

THE SECOND TEAM IN THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

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Most battle accounts concentrate on the plans, decisions, and actions of their primary commanders, who, above all, traditionally set the battle's strategy and tactics, and in most cases, survive the battle. It is therefore logical that study of battles centers on them and their actions and decisions. This is true of many Civil War battles.

But Gettysburg is different. First, it is the culmination of a three-week campaign for both the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) and the Federal Army of the Potomac (AOP). Second, at three days it is one of the longest battles of that war. Third, the ANV's retreat covers another 1.5 weeks after the battle. Fourth, it is considered by many (starting with the veterans of both sides) to be a turning point of the war, at least in the East. Therefore, it contains decisions and actions covering almost 6 weeks, and these decisions and actions are under scrutiny even today, and many of them have no consensus.

As stated above, it is natural and fitting to concentrate on the commanders of each army and their decisions and actions, but for Gettysburg, that might not be enough. By comparison, study of the Battle of Fredericksburg can be perceived as an inquiry on the decisions of Union General Ambrose Burnside. The same might be said of Chancellorsville (with Union General Joseph Hooker) and Franklin (with Confederate General John Hood).

However, for Gettysburg, studying only the commanders is insufficient for many reasons, starting with the four listed in the paragraph above. But there are three more

reasons, which follow. Reason five, neither army commander was present when the battle started: Confederate General Robert E. Lee did not show up until mid-morning, and Union General George Meade was elsewhere the entire day.

Reason six, many command substitutions were made during the three days of the battle. For example, after the death of Union General John Reynolds on July 1, I Corps had two substitute corps commanders, and on July 2, after Hood was wounded, the senior brigade commander became the division commander in his stead. Seven, each of these command substitutions placed a subordinate in command of a unit one tier higher than his normal command level. The performance of these substitutes and how they affected the battle is the subject of this paper.

This paper will present delegation from its basic civilian definitions to specific military definitions. It will then present an overview of the salient cases of command substitutions and explain how those included in this paper were chosen. It will then present an analysis of how these might have affected the battle.

However, some disclaimers are warranted. All discussion of generals in this paper is limited to facts and statistics. This paper will not “rate” generals and leaves that unnecessary task to others because the only substantive conduct is that *relative to the battle*. None of the points presented is intended to suggest that either side in that conflict was superior to the other: both North and South were part of the American culture. This paper never questions the incredible and inexhaustible courage and fortitude of the common soldiers who suffered, regardless of how their generals chose to fight battles.

Finally, this paper correlates actions and persons to those in other conflicts, a technique uncommon in Civil War historiography with the notable exceptions of the

works of Fletcher Pratt and John Keegan. However, using such an approach can often help cast new light on relevant topics and serve to explain them better than in isolation. Although many students think that our civil war was fought in a historical vacuum and is unique among world conflicts with absolutely no comparison to others, the similarities are there if one is willing to both look for them and accept what they reveal.

DELEGATION IN THE MILITARY

The common civilian definition of delegation is “the act of empowering to act for another.”¹ Delegation is not simply assigning a task to a subordinate, but “real delegation is assigning responsibility (ownership) for outcomes along with the authority (power) to do what is needed to produce the desired results.”² Other definitions are slightly more narrow, stating that one can delegate authority, not responsibility, which is fixed with the manager (or commander in the military).³ This narrow interpretation is that followed by the United States Army today. In describing the chain of command, the United States Army Command Policy manual (600-20) states: “Commanders delegate sufficient authority to Soldiers in the chain of command to accomplish their assigned duties, and commanders may hold these Soldiers responsible for their actions. Commanders who assign responsibility and authority to their subordinates still retain the overall responsibility for the actions of their commands.”⁴ Today, when a military base has fatal training accidents or accusations of sexual harassment, the commander is often replaced: he still retains responsibility for actions under his command.

Delegation is often cited as a tool for building leadership skills in subordinates: “It’s a leader’s primary responsibility to focus on the success of their people. You retain

your top talent by keeping your employees engaged, empowered and letting them develop their skills to become leaders.”⁵ However, delegation is one of the hardest skills for new managers to learn, both civilian and military. This is especially true if the new manager was previously a technician accustomed to tackling tasks alone, such as an engineer, programmer, or accountant. “Many leaders struggle with delegation, from the newly promoted to the most experienced who simply take on too much. Moving from an individual contributor to overseeing the efforts of others can be challenging.”⁶

One of the authors is familiar with adjusting to this transition: in 1975, he was a 23-year old first lieutenant at a remote United States Air Force space satellite radar site in command of six enlisted electronic intelligence technicians. He consulted often with his squadron commander, a colonel, for guidance on balancing his section’s technical work (in which he was also trained) with his new supervisory responsibilities. Because the entire squadron of about 75 airmen lived in the main building, these discussions were often in the commander’s quarters which were in the same hallway.

Building leadership skills is an activity that takes time, planning, and working closely with subordinates. The goal is to give subordinates authority to complete a task with no interference by the manager, unless asked for. In a normal corporate environment, there is plenty of time to groom potential leaders by assigning them to tasks with increasing responsibilities. Even in peacetime, constant training and drills, along with attendance at advanced service schools, such as The Army War College, allows company grade and field grade officers in the U.S. Military opportunities for developing and refining leadership skills.

But wartime is different. The need for officers is accelerated for many reasons. For example, the expansion of the military decreases the time for all the training and schooling one would normally offer younger officers. The death and/or wounding of officers exacerbate the need for a constant influx of officers. One result of this expansion is that one learns on the job; another is that promotions are sometimes quicker, especially in combat units, sometimes resulting in officers placed in positions of increased authority more quickly than in peacetime. Often that upward placement is quick, owing to the death, wounding, or absence of the commander, forcing lower-ranking officers or non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to take command. A good example of this is the invasion of France, also known as D-Day, when many American units on Omaha Beach lost commanders during the early landing waves, and those units were led off the beach by junior officers or NCOs until they could be reformed.

The Civil War was no exception. The need for officers in 1861 was so acute that it resulted in two graduations from the United States Military Academy at West Point, one in May (early) and one in June (one year early). Many of these officers went into the regular army as second lieutenants, and others resigned their regular commissions and went to their respective states for commissions at higher ranks in the United States Volunteers. Southern cadets who left the academy acquired commissions similarly in the Confederate Army. It is important to remember that West Point graduates second lieutenants, which are company grade officers (second and first lieutenants and captains), not a regimental commander (normally a colonel). But many of those graduates resigned from the regular army and became colonels commanding regiments in their home states.

West Point graduates who had served and were civilians in 1861 also received quick promotions, but they were not trained for high command. One of these was William Sherman, who graduated in 1840 and left the army in 1850 as a captain. In May 1861, he was offered a colonel's commission in the regular army and command of the 13th Regular Infantry.⁷ In late July of that year, he was appointed brigadier general of volunteers. About this time, he wrote (*italics added*):

I had received several new regiments, and had begun two new forts on the hill or plateau, above and farther out than Fort Corcoran [Arlington, Virginia]; and I organized a system of drills, embracing the evolutions of the line, all of which was new to me, *and I had to learn the tactics from books*; but I was convinced that we had a long, hard war before us, and made up my mind to begin at the very beginning to prepare for it.⁸

The problem and the process were similar on both sides. Few officers had experience with large-scale movements, and they learned any way they could.

There are two final considerations on delegation in the military. One is that the assumption of transfer of command is normally absolute, i.e., the new commander is *the* commander. Unlike the civilian arena, there is normally no “acting” commander, unless the unit commander is temporarily away from the unit. World War II (WW2) United States Navy Admiral Chester Nimitz is quoted as saying, “When you’re in command, command.”⁹ The other consideration is that when an officer assumes command of the unit from his superior, he should command only the higher unit and should not try to perform that and his original duties at the same time.

WW2 provides examples. When Admiral Raymond Spruance took command of Carrier Task Force 16 from the hospitalized Admiral William Halsey in May 1942 (just prior to the Battle of Midway), Spruance assumed all authority and responsibility for the

task force. Later, on June 4 during the battle, after the aircraft carrier U.S.S *Yorktown* was hit and burning, Admiral Frank Fletcher, commanding Task Force 17 and as senior officer in overall command, decided two things: he could not exercise command from a cruiser and he could not transfer his command (move himself and his staff) in the middle of the battle to the carrier U.S.S. *Hornet*. He had no choice but to transfer command to Spruance. When Spruance asked for instructions, Fletcher signaled back, shedding ego and compunction, “None. Will conform to your movements.” In naval parlance, this immediately transferred to Spruance command of the entire fleet, which he exercised for the remainder of the battle.¹⁰ Finally, in December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge, Major General Maxwell Taylor was in the United States and not in Belgium with the 101st Airborne Division. The next senior general, Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe, assumed full command of the division, which was surrounded by the Germans at Bastogne. He properly signed his famous “Nuts!” note to the German commander in response to his surrender demand as “The American Commander.”¹¹ To summarize, the transfer of command during war can be sudden, and the subordinate is on the hook, ready or not.

