacrifice of the fighting men. But comparatively little attention has been focused upon the actual experience of battle. What did the battle sound like to those in it? What did it smell like? How did the soldiers, who were nearly all veterans of other battles, control their fear so that they might do their duty? What could a typical soldier see of the battle? How different was it from what a commander could see? How did commanders control their men in battle? Do we really understand the tactics they used? Did they deviate at all from the standard training manuals that both armies used? How were the available weapons used and why were they used that way? What effect did the physical circumstances of the soldiers have upon their behavior and performance in the battle? How were men taken prisoner? This paper seeks to examine these and other questions -- to move from the perspective of the commanders to the front, where, as one soldier wrote, "it is all smoke, and dust and noise."

### The Armies

Major General George G. Meade's Union Army of the Potomac and General Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia were both experienced organizations having fought nine major battles – depending upon what one considers a major action – and many smaller actions over a period of thirteen months. The Army of the Potomac was composed exclusively of volunteer soldiers, whether in the regular or volunteer service. The majority of the men in the Army of Northern Virginia were also volunteers, but the Confederate government early on recognized the problems inherent with attempting to continue to attract volunteers and passed a general conscription act in April 1862. Beginning in the summer of 1862 Lee's army began to

receive conscripts who were absorbed directly into veteran units. It was a far more efficient system than that followed by the Federal government. To replace losses a Union regiment was obliged to detail officers and non-commissioned officers and send them home to drum up new recruits, which was not always possible. It was an ineffective system, and veteran regiments in the Army of the Potomac that had seen any amount of fighting and campaigning ranged considerably in size based on their ability to recruit new volunteers. Although in total manpower the Army of the Potomac outnumbered the Army of Northern Virginia, the average Union regiment fielded 301 officers and men, while the average Confederate regiment numbered 336.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Will to Fight**

The vast majority of the men in both armies were seasoned combat veterans. In the Army of the Potomac nearly 90 percent of the men had battle experience. In the Army of Northern Virginia it was 94 percent.<sup>2</sup> [might replace this with a footnote] This meant that the soldiers of both armies fully understood the carnage associated with the close-order tactics of mid-nineteenth-century warfare. Most accepted the risks philosophically. Typical was the opinion of Charles Barber, of the 104<sup>th</sup> New York; “there is not a man in the army that would be more delighted or overjoyed to go home,” but, “I believe in doing my duty in all places and under all circumstances even if death is staring us in the face.” Many found comfort in religion to confront the dangers of the battlefield. One such was Colonel William Speer, commander of the 28<sup>th</sup> North Carolina, who wrote his father after Chancellorsville, “I am perfectly resigned to my fate, for I believe the good Lord will take [care] & I will get home safe. If I fall, I will fall prepared for death, if it is my lot to leave the world that way.” Although the average soldier accepted the risks of combat, fear was the constant companion for all but a handful. “Of course, it would be absurd to say we were not scared,” recalled Brigadier General John Gibbon, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps division commander, “none but fools, I think, can deny that they are afraid in battle.” Yet most were able to conceal their fear beneath what a 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota soldier called a “mask of reckless indifference.” Sergeant John Plummer, another 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesotan, wrote how amusing he and his comrades found the stampede of “ambulances, hospital men, stragglers and darkies” to the rear when the Confederates began to shell their vicinity in the early afternoon. Plummer and his comrades, “had got used, somewhat, to such things as shells.” Lieutenant Charles Fuller, of the 64<sup>th</sup> New York, exchanged banter with some surgeons from his corps during their march up to Cemetery Ridge on the morning of July 2. Fuller recalled he spoke with a “jaunty air, but down in my shoes I did not feel the least bit jaunty. I think we all felt that this should be a death grapple.”<sup>3</sup>

Anger buttressed the courage of some. 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Charles H. Salter, of the 16<sup>th</sup> Michigan, concluded after the fighting on July 2 that “it seemed as if every man, on both sides, was activated by the intensest hate and determined to kill as many of the enemy as possible, and excited up to an enthusiasm far exceeding that on any other field before that we have been engaged in.” John C. Reid, a 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant in the 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia, concurred. When he and his comrades encountered men who had been engaged on July 1 their description of the fighting and the eventual defeat of the Yankees “raised the ardor of our men to white heat, and when we were moved off a demonstration of satisfaction was plain in every face. We knew we were going into action. I never at any time in the war heard such eager wishes for instant battle.” Major Eugene Blackford, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Alabama, was even more emphatic in his hatred of the enemy. “I would leave their bones to lie bleaching in the sun, to undisturbed by our posterity even,” he wrote.<sup>4</sup>

There also seemed to be a general understanding that the stakes were enormously high for this battle. “We are doubtless on the eve of the most decisive period of the war,” wrote Captain John C. Gorman, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> North Carolina Infantry on June 22. It was not lost on the soldiers of Lee’s army how deeply their incursion had taken them into enemy territory, and the possibilities it created for a war-ending blow. On June 26, William Calder, also of the 2<sup>nd</sup> North Carolina,

recorded, "I trust & believe this campaign will do much towards ending the war." The men of the Army of the Potomac likewise were impressed with the battle's importance and the potentially ominous consequences of a defeat on the soil of Pennsylvania. A private in the 12<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Reserves penciled in his diary that when his regiment crossed the state line from Maryland into Pennsylvania they gave three cheers and "we vowed never to leave the state until we had driven the rebels out." Captain David Acheson, 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, thought "this to be the campaign of the war, and the rebs have staked their all upon it." Henry Clare, of the 83<sup>rd</sup> New York, wrote of the impending battle to a friend that if "defeat should be our lot then farewell Washington Administration Country & all." General Meade issued a circular that was read to the troops on the morning of July 2, informing them of the enormous importance of the coming battle and the need for every man to do his full duty. Understanding that appeals to patriotism and duty did not resonate with every soldier, he added a grim warning that every soldier who abandoned his comrades at the time of danger should suffer death. Some dismissed the appeal as so much wind from a commander who had yet to earn their trust and respect, but many admired the deadly serious tone of the message. Sergeant John Plummer, 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota, was one of them. "I have always thought it would do good to make these addresses to troops before going into action, to rouse their enthusiasm and make them fight much better," he wrote. Brigadier General William Harrow, commanding a brigade in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, thought Meade's circular needed some personal emphasis, and after reading it to his brigade he drew his pistol and said, "the first God Damned man I see running or sneaking, I blow him to Hell in an instant. This God Damned running is played out, just stand to it and give them hell." Roland Bowen, one of Harrow's men, enjoyed Harrow's harangue and thought it "pleased the boys much. One says bully for Harrow, another says, he is tight, and third remarked that he was just the man to lead us."<sup>5</sup>

Yet not all found the will and courage to face battle. First Lieutenant Andrew J. Mandeville, in the 8<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, left his regiment at the opening of the engagement on July 2, and only returned when his colonel threatened to shoot him. When the colonel was wounded later, Mandeville immediately headed for the rear. The colonel saw him in Littlestown on July 3 and ordered him to return to the regiment, to which Mandeville replied, "I am not going back to the regiment again." He did not and was eventually dismissed. During his march into Pennsylvania on July 1, Captain Francis A. Donaldson, 118<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, was detailed with a guard to bring up the rear of his brigade and force "anyone found skulking on the road" back to their commands. One of the first he came upon was Private James Godfrey, of his own company, "a poor, miserable, weak minded fellow, utterly unable to stand fire, and altho' stout in person was not so at heart." Godfrey was assigned to manage the regimental pack horses and "in tones most distressed" tried to make his captain understand the "necessity of protecting the property in his charge." Donaldson was undeterred and found a musket and accouterment for the private. When the regiment went into action on July 2, Godfrey told Donaldson "I am going to show the boys how to fight today, I have been called a coward long enough." Donaldson sensed that the private might need some additional bracing and offered him a pull from a canteen the captain had filled with rum. "Well, I really thought the poor fellow would choke in his eagerness to get the rum down. When I thought he had enough I sent him back to the company . . ."<sup>6</sup>

### **The Physical Circumstances of Battle**

Any understanding of the experience of battle on July 2 must consider the physical circumstances of the day and of the combatants. July 2 was a close, muggy day with "a very gentle southern breeze." The day broke overcast but gradually became partly cloudy by the early afternoon. At 7 A.M., Professor Michael Jacobs at Pennsylvania College recorded the temperature at 74 degrees, exactly what it had been at 9 P.M. on July 1. The temperature rose to a high of 81 degrees at 2 P.M. and dipped only to 76 degrees at 9 P.M. The humid weather conditions certainly affected the endurance of the fighting men, particularly those who arrived on

the field fatigued and had not fully recovered before being sent into action. Nearly two-thirds of the Union army fell into this category. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> corps had been engaged in hard fighting the day before. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps completed a march of thirty-five miles on June 29, rested on June 30, then marched nearly eighteen miles on July 1 to arrive on the battlefield around 1:30 A.M. The troops were permitted two hours sleep before being awakened at 3:30 A.M. to move up closer to Gettysburg. The 5<sup>th</sup> Corps covered thirty-seven miles on July 1, marching from 10 A.M. until 3:30 A.M. In one of the most-celebrated marches of the campaign, the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps covered thirty-four miles in twenty-four hours to arrive on the battlefield on the afternoon of July 2.<sup>7</sup>

These severe forced marches, combined with sometimes skimpy rations and frequent bad water, took a toll on the physical constitution of all but the toughest. In the march on June 29 a member of the 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania recalled how in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps “hundreds fell by the wayside from mere exhaustion.” R. S. Robertson, in the 93<sup>rd</sup> New York, part of the Headquarters Army of the Potomac group, wrote his family on June 28 that he and his comrades were “completely used up.” The sides of his feet were covered in blisters and his feet swollen so “that I can scarcely bear my weight.” Robertson’s affliction was so common that the historian of the 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania recorded that “the man who did not have a limp in his gait in those trying days was a rare exception among his fellows.”<sup>8</sup> James L. Bowen, historian of the 37<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, described the toll their epic march took upon the rank and file:

Only the participant in like experiences can realize the misery of the ceaseless march of the long, sultry hours. It was a hot, breathless July day. The sun poured down with merciless, unbroken heat, and the dust that rose in great lazy clouds from the highway enveloped man and horse, general and private alike, in its all-embracing mantle of torture. How the exhausted lungs panted for one full breath of pure, cool fresh air! Panted only to be mocked by the bitter, burning, dust-laden blast that seemed to come from the mouth of a furnace. What wonder that the sun-stroke was omnipresent along the line – that strong men gasped and staggered and fell, while the thick blood burst forth from mouth and nostrils and the tortured frame was placed tenderly in some shaded nook by comrades whose visions swam and who trembled on the verge of a like fate. But the winding column never paused . . .<sup>9</sup>

Most of the Confederate army was already present on the field by the morning of July 2, and those that reached the field too late to participate in the fighting of July 1 -- Anderson, Johnson, Hood, and McLaws’ divisions -- were not forced-marched and arrived in good condition. The exception was Brigadier General Evander Law’s Alabama Brigade of Hood’s division, which marched nearly twenty miles in nine hours and arrived around noon. Those men were permitted a brief rest, then joined in the march of Longstreet’s corps to reach the Union flank, covering perhaps five more miles exposed to the hot sun. By the time they took up their pre-assault positions along Warfield Ridge at 3:30 P.M., the men had marched nearly thirty miles and been on their feet for more than twelve hours.<sup>10</sup>

This type of hard marching in warm and humid weather conditions caused men to lose body fluids rapidly. The demand for water to keep them hydrated was constant, and men with parched throats were not particular about where their water came from. “Sara I have drank water out of a ditch when there [h]as been a Dead horse laying a few rods above in the same Water and glad to get it,” wrote John Pardington of the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan to his wife. James Houghton, a private in the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan, recorded that on the morning of July 2 he and his comrades went in search of water and found a ditch “that had some stagnant water in it. We poked the scum to one side with our cups then gave the water a spat to scare the bugs and wigglers to the bottom then filled our canteens.” Colonel William Oates, commanding the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama in Law’s brigade, sent a detail of twenty-two men from his regiment to fill all his regiment’s canteens before they went into action, but the orders to advance came before the detail returned. The regiment advanced a half-

mile at the double-quick under fire from Union sharpshooters and artillery, then climbed Big Round Top, skirmishing much of the way with the pesky sharpshooters. Fatigue and lack of water took its toll on his regiment well before its famous encounter with the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine. Oates recalled how "some of my men fainted from heat, exhaustion, and thirst," during the ascent of Big Round Top.<sup>11</sup>

While water hydrated the system, food provided the fuel a soldier needed to endure the physical and mental strain of combat. In a reversal of the normal circumstances, the Confederate army was well supplied while Union soldiers, who had often marched beyond the range of their subsistence trains, frequently made do with less. Sergeant George D. Bowen, of the 12<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, recorded how he and his comrades went through the haversacks of dead Confederates after the fighting because "they were well supplied as they had been living off the country." Some Federal soldiers managed to supplement the hardtack, salt-pork, and coffee in their haversacks with food provided by civilians. On the march to Gettysburg on July 1 Bowen "had a good supper of fresh bread, fried Eggs and milk, all given me by some ladies along the road." But James Houghton of the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan observed that when his corps finally made camp in the early morning of July 2 that "we were too tired to cook any supper so we ate a cold lunch which consisted of raw pork[,] hardtack[,] and sun cooked coffee." Houghton's diet of salt pork, hardtack, and coffee was more far more typical in the Army of the Potomac than was Bowen's civilian feast. While the standard marching ration provided a Union soldier with more than enough protein, fat, carbohydrates, and calories, it was highly deficient in Vitamins A, C, D, and E. Of the first two vitamins the standard marching ration provided none of the body's daily needs. The combination of the deficiencies of this diet, with the severe demands marching placed on the body, and the occasional impure water introduced to the system, it is not surprising that a considerable number of Union soldiers suffered the effects of diarrhea and dysentery, which would have a profound effect upon their endurance for combat.<sup>12</sup>

In the short-term the prospect of imminent combat provided most men with a burst of adrenalin that helped them overcome fatigue and hunger, and sometimes even thirst and illness. "Gone now the fatigue, the weariness forgotten; the blood bounds once more in the veins, the muscles harden, the eyes flash!" recalled the historian of the 37<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts of the moment the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps neared the battlefield after their grueling march. Although many men had fallen out from exhaustion during the march, out of six hundred men in the regiment, all but seven rejoined the regiment before it was called into action. Captain Francis Donaldson, of the 118<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, implied that fatigue helped cope with the terror of battle. After the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps thirty-seven-mile march on July 1, Donaldson had a chance to sleep soundly on the morning of July 2. While it helped refresh him it also helped sharpen his anxiety. "With rest comes a dislike for bloody encounters," he wrote.<sup>13</sup> Lieutenant Frank Haskell, aide to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps division commander Brigadier General John Gibbon, wrote that he was too busy and the rest of the men too tired for reflection:

I did not sleep at all that night [July 1]. It would, perhaps, be expected, on the eve of such great events, that one should have some peculiar sort of feelings, something extraordinary, some great arousing and excitement of the sensibilities and faculties, commensurate with the great event itself; - this certainly would be very poetical and pretty, but so far as I was concerned, and I think I can speak for the army in this matter, there was nothing of the kind.<sup>14</sup>

