Little Round Top: The Role of Leadership, Timing, and Command and Staff Functioning in Deciding a Battle

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Little Round Top: The Role of Leadership, Timing, and Command and Staff Functioning in Deciding a Battle

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Thesis: What factors led to the outcome of the fight at Little Round Top on 2 July 1863? An analysis of the southern fighting during the battle at Gettysburg on 2 July 1863 suggests that leadership was the dominant factor in this fight, with other contributing elements being timing and command and staff functioning.

Background: Major battles or campaigns are often decided by relatively small engagements. Frequently these battles function as linchpin engagements, linking the tactical and operational levels of war. This may also be the case of Little Round Top at the battle of Gettysburg. Several factors combined to stymie the Confederate attack at the Little Round Top and enable the Union forces to retain the heights during the battle of Gettysburg. Timing and command and staff functioning played a crucial part in determining the outcome of this fight. But the most important factor in determining the results of the fight for the Little Round Top was leadership. The battle for Little Round Top indeed is one of those battles for which operational results rested on the tactical fight. However, the results of this fight were largely determined long before the soldiers closed with one another on the field. The fight for Little Round Top on 2 July 1863 suggests that the preliminary actions of commanders can help to win a battle. Conversely, actions prior to enemy contact can also cause a battle to be lost before it is ever joined. There are many tactical and operational insights offered by the study of the fight for Little Round Top that will remain critically important to Marine leaders from non-commissioned officers to generals.

Recommendation: Provide this paper as one viewpoint of the fighting on the southern portion of the field at Gettysburg on 2 July 1863 to spur discussion and professional development among students engaged in battle studies of Gettysburg.
LITTLE ROUND TOP

The Role of Leadership, Timing, and Command and Staff Functioning in Deciding a Battle

Introduction

Major battles or campaigns are often decided by relatively small engagements. Frequently these battles function as linchpin engagements, linking the tactical and operational levels of war. In the process they offer wonderful lessons for the military student about tactics and leadership, and about command and the art of war.

Perhaps the Battle of the Bulge would have had a different outcome were it not for the actions at Bastogne. It is likely that the Marine 'march to glory' from Korea's Chosin Reservoir would have been a much different and tragic event, if not for the resolute defense of the Toktong Pass. I suggest that such may also be the case of Little Round Top at the battle of Gettysburg. Fought between elements of two Union brigades and two Confederate brigades, this action was a small scale engagement. However, its importance goes beyond the size of the forces involved.

I have chosen to study the battle at Little Round Top to discern what factors led to the outcome of that fight. Why did the Confederate attack fail? What were the key factors that enabled the Union forces to hold the heights and preserve the Army of the Potomac's left flank?

Several factors combined to stymie the Confederate attack at the Little Round Top and enable the Union forces to retain the heights during the battle of Gettysburg. Timing was certainly a key factor. The race to Little Round Top was touch and go, the difference between the arrival of the Union defenders and the Confederate attackers was a matter of merely a few minutes. Command and staff functioning also played a crucial part in determining the outcome of this fight. Timely and accurate information from key commanders and staff officers provided Commanding Generals with a solid base for decisions. Conversely, there were ample occasions where poor command and staff action denied leaders critical information and cost precious time and resources. So timing and command and staff functioning were important. But the most important factor in determining the results of the fight for the Little Round Top was leadership.
Leadership wins battles. Leadership is the key to that element of combat that Clausewitz termed the "moral" factor. The principal moral elements Clausewitz identifies are, "the skill of the commander, the experience and courage of the troops, and their patriotic spirit." At least one great military mind suggested that the moral is to the physical as three is to one. The outcome of the fighting on Little Round Top during the late afternoon of 2 July certainly suggests that this is the case.

Men and weapons have an effect on the outcome of battles. But they can not ensure success by themselves, and they will not be decisive without effective leadership. Indeed, history provides many examples where the side with fewer men, guns, and bullets has prevailed because of better leadership. Clausewitz relegates these physical factors to a subservient role stating, "One might say that the physical seem little more than the wooden hilt, while the moral factors are the precious metal, the real weapon, the finely honed blade." 

Study of the actions and decisions of key leaders for both the Union and Confederate forces was revealing. Leadership established the context for other critical factors I cite, timing and command and staff function. There is no way to divorce timing and command and staff functions from the element of leadership. Leadership characterized by cooperation, initiative, judgment, selflessness, and courage proved to be the deciding factor in this fight.

**Strategic Context**

During the Civil War, "... the general theory upon which the war was conducted on the part of the South was one of defense." However, in June 1863 General Robert E. Lee marched his Army of Northern Virginia north for the second time in a year. Colonel Walter H. Taylor, the Adjutant-General of the Army of Northern Virginia, wrote that Lee's objective was to conduct a campaign that would contribute to the Confederate cause in a number of ways. First, Lee hoped that campaigning in the north would make the people of the north "weary of the struggle." Lee was very cognizant of the diminishing strength of the army. His fear was that absent an offensive blow to fragment the Union resolve the inevitable result of continuing a
defensive war would be defeat by a numerically superior Union army. General Lee also intended to break up any plans that the Union army might have for conducting a summer campaign, and while operating in the north to take the opportunity, should a lucrative one present itself, to inflict a significant blow on the enemy.4

General Lee also pushed into Pennsylvania keen on the idea of subsisting his army in the rich farmland of southern Pennsylvania. Living off the produce of the rich northern farmlands would, at the same time, allow the farmers of Virginia respite from hostile forces to plant and bring in a good harvest. En route to Pennsylvania General Lee intended to rid the Shenandoah Valley of Union troops that had been a nuisance there during the winter and spring.5

For the Confederacy there were other strategic issues involved in the decision to go north again. The Confederacy at that time faced a grave threat in the western theater of operations, specifically in Tennessee and Mississippi, and pressure in the Carolinas. Some senior leaders within the government argued in favor of removing forces from the Army of Northern Virginia and transferring them west to fight federal forces there. General Lee, President Davis and Secretary of War Seddon believed that a successful operation in the north would relieve the pressure in other quarters. Early in the planning of the campaign they thought that the operation would assist the west, specifically General Pemberton defending Vicksburg, by drawing Union forces east.6

In the end the decision to go North provided General Lee an opportunity to embark on a campaign that was flexible. The rationale and the campaign plan were sound.

**Operational Context**

The early events of the Gettysburg campaign seemed to justify many of General Lee's expectations. General Lee's army did steal a march on the federal forces encamped north of the Rappahannock -- across from Fredricksburg. The Army of the Potomac under General Hooker was unaware of exactly what the Confederates had in mind. The Union army had probed south of Fredricksburg on 6 June and at Brandy Station on 9 June to determine Confederate intentions. In both cases Hooker's moves were tentative and ineffectual. Hooker contemplated a
counterstroke against General A. P. Hill's Corps which remained encamped on the heights above Fredricksburg but was overruled by President Lincoln and General Halleck. In sum, the actions of the Army of the Potomac were unsuccessful at disrupting General Lee's movements for the campaign.7

By 25 June 1863 General Lee had almost all of his forces over the Potomac and had pushed his forward elements into Chambersburg and Greenwood, Pennsylvania. Lee's theater of operation was bounded by the significant obstacles of the Allegheny Mountains in the west, the Potomac River in the south, and the Susquehanna River on the north. General Hooker had suspected that the Confederates had some kind of offensive action in mind and began to reposition his army on June 13 although his movements were tentative. As a result, on 25 June General Lee's Army was two days march ahead of General Hooker and the Army of the Potomac. Within a few days, however, the absence of General Stuart and his cavalry division would begin to have a very significant effect upon the movements of General Lee and his army.8

On 25 June General Hooker began to move the Union army in earnest in order to position it between General Lee's army and Washington and Baltimore. By 28 June the armies had lost contact with one another and they were separated by a greater distance than at any time since the campaign began. The bulk of General Lee's army stretched from Chambersburg to York and the Susquehanna River. General Meade's Army of the Potomac "was spread in a thirty mile arch that bulged from the (Potomac) river northeasterly to Middletown and Fredrick, Maryland."9 On the 30th of June the armies of Northern Virginia and the Potomac would again make contact. This encounter would set the stage for the battle at Gettysburg.10

**Gettysburg 1 July**

The battle of Gettysburg began almost "accidentally".11 On 1 July 1863, General Heth's Division of General A. P. Hill's Third Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, moved against Gettysburg where the day before it had encountered Union cavalry. A fight started, initially localized between Heth's Division and a Union cavalry brigade under General Buford. By the end of the day this small engagement had become a major battle, involving both General Hill's
Third Corps and General Ewell's Second Corps for the Confederates and elements of the First and Eleventh Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

At the conclusion of that day's fighting the Confederate forces had driven the Union forces from the field and through the town where they gathered to occupy the high ground of Cemetery Hill. Major General Henry J. Hunt, Meade's Chief of Artillery, commented on the circumstances compelling General Lee to fight at Gettysburg:

It had not been General Lee's intention to deliver a general battle whilst so far from his base, unless attacked, but he now found himself by the mere force of circumstances committed to one. If it must take place the sooner the better. His army was now nearly all on the ground, and delay, whilst it could not improve his own position, would certainly better that of his antagonist.12

By the evening of 1 July both General Lee and General Meade would be on the field at Gettysburg. Neither had a fully prepared concept of operations for the next day. General Lee decided to continue to attack while General Meade decided to defend. Both had issued instructions to have their armies mass there.

General Lee had looked to the Union right on the night of the 1st as the location against which the Confederate main attack would continue. He visited the Second Corps headquarters that evening. General Ewell and his division commanders all advised against continuation of an attack against the enemy in their front because of the advantages the terrain gave to the federals and the strong Union forces arrayed against them. General Lee returned to his headquarters from that visit still undecided about his course of action for the next day.13

2 July: The Nature of the Field

On 2 July the battlefield at Gettysburg was a dynamic place where many dramatic changes occurred. Major elements of both armies closed on the field and reported for service. For the Army of the Potomac formations that arrived included the Second, Fifth and Sixth Corps and elements of the Third Corps. For the Army of Northern Virginia the First Corps and the army's Cavalry Division arrived, although one full division of the First Corps and the entire
Cavalry Division arrived too late to render any service in that day's fighting. As new units arrived on the field the armies adjusted their battle positions to accommodate these formations.

The maturing concept of operations of the respective army commanders required further adaptations to troop dispositions. For the soldiers of both armies it seemed that the second of July would be spent marching. Both the Union and Confederate forces extended their southern flanks for competing purposes. On the Confederate side, especially, the lack of accurate intelligence, largely due to the absence or misuse of cavalry forces, complicated the question of placement of forces.

It is somewhat ironic that Little Round Top played such a critical role in the events of 2 July. Both army commanders were aware of the hill and were interested in it, but neither devoted a great deal of emphasis to it. General Meade allowed General Warren to conduct the fight there while he attended to the advanced lines occupied by General Sickles, about a mile northwest. General Lee's attack orders in no way referred to the hill and no Confederate general officer even got as close to Little Round Top as Devil's Den. So far as the record shows, their attention was directed further north and east of Little Round Top. However, at least one prominent chronicler of that day's events has gone so far as to suggest that:

So long as Little Round Top was in Union hands, the left of Cemetery Ridge was likely to be secure. But should the Confederates take it, they would have access to the Union rear and be able to pry the Federal army from its position. Once the Confederates held the hill, artillery or not, the Cemetery Ridge line would have to be abandoned. It was as simple as that.

The Chronology of the Battle

The chronology of the events at Little Round Top is complex but important in understanding the course of the battle there on 2 July. From the Confederate perspective, the chronology leading up to the battle for Little Round Top began on 1 July with conversations between General Lee and General Longstreet, commander of the First Corps. General Longstreet proposed a turning movement directed against the Union left flank that would force a
Union attack against a well chosen Confederate defense. The depth of this movement, whether tactical or operational, is lost to history. General Lee rejected the suggestion of further maneuver and articulated his intention to attack. Lee looked to the federal southern flank as the location against which to direct his army. Having been discouraged in his designs on the Union right, Lee dispatched reconnaissance elements to the south on the evening of the 1st and early on the morning of the 2d to get a feel for the ground and possibly to determine the disposition of the federal left. The reconnaissance party on the 1st appeared to focus on the southern reaches of Seminary Ridge and concentrated on the location of possible Confederate artillery positions.16

From the Union perspective the chronology began about 5:00 P.M. on 1 July. Under orders of General Hancock --then the Union commander of the field -- elements of General Geary's Division of the Twelfth Corps occupied the Little Round Top line. This line extended from Round Top through Little Round Top and continued north, along Cemetery Ridge, to link up with the left of the First Corps. By 5:00 A.M. on the morning of 2 July, General Geary was ordered to move to the northern portion of the Union lines. He was to be relieved by General Birney's Division of the Third Corps. General Geary attempted to ensure there was a physical relief of his position. However, he had to move before General Birney's men arrived. General Birney reported that he relieved General Geary at 7:00 A.M. However, he later modified his account before the Commission on the Conduct of the War to state that he occupied the Little Round Top at 9:00 A.M. Consequently, there was a gap in the Union occupation of the Little Round Top that would have significant repercussions in the planning of the Confederate concept for the battle on the second day.17

By 3:00 A.M. on the morning of 2 July Confederate leaders were active. The delay and then other difficulties in continuing the attack against the Union right in the north had forced Lee to look to the south for a vulnerable flank. Accordingly, he had dispatched two reconnaissance parties to look over the ground there and to determine the Union dispositions.18

The most notable of these reconnaissance elements was a party that consisted of Captain Samuel Johnston and Major J. J. Clarke. Captain Johnston was General Lee's staff engineer and
Major Clarke was the staff engineer for the First Corps. Captain Johnston and Major Clarke, accompanied by two or three other men, made their way south and then east crossing the Emmitsburg Road near the Peach Orchard. They followed the high ground until they came to Little Round Top. They climbed Little Round Top and found no Union forces anywhere within their view. Very likely they arrived between the departure of General Geary's two brigades and the arrival of General Birney's forces. Not tarrying to determine with any more precision the location of the Union left, the party returned to report to General Lee. Captain Johnston's report seemed to confirm to General Lee the limited extension of the Union left flank.19

Captain Johnston contended that while his reconnaissance party was out, sometime between 6:00 and 8:00 A.M., General Lee gave orders for General Longstreet to march south beyond the enemy's lines and strike the Union left driving along the Emmitsburg road. The report of Captain Johnston appears to have solidified this course of action. Captain Johnston stated that at the conclusion of his report General Lee told General Longstreet, "I think you had better move on."20 Captain Johnston places that time between 7:00 and 8:00 A.M. General Longstreet contended that his orders were given to him at about 11:00 A.M. after General Lee returned from a visit to Second Corps. General Longstreet further recounted that he requested and received permission from General Lee to delay his movement until he was joined by General Law's Brigade. While Confederate forces delayed their advance the conditions on the battlefield that Captain Johnston described to General Lee were changing based on Union dispositions and the arrival of new formations on the field.21

By the middle of the afternoon of 2 July Union forces again abandoned Little Round Top, this time based on the advanced position of the Third Corps. Since the posting of the Third Corps on the Cemetery Ridge line over the course of the morning, General Sickles had become concerned with what he thought to be the abandonment of commanding terrain to his front at the Peach Orchard along the Emmitsburg Road. He began gradually to outpost that terrain with sizable portions of his corps until the demands of occupying the advanced line required General Birney to pull his forces from the Little Round Top. Indeed, the left of General Birney's
irregular line would only reach to the high ground adjacent to the Devil's Den because of the extensive adjustments to the Third Corps line.22

Meanwhile, General Longstreet waited on Seminary Ridge for the balance of his forces. General Law's brigade, approaching from New Gullford Courthouse, had a march of between twenty and twenty-five miles that day. Law's brigade arrived on the field about noon and joined Hood's Division. After a short rest, probably 30 to 45 minutes later, the two First Corps divisions then on the field began the march to the attack positions along the Emmitsburg Road.23

General Longstreet's First Corps then began what is perhaps one of the most critical phases of the Confederates' second day's movements. Attempting to travel by concealed routes to their attack positions on the Union left flank, Longstreet's two divisions delayed when it became evident that their route of march would be exposed to an active Union signal station on Little Round Top. Although an apparently viable detour existed that would have entailed a movement through farm pastures for a distance of about one quarter of a mile, the Confederate column turned around and retraced its steps to approach from a different location. The approach march of the First Corps was not completed until approximately 4:00 P.M. The critical difficulties apparent during this movement would only continue.