ANALYSIS OF DELEGATION AT GETTYSBURG

Gettysburg has been studied more than any Civil War battle and probably more than any battle involving the U.S. Army. The actions of its units have been dissected by time, space, and result, as have the decisions and actions of their commanders. What has not been studied separately are the actions of those subordinate officers who assumed command suddenly during the battle, usually owing to the wounding, death, or

reassignment of their superiors. It might be possible to gain some insight on the outcome of the battle via the performance of those subordinate officers. One aspect of this battle that beckons such a study is that it lasted three days during which many generals were elevated to higher command early in the battle owing to the absence, wounding, or death of their superiors. This allows for analysis of the battle based on the performance of those elevated generals.

Both sides lost many officers in the battle. Although the ANV lost no corps commanders, about 20 percent of its general officers would require replacement.¹² The AOP lost three out of seven corps commanders—Generals Reynolds, Daniel Sickles, and Winfield Hancock—and many division and brigade commanders (both generals and colonels). Each of these losses caused another officer to take command.

Some of these command elevations affected the battle more than others. For instance, almost every Confederate officer who took command on July 3 during and after General George Pickett's Charge (after their commanders had been killed or wounded) had little effect on the outcome of the battle, regardless of how well they performed. Their task that day was to lead their men during the charge and after and then to lead them back to Virginia. On the Federal side, General Abner Doubleday assumed command of I Corps after the death of Reynolds on July 1 and had immense impact for the rest of the day but was relieved of corps command the next day. His remaining contributions were as a division commander, his regular assignment. Doubleday's story will appear below.

Therefore, in this paper, the selection of subjects is based on these criteria:

1. Quick assumption of command during the battle, either by assignment or by the death or wounding of superior. This ensures the continuity of command that is so important to an army. (This is a slight extension to the meaning of delegation in that when a commander is killed or wounded, there is no “delegation” in the true sense of the definition, but it will suffice for the purpose herein.)

2. Performance in that role. This requires that the subordinate performed all tasks associated with the elevated command and delegated his former position to a subordinate, i.e., he did not try to do both jobs. “Performance” is only an indicator but does not require that the performance be brilliant or error-free. As with the rest of the population, few generals were (or are) brilliant, few executions in any battle are flawless, and it would be unfair and presumptuous (that *we* could do a better job) to include this in the evaluation.

3. Effect on the battle. As indicated above, this is dependent on when and where the subordinate assumed command. In addition, only assumptions of command down to the division level are considered. It is true that certain brigade commanders made an impact on certain parts of the battle, such as General George Greene and Colonel Strong Vincent on July 2. However, in the main, the point can be made by stopping at the division level; however, on the Confederate side, with few casualties among corps and division commanders, one must use brigade commanders to illustrate the point.

Finally, where possible, this paper uses participants’ accounts from their official battle reports. These are not always 100 percent correct, and they are laden with hindsight and self-interest, but they do present a first cut at events. Certainly, for many officers, they are self-serving, and other reports downplay errors, casualties, and fault.

Acknowledging that one must read with caution, for this paper, battle reports serve to indicate who was promoted temporarily to what and who substituted for the promoted. An important caveat is that *this paper does not critique the accounts for veracity or concordance with other accounts, but uses them merely to record the participants' reporting on how they commanded.*

An online search of 'delegation battle Gettysburg' produces few results involving the type of delegation discussed in this paper; however, it does produce many hits of modern organizations sending "delegations" to conferences there. This section concentrates on cases of individual delegation during that battle. The reader may refer to the Federal and Confederate orders of battle online or in published works: a list that shows the regimental commanders and who was killed, wounded, captured, or mortally wounded is especially helpful. In addition, an online order of battle allows one to search easily for the names of specific participants, especially for those with common names like "Jones."

Although modern management concepts of delegation were unknown to the participants, the evaluation of battles against modern concepts is not new and is an accepted mode of analysis. Colonel Tom Vossler, U. S. Army (Retired), is well known for such analyses under the auspices of the National Park Service. For instance, he has evaluated the battle against the modern Army Training and Evaluation Program, an objective training evaluation system.¹³ This paper simply uses another modern management concept in its analysis.

The incidents chosen for analysis involve delegation and subsequent action. These were determined by constructing a superset of potential cases from histories of the

battle and narrowing that set to those that appear in the paper, the goals being to present substantive cases and to keep the paper at a reasonable size. This study is not quantitative: no scores are assigned to the incidents nor are detailed statistics produced. Instead, this study is qualitative in that each incident was studied and evaluated against the main criterion of how well the subordinate assumed command totally of the new command. In other words, did he spend all the time on his new command or did he split his time between his new command and his original one?

LEAD-IN TO THE BATTLE PRIOR TO JULY 1

During this time, as both armies marched north, one significant command change occurred, and by June 1, this spawned many other command elevations. On June 28, President Abraham Lincoln ordered General Meade, V Corps commander, to take command of the AOP from General Joseph Hooker. As a result, General George Sykes, 2nd Division commander, assumed command of V Corps, and General Romeyn Ayres assumed command of its 2nd Division. Meade's activities have been described in a multitude of books on the battle and need not be covered here, but it is safe to write that Sykes took full command of V Corps. More on Sykes appears below.

Meade also split the army into two wings commanded by Reynolds and Slocum. These assignments and their resulting command changes are covered below in the context of the major actions of the generals involved.

DAY 1, JULY 1

Because Meade had been army commander for only three days, he remained in Taneytown, Maryland, to locate his seven army corps and the ANV, determine the best routes they should take to drive and converge north, establish his backup plan at Pipe Creek in Maryland, and ensure that the correct orders were issued before he himself traveled north. He was still performing these tasks when the battle started this day.

July 1 offers many candidate episodes, starting with its opening movements. Significant command changes occurred on both sides, and they are presented here. For ease of organization for the reader, they are presented for each army separately, starting with the attackers, the ANV. A curious feature of this first day of battle is that it was started by subordinate officers because both commanders were absent from the field for all of the day (Meade) or part of the day (Lee).

Unlike the Union army, the Confederates lost no corps commanders this day, but a division commander was knocked out of action for part of it. Per Lee's January 1864 battle report, describing the first day's battle, "Our own loss was heavy, including a number of officers, among whom were Major-General [Henry] Heth, slightly and Brigadier-General [Alfred] Scales, of [William Dorsey] Pender's division, severely wounded."¹⁴ Later, in describing his dispositions at day's end, Lee wrote, "[General Ambrose Powell] Hill's corps faced the west side of Cemetery Hill, and extended nearly parallel to the Emmitsburg road, making an angle with [General Richard] Ewell's. Pender's division formed his left, [Richard] Anderson his right. Heth's, under Brigadier-General [James Johnston] Pettigrew, being in reserve."¹⁵

However, it is unclear from Henry Heth's battle report exactly when Pettigrew took command of his (Heth's) division. Heth submitted two battle reports, one covering

June 3-August 1, 1863 (in September) and a second report (in October) covering the actions of his division on July 14, at Falling Waters, Maryland. He discusses his own wound in neither report. However, in the October report, Heth wrote, “General Pettigrew received a wound in one of his hands at Gettysburg, in consequence of which he was unable to manage his horse, which reared and fell with him. It is probable when in the act of rising from the ground that he was struck by a pistol-ball in the left side, which, unfortunately for himself and his country, proved mortal.”¹⁶ Pettigrew was mortally wounded at Falling Waters on July 14 and therefore filed no battle report.

Heth was hit this day during the second attack on McPherson’s Ridge after the brigades of Generals James Archer and Joseph Davis were repulsed. He was struck in the head, but a wad of folded newspaper in his over-large hat acting as a filler (because it was too large) and absorbed the hit. Although the bullet did not penetrate the skull, Heth was knocked senseless for at least a day.¹⁷ (Today this might be diagnosed as a concussion.) Command eventually passed to Pettigrew, but it is unclear when. In his own battle report, Hill, in his summary of July 1 states that Heth was “slightly wounded,” but in his description of the disposition of his corps on the morning of July 2, states (italics added) “Heth’s division (*now commanded by General Pettigrew*) in reserve.”¹⁸ Hill’s actions during the battle require some explanation. He was ill on the morning of July 1 and the nature and duration of the illness are unclear. His report states nothing about an illness or of his transferring command to anyone; therefore, this paper assumes that he commanded the division all three days of the battle.

Heth’s division, Pettigrew commanding, was depleted and worn out from the fighting on July 1, was held in reserve for the fighting on July 2, and saw no action that

day. Pettigrew's next action was on July 3, and this is covered below in the section for that day. It should be noted that throughout the morning of July 1, Hill was ailing and remained in Cashtown while Heth went to town and started the battle; however, at no time did Hill pass command to one of his division commanders.¹⁹ Other than the Heth-Pettigrew elevation, the ANV had no major changes to its corps or division commanders: with that, attention on July 1 now switches to the Federal side.