### **Morning**

"The morning of July 2 dawned close and foggy," noted Thomas Marbaker of the 11<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, "but with no indication to those in the ranks that a tremendous struggle was to take place within a few hours." To others there was abundant evidence of impending battle. After completing their

exhausting thirty-seven-mile march, James Houghton and his comrades of the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan attempted to catch some badly needed rest, “well aware that the next day would be a day of bloodshed and that with some of us our next sleep would be the cold sleep of death.” Bugles and drums heralded the beginning of the day for sleeping soldiers. Captain Adolpho Cavada, the inspector general of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps, who had been awakened before daylight to see to the relief of a 1<sup>st</sup> Division regiment on picket duty, heard the “clear notes of a single bugle” as daylight broke. “Before its echoes had lost itself among the hills a dozen had taken up the call, and the drums added their sullen roll to warn the tired soldiers that the hour of rest had expired.”<sup>15</sup>

Since most of the army corps of the Army of the Potomac were not yet in the positions Meade desired them, many formations were on the move before it was fully light. “We were Double Quicked up to the front,” wrote Sergeant George Bowen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, 12<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, “the men swearing at the luck, as they hoped their march was over.” Captain George Collins, a company commander in the 149<sup>th</sup> New York, 12<sup>th</sup> Corps, recalled that they woke the men at daybreak. “Many will recall the hazy and mysterious appearance of the soldiers,” as they made their preparations to move in the hazy early morning light. Lieutenant Frank Haskell, aide to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps division commander, Brigadier General John Gibbon, also commented on the surreal effect the early morning mist caused. “Men looked like giants there in the mist, and guns of the frowning batteries so big, it was a relief to know they were friends,” he observed.<sup>16</sup>

Because it was necessary for General Lee to reconnoiter the positions of the Union army and plan an offensive, most of the men in the Army of Northern Virginia spent the morning resting or tending to typical chores of an army in the field. The men of McLaws’ and Hood’s divisions of Longstreet’s 1<sup>st</sup> Corps had time to converse with soldiers from A. P. Hill’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps about details of the July 1 fighting. Lieutenant J. C. Reid, of McLaws’ division, and his comrades listened to “enthusiastic accounts of the good behavior and triumph of our side.” Dr. Spencer Welch, a surgeon with Perrin’s brigade of Pender’s division, had spent the entire night in surgery. A number of acquaintances from Kershaw’s South Carolina brigade in McLaws’ division visited him that morning, “all lively and jocose.” One of them, Welch recalled, departed “in a gay humor . . . as one going on a pleasure excursion.” John Coxe, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina, Kershaw’s brigade, recalled how quiet the early morning was and that the men of his regiment did not wake up until after sunrise, a pure luxury with a great battle looming.<sup>17</sup>

As the mist lifted and visibility improved, the soldiers in both armies were able to more clearly observe the massing of forces. Sergeant John Plummer, 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota, rose with his comrades at daylight and marched with the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps north along the Taneytown road to the eastern side of Cemetery Ridge. From where his regiment halted Plummer could see “troops were moving around in every direction, getting in position for the coming battle.” With his marvelous powers of observation and great attention to details, Lieutenant Haskell left a vivid description of the bustling activity along the front and rear of the Army of the Potomac:

Surgeons were busy riding about selecting eligible places for Hospitals, and hunting streams, and springs, and wells. Ambulances and the Ambulance men were brought up near the lines, and stretchers gotten ready for use. – Who of us could tell but that he would be the first to need them? The Provost Guards were busy driving up all the stragglers, and causing them to join their regiments. Ammunition wagons were driven to suitable places, and pack mules bearing boxes of cartridges [sic]; and the commands were informed where they might be found. Officers were sent to see that the men had each his hundred rounds of ammunition. Generals and their staffs were riding here and there among their commands to see that all was right. – A staff officer, or an orderly might be seen galloping furiously in the transmission of some order or message. – All, all was ready; - and yet the sound of no gun had disturbed the air or ear to-day.<sup>18</sup>

There were other important activities Haskell did not describe. On Culp's Hill, the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps spent the morning building formidable breastworks. "The men grumbled a little and said it was the old trade of building works never to be used," wrote Captain Collins, of the 149<sup>th</sup> New York, "nevertheless they brought sticks, stones, and chunks of wood, and felled trees and shoveled dirt for three or four hours." Along the front of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> corps, details removed obstructions and leveled fences that impeded maneuver. Yet, apart from piling some fence rails atop existing stone walls, these corps built no defenses during the quiet hours of the morning. Lieutenant Charles Hale, an aide to Colonel Edward Cross, a brigade commander in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, related that the men of the division spent the morning and early afternoon "lying on the ground, some just chatting and others sleeping, while here and there little groups were playing 'high-low' jack, all as indifferent to the sun as salamanders."<sup>19</sup>

### **Skirmishing and Sharpshooting**

Although many spoke of the quiet that lasted through the morning and early afternoon, it was relative, for from after sunrise until the great clash of infantry and artillery began in mid-afternoon, and after that clash, there was constant firing of skirmishers and sharpshooters in the contested ground between the armies. Skirmishing and sharpshooting was the light but very deadly overture and postlude to the massive clash of artillery and formed infantry. It was a standard tactic in both armies to cover their fronts with skirmishers. Typically a brigade commander might select two or more companies from the regiments under his command to deploy as skirmishers. These were usually units that had training in the more irregular style of fighting that skirmishers employed. The Confederates had started to develop an even more efficient system of forming what they termed sharpshooter battalions, which consisted of about one hundred twenty picked men, organized into three companies and commanded by a field officer, usually a major. Their duty was to perform most of the skirmishing and sharpshooting duties for an entire brigade. Since the men who composed these battalions were among the best shots and most aggressive soldiers in a brigade, these battalions proved highly effective.

Skirmishers fought in open order rather than the line of battle of the main combat. The tactical manual stipulated that skirmishers fight in groups of four men, with an interval of five feet between men, and no more than forty paces between groups of four. But cover primarily dictated the dispersal of skirmishers. Because the great and sometimes irregular length a skirmish line might assume, their movements were generally regulated by bugle calls. Skirmishers had multiple duties. Deploying anywhere from a couple hundred yards to a quarter-mile in advance of the main line, they served as a screen to harass and delay an attacker - if on the defensive - or revealing the enemy, if preceding an attack. They could also test the strength of enemy defenses, keeping enemy sharpshooters out of range of friendly artillery and main line troops while gaining positions from which their own sharpshooters could ply their deadly trade. Because they used open-order tactics, skirmishing required a higher degree of initiative from privates and non-commissioned officers than the line of battle did. Skirmishers were not expected to execute maneuvers "with the same precision as in closed ranks," nor, the tactical manual for skirmishers declared, "is it desirable, as such exactness would materially interfere with prompt execution." All movements were to be carried out at the quick or double-quick step, or at the run if necessary. Unlike the line of battle, officers and non-coms were encouraged to see that their men "economize their strength, keep cool, and profit by all the advantages which the ground may offer for cover."<sup>20</sup>

A frequent question about skirmish tactics is why they were not more commonly used to attack or defend a position, the logic being losses were bound to be far less to a skirmish line than they were to a line of battle where men stood shoulder to shoulder. A skirmish line simply did not possess the firepower to stop or overcome the firepower a line of battle could generate, and it was far more difficult to manage the firepower of a skirmish line. John Hetherington, a lieutenant in

the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters, cited an example from his regiment's morning reconnaissance on the Union 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps front, as his men encountered the Confederate brigade of Brigadier General Cadmus Wilcox in Pitzer's Woods. Hetherington's regiment, whose men were armed with breech-loading Sharps rifles and were deadly shots, entered the woods in skirmish order and encountered Wilcox's skirmishers, who the Sharpshooters drove back "till we came to a line of battle," the 10<sup>th</sup> Alabama infantry. "We had a fight here awhile as usual," recorded Hetherington, "which, of course, was absurd (a few skirmishers fighting a line of battle). We have done so much that they expect wonders of us." The result was, as the lieutenant wrote, "a hard fight" but even with breech-loading rifles, the numbers and concentrated firepower of the line of battle prevailed and drove the skirmishers from the woods.<sup>21</sup>

Skirmishing was dangerous duty and disliked by many soldiers accustomed to the close touch of comrades in the line of battle. It was particularly dangerous to officers, who were obliged to expose themselves to properly manage their skirmish line. A lieutenant of the 126<sup>th</sup> New York spoke to these dangers when he wrote his father after the battle: "I came near being hit five or six times," he wrote. "I would do anything rather than skirmish with those fellows. I never want to do it again. I will charge and repel charges but don't put me in that place again." In the line of battle soldiers drew courage from the nearness of their comrades. But the skirmisher, sprinting forward from cover to cover, or hugging the earth in tall meadow grass, might only see a handful of his comrades, creating a sense of isolation. And unlike line-of-battle fighting, the enemy was frequently concealed. The mental strain and physical danger of this type of combat could be extreme. Lieutenant Sam Fellers, in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Ohio, related an example of how deadly it could be. During the skirmishing near the edge of town his company made a rush over a rise west of the Emmitsburg road and came upon the advanced line of Confederate skirmishers, who had "dug holes in the field [a wheatfield] for each man to conceal himself in as he lay down to load." Both sides commenced blazing away, Fellers' men "picked every rebel as fast as one showed his head above the wheat." But Fellers' company suffered twenty-three killed and wounded of the thirty-six who made the advance.<sup>22</sup>

Skirmishing commenced at daylight on July 2 between Confederate sharpshooters and skirmishers posted near the southern edge of town and their Union counterparts positioned at the northern end of Cemetery Hill, and then spread across the fronts of both armies as skirmishers took their posts and observed targets. Sergeant Francis Galwey, 8<sup>th</sup> Ohio, recalled that the clouds were "scarcely yet lifted from the mountains, but already puffs of smoke issue from the windows of any house in the town which is advantageously placed for sharpshooters." The sergeant then watched Confederate skirmishers descend from Seminary Ridge "and advance out to the middle of the valley, where there is a slight rise of ground. Our skirmishers receive them with a warm fire, which they return." "Either party was skulking behin[d] trees and fences and popping away at each other, quite lively," observed Roland Bowen, in the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, who watched the skirmishing between Cemetery and Seminary ridges. The skirmishers did not remain static, noted Bowen, but were continually pressing one another so that the skirmish lines swayed back and forth. But both sides "generally kept a respectable distance from each other and it was only occasionally that a man was killed or wounded." Colonel James Woods, Jr., commanding the 136<sup>th</sup> New York, offered some sense of the distance between the opposing skirmish lines, reporting that his skirmishers kept about one hundred fifty yards from the Confederate skirmishers.<sup>23</sup>

Along the edge of the town of Gettysburg the skirmishers frequently were engaged at very close range, and sometimes in house-to-house fighting. On the front of the 55<sup>th</sup> Ohio, which was posted along the angle formed by the junction of the Taneytown and Emmitsburg roads, during one point in the skirmishing a group of Confederates used the cover of smoke "which hung like a pall over the battlefield" to dash into a house (perhaps the Barbahan home on Washington Street, that offered them cover near to the Union lines, but was too low down for the Union artillery to depress their tubes to fire at it. From this cover they proceeded to pick off Federal infantrymen, artillerymen, and horses. "Every shot from this house brought down a man, an officer, or a horse, until the situation



became unbearable,” noted a soldier from the 55<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers were called for to drive the enemy out. All knew it was a perilous mission. “Rushing against trained and barricaded sharpshooters is not conducive to long life,” observed the 55<sup>th</sup>’s historian. First Lieutenant Frederick Boalt, of Company D, a Norwalk, Ohio businessman, volunteered to lead the mission, and he found twenty to twenty-five men willing to join him. Boalt and his party crawled along Washington Street, probably along the edge of the road where they could get some cover from observation. The Confederates in the house remained unaware of Boalt’s approach, but other Rebel skirmishers saw the Buckeyes. Before they could warn their comrades in the house, Boalt and his party rushed and captured the house.<sup>24</sup>

Close-quarter skirmishing also took place at the intersection of the Emmitsburg road and the Baltimore pike. Here, Union soldiers of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Ohio occupied the Wagon Hotel at the southern corner of this intersection, while Confederates were across the street in the Rupp house and tannery. At one point, according to John Rupp, who remained in the basement during the battle, Union soldiers occupied the south porch of his home while Confederates were on the north side of it.<sup>25</sup>

Some of the deadliest skirmishing took place over the possession of the William Bliss farm. Situated about eight hundred yards west of Cemetery Ridge, the Bliss farm buildings included a large brick bank barn and weather-boarded two-story double log and frame house. Both buildings offered ideal cover for sharpshooters, but particularly to the Confederates, since the buildings were closer to the Union lines than they were to the Confederate lines. Throughout the day the buildings changed hands several times as one side or the other reinforced its skirmish line and forced the other from the buildings. Just how dangerous accomplishing this could be is illustrated by the experience of the 12<sup>th</sup> New Jersey. At about 4:30 P.M. four companies of the regiment were ordered to advance and seize the farm buildings. The 12<sup>th</sup> was an unlikely choice for skirmish duty for they were armed with .69-caliber smoothbore muskets, loaded with buck and ball, an effective weapon at ranges of less than one hundred yards but hardly the weapon of choice for skirmish duty. Albert S. Emmell, of Company H, described their advance from near Zeigler’s Grove: “In passing over a broad level sward field, they raked us awfully, dropping men to the right and to the left. But Jersey men are not checked by trifles and we charged at full gallop heeding not the whistling bullets.” Lieutenant Charles Troutman, of G Company, recalled “it was zip, zip all the way across the meadows,” and that a captain running beside him was struck above the right eye, “the noise of the bullet sounded exactly as that made by throwing a nail into a boot.”<sup>26</sup>

The Jersey men endured their casualties, and according to Emmell, approached to “within a few yards of the barn” when they halted and fired a volley of buck and ball toward any openings in the barn. This caused the Confederates to emerge “terror stricken and many of them with their faces covered with blood” from their places of hiding, which Emmell said included “behind walls and hay mows.” But Sergeant Frank Riley of Company K wrote that the Confederates did not surrender “until we poured in through the doors and windows and almost meeting them face to face, did [they] cry out for quarter.” And even then the process of taking prisoners proved dangerous, for Emmell noted that “several of the rascals fire on us after most of them had laid down their arms and surrendered.” One of them wounded the orderly sergeant of Company B, who subsequently told Sergeant Riley “had he not disabled me, the - - -, I would have pinned him to the wall.” Of the approximately two hundred Jersey men who made the skirmish charge, thirty-eight were killed or wounded, nearly 20 percent.<sup>27</sup>

Although many soldiers designated as sharpshooters, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps, fought primarily like skirmishers, the very best shots were used in the more traditional role of riflemen operating alone or in small teams, sometimes with the aid of telescopic sites. These men were more of a psychological weapon. While skirmishers harassed and maintained contact with the enemy, sharpshooters sought to kill or wound the enemy from long-range and positions of concealment. Long-range killing unnerved the enemy, made it more difficult for him to make observations, and eliminated his leaders.