As Hood's and McLaws' divisions moved into their designated attack positions and formed line of battle, the enemy situation on their front was dramatically different from what they expected. McLaws' division was to seize the Peach Orchard so that Confederate artillery could move forward to support further infantry attacks against the main federal line. However, at the Peach Orchard General McLaws did not find the light skirmish line that he expected. Instead, the area was alive with Union infantry and heavily supported by multiple batteries of Union guns.

On the First Corps right the story was the same. The salient formed by General Sickles' advanced Third Corps angled back from the Peach Orchard along the Wheatfield Road and it too was alive with both infantry and artillery. Neither of General Longstreet's divisions could attack, either up Emmitsburg Road or against the Union left flank without exposing the formation to a
lively enemy fire. Because their lines only extended slightly beyond the federal flank, only the slightest margin existed to afford the Confederates an opportunity to roll up the Union flank.24

From the Union perspective things were not going well either. The army was at significant risk based on its current dispositions. General Meade had been too long unaware of the status of his army's left flank. He had been attentive to threats elsewhere on his line. Meade's attention was diverted to the threat on his right flank, so he was using his staff and other key commanders, notably General Hunt, to keep tabs on the left. In spite of the report of General Hunt on the proposal that General Sickles made to occupy an advanced line, and in spite of the regular coming and going of staff officers between Army of the Potomac Headquarters and the Third Corps, the advanced position occupied by General Sickles' corps was a shock to General Meade. He received his first real indications of the extent to which General Sickles' disposition jeopardized his left from General Warren near the conclusion of a corps commanders meeting at Army Headquarters held between 12:00 and 3:00 P.M.25

In response to the new threat that Third Corps' advanced disposition invited, Meade directed the Fifth Corps, under General Sykes, to move from its post in reserve to the left. General Sykes wrote that General Meade ordered him to "throw my whole Corps to that point and hold it at all hazards." General Sykes dispatched a rider to order up his Corps and rode immediately to the left to make an estimate of the situation.26

Shortly thereafter, General Sickles himself joined the Commanding General at Army Headquarters, but the initial exchange of shells between Union gunners in the Peach Orchard and Confederate guns on the southern stretch of Seminary Ridge announced the battle's commencement. General Meade directed General Sickles to return to his corps and that he would join him there. General Meade borrowed a mount and, joined by several key staff officers (General Warren most notably), rode to meet General Sickles in the Peach Orchard. At some point, probably along Cemetery Ridge as General Meade was going to the Peach Orchard, General Warren suggested that General Meade dispatch him "to the Union left to examine the condition of affairs."27
About the time that Meade's corps commanders meeting was breaking up, Longstreet's Confederate division commanders were both exhibiting some vexation with the nature of their orders. As the lines of battle unfolded on the southern reaches of Seminary Ridge there was confusion between the corps and division commanders. Longstreet had earlier ordered McLaws to initiate the attack by seizing the Peach Orchard. As the lines were formed McLaws realized that the nature of the field had changed. Longstreet, on the other hand, unaware of or uninterested in the scope of the change ordered an immediate advance. McLaws countered that the enemy lines were more robust than expected and that a deliberate attack was in order, but General Longstreet ordered an immediate advance. McLaws was within five minutes of launching the attack when Longstreet rescinded the order. Hood would initiate the attack. General Longstreet wrote later that: "General Lee at the same time gave orders for the attack to be made by my right (Hood's division) following up the direction of Emmitsburg Road ... McLaws to follow the movements of Hood." The adjustments to orders, then the inflexible adherence to orders that appeared unproductive were frustrating to Generals McLaws, Hood, and Law.28

At about the same time that Longstreet was coordinating McLaws' attack, Hood and Law had both dispatched scouts to determine the enemy disposition in the area they were to attack. Each had reported the enemy in force among the rocks and stone fences in the valley below. The scouts reported a clear way around the south side of Big Round Top. This was confirmed by Union prisoners. Law appealed to Hood and Hood to Longstreet to modify orders. They wanted at least a portion of the attack to sweep wide around the Round Top and envelop the enemy line from the rear and flank. But, in spite of an apparently free route around the Union flank, Hood's orders remained the same. Time had grown too short, the attack would be made as ordered.29

On the Union side of the field the issue remained in doubt. Sykes had ridden to the left. There he found the left hanging on the ridge north of Devil's Den. He noted that Smith's 4th New York Battery was unsupported by infantry. He rode to General Birney to coordinate with adjacent forces. He asked General Birney to cover the battery, indicating that Fifth Corps would
secure the left. In the meantime, General Warren proceeded to Little Round Top and found it unoccupied, except for a small signal detachment. He sent a dispatch to General Meade requesting a division and General Meade concurred. General Warren also sent a rider into the Peach Orchard, requesting a brigade from the Third Corps to hold the hill against the Confederate attack that he could see forming across the Emmitsburg Road. General Sickles declined the request but may have directed the rider to General Sykes to have the forces assigned. Sykes somehow received the request and approved it. While Warren's rider returned to Little Round Top, Sykes directed that General Barnes provide a brigade from his division for service on Little Round Top. Colonel Vincent, the commander of General Barnes' Third Brigade, intercepted the rider and immediately moved to post his brigade on the threatened slopes. Now, with the presence of the Fifth Corps at the point of danger the situation no longer appeared grim, though it remained a critical matter of timing.30

Little Round Top was about to be occupied again by Union forces, but there were Confederates on the way, too, and they had designs on the hill as well. Colonel Vincent moved in advance of his brigade along the eastern face of Little Round Top and scouted positions that protected the hill's southern flank.31 Warren was not aware of the presence of Vincent's brigade on the southern side. From his position on the northern side the summit masked his view of Vincent's lower spur position. The first men that Warren remembered seeing were the artillerymen of Lieutenant Hazlett's Battery. These men hurriedly began to place the battery in spite of the poor nature of the terrain. Warren could also see the desperate attack of Hood's Confederates, swarming along the valley of Plum Run as they overran Devil's Den and Smith's battery and pushed back Union defenders, opening the way to the slopes of Little Round Top. By this time Vincent's men had, almost certainly, begun to engage the Confederate forces but Warren probably was simply unable to discern Vincent's presence in the din of the battle.32

Confederate participants in the attack across the Emmitsburg Road and into the Devil's Den and Little Round Top speak of the great difficulty of the attack. They were fatigued, hot, and thirsty. While waiting to launch the attack, Union artillery fired with great and demoralizing
effect on the left of Hood's lines, especially in the ranks of the Texas Brigade. When the attack was launched the artillery fire continued to be a major threat to the division, except for brief periods when temporary conditions in the terrain protected the formations. They found the federals posted in such a manner that they received fire from front and flank. They encountered federal skirmishers, who they pushed back, sometimes with bayonet charges. But most notably, they found that as their attack proceeded it did so against an enemy position strongly held, ably lead, and one that occupied singularly difficult terrain. Later in the paper the nature of the movement and the fragmentation of the attacking formations will be discussed in greater length.33

All along the line of battle on Little Round Top the Union line was engaged. Vincent's brigade formed a line consisting, from south to north, of the 20th Maine, the 83d Pennsylvania, the 44th New York, and the 16th Michigan. Probably somewhere behind the 16th Michigan, on the highest crest of Little Round Top, Hazlett's battery was firing on Confederates in the Devil's Den and beyond. General Warren, standing with the signal station detachment further to the right of Vincent's line, was still, incomprehensibly, unaware of the presence of Vincent's brigade. Fearing that the heights would be lost, General Warren rode north from Little Round Top and met the tail of his old brigade, Third Brigade, Second Division, Fifth Corps, as it marched towards the threatened Peach Orchard salient.34

The last regiment of this column was the 140th New York, led by Colonel Patrick O'Rorke. Warren greeted O'Rorke and detached him to help hold Little Round Top. Colonel O'Rorke and the 140th New York were guided into position by Lieutenant Roebling of General Warren's staff. Warren probably did not remain much longer in the vicinity of Little Round Top. With the arrival of additional units he thought the position was safe and went off to join General Meade. The final struggles for Little Round Top were being played out with the arrival of Colonel O'Rorke's regiment.35

The Confederate attack on Little Round Top had degenerated into an unsupported assault by two distinct elements. These elements were the mingled remnants of five regiments from two
different brigades. The northern portion of the Confederate force struggling to gain the crest of
Little Round Top consisted of the 4th Alabama (probably with some stragglers from the 48th
Alabama). These Alabamians were members of Law's brigade. Joining them in the wild
melee on the slopes of Little Round Top were the 4th and 5th Texas, members of Hood's famous
Texas Brigade, now commanded by General Robertson. The Texas and Alabama regiments had
become commingled in the attack because of the demands of the terrain and the nature of the
attack on Devil's Den. These men fought bravely, but there was no semblance of order to the
attack. One Texan wrote:

After we were up on the first ridge the ground was so rough and broken that it was
impossible to form a straight line, but it was quite evident to me from the sounds on our
left that we were in advance of the center. From this position we made sallies to our
front, over rocks and boulders (sic) and timber. It was impossible to make a united
charge. The enemy was pretty thick and well concealed it was more like Indian fight
than anything I experienced during the war.37

Leadership and command were matters of individual concern. Val C. Giles, Company B, 4th
Texas wrote:
In making that long charge our brigade got "jammed" (sic). Regiments overlapped each
other and when we reached the woods and climbed the mountain as far as we could go,
we were a badly mixed up crowd ... Confusion reigned supreme everywhere. Nearly all
our field officers were gone... By this time all order and discipline were gone. Every
fellow was his own General. Private soldiers gave commands as loud as the
officers--nobody paying any attention to either ... Officers were cross to the men, and the
men were equally cross to the officers. 38

In spite of the arduous nature of the task the Confederates succeeded in getting a whiff of
victory. The right of Vincent's line cracked. The 16th Michigan's colors fell back and with it the
regimental commander and three of its companies. Vincent, sensing the line waver, was up and
moving to shore the flank when he went down, mortally wounded. Unfortunately for the Texas
and Alabama troops, that is the precise moment when Colonel O'Rorke and the 140th New York
came crashing over the crest of Little Round Top. The dreadful collision was conducted hand to
hand. The New Yorkers had not the time to even load their muskets when their summons came.
Colonel O'Rorke did not allow them to form in line of battle or take time to load or even fix bayonets. So far as the record shows they waded in with rifle butts. Again, it was every man for himself in the fight. It was too much for the Confederates. They recoiled, surrendered, ran or were shot down in the process. The right flank held, but at a dreadful price. Colonel O'Rorke and 133 of his men would be killed, wounded or missing at the end of the battle, most as a result of this brief but vicious fight.39

On the extreme left of Vincent's Brigade, a similar struggle was underway. The initial Confederate attack emerged against the center and right of Colonel Vincent's line, from the slope of the Round Top up the Plum Run valley. The left, occupied by the 20th Maine, was quiet amid the din of battle. Colonel Chamberlain, picking his most experienced and steady company commander, detached Company B to act as skirmishers, sending them out as a security screen to prevent the Confederates from surprising the regiment. Before long the fighting on the brigade center had begun to involve the right of the 20th Maine.40

As this fighting progressed Colonel Chamberlain received word from one of his officers posted in the regiment's center that another force of Confederates was moving in the 20th Maine's front. Chamberlain confirmed the threat and, while keeping up the volume of fire so as to conceal the movement, shifted the regiment's left to meet the expected threat. Not a moment too soon, as the Confederates burst from the wooded valley below. Instead of falling on the unprotected flank they landed on the front of the newly extended flank.41

The Confederates who attacked the 20th Maine's left were men of the 15th and 47th Alabama. Their route to the battle had involved a detour to the top of the Round Top. The story of the jumble of the Texas and Alabama Brigades needs to be understood because it complicated a task -- breaking the Union left -- that would have been difficult under the best circumstances of command and control.42

In the attack from the line of departure, along the Emmitsburg Road, until some point short of the Plum Run Valley the 15th Alabama formed the center of Law's brigade. It had
become the right of the advance when the 44th and 48th Alabama were redirected against the Devil's Den, the 4th Maine, and Smith's Battery.43

On the right then, the commander of the 15th Alabama, Lieutenant Colonel William Oates, had been directed to exercise control of his own regiment as well as the 47th Alabama. Lieutenant Colonel Oates had also been directed to swing his formation left to attack Little Round Top and maintain the brigade front. Such a maneuver would have made the reformed line, from Confederate right to left, the 15th, the 47th, the 4th, 48th and 44th Alabama. However, Lieutenant Colonel Oates elected to continue pressing up the hill because of the confined nature of the ground and because of the presence of Union sharpshooters, who would have been left on his flank and rear.44