I. REYNOLDS → DOUBLEDAY, I CORPS

From General Abner Doubleday's December battle report [see below], it seems clear that Meade had split the army into two "flanks," or wings (as they are called today). Reynolds commanded the left wing, and it comprised I, III, and XI Corps.²⁰ (General John Buford, commander of the First Cavalry Division, also reported to Reynolds operationally.) It seems clear also that upon hearing that Reynolds fell mortally wounded, Meade sent Hancock to represent him on the field.²¹ Presented in no particular order of precedence, these actions caused higher leadership to fall on four subordinates, each of whom is covered in this section.

The first Federal elevation resulted from the assignment of Reynolds as the left wing commander on June 30. (In his December battle report [see below], Doubleday referred to this as the "right wing," but Meade referred to it as the "left flank." It is unclear what Doubleday was thinking.) Reynolds then assigned Doubleday to command I Corps. On the morning of July 1, Reynolds ordered forward the division of General James Wadsworth and ordered Doubleday to bring up the remaining two divisions of the corps, those of Generals John C. Robinson and Thomas Rowley (in command of Doubleday's division). Upon arriving on the field, Doubleday observed Reynolds's

dispositions of Wadsworth's division and concluded, "General Reynolds' intention appeared to be simply to defend the two roads entering the town from the northwest and southwest, and to occupy and hold the woods between them. The principal effort of the enemy was made on the Cashtown road from the northwest."²²

It is important to note here that Doubleday wrote two battle reports. The first report, submitted in September, starts with the *evening* of July 1, after his service as corps commander and his return to division command, until July 7, when he was ordered to Washington. The second report, submitted in December, starts on the morning of June 28 and ends on the evening of July 1, after the first day's battle. With Reynolds's death shortly after ten in the morning, Doubleday became, not only I Corps commander, but the senior commander on the field. As he stated in his December report, "The whole burden of the battle was thus suddenly thrown upon me."²³ He surveyed the field and ordered the Sixth Wisconsin to charge the Confederates, which they did along with other regiments. He then wrote:

I immediately directed the original line of battle to be resumed, which was done. All this was accomplished in less than half an hour, and before General [Oliver] Howard had arrived on the field or assumed command...

Upon taking a retrospect of the field, it might seem, in view of the fact that we were finally forced to retreat, that this would have been a proper time to retire; but to fall back without orders from the commanding general might have inflicted lasting disgrace upon the corps, and as General Reynolds, who was high in the confidence of General Meade, had formed his lines to resist the entrance of the enemy into Gettysburg, I naturally supposed that it was the intention to defend the place.

There were abundant reasons for holding it, for it is the junction of seven great roads leading to Hagerstown, Chambersburg, Carlisle, York, Baltimore, Taneytown, and Washington, and is also an important railroad terminus. The places above mentioned are on the circumference of a circle of which it is the center. It was, therefore, a strategic point of no ordinary importance. Its

possession would have been invaluable to Lee, shortening and strengthening his line to Williamsport, and serving as a base of maneuvers for future operations.

...nor could I have retreated without the full knowledge and approbation of General Howard, who was my superior officer, and who had now arrived on the field. Had I done so, it would have uncovered the left flank of his corps. If circumstances required it, it was his place, not mine, to issue the order. General Howard, from his commanding position on Cemetery Hill, could overlook all the enemy's movements as well as our own, and I therefore relied much upon his superior facilities for observation to give me timely warning of any unusual danger.²⁴

With the arrival of General Howard and XI Corps, Doubleday reverted to corps commander. His December report continues to document his actions directing his division commanders as required by the battle. By late afternoon, the situation became dire and he had to face the obvious:

About 4 p.m. the enemy, having been strongly re-enforced, advanced in large numbers, everywhere deploying into double and triple lines, overlapping our left for a third of a mile, pressing heavily upon our right, and overwhelming our center. It was evident Lee's whole army was approaching. Our tired troops had been fighting desperately, some of them for six hours. They were thoroughly exhausted, and General Howard had no re-enforcements to give me. It became necessary to retreat. All my reserves had been thrown in, and the First Corps was now fighting in a single line.

I remained at the seminary superintending the final movement until thousands of hostile bayonets made their appearance around the sides of the building. I then rode back and rejoined my command, nearly all of whom were filing through the town.²⁵

It seems clear from this and other statements that Doubleday's phrase "rejoined my command" at this point in the day referred to I Corps and not his original division. His report quoted heavily from his division and even brigade commanders, often including whole sections from *their* reports. It is also filled with detailed accounts of some of his regiments and commanders, by name; near the end, he offered thanks to a number of

participants, starting with civilian John Burns, “over seventy years of age,” and working through his various commanders and those who assisted in the writing of the report.²⁶

Doubleday quotes from the reports of his brigade commanders, notably General George Stannard and Colonel Theodore Gates, and affords them and their men credit for the victory:

I think these extracts show that it is to General Stannard and Colonel Gates the country is mainly indebted for the repulse of the enemy's charge and the final victory of July 3.

The troops in the second and third lines also deserve special commendation, as they were equally exposed to the enemy's missiles. Although the artillery fire was very severe, I did not see a man desert his post.²⁷

However, when reading Doubleday's December report for July 1, one is struck by its length: it is over twice as long as Meade's report for the entire campaign. In addressing the question of which Union generals deserve credit for the Union success in the morning, Edwin Coddington wrote:

In what was by far the longest battle report of the Union army Doubleday gave a fascinating account of his activities on July 1—if only it were reliable! Since Meade, who had little confidence in him, early on July 2 removed him as commander of the First Corps and appointed in his place Major General John Newton, his junior in rank, Doubleday felt the need to offer lengthy explanations to vindicate himself. Under the circumstances, his performance as commander, if not brilliant, was very creditable, and he would have been wiser not to have written quite so much. The element of second-guessing was very strong in his report, and he claimed to have said and done things which are open to question.²⁸

That said and treading carefully, it seems clear from Doubleday's December report that he was thinking and acting as a corps commander and, for part of the time, the senior commander on the field. As such, he offers no special mention of his former division, now under Rowley. Under his command that day, I Corps repelled and held off

Confederate attacks all day from two corps, retreating at the last minute, and buying time for the AOP to occupy the hills southeast of town, which was its putative goal all along.

II. DOUBLEDAY → ROWLEY, DIVISION

The second elevation was another result of Reynold's assignment on June 30 as left wing commander, i.e., the assumption of command of the Third Division of I Corps by General Thomas Rowley when his division commander, Doubleday, became corps commander. With Rowley's elevation, command of the 1st brigade devolved to Colonel Chapman Biddle of the 121st Pennsylvania Regiment of Volunteers. Per Rowley's battle report:

I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the division under my command at Gettysburg. Pa., on July 1: The command itself had devolved upon me the day previous.

(...)

Toward 11 o'clock these two portions of the division reached the battle-field from the south, and occupied the several positions as assigned them on the right and left of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, at the distance of a half mile or more to the west of it.

(...)

A determined effort of the enemy later to turn my right flank was met by an immediate change of front and so destructive a fire from the Second Brigade that the advancing lines of the rebels, though well covered by artillery, were compelled to fall back with broken ranks to a shelter where they could be reformed.

(...)

Notwithstanding the murderous fire with which the enemy were received by my left, the disparity between the contending forces was too great to render it possible for our line to hold its position.²⁹

In addition to detailed accounts of the positions of his brigades and regiments, Rowley highlighted the performance of his brigade and regiment commanders. The actions of General Rowley are not generally known, and it might seem from his report

that he thought and acted as a division commander. However, he mentions very little about commanding the other two brigades in the division. In addition, he was later accused of inebriation on the battlefield and court-martialed for conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and disobedience of orders. He was found guilty of the first two charges.³⁰ However for the most part, I Corps commanders experienced sudden jumps to higher command and performed them in accordance with the higher command.

III. REYNOLDS → HOWARD, COMMAND ON FIELD

The third elevation was a direct result of Reynolds's death, i.e., the assumption of command by Howard as the left wing commander and the senior commander on the battlefield. Per his battle report:

On hearing of the death of General Reynolds, I assumed command of the left wing, instructing General [Carl] Schurz to take command of the Eleventh Corps. After an examination of the general features of the country, I came to the conclusion that the only tenable position for my limited force was the ridge to the southeast of Gettysburg, now so well known as Cemetery Ridge. The highest point at the cemetery commanded every eminence within easy range. The slopes toward the west and south were gradual, and could be completely swept by artillery. To the north, the ridge was broken by a ravine running transversely.