Those positioned near Cemetery Ridge early on July 2 had an opportunity to observe the work of both skirmishers and sharpshooters. From this cover, wrote a New Jersey officer, the Confederates “annoyed our main line and made themselves particularly disagreeable when any mounted officers came within range of their rifles.” One of the mounted men they targeted was Lieutenant Haskell, who wrote, “a bullet from one of the rascals hid there hissed by my cheek so close that I felt the movement of the air distinctly.” Lieutenant Theron Parsons, of the 108<sup>th</sup> New York, was standing in Ziegler’s Grove talking with an acquaintance from the 126<sup>th</sup> New York, when a Confederate sharpshooter put a bullet through the head of a man from his friend’s company, “who stood about 200 feet from us.” Union sharpshooters were deployed to respond to this fire. Their deadly work attracted the interest of the nearby line infantry, and Chaplain Stevens, of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut, wrote how “it grew almost fascinating, we forgetting, nearly, that the game was human. One marksman had made his quarry a wounded skirmisher (one half-mile away) unable to stand, who was trying, by a series of flops, to drag his body up the slope to the shelter of his own lines. The marksman fired at him for several minutes as frequently as he could load and take aim; but we confess to a felling of relief and gladness, and we’ve felt it ever since when recalling the scene, when the man let up on the poor fellow and had failed to hit him.”<sup>28</sup>

Richard S. Thompson, an officer in the 12<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, also found interest in the work of the sharpshooters. He recalled the arrival of members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Company of Massachusetts Sharpshooters carrying “very heavy, long-range telescopic rifles, with a sort of tripod rest.” Once these men went to work, the Confederate sharpshooters at the Bliss farm quickly perceived “that we were using rifles that had sufficient range, but also that they were being used with remarkable precision.” This made the Confederates more cautious and at the flash of a rifle from Cemetery Ridge they would quickly disappear then “instantly reappear, ready to try a shot or fall back again if a second rifle flashed on our line.” To counter this, Thompson observed that the Union sharpshooters split up into teams of three men. When all three men were ready and had their rifles trained on a prospective target, the number one man would fire. The other two men counted to three then fired simultaneously, each at a specific opening. The Confederates took cover when the first rifle was fired but reappeared too late to see the flash of the other two rifles and met a bullet. “Alas!” wrote Thompson, “how little we thought human life was the stake for which this game was being played.”<sup>29</sup>

The experience of the brigades of Brigadier General Harry Hays and Colonel Isaac Avery, of Early’s division, on July 2 illustrated the damage sharpshooters could inflict. Both brigades moved out of Gettysburg early on the morning of July 2 and took cover behind a hill about five hundred yards from East Cemetery Hill, near the Culp farm and where the Lincoln Elementary School is located today. Union sharpshooters and skirmishers began to menace their line as soon as they were discovered, and Avery’s aide, Lieutenant John A. McPherson, wrote “a man could not show himself along the line without being shot at.” The enemy sharpshooters kept the Confederates “uneasy all the time balls hissing all around us.” Captain William J. Seymour, a staff officer in Hays’ Louisiana brigade, wrote that on their brigade line “it was almost certain death for a man to stand upright.” Some did, or moved enough to expose themselves, for Seymour reported the brigade had forty-five killed and wounded to sharpshooters.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Great Clash**

Ultimately the skirmishers and sharpshooters gave way to the great and decisive clash of artillery and formed infantry. Artillery and infantry worked as a mutually supporting team in this battle. Unlike the infantry, which could fight in literally any terrain, artillery were direct-fire weapons that required a clear line of sight to their targets. They also needed open ground to unlimber field pieces and room to place the limber and caisson that accompanied each gun.

Artillery at Gettysburg fell into two categories: rifled guns and smoothbores. The predominant rifled pieces were the 3-inch ordnance rifle and the 10-pound Parrott Rifle. Each had an extreme range of about two miles, although they were more effective at ranges of one and three-quarters of a mile. The 12-lb. Napoleon was the most common and favorite smoothbore fieldpiece in both armies. It had an extreme range of about one mile. Both rifled and smoothbore artillery fired four types of ammunition: shot, shell, shrapnel (also called case shot), and canister. Shot was short for solid shot, consisting of a solid round ball for smoothbores or bolt, for rifles, that was good for demolishing buildings or breastworks, dismounting guns, and creating mayhem in large infantry formations. Rifled solid shot, however, had apparently proved so ineffective on the battlefield that the rifled guns of the Army of the Potomac did not even carry it in their ammunition chests. Part of what made round solid shot lethal is it would continue to skip along the ground after it struck the earth, while rifled bolts tended to bury themselves in the ground or bounce and tumble, which largely negated their effectiveness. Shell consisted of a hollow shell with an explosive charge that detonated by a timed fuse that burst (hopefully) over, or in the midst of, its target, shattering the shell into several large iron fragments, by a percussion fuse that detonated upon impact with the ground or a hard target. Shrapnel or case shot was the most effective long-range ammunition in the artillery's arsenal. Like shell, it consisted of a hollow shell with an explosive charge within the casing, which also held a number of small iron shrapnel balls that scattered when the shell burst. With their greater range and accuracy, the rifled guns were more accurate in delivering this ammunition to the target than the smoothbores. But the smoothbores reigned supreme when firing canister. A large tin can filled with iron balls, canister was like a big shotgun shell. Smoothbore canister carried more balls than did canister for rifled artillery, and its pattern was more cylindrical and deadly. Its maximum range was approximately six hundred yards, which meant that when enemy infantry was within canister range, the gunners themselves were within range of the infantrymen's rifle.<sup>31</sup>

Although artillery was not the great killer on the battlefield that it would become in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it could inflict considerable punishment on an infantry line of battle and sow disorder, which often took the steam out of an attack or demoralized a defensive line. But for artillery to be effective on the defensive against enemy infantry it required friendly infantry support. If a battery were left unsupported, the attacking infantry could disperse in skirmish formation to attack it. With friendly infantry in support, enemy infantry was obliged to remain massed to concentrate their firepower. This gave artillery a target they could do damage to.

Artillery served two primary purposes at Gettysburg and on the other battlefields of the war. The first was to engage enemy artillery: either to silence it to pave the way for an infantry assault, or to draw its fire away from the infantry. Secondly, artillery fire sought to inflict damage, both physical and moral, to defending or attacking infantry. Both major Confederate offensive efforts on July 2 were preceded by bombardments. Longstreet employed some sixty-two guns in the bombardment that preceded his corps assault, and Ewell shelled East Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill with a battalion of sixteen guns as the demonstration Lee ordered him to make in favor of Longstreet. Both bombardments served a different purpose. Longstreet intended his guns to pave the way for his infantry by silencing the Federal batteries and smashing up the defensive formations of their infantry and creating as much confusion as possible. Ewell wished to make noise to meet his orders to conduct a demonstration, and also to test the enemy defenses, for his orders permitted him to convert his demonstration into a full-scale assault if circumstances warranted it. In both instances, Union artillery responded with counter-battery fire, the goal being to silence the Confederate guns if possible, and in the case of the guns on the Union 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps front, to draw the fire away from supporting infantry.

### **Artillery Duels**

Artillery duels typically inflicted relatively few casualties, for when a battery got within range of its opponent, they would generally limber the guns and move to a new position. But the two big gun duels on Longstreet's and Ewell's fronts both proved to be bloody work. Colonel Edward P. Alexander, who served as Longstreet's de facto chief of artillery, recalled that he expected the bombardment he arranged to be brief and decisive because the range was so close (about one-half mile). "But they [the Federals] really surprised me, both with the number of guns they developed, & the way they stuck to them," he wrote. He thought the fight that ensued to be the hardest and sharpest artillery fight of the war, an interesting statement when one considers the immense size of the bombardment on July 3. A hard-fought artillery duel might result in casualties of 5 to 6 percent. In this engagement one of Alexander's batteries lost thirty-six killed and wounded out of seventy-one men, a 50 percent casualty rate. His own battalion lost 139 men and 116 horses on July 2 and 3, 24 percent losses, with two-thirds of them occurring on July 2. On Ewell's front, two of Major Joseph W. Latimer's batteries suffered more than 20 percent losses in their duel, and Latimer himself was mortally wounded. These were unusually high casualties, and they were all inflicted by enemy artillery fire. Losses exceeding 20 to 30 percent could cripple an artillery unit, with its more specialized personnel.<sup>32</sup>

The duel between Latimer's battalion and the Union artillery under the command of Colonel Charles Wainwright on East Cemetery Hill, offers some details on the nature of the pure artillery fight and the tactics that often proved decisive. Wainwright left a marvelous description of the fight:

About four o'clock the enemy planted four twenty-pounder and six ten pounder Parrotts on a high knoll opposite our north front, and opened with a well-directed fire. To this I was able to reply with thirteen three-inch guns, so that the weight of metal was about equal, when you add the occasional shot which Stevens [5<sup>th</sup> Maine Battery on Stevens Knoll] was able to get in from his left section. In every other respect the rebel guns had the advantage of us. They were on higher ground, and having plenty of room were able to place their guns some thirty yards apart, while ours were not over twelve; and the two faces of our line meeting here, the limbers stood absolutely crowded together. Still we were able to shut them up, and actually drive them from the field in about two hours. Their two right guns we could see them haul off by hand; they left twenty-eight dead horses on the ground, while we did not lost over a dozen. How it was they did not kill more horses I cannot understand, huddled together as we were, for their fire was the most accurate I have ever seen on the part of their artillery, and the distance was just right, say 1,400 yards.<sup>33</sup>

Wainwright may be excused for getting several details wrong. The Confederates placed five 10-pound Parrotts, three 3-inch rifles and six Napoleons south of the Hanover road, and six 20-pound Parrotts north of the road. The relative height of the opposing artillery was the opposite of what Wainwright thought; his position was on higher ground than Benner's Hill. The lack of damage the Confederates inflicted may have had something to do with the quality of their ammunition and fuses, which were notoriously defective, particularly for rifled guns. As late as November 1863, E. P. Alexander related that one of his batteries of four Parrott rifles fired 120 shells during the siege of Knoxville. Only two of the 120 did not burst prematurely or tumble (which greatly affected accuracy). Smoke could also affect accuracy. Captain John Bigelow, who commanded the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery and engaged in the artillery duel preceding Longstreet's assault against the Union left, wrote that when his six Napoleons opened fire "the wind being light, we soon covered ourselves in a cloud of powder smoke." One of the lieutenants in Captain James Cooper's Battery B, 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania, wrote that the fire from Latimer's battalion "came thick and fast, bursting, crushing, and ploughing, a mighty storm of iron hail, a most determined and terrible effort of the enemy to

cripple and destroy the guns upon the hill.” Yet despite how destructive this description sounds, Cooper reported losses of only two killed, four wounded, one horse killed, and two disabled.<sup>34</sup>

The Confederates reported that the return fire from Cemetery Hill was quite accurate as well, but what likely proved to be the turning point in this lengthy duel was the fire the Federals delivered by the 5<sup>th</sup> Maine battery on Stevens’ Knoll, as well as five guns from the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps artillery brigade placed at the summit of Culp’s Hill. These guns partially enfiladed Latimer’s line. Enfilading fire could produce spectacular damage to an artillery battery because it was such a large target with guns, gun crews, and limbers. The depth of a battery struck head-on by a shell was one gun and one limber (the caissons were nearly always kept to the rear in a covered position). From the flank the depth of a battery was between four and six guns and limbers, thereby dramatically increasing the odds that a single shell would do some damage. It is no accident that the two batteries of Latimer’s battalion that suffered the heaviest losses were the two most easily enfiladed by Union fire. Each suffered more than 20 percent casualties, while Latimer’s other two batteries lost 5.6 and 4.4 percent, respectively.<sup>35</sup>

### **Artillery vs. Infantry**

While the Union artillery on East Cemetery Hill and Culp’s Hill was successful in drawing the Confederate artillery fire away from the infantry, in the larger engagement on the Union left this proved more difficult, and here artillery caused significant damage and disruption to the infantry. Sickles’ 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps infantry posted along the Emmitsburg road or on the reverse slope of the Emmitsburg Road Ridge were shelled by some sixty-two guns of Longstreet’s corps before the advance of his infantry. Numerous 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps soldiers attested to the fear the shelling produced. “There is nothing more trying to the nerves of soldiers than lying unprotected under a galling artillery fire,” related the historian of the 11<sup>th</sup> New Jersey. John Burnill, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire, commented in a letter home that the artillery fire his regiment endured near Sherfy’s Peach Orchard “made the earth tremble and the air shook and was so full of smoke you could not see.” Captain Adolpho Cavada, of General Humphreys’ staff, described how for more than a quarter of an hour “the crashing, pounding noise of guns and bursting shells was deafening.” The historian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire added that “never, in all its history, was the regiment exposed to such a terrific artillery fire” as it was that afternoon in the Peach Orchard.<sup>36</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps infantry exposed to this fire, as well as Longstreet’s infantry, which awaited the end of the bombardment to begin its assault, was ordered to lie down for cover, which spared the men many casualties from shell fragments and shrapnel. The 11<sup>th</sup> New Jersey reported that at its position near the Trostle farm, “the air seemed thick with flying missiles. Tons of metal hurtled over and fell around us and it was only by hugging the ground closely that we escaped serious loss.” Frontal fire inflicted relatively few casualties on a prone line, for as one Union officer observed, “It is very difficult to hit a single line of troops.” But an enfilading fire could wreak havoc. The nature of the forward position Sickles occupied offered the Confederate artillery splendid opportunities to deliver a cross-fire that enfiladed nearly everyone from the Peach Orchard north, and the artillery took advantage of this. The 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire, supporting Hart’s 15<sup>th</sup> New York Battery in the Peach Orchard, initially faced west and was enfiladed by fire from the left. “The air was fairly alive with bursting shell and whistling canister (probably shrapnel balls); the leaves fell in showers from the peach trees, and the dirt was thrown up in little jets where the missiles were continually striking,” wrote Martin Haynes. The shelling produced “a steady stream of wounded.” Solid shot could be deadly if it enfiladed a line, and this appears to have been the case with the 2<sup>nd</sup>, for Haynes described some shells skimming “along the ground and wounding as many as half a dozen men in their course.” In two instances shells struck the men’s cartridge boxes, causing them to blow up, with horrific consequences for the wearer.<sup>37</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, providing infantry support to Captain Judson Clark’s 2<sup>nd</sup> New Jersey Battery, endured a similar experience. “We lay flat on the ground, the air was one mass of flying missiles,” wrote Private Heyward Emmell, and “every now and then a shell would drop in our ranks & explode

& kill & wound a great many.” Clark’s gunners stood the fire “like good fellows,” but the 7<sup>th</sup>’s casualties became severe enough that their colonel ordered the regiment to “fall back a few yards to see if he could get out [of] the range a little.” An aide from Brigadier General Charles Graham rode over and told the colonel that he was expected to “support the battery at any cost.” No one ever distinguished the 7<sup>th</sup>’s casualties between those suffered from artillery or infantry fire, but circumstantial evidence implies that those caused by artillery fire were numerous. What effect this had on the men’s staying power in the infantry combat to come is difficult to determine, but if it were true that there was “nothing more trying to the nerves of soldiers than lying unprotected under a galling artillery fire,” then it likely had a significant impact.<sup>38</sup>

Artillery fire proved equally terrifying and destructive when infantry emerged from cover to assault or defend a position. When Longstreet’s infantry moved forward after the preliminary bombardment many Union guns adjusted their fire from the Confederate artillery to their infantry. The 4<sup>th</sup> Texas lost fifteen men to a single shell, illustrating the damage a well-placed round could inflict in a line of battle. Sergeant William Jones, in the 50<sup>th</sup> Georgia of Semmes’ brigade, wrote that the first shell fired at them when they left the cover on Warfield Ridge killed two men and wounded several others. Colonel David Aiken, commanding the 7<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, had two killed and three wounded in his color guard by a single shell. Major George Bass, of the 59<sup>th</sup> Georgia in G. T. Anderson’s brigade, wrote, “I could hear bones crash like glass in a hailstorm,” when shells struck his regiment’s line. William Johnson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina recalled that the artillery fire his regiment faced left the field behind them “covered with heads, arms, mangled bodies and the like.” But although all agreed the federal artillery fire inflicted frightful wounds, losses were not crippling. This was due to the difficulty artillery had in tracking a moving line, in bursting their shells over a thin infantry line, and the relatively short radius in which a shell caused damage. The Confederate infantry commanders moved their men as rapidly as conditions and the maintenance of order would permit. First Lieutenant J. C. Reid, in the 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia of G. T. Anderson’s brigade, wrote that as soon as his brigade emerged into the open the men came under fire “from more guns than I could locate, or count.” Their shells were well aimed and “had our advance been slow they would have swept all of us away.” Anderson’s veterans “understood that too well to loiter, and so we dashed on through small wheat fields and over stone fences, filling up every gap made by a hit, and maintaining a line which would have delighted Ney himself.” Their quick movement reduced casualties, and eventually they reached Rose Woods and ground where “we were too low to be seen by the artillery.”