So the movements against the Union left developed in quite a different manner than the senior commanders envisioned. The 44th and 48th Alabama, fighting in the Slaughter Pen around the Devil's Den, were widely separated from the rest of Law's brigade. Into that gap went the 4th and 5th Texas, thus breaking up Robertson's Texas Brigade and commingling elements of the two. The Confederate attack formations, thus fragmented and lacking any semblance of unit integrity, struck the Union lines in an uncoordinated manner without any reserve or depth to their formations. To complicate the matter further, General Hood went down, seriously wounded, and the succession of command was boggled. General Law assumed command of the division and Colonel Sheffield nominally assumed command of Law's brigade. However, in practice each officer seemed to have limited ability to exercise control as the battle developed, and subordinate commanders appeared to adapt to the situation as best they could without significant orchestration of efforts by Sheffield and Law.45

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Oates had gained the summit of the Round Top. He rested his men there for several minutes, while the battle of the 4th Alabama and 4th and 5th Texas raged below. Before the attack launched across Emmitsburg Road, Oates had dispatched a detail of twenty-two men with a large number of canteens to be filled to quench his men's parched throats. The attack kicked off before the detail returned and the party became lost while
trailing after the regiment. The entire detail and all canteens were then captured south of Round Top. There would be no water for the Alabama men in that fight. Soon a staff officer from General Law approached and relayed the order for Lieutenant Colonel Oates to continue the attack. He argued in favor of out-posting the Round Top but General Law's messenger was unconvinced and reiterated the order. Oates reluctantly got his men up and moving down the Round Top to their encounter with the 20th Maine.46

As the 15th Alabama entered the valley between Round Top and Little Round Top, Oates caught sight of the federal wagon trains that were parked between the Round Tops and the Taneytown Road. He detached a company to seize the trains and continued forward.47

The 15th and 47th Alabama emerged from the wooded slopes of the Round Top and advanced on Little Round Top. At close range they were engaged by the Union forces with a severe and destructive fire. The 47th Alabama, a smaller regiment than the 15th, had its share of troubles in the friction and fog of the attack that day as well. Three companies of men detached to act as skirmishers became separated and went south of Round Top and did not participate in the attack. In the initial attack the 47th was hard hit by fire from both the 83rd Pennsylvania and the 20th Maine. It recoiled. Its acting commander, Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Bulger, went down and stayed down, grievously wounded. The 15th Alabama, however, stopped and held its ground, returning fire. Finding the 20th Maine well disposed on the rocky slopes above them Lieutenant Colonel Oates, in a replay of the actions on the other end of Vincent's line, shifted his formation to the right, feeling for the 20th Maine flank.48

Again and again the Alabamians attacked, only to be driven back. They would then regroup with a movement to the right, and attack again. At one point the 15th Alabama succeeded in gaining the ledge on which the 20th Maine's left rested. Five times the 20th Maine counterattacked, and only after a brutal hand to hand struggle did the 15th Alabama yield, falling back to the base of the slope to attempt to reform.49

Finally the Alabamians reached their culminating point; fatigue, battle losses, difficult terrain and thirst were overpowering. Officers of the regiment reported that the 15th Alabama
had enemy in their right rear. Runners sent to gain contact with any Confederate unit on the regiment's left reported that no Confederate force was in evidence. Lieutenant Colonel Oates ordered the regiment to "sell out as dear as possible", stand and fight. But his southern pride and determination did not long interfere with reason.50

While Oates pondered his next move, a similar dilemma faced Chamberlain, for fatigue and casualties were a factor in the Union line as well. He was unable to secure reinforcements from his right. The 83rd Pennsylvania was itself hard pressed. His ammunition was running low and his line had been pushed back. The company commander of the color company, Lieutenant Melcher, approached Chamberlain. Melcher wanted to advance the colors to bring into the line some of the regiment's wounded and to recover what ammunition their cartridge boxes might offer. Chamberlain told Melcher to return to the colors, that Chamberlain was about to order the regiment forward. In his mind Chamberlain had determined the regiment could not resist another Confederate attack. His recourse, then, was to counterattack. He ordered fix bayonets. In his own words:

It was imperative to strike before we were struck by this overwhelming force in a hand-to-hand fight, which we could probably not have withstood or survived. At that crisis, I ordered the bayonet. The word was enough. It ran like fire along the line, from man to man, and rose into a shout, with which they sprung upon the enemy, now not 30 yards away. The effect was surprising; many of the enemy's first line threw down their arms and surrendered ... we had swept the valley and cleared the front of nearly our entire brigade. 51

Indeed, the men of Alabama who were not scooped up, captured or shot down, began to fall back. Whether by order or under the shock of the bayonet charge, the retreat was on. Just at this moment Captain Morrill with Company B and a collection of sharpshooters struck hard. The retreat became quite hasty. Lieutenant Colonel Oates wrote later; "When the signal was given we ran like a herd of wild cattle..." So ended the fighting for the Little Round Top.52

Analysis
I will not attempt a comprehensive treatment of all the causes and outcomes of the events at Little Round Top. There have literally been books written about the actions discussed in this paper. I have stated my hypothesis that timing, command and staff functions, and leadership were the factors that combined to bring about the results at Little Round Top. It is now time to analyze the events described and discuss the effect of decisions made by participants in these events. Before doing so I want to stress that I have not attempted to exclude other causes from contributing to the outcome of the fighting at Little Round Top. There certainly are other causes that contributed to the outcome. However, in my view, the factors that I cite are those which the evidence suggests are the most telling in deciding the outcome of the fighting.

Let's begin with timing. The first thing one should understand about time on the Civil War battlefield is that it is at best an approximation. Widely varied differences in time are attributed to events by different participants who were witness to these events. Even orders issued at major headquarters with times affixed are subject to error. At the tactical level the soldiers of this war gauged time based on sunrise, the location of the sun in the sky, and sunset. Senior officers and staff officers may have owned watches and in some cases their accounts may have been based in some degree on the time of their watch. But Civil War era time pieces varied in reliability and there was no central controlling agency to synchronize time. As a result, time is relative and in many cases it is very difficult to identify precisely when events occurred with great assurance.

Variations in time are especially significant at the battle of Gettysburg, and they complicate the study of the militarily significant events dealing with timing. Nonetheless, with accounts available it is reasonable to draw some conclusions with regard to time. The first step in the analysis of timing as it relates to the fight at Little Round Top is to identify key events that are time sensitive.

Confederate Chain of Events

From the Confederate perspective there are several time-sensitive events. First, there is the question of when Lee ordered the flank attack. In the years after the war there was great
controversy generated over the rumor that on the evening of the 1st of July General Lee ordered General Longstreet to conduct a flank attack at first light. This is certainly fiction. However, there is some disagreement over when the order to attack was actually given. For all practical purposes the issue here seems to center around the question of whether General Lee gave General Longstreet orders to attack before visiting the Second Corps Headquarters, somewhere between 9:00 and 11:00 A.M. on 2 July, or after he returned. A corollary question has to be, was General Lee expecting General Longstreet to act earlier than he did?

As alluded to earlier, the statements of Captain Johnston -- an officer friendly with General Longstreet -- provides compelling information to suggest that General Lee issued orders as early as 7:00 or 8:00 A.M. to General Longstreet for an attack. In letters to General Fitz Lee, Captain Johnston estimated that the conference of Generals Lee, Longstreet, and Hill (with Generals Hood and McLaws having previously departed) broke up about 8:00 A.M.54 In response to General Lee's tasking him to accompany General Longstreet, Johnston indicated that he joined General Longstreet at 9:00 A.M. Captain Johnston stated that he was not privy to the orders given to General Longstreet and could not therefore reply to General Fitz Lee's question about "Gen'l Longstreet having been ordered to attack an early hour on the 2nd, and why such a delay until 4 P.M." However, in his letter to General McLaws, Captain Johnston stated that when he reported upon returning from his reconnaissance General Lee was sitting on a log flanked by Generals Longstreet and Hill. He recounted his report to General Lee for General McLaws as follows, "When I got to (the point in his report concerning) the extreme right of our reconnaissance on the Little Round Top, General Lee turned and looking at me, said, 'Did you get there'. I assured him that I did. He said to General Longstreet I think you had better move on." Captain Johnston went on to state,

Whether or not General Lee had made up his mind to attack early on the morning of the second or whether or not he had made up his mind to attack at all at the time that he gave me the order to make the reconnaissance, I do not know; but his saying to General Longstreet that he had better move on, without indicating in what direction, led me to believe that General Longstreet had his orders, and as I was ordered to join Gen'l
Longstreet so soon after I made my report to Gen'l Lee, led me to believe that Gen'l Longstreet was at that time moving.55

Before leaving to tour Second Corps area, General Lee summoned General McLaws to issue specific instructions to McLaws about how Lee expected the attack to go. This suggests that General Lee had a mature concept of operations well before he departed for the Second Corps headquarters.

There is almost universal agreement among key officers within the Army of Northern Virginia that General Lee was anxious for an attack as early as possible on the second. General Hood thought that, "Lee's anxiety for Longstreet to start the attack in the morning appeared obvious." General Hill's caution with respect to the plan discussed while the Generals were sitting on the log near the Seminary was that the attack had to be delivered early to have any hope of providing the full measure of success, or darkness would close the action before the victory could be complete. Others remarked at the anxiety General Lee demonstrated while visiting Second Corps, although this may have been simply a matter of reading more into General Lee's mannerisms than were in fact justified. Nonetheless, there are credible suggestions that General Lee remarked on at least one occasion during this visit, "What can detain General Longstreet."58

General Longstreet stated that, "About 11 o'clock on the morning of the 2d he (General Lee) ordered the march." In his official report General Longstreet does not provide a time when he received the order from General Lee, but he does state that he received the order prior to General Law's arrival "to move, with the portion of my command that was up, around to gain the Emmitsburg Road, on the enemy's left." He acknowledges waiting for General Law -- "Fearing that my force was too weak to venture to make an attack, I delayed until General Law's Brigade joined its division."60

What is not reported by General Longstreet may be as telling as what was. In his account of the second day in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War entitled, "Lee's Right Wing at Gettysburg," General Longstreet simply neglected to detail the fairly extensive conversations
that General Lee held on the log near the Seminary in the early morning of the second. General
Longstreet simply reported,

On the morning of the 2d I joined General Lee and again proposed the move to Meade's
left and rear. He was still unwilling to consider the proposition, but soon left me and
rode off to see General Ewell and to examine the ground on our left with a view to
making the attack at that point. After making the examination and talking to General
Ewell, he determined to make the attack by the right, and, returning to where I was,
announced his intention of so doing...

This record of the event of the morning of the second bears very little resemblance to the
accounts of other participants.61

Historians and scholars who have studied the issue seem to accept that General Lee had
only a rough conception of the plan of attack in the early morning of 2 July. They seem to
support the view that as the morning wore on, and certainly by the time that Captain Johnston
made his report, the plan of attack had been firmed up, even to the point that General McLaws
was very likely briefed on the plan of attack while Captain Johnston was still out. Douglas
Southall Freeman and Edwin B. Coddington both suggest that General Lee thought that
sufficient instructions had been provided to General Longstreet to support a higher level of
activity than the First Corps Commander produced during General Lee's visit to Second
Corps.62

Clearly there is a lack of certainty about the exact time that General Lee issued his orders
to General Longstreet and there may be some confusion about General Lee's intentions as to
when he expected the movements he had ordered to commence. The greatest portion of this
confusion is largely attributable to General Lee. Lee always provided his subordinates with
broad and permissive instructions as opposed to detailed and constraining orders. This was
certainly the case with the orders for the First Corps attack on 2 July. It is also fair to state that
General Longstreet was reluctant to receive any orders to conduct an attack on the second. He
had for two days urged the Commanding General not to attack but to prosecute a movement
against the southern flank and rear of General Meade's army. There is a clear suggestion that
General Longstreet, in his methodical and deliberate manner, simply chose to ignore Lee's subtle suggestions that would have been a spur to a man like General Jackson. General Longstreet wanted to wait until his full force was present and he probably delayed as long as he could until General Lee was forced to order the movement -- "with the portion of my command that was up."

If General Longstreet had acted more aggressively in prosecuting his attack preparations there could certainly have been an earlier movement for the First Corps into their attack positions. I will discuss the possibilities attendant to an earlier Confederate movement in greater detail later in this analysis.

There are a number of benefits and some risks associated with taking up an advanced position early in preparing for the attack. In my view the advantages, almost always, outweigh the disadvantages. Early movement provides a time buffer that cushions execution against the unexpected delays often associated with the "friction" of combat. Occupying advanced positions early provides the time that subordinate commanders need to conduct their own reconnaissance. Setting up in attack positions early provides the opportunity to confirm enemy dispositions and to formulate or execute "branch plans" in the event that the attacker encounters some unexpected challenge or opportunity. The disadvantages of such an early move include, at least in the case of this action, less rest for soldiers who had been pushed hard in arriving on the field. Another disadvantage, given the conditions under which General Longstreet was operating, was the loss of command integrity in General Hood's division given the absence of General Law's brigade. The predominant risk associated with moving units into attack positions early is the possibility that the enemy will get advance warning of the attack. In the case of General Longstreet's movement this was a risk that might have been mitigated by the use of Colonel Black's 1st South Carolina Cavalry that General Lee detailed to the First Corps for flank and rear security.63

A second critical timing issue that helped set up the fighting at Little Round Top was the reconnaissance conducted by General Lee's staff engineer, Captain S. R. Johnston. In fact, the entire nature of Captain Johnston's reconnaissance of Little Round Top is problematic. The
timing of the actual reconnaissance, especially that portion when he climbed Little Round Top, appears critical to the nature of his report to the commanding General. How did he miss the brigades of General Geary's division that had occupied the heights? How could he have failed to detect the presence of the Third Corps soldiers of General Birney's division who had bivouacked nearby? How could he have failed to detect the movement of the remainder of the Second Corps as they marched into the Union lines from the Taneytown Road? And shouldn't his examination of the terrain have indicated the recent occupation of the hill by Geary's men?

The case has been made that Captain Johnston's reconnaissance, by a most unfortunate stroke of luck for the Confederates, gained the area in the vicinity of Little Round Top just after the first of the Union defenders was ordered to move to another portion of the Union lines. General Geary, having been ordered to depart Little Round Top and move to Culp's Hill at 5:00 A.M., left without the benefit of a physical relief with General Birney, the officer assuming responsibility of the area. In fact General Birney may not have occupied the line until as late as 9:00 A.M.64 This gap in coverage, up to four hours in duration, may explain how Captain Johnston may have come upon the unoccupied Little Round Top.