I at once established my headquarters near the cemetery, and on the highest point north of the Baltimore pike. Here General Schurz joined me before 12 m., when I instructed him to make the following dispositions of the Eleventh Corps.

At 2 p.m. a report of the state of things as then existing was sent to General Meade directly. About this time I left my chief of staff to execute orders, and went to the First Corps. I found General Doubleday about a quarter of a mile beyond the seminary.³¹

He then described the dispositions of his corps and divisions, his notifications (such as Meade, Sickles, and Henry Slocum), and reports of Confederate units appearing on the battlefield.

Eventually, the weight of Confederate numbers converging on the Federals resulted in the retreat of the AOP. Per General Howard:

About 4 p.m. I sent word to General Doubleday that, if he could not hold out longer, he must fall back, fighting, to Cemetery Hill and on the left of the Baltimore pike; also a request to General Buford to make a show of force opposite the enemy's right, which he immediately did. I now dispatched Major [Charles] Howard, my aide-de-camp, to General Slocum, to inform him of the state of affairs, requesting him to send one of his divisions to the left, the other to the right, of Gettysburg, and that he would come in person to Cemetery Hill.

(...)

At 4.10 p.m., finding that I could hold out no longer, and that the troops were already giving way, I sent a positive order to the commanders of the First and Eleventh Corps to fall back gradually, disputing every inch of ground, and to form near my position, the Eleventh Corps on the right and the First Corps on the left of the Baltimore pike. General [Adolph von] Steinwehr's division, of the Eleventh Corps, and the batteries which he was supporting, were so disposed as to check the enemy attempting to come through the town, or to approach upon the right or left of Gettysburg. The movement ordered was executed, though with considerable confusion, on account of the First and Eleventh Corps coming together in the town.

At 4.30 p.m. the columns reached Cemetery Hill, the enemy pressing hard. He made a single attempt to turn our right, ascending the slope northeast of Gettysburg, but his line was instantly broken by Wiedrich's battery, in position on the heights.

General Hancock came to me about this time, and said General Meade had sent him on hearing the state of affairs; that he had given him his instructions while under the impression that he was my senior. We agreed at once that that was no time for talking, and that General Hancock should further arrange the troops, and place the batteries upon the left of the Baltimore pike, while I should take the right of the same.³²

After the war, there was a dispute between Hancock and Howard about the exact nature of their command agreement, but that is not germane to the discussion herein.

As for Howard's command of the left wing during the day, his report seems to indicate that for the first few hours at least, he still acted as XI Corps commander. Per his

report, upon hearing of Reynold's death, he transferred corps command to Schurz; this was around 11:30 a.m. However, per his report, he did not visit Doubleday until two p.m., around 2.5 hours later, although he was in contact with him by messenger.³³ Until that time, Howard appears to have paid little attention to Doubleday and I Corps.

There is a minor controversy surrounding the forward placement of General Francis Barlow's division on Blocher's Knoll, today renamed Barlow's Knoll: specifically, who ordered Barlow to go out to such an exposed position? Schurz implied in his report that Barlow moved out without orders (below), but Barlow thought otherwise, claiming that Schurz ordered him. In his autobiography, Howard wrote, "I rode with Barlow through the city, and out to what is now Barlow Hill."³⁴ Under Howard's command that day, the left wing of the AOP repelled and held off Confederate attacks for much of the day from two Confederate corps, retreating at the last minute, and buying time for the AOP to occupy the hills southeast of town.

IV. HOWARD → SCHURZ, XI CORPS

The fourth elevation was yet another result of Reynolds's death, i.e., the assumption of command by General Schurz as XI Corps commander when Howard assumed command of the field. Per Schurz's battle report for July 1 as corps commander, sent to Howard (*italics in original, underline added*):

About 10.30 o'clock, when my division had just passed the latter place, I received, through one of your aides, the order to hurry forward my command as fast as possible, as the First Corps was engaged with the enemy in the neighborhood of Gettysburg. Leaving the command of the division in General [Alexander] Schimmelpfennig's hand, I hastened to the front, where I arrived about 11.30 o'clock, finding you upon an eminence east of the cemetery of Gettysburg, from which we overlooked the field of battle. You informed me that General Reynolds had just been killed; that you were in command of the whole, and that you had to turn over the Eleventh Corps to me.

(...)

Accordingly you ordered me to take the Third and First Divisions of the Eleventh Corps through the town, and to endeavor to gain possession of the eastern prolongation of the ridge then partly held by the First Corps, while you intended to establish the Second Division and the artillery, excepting the batteries attached to the First and Third Divisions, on Cemetery Hill and the eminence east of it as a reserve.

(...)

I ordered General Schimmelpfennig, to whom I turned over the command of the Third Division, to advance briskly through the town, and to deploy on the right of the First Corps in two lines. This order was executed with promptness and spirit.

(...)

Shortly afterward the First Division, under General Barlow, arrived by the Emmitsburg road proper, advanced through the town, and was ordered by me to form on the right of the Third Division, its First Brigade to connect with the Third Division west of the road leading to Mummasburg, while I ordered the Second Brigade to be held *en echelon* behind the right of the First Brigade east of the Mummasburg road.

(...)

After having taken the necessary observations on my extreme left, I returned to the Mummasburg road, where I discovered that General Barlow had moved forward his whole line, thus losing on his left the connection with the Third Division; moreover, the Second Brigade, of the First Division, had been taken out of its position *en echelon* behind the right of the First Brigade. I immediately gave orders to re-establish the connection by advancing the right wing of the Third Division, and hurried off aide after aide to look after the brigade of the Second Division which I had requested you to send me for the protection of my right and rear, but it had not yet arrived.³⁵

The two underlined sections describe Schurz's part of the Barlow controversy, indicating that he (Schurz) found Barlow's position different from the one assigned.

General Schurz submitted another battle report for July 2 and 3 as division commander, but that report is not germane to this discussion. As for Schurz's command of XI Corps on July 1, it seems clear from his report that he was thinking and acting as a corps commander. As such, he offered no special mention of his former division, now

under General Alexander Schimmelpfennig (this paper uses the correct German spelling). Under his command, XI Corps that afternoon repelled and held off Confederate attacks from two divisions, retreating at the last minute, and buying time for the AOP to occupy the hills southeast of town.

V. MEADE → HANCOCK, COMMAND OF FIELD

The last command assignment with major impact on the battle was Meade's ordering Hancock to ride to Gettysburg and assume command of the field, above all other generals regardless of date of rank. Per Meade's report: "About the time of this withdrawal, Major-General Hancock arrived, whom I had dispatched to represent me on the field, on hearing of the death of General Reynolds. In conjunction with Major-General Howard, General Hancock proceeded to post the troops on the Cemetery Ridge, and to repel an attack that the enemy made on our right flank."³⁶ Per Hancock's report:

A few minutes before 1 p.m., I received orders to proceed in person to the front, and assume command of the First, Third, and Eleventh Corps, in consequence of the death of Major-General Reynolds. Having been fully informed by the major-general commanding as to his intentions, I was instructed by him to give the necessary directions upon my arrival at the front for the movement of troops and trains to the rear toward the line of battle he had selected, should I deem it expedient to do so. If the ground was suitable, and circumstances made it wise, I was directed to establish the line of battle at Gettysburg.

Turning over the command of the Second Corps to Brigadier-General [John] Gibbon, under instructions from General Meade, at 1.10 o'clock I was on the road to Gettysburg, accompanied by my personal aides, Lieutenant-Colonel [Charles] Morgan, chief of staff, Second Corps, and the signal party of the corps, under command of Captain Hall....At 3 p.m. I arrived at Gettysburg and assumed the command.³⁷

By the time Hancock arrived, field command had passed from Buford to Reynolds to Doubleday to Howard and then to Hancock. After describing the army's dispositions upon his arrival, Hancock continued describing his actions:

Orders were at once given to establish a line of battle on Cemetery Hill, with skirmishers occupying that part of the town immediately in our front. The position just on the southern edge of Gettysburg, overlooking the town and commanding the Emmitsburg and Taneytown roads and the Baltimore turnpike, was already partially occupied on my arrival by direction of Major-General Howard.

(...)

As soon as the line of battle mentioned above was shown by the enemy, Wadsworth's division, First Corps, and a battery (thought to be the Fifth Maine) were placed on the eminence just across the turnpike, and commanding completely this approach....I ordered the division [General John Geary, XII Corps] to the high ground to the right of and near Round Top Mountain, commanding the Gettysburg and Emmitsburg road, as well as the Gettysburg and Taneytown road to our rear.

The trains of all the troops under my command were ordered to the rear, that they might not interfere with any movement of troops that might be directed by the major-general commanding.³⁸

Hancock then sent dispatches to Meade reporting on his actions and resulting dispositions and offered opinion on the position: “a very strong one, having for its disadvantage that it might be easily turned, and leaving to him the responsibility whether the battle should be fought at Gettysburg or at a place first selected by him.”³⁹ Between five and six, General Henry Slocum had arrived and Hancock turned command over to him.⁴⁰ Upon receiving Meade’s order to proceed to Gettysburg in the early afternoon, command devolved onto Gibbon, who led the corps from Taneytown to Gettysburg. More on Gibbon appears below.