The brigades of Hays and Avery of Early’s division who assaulted East Cemetery Hill are another case in point. As soon as they emerged from their cover they encountered what one member described as a “perfect storm of grape, cannister, schrapnel, etc.” But Hays’ brigade, in particular, advanced too quickly for the Union gunners to adjust their fire and passed through the most exposed point of their attack with relatively light losses. General Hays believed that had the attack taken place in full daylight the result would have been a “horrible slaughter.”<sup>39</sup>

But if circumstances of command error left a formed infantry unit in open view of artillery, the effects could be devastating. This was the experience of the left wing of Brigadier General Joseph Kershaw’s brigade during its assault upon the Union batteries along the Wheatfield road east of the Peach Orchard. After crossing the Emmitsburg road and learning that he would have no flank protection, Kershaw ordered his left wing, consisting of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, and 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina battalion, to wheel left and assault the guns that covered the rear of the Peach Orchard and would enfilade his line. The advance against the guns went smoothly enough at first, but mid-way in the attack the entire left wing received misguided orders to move by the right flank. This meant that the men who had been advancing directly toward the guns turned to the right and had to march across the front of the guns. “Guess they thought we had enough sight seeing from the front, and now we were to have a side view,” quipped William A. Johnson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina. No longer harassed by the Confederate infantry, the Union gunners blasted the line with canister and shrapnel. “The consequences were fatal,” related Lt. Colonel Franklin Gaillard, of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. “We

were, in ten minutes or less time, terribly butchered . . . I saw half a dozen at a time knocked up and flung to the ground like trifles. In about that short space of time we had about half of our men killed and wounded. It was the most shocking battle I have ever witnessed.” The South Carolinians endured the fire for only a few minutes before they broke for nearby cover in confusion, from which they never completely recovered. It was the only instance in the second day’s battle where the fire of artillery alone broke an infantry assault.<sup>40</sup>

Artillery without infantry supports, or with inadequate support, rarely checked a determined infantry attack. During the second day’s fighting, Confederate infantry overran more than forty Union guns, although the Federals recaptured most of them before the day ended. The problem for a battery without infantry support was twofold. While a battery could protect its front with canister, its flanks were highly vulnerable. This is how the 21<sup>st</sup> Mississippi captured four guns of the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery near the Trostle farm. Lieutenant Richard S. Milton, an officer in the battery, reported afterward that although the center of the 21<sup>st</sup> Mississippi was “badly broken” by the battery’s canister, that “its flanks closing in on either side of us, obtained a cross-fire, which silenced the four pieces on the right, and prevented their withdrawal from loss of officers, men, and horses.” Secondly, once enemy infantry managed to get within effective small-arms range, a battery was at a decided disadvantage, for the gun crews and horses were greatly exposed and the opposing infantry could disperse into more open order so that even canister could not keep them back. A battery had little choice under these circumstances but to limber and withdraw. Depending upon of the proximity of the enemy, this could be perilous, for during the process of limbering the battery could not defend itself. The 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery faced this situation when the Peach Orchard fell and Barksdale’s Mississippi Brigade appeared on its right flank at the same time that skirmishers from Kershaw’s brigade threatened its front and left flank. Captain John Bigelow, commanding the battery, ordered the guns to retire by prolonge, a tricky maneuver where the guns were attached to the limber by a heavy rope so that the gun could retire firing. This was necessary, wrote Bigelow, “for the skirmishers on my left were pressing me very hard, while Wilcox [actually Barksdale] rebel division [brigade] was marching down in line of battle on my right front,” and unless he kept up a fire he knew his guns would be overrun. The battery successfully completed its withdrawal to the Trostle farm and would have made good their escape if not for orders to make a stand at the farm to buy time for a line to be patched together in the rear.<sup>41</sup>

The experience of the crew of the number-one gun of Captain Charles E. Phillips’ 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery, which was on Bigelow’s right when the Peach Orchard line collapsed, affords another example of the difficulties of withdrawing guns under fire. Phillips ordered the gun to retire by prolonge. The crew secured the rope to the gun while the limber swung around so that they could attach the other end of the rope to the pintle. Corporal Benjamin Graham, the crew’s gunner, quickly accomplished this and shouted “drive on” to the limber team. But in the few seconds it had taken Graham to secure the prolonge rope to the pintle, Confederate small arms fire felled all five remaining horses pulling the limber and immobilized it. In this instance, Graham refused to lose his gun and he and his crew, who were soon joined by Captain Phillips, hauled the gun to safety using the prolonge rope.<sup>42</sup>

Most of the Union guns overrun or temporarily captured by the Confederates on the 2<sup>nd</sup> were taken while attempting to limber to the rear. This was the case with Battery B, 1<sup>st</sup> Rhode Island Light Artillery. The guns were posted on a rock outcropping northeast of the Nicholas Codori farm in advance of the main Union line supporting two regiments of infantry in the Emmitsburg road when an attack by Ambrose Wright’s Georgia Brigade drove off the infantry and bore down upon the guns. The battery historian recalled, “By their exposed position the battery received the concentrated fire of the enemy, which was advancing so rapidly that our fuses were cut at three, two, and one second, and then canister at point blank range, and, finally, double charges of canister were used.” Yet this fire failed to check the Georgians, and the battery was compelled to limber up and attempt to escape. One gun had to be abandoned at the advanced position because

the Confederates shot two horses and there was no time to cut them out. Another was lost when the remaining five guns and limbers jammed up at the narrow gap in the stone wall to their rear. Four guns managed to get through and away but the drivers of the fifth, seeing Wright's men closing upon them rapidly, abandoned the vehicle and gun and ran for their lives.<sup>43</sup>

### ***The Scene Now Beggars Description – Infantry Fighting***

Ultimately, the engagement of artillery vs. artillery and artillery vs. infantry gave way to the decisive clash of infantry. While artillery continued to play an important supporting role in this combat, the opposing infantry units were the key players. On the attack or defense the typical infantry formation was the infantry line of battle. This was a two-rank deep formation, with a pace or two separating the rear from the front rank. Sergeants and lieutenants were strung out behind the rear rank to act as file closers (with each front- and rear-rank soldier consisting of one file). Their duty was to maintain order and prevent crowding and confusion. The drill book called for the soldiers to deploy shoulder to shoulder, with elbows touching. There were four essential reasons for these close order tactics: 1) The drill manual both armies used to train their men specified the use of close order tactics; 2) It was relatively easy to train civilian volunteers in these tactics; 3) The formation massed the firepower of single-shot muzzle-loading weapons; and 4) the close-order formation facilitated easier communications and command and control. As mentioned earlier, skirmishers and sharpshooters might annoy and harass a line of battle, but they could not deliver the firepower to dislodge one or overcome it, neither could they hope to stop an attacking line of battle. Only another line of battle could do this, except in those rare instances where artillery checked an attack without the help of infantry.

Although the line of battle possessed formidable firepower, it also presented a concentrated target to the enemy, particularly its artillery, which, as we have seen, could wreak considerable damage at long ranges and also cause disorder and confusion in a formation. On the defensive, regiments in line frequently built breastworks or threw up earthworks, or sought some type of natural cover to shelter themselves from artillery and small-arms fire. By the time of Gettysburg, veterans had learned that a line of riflemen under cover was difficult and expensive in human lives to overcome with a frontal attack. But to seize terrain from the enemy, or demoralize him, it was necessary to attack, and this meant exposing your infantry in these dense formations to enemy fire. Since enemy artillery could deliver accurate fire at ranges of more than one mile, and rifle fire could be effective at ranges out to six hundred yards (although infantry officers never permitted entire formations to fire at such ranges), for an infantry assault to be successful two things were necessary. First, the position to be attacked needed to be "prepared" by an artillery bombardment that hopefully suppressed enemy artillery and disrupted and disorganized the defenders. This was the purpose of Longstreet's bombardment of Sickles' line. Second, the attacking infantry needed to commence its attack from a covered position as close to the objective as possible to minimize exposure to enemy fire. Longstreet was able to deploy his infantry about seven hundred yards from the Union line, so that his men were exposed to Union artillery fire for about half the distance as the infantry who made Pickett's Charge the next day.

Once an infantry formation emerged from its cover to attack, it needed to do two things that actually worked against one another. It had to preserve its formation so that when the line neared the enemy it could deliver an effective fire and, if necessary, employ shock power to overcome the defenders. But if the line were exposed to artillery fire, then it was necessary to cover the ground of an attack quickly. The drill manual accounted for this with the double-quick step, something like a jog, or ideally, 165 steps a minute vs. the 90 steps a minute of the standard rate of advance. Except on the level drill field, the double-quick over any distance or through natural obstacles inevitably led to disorder – it reduced firepower, winded the men, and weakened unit cohesion and discipline. At times there was no choice, such as when a line was targeted by



accurate artillery fire, but at other times this was a crucial decision for an attacking infantry commander as to when to change the pace from common time to double-quick.<sup>44</sup>

The nature of infantry line-of-battle fighting on July 2 and the tactics that infantry commanders employed were largely dictated by terrain. For instance, it was easier for Ambrose Wright to maintain his brigade formation crossing the open ground between Seminary and Cemetery ridges than it was for Evander Law's brigade, which advanced over Big Round Top and up the boulder-strewn Plum Run Valley. But no matter the type of terrain encountered, skillful infantry officers on the attack invariably sought to maneuver their troops to strike the flank of the enemy. This was the most vulnerable point in a defending or attacking line. If an attacker or defender could maneuver his line onto the flank of the opponent, he could deliver his men's full firepower along the length of the enemy line, while the enemy could only reply with a limited number of weapons at the end of the line. A unit that was "flanked" had two choices: to "refuse" the line, which meant bending back some companies or a larger unit to fend off the flank attack, or retreat and hope to find a position that offered some cover where the regiment or brigade could be rallied and reorganized.<sup>45</sup>

Although officers and file closers continually strove to maintain an orderly line of battle, a line in an infantry assault bore little resemblance to the drill field when it came under fire or encountered the broken terrain that marked much of the Gettysburg battlefield. Val C. Giles, a private in the 4<sup>th</sup> Texas, whose unit passed over the western slope of Big Round Top and made several efforts to dislodge Union defenders on Little Round Top, wrote that during the most intense fighting:

Confusion reigned supreme everywhere . . . Every tree, rock and stump that gave any protection from the rain of minie balls, that poured down on us, from the crest above us, were soon appropriated . . . By this time order and discipline were gone. Every fellow was his own general. Private soldiers gave commands as loud as the officers – nobody paying attention to either. To add to this confusion, our artillery on the hill in our rear was cutting its fuse too short. The shells were bursting around us, in the treetops, over our heads, all around us.<sup>46</sup>

One of Giles' comrades, John C. West, recalled of the advance, "after we were up on the first ridge the ground was so rough and broken that it was impossible to form a straight line . . . our line at times could hardly be called a line at all . . . It was impossible to make a united charge. The enemy were pretty thick and well concealed. It was more like Indian fighting than anything I experienced during the war." The simple act of loading and firing also contributed to unraveling a neatly formed line. Charlie Fuller was a lieutenant in the 64<sup>th</sup> New York and served as a file closer during the fighting in the Wheatfield. "In battle the tendency is almost universal for the men to work out of a good line into clumps," he wrote. "The men of natural daring will rather crowd to the front, and those cast in more timid or retiring molds will almost automatically edge back and slip in behind. Hence the necessity of not alone commissioned officers in the rear to keep the men out in two ranks, but sergeants as well." Captain Donaldson Francis Donaldson, of the 118<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, echoed Fuller's observations, noting that soon after becoming engaged in the Rose Woods his regiment's line "became somewhat broken and open as the men, after firing, would step back to load, but this is generally the case in all stationary lines of battle."<sup>47</sup>

The chaos that quickly descended upon infantry combat cannot be overemphasized; noise, smoke, and fear all worked together to pull formations apart. Captain Cavada, of Union General Humphreys' staff, offered some sense of this in his description of the infantry clash along the Emmitsburg road when Barksdale's brigade broke the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps line at the Peach Orchard:

Our batteries opened, our troops rose to their feet, the crash of artillery and the tearing rattle of our musketry was staggering, and added to the noise on our side, the

advancing roar & cheer of the enemy's masses, coming on like devils incarnate. But our fire had not checked them and our thin line showed signs of breaking. The battery enfilading us redoubled its fire, portions of Birney's command were moving the rear broken and disordered. Our left regiments took the contagion and fled, leaving a wide gap through which the enemy poured in upon us. In vain did staff officers draw their swords to check the flying soldiers, and endeavor to inspire them with confidence, for a moment the route [rout] was complete.<sup>48</sup>

Captain Donaldson, in Rose Woods and facing the attacks by G. T. Anderson and then Kershaw's brigades, offered another example:

During all this time the enemy were making their charge, and from the rapid firing of the battery [Bigelow's] on our right, I judged, were drawing closer and closer to our line, altho' as yet unseen by us. The roar of the artillery was deafening, and from the excited manner of the gunners all efforts had evidently failed to check the onset. The voice of the officer commanding the guns could be heard loudly calling for "canister," while the surrounding objects were becoming less and less distinct from the sulphurous smoke occasioned by such rapid firing. Soon was heard a startling volley of musketry towards the left of our brigade, another and another followed in a wild and continuous rattle as the enemy's column came within range. The scene now beggars description. The deafening shouts of the combatants, the crash of artillery, the trembling ground beneath us, the silent and stricken countenances of the men, the curtain of smoke over all and its peculiar smell, made up a picture never to be forgotten by any who witnessed it.<sup>49</sup>

Given the picture Cavada and Donaldson provide, we can appreciate the confusion of Private Heyward Emmell, of the 7<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, who noted in his journal that when he saw his regiment begin to fall back, "I started back so confused that I hardly knew which was the rear."<sup>50</sup>

One of the most vivid and detailed descriptions of infantry combat on the line of battle was penned by Private Roland Bowen of the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, whose regiment, accompanied by the 82<sup>nd</sup> New York, was ordered forward from its position on Cemetery Ridge to the Emmitsburg road on the afternoon of July 2 to support the right flank of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps' advanced line. We pick up Bowen's narrative after they have arrived in the road:

The pickets beyond the road were hard at it, and occasionally a Minnie came skipping over. It was evident Lee intended to attack us in a few minits. The roar of Artillery and the humming of shot & shell was incessant. Everything was excitement. Some one cried out, "put those two fences into one."<sup>51</sup>

Bowen and his comrades struggled with the newly built fencing but eventually were able to tear down enough of it to build "quite a formidable breast work, almost bullet proof, which was 2 feet or 30 inches in height," in just five minutes. Then picking up their rifles, both regiments took shelter behind their new works.<sup>52</sup>

I had got cooled down and nearly or quite done trembling. One of the boys was telling a short time before that he never trembled while going into battle. I noticed he trembled so he could hardly keep behind the fence. Said I, I thought you never trembled. Say he, bi bi bi gud Almite I neber did before . . .

