

According to historians Scott Bowden and Bill Ward in their controversial work, **Last Chance for Victory**, “*More myth and misconception enshroud the second day’s fighting at Gettysburg than any other battle of the American Civil War.*” They further state, “*The fight for Little Round Top was not as significant as some would have us believe.... Cemetery Hill was the decisive point for the fighting on July 2.*”

Supposedly, Robert E. Lee’s plan for that day called for James Longstreet’s I Corps to assail the Federal left at Little Round Top, followed by Richard Ewell’s II Corps, at the sound of Longstreet’s guns, to advance on the enemy’s right at Culp’s Hill. When dawn broke over Gettysburg on July 2, the two opposing armies faced each other on parallel ridges across an open plain. Both armies had been reinforced overnight—Confederate strength at about 50,000 and Union forces numbering over 60,000. Lee ordered Longstreet to attack “en echelon” (sequentially from right to left) up the Emmitsburg Road, presuming that such a maneuver would strike the Federals in flank and rear. Though Lee intended to begin this movement in the morning, it was 11:00 A.M. before he issued the orders. The most serious delay, however, was due to Longstreet who was convinced that the Confederate army should slip past the Federal left and take up positions in the Union rear, thus forcing George Meade to assume the tactical offensive against the Confederate defensive line. The delay cost the Confederates several hours and the attack did not commence until nearly 4:30 P.M.

Once Longstreet began the attack, his divisional commanders—John Bell Hood and Lafayette McLaws—attacked on the extreme Confederate right toward Little Round Top while Richard Anderson drove against the Federal center at Cemetery Ridge. Severe fighting ensued at Devil’s Den, the Wheatfield, the Peach Orchard, along the banks of Plum Run, and finally Little Round Top itself. On the other end of the long, curving line of battle, Ewell had waited all day to deliver his attack. Finally, giving the order, Ewell sent one division to assault Culp’s Hill and another the “*saddle*” between Culp’s Hill and Cemetery Hill. Although both attacks made by Ewell’s forces met with initial success, darkness and hesitation caused Ewell to suspend the fighting on his end.

July 2 had been a severely bloody day—both sides lost approximately 10,000 men. Lee had not broken the Federal line, but he had come close three times. That night George Meade called a staff meeting to discuss a possible retreat, but his corps commanders convinced him to stay. After the meeting Meade expressed his opinion that having attacked both the left and the right, Lee would next attack the Federal center. He was correct.

This month guest speaker, Neil Martin, will present “*The Myth of Little Round Top*” based on the analysis of the book by Garry Adelman. This thought-provoking book dares to go against the prevailing attitude concerning the importance of Little Round Top. Plan on attending the meeting—**MONDAY, JULY 31**—to find out what the myth is and how it developed over time. A long-time MRRT member and ex-president, Neil is retired from Ford and works part-time for a wine distribution company (save your wine-related questions until after the presentation). Neil’s interest in the Civil War goes back more than 45 years when he first read *Robert E. Lee and the Road to Honor*. Gettysburg holds a particular fascination for Neil, and this will be his third presentation to the Round Table, all on some aspect of Gettysburg. As with his last program, expect a different perspective on a generally-accepted view of the battle.

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FALL FIELD TRIP: This month money will be collected for the Saturday night dinner and the Saturday afternoon lunch. You must decide from the following dinner items: Grilled Beef Sirloin (\$39), Grilled Salmon (\$39), Grilled Chicken Breast (\$37), or the Vegetarian Plate (\$35). The lunch consists of a sandwich (ham, turkey, or vegetarian), chips, fruit, and a drink (\$6). Please have your selections and a check (made out to Jerry Maxwell or Carroll Tietz) ready at this meeting. If you have any questions, please call Jerry at 248-363-1710.



The MRRT extends its thanks to last month’s speaker, **Jerry Maxwell**, for his presentation, “*Six Heroes (and two honorable mentions) at the Battle of Shiloh.*”

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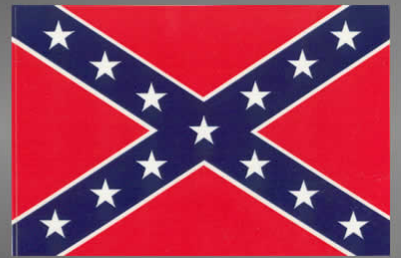
QUIZ: The month of July was dominated by the news of Gettysburg and Vicksburg. However, other events took place during July throughout the war. The following questions pertain to some of those events....

