

Gettysburg Staff Ride Guide

Ted Ballard

Much has been written about the Battle of Gettysburg, one of the greatest battles of the American Civil War. The most tangible historical link to those three days in July 1863, however, is the battlefield itself, parts of which look much the same today as they did at the time of the battle. For that reason, every year regardless of season, groups of Army officers and Department of Defense civilians tramp across the fields and hills of Gettysburg on organized staff rides.

The purpose of these rides is to further the professional development of Army leaders. These rides focus not only on what happened, but also on how and why events occurred as they did and on what these observations mean now. The emphasis on the "how and why" brings the staff ride analysis to bear on current understanding of the realities of war and airland battle doctrine. Thus, a properly conducted staff ride is a powerful teaching tool.

The following information is intended to assist individuals interested in designing and leading a Gettysburg staff ride.

One publication to assist in arranging the project is *The Staff Ride*, by William G. Robertson and published by the U.S. Army Center of Military History. This booklet provides guidance to organize a staff ride, lists various requirements associated with staff rides, and establishes flexible standards for a successful exercise. Copies are available from the U.S. Army Publications Center, 2800 Eastern Boulevard, Baltimore, Md. 21220-2896. The order number is CMH Pub 70-21.

Gettysburg staff rides invariably begin at the Gettysburg National Military Park Visitor Center. That office has brochures, maps, and other information which can be mailed to the staff ride leader, who should coordinate with the Visitor Center staff well before the day of the ride. The Visitor Center is located on Route 134, across from the National Cemetery, and includes a museum and a thirty-minute Electric Map presentation that shows—through the use of colored lights—landmarks, points of fighting, and troop movements during the battle. The Visitor Center and nearby Cyclorama Building are open seven days a week, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. The 750 square-foot Elec-

tric Map is shown from 8:15 a.m., every forty-five minutes. The last showing is at 4:25 p.m. Admission is \$2.00 per adult. Seating capacity is 525.

The Cyclorama Building, just south of the Visitor Center, also on Route 134, houses the Gettysburg Cyclorama, an 1884 painting of Pickett's charge by Paul Philippoteaux. The painting is 356 feet in circumference by 26 feet high and is displayed with a light and sound program highlighting points shown on the canvas. The Cyclorama is shown from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., every half hour. Admission is \$2.00 per adult, and seating capacity is 150.

Additional information regarding the Gettysburg National Battlefield Park can be obtained by calling (717) 334-1124, or by writing to the Superintendent, Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg, Pa. 17325.

Before actual field study at Gettysburg, the staff ride leader should become relatively familiar with the battle and principal personalities. A "dry run" to the battlefield is highly recommended to lay out the route, create a time schedule, and become familiar with actual sites of important events.

Gettysburg was an "encounter battle" because neither the Federal nor the Confederate leaders planned to meet in combat there. In fact, neither the Union Army of the Potomac nor the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had any prior idea of the relative geography or terrain of the area. Gettysburg staff ride participants, however, can arrive better prepared. Modern topographical maps of the battlefield area (Fairfield and Gettysburg Quadrangles, both 1:24,000) are available for sale by the U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, Colo. 80225, or Reston, Va. 22092. The cost is \$2.00 per set.

Sources of information and publications about the battle of Gettysburg are legion. It would take more space than is available here to list them all, but what follows may be helpful to Gettysburg staff ride leaders. These should be available from commercial bookstores or, if out of print, through interlibrary loan:

Cleaves, Freeman. *Meade at Gettysburg*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960.

Downey, Clifford. *Death of a Nation: The Story of Lee and His Men at Gettysburg*. New York: Knopf, 1958.

Eckenrode, Hamilton James. *James Longstreet, Lee's War Horse*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936.

Esposito, Vincent J. *West Point Atlas of American Wars*. vol. 1, 1689-1900. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964. Maps 92-99.

Freeman, Douglas Southall. *R.E. Lee, A Biography*. New York: Scribner, 1934-35, 4 volumes.

_____. *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, vol. 3 *Gettysburg to Appomattox*. New York: Scribner, 1942-44. Chapters 1-18.

Hollingsworth, Alan M. *The Third Day at Gettysburg: Pickett's Charge*. New York: Holt, 1959.

Longstreet, Helen D. *Lee and Longstreet at High Tide*. Privately published by the author. Gainesville, Georgia: 1904.

Luvaas, Jay and Nelson, Harold W., editors. *The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Gettysburg*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: South Mountain Press, Inc., 1986.

Meade, George Gordon. *With Meade at Gettysburg*. Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1930.

Montgomery, James. *The Shaping of a Battle: Gettysburg*. Philadelphia: Chilton, 1959.

Nichols, Edward Jay. *Toward Gettysburg: A Biography of General John F. Reynolds*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press: 1958.

Nicholson, John P., editor. *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: William Stanley Ray, 1904.

Norton, Oliver Wilcox. *The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top*. New York: Neale, 1913.

Stackpole, Edward James. *They Met at Gettysburg*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Eagle Books, 1956.

Swanberg, W.A. *Stickles the Incredible*. New York: Scribner, 1956.

Taylor, Emerson Gifford. *Gouverneur Kemble Warren: The Life and Letter of an American Soldier*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932.

Tucker, Glenn. *High Tide at Gettysburg: The Campaign in Pennsylvania*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958.

Walker, Francis Amasa. *General Hancock*. New York: Appleton, 1894.

_____. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Grant Lee edition, vol. 3, parts 1 and 2. New York: The Century Company, 1888.

_____. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series 1, vol. 27, parts 2 and 3. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1889.

Additional advice and assistance on how to plan and conduct staff rides can be obtained from the following sources:

In the continental United States: Mr. Ted Ballard (DAMH-FI), U.S. Army Center of Military History, Southeast Federal Center, Bldg. #159, Washington, D.C. 20374-5088 (DSN 335-2905, commercial 202-475-2905).

Military History Director, Department of National Strategy, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 17013-5000 (DSN 242-3207, commercial 717-245-3207).

Director, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kans. 66027-6900 (DSN 552-2810/3831, commercial 913-938-2810).

Head, Department of History, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. 10996 (DSN 688-2810, commercial 914-938-2810).

In Europe: Chief, Military History Office, ATTN: AEAGS-MH, Headquarters, U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army, APO New York 09403 (DSN 370-8612/8127)

In Korea: Command Historian, ATTN: SJS-H, Headquarters, Eighth Army, APO San Francisco 96301-0100 (DSN 315-723-5213/5214).

Larry C. ("Ted") Ballard is a historian in the Center's Field and International Division, with a special interest in the Civil War. Because of the numerous phone calls and letters we receive each year asking for advice or support for staff rides, in future issues Mr. Ballard will discuss the more popular Civil War staff ride sites in the region around Washington, D.C.