If Captain Johnston actually visited Little Round Top the next question is, what exactly were General Lee's orders and did Captain Johnston carry them out? The crux of this issue speaks to the purpose General Lee intended Captain Johnston's reconnaissance to serve. There is some room for equivocation here. The language Captain Johnston used in his accounts of this reconnoiter suggests that his mission was to "make a reconnaissance as far as practicable on our right..." (emphasis added). But elsewhere in his papers Captain Johnston stated, "I was ordered by General Lee to make a reconnaissance of the enemy's left and report as soon as possible. ... We were very successful, and after examining the roads over which our troops would have to move in the event of a movement on the enemy's left I returned to headquarters."65

The distinction here is germane. Was the Captain's mission a route reconnaissance -- looking for Union forces who could interfere with the flank march? Or was Captain Johnston's mission to locate the left flank of the Union Army? I am inclined to believe this mission was the
former rather than the latter. In this regard the task of locating or establishing contact with a
enemy's flank elements was not one that could be reasonably carried out by a small party of staff
officers. That assignment was more appropriate for the cavalry or a body of infantry
skirmishers.

What exactly was the role of Captain Johnston's report in setting the stage for the
Confederate plan of attack? The historical record certainly does not suggest that Captain
Johnston's reconnaissance was the basis of the course of action that General Lee executed on 2
July. However, the record does suggest that the report Captain Johnston made tended to solidify
the course of action in General Lee's mind. It is certainly not clear that Lee would have
materially changed his course of action if Captain Johnston had not returned or if he had returned
with information indicating the presence of enemy forces near Little Round Top. While not
decisive in determining the course of action it encouraged Lee to adopt a course of action that
required further development.

Lee's concern with enemy dispositions early on 2 July can not be discounted. He
appears to have had a preconceived opinion of the scope and depth of the Union dispositions that
he wanted confirmed. If he did, then it could have been an intuitive notion, borne of years of
battle, that required confirmation. Any intuitive notion that General Lee harbored could have
been based on the belief that the natural strength of the northern portion of the line would draw
Union forces there. It could have been that the roads he expected General Meade's army to
approach on led him to believe they would concentrate in the northern portion of the field. He
may have underestimated the ability of the Union Army to march hard to get to the field. After
all, previous Union commanders had never surprised him with the rapidity of their marches.
Stuart's absence from the field was certainly distressing, given the decisions hanging in the
balance and the uncertainty of the information on which the decisions were made. It seems
plausible that General Lee, for whatever reason, was so comfortable with his view of the enemy
situation that he needed only a small bit of reassurance to support his decision.
The record is clear that General Lee had already outlined a concept of operations to
General Longstreet, General Hill, and probably to General McLaws (and presumably General
Hood, though the record here is not clear) by the time Captain Johnston returned and reported.
The record, according to Captain Johnston, has General Lee appearing to order General
Longstreet to move immediately after the engineer delivered his report.

In the final analysis the fact is that Captain Johnston provided his Commanding General a
report, limited in its scope, based on his limited mission, accurate as of the time of his
observation. He was not responsible to General Lee to develop the position of the Union army's
left flank. If Lee expected the reconnaissance to uncover the actual location of Union forces then
he certainly would have been dissatisfied with the report that Captain Johnston provided. It
seems reasonable that General Lee would have ordered a stronger detachment, probably a
mounted force, forward to uncover the Union lines and to establish some sort of contact with
their pickets, at least. That would have been a classic cavalry mission. If that was a task General
Lee wished performed, he had at his resources the small detachment of Colonel Black's South
Carolina Cavalry to perform the mission.

A third factor with timing implications was General Longstreet's movement from his
corps staging areas on and near Herr Ridge to his attack positions along the Emmitsburg Road.
Confusion among the Confederate leaders here seems to have had its greatest cost to their
prospects for success during the upcoming attack. If Lee did intend an early attack on the Union
left flank, then his failure to forcefully convey that to General Longstreet contributed to the delay
of Longstreet's movement for at least three and possibly as long as five hours. A corollary aspect
of this portion of the Confederate execution of their attack plan has to be the conduct of the flank
march by the First Corps.

Very early on in the discussions of General Lee's plan for 2 July, the senior leadership of
the Army of Northern Virginia discussed the criticality of an early attack. Lee seems to have
expressed to both Generals Longstreet and Hill on the evening of 1 July a desire to attack "as
early as practicable" on the second. In the early morning conference between Generals Lee, Hill,
and Longstreet, General Hill expressed concern that an attack conducted late in the day would be
forced to conclude because of darkness and the full fruits of victory would not be realized.66 Why then did the attack on the second day begin so late, and could it have been conducted earlier? And would an earlier attack have had any greater opportunity for success?

The attack on 2 July occurred so late in the afternoon because of a reluctance by General Longstreet to attack and because of a delay to await the arrival of General Law. Longstreet certainly appears to have exercised reasonable and appropriate command and control in ordering his divisions to be marched to Gettysburg for action. There has been some criticism of the movement because of conflict on the march routes between the trains of the Second Corps and the divisions of Generals Hood and McLaws. The only real command or control deficiency seems to have been the delay in getting orders to General Law to move his brigade to Gettysburg. General Law's orders did not arrive until 3:00 A.M. on the second. As a result, Law's brigade -- one quarter of the infantry force of Hood's Division -- did not close on the field until about noon.67

Longstreet had sufficient forces and guidance to conduct the attack before noon on the second. By 8:00 A.M. on the morning of the second General Longstreet had almost two thirds of his Corps in a position to begin the flank march. It seems certain that General Longstreet could have begun to move his forces into position for the attack shortly thereafter. Indeed, before General Lee departed to visit the Second Corps he ordered Lieutenant Colonel Alexander to position his artillery in preparation for the attack. By about 8:30 A.M. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander had his orders, and his artillery was ready to go into position by 11:00. By that time Lieutenant Colonel Alexander had his artillery battalion in the valley of Willoughby Run, about one mile from his attack positions, waiting for the infantry and the remaining artillery.68

Longstreet wanted to wait not only for General Law's brigade but also for General Pickett's division to close on the field as well. Delaying the attack until the arrival of General Pickett's division gained the field would have been tantamount to no attack on the second, since Pickett's division did not arrive on the field until about 4:00 P.M. and since it was in no condition
to fight that day. This of course was intolerable to General Lee and probably led to his order about 11:00 A.M. for General Longstreet to move immediately, "with the portion of (his) command that was up." 69

But even then there was further delay. Another hour and a half elapsed waiting for General Law and his brigade and then sorting out the columns before the movement commenced. General Longstreet certainly thought that he was not strong enough to make the attack without the additional forces. He also may have been influenced by his own predisposition not to conduct the attack at all. The delay engendered by the wait for General Law seems to be more than just the period from 11:00 when, according to General Longstreet, General Lee "ordered the movement" until 12:00 or 1:00 P.M. when the brigade was up and rested. The movement could and probably should have been undertaken immediately after General Lee provided General McLaws with his instructions. Lieutenant Colonel (later General) E. P. Alexander in his memoirs, noted for the fair-minded and unbiased assessments that he offered therein, suggested that, "... by ten, or eleven o'clock at the latest, it was entirely practicable for us to have delivered our attack in good shape." Alexander goes on to suggest, "The long & the short of the matter seems to me as follows. Longstreet did not wish to take the offensive." 70

A part of the case suggesting that General Longstreet was out of sorts has to be the matter of the First Corps countermarch during its movement into position. The countermarch First Corps conducted to get to their positions was unnecessary. It cost precious time, and meant movement of over four miles to go a distance of only one mile. This march, which should have been routine in nature for a veteran corps such as General Longstreet's, was characterized by slow movement, confusion, lack of command and control, poor staff performance, poor judgment and a lack of initiative.

When the divisions of Generals McLaws and Hood stopped at the crest of the rise that would have exposed them to the Union signal station on Little Round Top, Captain Johnston showed General Longstreet a bypass through the fields that would have alleviated the need for the countermarch. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander also encountered the vexing scene of General
McLaws' division halted and waiting for orders. He also showed the officers there the bypass that his artillery had used to avoid detection, but was pained to hear that those officers were not in authority to change the orders they were under. In all the countermarch of the First Corps was perhaps costly beyond measure. 71

So it seems that the delays associated with the First Corps flank attack were avoidable and that the attack could have been delivered "in good shape" by ten or eleven in the morning. Now comes the compelling question of whether this attack, if delivered between five and six hours earlier than it ultimately was, had a greater likelihood of success. Alexander again directly addressed this very question, "It has since appeared that if our corps had made its attack even two or three hours sooner than it did, our chances of success would have been immensely increased." Interestingly enough Douglas S. Freeman also addressed this question and in his view the issue was not as certain. Freeman suggests the strength of federal forces in the area was such that the intuitive resistance that General Longstreet demonstrated was vindicated. Dr. Freeman presents a good case that the federal line was strongly held on its left with somewhere between 6 and 8 riflemen per yard between Ziegler's Grove and the Little Round Top. However, the issue centers on the susceptibility of the federal line to flank attack and the ability to defend Little Round Top. My view coincides with Alexander's, that an attack delivered earlier offered a much greater chance of success. Little Round Top was decisive terrain, even if it was not the object of the attack. The opportunity to seize the heights was certainly greater early in the day given General Birney's tenuous attention and because the Fifth Corps, that would ultimately successfully defend the heights, was not in position to do so until about 4:00 P.M.72

On a tactical level there was still a chance to redeem the day. The fourth and fifth time sensitive actions that may have offered an opportunity for success were the commencement of the attack by General Hood's division and the cooperation among the various attacks on Little Round Top. By the time of these actions the greatest opportunity for the success of the First Corps flank attack had slipped away. The issue now more than ever rested exclusively upon the seizure of Little Round Top to unhinge the Union line on Cemetery Ridge.
General Hood was initially ordered to follow General McLaws in his attack through the Peach Orchard. When the Confederate divisions moved into the area from which they could view the Emmitsburg Pike, the Peach Orchard, and the southern reaches of the federal line the plan of attack had to be adjusted. Instead of finding themselves on the Union flank the Confederates found themselves facing the Union line. In consequence General Hood was ordered to start the attack. He was to attempt to keep his left on the Emmitsburg Road as he attacked north. However, the presence of General Birney's forces due east of the Emmitsburg Road drew him into as much of a quandary as General McLaws who found himself facing the strong force of federal troops in the Peach Orchard. Hood found his prospects so disturbing that he delayed his attack. Both he and General Law dispatched scouts to determine if an alternative to the directed attack could be found. These unfortunate generals had been put on the horns of a dilemma. The delays that had occurred in getting their forces into attacking position now conspired to ensure that every small delay they accepted in executing their orders brought federal defenders rushing in to reinforce the lines they were to attack.\textsuperscript{73}

There is some irony that the delay in Longstreet's execution of General Lee's attack order led to his attack striking just as Sickles advanced his corps from the Cemetery Ridge line to occupy an advance position on the Emmitsburg Road. As is the case with much of the battle of Gettysburg there is divided opinion on the effect of this timing. Some suggest that this caused Longstreet's attack to fall at the precise time when the Union line was most vulnerable. Others suggest that the Confederate attack had to spend its momentum in driving Sickles' men from the Emmitsburg Road positions and so reduced their effectiveness against the Union main line. My study of this issue places me in the latter camp. True, the Confederate attack fell at a dangerous time; but Meade had quickly ordered his only reserve force to the threatened location as soon as he became alert to the danger. What's more, General Meade, by some accounts, during his conversation with Sickles termed the line on the Emmitsburg Road "neutral ground," that is, ground that was commanded by the artillery of both the Union and Confederate forces. By advancing his corps Sickles forced Longstreet to fight to seize the neutral ground. Absent
Sickles' corps from the Peach Orchard and Emmitsburg Road area Confederate forces would have been free to occupy this position and launch a deliberate attack against the Union line with only the harassment of artillery fire to impede them. General Sickles' advance coupled with the timely commitment of the Fifth Corps caused a great loss of life and momentum in the Confederate attack and may well have helped to preserve the Union line.74

Hood and Law both encouraged a wider movement to secure the flank of the federal line but Longstreet refused to allow it. Time had grown too short. Both these officers appealed the orders, Hood delaying by urging three times to adopt a wider movement south around Big Round Top to take the Union line in the flank and rear. As precious minutes ticked away staff officers from Longstreet and Hood traveled between the two. In the meantime, the Union Fifth Corps was on the move, coming to reinforce the left.75

Hood launched the attack after filing a formal protest over the orders impelling him to do so. By hard fighting his division fought to gain the Devil's Den and gain the flank of General Birney's lines. However, while they were attacking Union reserves had moved into position on Little Round Top. Instead of pushing through General Birney's line and exploiting their success by seizing the undefended heights on the Union left flank they found a Union brigade forming on the southern slopes of the position.

The timing that allowed the Union forces of the Fifth Corps to form a backup line on the Union left at Little Round Top was very close. First-hand accounts by Union soldiers universally speak of being able to see the Confederate attack pressing home at the Devil's Den just a few hundred yards from Little Round Top. One soldier wrote, "We had hardly formed in line of battle when we saw a line of rebels advancing with their skirmishers in advance. In a few moments the battle raged."76 Another wrote:

(we) came to a large hill, or range of hills, which the enemy were at the same time attempting to gain, we arrived first, formed in line and advanced over the hill, and as we arrived on top, saw a long line of rebels coming over and down a range of hills opposite us. If we had been 5 minutes later, the enemy would have gained the ridge we were on, and turned our left flank, and it would have been very hard to drive them from it. As we
advanced over the hill the firing commenced by both sides advancing until down in the hollow, when our brigade succeeded in driving back the rebels to take refuge behind the rocks, and the ridge opposite us.77

Indeed the delays of that morning and even the few minutes delay brought on by wrestling with the Corps commander on the nature of his orders cost Hood and his men dearly.

The final Confederate event that bears on timing as a critical factor in the battle at the Little Round Top is the attack of the 15th and 47th Alabama. As discussed in the chronology of the battle, the attack by Law's brigade degenerated somewhere in the valley of the Plum Run between Devil's Den and the slopes of Big Round Top. Two of the five regiments of Law's brigade, the 44th and 48th Alabama, were redirected to assist in silencing Smith's battery above Devil's Den and were drawn into the fighting there. Because of the difficulty of the movement, the rough terrain, and the challenge of keeping closed on a frontage too wide to adequately cover, the regiments of Robertson's Texas Brigade and Law's Alabamians became commingled. The terrain between Devil's Den and Big Round Top crowded the 47th Alabama into the 15th Alabama. This crowding, coupled with the presence of an active detachment of Union sharpshooters, caused the commander of the 15th Alabama, the right flank regiment of the Alabama Brigade, to adopt a route of march that took them to the top of Big Round Top. The 47th Alabama held to the 15th Alabama and together the two regiments were temporarily removed from the first stages for the fight at Little Round Top.78

Eventually, under pressure from General Law, the 15th and the 47th Alabama moved to join the attack on the left of the Union line. In the conduct of their attack, the 47th moved into the clearing separating Big Round Top and Little Round Top. In doing so they were exposed to Union defensive fire and engaged in a premature attack on Little Round Top. That attack struck at the junction of the 83rd Pennsylvania and the 20th Maine. It was uncoordinated with the movement of the 15th and as a result the regiment suffered concentrated fire from elements of both Union regiments. The 47th was badly repulsed, the acting commander was severely wounded, and the regiment disorganized to the point that they were largely ineffective during the
rest of the struggle for the heights. In spite of the loss of his flank units Colonel Oates very nearly cracked the Union line.79

The issue for timing in this attack gets at the tactical issue of small unit command. Colonel Oates appears to have had the chance to turn the left of Vincent's brigade late in the day, but his attack faltered. A lack of cooperation between the 15th, 47th and the regiments of the 4th and 5th Texas and the 4th Alabama on their left caused the attacks to be conducted piecemeal. The delay caused by Colonel Oates in his climb to the top of Big Round Top and the break in contact between the 47th and the 4th Alabama that this detour caused may have been, at the tactical level, the deciding factors of the fight at Vincent's Spur.