DAY 2, JULY 2

For both armies, the morning of July 2 was one of collection and planning. Both armies were incomplete at daybreak, and units arrived until the afternoon. The discussion for this day centers around two actions, those against the Federal left,

anchored by the Round Tops and the Federal Right, mainly Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill.

On the Confederate side, Heth was still senseless from his head wound July 1, but his division was in reserve. Hill was present in a physical sense, but his health is in question: the extent of his participation is unclear. Hill's participation was so small that his name appears in few reports of the day's operations.⁴¹ Yet, he commanded one-third of the divisions that attacked. The attack on the Federal right resulted in the loss of no corps or division commanders, but did result in the loss of three brigade commanders: infantry General John M. Jones (wounded), Colonel Isaac Avery (mortally wounded), and artillery Major Joseph Latimer (mortally wounded).⁴² With no major actions from these units afterward, their replacement officers led their brigades back to Virginia.

The Confederate attack against the Federal left started with Longstreet's corps and did not start until around four in the afternoon. The attack of Longstreet's corps continued south to north *en echelon* and continued with General Ambrose Hill's corps.

VI. HOOD → LAW, DIVISION

Only two of Longstreet's divisions participated because Pickett's division had just arrived and could not deploy in time. Those divisions were commanded by Generals Hood and Lafayette McLaws. Hood's division attacked first on the right (the southernmost part of the line). Shortly after the attack started, Hood was hit in the left arm from an overhead shell explosion. Division command devolved onto General Evander Law, senior brigade commander.

However, in leading his own brigade, Law was separated from Hood and the other brigade commanders. It is unknown exactly when Law heard that Hood was

wounded and that he, Law, was division commander. Law wrote no battle report, but reports were filed for the other three brigades in Hood's division, and they contain scant reference to either Hood's wounding or Law as division commander. Comments from these reports follow:

a. General Jerome Robinson reported, "My courier, sent to General Hood, returned, and reported him wounded and carried from the field. I sent a messenger to Lieutenant-General Longstreet for re-enforcements." This indicates that Robinson did not know where Law was located but did know where Longstreet was. Robinson did not refer to Law as his division commander in his report.⁴³

b. General Henry Benning did not mention Hood's wounding, and otherwise reported, "Until late in the afternoon, nothing occurred more important than picket firing." Sometime after five:

Shortly afterward, a courier from General Law came to me, and told me that General Law wished me to move to the crest of the hill. I asked him what crest--what hill. He said all he knew was that General Law waved his hand thus (making a wave of his hand)...In a few minutes afterward, I received what was the same order from General Law, but this time clearly and in a very different sense.

(...)

Toward night, General Law informed me that he would soon move the other three brigades of the division over to the Chester Gap road, and stay there during the night, and at the same time ordered me to remain with my brigade and the Fourth Alabama Regiment until relieved by Lieut. Gen. A. P. Hill, and then to follow the division, and overtake it as soon as possible.⁴⁴

The first section seems to indicate that sometime in late afternoon, Benning was taking orders from Law, indicating that Law was then acting as division commander. This is roughly one hour after Hood was wounded. In the second section, it seems clear that Law was issuing orders for the division.

c. The fourth brigade commander was General George Anderson, who was wounded during the attack. In his stead, Colonel W. W. White, who assumed brigade command, filed the battle report, which stated:

In this charge, General Anderson was wounded, in consequence of which some confusion ensued, and the command fell back a short distance the second time. ...From the exhausted condition of the men, together with the fact that the enemy were pouring in large re-enforcements on the right, it was deemed impracticable to follow him farther. In this charge, large numbers of prisoners were taken and sent to the rear without guard; consequently the number is not known.

The brigade retired in good order across the ravine, and went into bivouac for the night. The skirmishers of the brigade being well in front, the rout of the enemy was manifested from the fact that no attempt was made to follow our retreat, and scarcely any effort made to annoy us in retiring.

The loss of the brigade was heavy: 12 officers killed and 58 wounded; 93 men killed, 457 wounded, and 51 missing.⁴⁵

It is unclear whether White knew that Law became the division commander during the advance on July 2 (although he does write that he received orders from Law on July 3), but curiously he makes no mention that he (White) ascended to command.⁴⁶ In summary, no report relates any strong leadership by Law during the charge on July 2.

A final comment on Law's command is from Harry Pfanz:

Evander Law succeeded Hood to the division's command. The activities of division commanders at Gettysburg are poorly recorded, and those of Law are no exception. How soon he learned of Hood's wounding and of his new responsibilities is not known, and it is equally hard to determine when and how he exercised his new command. [Colonel William] Oates, for instance, did not learn that Law had taken command of the division until he reached the top of Round Top. Certainly Law appointed no one to the acting command of the brigade in his stead that afternoon—a peculiar and unfortunate omission on his part. [General Jerome] Robertson learned that Law was in command of the division only after his brigade was fully engaged and he sent back to Hood for reinforcements. Learning that Hood was no longer on the field, he sent his requests to Longstreet and to [George] Tige Anderson but not to Law. Evidence of Law's work as a division commander is scanty, almost too sparse to support a

judgment about it. And yet extant information suggests that his control of the division as a whole that afternoon was not very active and strong.⁴⁷

In summary, although Hood's wounding was detrimental to the success of Longstreet's attack, it appears as if Law's missing leadership during the crucial time afterward continued the damage. This does not mean that had Law taken command of the division sooner, the attack would have succeeded, but the lack of a division commander during this attack definitely did not help it.

VII. PENDER → LANE, DIVISION

The attack continued through Longstreet's brigades. Meade and Hancock shoveled brigade after brigade from the army's right and center into the left (south) end of the line to stem Longstreet's attack (see below). The second part of the attack was to continue with Hill's Corps, first with General Richard Anderson's division and then Pender's division. Shortly after six, R. Anderson's division started its part of the attack. Around 6:30, the brigades commanded by Generals Cadmus Wilcox, Colonel David Lang, and General Ambrose Wright set off toward the Emmitsburg Road. Both Wilcox and Wright reached the Federal line and threatened it directly, but both were repulsed.⁴⁸

When Wright reached the Federal line, it was after seven. The sun was low in the sky and visibility was obscured further by clouds of smoke.⁴⁹ At this point, prior to sunset (around 7:40, with no daylight savings time), the attack started to deteriorate "en *reverse* echelon," as it were. Per R. Anderson's order, General Carnot Posey's brigade took off shortly after Wright's, but stopped at the Bliss farm halfway to the Emmitsburg Road and dueled with Federal skirmishers there: his regiments went no farther.⁵⁰ Subsequent to Posey's movement occurred a most curious incident: the next brigade in

line, that of General William Mahone, never left its position. He refused a plea from Posey for support, and this caused R. Anderson to order him to move. Even after R. Anderson sent his aide with a direct order, Mahone did not move.⁵¹

To Mahone's left was the division of General Pender, a strict disciplinarian, an aggressive and capable officer. Pender, waiting for signs of the echelon attack from Posey and Mahone, saw no movement from them and decided to ride to the south of his command to determine why R. Anderson's brigades were not moving. While Pender was on this reconnaissance mission, a shell exploded near him, a fragment tearing into his thigh and knocking him out of the battle. (The wound was mortal: he died July 18.) Word reached Pender's senior brigade commander, General James Lane, around sunset. Lane took command of the division and sent a courier to Hill for orders; but with night falling and the fire to his right subsiding, Lane decided on his own initiative not to advance.⁵² Per Lane's report:

After a portion of the army on our right (I supposed they were some of Anderson's troops) had driven the enemy some distance, General Pender rode from the left of my line to the right of his division. About sunset, I was informed by Captain [William] Norwood, of General Thomas' staff, that General Pender had been wounded, and that I must take command of the division, and advance, if I saw a good opportunity for doing so. At that time the firing on the right was very desultory, the heavy fighting having ended.