All the pickets came rushing in, some kept straight on to the rear, but we made most of them stop and form in with us. All was now ready. Some said they could see their heads [Confederates] in the tall grass, and the musketry fire commenced

moderately. I looked but I could not see anything of them, but I had plenty of ammunition, so I let fly into the grass by way of practice and to see if my gun was all right. I quickly reloaded, took out a hand-full of cartridges and layed them on the ground so I could get them quick. My ramrod I also threw on the ground beside the cartridges so as to grasp it in an instant. Nearly all the boys done the same.

Again I rose. Could see the grass move and a few bay[on]ets rising above it. The villions were there, crawling up on their hands and knees. [I] sent another bullet into the grass and went down, as the bummers say, "to avoid a return." Their bullets began to fly pretty thick, but they were evidently excited as well as ourselves as nearly all went over. Now there was terrible excitement. A charge. They sprang forward with that demoniac yell wich is peculiar to themselves only, at the same time giving us a deadly volley. Now it was our turn. With a shout we sprang up on our knees and resting our muskets over the rails, we give them one of the most destructive volleys I ever witnessed. Unlike us, they had nothing to shield them from our fire, and their thinned ranks told that we had dealt out large quantities of death. For a moment they seemed to be suspicious or in doubt as if they had lost their confidence. They hesitated, they reeled, they staggered and wavered slightly, yet there was no panic. As fast as we could get powder and lead into our guns we sent it at them. They returned the compliments pretty effectually. Our line was fast breaking to the left. This of course they knew as every man could see for himself. This inspired them with new courage. Again with new vigor they rushed at us, dealing death as they approached. We poured one continual storm of lead on them, but they heeded us not. On they came, bound to do or died (they done both). The 82<sup>nd</sup>, immediately to the left began to break. There was but one line of Rebs in our front. Was it possible that they in an open field could drive us from that fence. Ah, it was only too evident that in thirty seconds more all would be lost. At this point every thing seemed to be in an utter state of confusion.<sup>53</sup>

Bowen provides us numerous insights into the infantryman's fight. He and his comrades ignore their training and spread cartridges on the ground in front of them along with their ramrods because as veterans they have learned that seconds will be the difference between life and death and the time spent returning a ramrod each time or fumbling in a cartridge box for a fresh round might mean death. The Confederates do not march up in full view as they do in the movies *Gettysburg* or *Gods and Generals*, nor do Bowen and his comrades wait for them standing erect. Instead, the Federals are crouching down behind their cover, and the infantry of Wright's Georgia Brigade are using the tall meadow grass to sneak up as close to the enemy as possible before making a general rush. They are discovered, and the Union troops commence firing, which is immediately returned by the Confederates, who seeking to end the fight quickly attempt a swift rush preceded by a volley. With their rifles now empty, the Georgians hope that the bayonet will chase off the Yankees. But a volley from the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts staggers them and the charge is checked. Now, caught out in the open, they are forced to trade fire with the 15<sup>th</sup>, which has the cover of the rail breastwork and consequently the Georgians suffer severe casualties. But it is evident that the Confederates were well-disciplined and -led, for they returned fire "pretty effectually." The 15<sup>th</sup> likely would have prevailed in this fight, but Wright's brigade turned the left flank of the 82<sup>nd</sup> New York, and the Union line began to unravel. Both Union and Confederate soldiers could see this and while it disheartened Bowen's comrades, it gave "new courage" to the Confederates and they renewed their advance, this time driving the 15<sup>th</sup> from its position. Finally, for Bowen, as for nearly every other soldier at Gettysburg who truthfully recorded his experiences, the combat degenerated into "an utter state of confusion" which resulted in his capture by the Confederates. Most of the Union casualties in this fight were probably suffered when they began to retreat, and the majority of the Confederate losses occurred in the brief firefight that preceded the Union collapse.

This engagement also highlighted the importance of training and discipline in the type of bloody fighting that characterized the line of battle. Despite the volley that the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts delivered into Wright's line, and the confusion it caused, Bowen noted that there was "no panic" among the Confederates. The bonds of discipline and leadership are likely what held the Confederates together and enabled them to endure their losses and drive their attack home. According to Bowen, Wright's soldiers "heeded not" their casualties in the final action that overcame the Union line along the Emmitsburg road, pressing ahead in spite of them. In contrast Bowen noted that he did not see a single officer of his regiment once the fighting became general, which might have influenced the confusion Bowen described, as well as the resolve of the enlisted men. The action also illustrates that even though soldiers might think they had delivered a "murderous fire," most bullets missed their mark, even at close range. Even though Bowen's regiment caused numerous casualties to the Confederate regiment opposite it, the men did not inflict enough to demoralize the Confederates or discourage them from continuing to fight.



*The Skirmish Line* by Gilbert Gaul accurately captures the intensity and chaos of the infantry battle. West Point Museum

Soldiers in the line of battle did not always seek or build up cover even when it was available. Captain Donaldson described his regiment's position in the Rose Woods "in all respects a good one. . . with rocks and huge boulders scattered about forming ample protection." Yet, when they were attacked by Confederates of George T. Anderson's Georgia Brigade, the captain noted that the men in his regiment were so eager "that I did not notice one of them taking advantage of the trees and rocks, but all standing bravely up to the work and doing good execution."<sup>54</sup>

Anderson's brigade employed an effective tactic in this assault that evidence indicates was unique to the Confederates and used to very good advantage at Gettysburg. This was to advance rapidly while loading and firing. Lieutenant J. C. Reid, of Anderson's 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia, wrote that they, "came on almost at a run, firing vigorously" in their attack. This had the effect of driving many Union soldiers to cover so that they "were thinking more of shelter by the rocks and trees

than of firing.” This, of course, affected the accuracy of their return fire. Reid’s regiment failed to drive the Federal line, mainly he thought, because of a bog the crossed their line of advance. To cross the bog, Reid wrote, meant, “that we have to cease firing, and the men on the other side know their advantage.”<sup>55</sup>

That this type of advance was not unique to Anderson’s brigade is evident from Bowen’s account of his regiment’s fight with Wright’s brigade as well as an unofficial report of the battle by Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain, of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine. In describing the advance of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama against his regiment, he wrote the Alabamians made “what they call a ‘charge’ – that is, advancing & firing rapidly,” a statement that implies both that this was not a unique event and that it was a Confederate tactic. What some Confederate commanders had apparently learned through experience is that once their line came within effective rifle-musket range of the enemy permitting their men to advance loading and firing forced the enemy to keep their heads down and made their return fire less effective. It was an early form of the marching fire that the U.S. Army would use very effectively in World War Two.<sup>56</sup>

The experience of an individual soldier in a line of battle differed considerably from that of the skirmisher. While the skirmisher often experienced a feeling of isolation and separation from his comrades, the soldier in the line of battle could see many of his comrades around him, from whom he drew courage and a feeling of security. At the same time, when a line began to dissolve, or it suffered many casualties, demoralization and panic could spread quickly through the ranks, which is precisely what happened to Roland Bowen’s regiment in its fight along the Emmitsburg road. An infantry line of battle was a noisy place, with the constant crash of hundreds of rifles being fired, officers shouting encouragement or orders to their men over the din, and file closers pushing and shoving their men around to fill in gaps in the line or to maintain a semblance of order. During the fighting on Rose Hill and in Rose Woods, command of the 9<sup>th</sup> Georgia, Anderson’s brigade, devolved upon Captain George Hillyer due to casualties. Anderson sent him orders to change front with his three left companies to respond to an enfilading fire from the left. Hillyer shouted the command, “Attention, three left companies,” but the din of battle was so great no one heard it. “I ran to the left of the line,” wrote Hillyer, “and touching the men on the back, made the movement mainly by signs; and fronted the three companies to the left and rear at right angles to our position.”<sup>57</sup>

With all the factors working to pull a line apart, command and control grew increasingly difficult as units came under fire. As Captain Hillyer helps us understand, at times of heavy firing, voice commands were largely useless. During the fighting in the Wheatfield, Colonel John R. Brooke, whose Union brigade had halted in the middle of the grain field to engage Confederates of G. T. Anderson’s and Kershaw’s brigades, concluded that rifle fire would not dislodge the Confederates, who were under cover of boulders and trees in Rose Woods and that only a general advance could do so. Ordering an advance was simple. Communicating that order and having it understood and executed was not. One of Brooke’s colonels, Daniel Bingham, commanding the 64<sup>th</sup> New York, recorded “the men were firing as fast as they could load. The din was almost deafening. It was very difficult to have orders understood, and it required considerable effort to start the line forward into another charge.” Without radio communication it can be imagined how difficult it would be while under fire to communicate even a simple command to enough officers to see it executed. In this particular situation, the two color bearers of the 64<sup>th</sup> ran several yards in front of the regimental line “so that they were dimly perceivable through the clouds of smoke.” Because of their size regimental colors were the most efficient means of communication in the confusion of combat, for the men were trained that where their colors went they should follow. This brave act by the 64<sup>th</sup>’s color bearers caused the body of their regiment to start to advance, which in turn began a general advance of Brooke’s entire brigade.<sup>58</sup>

Our image of one of the most famous actions of July 2 -- the fight between the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine and 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama -- is largely shaped by the movie *Gettysburg*. While some of that film’s scenes of

this fight were actually quite well done, much of it was staged to be more dramatic and appealing than the real battle actually was for the benefit of viewers who knew nothing of Civil War battle. There is a ludicrous scene where Colonel Chamberlain gathers all his company officers around him while the battle is still raging to explain how they are going to execute a right wheel forward. As Captain Hillyer, Colonel Bingham, and many other participants have made clear to us, hearing the human voice over the din of firing was well nigh impossible, and attempting to call a meeting of company officers in the middle of a fight was a recipe for disaster. And if Captain Hillyer could not make himself heard to have his three left companies refuse the line, how could Chamberlain have verbally communicated an order to execute a right wheel forward and have it understood? The answer is, he did not. By his own account Chamberlain gave only two commands that preceded the most famous charge of July 2 and that was “bayonet fixed” [or probably “fix bayonets”] and “forward,” although in his famous Gettysburg account penned in 1913 for *Hearst’s Magazine*, he claimed “it were vain to order ‘forward.’ No mortal could have heard it in the mighty hosanna that was winging the sky,” meaning the shouts and cheers of his men that followed the order to fix bayonets. The famous right wheel was simply one of those things that Chamberlain’s soldiers executed instinctively in their pursuit of the running Confederates.<sup>59</sup>

Because the noise and smoke of Civil War combat rendered command and control so difficult, infantry colors assumed a crucial role. These flags served a functional purpose as a means of communication in battle, such as in the incident related above involving the 64<sup>th</sup> New York, and as a mark to align the line upon or as a rallying point for a unit in disorder. But they also served an inspirational function. The colors were the visible symbol of the regiment and as such they were the source of great pride among the soldiers of the regiment. Only the bravest men were entrusted to bear them in battle. When a unit was driven from the field, the colors inevitably served as the rallying point to recollect the regiment. On the attack, a brave color guard could embolden the men of a regiment to continue forward or to hold their ground, despite the gravest danger and ghastly losses.

Once engaged, fighting men quickly lost whatever neat and orderly appearance they might have gone into action with. George K. Collins was a captain in the 149<sup>th</sup> New York, which was heavily engaged on the evening of July 2 on Culp’s Hill. He observed that after the night of fighting that the men’s clothing was “ragged and dirty,” and “their faces black from smoke, sweat and burnt powder, their lips cracked and bleeding from salt-petre in the cartridges bitten by them, and while loading and firing for dear life, resembled more the inhabitants of the bottomless pit than quiet peaceful citizens of the United States of America.” Sweat, blood, fear, and stains of black powder so altered a fighting man’s appearance that Collins believed that “the people at home would not have recognized their friends, and a father would have been perplexed to know his own son.” Such was the excitement of battle that Collins also noted that in his regiment “every pocket was torn open and the contents lost in a manner which none could explain.” A likely explanation is that the men had stuffed extra cartridges into their pockets and in their haste and excitement to reach for them had torn open their pockets. But such was the fear and excitement of the moment, none could recall doing so.<sup>60</sup>

In the midst of combat men often behaved with apparent callousness to the wounded and indifference to the dead. Lieutenant Charlie Fuller of the 64<sup>th</sup> New York suffered a wound that broke his leg during the fighting in the Wheatfield. He lay helpless and listened to bullets clipping the grain all about him. When he saw two men from his regiment going to the rear he yelled to them to drag him back. “They heeded the order, or entreaty,” wrote Fuller, and both men took an arm and set off dragging the lieutenant “on a run.” Fuller had also been shot in the shoulder and the bullet had broken the shoulder joint so his hasty evacuation was accompanied by excruciating pain. When his helpers had dragged him over a knoll Fuller thought would provide cover he shouted, “drop me,” which they did without a word and left the lieutenant “without note or comment.” Captain Collins recalled that during the fighting on Culp’s Hill the men killed

were initially “tenderly put back out of the way,” but that as the action continued “attention was given only to the wounded unable to get off the field without help. Occasionally the dead were tossed from under foot, but in most instances remained where they fell, and were sat upon by the men while loading their pieces.” During the advance of Brooke’s brigade into Rose Woods a 64<sup>th</sup> New York soldier was shot in the forehead and fell against George Whipple, a private in Captain Henry Fuller’s company. “Never mind, George, forward!” shouted Fuller. Numerous factors contributed to this apparent insensitivity. Veterans understood that they could do nothing for the dead. Often, danger lurked so nearby that there was no time to pay attention to those who were killed. That luxury had to wait until after the action was over. Wounded, by necessity were expected to evacuate themselves from the danger zone if possible, and if incapacitated they might expect little more than what Charlie Fuller received, a quick and painful drag to some cover where they would be left to the hope that the stretcher bearers would find them.<sup>61</sup>

While the fighting during most of July 2 pitted Confederate infantry against Union infantry behind natural cover or the existing protection of farmers’ stone walls or rail fences, Culp’s Hill was the only point where Confederate infantry assaulted an entrenched position. The results of this encounter spoke volumes about the difficulty of carrying earthworks by frontal assault. The works were built on the morning of July 2 by the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps and consisted of “sticks, stones, and chunks of wood, and felled trees and shoveled dirt.” Late on the afternoon of July 2 Meade ordered the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps to move from Culp’s Hill to reinforce the army’s embattled left flank. Fortunately for the Union cause, 12<sup>th</sup> Corps commander Major General Henry Slocum convinced Meade to allow one of the corps’ six brigades to remain behind and hold the works. Brigadier General George S. Greene’s New York Brigade of 1,424 drew this assignment. Greene did the best he could with his manpower, thinning out his four regiments (one was on the skirmish line) into a single rank with at least a foot between each man. He had only occupied the works of the departed 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade on his right when Confederates of Johnson’s division crossed Rock Creek and attacked his position. Greene’s position and the ground in his front “were covered with a heavy growth of timber, free from undergrowth, with large ledges of rock projecting above the surface.” The timber and numerous boulders afforded excellent cover for attacking enemy riflemen.<sup>62</sup>

Two Confederate brigades, Jones’ and Nichols’, totaling about twenty-five hundred men, assaulted the front of Greene’s line. The odds were approximately 2.5 to 1 in the Confederates’ favor. Without the cover their works provided, Captain George Collins, of the 149<sup>th</sup> New York, believed his brigade “could never have held the position on the 2d day of July against the overwhelming numbers brought against it.” Captain C. P. Horton, of Greene’s staff, left an excellent description of the Confederate attack and the tactics of the Union defense.