1. On July 10, 1861, the Confederate government concluded a treaty with a tribe of Indians. Which general/agent was responsible for the treaty and with which tribe did he negotiate the agreement? Also, on the same day the Imperial Russian Government instructed its ministry in Washington D.C. on its policy of neutrality. Which Tsar, known as the “Russian Lincoln” and later assassinated on March 1, 1881, ruled Russia at the time?
2. On July 13, 1861, Federal forces commanded by George B. McClellan won a stunning victory over the Confederates in western Virginia. Name the battle and the Confederate general who was killed there.
3. On July 20, 1861, a New York City newspaper editor coined a term that referred to Northerners who opposed Lincoln and the war effort. Name the commonly known expression. Also, nine days later the same editor urged Lincoln to negotiate a peace treaty with the Confederacy. Name the editor and his newspaper.
4. On July 1, 1862, the Battle of Malvern Hill ended the “Seven Days Battles.” Give 2 other names for this battle.
5. On July 2, 1862, what law did President Lincoln sign that granted thousands of acres of land and ultimately established land grant agricultural colleges in every state? Also, on July 12, what distinctive honor did Lincoln sign into law?
6. On July 26, 1863, which famous Confederate cavalryman was captured near West Point, Ohio? And, on the same day two prestigious Southern politicians died. One was a national hero who was later vilified by his own people in Texas; the other a Kentuckian who attempted a final compromise before the War began. Name them.
7. On July 9, 1864, the Federals lost a battle to Jubal Early that perhaps saved Washington D.C. Name the battle and the Union general who was defeated.
8. On July 12, 1864, President Lincoln, while under fire from the Confederates, was told by a Federal captain to “Get down, you damned fool!” Name the captain and the place where this incident occurred.
9. On July 22, 1864, two generals were killed during the Battle of Atlanta. Name them. [Extra Credit: Who temporarily replaced the Federal general?]
10. On July 30, 1864, the Federal army at Petersburg detonated 8000 pounds of gunpowder resulting in the massive hole in the ground called “The Crater.” Which regiment of mostly coal miners dug the tunnel and which lieutenant colonel led them? Also, which drunken Union general botched the entire operation of the attack after the explosion and which Confederate general halted the Federal advance?

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An admiring Union officer once stated: “*This Vincent fellow knows how to handle a brigade!*” He was speaking of Colonel Strong Vincent, the 26-year-old commander, whose brigade consisted of the 20th Maine, 16th Michigan, 44th New York, and the 83rd Pennsylvania. Although mortally wounded on the second day of fighting at Gettysburg, Strong Vincent’s critical actions at Little Round Top would never be forgotten by his admiring soldiers.

Born June 17, 1837, at Waterford, Pennsylvania, Vincent grew up to work in his father’s iron foundry in Erie. He later attended Trinity College and graduated from Harvard University in 1859. He practiced law until the outbreak of the war. He became adjutant of a 3-month regiment and then was promoted to lieutenant colonel of the 83rd Pennsylvania. Vincent took charge of the regiment when its colonel, J.W. McLane, was killed at Gaines’ Mill. Although Vincent was known as a strong disciplinarian, his men knew him to be quiet and considerate, and of cheerful disposition. Furthermore,



he was intelligent and resolute, exuded confidence, and looked the leader of men. His young wife, a skilled equestrienne, had visited him and their long horseback rides, their gaiety, and their striking good looks made them familiar figures to the army, greatly admired for their ideal love.