I was soon afterward informed by Major [H. A.] Whiting, of General [Robert] Rodes' staff, that General Rodes would advance at dark, and that he wished me to protect his right flank. I did not give him a definite answer then, as I had sent you to notify General Hill of General Pender's fall, and to receive instructions.⁵³

The time of Pender's wounding is not known exactly, but because he was traveling south to learn about Posey's and Mahone's delays in the echelon attack, a reasonable estimate is around 7:00 to 7:15. None of Pender's four brigades (commanded

by General Edward Thomas, and Colonels Lane, William Lowrance, and Abner Perrin) moved from their assembly lines. The attack was over. However, later that night, another action was contemplated and Lane acted in command of the division:

On being notified, however, by General Ewell that his whole command would move on the enemy's position that night, commencing with Johnson's division on the left, I told Major Whiting that would act without awaiting instructions from General Hill. I at once ordered forward Thomas' brigade and McGowan's, then commanded by Colonel Perrin, with instructions to Colonel Perrin to form an obtuse angle with Ramseur's brigade, which was the right of Rodes' first line, leaving an interval of 100 paces. At the same time, I determined to support these two brigades with Scales' and my own (commanded, respectively, by Colonels Lowrance and Avery), should there be any occasion for it. I subsequently received orders from General Hill, through Captain [W. N.] Starke, corresponding with what I had already done. Rodes' right advanced but a short distance beyond the road which was held by my skirmishers when the night attack was abandoned...⁵⁴

Lane remained in command until the next day until he was replaced by General Isaac Trimble, a supernumerary traveling with the army, for the infantry charge planned for the next afternoon. More on this appears below.

VIII. SICKLES → BIRNEY, III CORPS

Return now to the AOP. In mid-afternoon, after multiple disputes with Meade as to the placement of his corps, General Sickles decided to move III Corps west about ¾ mile. It was in the form of the Greek letter lambda (Λ) with the apex near the Peach Orchard on the Emmitsburg Road. The salient was the target of Longstreet's attack at four p.m. About one hour later, Sickles was wounded in the leg by an exploding shell and taken down from his horse, whereupon command passed to General David Birney, 1st division commander, who immediately got to work:

At 6 o'clock I found Major-General Sickles seriously wounded, and, at his request, took command of the troops. I immediately visited [General Andrew] Humphreys' division, and, finding that the enemy, advancing through a gap in the

line of my division, would take it in reverse, I ordered a change of front. General Humphreys accomplished this promptly under a most effective artillery and musketry fire, and, advancing his division rapidly, recaptured several batteries that the enemy had temporary possession of.⁵⁵

Birney offered little beyond this paragraph describing his actions for the remainder of the battle but indicated that Hancock reached him around 7:30 with a fresh brigade.⁵⁶

Meade's report refers also to this incident: "Notwithstanding the stubborn resistance of the Third Corps, under Major-General Birney (Major-General Sickles having been wounded early in the action), the superiority of numbers of the enemy enabling him to outflank the corps in its advanced position, General Birney was compelled to fall back and reform behind the line originally designed to be held."⁵⁷

Hancock's report also mentions Sickles's wounding (see below) and his description indicates that he treated Birney as III Corps commander:

I had just before received an order from General Meade to send a brigade to the assistance of General Birney (whose division had occupied the extreme left of Sickles' corps), and to send two regiments to General Humphreys, who commanded the right of that corps. I immediately led the brigade (Third Brigade, Third Division, under Colonel [George] Willard) intended for General Birney toward the left of the original line of battle of the Third Corps, and was about proceeding with it to the front, when I encountered General Birney, who informed me that his troops had all been driven to the rear, and had left the position to which I was moving. General Birney proceeded to the rear to collect his command.⁵⁸

Overall, it appears as if Birney took command of III Corps and acted afterward as the corps commander, although he does not indicate in his report to whom he gave command of his division. However, Coddington's order of battle indicates that it was General J.J. Hobart Ward.⁵⁹

IX. MEADE → HANCOCK, III CORPS

This day began with normal probing of the lines and minor artillery exchanges.

Per Hancock's report:

Sharp skirmishing occurred at intervals during the morning, particularly in front of [General Alexander] Hays' division, where quite a number of prisoners were taken from the enemy. The artillery was also frequently engaged, but no severe fighting took place until about 3 p.m., when the Third Corps advanced from its position toward the Emmitsburg road and became heavily engaged.⁶⁰

Hancock was ordered to support III Corps, and he sent in the division of General John Caldwell and made adjustments to his line.

Shortly after, Hancock reported: "About this time, General Meade informed me that General Sickles had been wounded, and directed me to assume command of the Third Corps in addition to that of my own. By this arrangement, the immediate command of the Second Corps devolved again upon General Gibbon, and that of the Third upon General Birney."⁶¹ Much of his account of July 2 covers his support of III Corps, with specifics on units and commanders of both corps (II and III, added in this quote):

I directed General Humphreys [III] to form his command on the ground from which General Caldwell [II] had moved to the support of the Third Corps, which was promptly done. The number of his troops collected was, however, very small, scarcely equal to an ordinary battalion, but with many colors, this small command being composed of the fragments of many shattered regiments. Three guns of one of its batteries had been left on the field, owing to the losses of horses and men. I established Colonel Willard's [II] brigade at the point through which General Birney's [III] division had retired, and fronting the approach of the enemy, who were pressing vigorously on. There were no other troops on its right or left, and the brigade soon became engaged, losing its commander, Colonel Willard, and many officers and men.⁶²

Hancock and Meade continued to send units to the south to contest the Confederate attack against the salient created by III Corps. Per Hancock:

On the left of the Second Corps, the line being still incomplete, and intervals existing through which the enemy approached our line of battle, General Meade brought up in person a part of the Twelfth Corps, consisting of two regiments of

Lockwood's brigade, under Brig. Gen. H. H. Lockwood, which formed line, and advanced against the enemy, then closely engaged with us, and he was soon driven from the field. By the advance of these regiments, the artillery which had been left on the field in the Third Corps line was recaptured from the enemy. Humphreys' division participated in this advance and in the recapture of its guns.⁶³

After ordering Gibbon to send Colonel Samuel Carroll's brigade to reinforce Howard on Cemetery Hill, Hancock saw to the replenishment of ammunition to his corps. Noting that his command was weakened by the fighting this day, Hancock ensured that every available soldier was on the line for July 3.⁶⁴

X. HANCOCK → GIBBON II CORPS

Another example of delegation this day is General John Gibbon, Second Division commander, who assumed command of II Corps when Meade on July 1 ordered Hancock to go to Gettysburg and take command of the field. He had led the corps in its march from Taneytown to Gettysburg, whereupon it arrived around seven the next morning. Probably because July 1 involved only marching and bivouacking and Hancock's report chronicled this in his own report, Gibbon did not refer to July 1 in his report:

I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the Second Division during the battle of Gettysburg, on July 2 and 3...

The report will refer partly to the Second Division and partly to the Second Corps, in command of which I was twice placed, first at Taneytown, and again during the battle of the 2d, when General Hancock was ordered to take command of the Third Corps.⁶⁵

For this day, Gibbon responded to the advance of III Corps by firing artillery over the heads of his men into the Confederates. Shortly after this: "About this time the command of the corps was turned over to me by Major-General Hancock. The smoke was at this time so dense that but little could be seen of the battle, and I directed some of

the guns to cease firing, fearing they might injure our own men or uselessly waste their ammunition.”⁶⁶ He continued to reinforce Humphreys and eventually, with assistance from XII Corps, the line held, until: “Darkness ended the contest here, but it continued for some time on our right, in front of the Eleventh Corps. I sent Carroll's brigade, of the Third Division, and two regiments of Webb's brigade to its assistance.”⁶⁷ His orders to Carroll's brigade of another II Corps division shows that he was still acting as corps commander when darkness fell.

Note that neither Hancock nor Gibbon indicated if Gibbon passed division command to a brigade commander at this time. This does not mean that he failed to do so: it means only that neither general reported it.

XI. MEADE → SLOCUM, RIGHT WING AOP

In his Pipe Creek Circular, Meade had given Slocum an additional assignment (brackets added): “General Slocum will assume command of the two corps at Hanover [V under Sykes] and Two Taverns [his own XII], and withdraw them, via Union Mills, deploying one to the right and one to the left, after crossing Pipe Creek, connecting on the left with General Reynolds, and communicating his right to General John Sedgwick at Manchester, who will connect with him and form the right.”⁶⁸ This assignment had little impact on July 1 because Slocum did not arrive in town until after five p.m. and, as the senior officer, took command of the field. Also, the army never rallied on Pipe Creek anyway.

On July 2, however, Slocum thought that he was still the commander of the right wing, reasonable because Meade had not rescinded it. Strangely, Slocum did not mention this assignment in his original report (August 23, 1863), and neither Sykes nor Sedgwick

reported having received any orders from him.⁶⁹ However, Slocum mentioned it (with some irritation) in an addendum dated December 30 (italics added):

I deeply regret the necessity which compelled me to send my report and that of General Williams [Alphaeus, 1st Division Commander] unaccompanied by any report of the operations of the First Division, for although an account of the operations of this division was given in the report of General [Alpheus] Williams, *who commanded the corps during the battle*, I think the absence of [General Thomas] Ruger's report may account for some of the errors contained in your report as to the operations of the Twelfth Corps.

(...)