In the gathering gloom of the evening the line of works held by Greene’s brigade could scarcely be distinguished until they were within pistol shot. The colors were dropped behind the works and the men closely concealed. The rebels advanced to within 50 yards were received by a volley which staggered though it did not stop the advance. The colors were flung out, and with three hearty cheers on our part the action commenced in earnest. The enemy succeeded in getting almost to the line of breastworks but the fire was too hot to stand and they finally broke and fell back out of sight . . .

The enemy meantime had formed up anew and advanced again to the attack. They succeeded this time in getting up to the works, and some close fighting took place but with the same result as before. They finally, being driven back with much loss and having a number of prisoners in our hands . . .<sup>63</sup>

Horton offers several interesting points about this engagement. In the falling light the Confederates had difficulty making out Greene’s line of entrenchments, and Greene’s men

concealed their colors and men until the Confederates were within fifty yards. It is surprising they were allowed to advance this close, and as Horton relates, the first volley staggered but did not stop the attackers, who by Confederate after-action reports, at some points reached within ten yards of the works before retreating. Having identified the enemy position the Confederates attempted a second effort that met with the same fate, and Horton related that a third, but far more feeble effort followed this. By the third assault the attackers were surely convinced of its futility, which explains why it was not made with the same spirit as the first two. Why did this attack against a thin line of defenders fail while a similar attack at about the same time against a regular line of battle at East Cemetery Hill succeed in driving the defenders? Darkness definitely assisted the Federals, for it spread confusion in the Confederate ranks, but the formidable nature of the Union works on Culp's Hill gave the defenders confidence and greatly reduced casualties from return fire. This enabled the Union soldiers to deliver a steadier, more accurate fire. Captain Collins reported that the men of his regiment, and probably the others as well, fired eighty rounds apiece. Collins' regiment had approximately three hundred men in it, which means that they fired about twenty-four thousand rounds. Statistics tell part of the tale of this battle's outcome. Jones' and Nichols' brigades, in their efforts to carry Greene's entrenched line by frontal assault on the evening of July 2 and again on the morning of July 3 cost them 30 percent and 36 percent casualties, respectively. The regiments of Greene's brigade who directly opposed them lost between 14 percent and 19 percent.<sup>64</sup>

### **Hand to Hand**

No aspect of infantry battle at Gettysburg is fodder for more hyperbole than hand-to-hand combat. Visitors to the battlefield often arrive with the idea that it was commonplace. The film *Gettysburg* helped reinforce this notion with its scenes of hand-to-hand fighting between the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine and 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama on Little Round Top. Infantry combat did sometimes degenerate into a brutal hand-to-hand fight with clubbed muskets and bayonets, but it was rare. Most infantry fighting occurred at ranges of around one hundred to two hundred yards. Although the Springfield or Enfield rifle, in the hands of a good rifleman, could hit man-sized targets at a range of three hundred yards and had a killing range up to a mile, the low muzzle velocity of these rifles meant that at longer ranges they did not have a flat trajectory. A soldier firing at a target three hundred yards away elevated his sights so that the bullet actually traveled in an arc to its target. If the firing soldier misjudged the range, or the enemy was advancing rapidly, it was possible for the bullet to pass completely over the enemy. Most soldiers were also poor shots, and the excitement of battle made their aim even more erratic. So the greater the range, the less the likelihood a firing line would inflict enough damage on an opposing line to cause its retreat and check its advance. But at what range between one hundred and two hundred yards should a unit commence firing? The closer the range a volley was delivered, the greater the accuracy and potential damage it could inflict. Just how deadly a well-delivered volley could be was illustrated by Lieutenant Frank Moran, of the 73<sup>rd</sup> New York. Moran was wounded in the fighting along the Emmitsburg road, and the 13<sup>th</sup> Mississippi of Barksdale's brigade was passing over him when "a volley from our side tore through the ranks and scores of Confederates fell." Moran thought he had never seen such destruction from a single volley "and its effect was instantly manifested; the line of battle came to a halt without command, and it took the utmost exertions of the officers to prevent a panic." But if the volley delivered at short range went high, there might not be time to reload before the enemy was upon the firing unit. Union Brigadier General Hobart Ward, whose brigade defended Devil's Den and Houck's Ridge, instructed his men "not to fire at a longer distance than 200 yards." They obeyed Ward's orders, which he said brought the advancing Confederate line to a halt, "which gave our men an opportunity to reload" and fire another volley. Veteran infantry officers understood that the first volley or two from their line would be the most



effective and well-aimed fire their men would deliver, for once the action became general, the men fired at will, and the effectiveness, accuracy, and shock of their fire dramatically declined.<sup>65</sup>

Inevitably, either the fire of the defender forced the attacker to seek cover, or it became evident to the defender that he could not stop the advance of the attacker and he withdrew before it ever came to a hand-to-hand contest. During the Confederate attack upon Sickles' advanced line on the afternoon of July 2, several regiments of Brigadier General Joseph B. Kershaw's brigade advanced and seized the "stony hill" near the Wheatfield. Here two brigades of Brigadier General John Caldwell's division from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps counterattacked them. Kershaw's men had good cover from rocks and trees and defended their position stubbornly. The Federals of Zook's and Kelly's brigades were equally determined on the attack. Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Gaillard, of Kershaw's 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina, describing the action afterwards, wrote, "the enemy's infantry came up and we stood within thirty steps of each other. They loaded and fired deliberately. I never saw more stubbornness. It was so desperate I took two shots with my pistol at men scarcely thirty steps from me." Yet despite the close, almost point-blank, range of this action, it never came to hand-to-hand, probably because the volume of fire Kershaw's men kept up made it impossible to get closer than thirty yards. Instead, the Federals maintained a heavy fire on Kershaw's front with part of their force and maneuvered the rest to get around the South Carolinians' flank. Kershaw kept swinging back the flank of his right regiment, the 7<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, until "the two wings of the regiment were nearly doubled on each other." There soon came a point in the fight when Kershaw realized that if he attempted to hold his position any longer he might well be cut off and forced to surrender, or suffer devastating losses, and he ordered a retreat.<sup>66</sup>

When hand-to-hand actions did occur, two factors were present. First, the fire of the defending unit was scattered or disorganized enough that the attacker was able to advance across the deadly ground – the final twenty to forty yards – and close with the enemy, or the attacker was able to gain the flank or rear of the defender. Secondly, the defender either believed he could fight off the number of attackers who closed to point-blank range, or he was left with no chance to flee safely. Certainly the most famous hand-to-hand fighting of July 2 occurred between the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine and 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama on Little Round Top. The film *Gettysburg* depicted this as almost general along the line of the two regiments as the 15<sup>th</sup> drove home its attack. In reality, the hand-to-hand engagements in this battle were few, isolated, and of very brief duration. The fire of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine did not break the initial charge of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama until the Confederates were "within a dozen yards" of the 20<sup>th</sup>'s line. That the Confederates were able to get this close is probably explained by the fact that the 20<sup>th</sup> had extended into a single line to cover a broader front, thereby significantly reducing its firepower. There was also cover that partially sheltered the Confederates' advance, and the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama was a well-disciplined, well-led unit. Having reached a position so close to the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Alabamians were able to muster rushes by what Colonel Chamberlain described as "squads of men," who, "broke through our line in several places, and the fight was literally hand to hand."<sup>67</sup> That the Confederates were able to do this had to do with the short distance they had to cover to reach the Union position, and again, because the 20<sup>th</sup>'s single line had gaps in it due to casualties. To recover ground lost, or drive these Confederate thrusts back, squads of the 20<sup>th</sup> would launch counterattacks. Colonel William Oates, who commanded the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama, recalled an encounter during one of these:

I recall a circumstance which I recollect. I, with my regiment, made a rush forward from the ledge. About forty steps up the slope there is a large boulder about midway the Spur. The Maine regiment charged my line, coming right up in a hand-to-hand encounter. My regimental colors were just a step or two to the right of that boulder, and I was within ten feet. A Maine man reached to grasp the staff of the colors when Ensign Archibald stepped back and Sergeant Pat O'Conner stove his bayonet through the head of the Yankee, who fell dead. I

witnessed that incident, which impressed me beyond the point of being forgotten.<sup>68</sup>

It is unlikely that Oates led his entire regiment up the slope, as he states, or that the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Maine charged his line, simply because it was impossible at that stage of the action, due to the smoke, terrain, confusion, and enemy fire, to get an entire regiment to act in unison. Oates' thrust more likely consisted of several companies, just as the Union counterthrust that led to the hand-to-hand action was not a general advance by the 20<sup>th</sup>, but rather a local attack to drive the Confederates back. That of all the incidents Oates observed during this action he chose to relate the story of Sergeant O'Conner indicates that it both shocked the colonel and was a rare, isolated event.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Maine's famous bayonet charge at the critical point in the action between these two regiments resulted in relatively few personal encounters. Chamberlain had one in which a Confederate officer attempted to shoot him at point-blank range, but missed. Chamberlain placed his sword at the officer's throat and the fellow quickly surrendered. Most of Oates' men withdrew in the face of the 20<sup>th</sup>'s bayonet charge. The rest, who were either wounded or too exhausted to flee, surrendered.<sup>69</sup>

More deadly hand-to-hand fighting involving the bayonet took place during the collapse of Union resistance in the Wheatfield. During a meeting of Union and former Confederate officers in 1869, Confederate Brigadier General William T. Wofford, whose brigade was largely responsible for the collapse of the Union line at that point, made the chilling statement that "more men were killed here with the bayonet than he had ever known before in the war." Wofford was not referring to the fighting in the Wheatfield in general, but to the fight between his brigade and Colonel Jacob Sweitzer's brigade of Barnes' 1<sup>st</sup> Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Corps. During the late afternoon fighting in the Wheatfield on July 2, Sweitzer's brigade advanced to the southern end of the Wheatfield, to support Colonel John R. Brooke's brigade of Caldwell's 1<sup>st</sup> Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps. Sweitzer faced south, because that was where Brooke was. Two other brigades of Caldwell's division, Zook's and Kelly's, supported Sweitzer's right flank, holding a place called "Stony Hill." The advance of Wofford's brigade, along with elements of Kershaw's brigade, drove Zook and Kelly off the hill and threatened the flank and rear of Sweitzer. To meet the emergency Sweitzer attempted to change front to the west (his right) with the 62<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania and 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan. As these regiments attempted to execute this maneuver, Wofford's men emerged from the woods bordering the Wheatfield and engaged the Federals at point-blank range. Jacob A. Funk was a color-bearer in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania, and he recalled, "The battle know [sic] raged in all its fury as foe grappled with foe and the Bayonet was freely used." Soldiers also wielded their rifles as clubs. Funk recalled a Confederate officer who demanded that the Pennsylvanians surrender, "when one of my company turned round and clubbing his musket brought the but down on the officers hed smashing him down on the spot."<sup>70</sup>

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan the fighting around the regimental colors degenerated into a hand-to-hand conflict. The color-bearer of the regiment was shot and a Confederate soldier picked up the fallen flag and was bearing it away when Colonel Harrison Jeffords, the 4<sup>th</sup>'s commander, rushed after the exultant enemy, ran him through with his sword and killed him. A Confederate behind Jeffords bayoneted the colonel, inflicting a mortal wound, whereupon a 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan lieutenant shot Jeffords' assailant with his pistol. While some men might have been killed by the bayonet in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania or in Wofford's brigade, it is interesting to note that a lieutenant in the 4<sup>th</sup> recorded that Jeffords was the only man in his regiment killed by a bayonet thrust. This would indicate that while Wofford's statement that he observed more men killed with the bayonet than he had ever known before might have been true, the number actually killed was not very many, even though it is clear that this action was a genuine hand-to-hand fight. Bullets cut down many more men in this action than did bayonets or clubbed muskets.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps the fiercest and most widespread hand-to-hand fighting of July 2 occurred during the Confederate assault of East Cemetery Hill. The goal of the Confederate infantry was the guns on the summit of the hill. To reach them it was necessary to overrun or drive off the supporting 11<sup>th</sup> Corps infantry who were posted behind a stone wall along Brickyard Lane at the base of the hill. 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Oscar D. Ladley, of the 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio, was one of the Union defenders. He recalled the assault:

They came on us about dark yelling like demons with fixed bayonets. We opened on them when they were about 500 yards off but still they came their officers & colors in advance. We lay behind a stone wall and received them without bayonets. I was standing behind the wall when they came over. A Rebel officer made at me with a revolver with his colors by his side. I had no pistol, nothing but my sword. Just as I was getting ready to strike him one of our boys run him through the body so saved me. There was a good man killed in that way. They had driven back the dutch Brig on our right and had got behind us, and rebels & Yankees were mixed up generally. But we finally drove them back. I never saw such fighting in my life. It was a regular hand to hand fight. Our Brig (Ohio) had sworn never to turn so they stood but it was a dear stand to some of them. I have 6 men left the Regt. has 60 the Brig. has 300 out of 1500.<sup>72</sup>

Ladley's account offers several interesting points that help explain how the action closed to hand-to-hand. It was nearly dark when Hays and Avery launched their assault, and Ladley's brigade commenced firing at five hundred yards -- long range with good light, but the falling dusk likely greatly reduced the accuracy of the fire. Moving at the double-quick, Hays' Confederates, who opposed Ladley's regiment, could cover five hundred yards in about one minute to ninety seconds, which meant that the Federals could get off two to three shots per man before the Confederates were upon them. Ladley also tells us that in his previous service he never saw such fighting as occurred at the stone wall, which speaks for how rarely combat came to such close quarters. Although two of the four regiments in Ladley's brigade were driven back by the force of the Confederate assault, most of his regiment and the adjacent 17<sup>th</sup> Connecticut stuck to its position. He states that the men did so because the brigade had sworn never to turn. This might have been in reaction to the scorn heaped upon the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps after Chancellorsville and their defeat on July 1 at Gettysburg. If true, then unit pride helped steel the men to stand their ground. But it may have also been that there was no time to retreat before the Confederates were upon them -- and no safe avenue of retreat. A steep hill rose behind Ladley's regiment, so retreat meant exposure to enemy fire until one reached the summit. With only seconds to make a decision, Ladley and his comrades chose to stand and fight as their best option for survival. The dense smoke produced by hundreds of rifles and numerous artillery pieces might have also made it difficult for some men to judge just how close the Confederates were. A staff officer of General Ames, whose division Ladley's brigade belonged to, wrote, "the smoke of battle was so thick that with the increasing darkness it became difficult to distinguish friend from foe."<sup>73</sup>

William Southerton was one of the members of Ladley's regiment who did not remain at the wall but retreated up the slope toward the Union artillery. He recalled that the Confederates gained his regiment's position "in spite of our efforts to block the way." Southerton found it impossible "to distinguish who were Union, who were Confederate, to shoot and not kill our own men." He and many other Union soldiers of Ames' division were swept up East Cemetery Hill to the guns on the summit. Here, Southerton wrote, "Artillerists fought with ramrods, wielding them like ballbats . . . So infuriated were the Tiger [Louisianans of Hays' brigade] that they jabbed with their bayonets. Fought with rocks. A tall rebel shoved right at my elbow, a huge rock raised ready to dash it at Major [sic] Fox. I jabbed with my bayonet." Then someone nearby shot the Confederate and he fell. The fight that swirled around the guns was violent but

brief. A member of Battery I, 1<sup>st</sup> New York, recalled the Confederates reached the guns, “but only for a moment,” for Union reinforcements arrived and the gunners “using sponge staffs, handspikes, and stones, forced them back, following it up with doses of canister. One Rebel planted his colors on one of the lunettes of the first section (which was on the left), and demanded the surrender of the gun. He was promptly knocked down with a handspike.”<sup>74</sup>

While rocks, bayonets, and even rammers and handspikes inflicted numerous casualties in this fight, the deadliest weapon remained the rifle, pistol, or canister fired at point-blank range.