Colonel Oates led a regiment that had marched over 32 miles that day in getting to the fight on the slopes of Little Round Top. His strength going into the fight was about 400 men. When considering the additional strength of the 47th Alabama, about 150, Colonel Oates had the opportunity to strike the Union left with a large force of about at least 550 battle-hardened veterans. Defending the southern portion of Vincent's Spur the 20th Maine alone had in line of battle somewhere between 350 - 450 men. Factoring in the rifles of the 83d Pennsylvania that also contested the attack of the two Alabama Regiments it becomes clear that the attack by Colonel Oates's men occurred at very nearly one-to-one odds. It is remarkable that the Confederates were able to press home an attack with such vigor and to the point of breaking the defenders lines, given the natural strength of the defensive positions that Colonel Vincent's men occupied.80

The truth of the matter is that if Colonel Oates had succeeded at Little Round Top, tactical victory there would have been hollow and short-lived. By that time, the Confederate attack across the front of Little Round Top had reached its culminating point. Federal reinforcements were filling in the lines on the eastern slope of the heights and Colonel Oates's men would have been badly outnumbered and most likely unable to hold their positions even if the 20th Maine had given way. The real opportunity of success for the attack at the southern slope of Little Round Top presented itself in cooperation with the attacks made against the
balance of Colonel Vincent's line. The detour to the top of Big Round Top and the loss of contact between the 47th Alabama and the 4th Alabama may have cost the Confederates the tactical victory that might have presented the opportunity for operational success in flanking the Cemetery Ridge line.

To conclude those actions that deal with the factor of Confederate timing in the attack on Little Round Top it is important to note that preliminary decisions made by leaders of the Army of Northern Virginia played a key role in creating a tactical situation that was ultimately beyond the control of junior commanders (regimental level and below) and men to overcome. Prompt, aggressive, and determined action escaped the leadership of the Army of Northern Virginia in preparing for the flank attack. Wasted hours at the Corps level, followed by wasted minutes at the Division level, followed by more wasted minutes and a lack of timely coordination provide, from the Confederate standpoint, bitter lessons on the critical effect of timely action and execution.

**Union Chain of Events**

From the Union perspective, the first event that has to be mentioned is the occupation and abandonment of Little Round Top by General Geary and General Birney. This has been examined in the previous section. However, I would be remiss if I did not reiterate the criticality of the abandonment of Little Round Top to the development of the battle on 2 July.

Until about 5:30 A.M. on 2 July, General Geary had about 600 men on the line that included the slopes of Little Round Top. When he pulled these forces off to move into positions up on Culp's Hill without a physical relief by General Birney of the Third Corps, the Union forces incurred a significant risk. It is clear from the report and manuscripts of Captain Johnston, the Confederate engineer who rode to the Little Round Top that morning -- probably within minutes of General Geary's departure -- that there was not a very active, robust, or aggressive federal screen line guarding the left flank of the army. However, in one of those ironic cases of serendipity, the abandonment of the position and the practically nonexistent flank screen provided a strong measure of false information to the Confederate forces.81
Union commanders were the beneficiaries of this oversight in a tangible way. This grossly misleading report was the single bit of intelligence upon which Confederate commanders based their plans of attack. In a quirk of nature, the timing of General Geary's departure and General Birney's indifference to occupying the line provided the Union with a distinct benefit analogous to intentionally planting misinformation in the enemy's hands.82

The next critical timing event for Union forces was the commitment of the Fifth Corps to the Union left. As the Confederate attack on the federal left flank unfolded, General Meade had inadequate forces available in that portion of the field to resist. His army reserve up to that point had been the Fifth Corps. It had marched onto the field that morning and had taken up a position near Powers Hill, where it could move to any portion of the federal lines that were threatened. During the morning General Meade ordered General Sykes, the Fifth Corps commander, to designate a brigade to support Third Corps if required. General Sykes designated General Weed's brigade. While the Confederates were on the move into their attack positions the Fifth Corps waited near Powers Hill.83

In the afternoon, sometime before 3:00 P.M., General Meade called his corps commanders together for a meeting. In this meeting he had his first real understanding about the vulnerability of the Union left based on the disposition of the Third Corps. General Sykes reported that while engaged in the Corps commanders meeting, "the enemy formed, opened the battle, and developed his attack on our left flank. I was at once ordered to throw my whole corps to that point and hold it at all hazards." The time that two of General Sykes brigade commanders provided for the receipt of his order was 4:00 P.M. The movement required a march at the double quick for about one and one half miles.84

The timely commitment of the Fifth Corps was the first step in a chain of events in which decisive actions led to the protection of the Union left. Meade's prompt orders and Sykes' prompt execution provided the margin of success. If the decision to move the reserve had been taken a scant few minutes later it is likely that the Confederates would have taken Little Round Top. Meade's order positioned the Army of the Potomac's reserve in just the right spot to repel
an assault that might have carried away the flank and possibly rendered untenable the Union line on Cemetery Ridge.

General Sykes also deserves recognition for his decisions and actions. When ordered to commit his corps General Sykes dispatched an aide to get the movement started. In the meantime he rode to the position his corps would defend. No time was wasted and no detail escaped his eye. Alone he reconnoitered the ground and noted the characteristics of the terrain. He noted the exposed position of Smith's battery and coordinated with General Birney to see that it was more strongly supported. General Sykes may reasonably be credited with improving the defense of the Devil's Den area and by so doing he may have bought the time that Vincent's Brigade of his First Division desperately needed to occupy Little Round Top.85

The next step in the critical Union chain of events in the defense of Little Round Top was General Meade dispatching General Warren to the Little Round Top. In spite of General Sykes' very active role on the left at the time that he was committed, he failed to note that Little Round Top was undefended. There are conflicting accounts of how General Warren came to be dispatched to the heights. Under one account General Meade is reported to have remarked, "Warren, I hear a little peppering going on in the direction of the little hill off yonder. ... I wish that you would ride over and if anything serious is going on ... attend to it." General Warren himself in letters after the war stated that he suggested that General Meade dispatch him to the Little Round Top to ascertain conditions there.86 However Warren got there, it was fortuitous. When General Warren arrived at Little Round Top and found it unoccupied he took immediate steps to defend the hill. A reasonable assessment of what General Warren accomplished is found in Gettysburg: The Second Day: "What Warren did discover, perhaps, was the extent of the Confederate line south of the Emmitsburg Road, that Little Round Top was not manned, that the Confederates might seize it, and that Sickles's line might be flanked."87 If this was the case that is quite a lot of critical information to acquire in a short period of time, and great responsibility fell on Warren all at once.
General Warren acted quickly and with some excitement sent messengers to General Meade recommending a division occupy Little Round Top. He sent a messenger to General Sickles requesting assistance, and by some accounts rode personally to request assistance from General Sykes, his old brigade and division commander when General Warren had commanded a regiment and then division in the Fifth Corps. The frenetic activity generated by General Warren paid off. General Meade over-rode General Sickles' orders and sent word to General Humphreys to move to defend the hill. General Sykes' speed in deploying his Corps from their reserve positions to the battle lines made the redeployment unnecessary, so General Meade countermanded his order to General Humphreys. Reinforcements were coming, largely because General Warren recognized how critically they were needed and acted promptly and aggressively to get them moving.88

The fourth time sensitive event critical to Union success at Little Round Top was the commitment of Colonel Vincent's brigade to the occupation and defense of the hill. Federal leaders were by then operating inside a tight cycle of timely decisions. They were beginning to get the edge on the Confederates, and not only in an operational sense, which probably occurred when General Meade was able to mass his reserve corps in position to meet the Confederate advance short of his preferred line of defense -- Cemetery Ridge. The Union action that secured the tactical advantage was the occupation of Little Round Top before Confederates could seize it and turn the Union line. Perhaps the man who single-handedly achieved that object was Colonel Vincent.89

The official record would suggest that a deliberate chain of orders and instructions placed Colonel Vincent's brigade on Little Round Top in time to blunt the Confederate attack. The official record imposes an order on the chaos of the moment that simply did not exist. Events were much more confused. If Colonel Vincent had waited for his division commander's orders to deploy, those precious few minutes between federal occupation and Confederate occupation of the hill would likely have elapsed.90
General Sykes did in fact order his corps deployed in such a manner as to anchor itself on the hill. If the story widely accepted now is accurate, General Sykes’ courier was galloping down the Fifth Corps lines in search of General Barnes who had gone off to another part of the lines. The messenger was confronted by Colonel Vincent and compelled to reveal his orders. Colonel Vincent then, without wasting time waiting for formal orders, on his own authority, led his men directly to the slope of the hill. This was a bold act and could have resulted in court martial for Colonel Vincent, but his judgment regarding the risk to the Union line outweighed his concern over his professional welfare. This is a daring contrast in decisiveness and leadership when compared to the lack of leadership demonstrated in the Confederate countermarch just a couple of hours earlier and a couple of miles away.

The final event in the Union chain of actions that was time critical was the redirection of Colonel O'Rorke's regiment to the defense of Little Round Top. As I stated earlier in the narrative of the battle the exact actions and the situational awareness of General Warren, with respect to his cognizance of forces present on Little Round Top at the various stages of the battle, is not clear -- indeed it is confusing. Nonetheless, General Warren certainly was directly responsible for directing Colonel O'Rorke to the defense of Little Round Top at a highly critical phase of the fight. On his own authority, General Warren detached Colonel O'Rorke’s regiment, the 140th New York, from its route of march in brigade column.

In the course of the march the 140th New York's movement became a counterattack, striking the flank of the 4th and 5th Texas just as they broke the ranks of the 16th Michigan. If General Warren had delayed his ride in search of assistance, General Weed's brigade would have arrived at the Little Round Top as it was being invested by elements of two and possibly four Confederate regiments. Colonel Vincent's brigade would have been outflanked and might have been forced to retire northeast over the slope, away from the converging Confederate attacks. If Colonel O'Rorke had tarried in his march, perhaps even to load muskets, to fix bayonets, or to deploy from the column into line of battle, the effect of his attack would probably have been
greatly reduced. The timing of this attack was psychologically and physically devastating to the Confederates. It saved Little Round Top, for the second time that day.

Dr. Edwin Coddington perhaps says it best: "The occupation of Little Round Top at the right time and right place by Vincent's Brigade was the result of a combination of circumstances and rare good luck for which no one person in the Union high command could claim the credit, and in fact none tried to." The combination of decisions and actions that led a number of Union soldiers and commanders to take action is fascinatingly complex and unique. Everything fell into place and for General Meade this was indeed a matter of great good fortune.

In analyzing timing as a critical component to the outcome at the battle of Little Round Top I have approached it from first the Confederate and then the Federal perspective. I believe there is linkage that is readily apparent between these key timing factors and the elements of command and staff functions and leadership. Further I think the use of time, the style of command and staff organization and the leadership evidenced between Union and Confederate forces stand in stark contrast to one another. On the Confederate side confusion over the Commanding General's intentions, delay in execution, jumble on a routine march, indecision and lack of initiative by the leading elements on the march, wasting precious time and tiring out worn men by countermarching, hedging prior to launching the attack, and poor judgment all mark the day's events. The soldiers who fought in gray or butternut were ill served that day by leaders of a higher caliber than their performance on 2 July would suggest. In contrast, Union actions, such as finesse in locating the reserves in a central place, good control over key leaders who quickly implemented the orders and understood their commander's intent, decisiveness, physical presence of key leaders at the critical spot, initiative -- I could go on. The comparison is shocking.

Now let's move on to some observations on command and staff functioning as they pertain to the actions leading up to the battle at Little Round Top. Most of the events that I will use to conduct this comparison have already been discussed. After comparing the command and
staff functioning, I will look at the elements of leadership evident in the battle. I will isolate just a few of the staff and command functions that played a role in the decision at Little Round Top.

Concerning staff organization and functioning, it is interesting to note that the size of the Confederate staff at the army headquarters was much smaller and much more junior than that of the Union staff. Apparently the austere Confederate staff organization was inadequate to the task at hand. In contrast the more robust Union staff seems to have functioned better, although not without its own flaws. Staff organization, staff size, and staff officer experience certainly played a role in the preparedness and timeliness of the armies to engage in combat on 2 July.

By the battle of Gettysburg, General Lee's personal staff consisted of about seven officers, two Colonels, three or four Majors, and one Captain. In addition to his personal staff General Lee had chiefs of several departments who also assisted in staff action. Lee was not well served by the quality of the staff work performed during the Gettysburg campaign. One chronicler went so far as to note "the slovenly staff work which plagued the Confederate high command during the campaign..." By contrast General Meade, who inherited much of General Hooker's staff upon assumption of his command, had a much larger headquarters with six general officers on his staff, each with a group of aides. Meade, like Lee, also had departmental chiefs. The Union staff had the benefit of operating on interior lines but they also had to adapt to a change in the command of the army within days of the battle. Yet they still seemed to have out-performed the Confederates.

Consider for a moment the role of the armies' two engineer officers in the battle at Little Round Top. General Warren, with his two lieutenants, was active along the line throughout the day. A skilled topographical engineer, General Warren immediately recognized the decisive nature of Little Round Top as the anchor of the southern end of the federal line. It was he who reported that the Third Corps was out of position and it was he who rectified the army's dangling flank. On the other hand, Captain Johnston, presumably a much younger and less experienced officer, had been on the ground with his First Corps counterpart and failed to grasp the significance of Little Round Top as the fulcrum that could have been used to lever the Union
army from its defensive line. It is interesting to note, however, that General Lee, a highly experienced engineer with service in the Mexican War and throughout a long career, seemed especially interested in the portion of his engineer officer's report on Little Round Top. Maybe a more experienced or talented Confederate engineer would have acted with more forethought about the potential value of the position. It is certain that General Warren lost no time in his assessment.