Although the command of the Twelfth Corps was given temporarily to General Williams by, your order, and although you directed him to meet at the council with other corps commanders, you fail to mention his name in your entire report, and in no place allude to his having any such command, or to the fact that more than one corps was at any time placed under my command, although at no time after you assumed command of the army until the close of this battle was I in command of less than two corps. I have now in my possession your written orders, dated July 2, directing me to assume command of the Sixth Corps, and, with that corps and the two then under my command (the Fifth and Twelfth), to move forward and at once attack the enemy.

I allude to this fact for the purpose of refreshing your memory on a subject which you had apparently entirely forgotten when you penned your report, for you have not failed to notice the fact of General Schurz and others having held, even for a few hours, commands above that previously held by them.⁷⁰

The Union commander's son and aide, George Meade, Jr., states this for July 4:

“General Slocum, in command of the right, was immediately directed to advance his corps, and ascertain the position of the enemy.”⁷¹ Given all this, it is unclear how much Slocum commanded the “wing” because his original report and addendum mention no case where he ordered either Sykes or Sedgwick to do anything, which corresponds to their battle reports. On the other hand, it appears to have been important to Slocum to highlight those under his command who performed above their paygrade, such as Schurz.

As of late on July 2, V Corps was ordered to the left flank and VI Corps was split up and acted as a reserve, so they were nowhere near Slocum. As a corps commander, he would have attended Meade's meeting on July 2 anyway, so that indicates nothing. Therefore, how much Slocum commanded his wing remains unclear.

XII. SLOCUM → WILLIAMS, XII CORPS

The last Union elevation this day is that of General Williams to command of XII Corps. As indicated in the previous section, mention of Williams in this position in official reports is tied closely to mention of Slocum as wing commander. However, the question here is how well did he assume that role? First, it should be noted that Slocum's original report in August mentions nothing about being wing commander nor any duties or actions associated with it.

Second, Williams's report is actually two submissions, the first from the commander of "First Division of, and Twelfth Army Corps," which he makes clear:

In compliance with circular order, Army of the Potomac, August 20, I have the honor to submit the following report of the movements of this division from June 28 to its arrival at Warrenton Junction on July 26 last, excepting July 1, 2, and 3, when the division was under the command of Brigadier-General Ruger...

(...)

[July 1] Major-General Slocum having turned over the temporary command of the corps to me, Brigadier-General Ruger assumed command of the division.

For operations of the division on July 2 and 3, I respectfully refer to the official report of that officer.⁷²

The second part of the report covers his tenure as XII Corps commander: "The temporary command of the Twelfth Army Corps having devolved upon me from July 1 to 4,

inclusive, I have the honor, in obedience to order, to submit the following report of the part taken by it in the recent operations in the vicinity of Gettysburg...”⁷³

Williams then continues to describe the activities of the actions of the divisions and brigades under his command as corps commander, to wit:

On the morning of July 1, the corps left Littlestown, moving-on the Baltimore pike toward Gettysburg. While halting near Two Taverns, information was received that the First and Eleventh Corps were engaged with the enemy beyond Gettysburg, and that Major-General Reynolds was mortally wounded. The corps was immediately put in rapid march toward the scene of action, and Major-General Slocum proceeded at once to the front, to assume command. In this temporary transfer of commands, Brig. Gen. T. H. Ruger took command of the First Division, and Colonel [Silas] Colgrove, Twenty-seventh Indiana Volunteers, of the Third (Ruger's) Brigade, First Division...

The Second Division (Geary's), under the direct orders of Major-General Slocum, crossed Rock Creek, and took up a position for the night on the left of the First Corps. My headquarters were with the First Division.

(...)

[July 2] At 8 a.m. orders were received to unite the two divisions of the corps, and occupy a new line on the right of Wadsworth's division, of the First Corps, north of Rock Creek...

Between 5 and 6 p.m. orders were received from Major-General Slocum to detach the First Division (Ruger's) and Lockwood's brigade to support the left wing of the army, then heavily attacked. Geary's division was at the same time ordered to cover and defend the intrenched line of the whole corps. I marched with the supporting detachment with all possible dispatch, under a severe artillery fire, following as nearly as possible the direction of the heavy firing.

[July 3] I made such arrangements for a heavy artillery fire, with infantry feints upon the right, followed by a strong assault by Geary's division from Greene's position on the left, as I judged would speedily dislodge the enemy.

(...)

[July 3] At length, after seven hours' continuous combat, the enemy attempted to push beyond the intrenchments on our right, and was in turn repulsed and followed sharply beyond the defenses by regiments of the First Division posted in the woods to observe his movements.

An advance from Geary's division at the same time effectually and finally expelled them from our breastworks, which were at once occupied by our troops in their entire length.⁷⁴

It should be noted that neither Slocum nor Williams state in their reports what time the corps departed Two Taverns for Gettysburg. Williams's statement above for July 1 that "The corps was immediately put in rapid march toward the scene of action" certainly ranks as hyperbole because the corps remained in that place until late afternoon before Slocum ordered it to move.

At Meade's meeting on the night of July 2, Williams appeared as corps commander, but when he saw Slocum there, he asked Meade if he should depart, but Meade directed him to stay.⁷⁵ That Williams perceived Slocum's attendance as enough to question his own appearance, resulting in two representatives from XII Corps (especially in the small room in the Leister House), indicates that the command arrangement was not clear to all involved. However, it does seem clear from these excerpts that Williams acted as corps commander through the four days of the battle, despite the ambiguity of the wing command of his superior.

DAY 3, JULY 3

The discussion for this day centers around two actions, Culp's Hill and Pickett's Charge. On the Confederate side, the action on Culp's Hill resulted in the loss of no major commanders (defined as division or above). With the end of the battle on this day, all that remained for the Second Corps was to lead the men across the Potomac. Heth was still unfit for duty owing to his head wound on July 1, and Pender was incapacitated

from his leg wound on July 2. Hill was present in a physical sense, but his health is in question: the extent of his participation is unclear. Hill's participation was so small that his name appears in few reports of the day's operations. Yet, he commanded one-third of the divisions that attacked that afternoon.

George Pickett's division had arrived west of Gettysburg on the afternoon of July 2, but not in time for the four p.m. attack; therefore, Lee ordered it to encamp. It was the ANV's only division that had seen no action on July 1 or 2. Its three brigade commanders were Generals Richard Garnett, James Kemper, and Lewis Armistead. Hill contributed six brigades to the attack. Because of the incapacities of Heth and Pender, Pettigrew and Trimble, respectively, commanded their divisions. The total number of soldiers in the attack was between 13,000 and 14,000 men, depending on the source.

Although the attack punctured the Federal Line on Cemetery Ridge along the border between the II Corps divisions of Gibbon and Hays, it failed. About one-half of the attacking force was lost. Its details are not germane to this discussion. What is important is the extent of the damage on the command structure of the two armies.

A Confederate order of battle shows clearly that the command structure of Pickett's division was decimated beyond reason. Although Pickett was unharmed, his three brigade commanders were either killed outright (Garnett), wounded and captured (briefly, Kemper), or mortally wounded and captured (Armistead). Of his 15 regimental commanders, 13 were wounded or killed; only two were unhurt. Brigade commands fell to two colonels and a major (Charles Peyton in Garnett's brigade).

The numbers in Pettigrew's (Heth's) division were similar, with Pettigrew himself wounded. He survived until he was wounded again mortally at the Potomac.

Most of the regimental commanders in Colonel James K. Marshall's and Davis's brigades were wounded or killed. With Pettigrew commanding the division, command of his own brigade fell eventually to a major (John T. Jones) after Colonel Marshall was killed. Trimble was wounded and captured. His (Pender's) division fared hardly better: for example, Lowrance's brigade lost four of its five regimental commanders to wounds or capture. With Pettigrew wounded, Lane assumed command of the division again.⁷⁶ All that remained for the fill-in commanders was to lead their men back to the Confederate line and then back to Virginia.

On the Federal side, the most prominent casualty was the wounding of General Hancock near the end of the charge, about the same time that General George Stannard's Vermont brigade enfiladed the Confederate right flank. Although taken from his horse, Hancock stayed on the field receiving reports and issuing orders as he awaited the arrival of an ambulance. (Stannard, whose brigade was in I Corps, was also wounded in the attack.) The divisions of Gibbon and Hays, being the aimpoint of the attack, suffered some command losses, comparable to those of General John Caldwell's division the previous day. Gibbon and a brigade commander, Alexander Webb, were wounded. About 10 regimental commanders (two were themselves fill-ins) were killed or wounded. Gibbon turned over command to the senior officer, General William Harrow, and went to the rear. Hays's division fared slightly better: Hays was untouched, but both brigade commanders on the line were either wounded (Colonel Thomas Smyth) or mortally wounded (Colonel Eliakim Sherrill, himself a fill-in). (Colonel Carroll and three regiments had been on detached duty to Culp's Hill since the previous afternoon; only the 8th Ohio remained on the line.)⁷⁷ Only three regimental commanders were wounded or

killed. But again, as with the ANV, these officers who assumed command did so at the end of the battle; although they performed in the higher role, for the most part, the battle was over.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper examined the concept of delegation as it pertains to the Battle of Gettysburg. It first defined and compared delegation in its civilian and military forms. Some definitions of delegation involve ownership and authority, and others are narrower, stating that one can delegate authority but not responsibility. The military version follows the latter definition.