Vincent's brigade had a new flag just prior to the Battle of Gettysburg, triangular-shaped, white, with a blue border, and a red Maltese cross in the center. It made the men of Vincent's outfit proud, but Vincent himself remained partial to the flag of his first regiment—the 83rd Pennsylvania. As his brigade neared Hanover on the evening of July 1, Vincent, mounted on his horse, "*Old Jim*," watched as the flag of the 83rd unfurled at headquarters after the long march. Vincent removed his hat and said prophetically to a staff officer, "*What death more glorious can any man desire than to die on the soil of old Pennsylvania fighting for that flag.*"

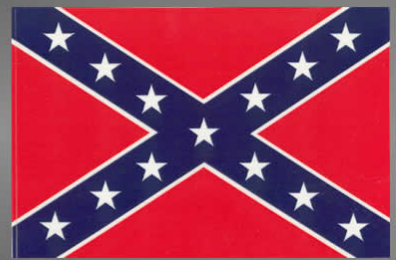
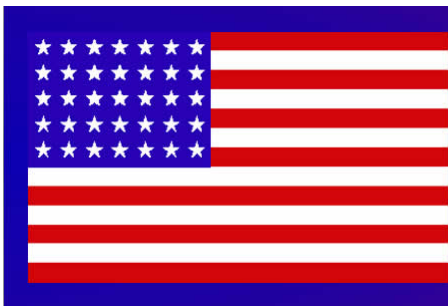
On July 2 Vincent rode with Private Oliver W. Norton, the brigade standard-bearer, on reconnaissance. Exploring the area of Little Round Top, a shell exploded nearby. Vincent yelled, "*Down with that flag, Norton! Damn it, go behind the rocks with it!*" Vincent continued to scout the area alone and on foot. Within 15 minutes Vincent did one of the war's best jobs of reconnaissance, selection, and occupation of position. He had selected a line of defense that would start on the west slope of Little Round Top and continue around the hill in a quarter circle—not on the crest, but well below it. As his regiments arrived, he put them into line carefully. To Joshua Chamberlain, colonel of the 20th Maine, Vincent said, "*This is the left of the Union. You understand. You are to hold this ground at all costs!*"

At that very moment the Confederates were rushing their way through the woods to assail that portion of the hill; had there been any delay, had Vincent not been alert and skillful in recognizing his opportunity, there would have been no salvation for that pivotal point. In a quarter of an hour it would have been occupied by the enemy as a location from which the Confederates could have destroyed the Union line. It became, instead, an invincible stronghold of the Army of the Potomac.

During the fierce fighting, Vincent exposed himself recklessly and fell early. As he was being placed on a stretcher, he told the men around him, "*Don't yield an inch!*" While being borne from the field, Vincent uttered: "*This is the fourth or fifth time they shot at me, and they have hit me at last.*" Carried to a farmhouse about 4 miles southeast of Gettysburg, Vincent's body was examined by surgeons. The bullet had passed clear through the left groin and lodged in the other. The thigh bone was badly fractured. That night George Meade sent a telegram to President Lincoln, who issued his brigadier general's commission, dated from the field. The next day Vincent wanted to go home, but the attending surgeon stated his condition was too critical for him to be moved. Although constantly attended by the surgeon and visited by friends, Vincent's condition worsened. He died on July 7 only minutes after his commission to brigadier general arrived. Vincent was taken to Erie to be buried in his beloved home state. Brigadier General James Barnes stated: "*[Colonel Vincent] was a gallant officer, beloved and respected by his command and all who knew him. His death is a serious loss to the army and the country.*" The adjutant general's report noted: "*A soldier, a scholar, a friend has fallen.*" Perhaps the finest compliment came from the enemy as James Longstreet acknowledged Strong Vincent as the man who saved Little Round Top and the Federal army.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Albert Pike/Creeks and Alexander Romanov II
2. Carrick's Ford and Robert S. Garnett
3. "Copperheads" and Horace Greeley/N.Y. *Tribune*
4. Crew's Farm or Poindexter's Farm
5. Morrill Act and the Medal of Honor



6. John Hunt Morgan and Sam Houston/John Crittenden
7. Monocacy (Maryland) and Lew Wallace
8. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and Fort Stevens
9. James Birdseye McPherson and William Henry Talbot Walker [Extra Credit: John “Blackjack” Logan]
10. 48th Pennsylvania Infantry/Henry Pleasants and James H. Ledlie/Billy Mahone

Remember our meeting date: **MONDAY, JULY 31** for **Neil Martin’s** presentation, “*The Myth of Little Round Top.*” Starting time is 6:30 P.M. at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). Be there early..... Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.