There are some special staff officers with command responsibility that were common to both armies, one pair being the chiefs of artillery for the respective armies. They and their service stand in as stark a contrast as the disparity of the services of the two engineer officers. General Henry Hunt, the Army of the Potomac Artillery Chief, was an active, aggressive, and effective assistant to General Meade. He helped General Meade shape the defense of the Union lines, he effectively emplaced and supervised the assets under his control and he reinforced the corps organic artillery where required. General Hunt personally visited Captain Smith at his battery position above Devil's Den as the battle opened and encouraged him to delay the Confederate advance.96 By contrast, the chief of artillery for the Army of Northern Virginia, General William Pendleton, was largely ineffective at weighting the attack conducted by the First Corps. He brought no additional guns to bear in support of First Corps attack. He is not mentioned as having provided material assistance in any manner on the second, even by his own account.97

The differences in the performance of commanders and their attitudes towards the tasks that they received are also stark. The Confederate corps commander charged with executing the attack argued against any attack. At the Union corps level the attack at Little Round Top really dealt with two Union commanders; one who performed very well, and another who disregarded the orders of his commander and nearly gave up the Union left flank anchor point without a fight.

Longstreet's performance has been harshly dealt with by many writers, both his contemporaries and historians. It seems that there is some validity to the hindsight criticism,
although he does not deserve the vilification that for a time accompanied his role on 2 July 1863. General Longstreet's behavior on Seminary Ridge has been characterized as petulant. This seems to be a fair criticism. Longstreet seems to have failed to fully and wholeheartedly embrace his commanding general's orders. He failed to put his whole energy into accomplishing the mission. What is instructive for military leaders to understand is that at times like these, a leader's indifferent behavior can make failure a self-fulfilling prophecy, and this seems to have been the case here.

General Longstreet was so convinced that an attack, even the southern flank attack he was to command, was wrong that he obstructed it. It may not be too strong to suggest that General Longstreet's obstinacy and obstruction prevented the success of the attack. It certainly seemed to reduce its chances. It may be true from a timing perspective, as has already been addressed. However, it may also be true from the perspective of his attack preparations.

General Longstreet's delay in launching the assault may be reconciled to some degree, and seems to have been absolutely consistent with his character. However, his failure to allow his subordinate commander's the opportunity to prepare for the attack seems inexcusable. In the offense General Longstreet was very deliberate and never launched an attack until he thought the conditions were right. When launched his attacks were devastating. The element of his conduct here that is objectionable was his failure to embrace the mission and work diligently to ensure its success from the earliest opportunity.

The most clear cut example of this is his refusal to allow General McLaws to go forward to conduct his own reconnaissance. Captain Johnston began his reconnaissance that morning from the Seminary Ridge. He did not know he would be guiding an attack, and he could not have known that the attack General Lee ordered would originate from Herr Ridge. General McLaws' forces were charged with the attack. He would bear the responsibility for success or failure. General Longstreet appears to have allowed his attitude to have interfered with not only his, but also his subordinate's, ability to carry out the mission.
Longstreet did another disservice to his subordinate commanders by refusing to move his command forward until joined by General Law. There was nothing to prohibit movement into attack positions and posting an aide to guide General Law's men forward as they came on the field. This would have afforded both division commanders the opportunity to examine the terrain over which they would attack and to determine enemy dispositions with sufficient time to adjust their own tactics accordingly. Leaders owe their subordinates the best advantages they can give them when they assign a mission. In this case General Longstreet did not set his command up for success. Indeed he may have condemned it to failure.98

By contrast, the Union commander who faced General Longstreet had a good appreciation of his Commanding General's concept for the defense, and of his expectations. General Sykes' corps was the army reserve. When General Meade ordered it committed General Sykes understood his mission. It was brief and to the point, "hold it (the left) at all hazards." While General Sykes understood what had to be done, he did not have an understanding of the tactical situation on the quarter of the field to which he was ordered. Even so, Sykes did not delay the movement of his corps. While he rode to the location he was to defend, he dispatched aides to order the whole corps forward to a staging area. General Sykes personally attended to coordination with his adjacent forces. He visited with both the neighboring corps and division commander. He was as dynamic and proactive as General Longstreet had been deliberate and reluctant.

The Fifth Corps commander's example stood the Union army in good stead. His subordinate commanders who fought at Little Round Top acted with the same energy. General Weed and Colonels Vincent and O'Rorke all demonstrated the same aggressive characteristics that General Sykes did -- those same characteristics that General Longstreet failed to demonstrate earlier in the day.

We have ample reason to believe that General Lee intended to strike the federal army from beyond its left flank and drive the line in upon itself, 'a la Chancellorsville'. At the time that the plan was articulated to Longstreet and his division commanders the plan was timely and
based on a fair appreciation of the tactical situation. However, by the time the attack was launched the situation had changed, and no one in the Confederate army attempted to ascertain the validity of the plan in time to effect the attack. Perhaps General Lee was deceived by the activity of the Third Corps, near the Peach Orchard, into believing that that position represented the left flank of the Army of the Potomac. That would explain the orders to attack up the Emmitsburg Road, and the caution that General Hood had to keep his left brigade flank on the Emmitsburg Road. Perhaps that explains General Lee's focus on the Peach Orchard area. Perhaps that in some measure explains why so much of the Confederate artillery focused upon the Peach Orchard in addition to securing that as a Confederate artillery position. If this was General Lee's intent he clearly failed to achieve it.

Throughout the course of the day, Lee remained committed to the plan of attack despite reports that may have reasonably suggested possible adjustments in the Union line. The Confederate plan remained the same in spite of the movements of Union forces marching north on the Emmitsburg Road and turning into position on the Wheatfield Road at the Peach Orchard. Confederate leaders remained satisfied with the plan in spite of skirmishing west of the Peach Orchard between elements of Berdan's Sharpshooters and General Wilcox's brigade on the Confederate southern, or right, flank. Clearly leaders must base their plans on analysis of surveillance reports and on what capabilities the enemy has. Leaders have to guard against basing assessments on actions they expect the enemy to take. I am not convinced that General Lee did that in this case. The presumption remained that the attack would be delivered by the First Corps from beyond the point where the Union left flank rested. Speed was then the key to the Confederate hopes for success. Every hour that passed pushed General Lee's plan further from the reality of the situation on which it was based.

The mass of the Confederate attack seemed to have struck at the wrong point. The actual position of the Union left flank was fully three quarters of a mile south east of the Peach Orchard, resting just above the Devil's Den. General McLaws' and General Hood's divisions were lined up in a position to deliver a crushing attack on the Peach Orchard, but they were
poorly positioned to strike at the true flank, just above the Devil's Den. By the time the attack had developed, the true federal flank rested on the formidable heights of Little Round Top. In essence the extension of the Union line by General Meade's commitment of General Sykes's corps resulted in a continuation of the disruption of the Confederate plan.

The misdirection of the Confederate attack resulted in an imbalance of resources by General Lee and his subordinates. Both Confederate infantry and artillery were out of position to achieve General Lee's desired result -- a crushing flank attack. The only Confederate infantry force on the Union flank was General Law's brigade on the end of the line. It is inconceivable that General Lee would expect to drive the Union flank in with a single brigade or even with the second brigade in line, Benning's Georgians. Rather, Lee's expectation seems clearly to have been to strike with the full power of the First Corps elements on the field.

Another area where Confederate forces appeared to be imbalanced in support of the attack was in the disposition of the artillery. General Longstreet had Lieutenant Colonel Alexander well positioned to support an attack against the Peach Orchard, but these artillery batteries were in a poor position to drive in the true Union flank. Confederate infantry forces engaged in the attack against the true flank of the Union army had to face the destructive fire of both infantry and artillery. Union forces did not. It is revealing that Union soldiers who defended in the area south of the Wheatfield remarked at the lack of effectiveness of Confederate artillery. Confederate accounts, on the other hand, frequently discuss the effectiveness of Union artillery during the attack.99

Conclusion

The battle for Little Round Top indeed is one of those battles for which operational results rested on the tactical fight. However, the results of this fight were largely determined long before the soldiers closed with one another on the field. The fight for Little Round Top on 2 July 1863 suggests that the preliminary actions of commanders can help to win a battle. Conversely, actions prior to enemy contact can also cause a battle to be lost before it is ever joined.
Every critical timing event cited and all command or staff functioning issues analyzed in the course of this paper have one common denominator -- leadership. Where timely decisions influenced the course of the battle in one's favor it was good leadership that made it possible. Where decisions were not made or where delay and procrastination occurred the fault lay with poor leadership. Where staffs functioned better or worse than their opponents the advantage was with the side that demonstrated better leadership. Commanders who were successful in this battle were successful because of better leadership demonstrated either by themselves or by their superiors. Looking back on the actions discussed in this paper it is apparent that leadership exercised by the Union commanders and their staffs certainly helped win this battle, and perhaps secure ultimate victory for their cause.

The Confederate attempt to turn the Union left flank had failed. The main weight of the Confederate attack, against the Peach Orchard and pushing towards the Cemetery Ridge line, did not succeed. Federal forces, initially poorly disposed in positions that General Meade was unaware of, recovered their balance. By judicious application of all the forces at his disposal, General Meade established a reserve, positioned and repositioned it based on the battlefield requirements, committed it at the critical time in the critical location, and reconstituted a reserve with elements of Sixth Corps filling gaps where they existed. He had fought his whole army to achieve his goals.

Conversely, guided by faulty intelligence, the Confederate attack had been unsuccessful.

As Generals Hood and McLaws moved into their designated attack positions and formed line of battle the critical deficiencies in intelligence under which the Army of Northern Virginia had been planning and conducting operations became terrifyingly apparent. General Lee assigned cavalry to General Longstreet but they were not used effectively in a route or area reconnaissance function. One must assume that they provided flank security to protect from an attack that the Union forces never intended to make. When the Confederate attack was delivered it fell late and against the wrong point -- one that would not provide decisive results. The attack lacked depth, it was not adequately supported by artillery and the amount of terrain that was
assigned to General Hood's division and the guidance to base the left of the division on the Emmitsburg Road prevented adequate mass at the critical point. More importantly, the Confederate leadership failed to recognize that the "decisive point" had shifted south with the Union extension of their left flank. In the center the attack that General Lee envisioned was not executed. Finally, unlike General Meade, General Lee did not fight his whole army. Major portions of the Army of Northern Virginia sat idle while the issue was being decided against the Confederate cause.

On the tactical level leadership dominates the lessons of the day. Union commanders at the brigade, regimental, and even lower levels exercised superior initiative. But that was not all. They coupled their initiative with the application of outstanding judgment, single-minded focus, and attention to detail. Confederate leaders who played a critical role that day demonstrated bravery and leadership. Where initiative and daring were demonstrated it sometimes lacked the same good judgment and focus of effort that Union leaders demonstrated on this field.

Think about leadership traits like initiative, cooperation, enthusiasm, judgment, decisiveness, and selflessness; ask which side in this battle demonstrated them more effectively than the other. I submit that on the fields of Gettysburg the answer would be the Union army. Think about the actions of Colonel Vincent in placing his brigade in the location he did. Occupying the spur vice the forward slope. Refusing the left of the line, vice occupying a front oriented directly at the Devil's Den. Placing the 16th Michigan and then shifting them to the left. He was brilliant. Colonel Chamberlain of the 20th Maine demonstrated prudent concern in outposting his flank and front. His choice of officer to lead the skirmishers reflected his awareness of the qualities required for an independent assignment of great responsibility in the face of hostile forces. Chamberlain's decision to attack when he sensed that his line could not withstand another Confederate attack was audacious and fortuitous. It is no coincidence that the federal army was successful in this battle. Given the stark contrast in the way the two armies operated on 2 July 1863, the key difference was effective leadership.
The study of this battle provides insights for the modern military professional, especially for America's Marines. Marines rely on maneuver warfare as their doctrinal way of warfighting. We fight our battles with centralized planning and decentralized execution. Leadership -- effective leadership -- will be absolutely critical to success in this sort of environment. We will find that initiative exercised without judgment is folly. We will find that deliberate execution may not keep pace with the fast paced tempo of a competent, capable, and aggressive enemy. There are many tactical and operational insights offered by the study of the fight for Little Round Top that will remain critically important to Marine leaders from Non-Commissioned Officers to Generals.

Is timing critical to the effective application of combat power in the maneuver warfare of the future that Marines will practice? The answer is yes, even more critically important than it was in the past or is currently. Timing is at the heart of such fundamental maneuver warfare concepts as tempo and synchronization. Marine leaders at all levels have to understand the importance of timing.

Staff organization and staff functioning are other critical issues that Marines need to wrestle with now. It is clear that at Gettysburg General Meade was better served by his staff than was General Lee. There should be many questions asked and reflected on now and in the near future about how the next generation of Marine commanders and leaders are going to be served by their staffs on the rapidly changing battlefield. Information age systems, digital communications, situational awareness, satellite imagery, and near real-time and real-time information exchange is changing the way we process information and fight. Clearly the insights of yesterday are important to suggesting how things may work in the future.
NOTES


6. Coddington, Pages 4 - 8 w/ footnote 9 page 600.


9. OR, Volume 27, Part I, Pages 143 - 144, cites the location of the major elements of the Army of the Potomac as follows. "28 June.- The First Corps marched from Middleton to Fredrick; the Second Corps from Barnesville to Monocacy Junction; the Third Corps from Middletown to near Woodsborough; the Sixth Corps from near Poolesville to Hyattstown; the Eleventh Corps from Middletown to near Fredrick; and the Twelfth Corps from Knoxville to Fredrick..." Coddington, Page 180. *Gettysburg: The Second Day*, Dr. Harry W. Pfanz University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill NC 1987. Pages 11 and 12. Cited hereafter as Pfanz.

10. Operational Reports Volume 27, Parts I and III reflect a tremendous amount of information generated by the Union forces that provides a detailed picture of the movement of the Confederate Army north. Conversely, there is very little in the Official Records that suggests the Confederates were receiving much useful intelligence. See OR, Volume 28, Part I, pages 61 - 66, 68 - 70; and Part III pages 84, 107, 114, 128, 131, 194, 217, 223 - 225, 227, 244 - 245, 285 - 287, 336, and 352. The amount and nature of the information seemed to frustrate the Army Chief of Staff, and perhaps to lead to the 19th Century equivalent of "information overload", see Part III pages 174 - 175.

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13. When General Lee returned to his headquarters on the evening of 1 July he sent orders to General Ewell to have his force reposition along the Seminary Ridge line, accepting the views of General Ewell and his subordinates that an attack in their sector was not practicable. By the time General Lee's orders arrived at General Ewell's headquarters General Ewell had changed his mind about the opportunity for a successful attack in his sector. Consequently he asked General Lee to allow him to remain in his position so that he could deliver an attack against the Union right on the morning of the second. General Lee acquiesced. Before Ewell's attack on the 2d of July could kick off the Union line in the area was shored up. Advancing Federal forces of the Fifth Corps were in position to further threaten General Johnson's division, so an attack there was untenable. General Ewell's efforts for the balance of the battle of Gettysburg can be described, at best, as inconsequential supporting attacks. For for substantiation of this view of the contribution of the Second Corps to the rest of the battle at Gettysburg see Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander, by Edward Porter Alexander, Edited by Gary W. Gallagher, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1989 pages 234 - 235. Cited here after as Fighting for the Confederacy.