### Prisoners

We can only speculate on the number of prisoners taken on July 2. The Union 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, respectively, reported 378, 589 captured and 211 missing. A handful of these were lost on July 3. Hood’s division reported 537 missing or captured, and McLaws, 451. Some of these were wounded who had to be left behind when the army retreated, and others were taken on July 3. A reasonable estimate would place the number of men captured on July 2 at around 2,000. How were these men taken prisoner? Was it easy or dangerous for a combatant to surrender? Was it safer to surrender in groups rather than singly? Gettysburg occurred before the collapse of the prisoner-exchange system, and although every soldier understood that prisons were notoriously unhealthy places to be avoided if possible, they had not yet achieved the overcrowding that turned them into true hellholes. Most men still believed that if you were captured, you had a reasonable chance of surviving your imprisonment.

Richard Holmes, in his book *Firing Line*, speculates that soldiers in twentieth-century wars who attempted to surrender after the fighting came to close quarters stood only a fifty-fifty chance of their surrender being accepted. In the early nineteenth-century, during the Napoleonic Wars, surrender could also be an iffy proposition, particularly between the French and Prussians after 1812. This was certainly not true at Gettysburg. Soldiers who offered surrender in this battle, even in cases of close-range or hand-to-hand combat, were nearly always spared. This is not to say that men were not shot down in the act of attempting to surrender, but this occurrence was rare. In a case of close-quarter fighting, Roland Bowen, of the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, continued to fire at the advancing Confederates of Wright’s Georgia Brigade, even though his comrades broke for the rear. Bowen resisted until it was too late to make a run for it without being shot. Flight, Bowen understood at this point, made him a legitimate target for the Confederate riflemen. So, he wrote, “I threw down my gun and held up both hands, my cap in one and begged that they might spare my life.” Wright’s men “spoke not a word to me but passed over and on.” No one from Wright’s line of battle even bothered to direct or escort Bowen to the Confederate rear. He did this on his own, since this was the only direction he could travel to find safety from the bullets and shell fragments flying about. He came upon a Confederate soldier who may have been shirking, but whom Bowen found “was mighty glad to get one prisoner to go the rear himself.”<sup>75</sup>

Captain Alanson H. Nelson, in the 57<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, while fighting within the Sherfy house, found himself cut off by the attack of Barksdale’s brigade. “There was nothing I dreaded so much as to be taken prisoner,” he related. So, when he emerged from the house he found many Confederates in the Sherfy yard not fifty feet away. “They saw me as soon as I did them, and ordered me to surrender,” wrote Nelson. Facing a situation similar to that of Bowen, Nelson chose flight, fully understanding the risk this entailed. But he also saw that the Rebel soldiers were in a group and that many could not fire without endangering the others. “I took the chance,” he continued, “and made a dive past them, then firing began.” Nelson concluded that either he moved too quickly or the Confederates were poor shots “for they never touched me.”<sup>76</sup>

Sergeant H. A. Johnson, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Maine, and some of his comrades had a less successful experience when they attempted to escape from advancing Confederates of Wilcox’s brigade during their morning fight in Pitzer’s Woods. One of Johnson’s men, Nathan Call, fell with a bullet in the hip. When the regiment commenced to fall back against Wilcox’s superior numbers,

Call cried out to Johnson not to leave him behind. Johnson secured the help of John W. Jones, also from his company. They seated Call on a rifle and had him throw his arms around their neck. So long as soldiers sought escape, wounded or unwounded, they remained fair game in combat. The group had not made much distance before Jones was shot in the head and killed, and the carrying party collapsed. Before Johnson could recover from the fall they were overrun. The dead Jones and the badly wounded Call “were of no use to them,” and were left on the field, while Johnson was taken prisoner. Yet despite the danger, and the death of Jones in the escape attempt, Johnson had no regrets on attempting to escape his pursuers. “It is needless to say that I would have taken the chances with my regiment a hundred times over, could the choice have been given me,” he wrote.<sup>77</sup>

Confederates of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama found themselves on the other end of this situation when their regiment was forced to flee in the face of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine’s counterattack. The left wing of the 20<sup>th</sup>, led by Captain Ellis Spear, trapped a large group of Alabamians in the Weikert farm lane. Quite a few attempted to leap over the fence enclosing the lane to escape, and Spear, writing his step-granddaughter, related with unusual honesty for a Civil War veteran, that “painful as the necessity was, we were obliged to shoot them. I mean those who were trying to scale the fence & escape without asking leave. The rest, who dropped their guns & showed signs of repentance, we magnanimously spared, and accepted their apologies.”<sup>78</sup>

Many soldiers who surrendered recorded being threatened by their captors, or being pushed and shoved, but in only the most exceptional cases were threats carried out, and not surprisingly these were not recorded by those who participated. The experience of George W. Whipple, of the 64<sup>th</sup> New York, was fairly typical. During his regiment’s disorganized retreat from an advanced position in the Wheatfield on July 2, Whipple’s company commander, Captain Charlie Fuller, fell badly wounded. Whipple tried to carry Fuller from the field but was unable to keep up and had to lay him down. This enabled his Confederate pursuers to catch up. They shouted “Surrender, you d-m Yankee,” as they approached. He did, but asked his captors if he could remain for a moment more with his dying captain, “but the bayonet was close to my back, with awful threats to put it through me if I refused.” “Go to the rear you d---d Yankee son of a b---h,” they cursed at him. That the Confederates should be angry at an enemy soldier whose comrades minutes before had caused many casualties in their ranks should not be surprising. As an experienced veteran Whipple probably understood that the mercy of angry men in battle only extended so far. He wisely complied with his captors’ demands and was escorted to the rear by two of them, who were probably very happy to have a reason to leave the front lines. They left him in the rear with some men from the ambulance corps, unharmed.<sup>79</sup>

E. H. Sutton, of the 24<sup>th</sup> Georgia, barely survived one of the uncommon cases where a captor deliberately attempted to kill an unarmed man. A counterattack by the Pennsylvania Reserves overran his position. The Federals told Sutton to go to the rear. He dropped his weapon and cartridge box and cut his belt. But when he started to the rear “a burly Irishman presented his gun at my breast and was pulling the trigger, cursing me.” A file closer saved Sutton’s life when he pushed the rifle aside just as it discharged, then ordered the soldier to “go forward and fight those who had not surrendered.” The dearth of evidence regarding the shooting of prisoners leads to the conclusion that although it did occur, it was rare.<sup>80</sup>

While to men cut off from their comrades or overrun by the enemy the decision to surrender or not was fairly clear cut, to those in a combat whose outcome hung in the balance, it could be decidedly murky. The skirmishing around the Bliss farm illustrated this. Sergeant Frank Riley, 13<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, recorded that during a charge his regiment made that swept up and around the Bliss farm buildings, the Confederates within the buildings did not surrender until Riley and his comrades “poured in through the doors and windows and almost meeting them face to face.” And even then some of the Confederates in this combat, perhaps sensing their captors were not too numerous, or not realizing that their comrades were laying down their weapons, chose to continue resistance and fired upon the Federals. One of them wounded an orderly sergeant in

Riley's regiment and as he was helped from the field swore to Riley that had the Confederate not wounded him he would have "pinned him to the wall," which indicated that the sergeant's comrades spared this individual even though he violated the soldiers' rough code of justice on the battlefield.<sup>81</sup>

### **The Wounded and the Dead**

After two years of war, the men of both armies were hardened, as much as one can become hardened, to the grim visages of battle. But the scale of carnage on July 2 challenged even the sternest resolution. James Houghton, of the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan, assisted his company commander, Captain James B. McLean, to the rear after the captain was hit in the chin, left leg, and heel during the fighting in the Wheatfield. McLean could "hobble along," but needed to support himself on Houghton's shoulder. They made their way back along today's Wheatfield Road. Houghton observed it "was a verry frequent occurrence to see pools of blood along the road" where wounded men had stopped to rest. There were some ambulances, but they were reserved for "only the worst cases," and McLean, though bleeding steadily from his wounds, did not qualify as such. The two men eventually reached the Leonard Bricker farm, east of Little Round Top, where 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps surgeons had established a field hospital. A guard met them at the gate to the farm and said there were already about three hundred wounded at the hospital and they could not admit any more. McLean lay down and said he could go no farther and would remain until he could be treated, while Houghton went by the guard apparently to see if he could find someone more helpful, or out of curiosity. "A fearful sight met my gaze," he wrote, "The wounded were lying on the ground in rows acrst the yard with allies between the waiters and sergeons to pass through . . . At the east end of the yard were lying some of the most hopless cases some were reathing in the agonies of death." He passed the surgeons' tables and concluded "It takes a man with a steel nerve and a casehardend heart to be a Army Surgeon." Bricker's barn he found "filled with the wounded to its utmost capacity and if I ever heard a Barn full of groans it was there." Finding this "more than I could stand," Houghton returned to his captain and eventually, with the help of his company lieutenant, carried him to another hospital.<sup>82</sup>

The appalling scene Houghton encountered at Bricker's farm was duplicated, sometimes on a larger scale, at numerous other farms, now field hospitals, behind the two armies' lines. Surgeon John Billings, with the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, served at the Jacob Weikert farm, just south of Bricker's on the Taneytown road, and reported that they received seven hundred fifty wounded on July 2. "Worked all night without cessation," he wrote. Dr. Aristides Monteiro, a surgeon with E. P. Alexander's reserve artillery battalion, spent some hours at Francis Bream's "Black Horse" Tavern and farm, which served wounded from McLaws' division. "The wounded appeared to be everywhere," wrote Monteiro, "they lay on blankets or on the bare ground . . . some screamed in their delirium, calling for their wives, sweethearts, or mothers. Others in shock were quite pale." Monteiro thought the working surgeons "looked like butchers," and "swarms of big green horseflies were everywhere," tormenting the wounded, while the air "was filled with the sickening odor of burning flesh" from surgeons cauterizing stumps of limbs they had amputated.<sup>83</sup>

The survivors of the day's battle who remained on the front lines, were not spared the grim scenes of the aid stations and field hospitals. Particularly on the southern end of the battlefield, hundreds of dead or dying men littered the landscape, as well as hundreds of wounded who lay between the lines or who had not yet been collected by the stretcher bearers. Once darkness blanketed the field, numerous soldiers ventured forth in search of missing comrades, loot, or, in rare instances, pure curiosity. Captain Adolpho Cavada went in search of a fellow staff officer mortally wounded during the retreat from the Emmitsburg road. As Cavada and his party ventured forward they found, "On every side lay the cold stiffened bodies of our dead soldiers, sometimes two or three forming ghastly groups together, in most unnatural attitudes." The

wounded encountered were “comforted with the assurance that the ambulances would find them in a few minutes.” Whether this was true or meant to placate men for whom Cavada and his comrades could do nothing is uncertain, but stretcher parties were at work throughout the night bringing in the wounded. They found their comrade’s dead horse, with “part of his head shot away.” A headless orderly sergeant still clung to the horse’s bridle, and at right angles to the sergeant lay a dead Confederate “whose brain oozed from a wound in the forehead.” To Cavada it was all a “horrible tableau.”<sup>84</sup>

Surgeon James B. Clifton, of Wofford’s brigade, after tending to the brigade’s wounded in the rear, rode to the front “to see how the men were getting on.” He found them near the western finger of the Rose Woods. The moon had risen and was shining brightly, revealing the ground in front of the unit “almost black with Yankees” lying dead or wounded. So many wounded remained beyond the reach of the Union stretcher parties that Clifton recorded the disturbing comment that “I can hear nothing but the groans of the wounded” while he visited the brigade. Exhaustion helped Wofford’s men and all the other surviving combatants endure this distressing sound that could be heard at any point where heavy fighting had occurred. Clifton found Wofford’s men “completely exhausted from the hard day’s fight.” Sergeant John Plummer, one of the handful of survivors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota’s charge, wrote “I never slept better and had more pleasant dreams” that night even though dead men and horses were “lying all around me.” He explained that “the excitement and exhaustion had been so great that a man could sleep in any condition, and under any circumstances.”<sup>85</sup>

Exhaustion helped deaden the senses to the heart-rending scenes and made sleep possible, but it provided only temporary relief. Lieutenant Frank Haskell wrote of “the sudden revulsions of sense and feeling” that came with the quiet that followed combat. Captain George K. Collins, on Culp’s Hill with the 149<sup>th</sup> New York, wrote that the men in his regiment were glad when the fighting ended there around 10 P.M. “for they felt sick both in body and mind.” The trauma of combat was not erased by a good night’s sleep. Fifteen days after the July 2 combat, Lt. Colonel Franklin Gaillard, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina, wrote his wife that it “it was the most shocking battle I have ever witnessed. There were familiar forms and faces with parts of their heads shot away, legs shattered, arms torn off, etc.” Only the cruelest people could witness such butchery and not be deeply affected. Veterans might conceal their emotions beneath what one called “the mask of reckless indifference,” to endure the heart-rending and violent scenes that were commonplace in battle and its hideous aftermath, but it was a sanity-preserving façade that some maintained better and longer than others.<sup>86</sup>

## Night

“How strange the stillness seems,” wrote Lieutenant Haskell of the quiet that accompanied the fall of night. “The whole air roared with the conflict but a moment since,” Haskell continued, “now all is silent, not a gun-shot sound is heard – and the silence comes distinctly, almost painfully to the senses.” Captain Adolpho Cavada remembered it was “intensely dark; the air laden with mist and pervaded by that strange musty smell peculiar to battlefields immediately after a battle.” Captain Donaldson, of the 118<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, left a similar eerie picture as night’s “gloomy shades were thickened by a sulphurous cloud that like a pall hung sadly over the field.” On Culp’s Hill outbursts of firing continued throughout the night as men from both armies collided accidentally. In the Wheatfield the melancholy work of gathering the wounded proceeded, allowed by an informal truce between the opposing pickets. As the work went on, someone on the Confederate lines, where Wofford’s brigade lay in line along the western side of the field, began to sing hymns familiar to all. His clear voice carried well despite the sultry night air and “echoed up and down the valley and the little mountain in our front.” George Hillyer, in the 9<sup>th</sup> Georgia, heard the singing and recalled that it was met with “a marked silence that could come only from attention.” After several hymns the young man concluded with “When This

Cruel War is Over.” When he finished there was clapping and a cheer from the Union lines. For a fleeting moment, the war receded and all who heard the singing were united in their sorrow and longing for peace, but then the applause faded, the cheers echoed to silence, and the grim work of the stretcher parties continued . . . and the war went on.<sup>87</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> John W. Busey and David G. Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, NJ: Longstreet House, 1982), 230.