In general, delegation is used to build leadership in subordinates, both in and out of the military. It is often difficult for the new manager to delegate owing to the pull of doing work themselves as they did previously. In quiet times, it takes time and planning to develop leadership skills, and subordinates are given tasks of increasing difficulty and responsibility to prepare them for higher positions. Wartime accelerates advancement, and this decreases the time available for gradual training: The Civil War was no exception to this. Examples from WW2 illustrated how suddenly command can pass to subordinates.

The paper then turned to the Battle of Gettysburg to examine cases therein to determine how command falling on subordinates affected its outcome. The battle depleted the officer corps of both armies from the Union's three corps commanders to the wholesale elimination of most regimental commanders in Pickett's division on July 3. This led to a discussion of command changes for four periods of the campaign and battle, and these are summarized below.

1. Lead-in to the battle prior to July 1. The Confederates had no major command changes during this period. On the Federal side, Lincoln's selection of George Meade for command of the AOP resulted not only in the removal of Hooker from command but caused other command elevations. One of these elevations is Sykes's assumption of command of V Corps to replace Meade in that position. Because Meade's performance is covered in numerous texts, it was not discussed in this paper, but others are covered below in subsequent sections.

2. Day 1, July 1. This day is characterized by the absence from the field of both commanders, General Lee for part of it and General Meade for all of it. The ANV had one division commander put out of action, Heth, and a small number of brigade commanders, but overall, its command structure remained intact.

For the AOP, this day saw a large number of command transfers, caused mostly by the death of General Reynolds in late morning as I Corps arrived on the field. The effect of this death rippled through the command structure of the army's left wing, mostly I and XI Corps. A summary of these command changes follows:

- I. Reynolds → Doubleday, I Corps
- II. Doubleday → Rowley, Division
- III. Reynolds → Howard, Command on Field
- IV. Howard → Schurz, XI Corps
- V. Meade → Hancock, Command of Field

Despite the changes to the command structure in the two corps, they, along with Buford's cavalry division, managed to delay the Confederates long enough until the rest of the army arrived and occupied the hills south and east of town. This was their goal all

along, despite the day's being judged as a Confederate victory. As such, from a command standpoint, Union commanders performed not necessarily brilliantly, but well enough that, at day's end, the Federals occupied the high ground that impeded the Confederates for the rest of the battle.

3. *Day 2, July 2.* With both armies largely in place, the ferocity of the fighting this day produced significant command changes in both armies. For the ANV:

VI. Hood → Law, Division

VII. Pender → Lane, Division

The loss of Generals Hood and Pender was critical this day not only because of their fighting ability, but also from the relatively minor impact of the generals who took command in their stead. This was not necessarily their fault but was caused by the timing of their assumption of command. General Law was not aware of Hood's wounding for up to one hour while the division engaged the Federals in some of the hardest fighting of the war near the Round Tops. General Lane took command of the division just before sunset when Pender was wounded: with the approach of darkness, Lane ordered the attack stopped. Given the technology of the period, neither of these episodes appears out of line.

The command structure of the AOP again involved more transfers of command than the Confederates with a number equal to that on July 1, to wit

VIII. Sickles → Birney, III Corps

IX. Meade → Hancock, III Corps

X. Hancock → Gibbon II Corps

XI. Meade → Slocum, Right Wing AOP

XII. Slocum → Williams, XII Corps

The wounding of General Sickles resulted in two command transfers. First, upon finding Sickles wounded seriously, General Birney took immediate command of III Corps, but was in command for only about one hour. During this time, he continued the corps's resistance against Longstreet's attack. Upon hearing the same news, Meade ordered Hancock to take command of that corps, causing Hancock to place Gibbon in command again. Hancock once again showed his worth to the Union by transferring enough units from across the AOP to stop Longstreet's attack.

The continued assignment of General Slocum as the right wing commander and the subsequent elevation of General Alpheus Williams to XII Corps commander had little effect on the battle. Slocum appears to have had little or no contact with Generals Sykes or Sedgwick, who were supposed to be under his wing command. As such, because Slocum's assignment was not rescinded from the Pipe Creek Circular, it appears to have caused more confusion than anything.

4. Day 3, July 3. The two main Confederate attacks this day, Culp's Hill and Pickett's Charge, produced thousands of casualties for sure including several generals on both sides. However, the generals in command at day's start provided the leadership that determined the outcome in both areas: Culp's Hill produced no casualties at or above the division level and Generals Hancock, Gibbon, and Hays led the defense against the Confederate infantry. Although Hancock and Gibbon were wounded, they remained on the field until the attack was repulsed; they were then removed from the field. For both armies, the remainder of this day and July 4 were spent patrolling, collecting wounded, and for the Confederates, preparing to evacuate.

These conclusions may be derived from this study:

1. The modern management concept of delegation provides a practical, structured approach for examining transfers of command in historical battles. The American military follows a narrow version of delegation which includes delegating authority to subordinates, but not responsibility. This makes commanders responsible for all activities and actions performed by subordinates under their command. It also transfers command authority to the subordinate when the commander is absent or unable to command. Good historical examples of these cases are General McAuliffe at Bastogne and Admiral Spruance at Midway, respectively.

2. Gettysburg is an excellent battle to study from the standpoint of delegation because of its three-day duration and the number of generals elevated to higher command responsibilities (but not higher rank). This allows enough time to examine the effects of those assignments and how they affected the battle. Although they are obviously studied long after the fact, hindsight does not give us the right to conclude that we, today, could have or would have done a better job. This is not the intended terminus of this analysis.

3. Meade's elevation to army command on June 28 caused one major command change, that of Sykes to command V Corps. He took command of the corps on that day, meaning that the Union army commander and one corps commander had three days of experience in their respective jobs when the battle started on July 1. The replacement of major commanders affected the AOP more than the ANV, with the former losing three of seven corps commanders (Reynolds, Sickles, and Hancock) and the latter, none.

The battle started with both army commanders absent and went downhill from there. Days 1 and 2 are the most affected by substitute commanders. On Day 1, the

cascading assignments owing to Reynolds's death managed to delay the Confederate advance despite being outnumbered and outflanked: at day's end, the Federals held the high ground south of town, their goal all along. On Day 2, the actions of Hancock, who was placed in command of III Corps after Sickles's wounding, saved its left flank. As Fletcher Pratt wrote in *A Short History of the Civil War: Ordeal by Fire*, "For if any one fact emerges from the tangled account of Gettysburg it is this—that the Union victory was achieved by no one man, but by the cooperation of a large number of men, each appearing, as though by a miracle, in exactly the right place."⁷⁸ He continued further by describing the appearance on the first day of the battle of Generals John Reynolds, Abner Doubleday, and Oliver Howard, each of whom independently did exactly what was required at the right time. He then mentioned General Gouverneur Warren and the V Corps on July 2.⁷⁹

A simplistic conclusion (unfortunately offered by many authors) might be that General Meade did not win the battle, but this is misleading. Indeed, by December 1863, this idea was already planted in the heads of some: Meade even referred to this in a letter to his wife Margaretta in December 1863: "I see the Herald is constantly harping on the assertion that Gettysburg was fought by the corps commanders and the common soldiers, and that no generalship was displayed. I suppose after awhile it will be discovered I was not at Gettysburg at all."⁸⁰ Care must be taken to avoid the pabulum provided by this path.

It is also unreasonable to conclude from this study that the Union won the battle *solely* because of good commanders; the Confederates had good commanders too. The reasons for the Union victory are many and need not be enumerated here. Certainly to be

considered in any analysis is that the Federal victory occurred despite the upheaval in the Union command by the surprise assignment of Meade and the early death of Reynolds.

In fact, the totality of the actions of all Federal subordinate officers who stepped up and performed, as shown in this paper, indicates that an army needs more than a commander to win a battle. It needs a mature, independent, and competent command system. Simply having Robert E. Lee in command was insufficient: the Confederate command system did not perform as well as the Union's. Upon deeper thought, is that not the goal of any management system—that subordinates rise to sudden challenges and perform independently and competently? Therefore, it is more apt to state that the Battle of Gettysburg was won by the Army of the Potomac, George Meade commanding.

In the end, the Battle of Gettysburg was fought largely by men of conviction on both sides under the most terrible circumstances. Some of the officers were propelled quickly to higher responsibilities, from commanding a brigade to a division, from a corps to one-third the army. Modern management concepts of delegation offer a way to evaluate these actions with clear criteria, and that has been used in this paper.

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