14. OR, Volume 27, Part II, pages 316 and 321. The Second Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership, Edited by Gary W. Gallagher, The Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1993. See specifically "If the Enemy Is There, We Must Attack Him": R. E. Lee and the Second Day at Gettysburg, by Gary W. Gallagher, pages 9 - 10. Diary of Private John Berry, Company A, 16th Michigan Infantry for 2 July 1863, CWTI Collection Military History Institute. "Having slept about 3 hours the bugle sounds at break of day. "Prepare to march" & in about an hour daylight we march. We march about 2 miles on the Gettysburg road, when we come up with the enemy. We turn off from the road and take up positions several lines and spend the whole [word unintelligible] maneuvering and marching around." The soldiers of Law's Brigade of Hood's Division would be able to sympathize with the account of Private Berry. See Southern Historical Society Papers, Volume 6, 1878, Gettysburg - The Battle on the Right, by William Oates. 0400 on 2 July "...When that hour came, the Brigade was put in motion, and after a rapid and fatiguing march, it arrived on the field ... having marched ... between twenty and twenty five miles... We were allowed but a few minutes rest, when ... moved around to the south of the federal position. There was a good deal of delay on the march, which was quite circuitous..."

15. Pfanz, page 205. This assertion is not wholly unfounded given that in retrospect a number of very prominent officers of the time shared this or similar view. Notably, General Hancock recognized the value of the terrain when he had General Geary occupy it on the afternoon of the
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first. General Geary was sensitive to the critical nature of the Little Round Top and his efforts to ensure a physical relief of the terrain were consistent with the value of the hill. See Battles and Leaders, Meade At Gettysburg, by Brevet Brigadier-General Francis A. Walker, U. S. V., page 409 and John Bachelder's History of the Battle of Gettysburg, Transcribed, Edited, and Annotated by David L. and Audrey J. Ladd, Morningside House Inc, 1997, page 383. Cited hereafter as Bachelder. The prompt actions of General Warren speak volumes for that officer's views on the value of the Little Round Top and the critically important requirement of denying the Confederates the use of the hill. General Meade himself seems to vaguely suggest a dire outcome if the hill were not held, Battles and Leaders, The Meade - Sickles Controversy, (A Letter from General Meade), pages 413 - 414. From the Confederate perspective there are also noteworthy officers who attest to the key, if not decisive, nature of Little Round Top as a terrain feature in the second day's battle. General Longstreet states that the retention of Little Round Top "was everything to the success of the Union Army at Gettysburg", Little Round Top, page 288. See also Fighting for the Confederacy, page 237.

16. Typescript copies of private letters of Samuel R. Johnston to General Fitzhugh Lee dated 11 February and 16 February 1878, and to Bishop George Petterkin of December year uncertain, and to General McLaw's of 27 June 1892. These letters are on file in the Gettysburg National Military Park Archives, photocopies in the authors possession. (Here after collectively referred to as Johnston Letters. When referencing a specific letter I will cite Johnston to the addressee with the date.) Johnston stated that the first and only reconnaissance to look south beyond scouting along the Seminary Ridge was the one he conducted on the morning of 2 July. Coddington, pages 360-361 with footnotes 6 - 8 found on page 727. Also see R. E. Lee, Douglas Southhall Freeman, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1935, pages 72 - 75. Cited hereafter as R. E. Lee. Similarly see Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command Volume III Gettysburg to Appomattox, by Douglas Southhall Freeman Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1944, pages 106 - 109. Cited hereafter as Lee's Lieutenants.

17. Bachelder, pages 359 and 383. Also see Battles and Leaders, The Meade - Sickles Controversy, (A Letter from General Meade), page 414. Finally, see Pfanz, pages 86-87.

18. OR, Volume 27, Part II, pages 348 - 350. Samuel R. Johnston to General Fitzhugh Lee dated 16 February 1878, and Samuel R. Johnston to Bishop George Petterkin of December, year uncertain. Captain Johnston confirms in these and other letters that at least three reconnaissance's were made to the south, one on the evening of 1 July and two on the morning of 2 July. The other party looking south on the morning of 2 July was General Pendleton's.


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29. Battles and Leaders, pages 320 - 322. Southern Historical Society Papers, Volume 38, 1910, *Unwritten History of the Gettysburg Campaign*, by William Youngblood of Alabama, pages 312 - 318, suggests that General Lee personally made the decision to push on with Hood's frontal attack. He also states that Hood, Lee, and Longstreet were all present together when Hood presented his appeal and Lee made his decision. This account is not attributed or corroborated by other accounts. The Gallant Hood, by John P. Dyer pages 191 - 194. Pfanz pages 158 - 159, 161 - 165, and 166 - 167. In the last two pages cited Dr. Pfanz has some valid observations with military significance regarding the viability of a Confederate sweep around the Round Top.
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30. OR, Volume 27, Part I, pages 116 and 592 - 593, In OR, Volume 27, Part I, pages 600 - 601, General Barnes' report indicates that he dispatched Colonel Vincent to the Little Round Top. This is directly contradicted by Norton in a private letter dated 28 September 1888, and in Little Round Top, pages 236 - 241. It appears more likely that Colonel Vincent intercepted the dispatch rider and moved his brigade to the threatened point. This version is cited in Coddington page 389, and in Pfanz pages 208 - 209.

31. The report of Lieutenant Colonel N. E. Welch Commanding the 16th Michigan suggests that Welch's Regiment was dropped off first, on the extreme left of the Union line. Only after placing the balance of his Brigade and realizing that his lines were not sufficient to extend to front Devil's Den did Colonel Vincent order the 16th Michigan at the double quick to the brigade right flank. By Colonel Welch's account this is how the 20th Maine came to be on the Union left. Colonel Welch also indicates that his position was occupied just in time to repel the first of several Confederate attacks on the brigade right. See OR, Volume 27, Part I, page 628. This is not consistent with commonly accepted history, however the Official Report of Colonel Chamberlain does not preclude the possibility that this occurred. See OR, Volume 27, Part I, page 622 - 623. See also, Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine, by Thomas Desjardin, Thomas Publications, Gettysburg PA, 1995, pages 35, 42, and 44. Cited hereafter as Stand Firm.

32. OR, Volume 27, Part I, pages 593, 600 - 601, 616 - 617 (with map at page 619). General Warren insisted that he remained on the Little Round Top until he rode down to redirect Colonel O'Rorke's 140th New York to the defense of the hill. Little Round Top, pages 262 - 266, and 308 - 312. Coddington in pages 390 - 391 finds it impossible to believe that Warren could have been unaware of the presence of Vincent's Brigade if he was on the Little Round Top at the time when Vincent's Brigade moved into position. At least one veteran of the 44th New York was in violent agreement, see file of the 44th New York, in the Brake Collection, at the Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA. Pfanz pages 210 - 213.


34. Under the Maltese Cross Antietam to Appomattox The Loyal Uprising in Western Pennsylvania 1861-1865 Campaigns 155th Pennsylvania Regiment, pages 165 - 167. Cited hereafter as Under the Maltese Cross. There is much uncertainty over the exact location of the guns of Hazlett's Battery and of the timing of the arrival of the battery. General Warren speaks of first realizing that reinforcements were arriving when he saw the artillerymen. However, the
members of the 140th New York, who Lieutenant Roebling would guide into line, recall passing batterymen furiously whipping their horses pulling the artillery pieces to the top of the rugged little hill. It may be that some pieces of the battery were slower than others in getting into position. It is almost certain though that elements of Hazlett's Battery were in position when Colonel O'Rorke came into the battle. Also see *Little Round Top*, pages 311 - 312.

35. *Under the Maltese Cross*, pages 167 - 168. *Little Round Top*, pages 307 - 332. See the Farley - Warren exchange of letters regarding the redirection of the 140th New York, the Regiment's place in the brigade order of march, and on the actions of General Warren, pages 308 - 312 and 313 - 319. From these exchanges of letters it is not entirely clear that General Warren was aware of the presence of Colonel Vincent's Brigade on the Little Round Top even as he rode down to redirect Colonel O'Rorke's 140th New York. General Warren indicates that he did not return to the Little Round Top with the 140th New York, but that Lieutenant Robeling guided the regiment into position. The author too is confounded about General Warren's apparent ignorance over the presence of Colonel Vincent's Brigade. Confederates had attacked and been repulsed several times by the time Colonel O'Rorke arrived at the hill's summit. Further it is unusual that General Warren would depart Little Round Top suspecting that the only Union infantry present on the hill to be Colonel O'Rorke's, even in spite of the presence of General Sidney Burbank's brigade or on encountering General Sykes. Pfanz, pages 225 - 226, suggests that after redirecting Colonel O'Rorke's Regiment that he encountered General Sykes, presumably in the Wheatfield Road, and departed the area traveling north to see General Meade. General Warren's exact actions are a mystery.


43. The Bachelder Day Two map shows the regiments of Law's Brigade in the incorrect sequence. This error is also evidenced in the Bachelder between pages 432 and 433, on map sheet "Second Day Section VII". Lieutenant Colonel Oates consistently wrote that the 44th and
the 48th Alabama Regiments were to his right along Emmitsburg Road and were held back slightly as the Brigade passed down into the Valley of the Plum Run and brushed against the Round Top. In addition the report of Colonel William F. Perry, of the 44th Alabama (OR, Volume 27, Part II, pages 393 - 394) states the 44th Alabama occupied the place second in line until detached by a flank movement ordered by General Law and brought to a position on the extreme left of the brigade. Both Bachelder maps show only the 48th Alabama to the right and slightly to the rear of the 15th Alabama.

44. OR, Volume 27, Part II, pages 392 - 393.

45. General Benning's Georgians, who were supposed to follow General Law's Brigade, went into the attack and fell into position adjacent to General Robertson's left and did not support the fight at the decisive point. They instead fell into the struggle above the Devil's Den and in the Rose's Woods. See OR, Volume 25, Part II, pages 392 - 394, 395 - 396, 405 - 406, 410 - 411. See also Pfanz, pages 174 - 175. Pfanz suggests that Benning's actual place of attack was more fortuitous than following in trace of Law's Brigade. This is highly debatable.

46. OR, Volume 27, Part II, page 392. Gettysburg, pages 85 - 90. Lieutenant Colonel Oates is a very interesting character and provides an outstanding study in contrast to that of his principal adversary at Gettysburg, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain. Both of these officers were prolific in their post war writings about the conflict at the Little Round Top, but the similarities do not stop there. Both officers had brothers who were serving in their regiments. Colonel Chamberlain's brother, Lieutenant Thomas D. Chamberlain, would survive the battle in spite of being ordered by his brother to fill a dangerous gap in the 20th Maine's center. Lieutenant Colonel Oates' brother, Lieutenant John A. Oates, did not long survive the attack at the Little Round Top. Lieutenant Oates was ill that day and was told by his brother to stay behind during the attack, but his sense of honor would not allow it. He fell mortally wounded inside the lines of the 20th Maine in one of the last desperate struggles on the extreme left of that regiment's line. His body was torn by at least five bullets, some reports had the number as high as six or eight, (see Stand Firm, page 67 and 216 footnote 89). His honor and a shallow grave were his reward for his valor, dedication to duty, and leadership. Both Colonels would later serve as Generals, Chamberlain in the Union Army and Maine Militia, and Oates as a General of Volunteers in the Spanish American War. Both were maimed in the course of the war. Colonel Chamberlain was grievously wounded at Petersburg, continued to serve and at Appomattox received the distinction of accepting the formal Confederate surrender, a duty which he carried out with honor and compassion. Lieutenant Colonel Oates would lose an arm. It would terminate his active service with the Army of Northern Virginia. Both officers would survive well into the 20th Century, remaining active in veterans organizations. And finally, both officers would rise to be the Governors of their respective states. See Pfanz and Stand Firm.

47. Gettysburg, page 90. Stand Firm, pages 47 and 156 - 157. Desjardin's indictment of Lieutenant Colonel Oates' decisions to detour to the top of Round Top delaying his attack and to detach a portion of his command to seize wagons in the midst of the attack certainly seem valid
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in hindsight. However, he was not in direct violation of orders and at worst can be faulted with poor judgment in this case.


49. Gettysburg, pages 91 - 98.

50. Gettysburg, pages 98 - 100.


52. Gettysburg, page 100. Stand Firm, pages 70 - 75.

53. Photocopy of typescript letter Captain S. R. Johnson to General Fitz Lee, 16 February 1878.

54. For an alternative version of the Commander's conference and the sequence of the events recounted the interested reader is directed to Gettysburg: Historical Articles of Lasting Interest, Issue Number Six, January 1, 1992 "Humbugging the Historian: A Reappraisal of Longstreet at Gettysburg", by Roger J. Greezicki, Esq., specifically pages 63 and 64. The author has read Mr. Greezicki's text and can not entirely justify the sequence based on its conflict with other historians interpretations, notably Freeman and Pfanz. The version postulated has unresolved conflicts between it and the text it cites. Mr. Greezicki's account fails to reconcile the fact that Captain Johnston indicated that General Longstreet moved off -- in response to General Lee's comment quoted by Captain Johnston, "You'd better move on" -- soon after General Lee received his report. Captain Johnston, who remained with General Lee after the General's Conference broke up and departed from General Lee to immediately join General Longstreet does not mention any other Generals besides Longstreet and Hill as being present. While Pfanz's account states that General McLaws could have seen General Lee after Captain Johnston's report it seems to weigh more heavily in the favor of Freeman's account. Coddington's account however is consistent with Mr. Greezicki's version of events.