<sup>2</sup> Eric A. Campbell, “Voices of the Gettysburg Campaign and the First Day of Battle;” *The Gettysburg Campaign and First Day of Battle* (Gettysburg National Military Park: Gettysburg, PA, 2005), 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond G. Barber and Gary E. Swinson, ed., *The Civil War Letters of Charles Barber, Private, 104<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry* (Torrence, CA: Gary E. Swinson, 1991), 121; Allen P. Speer, ed., *Voices From Cemetery Hill* (Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1997), 103; John Gibbon, *Personal Recollections of the Civil War* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Bookshop, 1978), 148; Martin Maginnis, “At Gettysburg The First Minnesota,” *Adams Star and Sentinel*, June 14, 1882, Vertical File V6-MN1, Gettysburg National Military Park Library [hereafter cited as GNMPL]; John Plummer to Brother, *The [Minneapolis] State Atlas*, August 26, 1863, Brake Collection, United States Army Military History Institute (hereafter cited as USAMHI); Charles A. Fuller, *Personal Recollections of the War of 1861* (Hamilton, NY: Edmonston Publishing, 1990), 92.

<sup>4</sup> Charles H. Salter journal, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library; J. C. Reid diary, Alabama State Archives; Eugene Blackford to Mary, August 4, 1863, Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park [hereafter cited as FSNMP].

<sup>5</sup> Gorman to “Friend Holden,” June 22, 1863, North Carolina State Archives [hereafter cited as NCSA]; Calder to his mother, June 26, 1863, William Calder Papers, Southern Historical Society Collection [hereafter cited as SHC], University of North Carolina [hereafter cited as UNC]; E.D. Benedict diary entry for July 1, 1863, E.D. Benedict Diary, Chicago Historical Society [hereafter cited as CHS], copy in GNMPL; Acheson to mother, June 28, 1863, in Sarah G. Walters, ed., *Inscription at Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1991), 100; Henry Clare to “William,” June 28, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, DU; John Plummer letter to his brother, *Minneapolis State Atlas*, August 26, 1863; Gregory Coco, ed., *From Ball’s Bluff to Gettysburg and Beyond* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1994), 196-197.

<sup>6</sup> Colonel John Ramsey to Seth Williams, August 9, 1863, New Jersey State Archives, copy vertical file V6-NJ8, GNMPL; J. Gregory Acken, ed., *Inside the Army of the Potomac: The Civil War Experience of Captain Francis Adams Donaldson* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998), 295-296, 302. Godfrey acquitted himself well and emerged as something of a natural leader.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Jacobs, “Meteorology of the Battle,” *Star and Sentinel*, August 11, 1885, copy vertical file V8-4, GNMPL.

<sup>8</sup> Robert L. Stewart, *History of the One Hundred Fortieth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers* (No city provided: Regimental Association, 1912), 88; R. S. Robertson to parents, June 28, 1863, FSNMP, copy GNMPL.

<sup>9</sup> James L. Bowen, *History of the Thirty-Seventh Regiment Mass. Volunteers* (Holyoke, MA: Clark W. Bryan & Co., 1884), 174.

<sup>10</sup> William C. Oates, *The War Between the Union and the Confederacy*, (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1974), 212-222.

<sup>11</sup> Coralou Peel Lassen, ed., *Dear Sarah, Letters Home from a Soldier in the Iron Brigade* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 131; James Houghton journal, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

<sup>12</sup> “The Diary of Captain George A. Bowen, 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment New Jersey Volunteers,” *The Valley Forge Journal*, 2:1 (June 1984), 128, 134; James Houghton journal, Bentley Library. Matthew Brennan, “The Civil War Diet,” Master of Arts Thesis, May 2005, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-05262005-122146/unrestricted/CivilWarDiet.pdf>, 73-74, 99-101.

<sup>13</sup> Bowen, 175; Acken, 299.



- 
- <sup>14</sup> Frank L. Byrne and Andrew T. Weaver, eds., *Haskell of Gettysburg* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1970), 103.
- <sup>15</sup> Thomas D. Marbaker, *History of the Eleventh New Jersey Volunteers from Its Organization to Appomattox* (Trenton, NJ: 1898), 96; James Houghton journal; Adolpho Cavada memoir, Historical Society of Pennsylvania [hereafter cited as HSP].
- <sup>16</sup> "The Diary of Captain George A. Bowen;" George K. Collins, *Memoirs of the 149<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Infy* (Hamilton, NY: Edmonston Publishing, 1995), 136; Byrne and Weaver, 103.
- <sup>17</sup> J. C. Reid diary, Alabama State Archives; Spencer G. Welch to wife, August 2, 1863, Joyner Library, East Carolina University; John Coxe, "The Battle of Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran* (XXI), 433.
- <sup>18</sup> Byrne and Weaver, 111.
- <sup>19</sup> Collins, 137; Charles A. Hale, "With Colonel Cross in the Gettysburg Campaign," *Civil War Times Illustrated* (August 1974), 35.
- <sup>20</sup> William J. Hardee, *Instructions for Skirmishers* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1861), 3-7.
- <sup>21</sup> Lieutenant Hethrington to his mother, July 6, 1863, printed in the *Cherry Valley Gazette*, July 15, 1863; V6-US1SS, GNMPL; U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), Series 1, 27(2), 617. [Hereafter cited as *OR*]
- <sup>22</sup> George L. Yost to Father, July 4, 1863, 126<sup>th</sup> NY Regimental File, GNMP Library; Richard A. Baumgartner, *Buckeye Blood: Ohio at Gettysburg* (Huntingdon, WV: Blue Acorn Press, 2003), 84.
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas F. Galwey, *The Valiant Hours* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1961), 102; Bowen, 197; *OR*, Series 1, 27(2), 726.
- <sup>24</sup> Hartwell Osborne, *Trials and Triumphs: The Record of the Fifty-Fifty Ohio Volunteer Infantry* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1904), 99-100.
- <sup>25</sup> Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg: Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 138.
- <sup>26</sup> Albert Stokes Emmell to Dear Aunt, July 17, 1863; V6-NJ12, GNMPL; Editors of Time-Life Books, *Gettysburg: Voices of the Civil War* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1995), 100.
- <sup>27</sup> Emmell to Dear Aunt, July 17, 1863, GNMPL; Elwood Christ, *Over a Wide Hot Crimson Plain* (Baltimore, MD: Butternut and Blue, 1993), 36-37.
- <sup>28</sup> Henry S. Stevens, *Souvenir of Excursions to Battlefield by the Society of the Fourteenth Connecticut Regiment September 1891*, (Washington, 1893), 11; Byrne and Weaver, 113-114; George H. Washburn, *A Complete Military History and Record of the 108<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Vols.*, (Rochester, NY: E. R. Andrews, 1894), 48-49.
- <sup>29</sup> Richard S. Thompson, "A Scrap of Gettysburg," *Military Order of the Loyal Legion United States, Illinois Commandry*, vol. III, (Reprint, Broadfoot Publishing, 1992), 98.
- <sup>30</sup> John A. McPherson to I. T. Avery, August 3, 1863, Alphonso Calhoun Avery papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Terry L. Jones, ed., "A Louisiana Tiger: The Civil War Memoirs of Capt. William J. Seymour," Seymour Papers, Scholl CW Collection, William L. Clements Library.
- <sup>31</sup> "Consolidated return of loss and expenditure of artillery and artillery material in battle of Gettysburg July 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>," RG 393, pt. 1, E4017, NA. This unpublished official return shows no solid shot expended by any rifled gun of the Army of the Potomac in the battle. The Gettysburg NMP museum collection does contain some rifled solid shot indicating the Confederate rifled guns did employ it.
- <sup>32</sup> Gary Gallagher, ed., *Fighting for the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 240; Busey and Martin, 286.
- <sup>33</sup> Allan Nevins, ed., *A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright* (Gettysburg, PA: Stan Clark Military Books, 1993), 242-243.
- <sup>34</sup> E. P. Alexander, "Confederate Artillery Service," *Southern Historical Society Papers*, (XI), 107; John Bigelow, *The Peach Orchard* (Minneapolis, MN: Kimball-Storer Co., 1910), 52-55; John P. Nicholson, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg* (Harrisburg, PA: Wm. Stanley Ray, 1904), (2), 901; *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 365;
- <sup>35</sup> Busey and Martin, 286.
- <sup>36</sup> Marbaker, 97; John Burill to Ell, July 6, 1863, Civil War Times Illustrated Collection (CWTI), United States Army Military History Institute (USAMHI); Adolpho Cavada journal, Historical Society of Pennsylvania;

- <sup>37</sup> Marbaker, 97; Martin Haynes, *A History of the Second Regiment New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry* (Lakeport, NH: No Publisher, 1896), 139; Robert G. Scott, ed., *Fallen Leaves: The Civil War Letters of Major Henry Livermore Abbott*, (Kent, OH: Kent State Univ. Press, 1991), 186.
- <sup>38</sup> Heyward Emmell journal transcript, V6-NJ11, GNMPL.
- <sup>39</sup> Keith Bohannon, ed., "Wounded & Captured at Gettysburg," *Military Images Magazine* (May-June 1988), 14; David W. Aiken to Wife, July 11, 1863, South Carolina Library; Major M. J. Bass to wife, July 8, 1863, V7-GA59, GNMPL; W. A. Johnson, "The Battle of Gettysburg, July 2, 1863," V7-SC2, GNMPL; J. C. Reid diary, V7-GA8, GNMPL; William J. Seymour Memoir, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan; *OR*, Series 1, 27(2), 480.
- <sup>40</sup> W. A. Johnson, "The Battle of Gettysburg, July 2, 1863," V7-SC2, GNMPL; Franklin Gaillard to Maria, July 17, 1863, Gaillard Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- <sup>41</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 886; John Bigelow to John Bachelder, no date, David and Audrey Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1994), 173.
- <sup>42</sup> Pfanz, 340.
- <sup>43</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 886; John H. Rhodes, *The History of Battery B, First Regiment Rhode Island Light Artillery*, (Providence, 1894), 202.
- <sup>44</sup> U.S. War Department, *U.S. Infantry and Rifle Tactics* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1862), illustrations and commentary by James R. Gunn, (Privately Printed, 1991), 13-14.
- <sup>45</sup> The most famous example of this on July 2 is Colonel Chamberlain's decision to refuse the line of his 20<sup>th</sup> Maine to meet the flank attack of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama. Many other units, Union and Confederate, employed the same tactic during the course of the battle.
- <sup>46</sup> Mary Lasswell, ed., *Rags and Hope: The Recollections of Val C. Giles, Four Years with Hood's Brigade, Fourth Texas Infantry* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1961), 179-180.
- <sup>47</sup> J. B. Polley, *Hood's Texas Brigade* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1976), 177; Fuller, 94; Acken, 303.
- <sup>48</sup> Adolpho Cavada journal, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- <sup>49</sup> Acken, 302.
- <sup>50</sup> Heyward Emmell journal, Madison (NJ) Historical Society.
- <sup>51</sup> Coco, *From Balls' Bluff to Gettysburg and Beyond*, 198.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.
- <sup>54</sup> Acken, 303.
- <sup>55</sup> J. C. Reid diary, Alabama State Archives. Reid's "diary" is in fact his recollections.
- <sup>56</sup> Joshua L. Chamberlain to General Barnes, Sept. 3, 1863, New York Historical Society (typescript copy GNMPL).
- <sup>57</sup> George Hillyer, "Battle of Gettysburg," Address to the Walton County, Georgia, Confederate Veterans, Archives, Tulane University.
- <sup>58</sup> *The Cattaraugus* (NY) *Freeman*, July 8, 1863. This is an account of the 64<sup>th</sup> New York's action at Gettysburg by their colonel. Of the two color bearers, one was killed and the other wounded before the charge ended.
- <sup>59</sup> Joshua L. Chamberlain to General Barnes, Sept. 3, 1863, New York Historical Society (typescript copy GNMPL); Joshua Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Magazine* (January 1992), 55.
- <sup>60</sup> Collins, 143.
- <sup>61</sup> Fuller, 95; Collins, 144; Stephen Rogers, "The Fight for Rose Woods," *Military Images Magazine* (May-June 1987), 12.
- <sup>62</sup> Collins, 137; *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 856.
- <sup>63</sup> Ladd and Ladd, 294. A typescript of Horton's letter in the GNMPL states that the Rebels reached within fifty yards of the Union works in their first assault. The Ladds deciphered Horton's manuscript letter to read ten yards. The author has accepted the transcript in the GNMPL on this discrepancy.
- <sup>64</sup> For Confederate reports from units who assaulted Greene's line frontally see, *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 513, 532-537; Collins, 139.
- <sup>65</sup> Time-Life, *Gettysburg: Voices of the Civil War*, 92; *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 493.
- <sup>66</sup> Franklin Gaillard to Maria, July 17, 1863, Gaillard Papers; Joseph B. Kershaw, "Kershaw's Brigade at Gettysburg," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, (New York, 1884-1888), (3), 336.
- <sup>67</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(1), 624.

---

<sup>68</sup> Oates, 219.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas A. Desjardin, *Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine*, (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1995), 74.

<sup>70</sup> "Report of reunion of the officers of the Army of the Potomac, August 23-28, 1869," Typescript, 25, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA; John S. Patton Papers, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Collection.

<sup>71</sup> James Houghton Journal, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Robert H. Campbell Reminiscence, Bentley Historical Library.

<sup>72</sup> Time-Life Books, 104.

<sup>73</sup> Baumgartner, 110.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 112, 115.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Holmes, *Firing Line*, (London: J. Cape, 1985), 382; Coco, *From Ball's Bluff to Gettysburg and Beyond*, 203.

<sup>76</sup> A. H. Nelson, *The Battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg*, Brake Collection, USAMHI.

<sup>77</sup> H. A. Johnson, *The Sword of Honor* (Hallowell, ME: Register Printing House, 1906), 11-12, copy GNMPL.

<sup>78</sup> Spears to Mildred, March 14, 1910, in William B. Styple, ed., *With a Flash of His Pen and Sword* (Kearny, NJ: Bell Grove Publishing Co., 1994), 301.

<sup>79</sup> Letter of George W. Whipple printed in the *Cattaraugus Freeman*, January 9, 1864.

<sup>80</sup> E. H. Sutton, *Civil War Stories* (Demorest, GA: Banner Printing Co., 1910), 43, copy GNMPL.

<sup>81</sup> Christ, 36-37.

<sup>82</sup> James Houghton journal, Bentley Historical Library, Univ. of Michigan.

<sup>83</sup> Gregory A. Coco, *A Vast Sea of Misery* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1988), 79, 146.

<sup>84</sup> Adolpho Cavada journal, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>85</sup> James B. Clifton diary, North Carolina Dept. of Archives and History; John Plummer to his brother, no date, *Minneapolis State Atlas*, August 26, 1863, copy GNMPL.

<sup>86</sup> Byrne and Weaver, 127; Collins, 139; Franklin Gaillard to Maria, July 17, 1863, Gaillard Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC; "At Gettysburg The First Minnesota," *Adams Star and Sentinel*, June 14, 1882. The author of this piece, a Major Martin McGinnis, does not appear on the muster rolls of the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota.

<sup>87</sup> Byrne and Weaver, 127; Adolpho Cavada journal, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Acken, 307; George Hillyer, "Battle of Gettysburg."

---