55. Photocopies of typescript letters from Captain Samuel R. Johnston to Bishop George Peterkin dated December, year unknown, to General Fitz Lee of 11 February and 16 February 1878, and to General McLaws of 27 June 1892. Copies are in the author's possession. Captain Johnston forswore participation in the controversy between General Longstreet and his critics (most notably General Early and Colonel Taylor). Johnston stated, "I do not want to be a party to controversy with any one, certainly not with General Longstreet, who always treated me with so much kindness and consideration..." The issue of General Longstreet's conduct of his duties at the battle of Gettysburg is an emotionally charged one even today. The question of whether Longstreet promptly and diligently executed his orders on 2 July is still hotly debated. For further discussion the reader is referred to The Second Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership. In the article by both Gary W. Gallagher entitled "If the Enemy Is There, We Must Attack Him": R. E. Lee and the Second Day at Gettysburg, Dr
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Gallagher argues that General Lee bore the major portion of the responsibility for the delay in opening the attacks on 2 July, see pages 15 - 16. Dr Gallagher cites as one source for this opinion Lieutenant Colonel E. P. Alexander. However, fairness to an opposing view requires that I note that Dr Gallagher did not cite another of Alexander's statements regarding the reasons for the delayed attack, "The long & the short of the matter seems to me as follows. Longstreet did not wish to take the offensive." The preceding is quoted from Fighting for the Confederacy, page 235 - 237, especially 237. Robert K. Krick offers an opposing view to Dr Gallagher. In his article entitled "If Longstreet ... Says So, It Is Most Likely Not True": James Longstreet and the Second Day at Gettysburg, castigates the military reputation of General Longstreet using contemporary quotes from Longstreet and other Confederate General's, many of which pre-date Longstreet's vilification after Lee's death. Dr Krick addresses Longstreet's failures on 2 July in pages 69 - 78. The author of this paper holds the view that General Longstreet had sufficient guidance and direction from General Lee to conduct his attack on 2 July by 9:00 A.M. without having had to wait for General Lee's order to march that Longstreet acknowledges receiving about 11:00 A.M. To further support this view the reader may refer to General Ewell's report, OR, Volume 27 Part II, page 446, "Early in the morning, I received a communication from the commanding general the tenor of which was that he intended the main attack to be made by the First Corps, on our right, and wished me, as soon as their guns opened, to make a diversion in their favor, to be converted into a real attack if an opportunity offered."


58. Lee's Lieutenants, pages 114 - 115. Coddington page 376 - 377. Coddington dispels the suggestions that Lee's demonstrated impatience for Longstreet to attack while visiting Second Corps was unreasonable. He viewed the timing issues to have been such that General Lee could not reasonably have expected an attack so soon. Pfanz pages 111 - 113. True to his Preface comments on pages xvi, Pfanz makes no judgments on the issue of the controversy surrounding Longstreet's delays on the second. He does, however, suggest that General Lee's travels to the Second Corps area could have taken as long as two hours. He indicates that there may be some credence to General Long's suggestion that General Lee was evidencing some impatience with General Longstreet's delay by the end of his Second Corps visit.


60. OR, Volume 27, Part II, Page 358. See Lee's Lieutenants, page 115. Coddington, page 378. Pfanz, page 113. General Longstreet did not mention requesting a delay in his official report. In fact, General Longstreet did not mention having requested a delay until after General Lee had died. However, historians have come to accept that General Lee authorized the delay.

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63. Pfanz, page 105 w/ footnote 5 on page 487. Coddington, page 524, quotes General E. M. Law as stating that Black's force was "ragtag and bobtail" and "'a nuisance' rather than a 'benefit'". So the point made in my text is arguable.

64. *Bachelder*, page 383. Quotes General Geary as stating, "...range of hills south and west of the town, which I occupied with two regiments of the First Brigade. These hills I regarded as of the utmost importance, since their possession by the enemy would give him an opportunity of enfilading our entire left wing and center with a fire which could not fail to dislodge us from our position." *Bachelder*, page 373 - 374, footnotes the passage of General Geary's report with the comment, "The orders moving Geary's force from this position were very nearly fatal to the Union Army." General Birney's Official Report stated that he relieved General Geary at 7:00 A.M. and formed a line with the left resting on Sugar Loaf Mountain, with pickets posted in the Emmitsburg Road and sharpshooters posted 300 yards in advance of that. Pfanz, page 86 - 87, cites a change to the location and time in that General Birney provided in the Official Report. In testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War General Birney that changed the language denoting his location and more critically changed the time at which he occupied General Geary's old position from 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. Pfanz doubts that even the modified location is accurate in light of subordinate reports in Official Record.

65. Captain Samuel R. Johnston to Bishop George Peterkin dated December, year unknown, to General Fitz Lee of 11 February and 16 February 1878, and to General McLaws of 27 June 1892. Historians all using the same account have interpreted the mission of Captain Johnston differently. *Lee's Lieutenants*, pages 113 and 175. Freeman seems to view Captain Johnston's movements as a route reconnaissance. He attributes failures to conduct an adequate reconnaissance upon the Cavalry arm of the army, absent from the field. Coddington, page 373 and footnote 72 page 735, seems to suggest that Johnston failed by not moving north to gain contact with Union forces. Pfanz, page 107, indictes Captain Johnston for making a false report to his Commanding General. Modern Gettysburg enthusiasts have begun to suggest that Johnston did not see any Union soldiers because he did not actually get to Little Round Top. These individuals postulate that Johnston drifted south of Round Top and climbed another hill mistaking it for Little Round Top. The author while noting this school of thought rejects this line of reasoning. Dr Pfanz suggests that Johnston was well familiar with the area and could not have misjudged his location. I concur and do not believe that there is another suitable terrain feature within reasonable proximity that Johnston could have confused for Little Round Top.

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68. Pfanz, footnote number 38 page 489, suggests that the actual time that Alexander was positioned in the valley of the Willoughby Run was more likely 1:30 P.M.


70. Fighting for the Confederacy, page 235 - 237, especially 237. Battles and Leaders, The Second Day at Gettysburg, by Major-General Henry J. Hunt, pages 300 and 301, General Hunt suggests that "there seems to have been no good reason why the attack should not have been made by 8 or 9 A.M. at the latest." Of course the only good reason for conducting an attack would be based on the receipt of an order to do so. General Longstreet's view was that he did not receive such an order until about 11:00 A.M. This certainly has been highly debated and continues to be debated to this day.


72. Battles and Leaders, The Second Day at Gettysburg, by Major-General Henry J. Hunt, page 300, General Hunt suggests that General Lee mistook the advanced lines of the Third Corps in the Peach Orchard and accordingly ordered an attack up the Emmitsburg Roar, believing that such a maneuver would roll up the Union line. In pages 302 and 303 General Hunt points out that General Meade had some trepidation over the commitment of the Fifth Corps early in the day of the second, owing in part to the number of forces still on the move to get to Gettysburg. Delay in the attack by the Confederates overcame this reluctance because as the attack began the Sixth Corps had begun to close on the field.

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74. Coddington, pages 346 - 356. Pfanz, page 144. Coddington on pages 355 - 356 places himself in the camp that believes that Sickles' advance jeopardized the army more severely than it aided it.


76. Letter from Wm. H. Brown Co D, 44th New York to his brother (name unknown) dated July 7th, 1863. Robert L. Brake Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, photocopies in the author's possession.


80. Stand Firm, Appendix One, pages 181 - 184. Desjardin provides a detailed estimate of the strength of the participating regiments involved in the attack on the 20th Maine front. On balance it paints a much different story than that commonly accepted as truth. The 20th Maine and 83d Pennsylvania had about equal strength as the attacking regiments of the 15th and 47th Alabama. The strength of the terrain on which Colonel Vincent had outposted his brigade and the incredible fatigue that must have afflicted the Alabamians should have made this fight incredibly one sided. The fact that the Confederates nearly succeeded in gaining their objective before their attack collapsed under the strain of fatigue and the weight of Colonel Chamberlain's counter attack speaks volumes about the ferocity of the attack by the Confederate First Corps on the second. The only deficiency in Desjardin's work is the absence of regimental totals for the 83d Pennsylvania, since elements of that regiment joined with the 20th Maine to repulse at least the 47th Alabama's first assault. Coddington, footnote 25 on page 741, provides the following strength for Vincent's Brigade: Brigade total: 1,500; 1,350 muskets, 150 officers. 83d Pennsylvania, 375. 44th New York, 365. 20th Maine, 360. 16th Michigan, 250. As noted in Stand Firm, above, Desjardin doubts the 20th Maine total and suggests it is appreciably higher. Even with the figures cited in Coddington, based on correspondence between General Barnes and Colonel Chamberlain, Confederate attackers against the left most regiments of Vincent's line may have been met one-for-one in some of the charges.
81. See Captain Johnston's letters. *Lee's Lieutenants*, pages 111, 113 - 114, and 174 - 175. Coddington, page 373 - 375. Coddington's criticism of Captain Johnston, that his "explanation for not reconnoitering along Cemetery Ridge is not convincing" cites Freeman pages above. Pfanz, page 106 - 107. As previously stated, Pfanz attributes a false report to Captain Johnston. The author disagrees with that assessment. The Captain's report was, to use the words of D. S. Freeman, "accurate in so far as it went." If the limited scope of the reconnaissance conducted by Captain Johnston was inadequate, then it was incumbent on the commanders to augment that reconnaissance with further patrols.

82. It must be conceded that the advantages of a comparison to planting disinformation is not entirely sound. Union forces were entirely unaware of the information on which the Confederate leaders were basing their plans. However, the Union forces were well served in this case by denial of accurate information on the dispositions and strength of the Union line on the southern flank. I will avoid any treatment of General Birney's troop dispositions although they do play peripherally into the events at the Little Round Top. Addressing General Birney's dispositions would lead into the question of General Sickles development of the Peach Orchard/Emmitsburg Road salient. This is a topic well beyond the scope of my paper.


84. OR, Volume 27, Part I, page 651 and 616.

85. *Little Round Top*, pages 293 - 295. It should be noted that General Sykes' conversation with General Birney may not have been as fruitless as General Sykes indicated. The 4th Maine and the 99th Pennsylvania conducted a counter-attack into the location occupied by Smith's Battery and the 40th New York moved into a blocking position in the upper portions of the valley of the Plum Run to limit Confederate penetrations in that corridor. These regiments are drawn from General Birney's lines, from two separate brigades of his division.

86. For the various accounts of how General Warren came find himself at the Little Round Top please see the following. *Little Round Top*, page 309. Coddington, page 388. Pfanz, page 142 and 201.


88. There is quite a body of text written about the role of General Warren in getting forces onto Little Round Top in time to prevent Confederate forces from gaining the heights. *Little Round Top*, contains an entire section of Warren letters (pages 307 - 332), exchanged mostly with Porter Farley of the 140th New York shortly after the war. Norton suggests that the role of Warren was increased to encompass deeds that General Warren never claimed for himself. Coddington, pages 388 - 390 (especially 390) seems to find a balance that recognizes the role of Warren and acknowledges the combination of efforts of other key personnel. Pfanz, 205 - 206.

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90. OR, Volume 27, Part II, pages 593 and 600 - 601. General Sykes' report is somewhat ambiguous. In Little Round Top, page 294, General Sykes is quoted as stating that he does not know how Colonel Vincent came to position himself on Little Round Top unless that upon hearing his aide convey the order for the Corps he went there by his own soldierly instinct. Norton suggests that this is exactly what he saw occur. He further rejects the suggestion that Colonel Vincent was responding to General Barnes’ orders but that he was exercising significant initiative and daring in accepting responsibility for repositioning his brigade without positive orders from his division commander. This story is not consistent with the account in General Barnes' report on the battle. General Barnes intimates that he was with General Sykes when he was approached by General Warren himself. In this version, General Sykes "yielded to his urgent request" and General Barnes immediately ordered Colonel Vincent to occupy the hill. Coddington, page 389 with footnote 24 on pages 740 - 741, accepts Norton's version of the event and disregards General Barnes’. Pfanz, page 208 simply states that accounts vary. It does seem that General Sykes' and General Barnes' accounts vary. General Sykes does not mention having seen General Warren and General Warren does not recall having left Little Round Top until riding to redirect Colonel O'Rorke's regiment.


92. Fighting for the Confederacy, page 236.

93. General Lee, pages 55 - 57. At some point in the course of the war Captain Johnston joined General Lee's staff -- certainly by the early summer of 1863 -- presumably about the time that Major Talcott, his previous engineer transferred. Captain Johnston, ironically, later went on to serve with General Longstreet as the First Corps engineer. Taylor states that by the conclusion of the war General Lee's personal staff was only three men.


95. Coddington, page 26. Pages 26 - 31 discuss the improvements in general within the Army of the Potomac as a result of General Hooker and General Butterfield's reforms. For a partial list of officers serving on General Meade's Headquarters Staff see Coddington page 575, some of the officers served as personal staff officers while some held departmental chief positions.

96. Pfanz, pages 177 and 200.

97. OR, Volume 27, Part II, pages 349 - 351. General Pendleton's report of the battle mentions very little with respect to tangible contributions to the battle. He indicates that he conducted reconnaissance and dispatched aides to help hurry the battalions of General Longstreet's Corps, but he does not mention having reinforced General Longstreet's guns. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander, in Fighting for the Confederacy, does not mention General Pendleton at all in his account of events on the second of July. Pfanz, page 117, indicates that Lieutenant Colonel
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Alexander visited General Pendleton who rode with him to familiarize him with the ground near where his guns would open the battle. General Pendleton confirms this in his report.

98. Readers interested in a balanced and fair review of General Longstreet's character and conduct should read "I Have Been A Soldier All My Life", by Carol Reardon, Farnsworth Military Impressions, Gettysburg PA, 1997.

99. Letter from 1st Lieutenant H. Salter, Co B, 16th Michigan Infantry to Miss Isabella Duffield, July 12th, 1863, Robert L. Brake Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA. "But it was the hardest work we ever done to drive them back and the most desperate fighting I ever saw, for where we were there was scarcely any artillery engaged on that day. The fighting was all done by infantry. Although we have been engaged in other battles where we have had more men cut down by artillery but we never had such a terrible, close, bayonet fight before. It seemed as if every man, on both sides, was actuated by the intensest hate, and determined to kill as many of the enemy as possible, and excited up to an enthusiasm for exceeding that on any field before that we have been engaged in." See also Unspoiled Heart, page 47. "...We were put under heavy but ineffective shelling at 4 o'clock. At 5 we went in with our muskets and in just an hour had 17 men killed and 84 wounded -- all with musket balls..." For Confederate accounts see, History of the Fourth Regiment Alabama Volunteer Infantry, pages 8 - 10, manuscript in author's possession. A Texan In Search Of A Fight, pages 84 - 86.

100. Captain Samuel R. Johnston to General Mclaws of 27 June 1892. Captain Johnston makes it clear that the Union forces encountered by General Mclaws in the Peach Orchard were a surprise to Confederate leaders, one and all.
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________.  Typescript of personal letter to General Fitz Lee, 16 February 1878.  This letter may be incomplete since it ends abruptly at the bottom of the page without a conclusion or closing signature.  On file in the Archives of the Gettysburg National Military Park.  A photo copy is in the author's possession.

________.  Typescript of personal letter to the Right Reverend George Petterkin, D.D., date not determinable but during December and presumed to be after 1878 (the letter addresses the Reverend Petterkin as Bishop, and the Reverend was not made a Bishop until that year).  On file in the Archives of the Gettysburg National Military Park.  A photo copy is in the author's possession.


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